

Sharing Knowledge:
**May 17th is The International
Day Against Homophobia,
Transphobia and Biphobia**

Humber College and the University of Guelph-Humber (the College) is committed to providing an accessible learning, working, and living environment for the Humber community. It is the College's goal to create a community that is inclusive of all persons and supports all members of the community in an equitable manner. In creating such a community, the College aims to foster a climate of understanding and mutual respect for the dignity and worth of all persons.

May 17th: The International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia

What is May 17th: A Worldwide Celebration of Sexual and Gender Diversities¹

The International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia was created in 2004 to draw the attention to the violence and discrimination experienced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex people and all other people with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities or expressions, and sex characteristics.

The date of May 17th was specifically chosen to commemorate the World Health Organization's decision in 1990 to declassify homosexuality as a mental disorder.

May 17 is now celebrated in more than 130 countries, including 37 where same-sex acts are illegal. Thousands of initiatives, big and small, are reported throughout the planet.

May 17 represents a major global annual landmark to draw the attention of decision makers, the media, the public, corporations, opinion leaders, local authorities, etc. to the alarming situation faced by people with diverse sexual orientations, gender identities or expressions, and sex characteristics.

The International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia is not one centralized campaign; rather it is a moment that everyone can take advantage of to take action, on whatever issue and in whatever format that they wish. Many different entities participate in the global mobilization around May 17. Some organizations add Lesbophobia or Intersexphobia as distinct focuses. Acronyms also vary, from the initial IDAHO to IDAHOTB or IDAHOBIT. The Day is not one central trademarked brand and everyone is free to communicate as they wish.

The theme in Canada is: **'For some, showing their colours isn't a choice'**. For Prime Minister Justin Trudeau this theme "highlights the difficult reality that many LGBTQ2 people continue to face high rates of harassment, bullying, and violent crimes".² "As governments and as citizens, we all have a role to play to make sure LGBTQ2 people feel safe and supported and can participate fully in society".³

To learn more about how you can better ensure 2SLGBTQ+ college members feel safe and supported, please refer to the recently updated [Gender Diversity Policy](#).

References:

1. *What is May 17? ~ May17.org*. May17.org. (n.d.). <https://may17.org/about/>.
2. Statement by the Prime Minister on the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia <https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/statements/2021/05/17/statement-prime-minister-international-day-against-homophobia>
3. Statement by the Prime Minister on the International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia <https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/statements/2021/05/17/statement-prime-minister-international-day-against-homophobia>

This document is available in an alternate format upon request.