



DIVERSITY

**Understanding and respecting the
diversity in your community.**



Diversity & Equity Office
Wilfrid Laurier University

What is diversity?

- **Diversity** refers to the individual characteristics and social background that makes each person unique, including **race, gender, religion, age, ability, and sexual orientation.**
- All members of your community have a right to feel **safe, accepted, and appreciated.** Respect for diversity through an awareness of your words and actions helps to create an inclusive and welcoming environment for all.



Respecting Diversity:

Choosing Inclusive Language

- Inclusive Language is language that does not exclude, insult, trivialize or stereotype on the basis of gender, disability, and race.
- Un-inclusive language reinforces negative attitudes and sets up barriers that can be difficult for members of your community to overcome.
- Even if your language is not intended to harass or discriminate, it can still be hurtful and exclusive. It is important to ***think before you speak*** to avoid language that could alienate and offend members or your community .



So what's wrong with using these common un-inclusive terms?

- **“That’s so gay”**
 - Using gay in to mean “stupid” can be hurtful to individuals indentifying as gay.
- **“That’s what she said”**
 - These jokes are offensive because they sexualize and objectify women. They also assume heterosexuality, discrediting diversity of sexual experiences.
- **Boyfriend or girlfriend**
 - Use the “partner” if you are unaware of someone’s sexual orientation. Making boyfriend/girlfriend assumptions can set up barriers causing individuals to feel unwelcome to express their identity.



- **“That test raped me”**

- Sexual assault and rape are grave social issues that need to be taken seriously. Mentioning rape in this context can also be hurtful as it may resurface negative memories for some individuals.

- **“Gypped” or “jewed”**

- Using these terms ascribes negative qualities to individuals of particular cultural groups (Jews and Gypsies). “Gypped” and “jewed” perpetuate stereotypes and may be hurtful and offensive.

- **“You’re/that’s retarded”**

- Using “retarded” as a replacement for “stupid” is demeaning to people with mental disabilities and creates a negative association.



Respecting Diversity

- It is important to be **open** and **welcoming** to diversity and to individuals who choose to disclose anything regarding personal diversity.
- How you react to a an issue of diversity can effect how a person will approach a new situation or relationship in the future. Your response in interactions can have a positive or negative effect.



Unlearn

- “**Unlearn**: A process of **removing barriers** that blind us to our authentic selves, questioning our classical conditioning, **deconstructing** and **re-ordering** our identities, identifying and discarding negative values, repeatedly **focusing awareness** towards one’s state of being.” – Steve D’Amico
- **UNLEARN** is an approach to life. It enables human connection and understanding that improves the quality of life for yourself and those around you.



inequity hate ageism resentment sexism
harassment violence inequity
prejudice SLAVERY greed discrimination harassment
racism SELFSHNESS ableism jealousy racism
harassment Apathy injustice contempt slavery
injustice

unlearn.TM

Learn more! Campus Resources

WLU Rainbow
Centre

Be You. Be Proud.

The **WLU Rainbow Centre** is dedicated to enhancing the university environment for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Queer individuals in the Laurier Community through awareness promotion, education, advocacy and support.



The **WLU Women's Centre** strives to challenge and examine gender inequalities. We hope to provide a space where women and trans people can feel safe and affirmed, in recognition of the gender-specific barriers that they often face.



The **Association of Black Students (ABS)** emphasizes empowerment, solidarity and progress by encouraging people to become more aware of and involved in overcoming social and racially based inequalities in our world.



The **Laurier chaplains** are all recognized leaders in their churches, and have been commissioned to represent their traditions on campus.


Questions?

- For more information, talk to your Don or contact the Diversity & Equity Office at diversity@wlu.ca
- Contact one of the centres in the Diversity & Equity Office
 - Rainbow Centre: rainbow@wlu.ca
 - Women's Centre: womenscentre@wlu.ca
 - Association of Black Students: abs@wlu.ca
 - Chaplains: bbork@wlu.ca



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



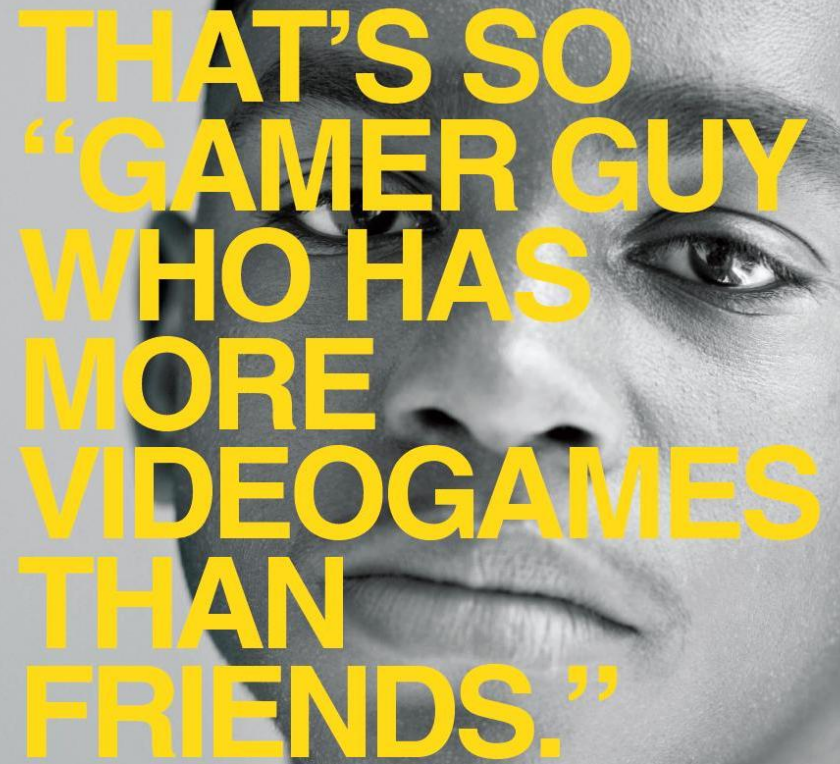
THAT'S SO
"CHEER-
LEADER
WHO LIKE,
CAN'T LIKE,
SAY SMART
STUFF."

*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?
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