You do not have to be lesbian, gay, bisexual or queer (LGBQ), or know someone who is, to be negatively affected by homophobia. Though homophobia actively oppresses LGBQ people, it also hurts heterosexuals.

- Homophobia prevents heterosexual individuals to form close, intimate relationships with members of their own sex, for fear of being perceived as LGBTQ.

- It locks people into rigid gender-based roles that inhibit creativity and self-expression.

- It is often used to stigmatize LGBQ individuals, those perceived to be LGBQ, children of LGBTQ parents, parents of LGBTQ children, and/or friends of LGBTQ individuals.

- It compromises human integrity by pressuring people to treat others badly, actions that are contrary to their basic humanity.

- Combined with sexism, homophobia can result in the invisibility or erasure of LGBQ lives and sexuality in school-based sex education discussion, keeping vital information from students.

- Homophobia is one cause of premature sexual involvement, which increases the chance of teen pregnancy and the spread of sexually-transmitted diseases. Young people, of all sexual identities, are often pressured to become heterosexually active to prove to themselves and others that they are “normal.”

By challenging homophobia, people are not only fighting oppression from specific groups of people, but are also striving for a society that accepts and celebrates the differences in all of us.

Source: From UCR LGBT Resource Center, Modified by CSUN Pride Center on 8/05/2013