

LGBTQ and Human Rights

Questions for Dialogue

1. Mr. Will Sutherland states that the biggest issues that the community faces “are judgement and discrimination,” and addresses the difference between visible and non visible minority. What do you think are the differences in judgement and discrimination between visible and non visible members in the LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, queer) community? How might support differ for each of these groups?
2. Discuss societal stigmas (attitudes) relating to the LGBTQ community in Canada.
3. How do you think other areas of oppression, such as age, race, and class affect the experience of LGBTQ community members?
4. Mr. Sutherland discusses the issue of homelessness in the LGBTQ youth community. What kind of additional support might these youth need?
5. How do you think the acceptance and support of events such as Gay Pride days by municipalities have affected the LGBTQ community?
6. Recently, Edmonton Public Schools Board of Trustees became the first board in Alberta to pass a motion to develop a specific policy to ensure all schools prevent harassment and discrimination of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual/ Transgendered and Queer (LGBTQ) students and staff. *"Boards have a responsibility to create safe, welcoming environments for all and this policy is the next step in demonstrating the Board's commitment to ensuring equity, fairness and justice for all students and staff,"* said Board Chair Dave Colburn. This has been met by some criticism, such as with a Christian program that operates in seven Edmonton public schools who oppose the policy because it uses the word "affirm" when talking the about the rights of gay, lesbian, and transgender students and staff. An article in the June 2011 Logos Lantern, a newsletter for parents, says the policy could have "a significant, negative impact" on the Logos Christian Alternative Program. Do you think a policy that specifically “affirms” the rights of the LGBTQ community is necessary? If so, how do you feel about the reaction from the Christian alternative program?

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7. There has been a recent growth of “gay-straight alliance” (GSA) groups in high schools. Gay-straight alliances are student-run and teacher-supported school-based groups that work to create safe, caring and inclusive spaces for LGBTQ students and their allies in schools. Typically, GSAs are designed to provide a safe space for students to meet, socialize and support one another as they discuss their feelings and experiences related to sexual orientation and gender identity issues. Some schools have banned GSA stating religious reasons, while others state that the focus should be more on anti-bullying rather than support for a specific group. What do you think about GSAs and their role in high schools?
8. Do you think it is fair to group lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, and queer together in order to address issues? Are some issues overlooked when these groups are addressed as one? Why or why not?