



Education Department Resource

## Four R's for Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Coaches and Teachers

Rights, Resources, Responsibilities, Resolve

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### RIGHTS

Know your rights. Before you have problems, find out what kinds of legal protections you have from harassment or discrimination because of your sexual orientation

Does your union contract prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation?

Do you have tenure?

Are there local or state laws that prohibit employment discrimination based on sexual orientation? Are educators protected under these laws?

Does your school have a non-discrimination policy that includes sexual orientation?

Does your school have a sexual harassment policy? Does it protect against harassment because of your sexual orientation?

Does your school, community, or state have a commission against discrimination that investigates complaints based on sexual orientation?

Does your school, community, or state have "hate speech" or "hate crime" laws or policies that include sexual orientation?

### RESOURCES

Find out what resources you have available if you believe you are being discriminated against or harassed because of your sexual orientation.

What colleagues and parents can you count on for personal and public support?

What kind of personal support network do you have out of school (family and friends) to whom you are out and can count on to stand by you?

What kind of support will your local, state, or national union or teacher's association provide?

What kind of support will national profession organizations provide?

What gay and lesbian legal resource organizations or lawyers do you have in your community?

What lesbian and gay educator organizations in your community can provide support and information (GLSTN, etc.)?

What national organizations do you have access to who can provide legal advice and

support (ACLU, NEA, AFT, NGLTF, Lambda Legal, GLAD)?

#### RESPONSIBILITIES

Be clear about your responsibilities to establish and maintain a sound professional reputation.

Keep records of all formal evaluations of your teaching or coaching performance (by administrators and students).

Keep all thanks you letters and other letters of appreciation from parents, colleagues, administrators, students.

Keep records of your participation in professional conferences and other professional development activities.

Maintain warm, but professional relationships with students or athletes.

Carry out all of your assigned professional responsibilities as well as you can.

Establish and maintain good working relationships with administrators, colleagues, students and parents.

#### RESOLVE (GUTS)

Believe in your right to coach or teach.  
Believe in your right to be as open about

your sexual orientation as heterosexual colleagues are about theirs. Do not allow others to count on your silence and fear as a way to help them discriminate against you.

Learn to understand and change the ways that you have internalized negative feelings about yourself and other lesbians, gay men, or bisexual people.

Learn to differentiate situations in which your own fear is your biggest obstacle from situations that are genuinely unsafe.

Expect heterosexual allies to be publicly outspoken against homophobia.

Speak up against homophobia in your school, on your team, or in your classroom.

Ask for homophobia awareness training for administrators, teachers, and coaches.

Check the library for good reference material for adults and students.

Come out whenever you can. Silence will not protect you and can be used against you.

If you are harassed or discriminated against because of your sexual orientation, stand up for your rights. If you have done nothing wrong, don't accept unfair treatment.