

# HOW TO BE AN ALLY

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Across time and place, people who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, two-spirit, queer, questioning and intersex (LGBT2SQ+) have faced an almost universal history of exclusion, discrimination, and violence. As an ally, we can help to end oppression and create equality. Following are some ways to be an ally.

## BECOME AWARE OF YOUR OWN BIASES & ASSUMPTIONS

- o Recognize that we are all taught a rigid system of gender roles.
- o Take the time to talk to people and educate yourself.
- o Don't assume what a person's gender is - get comfortable asking respectfully, for example, "Do you mind if I ask which pronoun you prefer?"
- o Don't make assumptions about a person's sexual orientation or identity.

## LEARN ABOUT WHAT GENDER & SEXUAL IDENTITY MEAN

- o Sexual orientation and gender identity are two different things.
- o Gender may not be only male or female.
- o Sexual identity may be more fluid or different from simply heterosexual.

## TALK THE TALK

- o Learn and use appropriate LGBT2SQ+ terminology often to stop the invisibility and promote an affirmative attitude.

## BE A PART OF CREATING SAFE AND AFFIRMING ENVIRONMENTS

- o Challenge homophobic and transphobic jokes, slurs or comments when you hear them; if it is not safe to do so, call the police or security.
- o Use inclusive language that is non-gender-specific and supportive. For example use "partner" to refer to a member of a couple.

## HOW TO BE AN ALLY

### BE VISIBLE IN YOUR SUPPORT

- o Wear a button or wristband; have a sticker on your desk, binder, or door.
- o Put an affirmative poster up to advertise LGBT2SQ+ events; attend them too!

### WALK ALONGSIDE

- o Model support for nonconforming gender and sexual identity expression.
- o Don't make assumptions. You don't know another person's identity unless they tell you.
- o Don't pressure people to label themselves.
- o Don't "out" someone, and disclose information about their identity for them without their request or permission.
- o Listen for how a person identifies or refers to themselves, and use their language.

### KEEP LEARNING

- o Listen to people, and be willing to learn something new.
- o Admit when you make a mistake or don't know, and invite someone to teach you.

**RELAX, BE YOURSELF AND HAVE FUN!**