



TOOLKIT

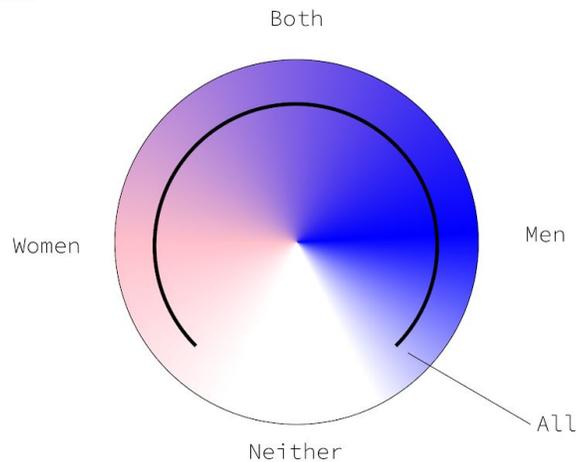
HOW TO BE AN ALLY TO THE LGBTQ+ COMMUNITY

Basics.

The LGBTQ+ community is essentially made of people who don't have completely heterosexual attractions and/or do not identify with the gender identity they were given at birth. Many different genders and sexualities come under the community.

The Sexuality Spectrum

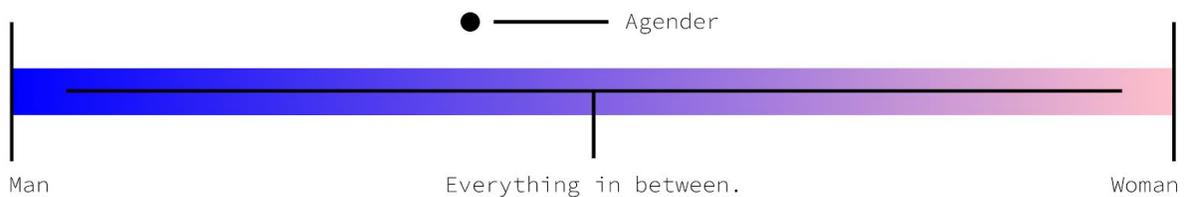
Attracted to..



Sexuality means what gender(s) someone is attracted to. People can be be homosexual (liking the same gender), heterosexual (liking the opposite gender), bisexual (liking men and women), pansexual (liking all genders), or asexual (not being attracted to any gender or person at all).

The Gender Spectrum

Identifies as..



Gender is also seen as a spectrum, and someone's gender identity is the gender identify with. People can be transgender (switching gender), agender (without a gender identity), non-binary or genderqueer (someone whose gender identity

is inbetween man and woman), or cisgender (someone whose gender identity matches the one they were given at birth).

Here's a quick intro of the vocabulary and ideas within the LGBTQ+ community.

Word	Definition
Ally	<p>Someone that provides assistance and support in an ongoing effort, activity, or struggle, often now used to describe someone who is not a member of a group, but who expresses or gives support to that group.</p> <p>In this toolkit, it'll be used to describe people who help the LGBTQ+ community.</p>
LGBTQ+	<p>An acronym that encompasses all of the different sexualities and genders within the spectrum in the entire community. LGBTQ+ can be written in many different ways, but almost all of them encompass the most common groups in the community: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Pansexual, Non-binary, Agender, and more!</p> <p>The LGBTQ+ community is essentially made of people who don't have completely heterosexual attractions and/or do not identify with the gender identity they were given at birth.</p>
Homosexual	Someone who is attracted to people who have the same gender as them.
Lesbian	A lesbian is a female homosexual: a female who experiences attraction to other females.
Gay	Gay is a term that mostly refers to a homosexual person or the trait of being homosexual. Gay is often used to

	describe homosexual males, but lesbians can also be referred to as gay.
WLW	Used to abbreviate / describe lesbians, means women like women
MLM	Used to abbreviate / describe gay men, means men like men
Transgender	<p>Transgender is a term for people whose gender identity differs from what is typically associated with the sex they were assigned at birth. It is sometimes abbreviated to trans.</p> <p>You might see this in conjunction with FTM (someone who used to be female and now is male) or MTF (someone who used to be male and is now female).</p>
Cisgender	Someone who still identifies with the gender assigned at birth.
Queer	Queer is an umbrella term for all communities within the LGBTQ+ community. Queer was originally used as a slur against the community, but some members of the community began to reclaim the word.
Bisexual	Someone who is attracted to both men and women, though not necessarily equally or at the same time.
Pansexual	Someone who is attracted to all people, irregardless of gender identity, though not necessarily equally or at the same time.
Non-binary	Someone who identifies with or expresses a gender identity that is neither entirely male nor entirely female
Agender	Someone who doesn't identify with any gender identity at

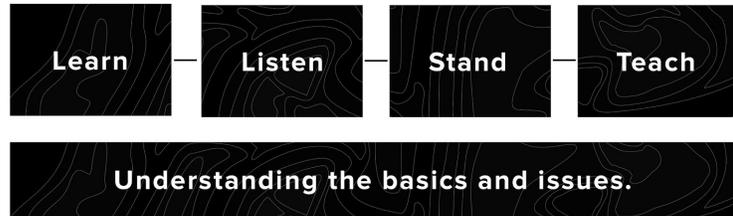
	<p>all.</p> <p>If you think of gender as color, agender would be clear, with no color at all.</p>
Pronouns	A way to identify people or things that belong to someone, and can describe their gender identity. The mostly used pronouns are he/him, she/her, and they/them.
Sexuality	The gender / genders that someone is attracted to.
Gender	An identity that someone uses to describe the behavioral, cultural, or psychological traits relating to the one or none of the sexes they most identify with. Gender within the LGBTQ+ community is seen as a spectrum, whereas in more traditional and conservative areas, gender is seen as something that can only be two identities, male and female.
Questioning	Someone who is unsure and exploring their sexuality and gender identity.

Overall, being a good ally revolves around one thing: understanding and being there for people who you know within the LGBTQ+ community, and being a good friend and loved one. Many LGBTQ+ people experience higher rates of homelessness, being disowned by family, being murdered or the victim of a hate crime, and mental illnesses. A good person to support them helps navigate the issues that come with being LGBTQ+, and can make a huge difference in their life. The greatest way to be an ally is to be a good friend to people already in your life. Listen, be supportive and have compassion and empathy, and show up for them when they can't show up for themselves.

Learn.

Ask your LGBTQ+ friends what's the best thing you can do for them, and how you can best support them. This can mean anything from supporting them, accompanying them to different LGBTQ+ events, or just being a person to talk

to and navigate this part of their life with. **Start opening up a dialogue about how to best support them**, and how to navigate their gender identity or sexuality with others around. If they come out as transgender or gender neutral, ask about their pronouns. Keep in mind, they might not be out to everyone, so don't forget to ask when it is appropriate to use their pronouns, or if it's ok to bring up their sexuality in front of other people. Many LGBTQ+ people don't come from accepting families or communities, and revealing their sexuality or gender identity puts them in danger. **Although it may be awkward to ask and navigate this now, it would be worse to accidentally out someone or indirectly hurt them.** Remember, this is about supporting them, and your feelings need to be put aside for the moment.



On your own, **learn about the different types of sexualities and genders**, just so you have a general idea of what to expect and the vocabulary. Your LGBTQ+ friends don't have to answer all of your questions, especially if they're still looking for answers themselves. Use resources within this toolkit or do your own research on the side to understand and support them. Check the read more section to find different starting points.

Above all, understand that even if you don't agree with their sexuality, you can still respect it. If someone confides in you, it's not about what you think or your opinion on the LGBTQ+ community, it's about the fact they trust you enough to tell you. Focus on how much strength and energy that takes, and being grateful for being confided in, rather than how you want to respond to it.

Listen.

Listening is a huge part of learning and supporting your loved ones, and it creates a relationship in which your LGBTQ+ friends know they can rely on you for support. You can't put yourself in their shoes, but you can **listen and be**

empathetic. Try to understand the situations they may be in, and how their sexuality and gender can make issues that are easy for you, 10x harder for them. If you look into research on the side, **listen to members of the LGBTQ+ community and their stories.** These are great ways to understand and process these complex issues and ideas, especially if you're not familiar with existing issues.

Take in information, and create dialogues and an open communication that makes the people you want to listen to feel safe. If you're talking to someone in the LGBTQ+ community only to disprove them, then you're not listening, or learning. Understand that respect is the most important part of being an ally, and that you don't have to agree with people to respect them.

While you're learning and growing as an ally, **be ok with receiving some criticism.** The LGBTQ+ community and its' history and systemic barriers are complex, and hard to understand for some people. You may have misconceptions or questions that can be taken the wrong way. That's ok, as long as you're working to always learn and make changes. Learning and listening are intertwined, and both of them require elements of the other. Take what members of the community say and the stories they share, listen, and take time to process what they say and how it can change your perspective of different things.

As much as listening helps with learning, it's also incredibly important to **use listening to support people.** Your LGBTQ+ loved ones will go through a lot of issues within their life, many of which can be related to their sexuality and gender identity. Being an active and good listener gives them a place to properly express these.

However, note that you shouldn't be ANYONE'S replacement for medical care or actual intervention. It can be hard to say no to people when they need help, but try to **define and understand the lines of the things that you can handle, and the things that require external help.** For example, if your gay friend telling you they're being discriminated in the workplace, you can support them filing reports through HR or looking for a new job. However, if that same

friend confides in you that their partner is abusing them, understand that it is bigger than anything you could handle on your own, and requires more than your support and help to solve. It crosses a line between things that you can fix and help with, and things that you can't.

Either way, listening is a great way to be supportive of your LGBTQ+ friends and to better understand the community as a whole.

Stand and teach.

Think of being an ally as being a superhero's sidekick. You're not in the spotlight here, you're just supporting them by helping things move smoothly and more safely in the background. **Being an ally can mean being an active voice in issues** where the community is being hurt, or your LGBTQ+ loved one isn't there to defend themselves.

If your friends say hurtful things in front of your LGBTQ+ loved one, quietly pull them aside and tell them to stop. If you see someone hurting or specifically being mean in public or online towards the community, support and help your friends avoid or ignore the situation. Advocate for your LGBTQ+ friends in spaces where they aren't present and use their pronouns all the time, not when it's convenient.

It doesn't have to mean getting in arguments! **Small steps**, such as reminding someone that they used someone's deadname or wrong pronouns, **help create a better and safer community for your LGBTQ+ friends.** These can be in the form of talking to your other friends who aren't in the community about how to better respect those who are and what things (e.g. using slurs, making gay jokes, having strong biases against certain sexualities) are bad, teaching younger kids (or your kids) how to respect people no matter their sexuality and gender. If you can safely do so, openly advocate for pro-LGBTQ+ legislation, attend protests with friends, and go to LGBTQ+ events if they need a supportive friend, and with their permission, speak on behalf of them or in the place of those who don't feel safe. If you have one, lend your platform to LGBTQ+ individuals if you discuss topics that involve them, and speak with them, not for them.

Remember, **being an ally is about lifting up other people. Not talking over them.**

Recap.

Start opening up a dialogue about how to best support the LGBTQ+ community and your LGBTQ+ friends with your friends and members of the community. Learn about the different types of sexualities and genders! Listen and be empathetic to members of the LGBTQ+ community and their stories, and be ok with receiving some criticism. Use listening to support people, but define and understand the lines of the things that you can handle, and the things that require external help. Being an ally can mean being an active voice in issues, and requires you to stand by and teach others when they don't feel comfortable doing so or aren't available to. But being an ally doesn't mean you have to take huge actions that you're not comfortable with. It can start with small steps to help create a better and safer community for your LGBTQ+ friends. But most importantly, being an ally is about lifting up other people. Not talking over them.

Read More.

Being an Ally

1. [10 ways to be an ally and a friend - GLAAD](#)
2. [Guide to being an ally to LGBTQ+ students - GLSEN](#)
3. [Stand up as an ally - Stonewall](#)
4. [How to actually be an LGBTQ+ ally - Carlos Maza](#)
5. [10 Steps to becoming an effective ally - UC Davis](#)
6. [5 tips for being a good ally - Psychology Today](#)
7. [LGBTQ+ Ally Toolkit - Amnesty International](#)
8. [Trans Ally: Do's and Don'ts - USC LGBTQ+ Resource Center](#)

Learning

History

9. [LGBTQ+ Encyclopedia - GLBTQ Archives](#)
10. [Glossary of LGBTQ+ terms - Human Rights Campaign](#)

11. [Making Gay History \(Podcast\)](#)
12. [A timeline of LGBTQ+ history - GSAFE](#)

Mental + Physical Health

13. [LGBTQ+ communities and mental health - Mental Health America](#)
14. [LGBTQ+ mental health - NAMI](#)
15. [LGBTQ+ people are prone to mental illness. It's a truth we shouldn't shy away from. - Alexander Leon](#)
16. [Mental health in the LGBTQ+ community - American Addiction Centers](#)
17. [Understanding the health needs of LGBTQ+ people - National LGBTQ+ Education Center](#)
18. [LGBTQ+ Mental Health - Shaw Mind Foundation](#)
19. [Mental Health in LGBTQ+ Youth - Stephen T. Russell and Jessica N. Fish](#)

Hate Crimes

20. [Hate Crimes and Violence in the LGBTQ+ community - HRC](#)
21. [Being LGBTQ+ in Britain - Stonewall](#)
22. [Responding to hate crimes - National Center for Transgender Equality](#)