

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

**Designed for:** Males and females, grades 7-12

*“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, bisexual & transgender (LGBT) people – is so interwoven into our society that LGBT youth face a constant struggle for positive self-esteem and a sense of community. Even today, with many LGBT people living openly and becoming more visible in the media; LGBT 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 class will provide participants with an understanding of what it means to identify as an LGBT adolescent. Using a comprehensive PowerPoint collection of drawings by youth\* who were asked to describe what they think their school is like for LGBT youth, the class will discuss their own school climate and the impact that being LGBT has on the lives of teens. An LGBT young adult guest speaker provides personal experiences about growing up “different” in our society with an emphasis on what LGBT students need in school in order to feel safe and included.

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

- Increase respect for the differences of others
- Explore personal attitudes and values about sexual orientation
- Evaluate the messages they receive about homosexuality and about people who are LGBT in order to move beyond stereotypes
- Consider healthy practices students can take to create a school environment where all students feel welcome

**Average length of program:** 45 minutes

**Recommended number of participants:** 10-30

\*The *Snapshot of My School* framed collection is available for display