

## Homophobia

People who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual may experience harassment or discrimination from people who are scared of or uncomfortable with these identities.

Homophobia encompasses a range of negative attitudes and feelings toward homosexuality or people who are identified or perceived as being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT). Homophobia may be based on irrational fear and ignorance, and is related to religious beliefs.

Homophobia can be seen in hostile behaviour such as discrimination and violence on the basis of sexual orientations that are non-heterosexual. Negative attitudes toward identifiable LGBT groups have similar yet specific names: lesbophobia is the intersection of homophobia and sexism directed against lesbians, gayphobia is the dislike or hatred of gay men, biphobia targets bisexuality and bisexual people, and transphobia targets transgender and transsexual people and gender variance or gender role nonconformity.

Homophobic language comes in many different forms. Most of the time it is used unconsciously and without hurtful intent. Homophobic language also refers to terms of abuse specifically directed at gay people. This includes words such as 'queer', 'poof', 'fag', 'faggot', 'dyke' and 'lezza'.

Homophobic language is often dismissed as 'harmless banter' that isn't intentionally hurtful. However, when homophobic language goes unchallenged, this has a clear negative impact on young people's sense of belonging, self-esteem. The constant use of homophobic language can lead young people to think being gay is bad and that it is acceptable to treat gay people less favourably. The use of homophobic language can quickly escalate into more serious homophobic bullying.

Homophobia is never ok, and you should never have to face any kind of discrimination (discrimination means people treating you differently or negatively because of something about you). If you are upset by the way that someone is treating you, you can speak out about it. If it is someone at school then you could tell a teacher, or if someone is being dangerous or threatening towards you then you could tell the police. If it is someone in your personal life who is the problem, consider whether that is the sort of person you want in your life.

### **Resources:**

*Homophobia – Let's Tackle It*

*Guide to challenging homophobic language*

*LGBT Awareness Student Worksheet*

### **What is homophobia?**

<https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/sexual-orientation/sexual-orientation/what-homophobia>

### **What is homophobic bullying?**

<https://www.bullying.co.uk/general-advice/what-is-homophobic-bullying/>