

Lights, Camera, Action: Using Film to End Anti-LGBT Name-Calling, Bullying, and Harassment

A lesson created by GLSEN and Stories of Us (USA)

This lesson draws on the Stories of Us *Promoting Positive Peer Relationships (P3R)* bullying prevention program and GLSEN activities. *P3R* is composed of a unique series of film-based resources for supporting students, educators, and the broader community in addressing the problem of bullying in schools. The film component of this lesson presents selected scenes from one of the films at the heart of the *P3R* program. For more information about *P3R* visit www.storiesofus.com.

GLSEN, the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, is the leading national education organization focused on ensuring safe schools for all, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. For information on GLSEN's research, educational resources, public policy advocacy, student organizing programs, and training initiatives, visit www.glsen.org.

For those interested in a more extensive project, Stories of Us and GLSEN have jointly developed a version of the *P3R* Make-Your-Own-Film curriculum focused on bullying and harassment due to sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression that can be used to guide students and educators through the process of creating their own film. For more information about the Make-Your-Own-Film curriculum see www.storiesofus.com/glsen. For more information about No Name-Calling Week and the Creative Expression Contest, visit www.nonamecallingweek.org.

Overview:

This lesson is designed to help draw students' attention to name-calling, bullying, and harassment that targets sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression, specifically name-calling, bullying, and harassment that is anti-lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (anti-LGBT). Students will engage in discussion and activity focused on the prevalence of anti-LGBT name-calling, bullying, and harassment in schools (including their own), consider how anti-LGBT bias in schools hurts all students, and begin to think about how they might address these issues through the creation of their own anti-bullying film.

Objectives:

- To expose students to student-made media on the topic of name-calling, bullying, and harassment.
- To help students recognize name-calling, bullying, and harassment that is based on some aspect of an individual's identity and how this might differ from other types of name-calling, bullying, and harassment.
- To familiarize students with basic LGBT terminology.
- To increase students' awareness of the prevalence of anti-LGBT name-calling, bullying, and harassment in schools nationwide.

- To help students identify what anti-LGBT name-calling, bullying, and harassment look like and sound like in their own school.
- To increase students' awareness of ways in which anti-LGBT name-calling, bullying, and harassment have a negative impact on all people.
- To motivate students to further explore issues of anti-LGBT name-calling, bullying, and harassment by engaging in projects such as creating and submitting their own film to the No Name-Calling Week Creative Expression Contest.

Grade Level: Grades 9-12

Time: 1-2 class sessions, 40-50 minutes each

Materials:

- Internet-ready computer (with speakers) and LCD projector
- White board or chart paper and markers
- Copies of *LGBT Terminology 101* handout, one per student (optional)
- Copies of *Anti-LGBT Name-Calling, Bullying, and Harassment At My School...* handout, one per student
- Copy of *Anti-LGBT Bias Hurts Us All* scenarios, one scenario per group

Procedure:

Part 1 – Film Clip and Discussion (15-20 minutes)

Note: It is recommended that teachers preview online film material before using it in class in order to become familiar with the specific issues raised by the student-made film.

Let students know that they will begin by watching a 5-minute film clip that represent a preview of a longer film about name-calling, bullying, and harassment. Let students know that the film was created by a group of students who developed the script based upon their collective experience and that they perform all roles in the film. Emphasize that every word of dialogue is the students' own, and that every detail of the film has been approved by the students.

Prior to playing the film clip, ask students to think about the following questions while watching:

- What are some of the different types of name-calling, bullying, and harassment that are portrayed in the film?
- What seem to be some reasons (if there are any) that students in the film are targets of the name-calling, bullying, and harassment?
- What role do students other than those being targeted and those doing the name-calling, bullying, and harassment play in the scenarios portrayed in the film?

Play film clip for class using the following link: www.storiesofus.com/glsen/lessonfilm



Ask students to share their reactions to the film clip, and facilitate discussion in regards to the questions they were asked to consider while watching the clip. If possible, keep a visual record of students' ideas on white board or chart paper.

Part 2 – Think-Pair-Share and Discussion (15-20 minutes)

Point out to students that as illustrated by the film clip, sometimes it is possible to determine why a person has become the target of name-calling, bullying, and harassment, and sometimes it is not. Ask students to pair up and spend about five minutes brainstorming with their partner about some of the most common reasons someone becomes the target of name-calling, bullying, and harassment (for example, because they do not wear the “right” clothes, because of their height/weight, etc.).

When students have had the chance to discuss in pairs, bring the group back together to share ideas and generate a list of reasons individuals might become the target of name-calling, bullying, and harassment. If sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression do not appear on the list in some form, ask students to consider whether they have noticed these as reasons why individuals are the target of name-calling, bullying, and harassment.

Highlight for students all items on the list that relate to some aspect of an individual's *identity* (race, class, religion, etc.), be sure to include sexual orientation and gender identity, and pose the following questions for discussion:

- How might name-calling, bullying, and harassment based on some aspect of a person's identity look or feel different to the individual being targeted?
- How might the motivations for identity-based name-calling, bullying, and harassment be different?

Explain that now you are going to talk about a specific type of name-calling, bullying, and harassment, one that targets people based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. Sometimes this is referred to as anti-lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (anti-LGBT) name-calling, bullying, and harassment.

Part 3 (optional) – LGBT Terminology 101 (10-15 minutes)

Note: Teachers may choose to skip this section of the lesson if they feel that students are adequately familiar with relevant terminology, though it is recommended that some discussion is facilitated that helps students distinguish between terms referring to LGBT identities with respect versus more pejorative words.

Have students break into groups of 4-5 and distribute copies of the *LGBT Terminology 101* handout to each group, ideally such that every student has a copy. Ask students to spend about five minutes reading and reviewing the terms in their group, and then have each group write down one or two questions they have about the terminology on a piece of paper.

Collect students' questions, bring students back together as a large group, and read each question out loud (without revealing which group asked which question). Facilitate discussion of the questions, encouraging students as much as possible to answer each other's questions. Emphasize that it is not wrong to not to know everything about another person's identity, and that asking respectful questions is often the best (or only) way to find this information out.

Part 4 – Statistics and Looks like/Sounds like Activity (15-20 minutes)

Share the following statistical information with students, either verbally or visually (on white board/chart paper) -

According to recent nationwide surveys of middle and high school students¹:

- Students indicate that, second only to physical appearance, sexual orientation, and gender expression were the most common reasons students were bullied or harassed at school.
- Nearly three quarters (74%) of LGBT students hear homophobic remarks in school (e.g., “dyke” or “faggot”) often or frequently.
- 86% of LGBT students were verbally harassed at school because of their sexual orientation, nearly half (44%) were physically harassed and a quarter (25%) physically assaulted for this reason.
- Two thirds (67%) of LGBT students were verbally harassed at school because of their gender expression, almost a third (30%) were physically harassed and 22% physically assaulted for this reason.

¹ Reports from both surveys can be found at www.glsen.org/research:

- Harris Interactive & GLSEN. (2005). *From Teasing to Torment: School climate in American, A survey of teachers and students*. New York: Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network.
[*From Teasing to Torment* is a national survey of secondary school students and teachers, which explores students' and teachers' experiences with bullying and harassment and their attitudes about this problem in U.S. schools.]
- Kosciw, J. G., Diaz, E. M., & Greytak, E.A. (2008). *2007 National School Climate Survey: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth in our nation's schools*. New York: GLSEN
[First conducted in 1999, the *National School Climate Survey* is a biennial national survey of LGBT students about their experiences in U.S. middle and high schools.]

Encourage students to share their reactions to these statistics by posing the following questions:

- Do these statistics regarding the frequency of anti-LGBT name-calling, bullying, and harassment surprise you? Why or why not?
- How do you think your school compares with the national statistics when it comes to LGBT students' experiences of name-calling, bullying, and harassment?

Help students to think more about the climate their school creates for LGBT students by distributing the *Anti-LGBT Name-Calling, Bullying, and Harassment At My School...* handout to



students and asking that they take a few minutes to write down their ideas about what anti-LGBT name-calling, bullying, and harassment at their school looks like and sounds like. If needed, provide students with a few examples:

- Anti-LGBT name-calling *sounds* like students calling each other “faggot” in the Hallway.
- Anti-LGBT bullying *looks* like students refusing to let a classmate participate in a game of soccer after school simply because he is gay.

Ask students to share some of their ideas with the class, highlighting and recording what seem like the most common forms of anti-LGBT name-calling, bullying, and harassment that students observe happening at their school.

Part 5 – Discussion and Scenarios (15-20 minutes)

Ask students to think about the ways in which anti-LGBT name-calling, bullying, and harassment at their school might have an impact on *all* students by posing the following questions for discussion:

- Have you ever been witness to an incident of anti-LGBT name-calling, bullying, and harassment that made you uncomfortable or feel bad about some aspect of yourself?
- Have you ever decided either to do something you did not want to or not to do something you did want to because you were afraid of being targeted by anti-LGBT name-calling, bullying, and harassment, even if you aren’t LGBT yourself?

Have students break into four groups and give each group one of the scenarios from the *Anti-LGBT Bias Hurts Us All* handout. Ask students to carefully read their scenario and discuss as a group the ways in which the situation described could affect not just LGBT students, but *all* students. Ask each group to jot down their ideas, and then bring the class back together so that each group may share their scenario and how they feel it represents the impact that anti-LGBT bias has on everyone. Help students make the connections between the thoughts they came up with and broader concepts regarding the damaging effects of anti-LGBT bias on all people. For more information, see the attached *Teacher Resource: How Anti-LGBT Bias Hurts Us All*.

Part 6 – Wrap-up (5 minutes)

Highlight for students that the ideas about anti-LGBT name-calling, bullying, and harassment that they’ve shared throughout the course of the lesson are not unlike the ideas that led the students they saw earlier in the clips to go through the process of planning and making short films that deal with these issues. Inform students that the activities they just participated in represent the first stage of developing a film.

The Stories of Us Make-Your-Own-Film Resource with the GLSEN addendum can be used to continue this project in class. Films produced by students using this resource will be featured during No Name-Calling Week and can also be submitted for the *21st Century Skills Bullying Prevention Film Competition*. Visit www.storiesofus.com/glsen for more information.



If additional class time will not be devoted to this process, be sure to let students know what they can do if they are interested in finding out more about creating their own film and submitting it to the annual No Name-Calling Week Creative Expression Contest. Information about the film component of the Creative Expression Contest can be found at www.nonamecallingweek.org.

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LGBT Terminology 101

Bisexual: A sexual orientation and/or identity of a person who is sexually, erotically and emotionally attracted to some males and some females.

Biological Sex or Sex: This can be considered our “packaging” and is determined by our chromosomes (such as XX or XY), our hormones (e.g., estrogen, progesterone, testosterone) and our internal and external genitalia (e.g., vulva, clitoris, vagina, ovaries, penis, testicles). Typically, we are assigned the sex of male or female at birth.

Coming Out: Declaring one’s identity, specifically, being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender, whether to a person in private or a group of people. To be “in the closet” means to hide one’s identity. Many LGBT people are “out” in some situations and “closeted” in others.

Gay: A sexual orientation and/or identity of a person who is sexually, erotically and emotionally attracted to some members of the same sex. Although gay can refer to both gay males and gay females, many gay females prefer the term “lesbian.”

Gender Expression: Refers to an individual’s physical characteristics, behaviors and presentation that are linked, traditionally, to either masculinity or femininity, such as: appearance, dress, mannerisms, speech patterns and social interactions.

Gender Identity: This is how we identify ourselves in terms of our gender. Identities may be: male, female, androgynous, bigender, transgender, genderqueer and others.

Heterosexism: Applies to attitudes, bias and discrimination in favor of heterosexual sexuality and relationships. It includes the presumption that everyone is heterosexual or that male/female attractions and relationships are the norm and therefore superior. It is the belief that everyone is or should be straight.

Heterosexual: A sexual orientation and/or identity of a person who is sexually, erotically and emotionally attracted to some members of another sex (specifically, a male who is attracted to some females or a female who is attracted to some males). Often referred to as “straight.”

Homophobia: An irrational fear of, aversion to or discrimination against homosexuality or lesbian, gay and bisexual people.

Lesbian: A sexual orientation and/or identity of a person who is female-identified and who is sexually, erotically and emotionally attracted to some other females.

Transgender: An identity of a person whose gender identity is not aligned with their sex assigned at birth and/or whose gender expression is non-conforming.

Transphobia: An irrational fear and/or hatred of those who are perceived to break or blur societal norms regarding gender identity or gender expression. Usually directed at those who identify as transgender or defy stereotypical gender norms, regardless of their actual gender identity or sexual orientation.

Anti-LGBT Name-Calling, Bullying, and Harassment at My School...

LOOKS LIKE	SOUNDS LIKE

Anti-LGBT Bias Hurts Us All

Scenario #1: During his junior year of high school, Marcus became increasingly involved in the drama club and appeared in several school and community productions throughout the year. After seeing him on stage in his first leading role, Marcus' father proclaimed that when he was seventeen, he was out playing football and dating girls. In his senior year, Marcus' drama teacher encouraged him to apply to a local college reputed to have an excellent drama program, noting that Marcus had real talent and a bright future ahead of him. At the dinner table that night, Marcus' father made it clear that he would not contribute his "hard earned money" so that Marcus could "prance around on stage" for four years. Unless Marcus chose a more serious career path, his father indicated, he would be financially on his own after high school.

Scenario #2: As the new semester began, Maria and her friends grew more excited about the upcoming senior prom and talked constantly about the boys they hoped would invite them. At lunch one day, Maria admitted she had a crush on Marc and fantasized about the two of them going to the prom together. "Are you crazy?," commented one of her friends, "He's never gonna ask you. You're too..." "Brainy," another girl chimed in. "It's all those classes you take—AP Chemistry and AP Calculus and all the others—it's like you want to be a man or something." "Yeah," agreed the first girl. "Marc even told me that he thinks you're a dyke." The next day Maria transferred out of advanced placement calculus, a class that she and Marc were in together. When Maria's advisor inquired about the switch, Maria explained that the higher level math was getting too confusing and thought she'd be more comfortable in a regular class.

Scenario #3: Throughout high school, Hector was the victim of verbal and physical assault because of his choice to wear nail polish and make-up to school. It was common for teachers to look the other way as yells of "queer," "freak," and "faggot" were hurled at Hector throughout the school corridors. In the bathroom one day, a group of boys cornered Hector and pushed him to the ground. Alex, one of the boys, watched as his peers repeatedly kicked Hector and screamed obscenities at him. Noticing that Alex wasn't joining in, one of the boys moved over to make room and motioned for Alex to participate in the beating. When Alex hesitated, the boy commented, "What's the matter? You feel sorry for the faggot?" Alex reluctantly walked over and began kicking Hector.

Scenario #4: Jill is a 16-year-old junior who plays the flute in her high school band. Though things with her boyfriend, Troy, had been great for the first few months, a growing conflict began to concern Jill. Troy accused her one night of caring more about her flute than she did about him, and exerted pressure on Jill to have sex. Jill assured Troy that she cared for him, but said she needed more time. Later that week, Jill's friend, Althea, confided that Troy told her boyfriend how "frigid" Jill was and that he wasn't even sure if she liked boys. Althea advised Jill to do something before she lost Troy for good. That night Jill went to the drugstore and bought a pack of condoms.

TEACHER RESOURCE

How Anti-LGBT Bias Hurts us All

1. Anti-LGBT bias locks all people into rigid gender-based roles that inhibit creativity, self-expression and freedom.
2. Anti-LGBT bias compromises the integrity of heterosexual people by pressuring them to treat others badly, actions contrary to their basic humanity.
3. Anti-LGBT bias inhibits one's ability to form close friendships with members of their own gender. It puts an unrealistic pressure to remain in rigid gender roles and expression.
4. Anti-LGBT bias generally restricts communications with a significant portion of the population and, more specifically, limits family relationships.
5. Anti-LGBT bias prevents some lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people from developing an authentic self- identity: believing in the stereotypes and myths.
6. Anti-LGBT bias is one cause of premature sexual involvement, which increases the chances of teen pregnancy and the spread of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Young people, of *all* sexual identities, are often pressured to become *heterosexually* active to prove to themselves and others that they are "normal."
7. Anti-LGBT bias, combined with sex-phobia (fear and revulsion of sex), results in the elimination of any discussion of the lives and sexuality of LGBT people as part of school-based sex education and general education programs, keeping vital information from all students.
8. Anti-LGBT bias can be used to stigmatize, silence, and, on occasion, target people who are perceived or defined by others as lesbian, gay, or bisexual, but who are, in actuality, heterosexual.
9. Anti-LGBT bias prevents heterosexuals and non-transgender people from accepting the benefits and gifts offered by LGBT people: theoretical insights, social and spiritual visions and options, contributions in the arts and culture, to religion, to family life, indeed, to all facets of society.
10. Anti-LGBT bias, along with racism, sexism, classism, and all forms of oppression, affect all people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, by derailing our constitutional promises of equality, fairness and freedom for all people.
11. Anti-LGBT bias inhibits appreciation of other types of diversity, making it unsafe for everyone because each person has unique traits not considered mainstream or dominant. Therefore, we are *all* diminished when any one of us is demeaned.