

## MAY 17, EVERY YEAR

### National Day Against Homophobia

The first *National Day Against Homophobia* was held in Québec on June 4, 2003, on the initiative of Fondation Émergence. The Day's theme was *From Tolerance to Acceptance*.

The purpose of this annual event is to raise people's awareness of homophobia's harmful effects, to provide a positive image of homosexuality and sexual diversity, and to combat exclusion.

Since its first edition, the *National Day Against Homophobia* has been a huge success in Québec. As a result, it spread to the Canadian level with the help of the Canadian Rainbow Health Coalition and its partners. Likewise, countries such as Belgium and France have adopted the idea and set up similar events.

All that remained was a step to launch the initiative on an international level, which was done in Europe with the participation of a number of countries. They came around to the idea of setting up a World Day Against Homophobia or an International Day Against Homophobia, known by the acronym IDAHO.

Since it was on May 17 that the World Health Organisation (WHO) removed homosexuality from its list of mental illnesses, IDAHO proposed this date as the World Day Against Homophobia. Canada is glad to combine its efforts with those of many countries willing to make May 17 of each year the World Day Against Homophobia.

A national or world day against homophobia belongs to no one in particular. It's the job of everyone who wishes for a prejudice-free world able to make room for all people regardless of their sexual orientation.

Following the example of all the world theme days, the day set aside for combating homophobia needs to be taken care of by all of civil society's members: gay, lesbian and other sexual diversity community organisations, their parents, friends, allies, unions, employers, private companies, governments and public administrations, professional corporations and any individuals seeking equality.

In order to support the organising of world campaigns against homophobia, Fondation Émergence is making its promotional material available to interested individuals and non-profit institutions.



Available at [www.homophobiaday.org](http://www.homophobiaday.org)

## SEXUAL DIVERSITY

### Discomfort towards Difference

#### Heterosexism

Heterosexism is the belief that everyone is heterosexual and that heterosexuality is the only acceptable way of being. This belief, which relies on the idea that the majority rules and is therefore normal, is often the source of homophobia.

#### Homophobia

Homophobia is a negative attitude or feeling, discomfort or an aversion towards gays and lesbians or towards homosexuality in general. It is also the rejection of people considered gay or lesbian and of all things associated with them, for example, gender non-conformity.

#### The following are variants of homophobia:

- **Bi-phobia:** aversion towards bisexual people or bisexuality;
- **Gayphobia:** aversion towards gay men or male homosexuality;
- **Lesbophobia:** aversion towards lesbian women or female homosexuality.

#### Transphobia

Transphobia is a negative attitude or feeling, discomfort or an aversion towards transgender people, transsexuals or people who are transitioning.

#### Transgender Person

Person who perceives themselves and identifies as belonging to a different sex and who feels the need to live that way. In contrast to a transsexual person, the transgender person refuses gender reassignment or a sex change. Also a transgender person is someone who does not conform to the norm imposed by male and female gender identities; some people consider themselves gender-fluid.

#### Transsexual Person

Person who has already changed their sex physically or a person who is making that transition through medical treatment or surgery. This transformation is usually irreversible.

#### Two-spirited Person

A two-spirited person is some who according to Amerindian tradition has two spirits, one female and one male.

#### Intersex Person

An intersex person is someone who shows physical features of both sexes.

#### LGBTI Communities

LGBTI is an acronym used by the **Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Transgender** and **Intersex** Communities.

## FAMILY VIOLENCE

### From Home to Work

There might be an impact on the job productivity of an employee struggling with family violence.

If violence in the family environment isn't the norm, then it doesn't skip over gays, lesbians, bisexual or transgender people either. It often occurs when a member of the family identifies him or herself as gay or lesbian. Such a situation can be the starting point of family violence. Same-sex couples are no exception because they, too, can experience the problem of domestic and family violence.

#### Family violence can appear in various forms ranging from simple insinuation to physical violence:

- Psychological violence, the most frequent form, includes insinuations, insults, accusations, threats, unjustified punishment, and other injustices;
- Monetary and financial violence entails blackmail and threats to cut off allowances; it can go as far as throwing a child out of the family home;
- The most extreme form of violence, physical violence, consists in hitting, confinement or imposing any other form of corporal punishment.

Regardless of sexual orientation, family violence will have negative effects. When this is the case, children are not spared from it. It can affect their psychological development. Family violence is often responsible for marital break-ups.

The job world and family world are two closely connected environments. Independently from people's sexual orientation, repercussions from family violence are bound to be felt at work. Whether through help programmes at work or through other means, employers must support their employees dealing with problems due to family violence.

For further information on family violence:  
[www.canada.justice.gc.ca](http://www.canada.justice.gc.ca)



#### Let us know

Fondation Émergence needs to be informed of any situation involving homophobia. Such information enables us to target our actions more precisely.

## INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON LGBT HUMAN RIGHTS

### 1<sup>st</sup> World Outgames *Rendez-Vous Montréal 2006*

The 1<sup>st</sup> World Outgames *Rendez-Vous Montréal 2006* will give rise to the most significant International Conference on LGBT Community Human Rights held ever before, thereby contributing to the fight against homophobia.

#### An obligation to support

Living in a society that prizes the right to equality, like Canadian society, sets the obligation to support societies that have yet to reach this stage. The International Conference on LGBT Human Rights is an occasion to share with and help other societies to benefit from an experience that can aid them in their pursuit of legal and social justice. As for our societies, they will be enhanced by others' experiences.

#### Conference Themes

Renowned conference speakers will announce their vision to 2000 participants, who will gather into groups for workshops focusing on five themes:

- Inalienable Rights
- World Issues
- GLBT Community Diversity
- Participation within Society
- Sparking Social Change

A series of workshops related to the sports world and two specialised sub-conferences will also be on the programme:

- Workers Out! (the job world)
- Out for Business! (the business world)

#### Registration

The conference is being held at the Montréal Conference Centre from July 26 – 29, 2006, before the official opening of the 1<sup>st</sup> World Outgames. Please see details and ways to register on the *Rendez-Vous Montréal 2006* web site.

[www.montreal2006.org/conference.html](http://www.montreal2006.org/conference.html)



To volunteer: [www.montreal2006.org/en\\_volunteers.html](http://www.montreal2006.org/en_volunteers.html)  
(514) 252-5858, ext. 5364

### The Gay Body (Le Corps gay)

June 1<sup>st</sup> – September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2006

Écomusée du Fier Monde  
2050 Amherst St., Montréal

Presented in connection with the 1<sup>st</sup> World Outgames, this exposition in visual arts draws together 24 Montréal and Canadian artists' works that focus on the gay male body.

Organised in partnership with Fondation Émergence.

# HIDING ITS FACE HOMOPHOBIA BECOMING MORE SUBTLE

## NATIONAL DAY AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA

# MAY 17<sup>TH</sup>

INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA

[www.homophobiaday.org](http://www.homophobiaday.org)

A HOMOPHOBIA-FREE WORKPLACE

# HOMOPHOBIA

# HOMOPHOBIA: IT’S LURKING

## Getting more creative

Discrimination based on sexual orientation is nothing new. What is new, however, is that now it's got a name of its own - *homophobia*. On a top-ten list of types of discrimination, homophobia ranks high.

At the same time that gays and lesbians are coming out of the closet, anti-gay bigots are stepping inside to avoid looks of disapproval and to become invisible.

It wasn't too long ago, in Canada like elsewhere in the world, that homophobia was not just allowed but encouraged. The Canadian Criminal Code had outlawed and used to punish same-sex relationships. Fortunately, that's no longer the case because gays and lesbians have obtained equality before the law and have the right to marry.

There are practically no open acts of homophobia and few anti-gay bigots will now risk showing their true colours out in the open. Homophobia is subtle now. Outbursts of laughter have been replaced with smirks while insults are swapped for insinuations.

In the job world, employers cannot refuse to hire someone or refuse to give promotions out of reasons based on sexual orientation. That in no way spells the end of homophobia in the workplace. When being evaluated, a gay, lesbian or bisexual person with the same qualifications could be placed second, without any explanations. The same can happen to people of other sexual diversities.

Some religions place great value on homophobia in the name of certain beliefs. For example, just think of the Catholic Church, which openly preaches against homosexuality yet by referring to its beliefs, will not admit being anti-gay. It would be impossible for any other minority group to tolerate the same situation.

In short, homophobia is becoming more and more subtle. It's being hidden, concealed, masked. It's put on a new face of sophistication and invisibility.

# A HOMOPHOBIA-FREE WORKPLACE

## 2006 Campaign

Made up of men and women of all backgrounds, the workplace is the image of society as a whole, including the presence of sexual diversity. Some workplaces appear open to this diversity while others seem to be more reluctant. Homophobia might even be tolerated.

Even nowadays, some employers avoid hiring gays and lesbians or people employers think might be gay or lesbian. The workplace is fertile ground for voicing homophobia. All too often gays and lesbians or those perceived as gay or lesbian are victims of discrimination, harassment or psychological harassment based on their sexual orientation. Their careers and their lives will be affected by it, as is the case for those who are victims of other forms of discrimination or harassment.

In everyday life, gays and lesbians have often been exposed to homophobia and have learned to face up to it. In the workplace, however, it's a different story. It's hard to stand up for your rights when you're also trying to both keep your job and earn a living. Financial constraints often require greater tolerance.

## Fear of Retaliation

At work as anywhere else, the need to be true compels people to reveal their sexual orientation even while the risk of retaliation requires the opposite.

Many therefore choose not to reveal their sexual orientation out of fear of potential prejudice or still hesitate when declaring their marriage status out of fear of retaliation. The workplace is then one of the most restrictive places for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people.

## Confidentiality and Social Benefits

Gays and lesbians, and same-sex couples, too, have a right to the same social benefits granted to company workers. In order to benefit from them, workers need to declare their personal situation to their employer. Therefore, it is the employer's responsibility to take the appropriate measures to ensure the confidentiality of such information.

**Statement from the Québec Labour Minister**

**For the 2006 Campaign of the *National Day Against Homophobia*, the Québec Labour Minister expresses his support in the fight against homophobia.**

“Respect for human rights, equal treatment and the absence of discrimination in the work place are central to my concerns. I offer my support in the pursuit of the goals you have set to make this event happen.”

*Laurent Lessard*, Labour Minister

## Say it or hide it?

Caution urges gays and lesbians to be at ease with their sexual orientation, well integrated into and valued in the workplace before revealing their sexual orientation. It normally should be done in stages. First, you confide in someone you trust, then a second person and so on. There are no set rules on the subject. It's up to each person to weigh the impact and consequences of revealing his or her sexual orientation.

Moreover, it's reassuring to know that many gays and lesbians have enjoyed successful professional careers without having to hide their sexual orientation.

## Policy in the Workplace

As they are obligated to do so for other forms of discrimination, employers must foster a work environment free of all forms of homophobia. For employers it will work out well: a healthful workplace has positive effects on company employee productivity.

## Everyone deserves respect, dignity, and protection from discrimination and harassment. Employers should:

- adopt a policy on discrimination and harassment that addresses homophobia;
- inform employees of the company's commitment to enforce its policy to prevent or put an end to discrimination and harassment;
- remind employees of their responsibilities and obligations;
- initiate dialogue with employees and their representatives so as to prevent discrimination, harassment and homophobia.

# PSYCHOLOGICAL HARASSMENT IN THE WORKPLACE

## New Protection

Discrimination, harassment and psychological harassment refer to specific legal concepts enacted by both federal and provincial laws.

As for Québec, it has equipped itself with a law to counter psychological harassment in the workplace. In terms of the law, psychological harassment is “harassing conduct that expresses itself through behaviour, speech, repeated acts or gestures that are hostile or unwanted, and is detrimental to the worker's dignity or psychological security and leads to a harmful work environment for this person.”

Harassing conduct is humiliating or abusive conduct that hurts a person's self-esteem or causes him or her suffering. It is also behaviour that goes beyond the limits of what the person judges proper and reasonable in accomplishing his or her work.

Homophobia can be a source of psychological harassment. Just as with other forms of discrimination, it's often difficult to prove.

## Employer's Responsibility

The law provides for employees to have the right to a workplace free of psychological harassment. The employer must take reasonable measures to prevent psychological harassment and, when such behaviour is brought to his or her knowledge, he or she must take measures to make it cease.

Harassment can come from, for example, a superior, a co-worker, a group of co-workers, a client or a service provider to the company.

The Québec Act respecting Labour Standards provides for recourse in the event of psychological harassment in the workplace for any worker whether he or she is a union member or not, or an executive.

[www.cnt.gouv.qc.ca](http://www.cnt.gouv.qc.ca)

**Backing from the President of the Fédération des chambres de commerce du Québec**

**For the *National Day Against Homophobia* the President of the Fédération des chambres de commerce du Québec expressed the business world's wishes.**

“A business, like society, is an environment in which each individual must feel free to evolve and develop, both personally and professionally, independently of his or her ethnic background, religion or sexual orientation. As the largest business network in Québec, the Fédération des chambres de commerce du Québec fully approves of the importance to respect and value diversity in the workplace and supports Fondation Émergence's initiatives to take the step from tolerance toward acceptance of difference.”

*Françoise Bertrand*  
President of the Fédération des chambres de commerce du Québec

# SPEAKING OUT AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA

## Know your rights

Discrimination or harassment based on sexual orientation count as homophobia. In Canada, the authority concerning protection against discrimination and harassment is shared between the federal and provincial levels of government. The Canadian Parliament legislates to ensure the protection of company employees under federal jurisdiction. The provinces possess a Charter of Rights and Québec has also equipped itself with a law to counter psychological harassment. Discrimination and harassment can sometimes be the cause of an occupational illness that gives entitlement to certain services and compensation. Even in this case, it is best to follow each province or territory's laws.

**Human Rights Commissions in Canada**

**Canadian Human Rights Commission**  
1 888 214-1090  
[www.chrc-ccdp.ca](http://www.chrc-ccdp.ca)

**Alberta Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission**  
N: (780) 427-7661  
S: (403) 297-6571  
[www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca](http://www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca)

**British Columbia B.C. Human Rights Coalition**  
1 877 689-8474  
[www.bchrcoalition.org](http://www.bchrcoalition.org)

**Manitoba Manitoba Human Rights Commission**  
1 888 884-8681  
[www.gov.mb.ca/hrc](http://www.gov.mb.ca/hrc)

**New Brunswick New Brunswick Human Rights Commission**  
1 888 471-2233  
[www.gnb.ca/hrc-cdp](http://www.gnb.ca/hrc-cdp)

**Newfoundland and Labrador Human Rights Commission**  
1 800 563-5808  
[www.justice.gov.nl.ca/hrc](http://www.justice.gov.nl.ca/hrc)

**Nova Scotia Nova Scotia Human Rights Commission**  
1 877 269-7699  
[www.gov.ns.ca/humanrights](http://www.gov.ns.ca/humanrights)

**Ontario Ontario Human Rights Commission**  
1 800 387-9080  
[www.ohrc.on.ca](http://www.ohrc.on.ca)

**Prince Edward Island PEI Human Rights Commission**  
1 800 237-5031  
[www.gov.pe.ca/humanrights](http://www.gov.pe.ca/humanrights)

**Québec Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse**  
1 800 361-6477  
[www.cdpcj.qc.ca](http://www.cdpcj.qc.ca)

**Commission des normes du travail**  
1 800 265-1414  
[www.cnt.gouv.qc.ca](http://www.cnt.gouv.qc.ca)

**Saskatchewan Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission**  
1 800 667-8577  
[www.gov.sk.ca/shrc](http://www.gov.sk.ca/shrc)

**Yukon Yukon Human Rights Commission**  
1 800 661-0535  
[www.yhrc.yk.ca](http://www.yhrc.yk.ca)

**Media**

**Conseil de presse du Québec**  
(514) 529-2818  
[www.conseildepresse.qc.ca](http://www.conseildepresse.qc.ca)

**Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission**  
1 877 249-CRTC (2782)  
[www.crtc.gc.ca](http://www.crtc.gc.ca)

**Others**

- Provincial laws on work-related accidents and occupational illnesses
- Police
- Management of educational institutions and school boards
- Management of health institutions
- Government departments and organisations
- Related professional corporations

# FONDATION ÉMERGENCE

## We fight prejudice

Fondation Émergence was created in 2000. After having led awareness campaigns for parents, teachers and heterosexual boys, Fondation started the *National Day Against Homophobia*. Fondation Émergence has the mission to foster gay men and lesbians' development, encourage society's inclusion of gays and lesbians, raise the level of awareness of gay and lesbian realities, fight prejudice against gay men, lesbians and other people of sexual diversity and support Gai Écoute's mission.

**Fondation Émergence**  
P.O. Box 1006, Station C, Montréal, QC H2L 4V2  
Phone: (514) 866-6788 / Fax: (514) 866-8157  
[courrier@fondationemergence.org](mailto:courrier@fondationemergence.org)  
[www.fondationemergence.org](http://www.fondationemergence.org)

**National Day Against Homophobia**  
[mail@homophobiaday.org](mailto:mail@homophobiaday.org)  
[www.homophobiaday.org](http://www.homophobiaday.org)

**National Day Against HOMOPHOBIA**

## Fondation Émergence needs your help to continue in its mission.

- Donation by check made out to Fondation Émergence inc.
- Donation by credit card (Visa or MasterCard) at (514) 866-6788

Fondation Émergence is a registered charitable organisation and can issue official receipts for income tax purposes.

## This campaign has been extended throughout Canada with the help of

**Canadian Rainbow Health Coalition**  
P.O. Box 3043, Saskatoon, SK S7K 3S9  
1 800 955-5129

**The *National Day Against Homophobia* has been made possible thanks to:**



Contributions can also be made to LGBTTI organisations in your area.

# HOMOPHOBIA