ThinkB4YouSpeak

Educator's Guide

For Discussing and Addressing
Anti-Gay Language among Teens

GLSEN®

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) teens in the U.S. experience homophobic remarks and harassment throughout the school day, creating an atmosphere where they feel disrespected, unwanted and unsafe. GLSEN's *2007 National School Climate Survey* found that nearly three-quarters (73.6%) of LGBT students hear homophobic language, such as "faggot" or "dyke," and more than nine in ten (90.2%) hear the word "gay" used in a negative way frequently or often at school. Though many play down the impact of expressions like "that's so gay" because they have become such a common part of teens' vernacular and are often not intended to inflict harm, 83.1% of LGBT students say that hearing "gay" or "queer" used in a negative manner causes them to feel bothered or distressed.

DID YOU KNOW?

9 out of 10 LGBT students hear the word "gay" used in a negative way often or frequently in school and nearly 3 out of 4 LGBT students report hearing their peers make homophobic remarks, such as "dyke" or "faggot," often or frequently in school.

Studies indicate that youth who regularly experience verbal or physical harassment suffer from emotional turmoil, low self-esteem, loneliness, depression, poor academic achievement and high rates of absenteeism.[1] Research also shows that many of the bystanders to acts of harassment experience feelings of helplessness and powerlessness, and develop poor coping and problem-solving skills.[2] Clearly, homophobic and all types of harassment—and the toxic effects they produce—are whole school problems that all educators must confront.

To address this disconcerting reality, the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) together with The Advertising Council has created the first national multimedia public service advertising (PSA) campaign designed to address the use of anti-LGBT language among teens. The campaign aims to raise awareness among straight teens about the prevalence and consequences of anti-LGBT bias and behavior in America's schools. Ultimately, the goal is to reduce and prevent the use of homophobic language in an effort to create a more positive environment for LGBT teens. The campaign also aims to reach adults, including school personnel and parents, because their support of this message is crucial to the success of efforts to change teens' behavior.

[1] See, for example, Widmeyer Communications for the Health, Resources and Services Administration of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *National Bullying Prevention Campaign Formative Research Report* (2003); Doris Rhea Coy, Bullying, ERIC Digest (2001); and Tonja R. Nansel, Mary Overpeck, Ramani S. Pilla, W. June Ruan, Bruce Simons-Morton, Peter Scheidt, *Bullying Behaviors Among US Youth: Prevalence and Association With Psychosocial Adjustment*, JAMA, 285:2094-2100 (2001)

[2] Tonja R. Nansel, Mary Overpeck, Ramani S. Pilla, W. June Ruan, Bruce Simons-Morton, Peter Scheidt, *Bullying Behaviors Among US Youth: Prevalence and Association With Psychosocial Adjustment*, JAMA, 285:2094-2100 (2001)

ABOUT THE CAMPAIGN

Created by the ad agency ArnoldNYC, the campaign includes television, radio, print and Web advertising. The TV ads feature scenarios in which the term "that's so gay" is used casually in an effort to help teens recognize that their anti-LGBT language is harmful. The ads conclude by asking teens, "When you say 'that's so gay,' do you realize what you say?," and with a message from celebrities, including Wanda Sykes and Hilary Duff, urging teens to "knock it off." The campaign hopes to motivate teens to become allies in the efforts to raise awareness, stop using anti-LGBT language and safely intervene when they are present and anti-LGBT harassment and behavior occurs.

The ads direct audiences to a comprehensive website, www.ThinkB4YouSpeak.com, which provides tips on how to support LGBT youth and the opportunity for visitors to take a stand against anti-LGBT language through an interactive pledge form that will allow teens to "say something original," by sharing alternatives to "that's so gay." The site also includes a dictionary-type tool that illustrates the evolution of language and the notion of understanding one's choice of words.

ABOUT THE PARTNERS

GLSEN, the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, is the leading national education organization focused on ensuring safe schools for all students. Established nationally in 1995, GLSEN envisions a world in which every child learns to respect and accept all people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity or expression. For more information on GLSEN's educational resources, public policy agenda, student organizing programs, research, public education or development initiatives, visit www.glsen.org.

The Advertising Council (www.adcouncil.org) is a private, nonprofit organization that marshals talent from the advertising and communications industries, the facilities of the media and the resources of the business and nonprofit communities to produce, distribute and promote public service campaigns on behalf of nonprofit organizations and government agencies in issue areas such as improving the quality of life for children, preventive health, education, community well-being, environmental preservation and strengthening families.

DID YOU KNOW?

54% of LGBT students often or frequently hear negative comments about their peers not acting "masculine" enough and 39% hear comments about their peers not acting "feminine" enough.

ArnoldNYC is a nimble, full-service, untraditional creative agency focused on building big ideas that lead to strong business results for brands like Hershey's, Timex, Lee, TUMS, alli, Nicorette and USTA. ArnoldNYC is owned by Havas (Nasdaq: HAVS) and is one of the leading mid-sized agencies in the New York market. ArnoldNYC prides itself on creating great work that works, as well as hours of impressive inter-office ping-pong.

USING THE EDUCATOR'S GUIDE

This guide assists educators and others who work with teens to introduce the campaign resources, frame and discuss the ads, and extend learning about the negative consequences of homophobic language and anti-LGBT bias. The core of the guide consists of discussion questions for exploring and analyzing the video, audio, and print ads followed by six educational activities that increase awareness and knowledge of the issues, develop skills for addressing them and promote social action.

The educational activities can be used in conjunction with the guided discussion or as stand-alone experiences. Additionally, the six activities can each be used separately or sequentially as a unit of investigation. The resources in this guide are appropriate for use in the classroom, by community and youth organizations, as part of gay-straight alliance (GSA) meetings, in diversity clubs, as part of anti-bullying programs, or in conjunction with other initiatives that promote safety and respect.

DID YOU KNOW?

83.1% of LGBT students report that hearing "gay" or "queer" used in a negative manner at school causes them to feel bothered or distressed to some degree. Yet only 18% of LGBT students report that school personnel frequently intervene when hearing homophobic remarks and only 8% report that other students frequently intervene.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

1. Where Do I Stand?: Participants stand along a human continuum in response to statements assessing their attitudes and experiences regarding the use of "that's so gay" and anti-LGBT slurs. Their reflections are used to build awareness about the impact of anti-LGBT epithets.

2. "That's So Gay" on Trial: Participants debate a court case involving a student who was reprimanded for the use of "that's so gay." Through this case, young people consider the seriousness of anti-LGBT language and the legal and ethical limitations to free speech.

3. Impact versus Intention: This exercise uses reflective writing and a school-based scenario to reinforce that the usual responses to the use of "that's so gay"—"it doesn't mean anything," "it just means stupid," "it doesn't have anything to do with sexual orientation"—miss the point because benign intent does not negate the detrimental effects of such language.

4. Breaking the Habit: Participants reflect on the ways that they have broken bad habits in the past and apply these strategies to eliminating the habitual use of "that's so gay." Participants generate positive alternatives to "that's so gay" and role play scenarios in which they can practice this alternative language and make it natural.

5. From Bystander to Ally: Participants reflect on situations in which they have been a silent bystander and explore what it takes to move from a passive bystander to an active ally role. Through case studies and role play, participants identify specific strategies for being an ally to others and articulate responses to name-calling and disrespectful behavior.

6. Planning a School Wide "ThinkB4YouSpeak" Campaign: In this culmination activity, participants explore ways to bring the message of the ad campaign to the broader school community. Using the campaign resources, they devise and implement a plan for changing the school culture with regard to the use of negative language.

CREATING A SAFE SPACE FOR DISCUSSION

Talking about themes related to diversity requires maturity and compassion for others. While the activities in this guide are intended to increase empathy and broaden young people's perspectives, certain discussions may cause prejudices and stereotypes to surface. In addition, some youth may express discomfort or have difficulty accepting others' viewpoints.

A useful way to encourage openness and positive behavior is to introduce working agreements or ground rules that communicate an expected standard of behavior. Encourage your students to collaboratively develop working agreements that ensure safety and respect. Suggest one or more of the following:

SAMPLE GROUND RULES

- Respect Others: You will hear ideas that may be different or new to you, and opinions with which you may disagree. As you participate and interact, try to take in new information without judgment and to keep an open mind. Make sure that your words and body language reflect a respectful attitude toward others. Learn by listening to others.

- Speak From the "I": Speak from your own personal experiences and try not to judge the experiences of others. Use I-statements such as "I feel…" or "In my experience…" Avoid "You should" or "You all think that …" statements and generalizations of any kind.

- Ask Questions: Much of the information we will cover will be new to many of you. Feel free to ask any questions that come up for you—either during the activity or privately afterwards—without fear that they are too "silly." Make sure to phrase all questions in respectful and nonjudgmental ways.

- Respect Confidentiality: Please make sure that everything said in the room stays in the room. When sharing personal anecdotes, make sure to avoid using the real names of other people.

- Share "Air Time": While you are encouraged to express your ideas and opinions, please do not monopolize the group's time. Help create a safe space in which everyone can speak. No one, however, is obligated to speak. "Passing" is okay.

As you delve into this guide, it is recommended that you introduce activities selectively depending on your group's readiness to explore certain topics. You may also choose to adapt or omit particular sections of activities in order to provide the most safe and developmentally appropriate experience for youth. In addition, utilize instructional techniques that provide the structure and support your particular students require.

For example, make sure that a teacher or other qualified adult facilitates all small group discussions until students show they are prepared to engage independently in small group or partner dialogue. If the youth with whom you work are not prepared to discuss personal experiences or examples of bias in respectful ways, use literature or other tools that provide a safe distance from which to talk about such issues. Likewise, if they cannot yet engage in role play with sensitivity and maturity, opt for structured writing and discussion until they are comfortable enough to act out scenarios responsibly.

As you engage in discussions about LGBT issues, be aware that such discussions may bring up strong feelings for some youth due to internalized prejudices, past experiences or because they are LGBT themselves or have family members that are LGBT. Make sure to carefully monitor students' responses, allow adequate time to debrief and process their feelings, and to provide further support and resources to young people when needed.

RESPONDING TO RESISTANCE

Though safety and respect for LGBT youth and people from all backgrounds should not be controversial, discussions related to sexual and gender diversity often ignite strong emotions and opposition. It is therefore recommended that, prior to introducing the campaign resources in this guide to young people, you enlist support and partnership among your colleagues. First, consider sharing your plans with your supervisors and educating them about the issues so that they are prepared to support you and respond appropriately to inquiries from family members, media and the broader community. In addition, build a coalition of educators, administrators, counselors and family members in your community who share a commitment to the goals of the campaign and are prepared to stand in a unified way against criticism and hostility.

These brief talking points may be useful when dealing with resistance to talking about anti-LGBT bias or challenging questions from youth or adult members of the community. Consult **glsen.org** for further resources.

RESPONDING TO RESISTANCE: TALKING POINTS

You're teaching about sex/promoting a "lifestyle."
Talking about safety and respect for LGBT people should not be conflated with talking about sex or sexual relationships. This lesson is about ensuring that no student is subject to prejudiced remarks or harassment, which is a goal that I think we can all support.

It's against my values/religion.
Everyone is entitled to their personal opinions and religious viewpoints, and at this school we provide a forum for everyone to express their perspectives, as long as they do so civilly. However, there are also school and community values, and those include respect for differences and the right of every student to receive an education free from harassment and discrimination. When we talk about LGBT issues at school, it is within the context of safety and equality, the same as when we discuss racism or gender bias. At this school we feel that such discussions benefit all children.

"That's so gay" just means stupid or weird.
Just because a lot of people use "gay" to mean "stupid" doesn't mean it's acceptable. Language evolves. Gay once only meant happy. Then it became a term to describe homosexuals. Now it is used to mean stupid, and this will change again as people become aware of how insulting this use of the word is to LGBT people and those who care about them.

This politically correct stuff is repressive and robs us of perfectly good expressions.
The idea of "political correctness" has been twisted in recent times. When I ask you to refrain from using expressions like "that's so gay," I'm just trying to make you aware that it is hurtful to a lot of people. How do you think it would feel to hear "gay" used over and over again to describe something stupid when it also describes who you are? We have all been on the receiving end of an insult and felt its sting, so why wouldn't you put a little effort into avoiding language that insults others, especially when there are so many alternatives?

My gay friends don't care if I say "that's so gay."
There's a difference between what's okay to say when you are alone with your friends and what's okay to say in public settings. When you're in public, you're expected to refrain from language that is insulting to others and encouraged to speak in ways that are respectful to all. While your friends may not mind "that's so gay," they don't speak for all LGBT people, and there are many who feel uncomfortable with this language. Your friends may trust you enough to know that you mean no harm when you say "that's so gay," but others who are within earshot may not feel the same way. And many of these people may not feel comfortable asking you to stop, so it's up to you to keep your own language in check.

A NOTE ABOUT LANGUAGE

There are many terms that are used to describe what is commonly known as the "gay community." Since the word "gay" most often refers to homosexual men, we have chosen to use the more inclusive "LGBT," which means lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender. Though this term may sound unfamiliar at first, we encourage you to use it consistently with your students and to avoid reflexively using "gay" to describe the broad spectrum of sexual and gender identities. There are many people within the LGBT communities who use a variety of other terms to describe themselves, including queer, questioning, and same-gender loving. Though we have chosen to use LGBT consistently here, we encourage you to respect the terms that individuals in your community have chosen to describe themselves.

Much of this guide is aimed at increasing young people's awareness about the damaging effects of expressions like "that's so gay" and other terms that are (intentionally or unintentionally) derogatory. While it is critical to discourage the negative use of words like "gay" and "queer," it is also important to reinforce that these are not "bad" words in and of themselves and are perfectly acceptable when used in appropriate contexts.

DEFINITIONS

Lesbian: A term given to females who are attracted sexually/erotically and emotionally to some other females.

Gay: A term given to males who are attracted sexually/erotically and emotionally to some other males.

Bisexual: A term given to people who are attracted sexually/erotically and emotionally to both males and females.

Transgender: A broad "umbrella" term that can be used to describe people whose gender expression is nonconforming and/or whose gender identity is different from their gender assigned at birth.

Questioning: A term that refers to people who are uncertain as to their sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

Queer: An umbrella term used by many for anyone whose sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression is not considered "standard."

DID YOU KNOW?

Almost 90% of LGBT students are verbally harassed, 44% are physically harassed and nearly 1/4 are physically assaulted at school because of their sexual orientation. And 2/3 of LGBT students are verbally harassed, 30% are physically harassed and 14% are physically assaulted at school because of their gender expression.

USING THE ADS

The campaign ads can be used as stand-alone resources for educating youth about the detrimental effects of anti-LGBT language, and they can also be used in conjunction with the educational activities in this guide. The questions that follow will help you to process the underlying messages of each ad with young people. Along with each set of questions is a note indicating which educational activities work in combination with each ad.

DISCUSSING THE TELEVISION ADS

Use in conjunction with Activity 1: Where Do I Stand?; Activity 4: Breaking the Habit; and Activity 6: Planning a School Wide "ThinkB4YouSpeak" Campaign

- How do the teens in the ads use "that's so gay"? (To describe an early curfew, a kitschy figurine and an unattractive outfit.)

- Why do some people use "gay" when they mean undesirable or stupid? Where does this expression come from? (Emphasize that the equating of gay with stupid stems from homophobic attitudes.)

- Some people defend the use of this expression by saying that it is not meant as an insult to LGBT people. Do you agree? Why or why not?

- Regardless of how it is meant, how do you think this expression is heard by people who identify as LGBT and those who care about them?

- How do the teens in the ads react when their identities (Emma and Julia) and appearance ("cheesy mustache"; "girl who wears a skirt as a top") are used as insults?

- How would you feel if an aspect of your identity was used as an insult?

- Why does "that's so gay" sound natural and normal while "that's so Emma and Julia" and the other "that's so…" statements in the ads sound odd and even jarring?

- Does the fact that certain expressions are used commonly make them acceptable?

- When most people say "that's so gay," do you think they realize what they say?

- What would it take for people to be more aware and to "knock it off"?

- What are some alternatives to expressions like "that's so gay" and "you're so gay"?

DID YOU KNOW?

LGBT students who experience high frequencies of verbal harassment are twice as likely as other LGBT students to skip school, and LGBT students who are frequently physically harassed report lower grades than other students (on average a 2.4 versus a 2.8 GPA).
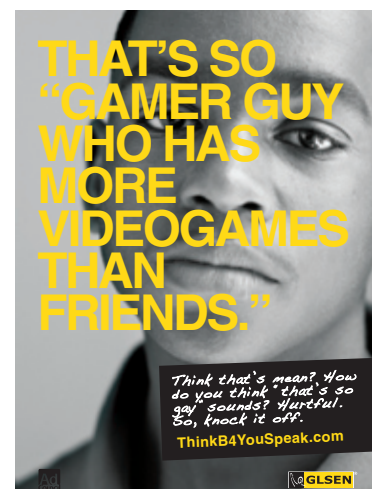
DISCUSSING THE RADIO ADS

Use in conjunction with Activity 1: Where Do I Stand?; Activity 4: Breaking the Habit; Activity 5: From Bystander to Ally; and Activity 6: Planning a School Wide "ThinkB4YouSpeak" Campaign

- How do the teens in the ads use "that's so gay"? (To describe a party and a sandwich.)

- Why do they use "gay" when they mean boring or babyish? Do you think this makes sense?

- Some people defend the use of this expression by saying that it is not meant as an insult to LGBT people. Do you agree? Why or why not?

- Regardless of how it is meant, how do you think this expression is heard by LGBT people and those who care about them?

- How would you feel if a part of who you are were used as an insult?

- What strategies do the teens in the ads use to let others know that they don't approve of "that's so gay"? (They "outsmart" their peers by using accurate information and "turn around" the situation by asking others to consider how it would feel to be insulted.)

- Could you see yourself using these strategies to respond to "that's so gay" and similar expressions? What other techniques would you use to get people to "knock it off"?

DISCUSSING THE "THAT'S SO" PRINT ADS

Use in conjunction with Activity 1: Where Do I Stand?; Activity 2: "That's so Gay" on Trial; and Activity 6: Planning a School Wide "ThinkB4YouSpeak" Campaign

- What was your immediate emotional response to these ads?

- What is a stereotype (an oversimplified generalization about a person or group of people without regard for individual differences)?

- What stereotypes are exploited in these ads (jocks and cheerleaders are stupid; gamers are loners)? Is this implication fair or accurate?

- What other mean stereotypes do you commonly hear that are upsetting to you?

- How does the use of "that's so gay" relate to the use of stereotypes, as in these ads? (It is based on the assumption that being gay is wrong, bad or undesirable.)

- How would you feel if a part of who you are was used as an insult?

- When people say "that's so gay," why doesn't it seem as mean as the "that's so…" statements in the ads?

- Does the fact that certain expressions are used commonly make them acceptable?

- How do you think you can make others more aware that "that's so gay" can be as hurtful as other stereotypical or insulting expressions?

THAT'S SO "GAMER GUY WHO HAS MORE VIDEOGAMES THAN FRIENDS."

Think that's mean? How do you think "that's so gay" sounds? Hurtful. So, knock it off.
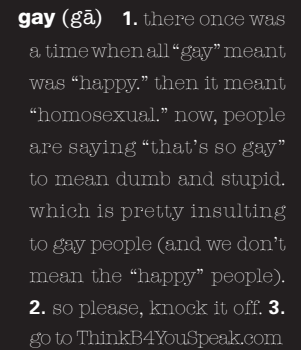
ThinkB4YouSpeak.com

GLSEN

DISCUSSING THE DICTIONARY PRINT ADS

Use in conjunction with Activity 1: Where Do I Stand?; Activity 2: "That's so Gay" on Trial; Activity 3: Impact versus Intention; and Activity 6: Planning a School Wide "ThinkB4YouSpeak" Campaign

• Words have a lot of power. Think about some words that have been used to hurt you, especially those that get at core parts of your identity (but don't say them aloud). How do those words affect you?

• Words like gay, faggot and dyke are used frequently to insult others. In your experience, what types of people are these words used against (don't name actual individuals; just describe the kinds of people who are targeted)? Under what circumstances might someone get called these names?

• These words are tossed around without much thought about the hate or hurtfulness behind them. What do you know about the history of these words and how they came to be used as insults?

> NOTE: At this point in the discussion, share with students the history and etymology of "gay," "faggot" and "dyke" (see WHAT'S IN A WORD?, page 30). If time allows, you may assign students individually or in groups to research the history of one or more of these terms and have them share their findings before continuing with the discussion.

gay (gā) **1.** there once was a time when all "gay" meant was "happy." then it meant "homosexual." now, people are saying "that's so gay" to mean dumb and stupid. which is pretty insulting to gay people (and we don't mean the "happy" people). **2.** so please, knock it off. **3.** go to ThinkB4YouSpeak.com

• Now that you are aware of the history behind these words, will you continue to use them as jokes or insults against others? Why or why not?

• Do you think people in general would be less likely to use these words as jokes or insults if they knew the history behind them? Why or why not?

• What can you do to educate your peers about the history of anti-LGBT language?

DID YOU KNOW?

Only 30% of LGBT students who experience high frequencies of physical harassment say they will go on to college (as compared to 41.5% of other students).

EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 1: WHERE DO I STAND?

OVERVIEW

Participants stand along a human continuum in response to statements assessing their attitudes and experiences regarding the use of "that's so gay" and anti-LGBT slurs. Their reflections are used to build awareness about the impact of anti-LGBT epithets.

DIRECTIONS

1. Prior to the activity, post signs at opposite ends of the room that say STRONGLY AGREE and STRONGLY DISAGREE.

2. Begin the activity by telling participants that you are going to read a series of statements aloud that relate to some commonly used expressions and put-downs. Explain that they will respond to each statement by standing along an invisible continuum that ranges from STRONGLY AGREE to STRONGLY DISAGREE (point out the corresponding signs posted earlier). Tell participants that they can stand by either sign or anywhere in-between that reflect their opinion or experience. Emphasize that they should be silent while choosing a place to stand and refrain from cross-talk during this part of the activity.

3. Read the first TAKING A STAND STATEMENT aloud and allow ample time for participants to "take a stand" at the appropriate place in the room. Once they have positioned themselves, ask them to silently look around and observe how their peers responded to the statement. Repeat this process with TAKING A STAND STATEMENTS or as many as time allows.

OPTION: Rather than having participants remain silent throughout the activity, briefly process each statement before moving on to the next one using some of the discussion questions in step #4 below.

4. Reconvene the group and lead a discussion with participants using some of the following questions:

- Which statements were the easiest for you to respond to? The most difficult? Why?

- Did the group's overall response to any of the statements surprise you? If so, which ones and why?

- Were you alone or in the minority in how you responded to any of the statements? If so, how did this make you feel?

- Did you change your mind about any of the issues raised in this exercise as a result of your peers' responses? If so, how did your opinion change?

- After participating in this activity, what impact do you think expressions like "that's so gay" and "no homo," and terms like "faggot" and "dyke" have on others?

ACTIVITY 1 CONTINUED

- Do you think that what you have learned today will change your attitude or your behavior in any way?

- What do you think it would take to limit or curb the use of expressions like "that's so gay" among your peers?

5. Introduce participants to one or more of the ThinkB4YouSpeak ads (see Appendix A – D). Use some of the discussion questions on pages 12-14 to process the ads.

6. Ask participants if the ads changed their feelings about any of the issues raised earlier in the activity. Discuss how these ads might be used in school or the community to reduce anti-LGBT slurs and work with students to put into action one or more of their ideas.

TAKING A STAND STATEMENTS

- I often hear the phrase "that's so gay," "you're so gay," "no homo" or the word "gay" in general used in a negative way among my peers.

- I often hear terms like "faggot" and "dyke" used among my peers.

- When I hear "that's so gay," it is usually aimed at an object rather than a person.

- When people say "that's so gay" or "no homo," they do not mean it as an insult against actual LGBT people.

- Regardless of how it is meant, expressions like "that's so gay" and "no homo" are probably insulting or upsetting to LGBT people and those who care about them.

- I have never thought about how expressions like "that's so gay" or "no homo" might make others feel.

- I have personally used expressions like "that's so gay," "you're so gay" or "no homo" with my peers.

- I have personally used terms like "faggot" and "dyke" with my peers.

- When expressions like "that's so gay" or "no homo" are aimed directly at me, it bothers me.

- Expressions like "that's so gay" and "no homo" are okay as long as they are not used to directly attack an LGBT person.

- Expressions like "that's so gay" and "no homo" are never okay to use.

- It would be impossible to get kids at my school to reduce or stop using terms like "that's so gay" and "no homo."

- I would personally be willing to limit or curb my use of expressions like "that's so gay" and "no homo."

ACTIVITY 2: "THAT'S SO GAY" ON TRIAL

OVERVIEW

Participants debate a court case involving a student who was reprimanded for the use of "that's so gay." Through this case, young people consider the seriousness of anti-LGBT language and the legal and ethical limitations to free speech.

DIRECTIONS

1. Tell participants that according to a recent survey, 9 out of every 10 students report hearing the expression "that's so gay" or "you're so gay" frequently or often at school, and 3 out of every 4 students report hearing remarks such as "faggot" or "dyke" frequently or often at school.[3] Ask if these findings reflect what they hear at their own school. Have participants briefly share their experiences with the ways in which these terms are used among their peers.

2. If you have not done so already, show participants the "That's So" and/or Dictionary print ads (see Appendix C – D). Use some of the discussion questions on pages 13-14 to process the ads.

3. Point out that expressions like "that's so gay" are often tossed around without much thought about how they affect others. Tell participants that the careless use of this term in a California high school led to a court case about whether or not a school has the right to discipline students for saying "that's so gay." Add that this case raises some important questions about the impact of language, and that the group will therefore spend some time debating the facts of the case.

4. Divide participants into small groups of four. Assign two people in each group to take the perspective of the school authorities in the case and two people to take the perspective of the student and her family. Tell participants that they will debate the case based on their assigned role, regardless of their personal opinion.

5. Read aloud or distribute copies of the CASE OVERVIEW to groups and post or distribute copies of the GUIDING QUESTIONS. Instruct each group to debate the case using the questions to guide their dialogue. Allow about 10 minutes for group discussion.

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[3] Kosciw, J. G., Diaz, E. M., and 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. Available at www.glsen.org.

ACTIVITY 2 CONTINUED

6. Reconvene the group and debrief using some of the following questions:

• Did you agree or disagree with the perspective that you were assigned? Why?

• Do you think "that's so gay" was an appropriate response to the teasing Rebekah experienced based on her religious upbringing? Why or why not? How else might Rebekah have responded?

• Do you think the students who made the anti-Mormon taunts should have been disciplined in the same way Rebekah was? Why or why not?

• Do you think expressions like "that's so gay" have a negative impact on individuals and/or school culture? Why or why not?

• What does our school discipline code say about the use of such expressions? (Have a copy on hand to refer to during this part of the discussion.)

• What do you think is the best way for a school to address the use of expressions like "that's so gay"?

• What do you think the outcome of the court case should have been? Why?

7. Share the outcome of the court case:

> In *Rice v. Gans-Rugebregt,* the Sonoma County Superior Court ruled that Rice was not entitled to monetary damages. The judge found that Rice's lawyers failed to prove that school administrators had violated any state laws or singled the girl out for punishment since the teacher in question was never aware that Rebekah had been teased about her religion and because other students at the school had received referrals for saying "that's so gay" prior to the disciplinary action against Rebekah. The judge added that school officials are given wide latitude in deciding how to enforce nondiscrimination provisions of the state education code.

8. Review with students what your school discipline code says about the use of slurs and how the use of expressions like "that's so gay" are (directly or indirectly) addressed in the policy. Reinforce that regardless of court cases or school policy, it is important that students consider the impact of their words and make responsible choices about language use.

CASE OVERVIEW [4]

When a few classmates razzed Rebekah Rice about her Mormon upbringing with questions such as, "Do you have 10 moms?", she shot back: "That's so gay." That phrase landed the high school freshman in the principal's office and resulted in a lawsuit that raises this question: When do playground insults used every day all over America cross the line into hate speech that must be stamped out? After Rice got a warning and a notation in her file, her parents sued, claiming officials at Santa Rosa's Maria Carillo High School violated their daughter's First Amendment rights when they disciplined her for uttering a phrase "which enjoys widespread currency in youth culture…" Testifying…about the…incident, Rice…said that when she uttered those words, she was not referring to anyone's sexual orientation. She said the phrase meant: "That's so stupid, that's so silly, and that's so dumb." But school officials say they took a strict stand against the putdown after two boys were paid to beat up a gay student the year before. "The district has a statutory duty to protect gay students from harassment," the district's lawyers argued…"In furtherance of this goal, prohibition of the phrase 'that's so gay'…was a reasonable regulation."

NOTE: Rebekah was disciplined in accordance with a class policy that imposed an automatic referral for any slurs related to race, gender and the like. The students who teased Rebekah about her religion did not receive punishment because the teacher did not hear those comments—she only heard Rebekah call out, "that's so gay"—and because Rebekah did not confide in her teachers or counselors about the anti-Mormon remarks.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Do you think that it was appropriate for Rebekah to respond to teasing about her religious upbringing with the retort, "that's so gay"? How else might she have responded?

- Rebekah says she only meant, "that's so stupid." Is her intent relevant or does it only matter what she actually said and how it may have affected others?

- Do you think that using the expression "that's so gay" warrants discipline by school authorities?

- Do you think that Rebekah's free speech rights were violated by the school discipline?

- Rebekah's lawyer argued that she should not be punished for using a phrase that "enjoys widespread currency." Does the fact that many students regularly say "that's so gay" mean that Rebekah was singled out for unfair punishment or that it's okay to use the statement?

- Is it relevant to the case that two boys were paid to beat up a gay student the year before? Does a history of anti-LGBT bias in the community give the school greater authority to strictly enforce rules about name-calling?

- Is this case just an instance of "political correctness" on the part of the school or do expressions like "that's so gay" have an actual negative impact on individuals and school culture? If so, what do you think is the negative impact?

- Do you think that formal discipline or education (or both) is the most appropriate way to address the use of negative speech like "that's so gay"?

[4] Excerpted from: The Associated Press. Calif. judge to weigh meaning of 'that's so gay', March 2, 2007, at http://www.firstamendmentcenter.org. For the full case summary and opinion in *Rice v. Gans-Rugebregt,* No. 233600 (Cal. Super. Ct. May 15, 2007), see http://www.sonomacountybar.org/assets/media/pdf/verdicts_decisions_2007_2.pdf.

ACTIVITY 3: IMPACT VERSUS INTENTION

OVERVIEW

This exercise uses reflective writing and a school-based scenario to reinforce that the usual responses to the use of "that's so gay"—"it doesn't mean anything," "it just means stupid," "it doesn't have anything to do with sexual orientation" —miss the point because benign intent does not negate the detrimental effects of such language.

DIRECTIONS

1. Begin the activity by engaging participants in some reflective writing in response to the following prompt:

> Describe a time when you were insulted or hurt by another person and they brushed it off by saying something like, "I didn't mean it like that." Allow about five minutes for writing.

2. Ask for a few volunteers to share their writing and use the following questions to debrief:

- How did you react when others dismissed your feelings by saying they "didn't mean it"?

- What mattered to you most in the moment, how the other person may have intended the comment or how it affected you?

- What would you have liked the other person to think about before speaking?

3. Tell participants that you'd like them to consider what they have just discussed in relation to the following scenario:

> Students are at their lockers just before the start of first period. One student takes off his jacket and is wearing a very bright t-shirt with an unusual design. Another student remarks, "Oh, my god, that shirt is so gay!" Several students laugh. A teacher, who is passing by and overhears the comment, tells the student who made the remark to cut it out. The student replies, "I just meant that it's a weird shirt." The teacher tells everyone to get to class.

4. Point out that expressions like "that's so gay" are used all the time by people who assume they are harmless or meaningless, but that often these words have an unintended impact. Tell participants that you would like them to take the perspectives of some of the different people who may have been standing by the lockers in the scenario and to think about the impact that the words "that's so gay" might have had on them that morning.

5. Divide participants into eight groups and assign each group one of the people AT THE LOCKERS. Instruct participants to discuss and record what they think that person might have been thinking or feeling in response to the "that's so gay" comment. Encourage them to be creative in how they record their ideas (e.g., cartoon with thought bubbles, poem, drawing, journal entry, etc.). Allow about 15 minutes for group work.

> NOTE: If any of the names on the AT THE LOCKERS role cards match the names of actual students in your class/group, change them before distributing.

6. Reconvene the group and have participants briefly share their work. Discuss the following:

- Though "gay" is often intended to mean "silly" or "stupid," is that the way it is heard or experienced by everyone?

- Taking all eight of these perspectives into account, how would you say that expressions like "that's so gay"—used regularly—impact school climate and culture?

- How do you think it would feel to consistently hear "gay" used to describe something undesirable or stupid when that label also describes who you are or the identity of someone you care about?

- What other terms are used to describe someone's identity and also used as put-downs (e.g., "you're so retarded," "that's so Jewish," "don't be a girl," etc.)? Is it ever appropriate to use language in this way?

- When someone tells you that they are offended by this kind of language, is it okay to just say you "didn't mean it like that"? How else might you respond?

7. If you have not done so already, show participants the Dictionary ads (see Appendix D) and use some of the discussion questions on page 14 to process them.

8. Emphasize how language evolves and sometimes comes into common use in ways that we take for granted, but that is hurtful nonetheless. Encourage participants to consider the actual meaning of the words they use and the possible impact—not just their intention—before speaking.

9. To illustrate the impact of "that's so gay," ask for nine volunteers to each read aloud one of the YOUTH VOICES ON "THAT'S SO GAY" quotes, which have been collected from actual teens nationwide. Allow participants to silently reflect on these testimonials.

ACTIVITY 3 CONTINUED

AT THE LOCKERS

Jessie, the student wearing the bright t-shirt, a gift from a favorite uncle who just returned from a trip to a far-away country.

Chris, who has been raised by two lesbian moms

Pat, who is bisexual and has been wrestling with whether or not to come out to friends

Casey, who just joined the school's gay-straight alliance to support a gay cousin

Jordan, who is in the drama club and is often teased about being gay, but identifies as straight

Ms. Perez, an English teacher who is a lesbian but keeps her identity a secret at school

Jamie, who likes outlandish clothes but always dresses like the other kids when at school so as not to attract negative attention

Morgan, whose family just moved to town and is starting at this school today

YOUTH VOICES ON "THAT'S SO GAY"

"If you mean 'that's so stupid,' why don't you just say 'that's stupid'? It's really degrading to hear 'gay' being used as the new 'stupid.'"
(Austin, age 15, CA)

"If we aren't supposed to say 'that's retarded' because it's offensive, how is 'that's so gay' any less offensive?"
(Michael, age 17, KS)

"I get so angry when someone says, 'that's so gay.' I can't imagine how, well, unclever someone has to be to use that phrase. I wish people were more aware of what they say."
(Adrien, age 16, WI)

"[When people say 'that's so gay,'] I don't get angry, they don't mean it in a hateful way. They just say it because others do, and they don't even know what they're saying anymore, or who they're hurting."
(Tyler, age 15, NC)

"When I hear 'that's so gay,' I think...that's so ignorant!"
(Chris, age 15, OH)

"When I hear 'that's so gay,' a chill rushes through my body and my heart drops into the pit of my stomach."
(Kaitlyn, age 17, MI)

"When I hear 'that's so gay,' I get tightness in my chest. Sometimes when I hear it from several people in a large group, I get a rush of anxiety. Hearing that can really ruin my day."
(Ayanna, age 16, GA)

"[When I hear 'that's so gay,'] I feel demoralized, as if the world does not care about others."
(David, age 16, VA)

"If I were to tell you how 'that's so gay' makes me feel, would you continue saying it?"
(Nate, age 17, NV)

ACTIVITY 4: BREAKING THE HABIT

OVERVIEW

Participants reflect on ways they have broken bad habits in the past and apply these strategies to eliminating the habitual use of "that's so gay." Participants generate positive alternatives to "that's so gay" and role play scenarios in which they can practice this alternative language and make it natural.

DIRECTIONS

1. Prior to the activity, label a sheet of chart paper BREAKING THE HABIT. Divide the chart into four rows and label them as follows: WHAT'S A HABIT?, WHAT'S THE TEMPTATION?, WHAT'S THE INCENTIVE? and WHAT'S THE STRATEGY?

2. Begin the activity by asking participants how they would define the term "habit" and record their responses in the appropriate section of the chart (e.g., an automatic pattern of behavior that is repeated regularly, without thinking).

3. Ask participants to think about some bad habits they have had in the past that they have managed to break. Have a few volunteers share what it took to break the habit.

4. Point out that some young people have picked up some bad habits when it comes to the type of language they use. Ask for some examples (making sure that no vulgarity is used). If participants do not bring it up, suggest that phrases like "that's so gay" and "you're so gay" are used habitually. Ask why this kind of language is problematic.

> ### ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY
>
> Objectives:
> - To explore why habitual behavior forms and how to change it
> - To consider bad language habits and positive alternatives to them
> - To practice using alternatives to "that's so gay" that don't offend others
>
> Time: 30 – 60 minutes
>
> Grade Level: 6 – 12
>
> Materials: chart paper, markers, paint pens and other writing/drawing implements, LET'S REPHRASE THAT scenarios

5. Highlight the habitual way in which "that's so gay" is used by playing one or more of the "ThinkB4You-Speak" TV spots (see Appendix A) and using the discussion questions on pages 12-14 to process them.

6. Ask participants to consider how they might apply some of the strategies they've used in the past to break bad habits to the habitual use of "that's so gay." Use the following questions to guide them through a discussion and chart their responses under the appropriate sections.

- WHAT'S THE TEMPATION? Why do we engage in the behavior even when it might be hurtful to others (e.g., to fit in, it's familiar, to get a laugh, everyone does it)?

- WHAT'S THE INCENTIVE? What is the benefit to expending the effort it will take to change the behavior (e.g., more respect, better school climate, safer space for LGBT people)?

- WHAT'S THE STRATEGY? What are the most effective methods for changing the behavior (e.g., identify alternative language, focus on the negative consequences of the habit, and stop/correct yourself when the old behavior inadvertently occurs)?

7. Suggest to participants that breaking the habit will require them to find alternative language that feels natural to them in instances when they might otherwise say "that's so gay" or "you're so gay." Divide participants into small groups and have each group select a recorder. Challenge each group to come up with a list of phrases that might convey that something is silly, weird or disagreeable without being offensive to others. Allow 5 – 10 minutes for brainstorming.

> NOTE: Participants can enter the alternative phrases they identify on the campaign website at www.ThinkB4YouSpeak.com

8. While groups are working, post a sheet of chart paper and label it SAY SOMETHING ORIGINAL. As groups complete their lists, ask the recorders to write their group's ideas on the chart "graffiti style" (make markers, paint pens, etc. available). Review some of the alternative phrases with participants and post the chart in a prominent place, where it can serve as an ongoing reminder.

9. (OPTIONAL) If time allows, ask for volunteers to come to the front of the room and role play some of the LET'S REPHRASE THAT scenarios, drawing upon the alternative language generated in steps #6-7 above.

10. If participants have not yet heard them, play the ThinkB4YouSpeak radio spots (see Appendix B) and use the discussion questions on pages 13 to process the ads.

11. Highlight the strategies used in the radio ads to respond to "that's so gay" and discuss how these strategies (and the ads themselves) might be used to help others break the "that's so gay" habit.

ACTIVITY 4 CONTINUED

LET'S REPHRASE THAT

NOTE: The role plays below are intended to explore alternatives to the word "gay" when used in well-intentioned, but inappropriate ways. It is important to underscore that these scenarios depict good-natured teasing and playfulness among friends, and that using "gay" or any other language to be intentionally mean to others is never acceptable.

Randy and Chris are window shopping at their favorite store. Randy points out a pair of sneakers that are orange with bright pink stripes and announces, "those sneakers are so…"
[SAY SOMETHING ORIGINAL]

Karen's 10th grade English teacher assigns the class to write an essay entitled "If I were a barnyard animal I'd be a…" During lunch Karen jokes with her friends that the assignment
is so…" [SAY SOMETHING ORIGINAL]

During science class a bee flies through the window and startles Manuel, who swats at it in
a flustered way and sidesteps away from it awkwardly. Manuel's best friend kids, "that was so…"
[SAY SOMETHING ORIGINAL]

While unpacking in their hotel room on the youth group overnight, Dawn's friends observe
that she has packed each and every one of her toiletry items in a separate Ziploc bag. The girls giggle and one teases good naturedly, "You are so…" [SAY SOMETHING ORIGINAL]

SAY SOMETHING ORIGINAL.
Instead of "that's so gay," try…

ludicrous	weak.	behind the times	way out
ridiculous	pathetic	outmoded	eccentric
foolish	sad	passé	quirky
silly	wretched	weird.	unconventional
goofy	feeble	wacky	wild
laughable	mindless	odd	original
childish	tedious	bizarre	annoying
senseless	dull	strange	maddening
pointless	boring	curious	irritating
useless	monotonous	peculiar	grating
meaningless	unfashionable	unusual	bothersome
tired	outdated	outlandish	frustrating

ACTIVITY 5: FROM BYSTANDER TO ALLY

OVERVIEW

Participants reflect on situations in which they have been a silent bystander and explore what it takes to move from a passive bystander to an active ally role. Through case studies and role play, participants identify specific strategies for being an ally to others and articulate responses to name-calling and disrespectful behavior.

DIRECTIONS

1. Prior to the activity, copy 10 WAYS TO BE AN ALLY on to a large sheet of chart paper.

2. Read the following scenario aloud to the group:

One of the students at your lunch table accidentally knocks over a bowl of food. The student next to her snaps, "You're such a retard." You shrink at the sound of this affront, especially since you are aware that another student at the table has a brother with a mental disability, but you avert your eyes and say nothing.

3. Ask participants if they can relate to this scenario. Ask them to think of a time when they have heard language used in a way that made them or others feel uncomfortable, yet no one put a stop to it. Provide each participant with an index card and ask them to briefly describe such an instance, making sure to include details about how others responded to the incident. Instruct them to keep the descriptions anonymous by omitting their names, and the names and identifying characteristics of others.

ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

Objectives:

- To increase awareness of bystander behavior

- To explore strategies for acting as an ally to others

- To build skills for responding to name-calling and disrespectful behavior

Time: 45 – 60 minutes
Grade Level: 8 – 12

Materials: chart paper, markers, index cards, 10 WAYS TO BE AN ALLY chart

4. Collect the index cards, shuffle them and redistribute so that each participant has a card written by someone else.

Ask for a volunteer to read their card aloud and then discuss the following questions:

- What do you think would have been the right thing to do in this situation?

- Why do you think that no one put a stop to the negative behavior in each situation?

Repeat this process 2-3 more times or as much as time allows.

OPTION: Rather than redistributing the cards to participants, select cards yourself that you feel are most appropriate and ask for volunteers to read them aloud.

ACTIVITY 5 CONTINUED

5. Post a sheet of chart paper and divide it into two columns (leave a space at the top to fill in the column headings later). Ask participants why they think there is often a discrepancy between what people know is the right thing to do and how they actually respond. Ask what stops people from doing the "right thing" in situations like these and chart their responses in the first column (e.g., fear, ignorance, peer pressure, prejudice).

6. Ask participants what the term is for someone who witnesses an incident, but doesn't get involved. Write BYSTANDER at the top of the first column of the chart. Ask what the term is for someone who speaks out or takes actions that are supportive of someone else. Write ALLY at the top of the second column.

7. Insert an arrow between the two column headings (BYSTANDER ⇨ALLY). Ask participants what they think it would take to shift bystander to ally behavior and chart their responses in the second column (e.g., courage, information, self-confidence, compassion).

8. Tell participants that you would like them to consider concrete ways that they can act as an ally when offensive language is used around them. As an example, play the "Party" radio ad from the ThinkB4YouSpeak campaign (see Appendix B). Ask participants to identify the ways in which the football player acted as an ally (e.g. he challenged negative behavior, provided accurate information, expressed his feelings, stood confident and remained calm).

9. Divide participants into small groups of 4 – 6 and have each group select a recorder. Provide each group with a sheet of chart paper and several of the index cards from step #3 above. Instruct groups to discuss specific ways that the bystanders in each scenario could have been allies and to chart their ideas.

SHORT TAKES: TEN THINGS TO SAY TO "THAT'S SO GAY"

- It's perfectly fine to use gay when referring to gay people, but not acceptable as a way to describe something silly or stupid.

- It's not okay to use a word that describes someone's identity as a put-down.

- How would you feel if who you are was used as an insult?

- I know you don't mean any harm when you say "that's so gay," but that expression is offensive to a lot of people, so please don't use it.

- Regardless of how it is intended, using gay to describe something negative reflects a long history of prejudice against LGBT people, so please don't use it in that way.

- There are so many different ways to say what you mean that are not insulting to others. Be imaginative and say something original.

- We have all been on the receiving end of an insult and felt its sting, so why wouldn't you put a little effort into avoiding language that hurts others?

- "Everyone" doesn't say "that's so gay." I don't say it and if you care about others' feelings, you won't say it either.

- Just because a lot of people say "that's so gay" doesn't make it any less hurtful. You can be an example to others by removing this expression from your vocabulary.

- It's not fair to use clichés about "political correctness" as an excuse for disrespecting others. Why say "that's so gay" if you are aware that it is offensive to many people?

ACTIVITY 5 CONTINUED

10. Reconvene the group and have participants highlight a few ally behaviors that they identified. Post the charts in the classroom where they can serve as an ongoing reminder.

>   OPTION: If time allows, ask each group to select one scenario to perform as a role play. Groups should act out their scenario twice—once as written and a second time demonstrating ally behavior. Audience members can be invited to "cut the action" at the appropriate time and step in to show additional strategies for acting as an ally.

11. Post the chart entitled 10 WAYS TO BE AN ALLY and highlight strategies that have not already been discussed. Reinforce to participants that even if they are not personally to blame for the disrespectful language and behavior around them, they may be part of the problem if they ignore it, laugh at it or do nothing in response.

>   NOTE: The following programs are great ways to build and sustain ally behavior in your school or organization:

>   • Ally Week (www.allyweek.org)
>   An annual week of action that engages youth in identifying and supporting allies in their schools, and encouraging peers to support an Ally Pledge to intervene in bullying and harassment throughout the school year.

>   • No Name-Calling Week (www.nonamecallingweek.org)
>   An annual week of educational activities aimed at ending name-calling of all kinds and providing schools with the tools and inspiration to launch an ongoing dialogue about ways to eliminate bullying in their communities.

10 WAYS TO BE AN ALLY

1. DON'T LAUGH. Let others know that jokes and comments based on race, religion, sexual orientation, gender, ethnicity, etc. are not funny.

2. SPEAK UP! If you feel safe, let those who behave disrespectfully know that you don't appreciate it.

3. CHALLENGE BYSTANDERS. If you feel safe, let spectators know they are not helping.

4. DON'T "GET EVEN." Responding to meanness with meanness won't help matters.

5. BE A FRIEND. Show kindness and support to the targets of negative behavior.

6. INVOLVE ADULTS. Tell a teacher or counselor about ongoing incidents and get support at home from parents and family members.

7. BE NONJUDGMENTAL. Demonstrate to others that you are willing to listen and talk with an open mind.

8. BE INCLUSIVE. Ensure that your language and behavior are respectful to all people.

9. BE SELF-REFLECTIVE. Be aware of your own prejudices and work to change them.

10. TAKE ACTION! Speak out against bias in your community and in the media.

ACTIVITY 6: PLANNING A SCHOOL WIDE THINKB4YOUSPEAK CAMPAIGN

OVERVIEW

In this culmination activity, participants explore ways to bring the message of the ad campaign to the broader school community. Using the campaign resources, they devise and implement a plan for changing the school culture with regard to the use of negative language.

DIRECTIONS

NOTE: This concluding activity engages students in the planning of a school wide project that spreads the message of the ThinkB4youSpeak campaign. As a prerequisite, students should have previously viewed the campaign ads and participated in several of the activities in this guide.

1. Prior to the activity, write ORGANIZING FOR CHANGE at the top of a large sheet of chart paper. Divide it into six rows and label them as follows: BEGINNING STATE, TARGET AUDIENCE, DESIRED END STATE, OPPORTUNITIES, OBSTACLES and INFLUENCERS AND PARTNERS.

2. Ask participants to summarize, based on the ads and activities they have experienced, the message of the ThinkB4You-Speak campaign (i.e., homophobic language and anti-LGBT bias and behavior are hurtful and harmful). Ask them to reflect on what it might take to create actual change in school, youth groups and other settings around this message.

3. As a first step, ask participants to consider public service ads that have influenced them in the past. Ask for a few volunteers to share examples and discuss how those messages took hold (i.e., in what settings were they experienced? How were they reinforced by others? What incidents or events do they associate with the ad? What attitude or behavior changes did they inspire?) Examples of impactful ad campaigns might include the following:

- Above the Influence
- We are all Africans
- You could learn a lot from a dummy (seatbelt safety)
- I am an American (post 9-11 unity and tolerance)

4. Post the ORGANIZING FOR CHANGE chart and have participants brainstorm the following topics/questions as a way to focus in on effective change strategies.

- BEGINNING STATE (what is the problem behavior that we want to change?)

- TARGET AUDIENCE (who do we want to reach/impact with the message?)

- DESIRED END STATE (what would success look like?)

- OPPORTUNITIES (are there occasions or openings for bringing the message to others, such as a diversity day, tolerance club, etc.?)

- OBSTACLES (what opposition or challenges should we anticipate and plan for?)

- INFLUENCERS AND PARTNERS (what groups have the status or power to help advance the message? Who are our natural allies in this effort?)

    OPTION: Rather than brainstorming as a whole group, divide participants into six groups and have each focus on one topic. Reconvene and have each group report back to the class.

5. Divide participants into four groups and provide each with a sheet of chart paper. Have each group select a recorder and a reporter. Assign each group to review one of the following four types of ads from the ThinkB4YouSpeak" campaign: (a) TV ads; (b) radio spots; (c) "That's So" print ads; and (d) Dictionary print ads. Instruct groups to discuss and chart ways in which each ad and message might be used to create awareness and change among their peers.

    NOTE: Examples of strategies that participants might identify include disseminating/posting the campaign ads, designing and disseminating their own posters/ads, conducting surveys/research to document the problem, writing articles for a school or local newspaper/ Website, disseminating the message through popular blogs or via MySpace and other social networking forums, conducting an assembly program, organizing an Ally Week or No Name-Calling Week, conducting LGBT awareness or anti-bullying trainings for school clubs, youth groups, sports teams, etc.

6. Reconvene participants and have the reporters share back their group's ideas. Discuss which ones seem most practical and potentially effective and, either by vote or consensual decision making, select a few ideas for implementation.

7. Have participants identify a name/slogan for their initiative—a response or catch phrase that they believe can impact the youth culture with regard to the use of negative language. They can simply adopt the campaign slogans ("Knock it off!" and "Think B4 You Speak") or come up with something original that they think will be more effective among their peers. (In one Connecticut high school, students successfully introduced the simple phrase, "not cool," as a response to disrespectful language; the phrase caught on and helped to change the culture around name-calling.)

8. Provide time, support and resources in future classes/meetings for participants to implement their plan. Build in ways to evaluate their efforts and use these assessments to inform future efforts to reduce homophobic language, anti-LGBT bias and name-calling and bullying in general.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

WHAT'S IN A WORD?

Below is a brief summary of some of the many theories about the origin of the words "faggot," "dyke," and "gay," and how their meanings have evolved over time. Use Lesson Plan: What Do "Faggot" and "Dyke" Mean? (at www.glsen.org) in conjunction with these histories to deepen students' understanding of the impact of homophobic language and anti-LGBT bias.

THE HISTORY OF THE WORD "FAGGOT"

You may know that "faggot" means "a bundle of sticks." The word "faggot" has been part of the English language since the 1300s. When and how did it become an anti-gay slur?

During the European Inquisitions, "faggot" referred to the sticks used to set fires for burning heretics, or people who opposed the teachings of the Catholic Church. Heretics were required to gather bundles of sticks ("faggots") and carry them to the fire that was being built for them.

Heretics who changed their beliefs to avoid being killed were forced to wear a "faggot" design embroidered on their sleeve, to show everyone that they had opposed the Church. Since it was hard to live with such a bad reputation, people began to use the word "faggot" to refer to anything that was considered to be a burden or difficult to bear. Unfortunately, the term quickly became a sexist insult, as people used it to disrespect women in the same way the term "ball and chain" is used today.

The word "faggot" appeared in the United States during the early 20th century. It was used to refer to men who were seen as less masculine than people believed they should be. During the course of the 20th century, the word "faggot" became the slur most commonly used to abuse gay men and men perceived to be gay. In fact, "faggot" has become a general insult that is often used to humiliate any man. Since many people are biased against LGBT people, being called "faggot" is a big fear of many heterosexual men, and thus the easiest way to hurt them. Considering the long and violent history of the word, it's important for people to understand its meaning before they use it so carelessly.

THE HISTORY OF THE WORD "DYKE"

"Dyke" is a very old word. You may have encountered it already in a Science class; it's a mass of mineral matter that fills a hole in a rock formation. Or, you may have seen it in a Geography lesson; it refers to a variety of ditches, trenches, caves and dams that have been built by many different civilizations. None of these definitions, however, relates to the modern usage of "dyke" as a slur directed at lesbian women or women perceived to be lesbian.

One theory about the origin of "dyke" as an anti-lesbian slur suggests that "dyke" came from the word "hermaphrodite," which used to be a very common term describing people born with ambiguous sex characteristics. When the word "hermaphrodite" was more commonly used, popular variations such as "morphodite" and "morphodike" sprang up. Some people believe that "dyke" came from "morphodike" and was used to reinforce the stereotype that all lesbians look and act like men.

Early British history provides another theory about the origin of the word "dyke." Boudicca (pronounced "bou-dikka") was a chieftain/queen in the Iceni tribe in Britain during the 1st century C.E. At the death of her husband, according to his will, Boudicca was given control of the tribe. But the Romans, who were occupying Britain, did not recognize the will of Boudicca's husband, and seized his land and property, flogging Boudicca

and raping her two daughters in the process. Boudicca then led a victorious armed revolt against the Romans, but they ultimately countered the attack and slaughtered many Iceni.

No matter which theory is the most accurate, all point to the word "dyke" having its roots in beliefs about how women are supposed to look and act. Women who've refused to conform to society's expectations of them often have been labeled as "dykes," whether or not they've identified as lesbians.

THE HISTORY OF THE WORD "GAY"

The word gay dates back to the 12th century and comes from the Old French "gai," meaning "full of joy or mirth." It may also be connected with the Old High German "gahi," meaning impulsive. For centuries, gay was used commonly in speech and literature to mean happy, carefree, bright and showy, and did not take on any sexual meaning until the 1600s.

At that time the meaning of gay as carefree evolved to imply that a person was unrestrained by morals and prone to decadence and promiscuity. A prostitute might have been described as a "gay woman" and a womanizer as a "gay man." "Gay house" was commonly used to refer to a brothel and, later, "gaiety" was used as a common name for certain places of entertainment.

In the 1890s, the term "gey cat" (a Scottish variant of gay) was used to describe a vagrant who offered sexual services to women, or a young traveler who was new to the road and in the company of an older man. This latter use suggests that the younger man was in a sexually submissive role and may be among the first times that gay was used to imply a homosexual relationship.

In 1951, gay appeared in the Oxford English Dictionary for the first time as slang for homosexual, but was most likely used in this way "underground" at least 30 years earlier. For example, in the 1938 film, *Bringing Up Baby,* Cary Grant dons a feathery robe when his clothes are sent to the cleaners and says, "…I just went gay." This line (ad-libbed by Grant) can be interpreted to mean that he was behaving in a happy-go-lucky or light-hearted way, but is accepted by many as the first use of gay to mean homosexual in a mainstream movie.

Today gay is a socially accepted term for homosexual people. However, this word is rooted in the classification of certain types of people as illicit, counterculture or behaving in ways that go against the respectable conventions of society. When gay is used today to mean stupid or undesirable (it has only been used in this way since the 1990s), it carries with it a history of negative judgment and rigid ideas about who or what is acceptable.

ZERO INDIFFERENCE:
ENDING NAME-CALLING IN SCHOOLS

The following resource for educators is an excerpt from *Zero Indifference: A How-to Guide for Ending Name-Calling in Schools.* For the full resource, visit www.glsen.org.

A "Zero-Indifference" response to name-calling means that members of the school community take collective action to stop name-calling and bullying. Although there is no one right way to intervene, consistent intervention is key to establishing a school environment where all students feel safe and respected.

THREE THINGS THAT YOU SHOULD AVOID:

1. Ignore the incident.
2. Excuse it.
3. Allow yourself to become immobilized by fear or uncertainty.

EFFECTIVE INTERVENTIONS CONSIST OF TWO STEPS:

1. Stop the behavior (immediately).
2. Educate those involved (publicly, on the spot, or later, in private).

THE FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE HOW AND WHEN YOU RESPOND ARE:

* The needs of the targeted student.
* How much time is available at the time of the incident.
* The location of the incident — whether it occurred in an unstructured setting, such as the hallway or cafeteria, or in a structured setting, such as a classroom, where you have the time and support to address the incident.
* The age of the involved students and possible intent of the harassing student(s).
* Your knowledge of the facts, such as the relationship between the involved students and their prior history— whether this is an isolated incident or part of a pattern of behavior.

THE DETERMINING FACTOR IN WHETHER YOU EDUCATE ON THE SPOT OR PRIVATELY, IMMEDIATELY OR LATER, IS THE NEEDS OF THE TARGETED STUDENT.

When incidents of name-calling and bullying occur, it may seem logical and appropriate to take charge and determine what is best for students. To be respectful of the needs of targeted students, you can stop the name-calling immediately and set aside a time to educate harassing students later. By first meeting privately with targeted students, you can gather necessary information and discuss what might work best for the students.

DISTINGUISH BETWEEN WHAT FEELS RIGHT TO YOU AND WHAT IS BEST FOR A GIVEN STUDENT OR SITUATION.

It's important to acknowledge that incidents of name-calling and bullying can be complex, and they require educators' thoughtful, critical judgment. To effectively respond, keep in mind that what "feels right" to adults may have negative consequences for targeted students who may cringe at the attention public intervention draws, and may feel increased concern for their safety on the way home, when no one will be there to protect them.

WHAT TO DO ABOUT "THAT'S SO GAY" AND STUDENTS' RELUCTANCE TO ADMIT THAT IT (AND OTHER ANTI-LGBT SLURS) ACTUALLY MEAN SOMETHING

The chart below suggests a strategy for dealing, not only with one of the often-used expressions in schools, but with any instance in which students respond to your intervention by saying, "We don't mean anything by that," "It's just a word we use," or "Everyone says it." The responses listed below include the benefits and challenges of each question.

RESPONSES	BENEFITS	CHALLENGES
"What do you mean by that?"	Doesn't dismiss it.	Students might not be forthcoming.
"How do you think a gay person might feel?"	Puts responsibility on student to come up with solution.	Student may not say anything.
"Do you say that as a compliment?"	Asking this rhetorical question in a non-accusatory tone may lighten things up enough for your students to shake their heads and admit, "No."	Students may just laugh off your question, or reiterate that they're "Just joking."
"So the connotations are negative?" or "So maybe it's not a good thing?"	Not accusatory. Could open up the floor for discussion.	There's always the chance that students will still be reluctant to speak up.

FURTHER RESOURCES

The following is a brief list of resources for further exploring LGBT issues and anti-LGBT bias. For a more complete listing of resources, visit GLSEN's BookLink at *www.glsen.org/booklink*.

BOOKS/ARTICLES FOR EDUCATORS

- *Always My Child: A Parent's Guide to Understanding Your Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgendered, or Questioning Son or Daughter* by Kevin Jennings and Pat Shapiro (Simon & Schuster 2003)

- *Becoming Visible: A Reader in Gay & Lesbian History for High School & College Students* by Kevin Jennings (Alyson, 1994)

- *Beyond Diversity Day: A Q&A on Gay and Lesbian Issues in Schools* by Arthur Lipkin (Rowman & Littlefield, 2003)

- *Full Spectrum: A New Generation of Writing about Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning, and Other Identities* by David Levithan and Billy Merrell (Random House, 2006)

- *"If These Were Racial Slurs, Teachers Would Be Stopping Them" … Three Activists Object* by Beth Reis, Mona Mendoza and Frieda Takamura (Safe Schools Coalition, 2000)

- *Trans Liberation: Beyond Pink or Blue* by Leslie Feinberg (Beacon press, 1999)

- *Troubling Intersections of Race and Sexuality: Queer Students of Color and Anti-Oppressive Education* by Kevin Kumashiro (Rowman & Littlefield, 2001)

- *Understanding Gay and Lesbian Youth: Lessons for Straight School Teachers, Counselors, and Administrators* by David Campos (Rowman & Littlefield, 2005)

BOOKS FOR TEENS

- *Down to the Bone* by Mayra Lazara Dole (HarperCollins Publishers, 2008)

- *Gay America: Struggle for Equality* by Lines Alsenas (Amulet, 2008)

- *Hear Us Out!: Lesbian and Gay Stories of Struggle, Progress, and Hope, 1950 to the Present* by Nancy Garden (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007)

- *Luna* by Julie Anne Peters (Megan Tingley Books, 2006)

- *The Misfits* by James Howe (Simon & Schuster, 2003)

- *Orphea Proud* by Sharon Dennis Wyeth (Random House Children's Books, 2006)

- *Revolutionary Voices: A Multicultural Queer Youth Anthology* by Amy Sonnie (Editor) (Alyson Publications, 2000)

EDUCATIONAL VIDEOS/DVDS

- *As If It Matters: Six Stories beneath the Surface* (GSA Network, 2001)

- *In Other Words* (National Film Board of Canada, 2001)

- *Let's Get Real* (Groundspark, 2003)

- *No Dumb Questions* (New Day Films, 2001)

- *Out of the Past* (Jeff Dupre/GLSEN, 1998)

- *Straightlaced* (Groundspark, 2009)

WEBSITES/ORGANIZATIONS

- Advocates for Youth, *www.advocatesforyouth.org*

- Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, *www.glsen.org*

- Ally Week, *www.allyweek.org*

- Day of Silence, *www.dayofsilence.org*

- Local School Climate Survey, *www.glsen.org/research*

- No Name-Calling Week, *www.nonamecallingweek.org*

- Gay-Straight Alliance Network, *www.gsanetwork.org*

- Gay Straight Alliance for Safe Schools, *www.GSAforSafeSchools.org*

- Parents, Friends, and Families of Lesbians and Gays, *www.pflag.org*

- Safe Schools Coalition, *www.safeschoolscoalition.org*

- Teaching Tolerance, *www.tolerance.org*

APPENDIX A:
TELEVISION ADS

TELEVISION AD | FITTING ROOM :30

OPEN INSIDE A CLOTHING STORE FITTING ROOM. TWO TEEN-AGE GIRLS ARE TRYING ON CLOTHES. ONE PUTS ON A TOP THAT'S PRETTY UGLY.

GIRL 1: Do you like this top?

GIRL 2: Ugh. That's so gay.

GIRL 1: Really?

GIRL 2: It's totally gay.

CUT TO SEE HILARY DUFF IS ALSO IN THE DRESSING ROOM. SHE'S HOLDING CLOTHES ON HANGERS IN HER HANDS, LIKE SHE'S ABOUT TO TRY THEM ON.

HILARY DUFF: You know, you really shouldn't say that.

GIRL 2: Say what?

HILARY DUFF: Say that something is "gay" when you mean something is bad. It's in sulting.

THE GIRLS LOOK AT EACH OTHER, NOT QUITE UNDERSTANDING. SO HILARY CONTINUES.

HILARY DUFF: I mean, imagine if every time something was bad, everybody said "Wow. That's so "girl wearing a skirt as a top."

THE GIRLS THINK ABOUT THIS FOR A MOMENT AS HILARY ADDS…

HILARY DUFF: I like the pants.

CUT TO TITLE CARDS AS WE HEAR HILARY SAY…

HILARY VOICE OVER: When you say "that's so gay," do you realize what you say? Knock it off.

TELEVISION AD | CASHIERS :30

EMMA: Are you going out tonight?

JULIA: I can't. My parents say I have to go home right after work.

EMMA: Uhh, that's so gay.

JULIA: It's totally gay.

CUSTOMER: That's so Emma and Julia.

EMMA: What do you mean "That's so Emma and Julia?"

CUSTOMER: You know, when something is dumb or stupid, you say, "That's so Emma and Julia."

EMMA: Who says that?

CUSTOMER: Everyone. (Said matter-of-factly.)

AVO: Imagine if who you are were used as an insult.

CUT TO TITLE CARD.

AVO: When you say "that's so gay" do you realize what you say? Knock it off.

TELEVISION AD | PIZZA SHOP :30

WE OPEN ON THREE YOUNG GUYS SITTING IN A BOOTH AT A PIZZERIA.

Male teen #1: Yo, check out the chef.

CUT TO A SILLY-LOOKING CHEF STATUE INSIDE THE RESTAURANT.

Male Teen #2: That's so gay.

THE GUYS THEN HEAR A VOICE COMING FROM THE NEXT BOOTH.

Wanda's voice: Please don't say that.

Male Teen #3: Say what?

THE GUYS TURN TO SEE THAT THE VOICE BELONGS TO WANDA SYKES WHO IS SITTING IN THE BOOTH NEXT TO THEM.

Wanda: Please don't say that something is gay, when you mean something is dumb or stupid. It's insulting.

THE BOYS DON'T QUITE GET IT YET, SO WANDA ELABORATES. PICKING UP A PEPPERSHAKER.

Wanda: It's like if I thought this peppershaker was stupid and dumb and I said, "Wow, this peppershaker is so 16 year-old boy with a cheesy moustache".

THE GUYS NOD THEIR HEADS IN SILENCE. WE SEE ONE OF THE BOYS IS TRYING TO GROW A MOUSTACHE THAT HASN'T QUITE FULLY GROWN. WANDA QUIETLY RETURNS TO HER MEAL.

Wanda: Just saying…

Fade to Title Card: When you say, "That's so gay" do you realize what you say?

AVO/Wanda: When you say, "That's so gay" do you realize what you say? Knock it off.

APPENDIX B:
RADIO ADS

RADIO AD | PARTY

PARTY :30

ANNOUNCER VO: How to deal with someone who says "That's so gay."

ANNOUNCER VO: Outsmart them.

SFX: Party sounds under

GIRL 1: This party is like sooo gay.

GIRL 2: Totally.

GUY: Excuse me, but did you ladies know the word gay used to mean happy or excited? Then, it became a word used to describe gay people. Then, somehow it came to mean dumb, or stupid. Which is how you just used it. Which is not very nice.

GIRL 1: Ew! That guy is on the football team AND super smart and he totally hates us now!

GIRL 2: Totally.

ANNOUNCER: When you say "that's so gay," do you realize what you say? Knock it off. Learn more at ThinkB4YouSpeak.com.

ANNOUNCER: Brought to you by GLSEN and the Ad Council.

RADIO AD | CAFETERIA

CAFETERIA :30

ANNOUNCER VO: How to deal with someone who says "that's so gay."

ANNOUNCER: Turn it around.

SFX: School cafeteria noise under.

KID 1: Did your mom cut the crusts off your peanut butter and jelly sandwich? That is SO gay.

KID 2: Oh yea? How would you like it if I said, that's so guy who makes fun of other people's sandwiches mostly because he's secretly jealous of them, and who also has ketchup on his face.

KID 1: Ok! Jeez! Sorry. Wait, do I seriously have ketchup on me?

ANNOUNCER: When you say "that's so gay," do you realize what you say? Knock it off. Learn more at ThinkB4YouSpeak.com.

ANNOUNCER: Brought to you by GLSEN and the Ad Council.

CAFETERIA :20

ANNOUNCER VO: How to deal with someone who says "that's so gay."

ANNOUNCER: Turn it around.

SFX: School cafeteria noise under.

KID 1: Did your mom cut the crusts off your sandwich? That is SO gay.

KID 2: Hey, how would you like if I said, that's so mean guy who makes fun of other people's sandwiches because he's jealous of them?

KID 1: OK! Sorry!

ANNOUNCER: When you say "that's so gay," do you realize what you say? Knock it off. Learn more at ThinkB4YouSpeak.com

ANNOUNCER: Brought to you by GLSEN and the Ad Council.

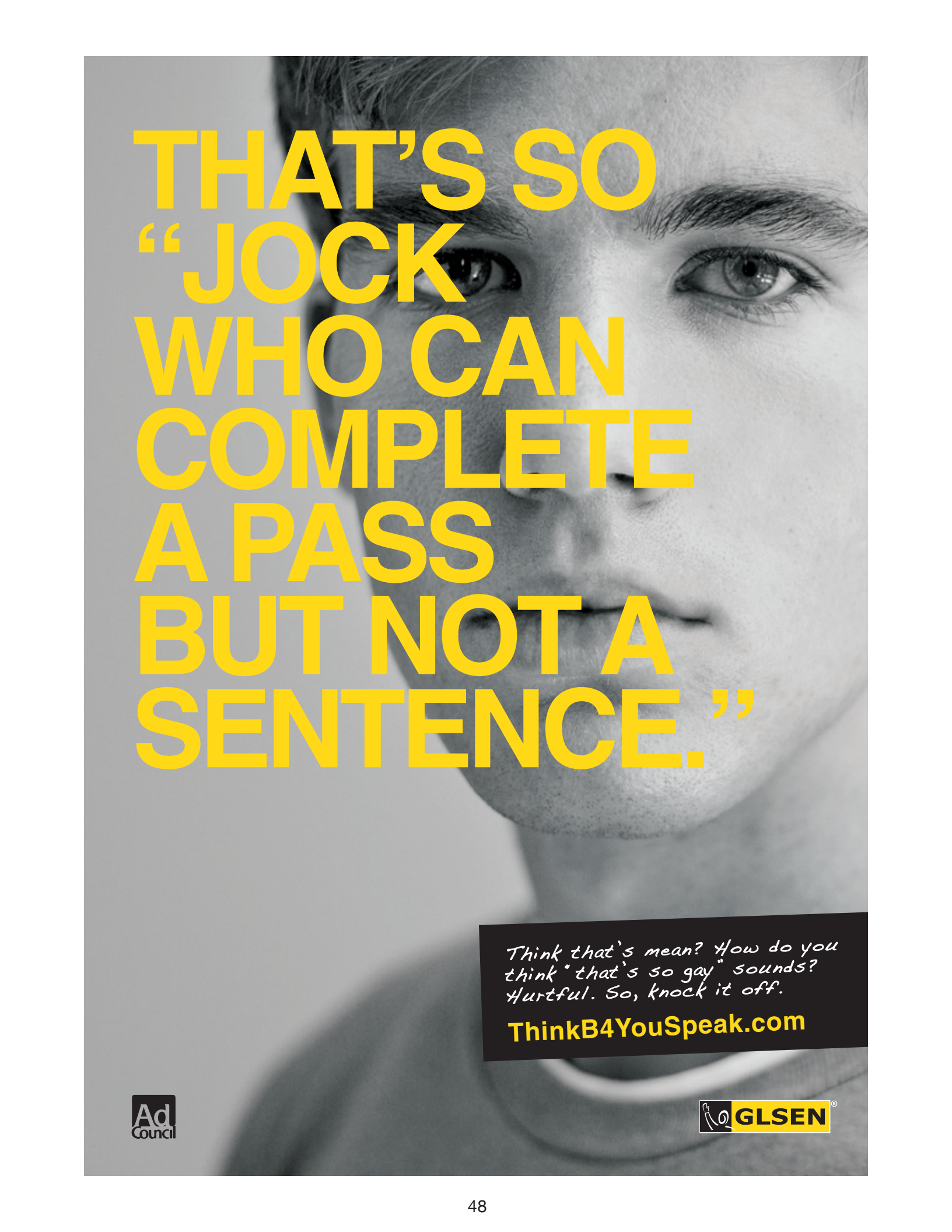# RADIO AD | ANNOUNCER READ

ANNOUNCER READ :15

ANNOUNCER: This commercial is so person sitting around listening to the radio. Doesn't make a lot of sense, right? Neither does "that's so gay." It's a hurtful, insulting phrase.

When you say, "that's so gay" do you realize what you say? Knock it off.
Learn more at ThinkB4YouSpeak.com

ANNOUNCER: Brought to you by GLSEN and the Ad Council.
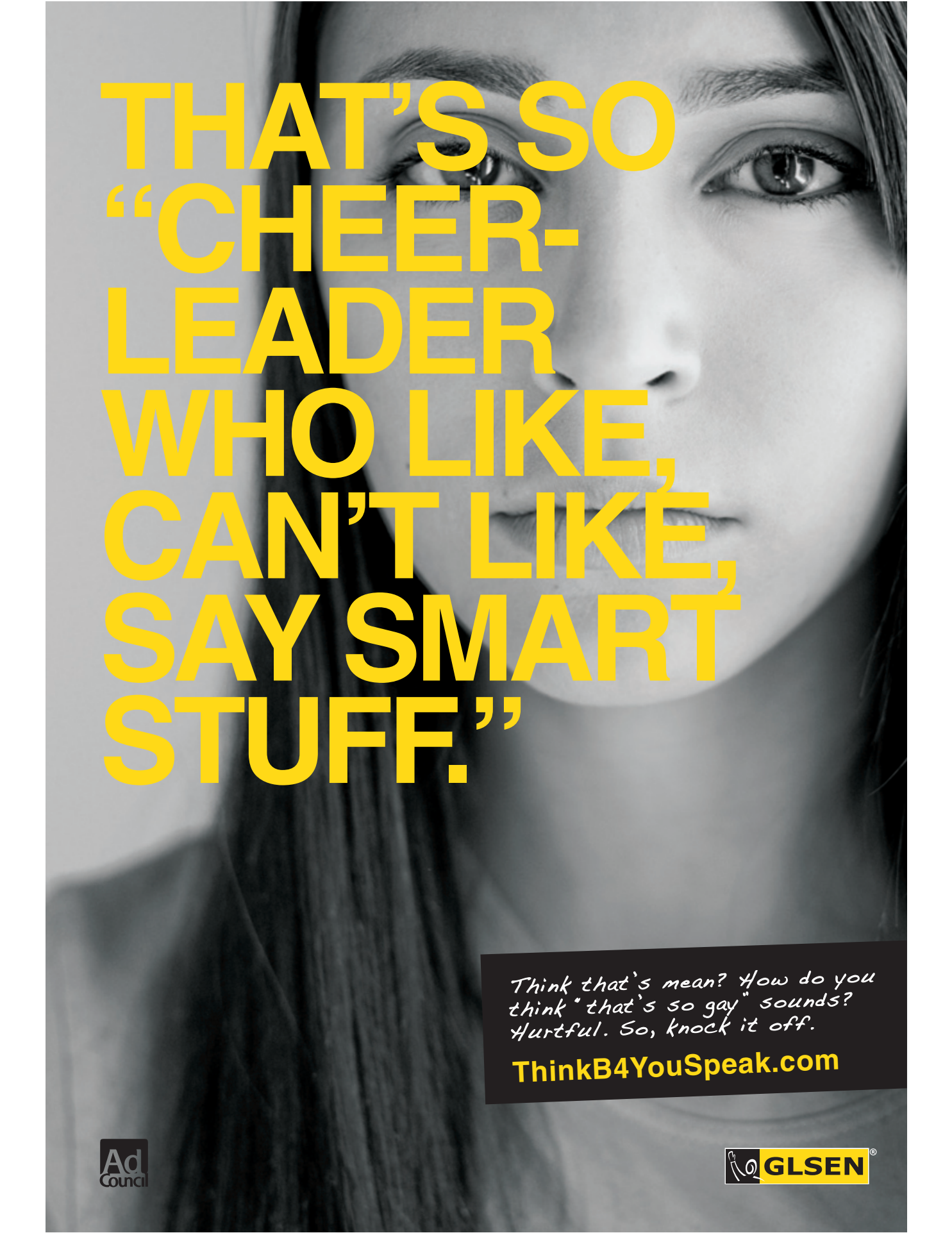
APPENDIX C:
THAT'S SO PRINT ADS

THAT'S SO "JOCK WHO CAN COMPLETE A PASS BUT NOT A SENTENCE."

Think that's mean? How do you think "that's so gay" sounds? Hurtful. So, knock it off.

ThinkB4YouSpeak.com

Ad Council

GLSEN®

THAT'S SO "CHEER-LEADER WHO LIKE, CAN'T LIKE, SAY SMART STUFF."

Think that's mean? How do you think "that's so gay" sounds? Hurtful. So, knock it off.

ThinkB4YouSpeak.com

Ad Council

GLSEN®

THAT'S SO "GAMER GUY WHO HAS MORE VIDEOGAMES THAN FRIENDS."

Think that's mean? How do you think "that's so gay" sounds? Hurtful. So, knock it off.

ThinkB4YouSpeak.com

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APPENDIX D:
DICTIONARY PRINT ADS

gay (gā)   **1.** there once was a time when all "gay" meant was "happy." then it meant "homosexual." now, people are saying "that's so gay" to mean dumb and stupid. which is pretty insulting to gay people (and we don't mean the "happy" people). **2.** so please, knock it off. **3.** go to ThinkB4YouSpeak.com

dyke (dīk) **1.** be honest with yourself. you're not thinking of "an embankment that holds back and controls water." the problem is, words like "dyke" and "faggot" are so commonly used as insults these days, it's really hard to remember a time when they weren't. **2.** so please, knock it off. **3.** learn more at ThinkB4YouSpeak.com

fag·got (faɡ′ət) **1.** there was a time when the word "faggot" meant a bundle of sticks. but then people started using it in an insulting, offensive way and things changed. so when you say things like "homo," "dyke" and "that's so gay" trying to be funny, remember, you may actually be hurting someone. **2.** so please, knock it off. **3.** get more information at ThinkB4YouSpeak.com

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