

## **Bridges of Respect: Homophobia Reduction** HiTOPS Educator

### **Designed for: Professionals**

*“We are the community of tomorrow. How we are treated now, our experiences now, who we are able to become, will affect the world of tomorrow. Even though we’re young and gay, we’re people just like you.”*  
Chris, age 17

Homophobia – defined as the fear or hatred of lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) people – is so interwoven into our society that LGB youth face a constant struggle for positive self-esteem and a sense of community. Even today, with many LGB people living openly and becoming more visible in the media; LGB youth know they are different and that their difference is unacceptable. Sexual orientation is a topic that few people have the opportunity to discuss in an honest, factual, and respectful way.

This in-service will provide participants with an understanding of what it means to identify as an LGB adolescent and how to create a safe, supportive environment for all students. Definitions, activities, resources, and open discussion will enable participants to work more effectively with their students. An LGB young adult guest speaker provides personal experiences about growing up “different” in our society with an emphasis on what LGB teens need in their school in order to feel safe and included.

### **Our goals are to help professionals:**

- Consider the impact that being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender has on the lives of people growing up in this society
- Explore personal attitudes and values about sexual orientation
- Learn strategies for developing a safe and inclusive climate

**Average length of in-service:** 90 minutes; half-day; whole-day

**Recommended number of participants:** 20-100