



RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS

What can a teacher do to make a difference to the school climate?

- Establish tolerance and non-harassment as a group norm, including non-harassment of gay men, lesbians, bisexuals and transgender people.
- Be prepared to respond to homophobic slurs just as you would to racist or sexist slurs.
- Focus on challenging the negative opinions rather than the person
- Don't expect to win an encounter. The aim is to get information across.
- Avoid debating religious arguments. If a person has strongly held views it may be more productive to discuss sexuality issues in terms of how the person is feeling rather than debating ideas.
- You can still be supportive of lesbian, gay, bisexual people even if you feel uncomfortable discussing sexual issues. Familiarise yourself with a few reference books, pamphlets and groups or refer to colleagues/counsellors who do feel comfortable discussing sexuality.
- Include sexual orientation and gender identity issues in discussion of human rights and discrimination.
- Always assume that at least 10% of the people you're working with are gay lesbian or bisexual and that others will have gay, lesbian or bisexual friends or family.
- Openly express your support of gay, lesbian and bisexual people.
- Have appropriate resources on display and available. Where possible, ensure that the environment in which you are working has a range of posters, pamphlets with positive images including people of diverse sexual orientations. If none of these posters are available then develop them, with your students.
- Include different family forms in any discussion on family and community. It is very reassuring for young people to know that they are not abnormal because they do not conform to a notion of normalcy that is, in any case, inaccurate. When corresponding with care-givers don't address mail to Mr and Mrs X unless you know this to be accurate.
- Ensure the development of library resources, both fiction and non fiction.

From: Liggins, S., Wille, A., Hawthorne, S. & Rampton, L. 1994. Affirming Diversity. Auckland Education Unit, Family Planning New Zealand, p23-4.