

SKILLS FOR HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Northwest Territories

School Health Program

CHALLENGING HOMOPHOBIA

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CHALLENGING HOMOPHOBIA

An Addendum
to
Skills for Healthy Relationships

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Introduction

This document and accompanying materials comprise an addendum to *Skills for Healthy Relationships (SHR)*. The addendum was developed as a way to respond to concerns that the program lacks adequate attention to homosexuality issues and ways to include gay, lesbian and bisexual adolescents. Three new student activities have been designed along with corresponding **Teaching Guide** content (see Appendix A). As well, for five of the *SHR* student activities, scenarios have been developed which are more directed to gay, lesbian and bisexual adolescents. (Heterosexist language was changed in the revised September, 1994 version of *SHR* so that these students and others who are uncertain about their sexual identity will feel more included.)

In this document, we first introduce the purposes for incorporating these activities in the program, and provide some justification for their inclusion. We next suggest where the three activities and scenarios can be integrated within *SHR*, as well as ideas for changing students' and teachers' biased, heterosexist language and attitudes. Then, we refer to inservice education approaches, both for helping teachers to integrate the new *SHR* content and for schools to address homophobia in general.

Purpose

The inclusion of materials related to sexual orientation in *SHR* is done in order to provide students with an opportunity to discuss issues like homophobia in a supportive atmosphere. In doing so, we may be able to develop students' understanding and compassion for others, minimize the anxiety of young people who are gay, lesbian or bisexual or confused about their sexual identity, encourage discussion of the impact of homophobia and avoid the development of homophobic attitudes which has led some young people to violent acts and the ostracization of homosexuals. Since adolescents are concerned about issues related to their emerging sexuality, it is necessary to ensure that all of them feel included in

school curricula, particularly programs that teach content on HIV/AIDS and human sexuality.

Rationale

In approaching educational authorities about including aspects of *SHR* that are designed to reduce homophobia, to inform students about homosexuality, and increase understanding of people's sexual orientation, you may find it useful to refer to some of the justification which is outlined below:

1. In Canada, the decriminalizing of same-gender activity took place in 1969. Quebec became the first Canadian province (in 1977) to include sexual orientation in its Human Rights Code as prohibited grounds for discrimination in access to goods, services and accommodation. Similar amendments were subsequently made in the codes of Ontario (1986); Manitoba (1987); the Yukon (1987); Nova Scotia (1991); British Columbia (1992); New Brunswick (1992); and Saskatchewan (1993).
2. Many gays and lesbians are often socially isolated and lack healthy outlets for discussing the initial steps in sexual exploration (Uribe & Harbeck, 1992). The isolation, rejection and low self-esteem felt by some gay, lesbian and bisexual youth can lead to substance abuse, runaway behaviour, poor school performance, peer and family conflict, depression and a high rate of attempted suicide (Remafedi, Farrow and Deisher, 1991).
3. The depth of hostility toward homosexual /bisexual activity, that some in our society feel, can result in only a few sources that a young person can turn to in order to discuss emotional problems.. In this respect the school can provide an invaluable service to help prevent a gay, lesbian or bisexual youth from feeling a sense of isolation.

4. Not only may adolescent homosexuals /bisexuals suffer physical, emotional and verbal abuse (e.g., being called "faggot", "dyke"), but also they may be excluded in the content of sexuality programs. School environments generally do not contribute toward improving their self-esteem. One student expressed his views in this way:

After coming out to my best friend two years ago in high school, she betrayed my trust by telling everyone. Since that day, I have lived two years of hell. Whether in the corridor or lunchroom, classmates would point me out and call me names. I'd get punched in the face, pinched or pushed. I looked down all the time - it was terrible. ¹

5. In a study involving homosexuals (National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, 1988), over 90 percent of the respondents experienced some form of victimization because of their sexual orientation - greater than one of three reported having been threatened directly with violence. One account was described as follows:

...he was beaten when he was in school mercilessly during the course of the day -in the lockers, hallways, playground. In order to avert additional beatings, he virtually memorized every bus route in the city to get home, taking him three hours each night. Can't we make schools safe for all youth?

6. There is a need for fully developed school policies surrounding issues of homosexuality. The lack of acknowledgement of gays, lesbians and bisexuals in many schools' curricula is an example of institutional heterosexism, just as poor handling of gender equity issues illustrates systemic discrimination.
7. The heterosexual youth in a school are also hurt by the negative forces of homophobia which promote unreasonable gender role expectations. This and preceding points are developed further in the *SHR* activities on gender roles. For example:

¹ The student quotations are cited in the Toronto Board of Education sexual orientation resource.

- exploration of a wide range of activities that might be generally thought of as "feminine gender roles" or "masculine gender roles" (e.g., ballet, weight training, hockey) is supported;
- acceptability of male-oriented or female-oriented job opportunities to all (e.g., male nursing or female fire fighting) is encouraged; and,
- same-gender, non-sexual relationships that are close and intimate are openly discussed.

8. Students learn more easily when the subject matter is related to their lives. Gay, lesbian and bisexual students are able to engage in the curricula if they can understand and see themselves in the language, scenarios and activities of the program being taught. One student explained:

I really did not appreciate what Mrs. S was doing in our health classes. What did she or the students know what was going on in my life. I didn't say anything because I don't think any of them understood what it is like to be gay. So I just went along with the program and said what I was supposed to say.

Suggestions for Integrating the *Challenging Homophobia* Content into SHR

To implement the content of this addendum, you could take a number of approaches which include: (1) integrating the activities and scenarios (found in Appendices A and B, respectively) into your existing curriculum; (2) attending to your classroom environment and the language you and your students use in the classroom; (3) encouraging an inservice education session to help colleagues to implement the content; and, (4) helping with strategies on a school-wide basis to challenge homophobia and heterosexism and deal with other homosexuality-related issues. These four approaches are further described below.

Integrating the Activities and Scenarios

We suggest that the following could be done to work toward implementing the *Challenging Homophobia* activities and scenarios.

1. Because some may find the activities and scenarios in this package controversial, it is advisable that administrator approval be sought before integrating them into your curriculum.
2. If a decision is made to incorporate all or any parts) of the three activities seen in Appendix A, you may wish to modify activities or parts of them to adapt them more specifically to your community needs.
3. Activity 2 presents four options, and you may wish to incorporate one or more of these parts.
4. Activity 2 addresses discrimination and the effects of it, whereas Activities 1 and 3 deal more directly with the effects of homophobia on heterosexuals. In order to bring about a minimum amount of change among students, it is important to consider selecting Activity 1 or Activity 3 and, at least, one of the four parts of Activity 2.
5. Decide which is the most appropriate place for the activities in this addendum in relation to the other *SHR* activities. The logical placement of all the new activities you select would be in **Unit 4: Health-Enhancing Supports**--immediately following **Activity 22: Equality for All I**. If you select more than one activity and would like to distribute them throughout the program, other possibilities are to insert one in **Unit 2 -Responsible Behaviour: Abstinence**, to follow **Activity 6: Male and Female Views**, and perhaps **Unit 1 -Transmission** to follow **Activity 3: Evaluating Responsibility**.

Seven scenarios can be seen in Appendix B. Each one was written as an addition to an existing *SHR* student activity in order to provide a situation which would be more applicable to the student who was homosexual or questioning his or her sexual orientation. The first scenario corresponds to Student **Activity 2: Estimating Risk**, the second one, to **Activity 5: Considering Abstinence**, and the remaining to

Activity 9: Practising Assertiveness, Activity 10: Responding to Persuasion, Activity 20: Considering Responsible Sex and Activity 25: Supports for Responsible Behaviour, respectively.

The Classroom Environment

There are ways that a teacher and students can help gay, lesbian and bisexual students feel comfortable in the learning environment. The language used in the classroom can convey powerful messages of exclusion or inclusion. You should be aware of appropriate and inappropriate words or expressions.

It is *not* OK to:

- say queer, fairy, dyke, faggot, butch, queen, sissy or use other pejorative terms
- joke about one's sexual orientation or to tell jokes about lesbians, gay or bisexual people
- say such things as the following to someone who is homosexual or is unsure about his/her sexual orientation:
 - You will grow out of it
 - Are you sure?
 - I don't agree with it but ...
 - I still like you
 - I don't want to hear about it
 - It's only a phase
 - You are going to get AIDS
 - Do you think it's God's punishment?
 - You need counselling
 - Have you tried dating the opposite sex?
 - You don't look like one
 - Gays cause AIDS

It is OK to:

- use terms appropriately: "gay"; "lesbian"; "homosexuality"; "bisexual";
- discourage jokes and putdowns by saying:
 - "That is offensive and will not be used in this classroom.";
- include the topic of homosexuality in classroom discussions where appropriate;

- include reference to various sexual orientations--heterosexual, same-sexual, bisexual, asexual-- in ways that are informative but that do not direct anyone toward or away from any particular position. This allows every student who is homosexual or bisexual, or whose family members) may be homosexual or bisexual, to feel less alone;
- be open to listening without judgment if an individual confides in you that he or she is homosexual. Help the student by using open-ended, non-directive statements such as:
 - tell me more
 - what concerns do you have?
 - do you have other people you can talk to?
 - can you share some of your feelings?If the student is troubled, provide advice to him or her to seek professional help (e.g., counselling, therapy). Assess the support system available in your community and, if need be, make appropriate referrals.

Be aware of bias in your language:

It is important to pay attention to the language used in discussion. Note the following:

- "couple" can be used to denote same sex as well as male/female couples
- "family" can be used for more than just heterosexual parents) and children
- use the term "partner" instead of "spouse"
- use "lifestyle" for all situations, not exclusively in reference to lesbian or gays' living arrangements or social/sexual activities

Inservice Education

In order to have *Challenging Homophobia* materials considered for implementation in your school, it may be decided that an inservice session would be appropriate to review them and discuss reactions and issues. In such a session, colleagues can help one another feel at ease with the new content. At that time, participants may also make suggestions about changing the methodological approach.

The teacher inservice workshop agenda for *Challenging Homophobia* could include the following:

- a review of the rationale and background for integrating the material into the curriculum;
- an opportunity for teachers to share and discuss their own views about homosexuality and to provide support for gay, lesbian and bisexual youth, as well as for those students who are confused about their sexual orientation;
- discussion of issues you and others will have identified as relevant to challenging heterosexism and homophobia and how to handle difficult situations;
- suggestions for placement of the activities within the existing curriculum sequence;
- time spent walking through each activity while discussing options for implementing each;
- brainstorming about and planning for means of addressing heterosexism and homophobia in the school; and,
- use of language and approach to discussions in the classroom; ideas could be generated for minimizing heterosexist language in and out of the classroom.

Strategies for School-Wide Change

If you work in a school jurisdiction where it is or could be a priority to work towards changing attitudes of staff and students towards gay, lesbian and bisexual students, you might contribute by encouraging your school administrators and other teachers to consider specific strategies to effect change.

At a staff meeting, in a committee or at an inservice or professional development session, staff may wish to explore ideas about ways of providing support for gay, lesbian and bisexual students. The following are some ways to prompt discussion and possibly decrease heterosexism and homophobia:

- offering workshops to educate teachers and staff about sexual orientation and the problems that confront lesbian, gay and bisexual students. These workshops can produce a safer and more tolerant atmosphere in classrooms; programs that reach administrators and counsellors will lead them to treat gay, lesbian and bisexual students with more understanding;
- organizing a school assembly or workshop in which lesbian/gay/bisexual teen concerns are discussed with an expert from outside the school (e.g., contact the Canadian AIDS Society in Ottawa). Such a session would allow all students to ask questions they may be reluctant to ask in a regular course;
- acknowledging the presence and contributions of gays and lesbians in a variety of curricula, from science through to fine arts;
- encouraging students to engage in discussions that air fears and prejudices against gays and lesbians, dispel popular myths and convey basic facts about the reality of gay and lesbian people;
- including policy statements that forbid harassment of anyone and punishment for intolerance and violent behaviour;
- developing codes of discipline which include enforcing consequences for such behaviour as name calling;
- beginning a campaign to use appropriate language to avoid exclusion and discrimination; the campaign could include introducing lesson plans for managing name calling and interrupting anti-gay or lesbian jokes or comments by staff and/or students;
- including books on gay and lesbian issues, history and support systems in the curriculum and/or library; removing pejorative material on homosexuality;
- training staff members to recognize and respond to individuals who have endured homophobic harassment;
- ensuring that lesbian and gay concerns are included in existing suicide and substance abuse programs;
- recognizing gay and lesbian role models;

- training peer counsellors in gay/lesbian/bisexual issues and support strategies;
- including gay, lesbian and bisexual issues on a list of possible and required topics for projects, assignments and/or class presentations; and,
- prominently displaying pamphlets and resource guides for the lesbian/gay/bisexual communities in and around the guidance/ student services department.

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Appendix A

CHALLENGING HOMOPHOBIA

**Student Activities
for
Skills for Healthy Relationships**

Note: Teacher Guide notes for each activity
follow the Student Activity pages

ON BEING A WO/MAN

READY

We often become what other people want us to become so that we will not be "different" from what others consider is "normal". People often expect that males and females will conform to or follow particular ways of behaving. Sometimes these expectations can be rigid and based on a lack of understanding about how males and females may act. This lack of understanding can result in a kind of fear known as homophobia. It is a fear and, for some, a hatred of gays and lesbians. For some, it may also be the concern with being homosexual oneself.

In this activity you will

- listen to/read a personal poem about a young man's experience with having to conform to peoples' expectations of others; you may be asked to change the poem to a young women's perspective
- discuss questions related to the roles to which men and women are expected to conform
- explore positive expectations of the behaviour of men and women

SET

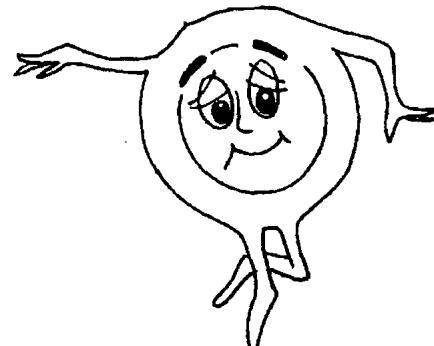
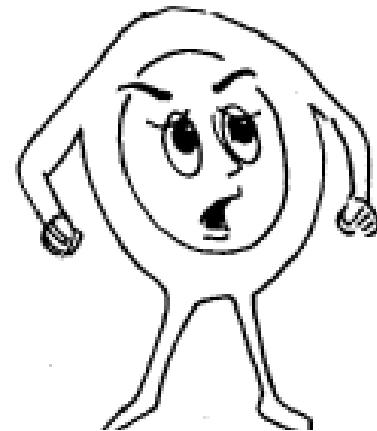
1. Listen as you hear the poem, *On Being a Man*, being read. Reflect upon what you think the author is saying.
2. Your teacher may ask you to write the poem from the point of view of a young woman.
3. Discuss the Follow-Up questions in your group.

On Being a Man

I haven't ever wanted to be
What people have always been telling me
Is a man.
The type of man they want me to be
Has little qualities that I would see
In a man.
Yet I must conform, and be their way
If I want to be considered "straight", not "gay".
But still I disagree with what they say
Is a man.

For all my life, my friends have said
That being an athlete, and not an "egghead"
Made a man.
And that a boy who didn't act like a baby,
That a boy who made it big with the girls, would be
Called a man.
And from earliest childhood, up until now,
As I failed to achieve these things, I asked "Now,
Is this really, truly, honestly, how
To be a man?"

"Is it not responsibility,
And by accepting it, that you come to be
Called a man?
Isn't it that, and that alone,
That is the hallmark of manhood, and makes you known
As a man?"
Yet I must conform, and be their way,
So that I will be considered "straight," not "gay".
But I still disagree with what they say
Is a man.



Stephen Rourke, 15

FOLLOW-UP

1. The author has suggested that society and his friends, in particular, believe that there is a set of characteristics or ways of behaving that are expected of a young man. What are some of these characteristics? _____

2. This poem is about being a man, but society could be seen as having similarly rigid expectations about female characteristics and ways that a young woman should behave. What are some of these characteristics? _____

2. Why might some people show they are uncomfortable with a person who does not have the characteristics mentioned above or who behaves differently than expected for their gender? How do you see those feelings being related to homophobia? _____

4. What changes would you suggest people make in their expectations of the way males and females behave? _____

5. Why is it important to discourage homophobic attitudes? _____

ON BEING A WO/MAN

Approximate time: 30-40 minutes

A. OBJECTIVES

Students will explore the rigid gender role expectations as experienced by one young man and develop empathy for such a person.

Students will

1. listen to a poem written by a young man discussing his feelings about the rigid gender roles imposed on him by society and his peers
2. identify male and female gender roles as set out by society
3. reflect on how society's expectations about male and female behaviours could be related to homophobia
4. understand the impact of rigid gender roles on individuals
5. think of different characteristics that society should accept -in the behaviours of women and men
6. explore reasons why it is important to alter society's expectations of women and men

B. RATIONALE

People with homophobia tend to accept behavioural expectations for men and women that are rigid, unhealthy and frequently demeaning. It is important for young people to explore these expectations and conclude that there are more effective ways to live as males and females.

C. RESOURCES AND/OR MATERIALS

- Student Activity 1
- poem *On Being a Man*

D. COOPERATIVE SKILL T-CHART

Ask each group to work on a cooperative skill that they think would help alleviate homophobia. (See pages 30-32 in Teacher Resource Book.)

E. RECOMMENDED COOPERATIVE STRUCTURES

- *Brainstorming*

F. PEER LEADER TASKS

Ask the peer leaders to help their small group select an appropriate cooperative skill from the T-charts on pages 30-32 in Teacher Resource Book and lead group members in the brainstorming session.

G. PROCEDURE

Homosexuality is a highly charged topic which may illicit strong opinions. It is important to remind students of the ground rules for effective classroom discussion (See Teacher Resource Book, "Reaching an Understanding", page 25). Be sensitive to the fact that there may be gay and lesbian youth or young people who are confused about their sexual identity in the classroom. DO NOT ALLOW JOKES OR PUT DOWNS THAT MIGHT HURT ANYONE.

1. Begin by reading the Ready and discuss the objectives of the activity. A review of the ground rules for effective discussion. might be a good idea to introduce at this time.
2. Read the poem aloud or ask a student (peer leader) to do so. Point out that it was not necessarily written by a homosexual. Discuss the meaning of the poem. Develop the concepts of "conforming" and "stereotypes".
3. If you choose to, ask the students to rewrite the poem, individually or collaboratively, from the perspectives of a young woman.
4. Form cooperative groups of four.
5. Ask each group to brainstorm answers to the Follow-Up questions. Ensure that they keep a list of all their answers for each question in preparation for a report to the class.
6. Summarize the group reports of their answers to the four questions on the blackboard. Help the students synthesize conclusions.

H. POSSIBLE RESPONSES TO ACTIVITIES

N/A

I. FOLLOW-UP

1. The author has suggested that society, and his friends in particular, believe that there is a set of characteristics or ways of behaving that are expected of a young man. What are some of those characteristics? In what ways can they differ among young men?

Responses may vary but the following can serve as a guide

MALE STEREOTYPES

Characteristics from poem:

- *be athletic*
- *not an "egghead" (studious)*
- *make it with girls*
- *don't be a baby*

Other characteristics:

- *outgoing*
- *logical*
- *strong*
- *independent*
- *mechanically inclined*
- *objective*
- *rugged*
- *holding emotions in check*

2. This poem is about being a man, but society could be seen as having similarly rigid expectations about female characteristics and ways that a young woman should behave. What are these characteristics? In what ways can they differ among young women?

Responses may vary but the following can serve as a guide.

FEMALE STEREOTYPES

• <i>passive</i>	• <i>emotional</i>
• <i>needs other people</i>	• <i>shy</i>
• <i>romantic</i>	• <i>illogical</i>
• <i>not mechanically inclined</i>	• <i>sweet</i>
• <i>delicate</i>	• <i>cries easily</i>
• <i>intuitive</i>	

3. Why might some people feel uncomfortable with a person who does not have the characteristics mentioned above or who behaves differently than expected for their gender? How do you see those feelings being related to homophobia?

If one does not try to live up to society's rigid expectations, then one is labelled as "different". Such men could be called "wimps", "fags" or "effeminate". Such women could be labelled as "butch" or "dyke". These derogatory names are used to ostracize those who do not conform to behaviours dictated by society. Practices such as discriminatory rules, name calling and ostracism are used to control others.

Whenever someone does not live up to the expectations of others there is a sense that something is wrong with the individual rather than something being wrong with the expectations.

4. What changes would you suggest people make in their expectations of the way males and females behave?

Responses may vary, but it is important that students suggest ways of accepting men and women as they are.

- *more compassion and empathy*
- *increased acceptance of close, same gender relationships*
- *more evidence of men and women behaving similarly (e.g. for men: greater sensitivity, more emotion; for women: more initiative and being more active and assertive rather than passive)*
- *important to avoid the problems outlined in #3 on the previous page.*

5. How would your changes help people be themselves? Why is it important to discourage homophobic attitudes?

If one goes through life trying to live up to a set of stereotypes that do not fit with one's real personality, there is bound to be inner conflict. This may lead to self-destructive behaviour. It is important to discourage homophobia because it hurts everyone. For example, it can inhibit the ability of heterosexuals to form close relationships with others of their gender for fear of discrimination.

WALK A MILE IN SOMEONE'S SHOES

READY

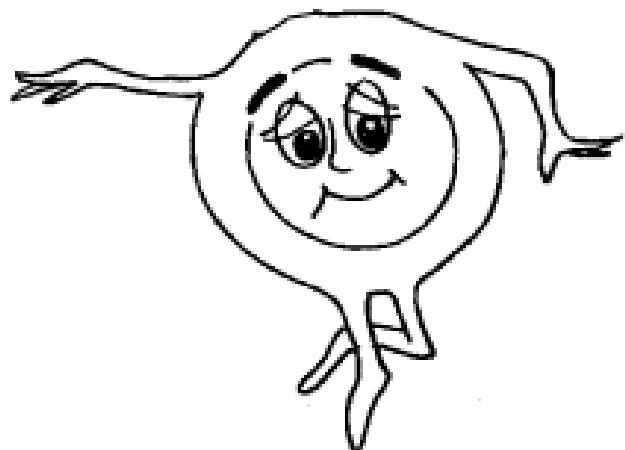
People have empathy when they have gained an understanding of another person's feelings, thoughts and motives. To really understand and appreciate someone who appears to have a different way of looking at life, it helps to "walk a mile in that someone's shoes." This activity is designed to help you gain empathy for the feelings of a young person who is gay (male) or lesbian (female).

In this activity, you will

- read and/or listen to one or more stories and read a poem to imagine what gays and lesbians experience
- consider how you would feel as the person being described

SET Part I

1. Read the following story: *Different is Not Bad*.
2. Complete the Follow-Up questions.



Different Is Not Bad

Each day as I skim through the newspapers and read the articles concerning homosexuals, and as I look at the editorials, I wonder what the big deal is. Why does it matter that I like members of my own sex?

There are a lot of answers to that question. For example, we, as a sexual minority, face a lot of discrimination in everyday life. Probably the most prevalent source of this information stems from the simple reason that we are different. Anything that is not what the majority of society does and "generally accepts" is different, and therefore hated by many people. Most people have trouble adjusting to something that they are not used to.

Why does it really matter than I am gay? I like other guys; I find companionship with another male very pleasurable. I do not harm other people in the process; quite the opposite. I can bring love and happiness to someone's life and does it really matter that that person may be another male? Different is not bad, and such a relationship is most certainly filled with love. Which is more damaging to society--persecuting people because they like members of their own sex and forcing them to feel isolated, guilty and less than human (which directly affects society), or allowing people to be as they are, and accepting them for who they are? Not a very difficult question to answer?

In the process of dealing with my sexuality, I have discovered more about myself, and about other people. I am no different from anyone else. I did not choose to be gay but I don't want to change (assuming that I could). True, being straight in today's world is much easier than being gay. Yet at the same time, I have learned much through my struggle to accept myself as I am and I refuse to cover up my feelings that I'm gay. People are equally capable of sharing love and friendship regardless of who they share those feelings with. Does it matter if both of them are male or female? As a good friend says, "So you like other guys; big deal." Exactly.

Michael, 16

FOLLOW-UP Part I**ACTIVITY
2**

1. Why do you think Michael looks for articles concerning homosexuals?

2. Give examples of other people who are discriminated against because they are different?

3. In the third paragraph, the author says, "Not a very difficult question to answer?" Why is it not difficult to answer? _____

4. Why would he not want to change his sexual orientation? _____

5. Find the sentence in the article which indicates that the author believes that a loving and sharing friendship with someone of the same gender is okay? Why do you think what he says is important?

6. How do you respond to the last statement?

SET Part II

1. Read the following story: *My Best Friend is Gay?!*
2. Complete the Follow-Up questions.

My Best Friend is Gay?!

I recently found out that my best friend is gay. We've been friends since I was two and I never really thought that he'd one day tell me, "I'm gay." When he told me, I wasn't threatened or surprised. In fact, I kind of knew. My reaction was that of typical understanding--"Really? I kind of knew, but I'm glad you told me." The funny thing is, it doesn't matter. It hasn't changed one thing. I even think that it has brought us closer.

I now feel that my best friend has opened my eyes and helped me realize that my discrimination was just plain ignorance. We reject things we do not understand because we are uneducated or ignorant. I understand my friend more and I have more in common with him than I ever had.

I have heard that gay people are much more sensitive than heterosexuals. I feel the "stereotype" is true in this case. I can tell my friend anything and he is in tune with everything that I say.

Basically, I love my friends--straight or gay--and who they choose to love does not affect the way that I feel about them.

Shawn, age 16

FOLLOW-UP Part II

1. Complete the following unfinished sentence: If I found out that my best friend was gay, I would _____

2. Why did Shawn say, "...it doesn't matter. It hasn't changed one thing"? Why was Shawn glad the friend confessed his information? _____

3. What do you think of the statement, "I have heard that gay people are much more sensitive than heterosexuals"? Why would they be or why would they not be more sensitive?

4. Why would the author have more in common with the friend now than before knowing he was gay?

1. Read the poem *Does It Matter?*
2. Complete the Follow-Up questions.

Does it Matter?

My father asked if I am gay
I asked, "Does it matter?"
He said, "No, not really."
I said, "Yes."
He said, "Get out of my life."
I guess it mattered.

My boss asked if I was gay.
I asked, "Does it matter?"
He said, "No, not really."
I said, "Yes."
He said, "You're fired, faggot."
I guess it mattered.

My friend asked if I am gay.
I asked, "Does it matter?"
He said, "No, not really."
I said, "Yes."
He said, "Don't call me your friend."
I guess it mattered.

My god asked me, "Do you love yourself?"
I said, "Does it matter?"
He said, "Yes."
I said, "How can I love myself? I am Gay."
He said, "That is the way I made you."
Nothing again will ever matter.

Anonymous high school student--abridged version

1. Complete the following unfinished sentences:

a. After reading this poem, I felt _____

b. I think the person who wrote this poem felt _____

c. The father, boss and friend did not accept this person's sexual orientation because _____

2. Why does the person writing this poem say, "Does it matter?"

3. Why do people say, "Not really" when it obviously does matter? _____

4. Why does the poet say, "Nothing again will ever matter"? _____

5. Why does the poet capitalize the word "Gay" in the last verse? _____

1. Relax, clear your mind, close your eyes, listen and put yourself in the shoes of the person in the following story that your teacher will read to you.
2. Be conscious of what you are feeling for Maggie as well as what you are not feeling.
3. After the story, jot down several words to indicate your feelings.
4. Complete the Follow-Up questions.

Maggie

You have a friend, Maggie, who realizes she is more attracted to girls than guys. She does not want to talk to anyone else but you about her feelings. So Maggie keeps a lot of things inside. The "dyke" jokes you hear make you sick, but you don't say anything so people won't suspect that your friend is a lesbian.

Maggie tries out for cheerleader, not because she likes cheerleading, but to be accepted. She has even tried going out with a guy, but said that didn't work out very well. Recently, Maggie confided in you that she found a girl she feels very close to emotionally. This girl seems to feel the same way about Maggie.

It's Friday and you and your friends are talking about plans for the weekend. One of your friends says, "I'm going out with Sam again tonight. We're going out to the early show and then to a party." The others talk about their weekend plans and who they are seeing.

One friend asks Maggie, "What are you doing tonight? You're not going to stay home again this weekend, are you?" She shrugs and looks awkward. They offer to fix Maggie up with someone. Maggie replies, "Maybe some other time." They continue talking about their dates and plans. Whenever she can, Maggie smiles, nods and jokes with them about love and guys so they will not be suspicious of her. She said later that she wanted to be able to tell your friends about her special friend and how it feels to care for someone.

Maggie told you on Monday about meeting with her friend. They were really glad to see each other, but they simply smiled and said hello; they felt they couldn't show affection even though they wanted to hug and kiss each other. They went to a restaurant. Maggie explained how unsafe it was even to look in each other's eyes too long. They went to a movie although they both wanted to go to the party, but they had agreed that they shouldn't be seen together. At least in the movie they could sit beside each other. When they came out of the theatre, they would have liked to have held hands, but felt afraid to do that in public.

Maggie talked about wishing there was some place they could go together. She can't take the friend home because her father hates lesbians and gays. In fact, during a recent TV show where they were talking about their lives, Maggie heard her father say, "Haven't we heard enough about these fags and dykes already! They should all be shot!"

(cont'd)

Yesterday, when Maggie was thumbing through the newspaper, a headline jumped out at her:

FIVE TEENS BEAT GAY MAN TO DEATH WHILE OTHERS LOOKED ON

You were not surprised when Maggie described the nightmares she has about your classmates threatening her and her friend. If there was only someone else with whom Maggie could discuss those nightmares and get help!

Having heard the story, how do you feel? On your own, jot down several words to indicate your feelings. _____

FOLLOW-UP Part IV

1. Make a list of the kinds of actions toward and comments about young gays and lesbians that you would consider to be an indication of homophobia.

2. Why do some people fear gays and lesbians, in other words, have homophobic tendencies? How do you think this fear affects young gays and lesbians? How do you think this fear affects heterosexual youth? _____

3. How might homophobia affect the incidence of HIV/AIDS?

4. How can students and teachers increase their awareness of homophobia and concern about its negative consequences? What recommendations would you make to prevent or decrease homophobia in the school? _____

WALK A MILE IN SOMEONE'S SHOES

Approximate time: 60 minutes

A. OBJECTIVES

Students will experience, through different accounts, what it is like to be a gay or lesbian youth, living in a heterosexist society.

Students will:

1. express their perceptions of what it might be like to be gay or lesbian in a world where there is discrimination
2. explore what life might be like for those who must conceal an integral part of themselves and develop an understanding of them
3. identify how homophobic attitudes are demonstrated
4. identify reasons that people might fear gays and lesbians and analyze the impact of homophobia on their lives as well as on those of heterosexual youth
5. brainstorm and make recommendations for ways of increasing awareness and prevention of homophobia in their school

B. RATIONALE

To read a piece of writing that expresses, someone's experience provides an opportunity to develop an understanding about and encourage empathy for that person. To listen to a narrated passage with eyes closed rather than to read on one's own is an effective teaching technique. In a story in which students can place themselves in the "shoes" of a gay or lesbian young person, they can imagine the prejudice, discrimination and pain that some must face.

C. RESOURCES AND/OR MATERIALS

- Student Activity 2
- Different is Not Bad
- My Best Friend is Gay?!
- Does it Matter?
- Maggie

D. COOPERATIVE SKILL T-CHART

N/A

E. RECOMMENDED COOPERATIVE STRUCTURES

N/A

F. PEER LEADER TASKS

N/A

G. PROCEDURE

You may see part of this activity as controversial and you may choose to use only one or two parts. Students should be given the choice of whether to participate or not. Jokes should not be tolerated (a warning about this might be appropriate). The rationale for doing this activity should be introduced in some depth with the students.

1. Read to the students the Ready and Set of the parts you select.
2. For Parts I, II and III, have the students read the material on their own. (Note that the author of the article in Part II, *My Best Friend is Gay?!*, could be male or female.) Lead the discussion with the Follow-Up questions.
3. For Part IV, impress upon the students that it is important to relax and close their eyes as it is easier to visualize while they listen to you read the story. Students having eye contact with one another during the reading may distract and encourage others not to concentrate.
4. It is recommended that you read *Maggie* with as much expression as possible. Ask the students to be very aware of how they are feeling and not feeling as the story is read.
5. Before the mood is broken, ask the students to jot down quietly in the box on page 8 several descriptive words to describe how they feel. Ask them to select one of their words and record it on one of the slips of paper which you have passed around. To preserve the mood, ask for continued silence until you have collected all the the slips of paper.
6. State first how you feel in one or two words. It is suggested that you read the students' words as you write them on the blackboard to show the variety of emotions in the class.
7. Lead the discussion of the Follow-Up questions.

H. POSSIBLE RESPONSES TO ACTIVITIES

Part IV: The only comments about students' spontaneous feelings after hearing Maggie should relate to praise for thoughtful responses.

I. FOLLOW-UP

Responses to all the questions in each part may vary; use the following as guidelines. Encourage reference to events and remarks in the stories and/or poem as much as possible.

Part I: *Different is Not Bad*

1. Why do you think Michael looks for articles concerning homosexuals?
 - *articles could be an important way to access information so that he can gain understanding about the feelings of others who are gay*
 - *Michael could be lonely and feeling isolated; he is looking for ways to connect with other gay people*
2. Give examples of other people who are discriminated against because they are different.
 - *the disabled and others with special needs*
 - *individuals of different racial or cultural backgrounds*
 - *people with different physical characteristics (e.g., who are overweight or underweight)*
3. In the third paragraph, the author says, "Not a very difficult question to answer." Why is it not difficult to answer?
 - *to have love and happiness is very important in our society; it doesn't matter whom we love or make happy, but that we are being human and natural when we do express these feelings to others*
4. Why would he not want to change his sexual orientation?
 - *he has learned a lot about himself, others and discrimination, but he now feels comfortable about who he is*
 - *he knows he cannot change who he is*
5. Find the sentence in the article which indicates that the author believes that a loving and sharing friendship with someone of the same gender is okay. Why do you think what he says is important?
 - *"people are equally capable of sharing love and friendship regardless of who they share those feelings with"*
 - *by only loving and having a close, intimate friendship with someone of the opposite sex, a person could cut himself or herself off emotionally from developing meaningful relationships with others in the human race*
6. How do you respond to the last statement?
 - *Responses will vary*

Part II: *My Best Friend is Gay??*

1. Complete the following unfinished sentence: If I found that my best friend is gay, I would ...
 - *Responses will vary*
2. Why did Shawn say, "...it doesn't matter. It hasn't changed one thing". Why was Shawn glad the friend confessed his information?
 - *a relationship which is honest is important*
 - *Shawn would continue to give him support; still appreciates his/her friend*
 - *not many would reveal such a private "secret" unless they were close to the person they were informing; this was a way Shawn's friend showed how close he felt towards Shawn*
3. What do you think of the statement, "I have heard that gay people are much more sensitive than heterosexuals." Why would they be or why would they not be more sensitive?
 - *they have probably been through very difficult times themselves; therefore, they have empathy for others who may go through similar trying experiences*
 - *they can allow their feminine side to show; it is well known that females usually show more sensitivity than males*
 - *(Why would they not be more sensitive?): they could become very angry and aggressive because of the injustice they have suffered through discrimination and prejudice*

Part III: *Does it Matter?*

1. Complete the following unfinished sentences:
 - a. After reading this poem, I felt ...
 - *Responses will vary*
 - b. I think the person who wrote this poem felt ...
 - *Responses will vary*
 - c. The father, the boss and friend did not accept this person's sexual orientation because ...
 - *Responses will vary*
 - d. If I was a friend of the person who wrote this poem, I would ...
 - *Responses will vary*
2. Why does the person writing this poem say, "Does it matter?"
 - *the author is saying, "This is my life. I'm not affecting your life. Therefore it should not matter."*
3. Why do people say, "Not really" when it obviously does matter?
 - *some people are afraid to express how they really feel about the situation to the other person*

4. Why does the poet say, "Nothing again will ever matter"?
 - *because his god loves him and that is the most important thing to him right now*
 - *he has discovered that his god made him and chose his way of life. Now he can be happy with himself*

5. Why does the poet capitalize the word "Gay" in the last verse?
 - *in other parts of the poem gay is not capitalized; capitalizing gay signifies that he has finally accepted himself and his orientation*

Part IV: *Maggie*

1. Make a list of actions toward and comments about young gays and lesbians that you would consider to be an indication of homophobia?
 - *name calling and other verbal abuse (jokes, put-downs; e.g., father's statement about 'fags and dykes'; the "dyke" jokes told by the author's friends.)*
 - *physical abuse, beating (e.g., the newspaper headline in the story)*
 - *sexual abuse (a lesbian could be sexually assaulted because of the belief that what she really needs is a physical encounter with a man)*
 - *isolating the gay or lesbian, or the presumed gay or lesbian, physically and emotionally (not going near them, not talking to them, shutting them out, refusing to work with them in class)*

- 2a. Why do some people fear gays and lesbians, in other words, have homophobic tendencies?
 - *people tend to fear what is different from what they consider are nouns of behaviour*
 - *people feel more comfortable with those who look and act like themselves*
 - *lack of knowledge about gays and lesbians*

- 2b. How do you think this fear affects young gays and lesbians?

Fear of gays and lesbians (as with any other prejudice) can mean:

- *they are ostracised by others and feel isolated*
- *responses to feelings of isolation can be substance abuse (alcohol and drugs), depression, suicide or other self-abusive behaviours*
- *after told they are "bad", "evil", "sinful", "worthless", they will tend to believe it unless they encounter some positive feedback. They may respond with self-destructive behaviours*
- *fear of exposure, as illustrated by the author in the story*

2c. How do you think this fear affects heterosexual youth?

Heterosexuals (straights)

- *will lack openness and an awareness of others' experiences*
- *will miss a dimension of the world*
- *may use homosexuals as scapegoats; be blinded to realities in society*
- *are likely to strictly control their own behaviours. For example, young men will control their emotions, and women may avoid being assertive*
- *friendships may be stilted: men will not allow themselves to be close to other men because people might think that they are gay. (Think of men during a war and the intensity of their feelings for other men while carrying out profoundly male duties: D-Day survivors talked about "loving" their buddies, but after the war, not being able to find this closeness with new male friends.)*
- *will see homosexuals as the "others" with no connections to them, no common ground, as strangers; that perception invites scapegoating and encourages isolation and mistrust*

This next question is difficult and is dependent on the answers to previous questions being understood thoroughly. The students will need a solid understanding of the effects of homophobia on the lives of both homosexuals and heterosexuals.

3. How might homophobia affect the incidence of HIV/AIDS?

- *Reviewing the impact of homophobia on the lives of homosexual and heterosexual youth, one can see a connection between reaction to homophobia and HIV/AIDS. If gay and lesbian youth believe that they are "bad" or "worthless", then they may participate in self-destructive behaviour and may be less likely to participate in behaviour that would reduce the risk of infection. That is, if one wishes to be engaging in self-destructive behaviour, one could easily avoid using protection when engaging in sexual intercourse and, therefore, could be spreading HIV/AIDS.*
- *For heterosexual youth, the risk is that by believing that HIV/AIDS is a "gay disease", they would likely feel there is no real need to take precautions; therefore, they may engage in high-risk behaviours, risking infection and spreading HIV.*

4. How can students and teachers increase their awareness of homophobia and concern about its negative consequences? What recommendations would you make to prevent or decrease homophobia in the school?

- *Encourage the students to be creative in their responses here. For example, projects, posters about homophobia could be displayed; dynamic speakers could be invited to assemblies; related topics for public speaking contests; an Anti-discrimination Day; memo to teachers with relevant poem or story suggested for class discussion.*
- *Encourage them to prepare a set of recommendations for the administration.*

BELIEFS IN ACTION

READY

Heterosexuality is the attraction of an individual to someone of the opposite gender. Homosexuality is the attraction of an individual to someone of the same gender. People, whether heterosexual or homosexual, can feel pressure from others when they behave in a way that is different from what society generally expects.

Homophobia is the fear of homosexuality or of being thought of as homosexual. Homophobia can result in an extreme kind of prejudice and discrimination which affects people's lives, especially those who are, or are thought to be gay or lesbian. Gays and lesbians, whether or not they have declared their sexual orientation, can be subject to some people's hatred which can lead to harassment, "gay bashing", isolation and sometimes suicide.

In this activity you will

- look at the effects of homophobia on gays and lesbians, on heterosexual men and women, and on those who are thought to be gay or lesbian
- examine your own attitudes and how you react to the given situations that could involve homophobia
- explore the benefits of eliminating homophobia

SET

1. Read the list of statements, and indicate whether you agree or disagree with each one.
2. Give your reaction to the episode matching each statement to which you responded.
3. Discuss your answers to the questions that follow each episode.
3. Answer the Follow-Up questions.

SIDE A -STATEMENTS (Circle your response)

1. I can ignore people when they call me names; it doesn't really bother me.

AGREE *DISAGREE*

2. Prejudice and discrimination are unfair. In fact, people should support those who suffer prejudice and discrimination.

AGREE *DISAGREE*

3. Close, affectionate relationships with same gender friends are important.

AGREE *DISAGREE*

4. A young person should be able to participate in a wide range of activities without feeling foolish or embarrassed.

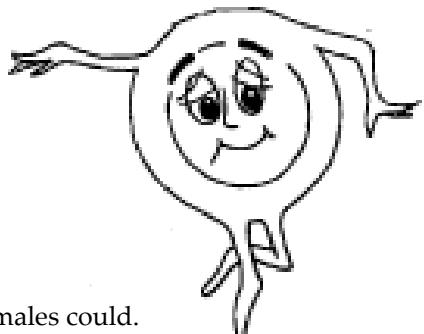
AGREE *DISAGREE*

5. When emotionally upset or sad, males should not cry in public.

AGREE *DISAGREE*

6. When others are present, females could take risks with their lives just as males could.

AGREE *DISAGREE*



SIDE B - SITUATIONS

ACTIVITY
3

Episode 1: On the Way to School

You just began attending a new high school. It has been difficult to make friends but finally you have found a close friend of the same sex. The two of you do everything together. Today you and your friend are on your way to school when you meet a group of students. A couple of them make comments that are obviously intended for you.

"Hey we've got a new fag/lezzie in town."

"Why don't the two of you hold hands?"

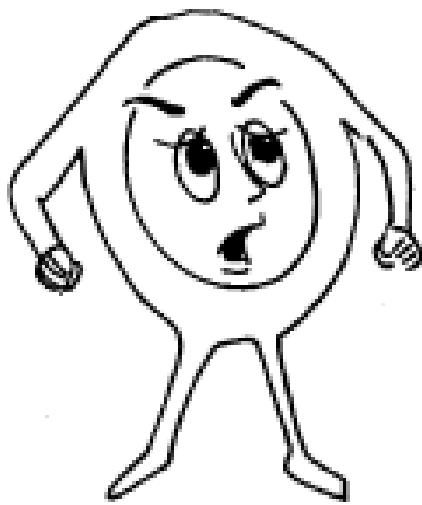
"You know what we do to queers, don't you?"

How do you feel?

How do you behave?

Discussion Questions

1. Is it worse to be called "lezzie" or "fag" than being called "stupid" or "jerk"? Why? Why not?
2. Why do some young people call others "fag", "queer", "lezzie" or "dyke"?
3. Do you think one person in this group of students, if he or she were alone, would make these comments? Why or why not?



SIDE B - SITUATIONS (cont'd)

Episode 2a: In the Restaurant

You and a group of same sex friends go into the restaurant for lunch. It's very busy but there are several seats at a table where a friend, Pat, is having lunch. You head over to sit beside Pat when you hear your other friends saying,

"Don't sit there! Pat's a fag. Who knows--he may even have AIDS!"

"A lot of queers have it, you know."

"I wouldn't sit with him for any money!"

How do you feel?

How do you behave?

OR

Episode 2b: On the Street

You are with a group of same sex friends on your way to school. One of the group sees a classmate walking alone on the other side of the street and says, "You know Pat's a fag/lezzie. Let's show him/her what we think of queers."

How do you feel?

How do you behave?

Discussion Questions

1. How do you think Pat would feel being isolated or ostracized by others in this way? Why is Pat being ostracized by others?
2. How would it make you feel to stand up for Pat? What do you think you could say to him/her and to the others?
3. What do you think causes some people to say mean things to others?

SIDE B - SITUATIONS (cont'd)

Episode 3: Summer Holidays

It is the first day of school after summer holidays. Your best friend (same gender) has been away for the last two months. He or she sees you in the hallway and greets you with a big hug.

How do you feel?

How do you behave?

Discussion Questions

1. What is it about hugging or kissing a friend in public that makes it okay for some girls but not for some boys?
2. In what ways might your other friends react that could make you feel uncomfortable?
3. How do men show affection for each other if they don't hug or kiss? How affectionate are these methods?

Episode 4: Physical Education Class

You are in a co-educational physical education class. Today the boys are taking aerobic dance and the girls are expected to take wrestling. Everyone must participate.

How do you feel?

What do you do?

Discussion Questions

1. What is it about some physical activities that make them more acceptable for males or females? What are other examples of activities that are seen mainly for women or for men? How are we limiting ourselves by doing only expected activities for our gender?
2. How could you show support for those who participate with enthusiasm and excel in activities that people think of as more appropriate for the other gender? What might be some advantage of showing such support?

SIDE B - SITUATIONS (cont'd)



Episode 5: Watching a Video

MALES:

You are watching a video with your girlfriend. The ending of the video is very sad and your girlfriend is obviously crying. You feel tears welling up in your eyes, but you know that there are other people in the room.

How do you feel?

How do you behave?

What if your girlfriend sees the tears in your eyes?

How do you feel?

How do you behave?

FEMALES:

You are watching a video with your boyfriend. The ending is very sad and you are crying. You can see that your boyfriend has been crying but is obviously trying to hide his tears.

How do you feel?

How do you behave?

What if there are other people in the room and they notice your boyfriend's tears?

How do you feel?

How do you behave?

Discussion Questions

1. What is it about crying that makes men uncomfortable?
2. Why might a woman feel uncomfortable seeing a man cry?
3. How do you think it affects people to hold in such a strong emotion as sadness?
4. How can some people's negative reaction to crying be connected to gender role behaviour? to homophobia?



SIDE B - SITUATIONS (cont'd)

Episode 6: Hiking

A man and woman are out hiking. While the woman is taking a picture of a beautiful view from a high cliff she drops her expensive camera over the edge. It comes to rest on a ledge 15 feet below. There is a sign "DANGEROUS DO NOT GO BEYOND THIS POINT", but there is a steep path that has obviously been used by others to reach the ledge.

Who do you think will go down to retrieve the camera?

Why do you think he or she would take this risk?

What do you think of a person who would take this kind of risk?

Discussion Questions

1. Who do you think takes more risks with their life in the presence of someone of the opposite gender, women or men? Why?
2. What is the difference between good (acceptable) risks and bad (unacceptable) risks?
3. What effects could risk-taking have on relationships?

FOLLOW-UP

1. In how many cases were your responses to each statement consistent with your reaction to the corresponding episodes? In all, most, some or a few cases?

2. Everyone has a feminine and a masculine side to his or her personality. What can be gained by encouraging more understanding and compassion towards people who show characteristics which people generally accept in the opposite gender; e.g., women who behave as men usually do?

3. Would you say you were understanding or not understanding of gays and lesbians? Would you say you were understanding or not understanding of people who may show characteristics and/or interests of both genders? What could people do to become less homophobic? How can more understanding and compassion be encouraged in others? _____

4. What do you stand to gain by being less homophobic?

BELIEFS IN ACTION

Approximate time: 40-50 minutes

A. OBJECTIVES

Students will have the opportunity to reflect on how well their actions match their beliefs by examining their reaction to specific situations.

Students will

1. understand the effects of homophobia on the lives of gays and lesbians
2. understand the effects of homophobia on the lives of heterosexual women and men
3. analyze the benefits of working to eliminate homophobia

B. RATIONALE

Homophobia has a negative effect on gays and lesbians through put downs, prejudice, ostracism and discrimination. Also, it can have a negative effect on heterosexuals, particularly heterosexual men by creating pressure on them to conform to rigid and unhealthy ways of living. This activity questions this kind of pressure and conformity and explores alternative, more flexible and healthier lifestyles.

C. RESOURCES AND/OR MATERIALS

- Student Activity 3
- The statements ("A") and the episodes ("B") are found at the end of this activity along with the instructions for making them into "cards".

D. COOPERATIVE SKILL T-CHART

DISAGREEING IN AN AGREEABLE WAY	
LOOKS LIKE....	SOUNDS LIKE....
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • minimizing gestures • maintaining eye contact 	<p>With a calm controlled voice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>That's a possibility. Would you consider ?</i> • <i>I understand your position, however would you...?</i> • <i>Yes, I see that. What about looking at it from the point of view that...?</i> • <i>I guess we agree to disagree.</i>

E. RECOMMENDED COOPERATIVE STRUCTURES

- Brainstorming

F. PEER LEADER TASKS

- If small groups are used, peer leaders could be asked to read A statements and B episodes. The peer leaders could also help with the practise of cooperative skills and lead their group's discussion.

G. PROCEDURE

Some heated debates might occur during this activity as students express a variety of opinions or make light of someone else's viewpoint. Remind students of the importance of this topic and that acting upon beliefs that place unreasonable social demands on others can harm all people, regardless of their sexual orientation. Do not tolerate jokes or put downs of others during this activity.

1. Decide whether this activity will be teacher-led or conducted in small, cooperative groups. (You may choose to have the students work on their own for all or part of the activity.)
2. You or the peer leaders (if in small groups) will read the first A statement.
3. The students will then be asked to agree or disagree with the first statement.

4. You or the peer leaders could then read the first statement B (episode) that corresponds to the A statement.
5. Students reflect on how they feel and what they would do. The students then discuss how they feel and/or what they would do in small groups or in the class as a whole.
6. Finally, the students will complete the discussion questions after the first episode.
7. You will follow the same procedure for each set of A-B cards
8. After the A-B card activity, proceed through the Follow-Up.

H. POSSIBLE RESPONSES TO ACTIVITIES

EPISODE 1: ON THE WAY TO SCHOOL

How do you feel?

- *embarrassed, humiliated*
- *you feel okay; you feel confident in yourself*

What do you do?

- *present a more feminine image (females)*
- *present a more macho image (males)*
- *ignore your friend (your friend may want to avoid you as well)*
- *ignore the group making the comments*

In summary, students are probably embarrassed, humiliated and want to look "straight". The question is to what extent would they go to change the image people have of them? Sadly, most would go to a great extent to do so. Students should deduce through the discussion how much other people in society control the behaviour of others

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Is it worse to be called "lezzie" or "fag" than being called "stupid" or "jerk"? Why? Why not?
 - *sexuality and sexual identity are ties to one's sense of self and self-esteem in our society*
 - *there is such a stigma attached to being thought of as gay or lesbian that may make life miserable for some*
 - *it would be just as bad to be called either set of names*
 - *being put down for your sexual orientation when you are young is more damaging than being put down for your lack of intelligence*

2. Why do some young people call others "fag", "queer", "lezzie", "dyke"?
 - *they may be ignorant of what it is like to be homosexual and how they can be affected by discrimination*
 - *they perceive that people do not support homosexuals; so they think homosexuals are a fair target*
 - *by supporting a gay or lesbian, they can be seen to be one themselves*

(All of these are homophobic responses.)

3. Do you think one person in this group of students, if he or she were alone, would make these comments? Why or why not?
 - *probably not; people tend to be encouraged or feel powerful when part of a group*
 - *there is strength in numbers*
 - *people may not bother making these kind of comments if they do not have an audience*

EPISODE 2: IN THE RESTAURANT/ ON THE STREET

How do you feel?

- *embarrassed and uncomfortable that your friends would say these things*
- *surprised that your friends could be so cruel*
- *embarrassed that you might have sat with Pat*
- *powerful; you are part of a gang making someone feel badly*
- *okay; it does not bother you*

How do you behave?

- *go over to Pat and apologize*
- *tell your friends that they are being cruel and ignorant*
- *the dilemma is how to stand up to their friends without incurring humiliation themselves*
- *give them the facts about HIV/AIDS*
- *join in with the taunting*
- *ignore the group's comments and go over to see Pat*

EPISODE 2: DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How do you think Pat would feel being isolated or ostracized by others in this way? Why is Pat being ostracized by others?
 - sad, lonely, humiliated, depressed, hurt, angry*
 - Pat is seen by others to be different. It seems likely that Pat's classmates are homophobic.*
- How would it make you feel to stand up for Pat? What do you think you could say to him/her and to the others?
 - good, strong*
 - scared, nervous*
 - might say that they are cruel, wrong, insensitive, ignorant of the facts, prejudiced*
 - that it isn't right to label people*
- What do you think causes some people to say mean things to others?
 - fear, lack of knowledge, information*
 - low self-esteem, say nasty things about other people and make themselves look good*
 - because they see people that they respect saying these things, either in jest or in earnest*
 - cannot see another way of behaving. Studies of young men who "gay bash" show very homophobic fathers; perhaps their young sons behave similarly to please their fathers.*

EPISODE 3: SUMMER HOLIDAYS

NOTE – Generally, in North American culture, there will probably be a difference between the responses of young women and young men.

How do you feel?

- embarrassed, flustered, shocked*
- it feels good*

How would you behave?

- push friend away, keep your distance from your friend for a while*
- make jokes, laugh it off*
- leave the situation*
- talk to your friend and explain that it makes you feel uncomfortable when they hug and kiss you in front of other people*
- thank your friend for showing affection*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is it about hugging or kissing a friend in public that makes it okay for some young women but not for some young men?
 - *it is seen as feminine to show this kind of affection*
 - *males don't want to be seen as feminine*
 - *affection, specifically physical tends to be misinterpreted by males*
2. In what ways might your other friends react that could make you feel uncomfortable?
 - *laugh, taunt you at the time or later*
 - *bring it to the attention of others*
3. How do men show affection for each other if they don't hug or kiss? How affectionate are these methods?
 - *other kinds of touching; punches, slaps, handshake*
 - *eye contact*
 - *verbally, e.g., "good to see you"*
 - *responses to the second part will vary depending on degree of comfort*

EPISODE 4: Physical Education Class

There will probably be a difference between the responses of young women and young men to this situation.

How do you feel?

- *uncomfortable*
- *embarrassed*
- *okay; natural*

How would you behave?

- *laugh it off, snicker*
- *make fun of the activity*
- *accept it*
- *leave or not do it or skip class*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is it about some physical activities that make them more acceptable for males or females? What are other examples of activities that are seen mainly for either women or for men?
 - *some activities make people feel foolish in front of their same gender friends*
 - *physical strength, force needed to pursue activity (e.g., wrestling for women)*
 - *historically, some sports are male or female dominated*
 - *female: dance, field hockey, synchronized swimming, figure skating*
 - *male: physical sports such as football, wrestling, hockey*
 - *female: sewing, child care, housework*
 - *male: hunting, mechanics, carpentry/construction*

- *since certain physical activities are seen as more appropriate/acceptable to either males or females, some people are afraid of participating in inappropriate ones because people will think they are gay/ lesbian*
- *we limit the range of activities we can participate in*
- *we learn to avoid taking emotional risks and we may miss an opportunity for developing ways to cope with stress, become bored and limit opportunities to express our own personality ,*

2. How could you show support for those who participate with enthusiasm and excel in activities that people think of as more appropriate for the other gender? What might be some advantages of showing such support?

- *compliment them on and be enthusiastic about their ability*
- *support them in front of peers*
- *encourage them to continue to practise*
- *if they are playing/performing for an audience, be there*
- *comment on the amount of time it takes to do what they are doing well*

Advantages: help give them courage to continue in the face of objections from those who do not approve of their participation; help to ease the sense of frustration they might feel in trying to excel in an activity which others believe they should not do.

EPISODE 5: WATCHING A VIDEO

To avoid possibly alienating individuals, reinforce that these are heterosexual date scenarios.

PART A - MALE

How do you feel?

- *embarrassed, upset*
- *nervous that the girl would notice*
- *okay, no problem*

How would you behave?

- *fight back the tears*
- *lie about something being in your eyes*
- *be honest*

PART B - MALE

How do you feel?

- *embarrassed*
- *nervous; asking yourself what she will think?*
- *okay*

How would you behave?

- *laugh it off*
- *go to the bathroom; getaway*
- *be honest*
- *do nothing*

PART A - FEMALE

How do you feel?

- *could be embarrassed for him*
- *could be pleased that he can express emotion*
- *fine*

How would you behave?

- *laugh it off, make a joke*
- *try to make him comfortable*
- *ignore the tears*
- *do nothing*

PART B - FEMALE

How do you feel?

- *embarrassed, uncomfortable*
- *okay, not a problem*

What do you do?

- *get away from friend*
- *make joke or laugh it off*
- *be honest*
- *nothing, it's natural*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is it about crying that makes men uncomfortable?
 - *show of emotion*
 - *reaction of others*
2. Why might a woman feel uncomfortable seeing a man cry?
 - *show of emotion, views of family and friend, seen as a "wimp"*
 - *despite lip service to the desire for "sensitive men", many women are still caught up in the search for the knight, the big strong man who will protect them*
3. How do you think it affects people to hold in such a strong emotion as sadness?
 - *it can make you sick*
 - *confusion, how to express this emotion*
4. How can some people's negative reaction to men crying be connected to gender role behaviour? to homophobia?
 - *it may appear feminine for a male to cry and some people cannot accept that. He may be perceived as having homosexual tendencies and people with homophobia fear such behaviour in a "guy".*

EPISODE 6: HIKING

1. Who will go down to retrieve the camera?
 - *write the two headings Male and Female on the board, take a survey of who the students think would go down onto the ledge and write the numbers on the board*

2. Why would they take a risk?

MALE

- *prove a point*
- *impress the woman*
- *believe they are invincible*

FEMALE

- *prove a point*
- *worried about the camera*
- *impress the man*

3. What do you think of someone who would take this kind of risk?

- *macho, strong caring, loving, thoughtful*
- *stupid, irresponsible, thoughtless*
- *egotistical*
- *unrealistic*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Who do you think takes more risks with their life in the presence of someone of the opposite gender, women or men? Why?

MALE

- *they are taught that this is how you prove yourself to women as well as to other men*

WOMEN

- *they have things to prove as well, they may feel the need to prove that they are men's equal, that they do not need to be "taken care of"*

2. What is the difference between good (acceptable) risks and bad (unacceptable) risks?

GOOD RISKS

- *jobs, friendships, love, school, sports*

BAD RISKS

- *drinking and driving, playing hockey without a helmet, having sex without a condom*

3. What effects could risk taking have on relationships?

- *uncertainty, strain*
- *if a partner wants to take risks and the other doesn't want him/her to, there will be conflict*
- *if the man tries to "save" the woman and she does not think she needs to be "saved" there may be conflict*
- *risk taking could force the couple to discuss their behaviour and help improve their relationship by leading them to express their concern for one another*

I. FOLLOW-UP

1. In how many cases were your responses to each statement consistent with your reaction to the corresponding episodes? In all, most, some or a few cases?
 - *you could do a tally of student responses*
2. Everyone has a feminine and a masculine side to his/her personality. What can be gained by encouraging more understanding and compassion towards people who show characteristics which people generally accept in the opposite gender; e.g., women who behave as men usually do?
 - *people might become more open to their feelings*
 - *people would accept males showing more physical affection to one another, showing more sensitivity towards others and being less macho*
 - *people would be more accepting of females who were less passive, more assertive, not part of the "beauty myth" promoted by media*
3. Would you say you were understanding or not understanding of gays and lesbians? Would you say you were understanding or not understanding of people who may show characteristics and/or interests of both genders? What could people do to become less homophobic? How can more tolerance and compassion be encouraged in others?
 - *identify what is inappropriate and what is appropriate and model these behaviours every day*
 - *educate others about the negative impact of put downs*
 - *understand why people are homophobic and work to change their behaviour*
 - *be strong and confident enough to stand up to people who are homophobic*
4. What do you stand to gain by being less homophobic?
 - *you will probably become more understanding of homosexuals as well as of people in other minority groups*
 - *you will probably be more able to break the mold of conforming to the stereotypical male or female roles/actions*
 - *you will probably feel able to stand up for others' rights*

"A" (Statements) and "B" (Episodes)

The following masters could be prepared for the "cards" for every student or each group of students. Photocopy or print a given statement on one side of the card/paper and its corresponding episode on the other.

1. I can ignore people when they call me names; it doesn't really bother me.

AGREE *DISAGREE*

2. Prejudice and discrimination are unfair. In fact, people should support those who suffer prejudice and discrimination.

AGREE *DISAGREE*

Episode 1: On the Way to School

You just began attending a new high school. It has been difficult to make friends but finally you have found a close friend of the same sex. The two of you do everything together. Today you and your friend are on your way to school when you meet a group of students. A couple of them make comments that are obviously intended for you.

"Hey we've got a new fag/lezzie in town."

"Why don't the two of you hold hands?"

"You know what we do to queers, don't you?"

How do you feel?

How do you behave?

Episode 2a: In the Restaurant

You and a group of same sex friends go into the cafeteria for lunch. It's very busy but there are several seats at a table where a classmate, Pat, is having lunch. You head over to sit beside Pat when you hear your other friends saying,

"Don't sit there! Pat's a fag. Who knows--he may even have AIDS!"

"A lot of queers have it, you know."

"I wouldn't sit with him for any money!"

How do you feel?

How do you behave?

OR

Episode 2b: On the Street

You are with a group of same sex friends on your way to school. One of the group sees a classmate walking alone on the other side of the street and says, "You know Pat's a fag/lezzie. Let's show him/her what we think of queers."

How do you feel?

How do you behave?

3. Close, affectionate non-sexual relationships with same gender friends are important.

AGREE

DISAGREE

4. A young person should be able to participate in a wide range of activities without feeling foolish or embarrassed.

AGREE

DISAGREE

Episode 3: Summer Holidays

It is the first day of school after summer holidays. Your best friend (same gender) has been away for the last two months. He or she sees you in the hallway and greets you with a big hug.

How do you feel?

How do you behave?

Episode 4: Physical Education Class

You are in a co-educational physical education class. Today the boys are taking aerobic dance and the girls are expected to take wrestling. Everyone must participate.

How do you feel?

What do you do?

5. When emotionally upset or sad, males should not cry in public.

AGREE

DISAGREE

6. When others are present, females could take risks with their lives just as males could.

AGREE

DISAGREE

Episode 5: Watching a Video

MALES:

You are watching a video with your girlfriend. The ending of the video is very sad and your girlfriend is obviously crying. You feel tears welling up in your eyes, but you know that there are other people in the room.

How do you feel?

How do you behave?

What if your girlfriend sees the tears in your eyes?

How do you feel?

How do you behave?

FEMALES:

You are watching a video with your boyfriend. The ending is very sad and you are crying. You can see that your boyfriend has been crying but is obviously trying to hide his tears.

How do you feel?

How do you behave?

What if there are other people in the room and they notice your boyfriend's tears?

How do you feel?

How do you behave?

Episode 6: Hiking

A man and woman are out hiking. While the woman is taking a picture of a beautiful view from a high cliff, she drops her expensive camera over the edge. It comes to rest on a ledge 15 feet below. There is a sign "DANGEROUS DO NOT GO BEYOND THIS POINT", but there is a steep path that has obviously been used by others to reach the ledge.

Who do you think will go down to retrieve the camera?

Why do you think he or she would take this risk?

What do you think of a person who would take this kind of risk?

Appendix B

CHALLENGING HOMOPHOBIA

Additional Scenarios
for
Skills for Healthy Relationships

Skills for Healthy Relationships

CHALLENGING HOMOPHOBIA

Scenarios

The following scenarios have been developed to be added to particular student activities. (*The decision to include them in the SHR activities, will, of course, be that of school board/school administrators and teachers.*)

ACTIVITY 2: ESTIMATING RISK

The following scenario would be added to those on page 6 of Activity 2 in the Student Manual. An explanation of how the scenario will be used in the activity can be found in 'SET: Part II' on page 5 of Activity 2.

Alvin is thinking about having sex with Roger. They do not want to use a condom because they think it would be uncomfortable. Alvin had unprotected sex with one other partner, a person whom he didn't know very well. This will be Roger's first time having sex.

ACTIVITY 5: CONSIDERING ABSTINENCE

The following scenario would be added to those on page 8 and 9 of Activity 5 in the Student Manual. An explanation of how the scenario will be used can be found in 'SET: Part II' on page 6 of Activity 5.

Daryl and Maurice care spending a weekend at Daryl's cabin without his parents. They are sexually attracted to each other and have recently discussed this. Neither has had sex.

Maurice feels very close to Daryl but wants to remain in control. He has decided to talk to Daryl and set out his limits.

ACTIVITY 9: PRACTISING ASSERTIVENESS

The following scenario would be added to those on page 7 of Activity 9 in the Student Manual. An explanation of how the scenario will be used in the activity can be found in 'SET: Part II' on page 7 of Activity 9.

Angela and Irene have been friends for along time. Last year Irene told Angela that she is lesbian. Angela was very supportive which meant a lot to Irene. About a month ago Irene decided to come out to more of her friends and has found them to be pretty supportive. Today at school a boy who used to have a crush on Irene yelled out in a crowded hall, "Hey everyone, there goes the dyke!".

Playing the role of Angela, how would you respond to the boy?

Playing the role of Irene, how would you respond to the boy?

ACTIVITY 10: RESPONDING TO PERSUASION

The following scenario would be added to those on page 9 of Activity 10 in the Student Manual. An explanation of how the scenario will be used in the activity can be found in 'SET: Part II' on page 8 of Activity 10.

Martin and Lucas are sexually attracted to each other. Lucas wants Martin to go on a hunting trip so they can be alone. He tells Martin that this is the opportunity they have been waiting for, a chance to be alone together. Martin is unsure; Lucas has begun to put pressure on him and is threatening to end their friendship.

ACTIVITY 20: CONSIDERING RESPONSIBLE SEX

The following scenarios would be added to those on pages 3 and 4 of Activity 20 in the Student Manual. An explanation of how the scenarios will be used in the activity can be found in 'SET' on page 1 of Activity 20.

SCENARIO #1

Jessica and Connie are very close and have begun to experiment sexually with each other. Two months ago Jessica had sex with a boy who was using drugs and since then she has heard rumours that he was sharing a needle with some of his friends. They know that lesbians are at low risk of contracting HIV but they want to be sure. They have decided to cut the top off a latex condom then split it to make a rectangular barrier for oral sex.

SCENARIO #2

Peter stayed over night at Harry's house. During the evening Harry performed oral sex on Peter who was wearing an unlubricated condom. They emptied the condom and Peter performed oral sex on Harry using the same condom. This was the first time they had ever had sex with each other.

ACTIVITY 25: SUPPORTS FOR RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOURS

The following scenario would be added to those on page 2 of Activity 25 in the Student Manual. An explanation of how the scenario will be used in the activity can be found in 'SET' on page 1 of Activity 25.

Emily's dad was diagnosed HIV positive when she was ten years old. Now, at fourteen, she is working through her feelings about HIV and AIDS and how her dad contracted the virus, from his male partner. Recently in a class discussion about HIV and AIDS, Emily told the class about her dad.

After that some of your friends began telling people that if Emily's dad has HIV then she must have it too, so they refuse to go near her.

After school Heather, a friend of Emily, tells you that she and some of the other students in the class are organizing a group of friends to show their support for Emily and what she is going through.

You want to show your support for both Heather and Emily. Your friends look at you for your reaction.

How would you encourage your friends to support non-discrimination and compassion to people living with HIV/AIDS?