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The Power of Words [brochure and video]

Lauren D. Cunningham

Western Kentucky University, lauren.cunningham@wku.edu

Robin R. Rathje

Western Kentucky University, robin.rathje@wku.edu

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“Hurt Words”

Lauren Cunningham & Robin Rathje

Below are resources available and information to anyone interested in this topic or seeking to educate others about the danger in using harmful language.

www.thinkb4youspeak.com

www.ouch-video.com

www.youtube.com “Hurt Words”

Damaging language

The rate at which students use and hear negative language about lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) people is huge. Over half of all students report hearing homophobic remarks often at school.

The common use of anti-LGBT language is directly related to an even bigger problem – the bullying and harassment of LGBT students.

9 out of 10 LGBT students report being harassed at school in the last year. Over one-third of LGBT students have been physically assaulted at school because of their sexual orientation or gender identity/expression.

Such frequent harassment results in LGBT students being more likely than others to:

- Feel unsafe
- Miss school
- Receive lower grades
- Not attend college

Creating a safe environment for all students - LGBT and straight alike - begins with one simple act: thinking before you speak.

A lot of anti-LGBT language is said carelessly, and isn't intended as negative or hurtful. Understand what you're saying, and think about the potential consequences of the words you choose.

Statistics and impact

Schools nationwide can be unsafe environments for students that identify as or perceived to be lesbian, gay bisexual or transgender (LGBT). A distressing majority of middle and high school students have reported being verbally or physically harassed at school:

86.2% of lgbt students reported being verbally harassed at school

44.1% of lgbt students reported being physically harassed at school

60.8% of lgbt students felt unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation

22.1% of lgbt students reported being physically assaulted at school in the past year because of their sexual orientation.

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