



## in other words

Name-calling and cruel language hurt, say the teens who speak in this documentary video. Homophobic language is a common verbal put-down among young people, but many adults feel uncomfortable responding to it.

*in other words* speaks directly to teens and offers a valuable tool to teachers, counsellors and community youth leaders who want to explore the homophobic language heard both in and out of schools—the words themselves, their origins, how young people feel about them, and how to overcome the hurt and anger they cause.

Moving interviews with gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered teens provide first-hand accounts. Weaving together slang, music media images and dictionary definitions, the film examines how language shapes attitude. The video is designed to foster change, to ensure that schools are safe places where youth can learn in a climate of respect.



Background information and classroom activities are printed on the inside of this videojacket.

**Ages 13 and up**

*in other words* is part of the NFB collection *Celebrating Diversity: Resources for Responding to Homophobia*.

"The effects of homophobia can be devastating. The Canadian Human Rights Commission encourages schools, community and youth organizations to make use of this important video to discuss the dangers of intolerance."

— Catherine Barratt, Media & External Relations  
for the Canadian Human Rights Commission

**Director & Writer: Jan Padgett • Producer: George Johnson**  
27 minutes • Order Number: C9101 046



Close captioned. A decoder is required

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Words that hurt—  
and how young people  
can overcome them

# in other words

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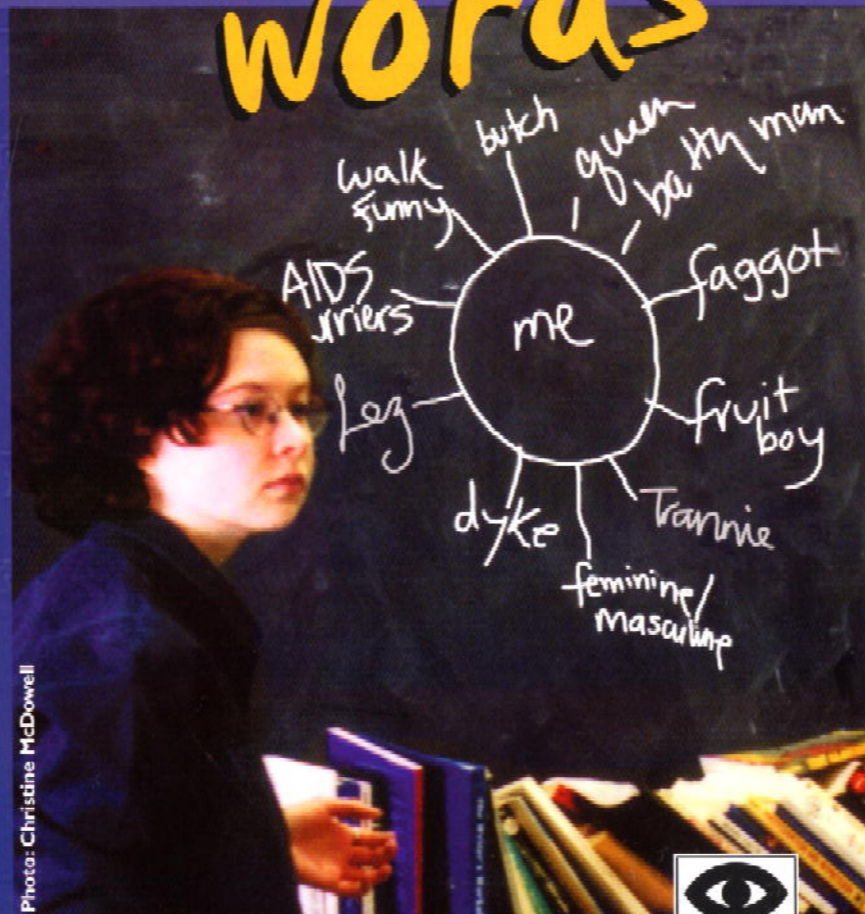


Photo: Christine McDowell



## WHY TALK ABOUT HOMOPHOBIC NAME-CALLING IN SCHOOL?

- Language and attitudes reveal what society thinks about lesbians, gay men, bisexuals and transgendered people. Silence about homophobia can imply that discrimination is acceptable.
- To provide a safe learning environment, teachers must respond to the hurt and pain that bullying and homophobia cause.
- Name-calling is not a game but a part of bullying and discriminatory behaviour. "Words can hurt," as the young people in the video emphasize.
- Name-calling is the most common form of bullying and discrimination in schools, and homophobic names are among the most common.
- Name-calling fosters an atmosphere of bullying, discrimination and violence. This atmosphere affects all students, whether or not they are the direct targets.
- Opposing homophobic name-calling is opposing discrimination, *not* endorsing sexual activity.

## THE LAW AND ANTI-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

- Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms prohibits discrimination, and the Supreme Court of Canada says the Charter prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation.
- Federal and provincial Human Rights acts also protect sexual minorities from discrimination.
- Many provincial education departments and school districts have policies that protect students from discrimination based on sexual orientation.
- Many teacher associations impose professional responsibilities on teachers to keep their students safe from violence and discrimination.
- In the USA, a number of federal, state and local laws protect gay and lesbian students from discrimination and similar harms, and the American Constitution guarantees equal protection under the law to all. Courts have ruled that students can claim substantial damages if their rights are violated in school.

## GUIDELINES FOR DISCUSSING HOMOPHOBIC NAME-CALLING IN SCHOOL

To ensure safe classroom discussion, establish guidelines:

- Show respect for other participants, listen to others and speak calmly.
- Speak for yourself, not for others.
- Opt in or out of the discussion but remain in class.

It's important to respond immediately to inappropriate comments by correcting stereotypes and offensive language and preventing personal attacks.

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C9101 046

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## APPROPRIATE LANGUAGE AND TERMS

In class discussions and interactions with students, use language that is gender-neutral and that avoids suggesting that heterosexuality is the only possible relationship. For example, do not assume that students' families are headed by a man and a woman, or that the adult partners are necessarily of the opposite gender. Use neutral language such as "parents and guardians" rather than "mothers and fathers" or "partners" rather than "boyfriends" or "girlfriends." Appropriate language changes over time. The following terms are widely accepted in talking about homosexuality and are used in this video.

**Heterosexual** Attracted emotionally and physically to someone of the opposite sex. "Straight" is an informal term.

**Homosexual** Attracted emotionally and physically to someone of the same sex. It is regarded as a clinical term and the terms below are preferred.

**Gay** Homosexual. Can refer to men or women.

**Lesbian** A female homosexual.

**Bisexual** Someone attracted emotionally and physically to people of both genders.

**Transgender** A person whose gender identity, physical appearance or anatomy differs from society's expectation.

**Two-spirited** A person possessing qualities of females and males, with honoured roles in some Aboriginal cultures.

**LGBT** Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people.

**Queer** LGBT. Used by some LGBTs as a positive, inclusive term, but offensive to many. Neutral terms are usually preferred.

**Gender identity** A person's internal feeling of being female, male, both or neither.

**Sexual orientation** Physical and emotional attractions. May include attractions to people of the opposite sex, the same sex, both or neither.

**Homophobia** Fear and hatred of homosexuals, often exhibited in harassment and discrimination in ideas, attitudes and actions.

**Heterosexism** The belief that all people are, or should be, heterosexual.

**Coming out** To share information about one's homosexuality. Also, the process (often lifelong) in which LGBTs acknowledge and accept their sexual orientation or gender identity.

## PRE-VIDEO ACTIVITIES

Preview the video and select activities appropriate for your class.

**Writing feelings** Have students write a journal entry describing a time when they were called names.

**Fighting words** Have the class list gender-specific words such as *fireman*, *police-man*, etc. and discuss how the words affect people's thinking. Ask for examples of ways the language can change to be more inclusive (eg, *firefighter*, *police officer*). Explore how homophobic, racist and other discriminatory language affects people's thoughts and feelings. Discuss what happens if a group is never named.

**Student survey** Have students conduct a confidential survey of the class or school to identify how many have been called names or bullied, and to note the responses.

**Discussing reasons (1)** Have students in small groups brainstorm reasons why people call other people hurtful names, and write the reasons on chart paper. **(2)** In a class discussion, have students identify common ideas on their charts (eg, fear, learned behaviours, power relationships, revenge, lack of understanding, social pressures, etc.) **(3)** Write titles for the common ideas, then have students cut the reasons from their charts and place them under an appropriate title.

## SCREENING THE VIDEO

- Have the class make charts of positive, negative and neutral slang words. Talk about how the terms came to be positive, negative or neutral. Screen the video, and have students note each word defined on screen and its meaning. Have them place the word on one of the charts, and discuss the reasoning.
- As you screen the video, stop the tape and have students react to what they have seen. Have them briefly note their reactions and questions:

After the definition of *faggot*.

After the definition of *lesbian*.

After the discussion of *queer*.

At the end of the video.



Director  
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**George Johnson**

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Music  
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Order number  
**C9101 046**

27 minutes



## POST-VIDEO ACTIVITIES

### Discussion

- What new word meanings did the video reveal?
- How did the people in the video feel about the names they had been called? How did they feel when they found names they were comfortable with?
- How did the students on screen react? Why?
- Why does the TEACH resource person say "When you hear things over and over, that's how you start to think"?
- Why does one person say some Asians think homosexuals do not exist in their society? What cultures have similar beliefs?
- What does the Aboriginal boy mean by "two-spirited"? (See definitions.) Why does he say "I would have grown up thinking it was a good thing, not evil"?
- Q & A** Have students anonymously write comments or questions arising from the video or from their personal experience on slips of paper. Answer as many questions as you can, or invite a school counsellor or resource person to class.
- Not just names** Explain that name-calling is often associated with other hurtful behaviours. Have students research forms of discrimination associated with various names (eg, homophobic, racist or sexist discrimination), and report back to the class.
- Showing support** Discuss how the targets of derogatory words might have felt if someone had offered them support. How can young people give support if they hear someone being called names?
- Talking back** Have students brainstorm what they can do when they hear homophobic or other offensive language in the school. Have students role-play constructive ways that the target of name-calling could react, and ways that others could support the targets. Discuss what responses work best, and have students modify the role play to show how they could offer more support.

## TITLES FROM THE COLLECTION CELEBRATING DIVERSITY

**One of Them** (2000) A drama in which teenagers planning Human Rights Day at high school confront opposition when they try to add homophobia to other forms of prejudice.

**Out: Stories of Lesbian and Gay Youth** (1993) Breaks the silence surrounding sexual orientation.

**School's Out** (1996) Members of Teens Educating and Confronting Homophobia visit schools, and author and activist Jane Rule offers her insights.

**Sticks & Stones** (2001) Expressive young children aged 5-12 talk about families, gender stereotypes and name-calling. Encourages all children to feel empathy and respect for their playmates.

**Apples + Oranges** (2002) For children aged 8 to 12. This is an energetic short film that uses a story-based model to integrate anti-homophobia information into community issues.



Fabienne



Paul



Ryan



Ivy



Jacob



Shawn



Julia



Lindsey