How to Be an Ally to the LGBTQ+ Community

What do we mean by LGBTQ+?
LGBTQ+ is an umbrella term that includes lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, queer and Two-Spirit, as well as many other gender and sexual minorities. You don’t have to fully understand all the terms, but as an ally, be respectful and open to learning. Get started by reviewing some common terms:

http://www.hrc.org/resources/glossary-of-terms

What is an ally?
Someone who is supportive of the LGBTQ+ community and advocates for equality and acceptance of all people. Anyone can be an ally, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Why are allies important?
LGBTQ+ youth experience widespread harassment, bullying, and discrimination.

65% of LGBT students heard homophobic remarks like “fag” or “dyke” frequently or often.¹

40% of teens who experience homelessness each year identify as LGBTQ.²

Lesbian, gay, and bisexual teens are 4x more likely to attempt suicide as their straight peers.³

Questioning teens are 3x more likely to attempt suicide as their straight peers.³
Everyone Can Be an Ally

For many LGBTQ+ teens, it takes courage to come out to family and friends, and they fear harassment, rejection, and isolation. Being an ally can make a difference. Allies are some of the most effective and powerful voices of the LGBTQ+ movement.

Whether you’re just learning about LGBTQ+ issues and want to learn more, or you are a recognized advocate in your community, your actions and words as an ally are meaningful and important.

http://www.straightforequality.org/allyspectrum

3 WAYS You Can Be an Ally

1 Be mindful of language
Don’t assume someone is straight • Use inclusive terms like “partner” or “they” instead of “him” or “her” when you first meet someone • These words don’t imply gender or sexual orientation and can apply to any relationship.

2 Create safe spaces
Create safe and welcoming places for LGBTQ+ friends and peers. Join your community’s Gay-Straight Alliance, or if your community lacks one, help create one. • Be inclusive and respectful to peers on and off the field. And speak up when people use offensive language around you. • Don’t let your friends be bullied!

3 Listen and provide support
Be open minded and confront your own prejudices. • Avoid stereotyping people, and take the time to get to know people in the LGBTQ+ community. • Use social media to show support and participate in inclusion campaigns.

Resources

The Straight Ally Spectrum  http://www.straightforequality.org/allyspectrum.html
Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation  http://www.glaad.org/
The Trevor Project  http://www.thetrevorproject.org/
Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays  https://www.pflag.org/
The National LGBTQ Taskforce  http://www.thetaskforce.org/
Human Rights Campaign  http://www.hrc.org/
Advocates for Youth  http://www.advocatesforyouth.org/lgbtq-issues-home
It Gets Better Project  http://www.itgetsbetter.org/

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