

# HOW TO BE AN ALLY

## Learn

Listen to the experiences and perspectives of LGBTQ people; respect these experiences and perspectives; acknowledge their validity (even if you don't understand them).

Seek out information and opportunities to expand your understanding (learn through media, attend events, meet LGBTQ community members, and learn about local services and supports).

Remember your learning is YOUR responsibility - avoid asking LGBTQ people to answer all of your LGBTQ questions (not all LGBTQ people are comfortable acting in an educator role).

## Practice

Intervene when you witness offensive behaviour or language.

Use inclusive language to ensure everyone feels welcome and respected.

Challenge policies, practices, and procedures that create barriers for LGBTQ people.

Apologize regardless of intent. Everyone makes mistakes in an ally role, what matters is how you respond when it gets brought to your attention.

Be courageous! Don't be afraid to learn, ask for more information and provide support.

## Reflect

Be open to feedback about how your behaviour is impacting other people.

Reflect on and question the stereotypes and negative assumptions held by yourself and others.

Avoid assuming how people identify. Listen for, or politely ask, how someone wants to be identified.

When talking about LGBTQ topics, assume there are LGBTQ people or people with LGBTQ loved ones in the room and consider how they might be impacted by the tone, spirit, and direction of the conversation.

Observe the way other folks around you act as allies, even in the smallest ways.

Remember, everyone's experience of gender and sexuality is different and it's impossible (and unfair) to ask one person to speak on behalf of a whole group.