Rainbow Nursing Interest Group

An Interest Group of the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario (RNAO)

<http://rnig.weebly.com/>

**Being an Ally for LGBTQ People**

Combating Homophobia and Heterosexism for LGBTQ Identified People:

• **Understand Homophobia:** Know how homophobia exists on both a personal and institutional level. Be alert for subtle forms of homophobia.

• **Know the history of lesbian and gay rights movement.** Knowledge of history gives us a sense of the past, which in turn helps us create a vision and set a course for the future. It also helps give LGBTQ individuals a sense of their place in the world.

• **Visualize a non-homophobic society.** Having a vision of a non-homophobic society can help us in bringing it about.

• **Find positive LGBTQ role models.** Free yourself of negative stereotypes and find inspiring LGBTQ individuals to use as role models.

• **Report all incidents of violence towards LGBTQ individuals.** Silence connotes acceptance. Send that message that any form of violence based on hatred is not acceptable.

• **When challenged, defend your sexual orientation or that of others.** In situations where you feel comfortable doing so, challenge homophobic or heterosexist remarks.

• **Discuss homophobia with others.** Help increase their awareness about the overt or subtle messages they may be sending.

• **Respond to homophobia in movies or TV.** For many people their only experience of LGBTQ individuals is what’s depicted on TV. Help makesure that LGBTQ characters are depicted realistically by writing to producers or networks.

• **Know your rights.** Be aware that discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation is illegal, as is discrimination on the basis of association with LGBTQ people.

• **Attend demonstrations.** Share your voice and your support.

• **Write letters to the editor.** Express your views on issues.

• **Sign petitions and organize petition drives.** Lend your support to others who are working to end homophobia or take action yourself.

• **Join LGBTQ political organizations.**

• **Support corporations with progressive attitudes towards LGBTQ individuals.** Let them know their efforts are appreciated.

• **Know the facts, distinguish between myth and reality.** Don’t perpetuate stereotypes.

• **Accept diversity in the LGBTQ community.**

• **Ask libraries to stock LGBTQ books.**

• **Participate in Pride Week events in your community.** Show your support for the LGBTQ community and help them celebrate their culture, history and contributions.

• **Be visible –** do not be afraid to display Pride symbols.