

WHY MAY 17TH?

May 17th is a symbolic day. On May 17, 1990, homosexuality was removed from the World Health Organization's (WHO) list of mental disorders. In 2003, Fondation Émergence created the first national day against homophobia, which took on an international dimension in 2006. Finally, in 2014, Fondation Émergence added transphobia to the name of the day. Every year, the campaigns organized for this day help fight discrimination in our society.

HOW TO PARTICIPATE?

We invite you to visit our website **homophobiaday.org** to get ideas for activities to organize, and to download or order free awareness raising material. If you organize an activity for May 17th, don't forget to tell us about it.

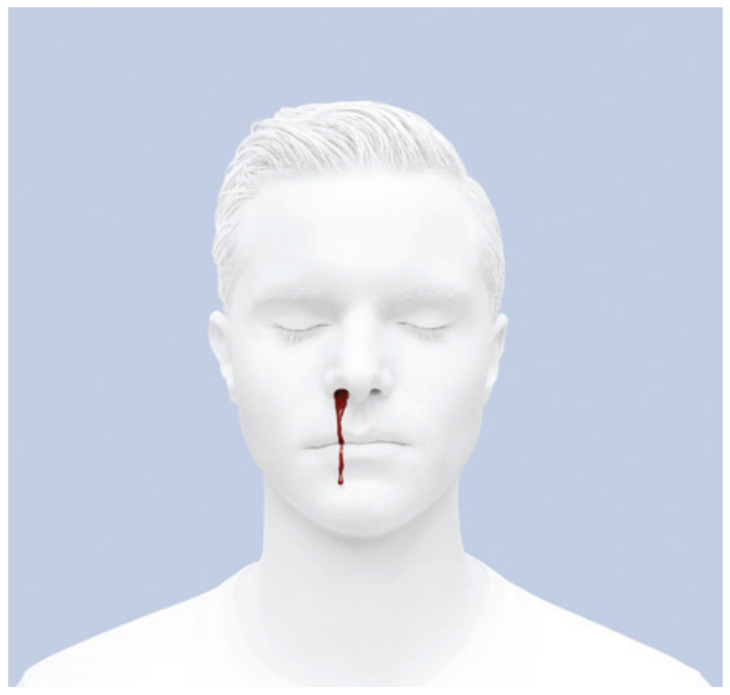
DEFINITIONS

- LGBTQ+** — Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer people, as well as other communities who identify as part of sexual and gender diversity such as intersex, asexual and 2-spirit people.
- TRANS** — People whose gender identity differs from the one they were assigned at birth.

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INTRO


The Internet can provide incredible opportunities to learn, connect and have fun. However, LGBTQ+ people are still targeted on digital platforms and this violence, rarely taken seriously, has real harmful impacts on people. Because cyberhomophobia and cybertransphobia occur online, the bullies don't see the pain they cause, and, as a result, it's easy for them to continue or even step up their attacks, which they perhaps would not do if the person was in front of them. Insults, taunts and threats made online hurt real people.

Online violence against
LGBTQ+ people has
real life consequences.




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Learn more at homophobiaday.org

CYBERHOMOPHOBIA CYBERTRANSPHOBIA

Cyberhomophobia and cybertransphobia are the most common forms of cyberbullying and hate speech online, especially on social media.

Homophobia encompasses a range of negative attitudes towards homosexuality and can lead to direct or indirect discrimination against people who identify as, or are perceived as being, gay, lesbian or bisexual. Transphobia is similar, but consists of negative attitudes towards trans people, or anyone who violates gender stereotypes or sex- and gender-related norms and representations.

Cyberbullying occurs “when people use computers, cellphones or other devices to embarrass, humiliate, torment, threaten or harass someone else “(Public Safety Canada).

Hate speech is a form of discourse, often found on social media, which attacks a community or a member of a community based on certain characteristics such as sexual orientation or gender identity. Hate speech takes its roots in negative stereotypes about a community and results in:

- Hurting (e.g. insults);
- Causing fear (e.g. threats);
- Dehumanizing (e.g. comparing to animals or an illness);
- Isolating (presenting the group considered “abnormal” as being fundamentally different from the majority).

PROBLEMS

HOSTILITY

In addition to the ambient homophobia and transphobia that can be found on the Internet, the violence of certain messages (e.g. “if my son were gay, I’d kick him out”), may discourage young LGBT people from coming out in order to avoid being exposed to such violence.

IMPUNITY

With the anonymity provided by the Internet, it’s hard to intervene even if people make unacceptable comments. Furthermore, hidden behind an avatar, many allow themselves to say things that they wouldn’t if their real identity were known.

PROPAGATION

The viral nature of the Internet allows harassing or violent messages to be quickly distributed to a wide audience. However, people don’t always realize how many people will read and potentially be hurt by such content: LGBTQ+ people, their families and friends, children, etc.

TABOU

The vast majority of cyberbullying victims don’t talk about it to the adults around them. In cases of cyberhomophobia or cybertransphobia, some young people may be embarrassed to talk about their situation or don’t want to be seen as LGBTQ+.

SOLUTIONS

TAKE ACTION

- Think before posting, sharing or sending content: would you be comfortable making those remarks to the face of the people concerned by your message? Is it something you want to be circulating in the public sphere?
- Report violent content, threats and hate-mongering that you find on the Internet to platform administrators or to the police if you are personally targeted or threatened.
- Block homophobic and transphobic comments on your posts and pages.

CYBERBULLYING CAN BE A CRIME

Some cyberbullying issues are offenses under the Canadian Criminal Code. Articles of law are provided for cases of defamatory behavior (article 298: “... matter published, without lawful justification or excuse, that is likely to injure the reputation of any person by exposing him to hatred, contempt or ridicule...”) but also for cases of criminal harassment or uttering threats (art. 264).

WHEN TO RESPOND AND WHEN TO BLOCK?

No one should be responsible for educating others about LGBTQ+ issues in their free time, especially when this involves getting insulted. In general, it’s better to report the content to the platform or to the police when it is violent and to block the person if you no longer want to receive their messages. However, responding can make some people change their mind, especially passive onlookers or people who are more ignorant than malicious.

For more information and techniques for responding to cyberhomophobia and cybertransphobia, visit www.homophobiaday.org

A FEW FIGURES

73%

of LGBTQ + people say they have been personally attacked or harassed online (According to VpnMentor).

35%

of LGBT youth who were bullied online reported having suicidal ideation due to cyberbullying.¹

x2

The proportion of the population who have experienced cyberbullying at some point in their lives has almost doubled between 2007 (18%) and 2016 (34%).²

1/5

of LGBT youth think cyberbullying is a normal and unavoidable part of online life.³

¹ Technology Hurts? Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Youth Perspectives of Technology and Cyberbullying, Varjas, Meyers, Kiperman & Howard (2013)
² Lifetime Cyberbullying Victimization Rates, Patchin & Hinduja (2016)
³ Responses to Cyberbullying: A Descriptive Analysis of the Frequency of and Impact on LGBT and Allied Youth Cooper & Blumenfeld (2012)