

## Where else can I find help?

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### Other Campus Services @ WLU:

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- **Alternative Reporting**
- <http://www.wlu.ca/report>
  
- **Women's Centre**
- Ext. 4444 or
- <http://info.wlu.ca/~wwwwnc>

### Off Campus Resources

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- **The Heterosexuality Enquirer**
- <http://www.mun.ca/the/themain.html>
  
- **LGBT Youthline**
- 1-800-268-YOUTH
- [www.youthline.ca](http://www.youthline.ca)
  
- **GLOW at U Waterloo**
- [www.glow.uwaterloo.ca](http://www.glow.uwaterloo.ca)
  
- **PFLAG Canada**
- <http://www.pflag.ca>
  
- **EGALE Canada**
- <http://www.egale.ca>
  
- **Tri-Pride**
- <http://www.tri-pride.ca>

## How to find us:

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The Rainbow Centre can be found in Room 104 on the first floor of Macdonald House Residence. Enter into the front doors of MacDonald House from the Mac House Quad (across from the Dining Hall). Turn left and the Rainbow Centre is the first door on the left just past the recycling bins!



Macdonald House 104  
75 University Ave West  
Waterloo, Ontario  
Canada  
N2L 3C5  
Phone: 884-0710 ext. 3010  
Email: [rainbow@wlu.ca](mailto:rainbow@wlu.ca)  
<http://www.mylaurier.ca/rainbow>

## Heterosexism and Heterosexual Privilege



Macdonald House Room 104  
P. 519.884.0710 x3010  
[rainbow@wlu.ca](mailto:rainbow@wlu.ca)  
[www.mylaurier.ca/rainbow](http://www.mylaurier.ca/rainbow)

# What is Heterosexism & Heterosexual Privilege?

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**Heterosexism** is the societal belief that everyone is, or should be, heterosexual. It also assumes that all people are either a woman or a man. It denies and discriminates against any non-heterosexual form of behaviour, identity, relationship, or community.

Whether intentionally or unintentionally, our society gives privileges to heterosexuality and heterosexual persons, and devalues, mistreats, and discriminates against lesbian, gay, bisexual, two-spirited, transgender and/or queer (LGBTQ) individuals and those perceived to be so.

This **Heterosexual privilege** gives unearned and unchallenged advantages and rewards to heterosexuals just for being heterosexual. These same benefits are not automatically granted to LGBTQ persons.

Both of these things can lead to **heteronormativity**, which refers to the often unconscious assumption that everyone is heterosexual, and that every person falls within the strictly defined, socially accepted gender roles.

# Heterosexual Privilege Includes one's right to:

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**Show affection** in public safely and comfortably, without fear of harassment or violence;

**Openly talk** about one's partner and relationships to others without considering the consequences;

**Benefit** from societal acceptance: the assumption that heterosexual individuals and relationships are valid, healthy, and non-deviant;

**Assume** that all people and relationships are heterosexual, unless otherwise known;

**Not face rejection** from one's family and friends because of one's sexual orientation or gender identity;

**Raise children** without fear that their child will be rejected or harassed by peers because of their parents' sexual orientation or gender identities;

**Not risk being denied** employment, housing, or other services because of one's sexual orientation or gender identity.

# How does one challenge Heterosexism?

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**Challenging heterosexism** involves recognizing and questioning the power and privileges society provides to heterosexuals because of their assumed sexual orientation and gender identity.

It involves **respect** and **inclusion** of diversity for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities.

It involves **challenges the assumptions** that disadvantage LGBTQ persons because of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

It involves using **gender-inclusive** and **non-heterosexist language** can be one of the easiest ways to combat heterosexual bias.

For instance, the word '**partner**' can be used in place of boyfriend, girlfriend, husband, wife, etc. You can use inclusive language even if you know someone is heterosexual.

It involves helping to educate and encourage others to be accepting.

It involves not making assumptions about one's sexual orientation or gender identity.

For more information, contact the Rainbow Centre at [rainbow@wlu.ca](mailto:rainbow@wlu.ca)