

●● Allies ●●

Strategies for being an Effective Ally

1. Assume issues of prejudice and discrimination are everyone's concern, and your concern in particular, not just the concern of those people who are the targets of prejudice and discrimination.
2. Assume the elimination of homophobia and heterosexism, discrimination and prejudice based on sexual orientation and gender identity will benefit everyone in our society.
3. Create an environment promoting the equality and dignity of LGBTQ+ people and their right to live and pursue their goals free from intolerance, discrimination, and harassment.
4. Assume LGBTQ+ people who seem to reject you as an ally or who seem not to trust you are doing so because of past negative experiences with heterosexuals. Learn to appreciate their caution and not to expect immediate trust.
5. Assume it will take some time to bridge communication gaps and develop an understanding of the experiences of LGBTQ+ people. But also understand they are experts on their own experience and you have much to learn from them.
6. Take responsibility for your own education on issues related to sexual orientation. Take the initiative to learn and to become an expert on the concerns of LGBTQ+ people. Be in touch with how you feel about the issues.
7. Assume making mistakes is part of the learning process of being an ever more effective ally. Acknowledge and apologize for mistakes; learn from them, but don't retreat.
8. Acknowledge and take responsibility for your own prejudices.
9. Don't feel you must convince LGBTQ+ people you are "on their side." Simply make sure your words and actions are in accordance with your identification as an ally.
10. Confront jokes and slurs; silence may communicate that you condone the prejudice.
11. Be willing to risk discomfort. Remember, it is important to educate and challenge people, but not judge them when they do not agree with your views.
12. Treat people as unique individuals.
13. Use inclusive language, such as "significant other" instead of "girlfriend" or "boyfriend," and use "relationship" instead of "marriage."
14. Be committed to maintaining the confidentiality and privacy of LGBTQ+ people. Do not disclose anyone's sexual orientation or gender identity without his/her/hir explicit permission.