

# WHAT IS AN ALLY?



## What is an ally?

An ally is someone who advocates for and supports members of a community, especially other than their own; reaching across differences to achieve mutual goals.

## Why do LGBTQ+ people need advocates?

It is a widely available statistic that an estimated 10% of the population is comprised of LGBTQ+ people. This means that one in four families have a sexual minority within their immediate circle and almost everyone loves someone who is LGBTQ+ within their extended circle of friends.

Despite decades of progress towards universal human rights, the LGBT community still confronts criticism, discrimination, and animosity. Alarming, these prejudices and stereotypes are often much more socially acceptable when directed towards sexual minorities than towards many ethnic, racial, and religious minorities. By forming an alliance with those that we love, we can forge a bridge of understanding and support that will strengthen the fabric of our society.

## What do allies and advocates do?

- Help LGBTQ+ people feel supported and included.
- Help others understand more about LGBTQ+ experiences.
- Support fairness and justice for everyone.
- Make our neighborhoods, communities, and our world a safer place for everyone.

## Support

- Stick around and offer support when others don't. A real friend walks in when everyone else walks out.
- Let them know you care.
- Listen, listen, listen, listen, listen, listen, listen, listen, listen, listen.
- Invite them (and their significant others) to activities with your friends.
- Learn to use the words gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual, and transgender comfortably and correctly. Consider refraining from using the term "homosexual," as the overwhelming majority of LGBTQ+ people do not identify with or use the word to describe themselves.
- Do not assume that everyone is interested in sex or dating.
- Refrain from assuming the sexual orientation of another person, even when that person is in a committed relationship with someone of a different gender. Many people who identify as bisexual, gay, and lesbian are in relationships that may not clearly indicate their sexual orientation.
- Be interested in their romantic life and significant others. Use non gender-specific language when doing so. Ask "Are you seeing someone?" or "Are you in a committed relationship?" instead of "Do you have a boyfriend/girlfriend?" or "Are you married?" If they are in a committed relationship, use the word "partner" or "significant other," showing your acceptance of all couples.

- Join PFLAG, GLSEN, GLAAD, and other support groups.
- Remember that when you have privilege, you cannot see the oppression as clearly as the non-privileged group can. When people point out your oppressive attitudes or language to you, your first response should be to believe it. Try not to leap to defend yourself. Then it is time to ask questions and learn more.
- If an LGBTQ+ person hits on you, be flattered rather. Treat any interest that someone might show just as you would if it came from someone who is heterosexual or cisgender.
- Talk to them about the same things as you do with other friends (music, weekends, parties, parents, dates, movies, studies, etc.); sexuality is just one part of their life (just as it is with yours) and should not dominate all of your conversations with them.
- Volunteer for or contribute to organizations that support the LGBTQ+ community.
- Do not assume that a gay, lesbian, or bisexual person is attracted to you just because they identify as such.
- Be as physical (or not) with them as you are with heterosexual friends.
- Check in with them if there has been an anti-gay incident on campus or in the news.
- Do not inform others of their sexual orientation or identity without prior consent. In fact, as with all good friends, if they tell you anything in confidence, honor that trust. Go to LGBTQ+ events every now and then.
- Go to LGBTQ+ events.
- Actively work toward making the world a better place for all marginalized people, not just LGBTQ+ people.
- Remember that everyone in privileged groups is part of the oppression. No matter how much work you have done on that area, the work of unlearning oppression is never finished. Until we change the politics and economics of oppression, we are still "living off the avails" of oppression.

## **Educate & Advocate**

- The responsibility of acceptance lies with those who have the ability to advocated and educate in areas uncomfortable/unsafe to the LGBTQ+ community.
- If you hear a prejudice comment or see an example of oppression or discrimination, try to speak up first. Do not wait for a member of the oppressed group to point it out.
- Support the process of unlearning oppression with other members of your own group. Fellow individuals with privilege might hear you even if they are not ready to believe and listen to LGBTQ+ individuals speak about their experiences.
- Make LGBTQ+ issues a comfortable part of your everyday conversation, just as you might talk about music, a class, or political ideas.
- Let people know you don't want to hear offensive slang, anti-gay jokes, stereotypical remarks, or put-downs of LGBTQ+ people.
- Write an editorial when someone prints a slanderous article about the LGBTQ+ community.
- Volunteer for organizations that advocate for civil rights.
- Support local LGBT businesses and LGBT-friendly national chain stores (<http://www.hrc.org/apps/buyersguide/#.UcyPWvmmguc>)
- Stand up against harassment of a person or group perceived as LGBTQ+.
- Join a political rally.
- Donate money to an organization that fights for civil rights.

- Count your privileges; keep a list, then work to break the invisibility of privilege by trying to help others who benefit from privilege understand oppression and make the links among different forms of oppression.
- Write a letter to your legislators encouraging them to defend the civil rights of the LGBTQ+ community.
- Report illegal discrimination, hate crimes, and abuse to the authorities.
- Write letters to your political representatives asking them to support legislation that positively affects LGBTQ+ people.
- Talk to professors about including LGBTQ+ history and information in the curriculum.
- Use your privilege to strategically amplify the voices of marginalized people you are working alongside in order to educate other allies in the movement.

## **Find Out**

- Read books or magazine by or about LGBTQ+ people.
- Attend a workshop about diversity, homophobia, and/or transphobia.
- Listen to music by LGBTQ+ musicians.
- Visit your local LGBTQ+ Pride Center.
- Research topics at the library at the university campus or the LGBTQ+ Resource Center.
- Read poetry or stories with LGBTQ+ themes.
- Support LGBTQ+ artists by buying their artwork.
- Learn everything you can about oppression - read, ask questions, listen. Find LGBTQ+ who like to teach and educate others and ask them your questions (however, do not *expect* every LGBTQ+ to be willing to teach you).

## **Ask yourself some questions**

- How comfortable are you with LGBT people?
- What are my conceptions about gender gender-appropriate roles and behaviors?
- What are your assumptions?
- Do you hold any stereotypes?
- What comes to mind when you think of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender individuals?
- What personal characteristics and perspectives will make it easy for you to be an ally?
- What personal characteristics and perspectives will make it more difficult?
- Are there questions you'd like to have answered?
- How are LGBTQ+ civil rights related to other civil rights and social justice issues?
- How might I be contributing to the oppression of LGBTQ+ people?

“The best thing you can learn to do if you want to be an ally is realize that you’re going to screw up, and you’re going to do it a lot, so you will need to learn to apologize with honesty and a true desire to change. Then don’t get hung up. Move forward and do better.”

- Jamie Utt

*Compiled from various resources, including: <http://lgbt.utah.edu/training/ally.php> &  
<http://www.umass.edu/stonewall>, and <http://www.daa.org.uk/>*

# STAGES OF BECOMING AN ALLY



## Negative Attitudes

### **Stage One: Repulsion**

Homosexuality and/or gender nonconformity are seen as “crimes against nature.” People who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender are seen as sick, crazy, immoral, sinful, wicked, etc.; anything is justified to change them: prison, hospitalization, psychotherapy, electroshock therapy, etc.

### **Stage Two: Pity**

Heterosexuality and/or traditional gender roles are seen as more mature and preferable. Any possibility of reform or becoming heterosexual or gender conforming is reinforced, and those who identify as LGBTQ+ are to be pitied and helped to change.

### **Stage Three: Tolerance**

Homosexuality and/or gender nonconformity are seen as just phases of adolescent development that many people go through and most people grow out of. In addition, the individual is seen as good, but the behavior or “lifestyle” is seen as bad (an example of this belief system is, “love the sinner, hate the sin”). People who are LGBTQ+ are not be given positions of authority because they are viewed as less mature than heterosexual and cisgender people.

### **Stage Four: Acceptance**

Acceptance implies there is still something that has to be accepted. Heterosexuals see being gay as acceptable, but not the preferred way to be. This stage is characterized by such statements as “You’re not lesbian to me, you’re a person,” or “What you do in bed is your own business,” or “That’s fine with me as long as you don’t flaunt it.”

## Positive Attitudes

### **Stage Five: Support**

A person works to safeguard the rights of people who identify as LGBTQ+. People at this level may be uncomfortable themselves, but they are aware of the homophobic climate, restrictive ideas about gender, and the irrational unfairness.

### **Stage Six: Admiration**

In this stage, one believes that being a LGBTQ+ person takes strength in our society. People at this level are willing to truly examine their own ideas about gender and their own homophobic attitudes, values, and behaviors.

### **Stage Seven: Appreciation**

Values the diversity of people and sees people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender as a valid part of that diversity. These people are willing to combat homophobia and gender-based prejudice in themselves and others. These individuals are typically comfortable being a visible ally and an advocate publicly for LGBTQ+ civil rights.

### **Stage Eight: Nurturance**

Assumes that people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender are indispensable in our society. These individuals view people who identify as LGBTQ+ with genuine affection and delight, and are willing to be allies and advocates. At this stage, the person may be involved in taking action to cause systemic changes for equality.

# AN ALLY'S PROMISE

*by Anthony J. D'Angelo*



## I Believe

I believe success is the freedom to be yourself.  
I believe nobody is wrong they are only different.  
I believe your circumstances don't define you, rather they reveal you.  
I believe without a sense of caring, there can be no sense of community.  
I believe our minds are like parachutes. They only work if they are open.  
I believe we only live life once, but if we live it right, one time is all we'll need.  
I believe we must first get along with ourselves before we can get along with others.

## I Will

I will seek to understand you.  
I will label bottles, not people.  
I will grow antennas, not horns.  
I will see the diversity of our commonality.  
I will see the commonality of our diversity.  
I will get to know who you are rather than what you are.  
I will transcend political correctness and strive for human righteousness.

## I Challenge You

I challenge you to honor who you are.  
I challenge you to enjoy your life rather than endure it.  
I challenge you to create the status quo rather than accept it.  
I challenge you to live in your imagination more than your memory.  
I challenge you to live your life as a revolution and not just a process of evolution.  
I challenge you to ignore other people's ignorance so that you may discover your own wisdom.

## I Promise You

I promise to do my part.  
I promise to stand beside you.  
I promise to interrupt the world when its thinking becomes ignorant.  
I promise to believe in you, even when you have lost faith in yourself.

**I am here for you.**



# BENEFITS AND RISKS OF BEING AN ALLY

## *Some Benefits of Being an Ally:*

- You learn more accurate information about the reality of being lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer.
- You learn more about how values and beliefs about sexual and gender identities affect your own and other's lives.
- You open yourself up to the possibility of close relationships with a wider range of people.
- You become less locked into gender-role expectations and stereotypes.
- You increase your ability to have close relationships with same-gender friends.
- You have opportunities to learn from, teach, and have an impact on a population with whom you might not have otherwise interacted.
- You empower yourself to take an active role in creating a more accepting world by countering prejudice and discrimination with understanding and support.
- You may be a role model for others and your actions may help someone else gain the courage to speak and act in support of LGBTQ+ people.
- You may be the reason a friend, sibling, child, coworker, or someone else you know finds greater value in their life and develops a higher level of self-esteem.
- You may make a difference in the lives of young people who hear you confront derogatory language or speak supportively of LGBTQ+ people. As a result of your action, they may feel that they have a friend to turn to, instead of dropping out of school, using alcohol or drugs to numb the pain and loneliness, or contemplating or attempting suicide.

## *Some Risks of Being an Ally:*

- Others may speculate about your own sexual or gender identity. Some may believe that you are actually LGBTQ+ but are not ready to admit it.
- You may be labeled as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer "by association," which you might find uncomfortable.
- You may become the subject of gossip or rumors.
- You may be criticized or ridiculed by others who do not agree with you or who consider offering support to LGBTQ+ people to be unimportant or unwarranted.
- You may experience alienation from friends, family members, or colleagues who are uncomfortable with LGBTQ+ issues.
- You may become the target of overt or subtle discrimination by people who are homophobic/transphobic.
- Your values, morality, and personal character may be questioned by people who believe that being gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender is wrong, sinful, or against their family values.
- LGBTQ+ people may not accept you as an ally. Due to past negative experiences with heterosexuals, some LGBTQ people may not trust you and may question your motivations.



# HOW TO BE AN ADVOCATE IF YOU ARE A PERSON WITH PRIVILEGE

One way to work for social justice is as an ally. The gay and lesbian community realized ten or fifteen years ago that, without the help of straight allies, gays and lesbians don't have the clout needed to fight heterosexist and homophobic legislation. Gradually the call for allies has spread to other communities in which discrimination is systemic.

What it means to be an ally varies greatly from person to person. For some, it means building a relationship of love and trust with another; for others, it means intentionally putting one's self in harm's way so that another person remains safe. Each type of alliance has its own parameters, responsibilities, and degree of risk. For example, being an ally to someone who is in a less privileged position than I am requires different work than is necessary if the person has privileges like mine. There are also a variety of styles that an ally can use. Some of us are bold and audacious, others are more reserved. The common bond is that we align ourselves with a person or people in such a way that we "have their backs."

Being an ally is integral to my work for social justice: I align myself with an individual or group for a common cause or purpose. When I use the term "ally," I am not talking about love or friendship, although I grow to love many of the people with whom I align myself. I even see myself as an ally of people whom I don't know, individuals who are members of groups with which I align myself as a matter of principle.

Those of us who have been granted privileges based purely on who we are born (as white, as male, as straight, and so forth) often feel that either we want to give our privileges back, which we can't really do, or we want to use them to improve the experience of those who don't have our access to power and resources. One of the most effective ways to use our privilege is to become the ally of those on the other side of the privilege seesaw. This type of alliance requires a great deal of self-examination on our part as well as the willingness to go against the people who share our privilege status and with whom we are expected to group ourselves.

[Note: In the following descriptions of ally behavior, the governmental term "target groups" refers to those who are at greatest risk of being targeted for discrimination, e.g., people of color, women, gays and lesbians, people with disabilities, and so on.]

1. **Allies** work continuously to develop an understanding of the personal and institutional experiences of the person or people with whom they are aligning themselves. If the ally is a member of a privileged group, it is essential that she or he also strives for clarity about the impact of privileges on her or his life.

What this might look like:

- Consistently asking myself what it means to be white in this situation. How would I be experienced now if I were of color? Would I be listened to? Would I be getting the support I am getting now? How would my life in this organization be different if I were not white/ male/ heterosexual/ tenured/ a manager?
- Closely observing the experiences of people of color in the organization: how they are listened to, talked about, promoted, and expected to do additional jobs. For example, members of target groups counsel all the people in the organization who look like them even though that is not a part of their job description or have to speak for all members of "their" group or serve on a disproportionate number of committees so that there is "racial input." Few of us who are white ever have to be "professional whites," asked to speak for our race, represent our race, or offer support to people purely because their skin color is the same as ours.

2. **Allies** choose to align themselves publicly and privately with members of target groups and respond to their needs. This may mean breaking assumed allegiances with those who have the same privileges as you. It is important not to underestimate the consequences of breaking these agreements and to break them in ways that will be most useful to the person or group with whom you are aligning yourself.

What this might look like:

- Stepping into a situation in which a person of color is being overrun by someone who looks like you: "John [a white man], I think Eugene [a Filipino] is making an important point. Would you hold your comment for a second so I can hear what Eugene has to say?"
- Speaking out about a situation in which you don't appear to have any vested interest: "Jean, there are no women of color in this pool of candidates. How can we begin to get a broader perspective in our department if we continue to hire people who have similar backgrounds to ours or who look like us?"
- Interrupting a comment or joke that is insensitive or stereotypic toward a target group, whether or not a member of that group is present. "Lu, that joke is anti-Semitic. I don't care if a Jewish person told it to you; it doesn't contribute to the kind of environment I want to work in." This is NOT about rescuing or grandstanding, making a show of our support so that we will look good or progressive or liberal.

Other white people may perceive our stepping in as betraying of our same-race relationships. Comments such as "Who made you the political correctness police?" or "Don't you have a sense of humor?" or "Can't Beth [a Native American] take care of herself?" alert you to the fact that you have broken the unspoken code about criticizing another white, broken what Aida Hurtado calls the "unspoken rules of privilege." (*The Color of Privilege*, p. 128.) While we may choose to take this risk ourselves, it is important to work strategically so as not to put the person to whom we have aligned ourselves in greater jeopardy. The example above about the unbalanced pool of candidates is worded to make it clear that it is in the department's interest to interview and hire people who bring different experiences and points of view to the table. The white person could have covered himself by implying that his concern was for the lonely woman of color already present. ("Jean, there are no women of color in this pool of candidates. I know from talking with her that Josephina is sick of being the only Latina in our department.") Instead, he made it clear that a mostly white staff was not in his personal interest or that of the institution.

3. **Allies** believe that it is in their interest to be allies and are able to talk about why this is the case. Talking clearly about having the privilege to be able to step in is an important educational tool for others with the same privileges.

What this might look like:

- Regularly prefacing what I am about to say with, "As a white person, I [think/ feel/ understand/ am not able to understand...]." By identifying one of my primary lenses on the world I let others know that I am clear that being white has an impact on how I perceive everything.
  - Choosing to make an issue of a situation, acknowledging that our whiteness gives us the privilege to speak with impunity. "As white women, because of our race privilege, our promotions are at far less risk than those of the women of color. Let's go as a group to the senior vice president to talk about the harassment we have all be experiencing."
4. **Allies** are committed to the never-ending personal growth required to be genuinely supportive. If both people are without privilege it means coming to grips with the ways that internalized oppression affects you. If you are privileged, uprooting long-held beliefs about the way that the world works will probably be necessary.

What this might look like:

- Recognizing the lack of equitable access to education that I had always been told was present. A brief story. As I was finishing my Master's degree at Bank Street College of Education, I began to look at



doctoral programs. My scores on the GRE did not meet minimum requirements for any of the programs I was interested in, and I had no grades because Bank Street used a pass-fail system then. Further, I was clear that the doctoral work I wanted to do was to create anti-racist curriculum. So, not only did I not have grades or scores in my favor, but I was also openly preparing to challenge the current educational system. I did, however, have four aces in my pocket: first, I had gone to Bank Street and that said a lot to the schools to which I was applying. Second, I had a recommendation from one of the most esteemed child development theorists in the country. Third, I was born with class entitlement and, thus, interviewed well. Fourth and I believe most importantly, my whiteness made me more appealing and less threatening to all of the schools. I know that rules were bent on my behalf to admit me to three prestigious schools. I also know that, had I been a person of color proposing to do anti-racist work, the chances of my being accepted into two of those programs would have been slim. Mine is a clear example that our educational system is not a meritocracy. While I had known intellectually that racism is ingrained in every American institution, this was the first time my privilege was so obvious to me. In order to be clear about the role that white privilege played, and in order to be an ally, I had to give up my belief that we live in a world in which everyone is treated fairly, much less "the same."

- Facing in an on-going way the difficult reality of the intentionality of white people's treatment of people of color, both historically and currently. In order to be an ally, I must hold in my consciousness what my racial group has done to keep us in positions of power and authority. This is not about blaming myself or feeling guilty. In fact, I think guilt is often self-serving; if I feel terribly guilty about something, I can get mired in those feelings and not take action to change the situation. Staying conscious of our behavior as a group moves me to take responsibility for making changes. It also gives me greater insight into the experiences of those with whom I align myself.

5. **Allies** are able to articulate how various patterns of oppression have served to keep them in privileged positions or to withhold opportunities they might otherwise have. For many of us, this means exploring and owning our dual roles as oppressor and oppressed, as uncomfortable as that might be.

What this might look like:

- Seeing (as in the story above) how my whiteness opened doors to institutions that most probably would not have opened so easily otherwise.
- Understanding that as white women we are given access to power and resources because of racial similarities and our relationships with white men. In fact, we often receive those privileges at the expense of men and women of color. While we certainly experience systemic discrimination as women, our skin color makes us less threatening to the group which holds systemic power.

6. **Allies** expect to make some mistakes but do not use that as an excuse for inaction. As a person with privilege, it is important to study and to talk about how your privilege acts as both a shield and blinders for you. *Of necessity, those without privileges in a certain area know more about the specific examples of privilege than those who are privileged.*

What this might look like:

- Knowing that each of us, no matter how careful or conscious we are or how long we have been working on issues of social justice, is going to say or do something dumb or insensitive. It isn't possible not to hurt or offend someone at some point. Our best bet is to acknowledge to others our mistakes and learn from them.
- Questioning how your perceptions might be different if you were not a member of a privileged group. For example, consider what it might be like to be the only woman of color in a group of senior decision-makers who are all white and male. Would you read situations and conversations differently than one of the white men? What things might you say or how might you make your comments? What kind of support might you want if you were Other than white and male?

- Keeping a filter in your mind through which you run your thoughts or comments. Remarks such as, "If I were you..." or "I know just how you feel..." are never very helpful in opening up communication, but, in conversations in which there is an imbalance of privilege, they take on an air of arrogance. People with privilege can never really know what it is like to be a member of the target group. While I can sympathize with those who are of color, it is not possible for me truly to understand the experience of a person with different skin color because I am never going to be treated as they are. The goal is to show someone you are listening, you care, and you understand that being white causes you to be treated differently in the world. Much more useful comments would be "Because of my white blinders I don't always notice how he or she responds to you" or "Obviously, as a white person, I have never had your experience, but I really want to know how you feel you are being treated."
7. **Allies** know that those on each side of an alliance hold responsibility for their own change, whether or not persons on the other side choose to respond or to thank them. They are also clear that they are doing this work for themselves, not to "take care of" the Other.

What this might look like:

- Remembering that we do this work for ourselves is really hard, but it is essential. For example, in a workshop in which I was a participant, we were talking about really painful stuff, and I heard myself say, "I have supported African American women all my life. I wish they would support me now." Luckily for me, a white woman who had done a lot of work on race was present and said, "African American women don't owe you shit. You chose freely to act as their ally." I thought to myself, "Oh, yeah, I have been knowing and saying that for years, but I forgot." I was grateful that there was another white woman to put me back on track, so that no woman of color had to make the effort to remind me.
  - Examining continually the institutional and personal benefits of hearing a wide diversity of perspectives, articulating those benefits, and building different points of view into the work we do.
  - Interrupting less-than-helpful comments and pushing for an inclusive work environment. We do it because we, as well as others, will benefit. We do not step forward because we think we should or because the people of color can't speak for themselves or because we want to look good to the people of color around us. We are allies because we know that it is in our interest.
8. **Allies** know that, in the most empowered and genuine ally relationships, the persons with privilege initiate the change toward personal, institutional, and societal justice and equality.

What this might look like:

- *Assessing who is at least risk to step into a situation and initiate change, conferring with others who are at greater risk about the best strategies, and moving forward.* Being an ally is something like dancing in a ballet. Our moves should be carefully designed to have the greatest impact.
  - Understanding that this is not another opportunity to take charge, to ride in on our white horses to fix everything. Ally relationships are just that: relationships. *Together with the people who aren't privileged, we choreograph who makes which moves and when they will be made.* On many occasions, people of color have looked at me and said, "You help her understand what's going on. She's your white sister." They implied that it is not their job to educate white women and that, because of my privilege, I am less likely to suffer from speaking straightforwardly than they would.
9. **Allies** promote a sense of inclusiveness and justice in the organization, helping to create an environment that is hospitable for all.

What this might look like:

- Recognizing the expectation that people of color will address racism, women will take care of sexism, and gay men and lesbians will "fix" heterosexism in the organization and, in their stead, becoming the point person for organizational change on these issues.

Clues that this assumption is operating: the Diversity Committee is composed predominantly of people of color and white women, while those with greater positional and informal decision-making power are on the "important" committees; the senior manager reroutes all announcements of "diversity" conferences to a person of color with an attached note that says, "Thought you might be interested," implying that addressing issues of diversity is not his or her concern; men joking on the way to a sexual harassment seminar that they don't know why they have to go since they "already know how to harass"; the majority of people pushing for domestic partner benefits are gay or lesbian.

- Paying attention to the days and times meetings are scheduled so that no one group bears the brunt of exclusion. For example, being sure that meetings are not regularly scheduled on Saturdays or other Jewish holidays, or before or after the regular work day so that parents have difficulty with childcare.

10. **Allies** with privilege are responsible for *sharing the lead* with people of color in changing the organization and hold greater responsibility for seeing changes through to their conclusion. *Sharing* the lead is very different from *taking* the lead. When we take the lead we get to keep ourselves central and see ourselves as riding in to fix everything. Sharing the lead requires that we are in alignment and partnership with people who are working toward the greater good of all of us.

What this might look like:

- Working to build a strategic diversity plan for the organization, tying it to the organization's business plan, and assuring that the plan is implemented.
- Securing funding for scholarships so that an economically and racially diverse student population is guaranteed.
- Assessing current policies and procedures in the organization and changing them so that they don't differentially impact groups of people.
- Intentionally using our access to power, resources, and influence to push those who are in positions to be able to bring about change.

11. **Allies** are able to laugh at themselves as they make mistakes and at the real, but absurd, systems of supremacy in which we all live. As many oppressed people know, humor is a method of survival. Those with privilege must be very careful not to assume that we can join in the humor of those in a target group with whom we are in alliance.

What this might look like:

- Appreciating that there are times when laughing together is the only thing we can do short of throwing ourselves off a bridge. As Cornel West, an African American scholar, asked, "What could be more Theater of the Absurd than being Black in America?"
- Paying attention to the boundaries of who-can-say-what-to-whom: While it may be OK for a person of color to call me his "white sister," it would be presumptuous for me to call him my "Latino brother." In some communities, African Americans call white men "white boys" to lessen the feeling of white men's power. It would be very insensitive, on the other hand, for a white male ally to call African American men "Black boys." This is because of the history of that phrase and the indication that a person with privilege is ignoring the impact of race and believes that we are really all the same under the skin.

12. **Allies** understand that emotional safety is not a realistic expectation if we take our alliance seriously. For those with privilege, the goal is to *"become comfortable with the uncomfortable and uncomfortable with the too-comfortable" and to act to alter the too-comfortable.*

What this might look like:

- Being alert to our desire to create a "safe" environment for an interracial conversation. My experience is that when white people ask for safety they mean they don't want to be held accountable for what they say, they want to be able to make mistakes and not have people of color take them personally, and they don't want to be yelled at by people of color. Those of us who are white are almost always safer, freer from institutional retribution, than people of color. That knowledge should help us remain in uncomfortable situations as we work for change.
- Identifying committees, decision-making teams, and departments that are "too white" and working to bring a critical mass of people of color and white allies into the group. We do this not because it will look good but because the current composition is less able to make wise decisions due to its narrow vision. While discomfort is certain to follow, the benefits of inclusiveness far outweigh the discomfort.

13. **Allies** know the consequences of not being clear about the Other's experience. Some of these are:

- lack of trust
- lack of authentic relationships
- lack of foundation for coalition

For allies with privilege, the consequences of being unclear are even greater. Because our behaviors are rooted in privilege, those who are in our group give greater credence to our actions than they might if we were members of groups without privilege. Part of our task is to be models and educators for those like us.

What this might look like:

- Understanding that because we don't see a colleague of color being mistreated doesn't mean that daily race-related experiences aren't occurring. I often hear white people make comments such as, "Well, my friend is Black but he's beyond all this race stuff. He is never treated poorly." Or, "I'm sure she doesn't have any problems with white people. You'd hardly know she's Hispanic." Or, "He *is* Black, but he's really like a *white* Black person. He is treated better than I am."

Comments such as these alert a person of color to the fact that we don't have those experiences, we can't imagine other people having them, and therefore put little credence in the stories that people of color share. If we are to be genuine allies to people of color, we must constantly observe the subtleties and nuances of other white people's comments and behaviors just as we observe our own. And we must take the risk of asking, "What if I am wrong about how I think people of color are being treated in my institution? What can I do to seek out the reality of their experiences? How will I feel if I discover that people I know, love, and trust are among the worst offenders? And what will I do?"

- Reminding a colleague who says, "She's always whining about race. This is not about race," that as white people we simply can't know what it is like to be of color. We will never be treated as if we were. While not everything is about race, there is always the possibility that it is an element in any situation. To deny that reality signals people of color and other white people that we can't be trusted as allies or as members of a coalition.

# CISGENDER PRIVILEGE



If I am cisgender, or am perceived as cisgender, it is highly likely that:

1. Strangers do not assume that it is okay to ask me what my genitals look like, and they certainly do not try to touch them without my consent or ask if they can see them.
2. My validity as a man, woman, and/or human is not based on how much surgery I have had or how well I conform to gender stereotypes.
3. I do not worry about lovers becoming angry, disdainful, or violent when they see my private parts.
4. I am not excluded from events or places that rely on the gender binary (“women’s only” and “men’s only” spaces) as an indicator of whether or not I can attend.
5. I don’t have to hear “Oh, so you’re really a [insert incorrect gender here]?” or “So have you had the surgery?” when someone becomes aware of my gender identity.
6. I do not have to worry about others perceiving me as being in the wrong bathroom, putting me at risk for harassment or violence each time I use a public restroom.
7. I generally do not have to worry about the gendered repercussions of being arrested (e.g.- What will happen to me if the police find out that my genitals do not look the way they think they should? Will I be detained in a cell with people who share my same gender identity?).
8. I do not have to choose between being invisible (“passing”) or being “othered” and tokenized because of my gender.
9. When I go to the gym or public pool, I can use the showers without being concerned about how others will respond.
10. I can walk through the world and generally blend in without being constantly stared at, whispered about, pointed at, or laughed at because of my gender expression.
11. It is unlikely that I would risk my health by avoiding the medical profession (out of fear that doctors might refer to me as crazy, attribute unrelated symptoms to my gender, deny me medical care, and/or call other medical professionals into the room to gawk at me).
12. If I go to the emergency room I do not have to worry that my gender will keep me from receiving appropriate medical treatment, that I will be denied medical care, or that all of my symptoms will be attributed to my gender.
13. My gender has not led me to be considered diagnosably disordered by mental health professionals.
14. I am not required to undergo extensive psychological evaluation in order to obtain necessary medical care.

15. I can be confident that people will not call me by an incorrect name or pronoun, even after they have been corrected.
16. Strangers do not ask “Yeah, but what’s your real name?”
17. I will only experience puberty once.
18. I can reasonably assume that my ability to acquire a job, rent an apartment, or secure a loan will not be denied on the basis of my gender identity/expression.
19. I am not be profiled on the street as a sex worker because of my gender expression.
20. If you have any crime committed against you, your gender expression will not be used as a justification for you’re the crime nor as a reason to coddle the perpetrators.
21. My gender is acknowledged universally, immediately, and without hesitation.
22. I can easily find role models and mentors to emulate who share my identity and express their gender in a manner that is similar to myself.
23. The media accurately depicts people of my gender in films and television, and does not solely make my identity the focus of a dramatic storyline, or the punchline for a joke.
24. No one checking my identification or driver’s license insults or glares at me because my name or sex does not match the sex they believed me to be based on my gender expression.
25. My gender identity is always listed on demographic surveys and forms.



Compiled from various resources, including: <http://new.oberlin.edu>, <http://itspronouncedmetrosexual.com>, & <http://queersunited.blogspot.com>

# HETEROSEXUAL PRIVILEGE



If I am heterosexual, or am perceived as heterosexual, it is highly likely that:

1. I can marry the person I love in any state or country.
2. I feel safe expressing affection toward my significant other without having to worry about hostile or violent reactions from others.
3. People don't ask why I chose my sexual orientation or why I've decided to be public about my sexual orientation.
4. Strangers do not ask me how I have sexual intercourse.
5. I am confident I will be granted immediate access to my loved one in case of accident or emergency.
6. I regularly receive public recognition and support for my romantic relationships (e.g., others congratulate me if I become engaged to be married).
7. I do not fear that if my family or friends find out about my sexual orientation there will be economic, emotional, physical or psychological consequences.
8. I was able to learn about romance, dating, and sex from movies, television, music, and other media.
9. When I come out to others about my sexual orientation they do not write it off as a phase.
10. My individual behavior does not reflect on people who identify as heterosexual.
11. I do not ever wonder whether I will be the only person in a social situation who identifies their sexual orientation as I do.
12. Others do not feel concerned that I will harm children or force them into sharing my sexual orientation.
13. I am able to share an insurance policy and file joint taxes with my significant other, thus receiving economic benefits.
14. I do not worry that others will write off how I act, dress, or talk as a byproduct of my sexuality.
15. My attraction to others is not referred to as "a lifestyle."
16. I do not worry or even have to think about whether I will be harassed, beaten, or killed because of my sexuality.
17. My children will be given texts in school that reflect the family they are being raised in and they will not be taught that my sexuality is a "perversion."
18. I can walk into any place of worship and be assured that my relationship will be supported and I will not be denounced because of my sexual orientation.

19. Making a declaration about my sexual orientation was/is unnecessary. I do not have to explain to people that I'm straight because others regularly assume heterosexuality.
20. If I have a significant other who does not have US citizenship, I can marry him/her in order for him/her to obtain citizenship so that we can live together in the US.
21. I can speak openly at work about my personal life without concerns that I might lose my job.
22. I did not grow up with games that attack my sexual orientation (ex- "smear the queer").
23. When others speak of my marriage it is not preceded by a notation about my sexual orientation (ex- "straight marriage").
24. I am not accused of having been abused or told that I am warped, perverted, or psychologically confused because of who I am attracted to.
25. I am never placed in a position where I have to defend or justify my romantic or sexual attractions because of the sex or gender of those whom I am attracted to.
26. People do not use clichés, idioms, or slurs that describe my sexual orientation in demeaning terms.
27. I am guaranteed to find sex education and safer sex literature for people who share my sexual orientation.
28. My masculinity/femininity is not challenged because of my sexual orientation
29. I can walk in public with my significant other without people doing a double-take or staring.
30. I can choose to not think politically about my sexual orientation.

*Compiled from various resources, including: <http://itspronouncedmetrosexual.com>, & <http://queersunited.blogspot.com>, <http://sap.mit.edu/>*



# Being an Advocate to Trans\*people



## **Refrain from making assumptions by challenging what you've been taught about gender.**

- Be aware of gender diversity, and refrain from assuming that you can tell if someone is transgender. Transgender and transsexual people don't all look a certain way (many trans people live most of their lives with very few people knowing they are trans).
- Don't assume all transpeople identify as men or women. Many transpeople and genderqueer people identify as both, neither, or outside of the binary altogether.
- Remember that gender identity and expression are different than sexual orientation. Sexual orientation is about who we're attracted to, while gender identity is about how we know our own gender to be. Refrain from making assumptions about a trans person's sexual orientation; transpeople can identify as gay, straight, bisexual, pansexual, asexual, etc. Also, do not assume that a transgender person is gay or will be heterosexual after transitioning.
- Understand that medical transition (hormones/surgery) is not the only way to be transgender. Very often, access to such means is based on economic status and thus many transpeople cannot afford to access medical treatment. Recognize the classism inherent in associating medical transition with trans authenticity.
- In addition, be aware that hormones and surgery are not the path for everyone (some people wish to be non-operative); not all transpeople *want* hormones and/or surgery, or to transition at all.
- Learn and accept alternative trans narratives and personal stories. Not all transpeople feel "trapped in the wrong body." This is not every transperson's reality.

## **Respect preferred pronouns and names.**

- If you are uncertain about a person's gender identity, then refrain from using gendered language (pronouns, sir/ma'am, Mr./Ms., etc). Refer to people by name instead.
- Ask about pronoun and name preference, then use the pronouns & name the transperson wants you to use. If you make a mistake, briefly apologize, correct yourself, and make a mental note to get it right the next time. If someone corrects your misuse of a transperson's pronoun or name, avoid being defensive.
- Politely correct others if they use the wrong pronoun or name when speaking to or about a transperson.
- Never use the word "it" when referring to someone who is transgender. To do so is incredibly insulting and disrespectful.
- Don't ask transpeople what their "real" name is (i.e., the one they were born with). If you know their birth-assigned name, do not divulge it to others.

## **Be mindful of confidentiality, disclosure, and outing.**

- Refrain from outing transpeople, it's dangerous, risks their safety, & invalidates their identity.
- Be aware of your surroundings when discussing trans issues with a transperson. For their safety, comfort, & privacy they may prefer not to discuss these topics in public places or among strangers.

- If a trans person is not out in all areas of their life, ask who else knows, who it's okay to talk to about it, and who it's okay to talk about it in front of.

### **Respect and support transpeople in their lives & choices.**

- Transpeople's bodies are not a public forum. Don't ask transpeople about their bodies, how they have sex, what their genitals are like, etc. (It can be helpful to think about whether you would ask these questions of a cisgender person, or whether you would want these questions asked of you).
- Don't ask about surgery or hormone status. Medical histories & bodies are personal & private. If transpeople want to share these details with you, allow them to do so on their own terms.
- Listen with an open mind to trans people themselves. They are the experts on their own lives! Talk to trans people in your community. Seek out resources by trans authors and artists in order to hear what trans people have to say.
- Use the word crossdresser instead of transvestite, and intersex instead of hermaphrodite, as the latter terms are often considered pejorative because of medical and pathological histories.
- Allow others to tell you how they identify, rather than placing a label on them that they have not chosen for themselves. If a person is unsure of which identity suits them best, give them time and space to decide for themselves.

### **Validate transpeople's identities**

- Allow transpeople to decide for themselves what is appropriate for their gender when it comes to gender expression and roles.
- Avoid using prefixes like bio- or real- to designate that someone is not trans. Using these prefixes sets up a dichotomy in which transpeople are considered "not real" or "other," while cisgender people are the default.
- Instead of saying someone was born one gender or the other, try saying they were assigned a specific sex at birth. These terms (male-assigned at birth, female-assigned at birth, intersex at birth) recognize the difference between sex & gender, and emphasize the ways in which sex and gender are assigned at birth rather than being innate qualities.
- When you learn about someone's transgender identity, do not assume that it is a fad or trend.
- It is important to trust that someone's identification as transgender has not been made lightly or without due consideration.
- If you include the T in an LGBTQ+ training or event, be sure to actually address trans issues (rather than just adding it on to the acronym out of habit or to make it appear inclusive).

### **Revolutionize your thinking**

- Refrain from making comments related to, or thinking in terms of, how well or poorly someone passes. Not every trans person is trying to, or wants to, pass and this thinking reinforces gender stereotypes that are unhealthy for everyone.
- Embrace and accept varying forms of gender expression.
- Realize that intentions are not always enough. Even when your intentions are good, your actions can still be hurtful to others.

- Recognize the diversity of trans & genderqueer lives. Remember that each person is an individual and that other aspects of identity shape people's experiences (such as race, class, sexual orientation, age, ability, etc).
- Recognize your privilege & prejudices as a cisgender person.
- Think about what makes you uncomfortable & why.
- Trans folks spend a lot of time educating people around them (families, co-workers, friends, etc.) and it can be draining. Take initiative to educate yourself; do your own homework & research.

### **Advocate**

- Increase your awareness of places transpeople may not be able to go (bathrooms and locker rooms are important examples), then work to help increase trans accessibility in binary gendered spaces.
- Talk about trans issues/rights. Engage people in discussions & share your knowledge. The majority of information people have about trans issues is based on stereotypes & assumptions.
- Because cisgender people may be more likely to listen to & take cues from other cisgender people than from transpeople, it is important to be aware of the vital role you play in combating transphobia.
- Remember that the way you talk about transpeople (e.g., using preferred gender pronouns) can make a difference in whether transpeople pass & whether transpeople feel safe/comfortable.
- Speak up if you witness transphobia, instead of letting it slide. Transphobia is equally oppressive as (and works in conjunction with) racism, sexism, homophobia, etc.
- Work to change policies in areas such as housing, employment, and health care that discriminate against transgender people. Advocate for the inclusion of gender identity/expression in school, company, city, and state nondiscrimination policies.
- Educate others about trans issues.
- Know your own limits as an ally. Don't be afraid to admit you don't know everything!

*Compiled from various resources, including: <http://lgbcenter.ucdavis.edu>, <http://web.mit.edu/trans>, <http://www.umass.edu/stonewall>, and <http://lcfid.org/trans-ally-101.html>*

# **INTERRUPTING PREJUDICE: "WHAT SHOULD I DO IF...?"**



## Answers to Commonly Asked Ally Questions

### **What should I do if I think someone is LGBTQ+ but they haven't told me?**

Remember that assumptions on your part may be inaccurate. The best approach is to create an atmosphere where that individual can feel comfortable coming out to you. You can do this by making sure that you are open and approachable and by giving indications that you are comfortable with this topic and are supportive of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transsexual concerns. If the person is already out to themselves, and they feel that you are worthy of their trust, then they may tell you. If the person seems to be in conflict about something, it may or may not be because of their sexuality. In this case, it is best simply to make sure that they know you are there if they need to talk. Remember, they may not have told you because they don't want you to know.

### **How do I make myself more approachable to people who are LGBTQ+?**

Demonstrate that you are comfortable with topics related to sexual orientation and gender identity and that you are supportive of lesbian, gay, and bisexual concerns. Be sensitive to the assumptions you make about people—try not to assume that everyone you interact with is heterosexual or subscribes to a gender binary, that they have a partner of a different gender, etc. Try to use inclusive language, such as avoiding the use of pronouns that assume the gender of someone, their partner, and/or friends. Be a role model by confronting others who make homophobic/transphobic/biphobic jokes or remarks. Become knowledgeable about issues surrounding LGBTQ+ people by reading books and attending meetings and activities sponsored by LGBTQ+ organizations.

### **If someone wants advice on what to tell their roommate, friends, or family about being LGBTQ+?**

Remember that the individual must decide for themselves when and to whom they will reveal their sexual identity. Don't tell someone to take any particular action; the person could hold you responsible if it doesn't go well. Do listen carefully, reflect on the concerns and feelings you hear expressed, and suggest available resources for support. Help the person think through the possible outcomes (pros/cons) of coming out. Discuss how others might react and how the person might respond to those reactions. Support the person's decision even if you don't agree with it, and ask about the outcomes of any action taken. Mention the option of coming out to a few people at a time, as opposed to the entire group. If someone has decided to come out, let that person know they have your support. Suggest additional resources such as PFLAG, support groups, resource centers, or other materials that may help their coming out process.

### **How should I respond to heterosexual/cisgender friends or coworkers who feel negatively about a person who is LGBTQ+ in our office, on our residence hall floor, or in any group I am a part of?**

When such problems arise, it is most useful to discuss this with the people involved. Help them to see that they are talking about a person, not just a sexual identity. Make sure that you have accurate information so that you may appropriately discuss the myths and stereotypes that often underlie such negative reactions. Note the similarities between LGBTQ+ people and heterosexual/gender conforming people. Be clear with others that while they have a right to their own beliefs and opinions, you will not tolerate disrespectful comments or discrimination. Remember that others may take their cues from you—if you are uncomfortable with, hostile to, or ignore someone who is LGBTQ+, others may follow suit. Conversely, if you are friendly with the person and treat them with respect, others may follow suit.

### **What should I say to someone who is afraid of contracting HIV/AIDS from LGBTQ+ people?**

HIV is not transmitted through ordinary social contact. It is necessary for everyone to be knowledgeable about HIV and AIDS. If a friend or coworker is afraid and uninformed, use this as an educational opportunity. Provide the person with pamphlets and other resources containing current and accurate information.

### **How should I respond to rumors that someone is lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender?**

Let others know that the sexual identity of any individual is irrelevant unless that person wishes to disclose that information. If you can, address any myths or stereotypes that may be fueling such speculation. If a particular person continues to spread rumors, talk to that person individually.

### **How can I get others to be more open-minded about LGBTQ+ people?**

In brief, be a role model for others by being open and visible in your support. Share your beliefs with others when appropriate. When LGBTQ+ topics come up talk about them, don't simply avoid them. Show that you are comfortable talking about these issues, and comfortable with LGBTQ+ people. Remember that part of your goal as an ally is to create bridges across differences and to increase understanding. While you may be motivated to share your views with others, be careful of being self-righteous; others can't learn from you if they are turned off from listening to begin with. Of course, your views are more convincing if they are supported by sound knowledge. Take the time to educate yourself so that you know what you are talking about.

### **How can I respond when someone tells a homophobic/transphobic joke?**

Many people believe that jokes are harmless and get upset by what they perceive as the "politically correct" attitudes of those who are offended by inappropriate humor. Labeling a belief as "politically correct" is a subtle way of supporting the status quo and resisting change. Most people who tell jokes about an oppressed group have never thought about how those jokes perpetuate stereotypes, or how they teach and reinforce prejudice. Someone who tells jokes about LGBTQ+ people probably assumes that everyone present is heterosexual/and or gender conforming, or at least that everyone shares their negative attitudes toward LGBTQ+ people. However, most people do not tell jokes to purposefully hurt or embarrass others and will stop if they realize this is the effect. Responding assertively in these situations is difficult, but not responding at all sends a silent message of agreement. No response is the equivalent of condoning the telling of such jokes. It is important to remember that young people, particularly those questioning their own sexual identity, will watch to see who laughs at such jokes, and may internalize the hurtful message. In some instances, the inappropriateness of the joke could be mentioned at the time. In other situations, the person could be taken aside afterward. Try to communicate your concerns about the joke with respect.

### **How can I respond to homophobic/transphobic attitudes?**

If you disagree with a negative statement someone makes about LGBTQ+ people, the assertive thing to do is to say so. Again, silence communicates agreement. Remember what your goal is in responding: not to start an argument or foster hostility, but to attempt to increase understanding. Disagreement can be civil and respectful. Share your views without accusing or criticizing. You are simply presenting another way of thinking about the topic. It can be difficult to speak out in support of LGBTQ+ people. You might be afraid that others will question your sexual orientation, morals, and values, or that you will be ostracized. It is easy to forget that there might be positive effects of your outspokenness as well.

### **How can I respond to people who object to LGBT people for religious reasons?**

Usually, there is no way to change the minds of individuals who base their negative beliefs about LGBT people on strict religious convictions. However, while respecting their right to believe as they wish, you can share some information with them. Concerning "conflicts" between LGBT people and Christianity, it can be useful to point out that identifying as Christian is not necessarily incompatible with being supportive of LGBT people. There is a great deal of diversity among the Christian community with regard to beliefs about same-gender sexuality. In addition there is much disagreement about the Biblical basis for condemning LGBT people. Many religious scholars argue that the Biblical passages which are said to refer to same-gender sexuality have been misinterpreted. It is also important to point out that while individuals are entitled to their personal religious beliefs, these opinions should not be used to deny LGBT people equal treatment under the law.



# EXAMPLES OF LGBTQ+ MICROAGGRESSIONS

**Microaggressions** are brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative slights and insults toward people with marginalized sexual or gender identities.

- “It’s just a phase, you’re too young to decide your sexuality, you should just have sex with men till you’re sure.”
  - Said to me by a sexual health nurse when I was 22.
- So how long has she been “married”?
- “Aren’t you a little young to be mutilating your body? There’s nothing wrong with being butch or a lesbian.”
  - I have just recently come out as a gay trans man, and so I decided to speak with a counselor at my college. They didn’t understand why I was worried that the loans I have to take out to pay for my education will make my transition harder because it will leave me unable to afford trans surgery. I am not butch, female, lesbian, or too young. I am a 19 year old gay trans man in North Carolina.
- “Asexual? I’m sorry that you’re broken.”
  - I’m asexual. This was said by my boyfriend. This really offends me. People like him don’t understand that wanting sex is not essential in order to be a whole person.
- “Now that you’re a man, you have to come hunting with us/go to straight bats/objectify women/drink beer/learn home repair/drive/etc because that’s what real men do!”
  - My uncle in an attempt to encourage me when I came out as a trans guy. I abhor animal cruelty, am gay, can’t stand beer and am rather feminine in interests. My only thought was “you have to be kidding me, it’s 2011. It took months for me to get across that I wasn’t going to do any of this.”
- You probably aren’t bisexual. You’re probably just ... friendly.
- But you’re so cute! Why do you want to be a boy?
- “Granted, you won’t have a normal family.”
  - Sister talking about how having a “gay family” isn’t normal.
- “No, I like that you’re bi. It’s hot!”
  - Multiple ex-boyfriends and straight male friends when I came out to them. It made me feel objectified, invalidated and othered. If I am going to hook up with a woman, it doesn’t mean I’m going to bring them to you, boys!

- Frequently while walking around campus, I receive catcalls and horn-honks from straight men who mistake me for cisfemale. Sometimes it is followed by the guy(s) “realizing his mistake” and then threatening me for “deceiving” him.
- “Are you lesbian because a man hurt you?”
  - I was facing homelessness after my parents found out I’m lesbian. My only nearby support system was the school I attended. After I explained the situation and disclosed my sexuality to a teacher I trusted with the information, this was the response I got.
- “Why does everything have to be gay with you?”
  - My roommate when I enthused about my good week with my friends. I instantly shut down and stopped feeling so cheerful. I felt alienated in my own home.
- My girlfriend and I are walking to her apartment at night, holding hands and huddling close because it’s super rainy and cold. A young white male driving alone slows down and hangs his upper body out the window (still driving), and yells ‘LESBIANS!’ with a stupid grin on his face. A couple nights later we are walking to my place, holding hands, when a girl walks by opposite us and flips us off while she’s talking on the phone.
- Living with your parents always presents a raft of problems, which is not made easier when you’re transgendered. For example, their refusal to use your (now legal) name or (now legal) sex when talking to or about you. Despite the fact both have been changed for years....my sister believes that I’m ‘too young’ to know my own gender and shouldn’t try to transition until she deems me old enough. Makes me feel isolated, and depressed.
- At a gathering of my boyfriend’s family, one uncle decides its ok to repeat everything I say in a camp accent because I am gay.
- “Is it a he or a she? Well, it’s wearing a dress so it’s a she, of course.”
- “Oh... So I’m just going to put that you aren’t sexually active at this time.”
  - My gynecologist’s reaction to me revealing, when she asked about my sexual activity, that I only have sex with women.
- “They need to learn how suck it up and take it.”
  - My coworker (and friend) on the subject of LGBT youth, bullying, and suicide, during a discussion of the recent Rolling Stone article on the subject.

# PERSONAL ATTITUDES ASSESSMENT



Below are some questions we can ask our selves to help explore our own biases regarding sexual orientation and gender. Please Circle Yes or No Regarding the questions below.

- Y or N 1. Do you assume you can tell whether someone is lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender?
- Y or N 2. Do you feel uncomfortable if you can't decipher someone's gender?
- Y or N 3. Do you believe that because you have a gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender loved one (or that because you yourself are LGBTQ+) that you are not homophobic, biphobic, or transphobic?
- Y or N 4. Do you worry about gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender persons working in certain professions (teachers, counselors, politicians, religious officials, law enforcement, armed forces, etc)?
- Y or N 5. Do you automatically assume everyone you meet is heterosexual or cisgender?
- Y or N 6. Do you look at a non-heterosexual person and automatically think of their sexual orientation?
- Y or N 7. Do you believe that a lesbian is someone who can't find a man and/or wants to be a man?
- Y or N 8. Do you believe that same-sex couples flaunt their sexuality?
- Y or N 9. Do you stop yourself from saying or doing certain things because others might assume you are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender?
- Y or N 10. Do you feel concerned that a gay, lesbian, or bisexual person who touches you or looks at you may be hitting on you?
- Y or N 11. Do you believe that gay, lesbian, bisexual, and/or transgender individuals persuade others to become like them?
- Y or N 12. Do you believe gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender individuals are going to hell (or other religious equivalents)?
- Y or N 13. Do you believe that men and women should look, behave, and speak differently, as well as have distinctly different sets of interests?
- Y or N 14. Would you experience discomfort sitting in a seat next to someone whom you believe to be gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender?
- Y or N 15. Are you outspoken about LGBTQ+ rights, but make sure everyone knows you are a straight ally?
- Y or N 16. Do you believe bisexual individuals are greedy, indecisive, experimenting, oversexed, or are in some way responsible for the AIDS epidemic?
- Y or N 17. Do you use the word gay as a synonym for foolish, ridiculous, ludicrous, or asinine?
- Y or N 18. Do you ever mention that someone is gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender when telling a story, even though their sexual orientation or gender identity is irrelevant to the story?
- Y or N 19. Do you find yourself wondering "who is the man?" and "who is the woman?" when contemplating same-sex relationships?
- Y or N 20. Do you neglect (or consciously choose) to ask an LGB person about their partner yet regularly ask heterosexual people "how's your husband/wife?"

**Scoring:** Yes responses indicate the presence of some negatively biased attitudes, beliefs, or prejudices.





# KLEIN GRID

The Klein Sexual Orientation Grid was developed by Fritz Klein (1987) to measure sexual orientation. Klein's multidimensional grid expands on Kinsey's earlier scales, taking into consideration the dimension of time (past, present, future), as well as numerous aspects of attraction (sexual, behavior, fantasy, emotional, & social).

## Klein Grid

Fluidity and dimensionality of attraction

Please take a moment to consider the complexity of sexual orientation and where you fall within this.

What draws you to others?	Past	Present	Future	
<b>Sexual Attraction</b> Who are you sexually attracted to?				Men Women Both Neither
<b>Behavior</b> Who do you/ have you engaged with sexually? (kiss, physical touch, sex)				
<b>Fantasies</b> Who are your sexual fantasies about?				
<b>Emotional</b> Who do you feel more drawn to or close to emotionally?				Gay Lesbian Bi Hetero
<b>Social</b> Who do you feel more comfortable with socially?				
<b>Sexual orientation?</b> How do you identify or label yourself?				
<b>Community</b> In which community do you feel more comfortable?				



# LGBTQ+ SAFE ZONE ADVOCACY RESOURCES

## General Websites

**Building Communities: Autonomous LGBTQ People of Color Organizations in the U.S.**

[http://www.lgbtfunders.org/files/FLGI%20LGBTQ\\_POCRprt-F.pdf](http://www.lgbtfunders.org/files/FLGI%20LGBTQ_POCRprt-F.pdf)

**Campus Pride** <http://www.campuspride.org/tools/activism-and-advocacy/>

**Change Lab** <http://www.changelabinfo.com/>

**Colorlines** <http://colorlines.com/>

**Decolonizing Yoga** <http://www.decolonizingyoga.com/>

**Fraternity & Sorority Guide to Being Inclusive**

[http://www.jessicapettitt.com/images/transgreek\\_L10TransGuide.pdf](http://www.jessicapettitt.com/images/transgreek_L10TransGuide.pdf)

**Gender education and advocacy** <http://gender.org/>

**Gender activism in schools** (“Beyond the Binary”)

[http://www.transgenderlawcenter.org/pdf/beyond\\_the\\_binary.pdf](http://www.transgenderlawcenter.org/pdf/beyond_the_binary.pdf)

**It’s Pronounced Metrosexual** <http://www.itspronouncedmetrosexual.com>

**L Weingarten (A Series of Questions, photographic project)** <http://lweingarten.com/projects/ques/>

**Microaggressions: Power, Privilege, and Every Day Life** <http://microaggressions.tumblr.com/>

**National Gay and Lesbian Task Force: Reports and Research** [http://www.nglhf.org/reports\\_and\\_research](http://www.nglhf.org/reports_and_research)

## Activist Organizations

**Close to Home: Developing Innovative Community-Based Responses to Anti-LGBT Violence**

<http://www.prisonpolicy.org/scans/afsc/close-to-home.pdf>

**GLAAD (Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation)** <http://www.glaad.org/>

**GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network)** <http://www.glsen.org>

- **Ally Week** <http://www.allyweek.org/resources/>

**HRC (Human Rights Campaign)** <http://www.hrc.org/>

- **Coming Out as a Straight Supporter** <http://www.hrc.org/resources/entry/straight-guide-to-lgbt-americans>

- **Gender Identity and Our Faith Communities: A Congregational Guide for Transgender Advocacy**

[http://www.hrc.org/files/assets/resources/Gender-Identity-and-our-Faith-Communities\\_2008-12.pdf](http://www.hrc.org/files/assets/resources/Gender-Identity-and-our-Faith-Communities_2008-12.pdf)

- **Guide to Becoming a More Activist-Oriented Campus**

<http://www.hrc.org/resources/entry/becoming-a-more-activist-oriented-campus-group>

**National Gay and Lesbian Task Force** <http://www.nglhf.org/>

**PFLAG (Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays)** <http://www.pflag.org>

**PFLAG (Spanish)** [http://www.pflag.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Publications/Nuestras\\_hijas.pdf](http://www.pflag.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/Nuestras_hijas.pdf)

## Radio/Video

**6 Rules for Allies: Dr. Omi Osun Joni L. Jones** <http://blip.tv/sharon-bridgforth/6-rules-for-allies-3271535>

**Beyond the Gender Binary: Yee Won Chong (TEDx Talks)** <http://youtu.be/-Lm4vxZrAig>

**How I learned to Stop Worrying and Love Discussing Race: Jay Smooth**

<http://tedxtalks.ted.com/video/TEDxHampshireCollege-Jay-Smooth>

**How to Tell People They Sound Racist**

[http://www.illdoctrines.com/2008/07/how\\_to\\_tell\\_people\\_they\\_sound.html](http://www.illdoctrines.com/2008/07/how_to_tell_people_they_sound.html)

**Partners in the Struggle: How to Be an Effective Ally**

<http://truth-out.org/news/item/16590-partners-in-the-struggle-how-to-be-an-effective-ally>

**Why Diversity Isn’t Enough** <http://www.decolonizingyoga.com/why-diversity-isnt-enough/>

## Books/Articles

### **5 Things Not to do When Accused of Racism**

<http://www.changelabinfo.com/2013/06/28/5-things-not-to-do-when-accused-of-racism-a-note-to-paula-deen-and-the-rest-of-white-america/#.Udbbl7vLhbX>

### **Being an Ally Between a Rock and a Hard Place** (Sam Killermann)

<http://itspronouncedmetrosexual.com/2013/05/being-an-ally-between-a-rock-and-a-hard-place/>

### **Cultural Humility versus Cultural Competence** (1998, Tervalon & Murray Garcia)

[http://info.kaiserpermanente.org/communitybenefit/assets/pdf/our\\_work/global/Cultural\\_Humility\\_article.pdf](http://info.kaiserpermanente.org/communitybenefit/assets/pdf/our_work/global/Cultural_Humility_article.pdf)

### **Meet us at Our Table** (2013, by Toi Scott)

<http://www.decolonizingyoga.com/meet-us-at-our-table-the-problems-with-the-white-savior-complex/>

### **Trans Etiquette 101: No Offense, But That's Offensive!**

<http://autostraddle.tumblr.com/post/26768943096/trans-etiquette-101-no-offense-but-thats-offensive>

### **That's So Gay! Microaggressions and the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Community** (2013, Kevin L. Nadal)

### **The Importance of Listening as a Privileged Person Fighting for Justice**

<http://everydayfeminism.com/2013/04/the-importance-of-listening-as-a-privileged-person-fighting-for-justice/>

### **The T Word: Taking on the Transphobic Slur** (2010, Asher Bauer)

<http://carnalnation.com/content/58040/1067/t-word-taking-transphobic-slur>

### **Transgender is an Adjective. Not a Noun. Or a verb!** (2010, Rachel McCarthy James)

<http://www.deeplyproblematic.com/2010/05/transgender-is-adjective-not-noun-or.html>