

Allyship in Action

There is no one “correct” way to be an ally to the LGBTQIA+ community. There are, however, some actions you can take to move forward in allyship. These are a few examples:

- **Educate** yourself. There are many local available, and electronic resources available. The resources on the back of this pamphlet are a good place to start
- **Ask questions.** However, if you’re going to ask a sensitive question, it’s a good idea to ask yourself if you’d want someone to ask something similar of you. If the answer is “no” then it’s probably best not to ask them
- **Challenge stereotypes.** LGBTQIA+ people are extremely diverse, and no one person fulfills any one stereotype. Recognizing the diversity of such a large group can help avoid contributing to the problems LGBTQIA+ people face
- **Acknowledge your privilege.** The society we live in today favors and provides advantages to straight, cisgender, alloromantic, allosexual, binary, and dyadic people. Recognizing these advantages can provide a useful perspective
- **Reflect** on your own beliefs, and challenge them if necessary. Everyone is raised with a different set of values, some of which can be harmful to others. If you do hold harmful views, consider asking yourself why and go from there
- **Step back** to allow LGBTQIA+ people to highlight their own experiences. One of the things a great ally will do is encourage a LGBTQIA+ person to use their own voice as much as possible, not speak for them
- **Speak up** when it’s called for. This is especially important when there is no one from the LGBTQIA+ community present to defend themselves
- **Understand** you will never have the lived experience of LGBTQIA+ people. There are many issues unique to the LGBTQIA+ community. It’s not your place to understand completely the impact of these experiences, but to try to lessen their impact and ensure the issue is addressed

To Learn More:

- **Allyship**
www.allyship.org
- **HRC**
www.hrc.org/resources/topic/allies
- **PFLAG**
www.pflag.org/allies

Local Resources:

- **LGBTQ Student Resource Center**
www.lgbtq-auraria.org
- **PFLAG Denver**
www.pflagdenver.org
- **The Center**
www.lgbtqcolorado.org

*We would like to note that sex, gender, and sexual orientation are defined as different entities, although they do inform each other and are not necessarily mutually exclusive

**For more information on sexual orientation, gender identities, and related LGBTQIA+ identities and issues, check out our other LGBTQIA+ 101 pamphlets

†Pamphlet written and compiled by the LGBTQ Student Resource Center staff

Allyship 101



Showing Your Support for the LGBTQIA+ Community

Some Definitions*

- An **Ally** is someone who, through their actions and words, consistently shows their support for a minority community, such as the LGBTQIA+ population
- **Allyship** is the active and consistent practice in which a person of privilege seeks to operate in solidarity with a marginalized group of people
- **Solidarity** is the term used to define the unity of people with a shared interest, objective, or sympathy
- **LGBTQIA+** is the acronym that stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual people, and everyone else who does not identify as straight, cisgender, allosexual, and/or alloromantic
- **Intersex** is the general term used to describe a set of biological, physiological, and sex-related anatomical variations that differ from the typical characteristics of the sex categories “male” and “female”
- **Queer** is an umbrella term that means “not straight and/or not cisgender.” It was historically used as a slur against LGBTQIA+ people, but has been reclaimed by many people as an identity
- **Cisgender** means someone’s sex assigned at birth and the gender they identify with are the same
- **Allosexual** is a person who experiences sexual attraction relatively readily and easily
- **Alloromantic** is a person who experiences romantic attraction relatively readily and easily
- **GSM** is shorthand for Gender and Sexual Minority, and is most often used as an academic term to refer to LGBTQIA+ people



Ally Flag

Allyship Isn't Just a One-and-Done Thing

There are many ways to act in allyship for the LGBTQIA+ community. However, it is best defined as a consistent pattern of behaviors and actions that, while sometimes uncomfortable, can also be very rewarding.

- **Privilege** is an unearned advantage that one has simply for being a member of the group with the most power in social situations
- **Bystander** is someone who witnesses an act but does nothing. Intervening can move one toward acting in allyship or oppression
- **Microaggression** is a small act of discrimination against a member of a minority group
- **Heteronormativity** is the belief that heterosexuality is the norm everyone should strive to conform to
- **Cisnormativity** is the belief that being cisgender is the norm everyone should strive to conform to
- **Amatonormativity** is the system based on the belief that being in a romantic relationship is the end-all, be-all to achieve happiness
- **Homophobia** is the prejudice against homosexual people and concepts
- **Biphobia** is prejudice against people attracted to more than one gender and related concepts, such as sexual fluidity
- **Transphobia** is prejudice against transgender and gender variant people and related concepts
- **Intersexism** is prejudice against intersex people and related concepts, based on the belief that there are only two sexes
- **Binarism** is the belief that only two genders exist (man and woman), and refers to when people and systems actively attempt to categorize people into either of these labels
- **Queerphobia** is the prejudice against any member of a gender and sexual minority group. It is often used as an umbrella term that encompasses homo-, trans-, and biphobia, and intersexism and binarism

Challenges & Possible Solutions

LGBTQIA+ people face many challenges on a regular basis. The purpose of being an ally is to ensure you're not contributing to these challenges. Here are some of the most common issues faced by LGBTQIA+ people, as well as some alternative suggestions:

The Challenge:

Stereotyping. This is when a group of people are widely viewed as an oversimplified caricature based on similar traits

Tokenization. This occurs when someone is only included when it's of benefit to the person or group of privilege

Insensitive Comments. Phrases such as “that’s so gay” or “you don’t look trans” trivializes the life experiences of LGBTQIA+ people

Erasure. Being excluded from conversations and being denied accurate representation tells LGBTQIA+ people that their lives are unimportant

Derogatory Language. Being called names is never fun, and is especially problematic when it has historically been used to dehumanize an entire group

A Solution:

Recognize that no two people are the same, and everyone has their own story and life experience

Include people based on their experience, expertise, or simply because of who they are as a person, and not their minority status

Avoid using these and similar phrases. Often, these phrases are also used to indicate that the LGBTQIA+ experience is somehow unacceptable

Discuss LGBTQIA+ lives in a way that accurately and fairly depicts them. Even better is including them in a sincere way

Be mindful of the words you say. Ask yourself if it's something you'd want to hear if they were about you. If the answer is “no” then it shouldn't be said