LGBTQIA & Ally Resources
Allyship Information

What is an Ally?

An ally is a member of the dominant social group who takes a stand against social injustice directed at a target group. An ally works to be an agent of social change rather than an agent of oppression. When a form of oppression has multiple target groups, as do racism, ableism, and heterosexism, target group members can be allies to other targeted social groups.

An Ally is someone who:

✓ Listens openly.
✓ Actively pursues a process of self-education.
✓ Learns about the history and culture of target groups.
✓ Acknowledges and takes responsibility for one’s own socialization, prejudice and privilege.
✓ Is willing to examine and relinquish privileges.
✓ Learns about and takes pride in one’s own identities.
✓ Identifies one’s own self-interest in acting as an ally.
✓ Makes friends with people who are different.
✓ Knows resources about and for target groups.
✓ Educates others.
✓ Takes a public stand against discrimination and prejudice.
✓ Interrupts prejudice and takes action against oppression even when people from the target group are not present.
✓ Risks discomfort!
✓ Is not self-righteous with others (especially other dominant group members).
✓ Challenges the internalized oppression of people in target groups.
✓ Supports the value of separate meetings/events/activities for members of target and agent groups.
✓ Has a vision of a healthy multicultural society.

How to be an Ally:

✓ Be Yourself
  Be aware of and respect your limits. We are each unique and have different strengths. We also each have limits which need to be respected. Know yourself and what you are willing to do as an Ally. There is enough to be done that we can all share a part in this exciting project!

✓ Be Relaxed
  Don’t be hard on yourself! While we are not responsible for the existence of transphobia, homophobia or heterosexism, we are responsible for its existence within ourselves and our environments. It takes courage to examine the source of prejudice within ourselves and to work to eradicate it. Be patient with yourself. We are all human, born and raised in homophobic, transphobic and heterosexist cultures. We all have growth and learning that will take place as part of this self-evaluation process. This is extremely important to our work as Allies and for those we want to support.

✓ Demonstrate LGBT Positive Behavior:
  • Use the vocabulary that the other person uses. If they say “homosexual”, follow their lead. Likewise, if the person uses other words to describe themselves, use those. If you’re unsure what word to use, ask the person what they would like you to use when referring to them.
  • Be aware of your comfort level and limitations.
  • Be aware of cultural differences that may affect the person.
  • Provide pamphlets and materials to the person if they are seeking resources.
  • Respect confidentiality. Any information that is shared with you about LGBT identity should be kept confidential.
Terms to Know To Be an Effective Ally

- **Asexual** - Person who is not sexually attracted to anyone or does not have a sexual orientation.
- **Biphobia** - The fear of, discrimination against, or hatred of bisexuals, which is often times related to the current binary standard.
- **Bisexual** - A person emotionally, physically, and/or sexually attracted to males and females. This attraction does not have to be equally split between genders and there may be a preference for one gender over others.
- **Cross-dresser** - Someone who wears clothes of another gender/sex.
- **Drag** - The performance of one or multiple genders theatrically.
- **Gay** - Term used to represent males who are attracted to males in a romantic, erotic and/or emotional sense.
- **Gender Binary** - The idea that there are only two genders – male/female or man/woman and that a person must be strictly gendered as either/or.
- **Gender Expression** - External manifestation of one’s gender identity, usually expressed through “masculine,” “feminine” or gender-variant behavior, clothing, haircut, voice or body characteristics. Typically, transgender people seek to make their gender expression match their gender identity, rather than their birth-assigned sex.
- **Gender Identity** - One’s internal, personal sense of being a man or a woman (or a boy or a girl). For transgender people, their birth-assigned sex and their own internal sense of gender identity do not match.
- **Gender Normative** - A person who by nature or by choice conforms to gender based expectations of society.
- **Genderqueer** - A gender variant person whose gender identity is neither male nor female or is some combination of genders. Often includes a political agenda to challenge gender stereotypes and the gender binary system.
- **Gender Variant** - A person who either by nature or by choice does not conform to gender-based expectations of society (e.g. transgender, transsexual, = intersex, genderqueer, cross-dresser, etc.).
- **Heteronormativity** - The assumption, in individuals or in institutions, that everyone is heterosexual, and that heterosexuality is superior to homosexuality and bisexuality.
- **Heterosexism** - Prejudice against individuals and groups who display non-heterosexual behaviors or identities.
- **Heterosexual Privilege** - Those benefits derived automatically by being heterosexual that are denied to homosexuals and bisexuals. Also, the benefits homosexuals and bisexuals receive as a result of claiming heterosexual identity or denying homosexual or bisexual identity.
- **Homophobia** - The irrational fear or hatred of homosexuals, homosexuality, or any behavior or belief that does not conform to rigid sex role stereotypes. It is this fear that enforces sexism as well as heterosexism.
- **In the Closet** - Refers to an LGBTQI person who will not or cannot disclose their sex, sexuality, sexual orientation or gender identity to their friends, family, co-workers, or society. Also known as ‘Downlow.’
- **Intersexed** - Formerly referred to as hermaphrodites, intersexed people are not easily categorized as male or female because of ambiguous genitals.
• Lesbian - Term used to describe females attracted romantically and/or emotionally to other females.
• Oppression - The systematic subjugation of a group of people by another group with access to social power, the result of which benefits one group over the other and is maintained by social beliefs and practices.
• Outing - The act of publicly declaring (sometimes based on rumor and/or speculation) or revealing another person’s sexual orientation or gender identity without that person’s consent. Considered inappropriate by a large portion of the LGBT community.
• Pansexual - A person who is sexually attracted to all or many gender expressions.
• Queer - An umbrella term which embraces a matrix of sexual orientations and identities. Nevertheless, a sizable percentage of people to whom this term might apply still hold ‘queer’ to be a hateful insult, and its use by heterosexuals is often considered offensive.
• Questioning - The process of exploring one’s own sexual identity, including but not limited to one’s upbringing, expectations from others (family, friends, religion, etc.), and inner motivation.
• Rainbow Flag - The flag was originally designed by San Francisco artist, Gilbert Baker, in 1978 and was intended to be a symbol of gay and lesbian pride. The six colors of the flag — red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple — represent the diversity and unity within the LGBT movement.
• Sex - The classification of people as male or female. At birth, infants are assigned a sex based on a combination of bodily characteristics including: chromosomes, hormones, internal reproductive organs, and genitals.
• Sexual Orientation - Describes an individual’s enduring physical, romantic and/or emotional attraction to another person. Gender identity and sexual orientation are not the same. Transgender people may be straight, lesbian, gay or bisexual. For example, a man who transitions from male to female and is attracted to other women would be identified as a lesbian or a gay woman.
• Sexuality - A person’s exploration of sexual acts, sexual orientation, sexual pleasure, and desire.
• Sexual Reassignment Surgery (SRS) - A term used by some medical professionals to refer to a group of surgical options that alter a person’s “sex”. Not all transgender people choose to or can afford to have SRS.
• Transgender - A person who lives as a member of a gender other than that expected based on anatomical sex. Sexual orientation varies and is not dependent on gender identity. Transsexuals may live as the opposite sex, undergo hormone therapy, and/or have sex reassignment surgery to "match" their bodies with their gender identity.
• Transition - This term is primarily used to refer to the process a gender variant person undergoes when changing their bodily appearance either to be more congruent with the gender/sex they feel themselves to be and/or to be in harmony with their preferred gender expression.
• Transphobia - The irrational fear of those who are gender variant and/or the inability to deal with gender ambiguity.
• Ze / Hir - Alternate pronouns that are gender neutral and preferred by some gender variant persons. Pronounced /zee/ and /here/, they replace “he”/”she” and “his”/”hers” respectively.
What Do You Do When…

A Brother/Sister Comes Out to You?

• Listen to what he/she has to say and try to keep an open mind.
• Understand the personal risk he/she took in telling you, and if you are confused, be honest about your feelings. Realize the trust he/she has placed in you.
• Realize that your brother/sister has not changed. You may be shocked, but remember that he/she is still the same person as before he/she came out to you.
• Respect his/her choice to tell you by letting him/her know that you will not tell anyone he/she is gay. Realize that the member has to come out to the fraternity/sorority when he/she is ready.
• Feel free to ask questions to better understand your brother/sister, such as:
  - How long have you known that you were gay?
  - Do other brothers/sisters or friends know that you are gay?
  - Has it been hard for you to carry around this secret?
  - How can I be most supportive of you?
• Actions speak louder than words so offer your support and willingness to help him/her through his/her coming-out process. He/she may really need a brother/sister like you to count on right now.
• Communicate support to your brother or sister. He/she may feel isolated, as if he/she is the only one.
• Know what you are talking about by using resources on the college campus. Try to educate yourself, and, if comfortable, be an ally on the issue.
• Most important, remember the meaning of brother/sisterhood and be a brother/sister.

A Member is Outed to the Chapter?

• Approach the brother/sister in private (if possible) and let him/her know that you are willing to listen and be a brother/sister.
• Calm the member if he/she is upset by the outing and allow him/her to take the lead or speak about his/her feelings.
• Stand up for your brother/sister as you would for any other member.
• Attempt to resolve any conflict among other members who may not understand by asking them to give the brother/sister some time to process his/her feelings.
• Seek expertise from campus officials or national headquarters if you are concerned about the chapter's response and need assistance processing the experience.
• Let the member know that you value him/her as a brother/sister and as a person, no matter what.

A Member Is Suspected or Perceived to be Gay?

• Try not assume anything about your brother’s/sister’s sexual orientation.
• Remember that your brother/sister may be gay, but not ready to acknowledge this to him/herself or others. He/she needs to come out when he/she is ready.
• Be supportive of your brother/sister, possibly bringing up gay topics to communicate that you would be a person with whom he can talk.
• Understand that your brother/sister may not be gay.
What Do You NOT Do When Your Brother/Sister is Gay…

- Do not think it is just a phase and that you can help your brother/sister find the “right” woman/man.
- Do not be afraid to ask questions about being gay or about the coming-out process.
- Do not assume that your brother/sister finds you attractive.
- Do not try to change the member. Do accept him/her as being gay.
- Do not ignore the member or treat him/her differently after he/she has come out. Still invite him/her along when you go out and, most importantly, do not change who you are.
- Do not be ashamed or fail to defend a member who is gay if otherwise he/she is a good brother/sister.
- Do not be afraid to use the word “gay” and do not ignore him/her when he/she brings up gay topics.
- Do not try to restrict the member’s freedom to share being gay or to be a public role model. The Greek system and the campus at large need more out student leaders to identify with – do not be surprised if more Greeks start to come out of the closet.
- Do not be worried about what other chapters think or about the reputation of the chapter. Lead by example and remember that there are gay members in every house. Some are simply less fortunate and do not have the open-minded environment for members to come out.
- Do not assume that all of his/her guests are dates and do not make a big deal if he/she brings a date to the house or a fraternity/sorority function.
- Treat him/her with respect as you would any other person.
- Do not kick him/her out of the chapter for being gay. Such an action may be a violation of university policy and definitely contradicts the ideals of your organization.
- Do not be afraid to approach a gay member if you think their actions are inappropriate. Hold a gay member to the same standards as all members.
- Do not treat the member as if he/she is a public relations disaster for the chapter since they have come out. Support their openness and work together to communicate similar messages. Trust that they are going to proudly represent your organization wherever they go, as always.
- Do not feel let down if the gay member decides to leave the chapter because of other members’ actions or behavior. Be supportive and still be their friend.

SOURCE: Shane L. Windmeyer and Pamela W. Freeman, Lambda 10 Project
Checklist for a Climate of Acceptance

Building a climate of acceptance in fraternities requires a commitment at all levels, ranging from individual members to the group’s headquarters and including the university administration. The following checklist is suggested as a guide for creating a climate of acceptance in fraternities and sororities – a climate in which a brother or sister who is LGBT may feel a sense of safety and support among his brothers or sisters.

Individual Members

___1. Refrain from ridiculing persons on the basis of sexual orientation, such as through jokes, name-calling, and display of demeaning images or messages.
___2. Confront others who may ridicule or harass persons on the basis of sexual orientation.
___3. Be committed to learning about sexual orientation, as shown through participation in educational programs and personal study.
___4. Assume responsibility for learning how to respond to a brother or sister who is gay and wants or needs to talk.
___5. Insist that leaders of the chapter state their commitment to diversity, including that pertaining to sexual orientation.

Chapters

___1. Include expectations for appreciating diversity in training for pledges and actives.
___2. Create a diversity statement, either from national headquarters or locally developed, that promotes respect for all people, regardless of sexual orientation.
___3. Display prominently the diversity statement in the house and/or in printed materials about the chapter.
___4. Develop a procedure for addressing harassing behaviors, including those directed at persons on the basis of their sexual orientation.
___5. Contribute to the education of other chapters on campus by modeling acceptance and appreciation of diverse members.
___6. Support individual members who wish to state publicly their support for persons who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered.
___7. Sponsor and support events that contribute to understanding of sexual orientation issues.
___8. Encourage brothers or sisters to be honest with each other by creating an atmosphere of support for differences. Remember: This leads to a stronger sense of brotherhood/sisterhood.
___9. Have policies that apply to guest and alumni, making it clear that it is not acceptable to use demeaning language or harass members on the basis of sexual orientation.
___10. Periodically review traditions, such as songs and events, to be sure that language and actions are not demeaning to people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgendered.

Source: Shane L. Windmeyer and Pamela W. Freeman, Lambda 10 Project
Resources

On Campus

LGBTQ Student Resource Center
Oglesby Union A211
The LGBTQ Student Resource Center provides resources and a safe environment in which LGBTQI individuals can be themselves.

PRIDE Student Union
http://sga.fsu.edu/pride/
PRIDE Student Union is an SGA agency for LGBTQI students and their Allies at Florida State University. They are committed to initiating discussions, encouraging education, and celebrating diversity.

Safe Zone
http://safezone.fsu.edu/
Safe Zone is a program designed to identify people who consider themselves to be open to and knowledgeable about lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) issues. Members display a Safe Zone symbol to demonstrate their acceptance of LGBT individuals.

For more information, please contact Program Coordinator for Safe Zone and Agencies, Paul Hafner- phafner@fsu.edu

University Counseling Center
Askew Student Life Building
(850) 644-2003
The University Counseling Center offers multiple services to LGBTQI students, including individual and group therapeutic services and information on a wide variety of concerns.

Local Organizations

http://eqfl.org/
Equality Florida works to secure and protect the rights of LGBTQI Floridians by promoting legislative initiatives on the state, county and municipal levels.

http://www.familytreecenter.org/
The Family Tree Community Center works year-round to ensure that Tallahassee is a great place for LGBTQI people and families.

National Organizations

http://www.campuspride.org/lambda10/
Lambda 10 is a national clearinghouse for LGBTQI fraternity and sorority issues that conducts research, publishes books, gives presentations, and founded the Out and Greek Conference.

http://www.glsen.org/
The Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network strives to assure that each member of every school community is valued and respected regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression.

http://thetaskforce.org/
The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force works to build the grassroots political power of the LGBTQI community to win complete equality.

http://community.pflag.org/
Parents Families and Friends of Lesbians And Gays promotes the health and well-being of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered persons, their families and friends through support, education and advocacy to end discrimination and to secure equal civil rights.