



**Bryant University
LGBTQ and Allies Faculty & Staff Caucus**

SAFE ZONE Training Manual

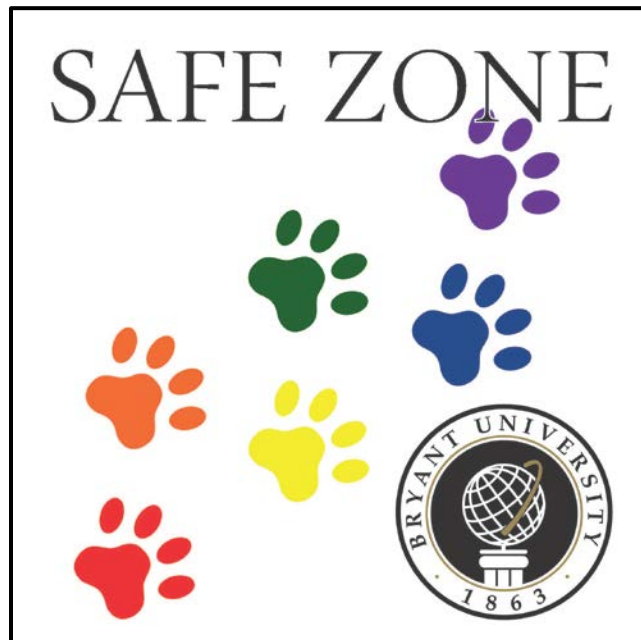


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NOTE: This manual was put together especially for Bryant's Safe Zone training.

HETEROSEXUAL QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire is for self-avowed heterosexuals only. If you are not openly heterosexual, pass it on to a friend who is. Please try to answer the questions as candidly as possible. Your responses will be held in strict confidence and your anonymity fully protected.

1. What do you think caused your heterosexuality?
2. When and how did you first decide you were a heterosexual?
3. Is it possible your heterosexuality is just a phase you may grow out of?
4. Could it be that your heterosexuality stems from a neurotic fear of others of the same sex?
5. If you've never slept with a person of the same sex, how can you be sure you wouldn't prefer that?
6. To whom have you disclosed your heterosexual tendencies? How did they react?
7. Why do heterosexuals feel compelled to seduce others into their lifestyle?
8. Why do you insist on flaunting your heterosexuality? Can't you just be what you are and keep it quiet?
9. Would you want your children to be heterosexual, knowing the problems they'd face?
10. A disproportionate majority of child molesters are heterosexual men. Do you consider it safe to expose children to heterosexual male teachers, pediatricians, priests, or scoutmasters?
11. With all the societal support for marriage, the divorce rate is spiraling. Why are there so few stable relationships among heterosexuals?
12. Why do heterosexuals place so much emphasis on sex?
13. Considering the menace of overpopulation, how could the human race survive if everyone were heterosexual?
14. Could you trust a heterosexual therapist to be objective? Don't you fear s/he might be inclined to influence you in the direction of her/his own leanings?
15. Heterosexuals are notorious for assigning themselves and one another rigid, stereotyped sex roles. Why must you cling to such unhealthy role-playing?
16. With the sexually segregated living conditions of military life, isn't heterosexuality incompatible with military service?
17. How can you enjoy an emotionally fulfilling experience with a person of the other sex when there are such vast differences between you? How can a man know what pleases a woman sexually or vice-versa?
18. Shouldn't you ask your far-out straight cohorts, like skinheads and born-again, to keep quiet? Wouldn't that improve your image?
19. Why are heterosexuals so promiscuous?
20. Why do you attribute heterosexuality to so many famous lesbian and gay people? Is it to justify your own heterosexuality?
21. How can you hope to actualize your God-given homosexual potential if you limit yourself to exclusive, compulsive heterosexuality?
22. There seem to be very few happy heterosexuals. Techniques have been developed that might enable you to change if you really want to. After all, you never deliberately chose to be a heterosexual, did you? Have you considered aversion therapy or Heterosexuals Anonymous?

Commonly Used Terms and Definitions

(Adapted from Youth Pride Inc. www.youthprideri.org)

Vocabulary is a communication tool that is constantly changing within our society and within the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning (LGBTQQ) community. The terms below are in no way comprehensive or representative of everyone within the LGBTQQ community, but are those that are commonly used. These are terms and definitions for sexual orientation as well as gender identity/expression. Please use these terms and definitions as a suggested guideline for appropriate language with people that identify as LGBTQQ and as a starting point to open dialogue with students, colleagues and community members.

Sexual Orientation: Sexual orientation is a person's emotional, physical, spiritual, intellectual, and sexual attraction and the expression of that attraction.

Bisexuality: A sexual orientation in which a person feels attracted to some members of both genders.

Heterosexuality: A sexual orientation in which a person feels attracted to some members of the opposite gender.

Homosexuality: A sexual orientation in which a person feels attracted to some members of the same gender – commonly, gay or lesbian.

Gender Expression/Gender Presentation: The way a person expresses gender through gestures, movement, dress, and grooming.

Gender Identity: A person's understanding, definition, or experience of their own gender, regardless of anatomical sex. Gender identity may or may not be the same as the individual's anatomical sex.

Gender Nonconformity: Expressing gender or having gender characteristics or gender identity that does not conform to the expectations of society and culture.

Gender Role: Culturally accepted and expected behavior associated with biological sex. The feelings, attitudes, mannerisms, and behaviors that are culturally associated with men or with women.

Gender Baiting: Taunting intended to harass or humiliate an individual because they are perceived as insufficiently masculine or feminine.

Coming Out: (Also called "coming out of the closet" or being "out".) Refers to the process during which a person acknowledges, accepts, and in many cases appreciates their sexual orientation or gender identity/expression. This often involves sharing of this information with others. The process of coming out to oneself and to others is unique for every individual.

Co-Parent: Refers to adults raising a child together. Sometimes refers to the non-biological or non-adoptive parent raising a child.

Down Low/DL: Refers to people whose public identification is straight, but who have discreet sex with other people of the same sex, sometimes outside their primary relationship. A person who identifies this way would be said to be "on the down low," or "on the DL." Often these people do not consider themselves gay or bisexual. Their primary partners are often not aware that they have same sex relations.

Family of Choice: Persons forming an individual's social support network and often fulfilling the functions of one's family of origin. Some LGBTQQ people are rejected when their families learn of their sexual orientation or gender identity or may remain "closeted" to their biological relatives. In such cases it is often their partner/significant other and close friends who will be called on in time of illness or personal crisis. It is important for clinicians to be aware of who clients consider family and who they would like to involve in their care.

Family of Origin: The family in which one was raised (biological, adoptive or foster). These individuals may or may not be part of a person's support system.

Inclusive Language: The use of gender non-specific language (i.e. "partner" instead of "husband") in conversation, forms, education materials, and public health campaigns to avoid assumptions which limit the information available to clinicians and to enhance the accessibility of services to LGBTQQ individuals.

Invisibility: The assumption of heterosexuality renders LGBTQQ people (youth in particular) invisible and seemingly non-existent. LGBTQQ youth are rarely discussed or portrayed in the media or in schools, churches, or other institutions. This invisibility results in feelings of isolation for LGBTQQ people, reinforcing internalized homophobia and/or transphobia.

LGBTQQ: Acronym representing lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning.

Partner or Significant Other: Primary domestic partner or spousal relationship(s). May be referred to as "girlfriend/boyfriend," "lover," "roommate," "life partner," "wife/husband" or other terms.

Queer: Term often used in derogatory manner that is being reclaimed by some academics, activists and young people as a source of power and pride. Thought to be inclusive of both gender identity/expression and sexual orientation, its use is controversial, and not uniformly accepted.

Two-spirit: First Nation lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender people. Two-Spirit is a term that can encompass alternative sexuality, alternative gender and an integration of Native spirituality. In many native tribes, these are special and well respected spiritual leaders, healers, and teachers. Native American and First Native peoples see gender along a continuum, not as opposite categories, and enjoy a tradition that respects, honors and reaffirms each being as part of the sacred web of life and society.

Phobias and Isms:

Transphobia: The fear, dislike and hatred of transgender people and what they do (or of what they are feared to do).

Homophobia: The fear, dislike, and hatred of people who are, or are presumed to be, lesbian or gay.

Biphobia: The fear, dislike and hatred of people who are, or are presumed to be, bisexual.

Internalized Homophobia: The experience of shame, aversion or self-hatred in reaction to one's own feelings of attraction for a person of the same gender. Most lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals learn negative ideas about homosexuality throughout childhood. These individuals learn that they are members of a group that is often despised, rejected, and stigmatized. Individuals accept and internalize these beliefs, resulting in fear and hatred of themselves.

Heterosexism: The presumption that all people are or should be heterosexual, and the institutionalized assumption that heterosexuality is inherently superior and preferable to other sexual orientations. Heterosexism reinforces silence and invisibility for lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals, while conferring advantages on heterosexuals.

Transphobia: The fear, dislike, and hatred of people who are, or are presumed to be, gender non-conforming and/or gender queer; display characteristics of personality, dress or mannerisms not consistent with their biological gender.

All of the following are labels for people to use in self identification and about themselves, not for others to impose:

Transgender (TG): An umbrella term used to refer to individuals for whom their anatomical sex does not accurately or adequately describe their gender identity. It is a term for designating those who transcend or transgress gender by not looking, acting, being or identifying as traditionally male or female; this umbrella term can include crossdressers, transsexuals, intersex people and other gender nonconformists. Because sexual orientation and gender identity are two separate identity issues, transgender individuals may also self-identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or heterosexual.

Transsexual (TS): A person who transitions from one gender to another. Their transition may or may not involve medical transition (i.e. surgery or hormone use).

Cross-living: Living full-time in the preferred gender (other than assigned sex at birth); sometimes in preparation for gender reassignment surgery, sometimes not.

Crossdresser (CD): Used by people who privately or socially present in clothing, name, and/or pronouns that differ from their everyday gender. While some trans and gender variant people begin their self-discovery by crossdressing, many people who self-identify as crossdressers are not transgender and do not seek transition. Most transgender people find it disparaging to be called crossdressers.

Drag King/Queen: Used by people who present socially in clothing, name, and/or pronouns that differ from their everyday gender, usually for enjoyment, entertainment, and/or self-expression. Drag queens typically have everyday lives as men; drag kings typically live as women and/or butches when not performing. Drag shows are popular in some gay, lesbian, and bisexual environments. Many transgender people consider it offensive to be called drag queens or drag kings.

FTM (F2M, Female-to-Male): Shortened term for female-to-male transgender men. This term is not preferred or used by everyone and should not be used unless a person prefers it.

MTF (M2F, Male-to-Female): Shortened term for Male-to female transgender women. This term is not preferred or used by everyone and should not be used unless a person prefers it.

Passing: Term used to describe individuals and situations where people of TG/TS experience are not publicly identifiable as having undergone transition or as having a birth-designated sex that diverges from their current presentation. Ability to pass should not be a factor when deciding whether a person's transition is successful or when determining bathroom access and pronoun usage.

Transition: This term can refer to the social and/or legal process of changing from a birth-designated gender to the gender with which a person identifies and/or to the medical process involved in changing physical appearance and anatomical characteristics. This term is preferred to the misleading phrase "sex change", which makes transition seem inextricably linked with genital surgeries. Some people seek transition to non-binary gender identities. Some people seeking medical transition have a body concept that differs from standard male or female bodies; desire for medical transition to non-standard bodies should be respected by medical providers.

Gender Reassignment Surgery (GRS): process of changing/reassigning anatomy through surgery. Some transsexuals may elect to have one surgery to alter one part of their body or may elect for numerous surgeries to alter many parts of their body.

Non-operative (non-op): Transsexual who is not seeking or does not desire GRS.

Pre-operative (pre-op): Transsexual who has not had GRS but may be preparing for GRS.

Post-operative (post-op): Transsexual who has undergone GRS.

Diagram of Sex, Gender, and Sexuality

Biological Sex <i>(anatomy, chromosomes, hormones)</i>	
Male	Intersex Female
Gender Identity <i>(psychological sense of self)</i>	
Man	Two-spirit/Third Gender/Transgender Woman
Gender Expression <i>(communication of gender)</i>	
Masculine	Androgynous Feminine
Sexual Orientation <i>(erotic response)</i>	
Attracted to women	Bisexual/Asexual Attracted to men
Sexual Behavior <i>(acts engaged in)</i>	
Sex with women	Sex with men and women Sex with men

Adapted from "Diagram of Sex & Gender," Center for Gender Sanity. Also based on the work of Fritz Klein.

Understanding the Coming Out Process

What is “Coming Out”? Coming out is a life-long process that begins when a lesbian, bisexual, or gay person recognizes his/her own same-sex feelings and shares these feelings with another person. Many people in this society assume that everyone is heterosexual, so gays, lesbians, and bisexuals must decide with whom they would like to share this information.

Why come out? Coming out allows the person to develop as a whole individual, allows for greater empowerment, and makes it easier for an individual to develop a positive self-image. Once “out,” the person is more able to share with others who they are and what is important to them, as well as to develop close and mutually satisfying relationships. Coming out frees the person of the fear of being “found out” and helps them avoid living a double life. Finally, it facilitates interaction with other gay people, giving a sense of community.

What does coming out entail? The coming out process varies from person to person depending on numerous factors. There are two commonly used descriptive models of the coming out process. The first is the Coleman Model, developed by Eli Coleman, and contains a five-step generalization of an individual’s progress. The second is a six-step model developed by Vivienne Cass, and is called the Cass Model.

Coleman’s Model

1. *Pre-coming out* - The individual is not conscious of same-sex feelings because of strong defenses built up to defend against these feelings. Person does feel somewhat different, but does not understand the reason.
2. *Coming out* - Acknowledgement of feelings. Limited disclosure for external validation. May make contact with other gays and lesbians, but avoids telling family and friends.
3. *Exploration* - More interactions with gays and lesbians, adds “experimentation” with new sexual identity. Improved interpersonal skills to make up for “developmental lag” if coming out occurs after adolescence.
4. *First Relationship* - Desire for more stable and committed relationship and less experimentation. Combines emotional and physical attraction.
5. *Integration* - Public and private identities merge into one unified self-concept. Relationships are more mature and the person is better able to meet everyday problems and pressures.

CASS Model of Coming Out

Stage 1 - Identity Confusion

- “Who am I?”
- Feeling one is different from peers
- Sense of personal alienation
- Beginning consciousness of same-sex feelings or behavior
- No sharing of inner turmoil

Stage 2 - Identity Comparison

- Rationalization or bargaining stage: maybe this is just temporary, just a phase
- Sense of not belonging anywhere
- “I am the only one in the world”

Stage 3 - Identity Tolerance

- “I probably am gay/lesbian”
- Beginning contact with other gay/lesbian people
- Barely tolerates own gay/lesbian identity
- Feelings of not belonging with heterosexuals

Stage 4 - Identity Acceptance

- Continued and increased contact with other gay/lesbian people
- Forming friendships
- Beginning to accept a more positive self-image
- Beginning to feel a sense of belonging

Stage 5 - Identity Pride

- “These are my people”
- Increasing awareness of gap between gay/lesbian and non-gay worlds
- Anger towards non-gay people; rejection of their values and institutions
- Discloses gay/lesbian identity to more people
- Desires to immerse self in gay/lesbian subculture

Stage 6 - Identity Synthesis

- Anger toward non-gay world mellows
- Realization that some non-gay people are friends, allies, supporters
- Some continuing anger at injustice of society’s attitudes/treatment
- Gay/lesbian identity becomes integrated into personality

About Coming Out as a Straight Supporter

A straight ally is someone who is not gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender (GLBT) but personally advocates for GLBT equal rights and fair treatment. Straight allies are some of the most effective and powerful advocates for the GLBT movement. These allies have proven invaluable personally and politically, and are increasingly important in the fight for GLBT equality. Indeed, their voices often have been heard while those of GLBT people have been ignored.

Coming out as a straight ally may be an extremely challenging experience, but many find that it is unexpectedly rewarding. Some may think that advocating on behalf of GLBT equality is solely the responsibility of those who are affected by the inequality.

But as straight ally Caleb Baker has put it: "U.S. Representative John Lewis once said that the next great movement in America would be the gay rights movement. His words make me remember there are white people fighting for black people's rights in the civil rights movement. There are men fighting for women's rights in the feminist movement. I would be greatly ashamed if there were no straight people fighting for gay rights in our movement." (GLSEN's Students and GSA's Yearbook)

Like GLBT people, straight allies will find that coming out is not a one-time event, but rather a lifelong journey.

Opinion polls show that people who know someone who is gay or lesbian are more likely to support equal rights for all gay and lesbian people. Anecdotal evidence also suggests that the same is true for people who know someone who is bisexual or transgender.

What is an Ally?

An ally is an individual who speaks out and stands up for a person or group that is targeted and discriminated against. An ally works to end oppression by supporting and advocating for people who are stigmatized, discriminated against or treated unfairly. For the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) communities, an ally is any person who supports and stands up for the rights of LGBT people. Allies have been involved in almost all movements for social change, and allies can make a significant contribution to the LGBT rights movement. It is important for allies to demonstrate that LGBT people are not alone as they work to improve school and work climates, and to take a stand in places where it might not be safe for LGBT people to be out or visible. Any educator or staff member, LGBT or non-LGBT, can be an ally to LGBT students. And any employee or supervisor can be an ally to LGBT colleagues.

What is a Safe Zone?

A Safe Zone is a welcoming, supportive and safe environment for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) students. From GLSEN's National School Climate Survey, a biennial survey of LGBT secondary school students, we know that school is not always a safe place for LGBT students. Most LGBT students frequently hear anti-LGBT language and experience harassment related to their sexual orientation and gender expression, and the majority of LGBT students feel unsafe at school and are likely to skip class or even full days of school to avoid the anti-LGBT name-calling, bullying and harassment they face on a daily basis.

A number of colleges and universities have implemented educational interventions with names such as *Safe Zone*, *Safe Space*, *Safe Harbor*, and *Safe On Campus*. Although it is unclear who first conceived of the "Safe" idea, the earliest found is the Ball State University program called *SAFE On Campus* or *Staff, Administration, and Faculty for Equality On Campus* implemented in 1992. The hallmark of these "Safe" programs is the public identification of allies by placing a "Safe" symbol, usually incorporating a pink triangle or rainbow, on office doors or within living spaces.

The research indicates that students who can identify a supportive faculty/staff member or student group are more likely to feel a sense of belonging at their schools than those who cannot. For many students, the presence of allies to whom they can turn for support - or even the simple knowledge that allies exist - can be a critical factor in developing a positive sense of self, building community, coping with bias, and working to improve school climate. *Safe Zone* programs therefore seek to increase the visible presence of student and adult allies who can help to shape a school culture that is accepting of all people regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity/expression, or any other difference.

What is Safe Zone Training?

Through education, advocacy, visibility, and skill development, we endeavor to support faculty and staff to become allies for LGBTQ students and colleagues.

The Safe Zone symbol provides a message to students and colleagues that the person displaying the symbol is a person who has completed the Safe Zone training, has decided to be an active and visible ally, can be trusted to maintain confidentiality, and will respond to the individual with understanding, support, and empathy.

Check Yourself: Understanding Your Own Beliefs

Anti-LGBT bias is all around us. Yet we tend to overlook the subtle biases — the anti-LGBT jokes, the exclusion of LGBT related-themes in curricula, even anti-LGBT name-calling. Subtle or not, bias has the power to hurt and isolate people. Your work as an ally includes recognizing and challenging your own anti-LGBT bias. Answer each question honestly, and consider how these will affect your work as an ally to LGBT students.

1. If someone were to come out to you as LGBT, what would your first thought be?
2. How would you feel if your child came out to you as LGBT? How would you feel if your mother, father or sibling came out to you as LGBT?
3. Would you go to a physician whom you thought was LGBT if they were of a different gender than you? What if they were the same gender as you?
4. Have you ever been to an LGBT social event, march or worship service? Why or why not?
5. Can you think of three historical figures that were lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender?
6. Have you ever laughed at or made a joke at the expense of LGBT people?
7. Have you ever stood up for an LGBT person being harassed? Why or why not?
8. If you do not identify as LGBT, how would you feel if people thought you were LGBT?

Recognizing your own biases is an important first step in becoming an ally. Based on your responses to these questions, do you think you have internalized some of the anti-LGBT messages pervasive in our world? How might your beliefs influence your actions as an ally of LGBT students? The more aware we are of our own biases and their impact on our behavior, the easier it is to ensure that our personal beliefs don't undermine our efforts to support LGBT students.

Attitude Continuum

There is a continuum concerning reactions to homophobia and transphobia ranging from intolerance to affirmation. Where do you see yourself?

1. ***Active Participation*** - This response includes actions that directly support lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) oppression. Actions include laughing at or telling jokes about LGBT people, making fun of people who don't fit traditional masculine/feminine stereotypes, and engaging in verbal or physical harassment of people who do not conform to traditional sex-role behavior. It also includes working for anti-gay or anti-trans legislation.
2. ***Denying or Ignoring*** - This stage of response includes inaction which supports LGBT oppression or an unwillingness/inability to understand the effects of homophobic, heterosexist, and transphobic actions. This stage is characterized by a "business as usual" attitude. Though not actively and directly oppressive, the passive acceptance of these actions by others serves to support the system of discrimination.
3. ***Recognizing (But No Action)*** - This stage of response is characterized by a recognition of the harmful effects of homophobic, heterosexist, and transphobic actions. However, this recognition does not result in action to counter the homophobic or heterosexist situation. An example of this is a person hearing a "queer joke", not laughing, recognizing that it is homophobic, but saying nothing.
4. ***Recognizing and Interrupting*** - This stage of response includes not only recognizing homophobic and heterosexist actions, but also taking action to stop them. This stage is often an important transition from passively accepting homophobic or heterosexist actions to actively choosing anti-homophobic and anti-heterosexist actions. In this stage a person hearing a "queer joke" would not laugh and might tell the joke teller that such jokes are not funny, or might open up a discussion about what happened.
5. ***Educating Self*** - This stage of response includes taking action to learn more about LGBT people and the affects of heterosexism, homophobia and transphobia. These actions include reading, books, attending workshops, talking to others, joining organizations, or any other actions that can increase awareness and knowledge.
6. ***Dialoguing, Supporting and Encouraging*** - This stage of response includes actions that seek to dialogue with people, and support and encourage the anti-homophobic and anti-transphobic actions of others. Talking to people about the issue, and supporting and encouraging others are important parts of reinforcing affirming behavior.
7. ***Initiating and Preventing*** - This stage includes actions that actively anticipate and identify homophobic and transphobic institutional practices or individual actions and work to change them. Examples include teachers changing a "Family Life" curriculum that is homophobic or heterosexist, social workers inviting a speaker to come and discuss how homophobia can affect clinical practice, or schools developing Safe Zone Programs.

19 Ways to Be an Effective Ally

1. Be a listener.
2. Be open-minded.
3. Be willing to talk.
4. Don't assume everyone is heterosexual. Be aware that transgender and intersexed people exist.
5. Don't assume that all your friends and co-workers are straight. Someone close to you could be looking for support in their coming-out process. Not making assumptions will give them the space they need.
6. Do not ever "out" someone. Just because you know, don't assume that others do.
7. Avoid anti-gay jokes and conversations. Homophobic comments and jokes are harmful. Let your friends, family and co-workers know that you find them offensive.
8. Create an atmosphere of acceptance.
9. Use all-inclusive language. Use "partner" instead of "boyfriend" or "girlfriend."
10. Actively pursue a process of self-education. Read and ask questions.
11. Acknowledge and take responsibility for your own socialization, prejudice, and privilege.
12. Educate others.
13. Interrupt prejudice and take action against oppression even when people from the target group are not present.
14. Have a vision of a healthy, multicultural society.
15. Be inclusive and invite LGBT friends to hang out with your friends and family.
16. Confront your own prejudices and homophobia, even if it is uncomfortable to do so.
17. Defend your LGBT friends against discrimination.
18. Believe that all people, regardless of gender identity and sexual orientation, should be treated with dignity and respect.
19. If you see LGBT people being misrepresented in the media, contact www.glaad.org.

Supporting Students When They Come Out to You

As an ally, LGBT students may come to you for support, comfort, guidance or just to talk. You may encounter a situation where a student comes out or reveals their sexual orientation or gender identity to you. You may be the first or only person an LGBT student comes out to. It is important that you support the student in a constructive way. Keep in mind that the student may be completely comfortable with his or her sexual orientation and may not need help dealing with it or may not be in need of any support. It may be that the student just wanted to tell someone, or just simply to tell you so you might know them better. Below you will find more information on the coming out process and how you can be a supportive ally when students come out to you.

Simply put, coming out is a means to publicly declare one's identity, whether to a person in private or a group of people. In our society, most people are generally presumed to be heterosexual, so there is usually no need for a heterosexual person to make a statement to others that discloses their sexual orientation. Similarly, most people feel that their current gender is aligned with their sex assigned at birth, therefore never having a need to disclose their gender identity. However, a person who is LGBT must decide whether or not to reveal to others their sexual orientation or gender identity.

To come out is to take a risk by sharing one's identity, sometimes to one person in conversation, sometimes to a group or in a public setting. The actual act of coming out can be as simple as saying "I'm gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender," but it can be a difficult and emotional process for an LGBT student to go through, which is why it is so important for a student to have support. One positive aspect of coming out is not having to hide who you are anymore. However, there can be dangers that come with revealing yourself. A student who comes out may be open to more anti-LGBT name-calling, bullying and harassment, yet they may also feel more comfortable and free to be themselves. One of the most important things you as an ally can do for an LGBT student is to be there for him or her in a safe, respectful and helpful way.

When a student comes out to you and tells you they are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender your initial response is important. The student has likely spent time in advance thinking about whether or not to tell you, and when and how to tell you. Here are some tips to help you support them:

▼ **Offer support but don't assume a student needs any help.** The student may be completely comfortable with their sexual orientation or gender identity and may not need help dealing with it or be in need of any support. It may be that the student just wanted to tell someone, or just simply to tell you so you might know them better. Offer and be available to support your students as they come out to others.

▼ **Be a role model of acceptance.** Always model good behavior by using inclusive language and setting an accepting environment by not making assumptions about people's sexual orientation or gender identity, and by addressing other's (adults and students) biased language and addressing stereotypes and myths about lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people. By demonstrating that you are respectful of LGBT people and intolerant of homophobia and transphobia, LGBT students are more likely to see you as a supportive educator.

▼ **Appreciate the student's courage.** There is often a risk in telling someone something personal, especially sharing for the first time one's sexual orientation or gender identity, when it is generally not considered the norm. Consider someone's coming out a gift and thank them for giving that gift to you. Sharing this personal information with you means that the student respects and trusts you.

▼ **Listen, listen, listen.** One of the best ways to support a student is to hear them out and let the student know you are there to listen. Coming out is a long process, and chances are you'll be approached again to discuss this process, the challenges and the joys of being out at school.

▼ **Assure and respect confidentiality.** The student told you and may or may not be ready to tell others. Let the student know that the conversation is confidential and that you won't share the information with anyone else, unless they ask for your help. If they want others to know, doing it in their own way with their own timing is important. Respect their privacy.

▼ **Ask questions that demonstrate understanding, acceptance and compassion.** Some suggestions are: Have you been able to tell anyone else? Has this been a secret you have had to keep from others or have you told other people? Do you feel safe in school? Do you feel supported by the adults in your life? Do you need help of any kind? Do you need resources or just someone to listen? Have I ever offended you unknowingly?

▼ **Remember that the student has not changed.** They are still the same person you knew before the disclosure; you just have more information about them, which might improve your relationship. Let the student know that you feel the same way about them as you always have and that they are still the same person. If you are shocked, try not to let the surprise lead you to view or treat the student any differently.

▼ **Challenge traditional norms.** You may need to consider your own beliefs about sexual orientation, gender identity and gender roles. Do not expect people to conform to societal norms about gender or sexual orientation.

▼ **Be prepared to give a referral.** If there are questions you can't answer, or if the student does need some emotional support, be prepared to refer them to a sympathetic counselor, a hotline, your school's student LGBT group or a local program.

WHAT NOT TO SAY WHEN SOMEONE COMES OUT TO YOU

▼ **"I knew it!"** This makes the disclosure about you and not the student, and you might have been making an assumption based on stereotypes.

- ▼ **“Are you sure?” “You’re just confused.” “It’s just a phase – it will pass.”** This suggests that the student doesn’t know who they are.
- ▼ **“You just haven’t found a good woman yet” said to a male or “a good man yet” said to a female.** This assumes that everyone is straight or should be.
- ▼ **“Shhh, don’t tell anyone.”** This implies that there is something wrong and that being LGBT must be kept hidden. If you have real reason to believe that disclosing this information will cause the student harm, then make it clear that is your concern. Say “Thanks for telling me. We should talk about how tolerant our school and community is. You may want to consider how this may affect your decision about who to come out to.”
- ▼ **“You can’t be gay – you’ve had relationships with people of the opposite sex.”** This refers only to behavior, while sexual orientation is about inner feelings.

SOME ADDITIONAL THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND WHEN A STUDENT COMES OUT TO YOU AS TRANSGENDER

- ▼ **Validate the person’s gender identity and expression.** It is important to use the pronoun appropriate to the gender presented or that the person requests – this is showing respect. In other words, if someone identifies as female, then refer to the person as she; if they identify as male, refer to the person as he. Or use gender neutral language. Never use the word “it” when referring to a person, to do so is insulting and disrespectful.
- ▼ **Remember that gender identity is separate from sexual orientation.** Knowing someone is transgender does not provide you with any information about their sexual orientation.

Dos and Don'ts of Being an Ally to LGBT Students

DO...

Listen. One of the simplest yet most important ways to be an ally is to listen. Like all students, LGBT students need to feel comfortable expressing themselves. If a student comes to talk to you about being harassed, feeling excluded or just about their life in general, keep in mind that you may be the only person they feel safe speaking to.

Respect confidentiality. Effective allies will respect their students' confidentiality and privacy. Someone who is coming out may not want everyone to know. Assume that the person just wants you to know, unless they indicate otherwise. Informing others can create an unsafe environment for the student.

Be conscious of your biases. Effective allies acknowledge how homophobia, transphobia and heterosexism may affect their efforts to be an ally to LGBT people. They continuously work to recognize and challenge their own biases.

Seek out knowledge. Effective allies periodically brush up on LGBT-related language and current issues facing the LGBT community.

Be a resource. An effective ally will also know when and how to refer students to outside help. The last section of this guide includes a list of LGBT-related resources and referral sources for LGBT youth.

DON'T...

Think you have all the answers. Do not feel you must always have the answers. If you are faced with a problem you don't know how to solve, let the student know you will look into the subject to try and find an answer. Sometimes the best thing for you to do is to refer the student to an outside source that may be able to help them. The last section of this guide includes a list of LGBT-related resources and referral sources for LGBT youth.

Make unrealistic promises. Be careful not to promise something you may not be able to deliver. This can damage the relationship you have with the student as an ally.

Make assumptions. It is important to avoid making assumptions and perpetuating stereotypes. These can be extremely offensive and may turn a student away from you. It is also important to avoid assuming you know what the student needs. Be sure to listen to your student and ask how you can support them.

Creating a Non-Homophobic Campus Environment

Object to and eliminate jokes and humor that put down or portray LGBT people in stereotypical ways.

Counter statements about sexual orientation that are not relevant to decisions or evaluations being made about faculty, staff, or students.

Invite "out" professionals to conduct seminars and provide guest lectures in your classes and offices.

Don't include sexual orientation information in letters of reference or answer specific or implied questions without first clarifying how "out" the person chooses to be in the specific process in question. Because your environment may be safe does not mean that all environments are safe.

Recruit and hire "out" staff and faculty. View sexual orientation as a positive form of diversity that is desired in a multicultural setting.

Do not refer all LGBT issues to LGBT staff or faculty. Do not assume their only expertise is LGBT issues nor that non-LGBT staff or faculty are not able to provide expertise.

Be sensitive to issues of oppression and appreciate the strength and struggle it takes to establish a positive LGBT identity. Provide nurturing support to colleagues and students in all phases of that process.

Be prepared. If you truly establish a safe and supportive environment, people that you never thought of will begin to share their personal lives and come out in varying degrees. Secretaries, maintenance personnel, former students, and professional colleagues will respond to the new atmosphere. Ten percent is a lot of people.

View the creation of this environment as an institutional responsibility, not the responsibility of individual persons.

Information on Bullying

In the fall of 2010, five young people committed suicide after being bullied for their actual or perceived sexual orientation.



18-year-old Rutgers University student Tyler Clementi, who jumped to his death	13-year-old Seth Walsh from Tehachapi, California, who hung himself from a tree	13-year-old Asher Brown of Cypress, Texas, who shot himself after years of torment	15-year-old Billy Lucas in Greensberg, Indiana, discovered hanging from the family's barn by his mother	19-year-old Raymond Chase of Rhode Island, who hung himself in his dorm room at Johnson and Wales University
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Compared to their heterosexual peers, LGBT youth are:

- two to three times more likely to be bullied¹
- up to four times more likely to attempt suicide²

2009 NATIONAL SCHOOL CLIMATE SURVEY

Key Findings

- 9 in 10 LGBT students heard “gay” used in a negative way frequently or often at school.
- 6 in 10 LGBT students reported feeling unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation
- 4 in 10 LGBT students were physically harassed at school because of their sexual orientation.
 - 2 in 10 were physically assaulted.
- 8 in 10 LGBT students were verbally harassed at school because of their sexual orientation.
 - 5 in 10 were cyberbullied.

¹ Nationwide Children's Hospital, Columbus, OH 2010

² Massachusetts Youth Risk Survey 2007

Ally Scenarios

1. A first-year student drops by your office saying he saw the sticker on your door and wanted to talk to you because, "You might be able to help." He tells you he is gay but not out to many people including his roommate. He really likes him and they have a good relationship that he doesn't want to ruin. He is afraid that his roommate might "freak out," try to move out, or tell other people. He also feels like his roommate may be mad that he wasn't honest with him earlier. He asks you for advice.
2. A student ask you for an extension on a paper stating she is having a really hard time concentrating as she recently ended a relationship. She starts crying in your office and you ask her to sit down. She seems to be avoiding names and pronouns in talking about the relationship but she seems to want to open up to you. You think the relationship she is referring to may have been with a woman.
3. Two students you know fairly well come in to see you and tell you that they have begun seeing each other. They recently told their parents and one of the young woman's parents reacted with tepid support while the other student's parents reacted badly. This student's parents told her that if she didn't end the relationship they would not continue to pay for school. She asks you what she should do. Should she just lie to her parents and say the relationship is over? Should she tell them she was just experimenting and she isn't really gay?
4. A student comes in to see you because he knows you are really "good on this kind of stuff." He is a trans man in transition, is taking testosterone, and living as a male. He needs to go to Health Services as he is having some gynecological issues. He is worried about going and asks you what you think he should do.
5. A student comes in to see you because she has a friend who is struggling with being gay and "seems really depressed." She is the only person he is out to and she feels too overwhelmed to assist him herself. She is afraid that he needs more support but he refuses to go to counseling and won't tell anyone else what is wrong because he doesn't want to come out to anyone else. He is an athlete and is very concerned about his reputation.
6. A colleague confides to you that she is bisexual but not out to anyone else at work. She shares that a lesbian student hit on her and she is unsure how to talk with the student about the issue, including whether or not to "out" herself in the process.

The Ally's Pledge

As an Ally, I will:

- Be a friend
- Be a listener
- Be open-minded
- Acknowledge and confront my own biases
- Commit myself to personal growth in spite of the discomfort it may sometimes cause
- Recognize my own personal boundaries
- Recognize when to refer an individual to additional resources
- Join others with a common purpose
- Believe that all persons regardless of age, sex, race, gender, religion, ethnicity, or sexual orientation should be treated with dignity and respect
- Engage in the process of developing a campus culture free of homophobia and heterosexism
- Recognize my own mistakes, but not use them as an excuse for inaction
- Be an ongoing learner about LGBTQ issues
- Be a source of information about campus policies and resources for LGBTQ students
- Recognize the legal powers and privileges that heterosexuals have and which LGBTQ people are denied
- Support the Safe Zone program at Bryant University

I also understand that I am not:

- Someone with ready-made answers
- A therapist, counselor or crisis intervention expert
- A lifeline in an emergency
- An expert on sexual orientation or gender identity and expression
- Personally invested in how "out" someone else is

Name

Date

Online Resources

Advocates for Youth - www.advocatesforyouth.org

Children of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere (COLAGE) - www.colage.org

Family Equality Council - www.familyequality.org

Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network – www.glsen.org

Gender Education and Advocacy (GEA) - www.gender.org

National Association of Multicultural Education (NAME) - www.nameorg.org

National Center for Transgender Equality (NCTE) - www.nctequality.org

National Youth Advocacy Coalition (NYAC) - www.nyacyouth.org

Parents and Friends of Lesbian and Gays (PFLAG) - www.pflag.org

Southern Poverty Law Center – www.splcenter.org

Teaching Tolerance – www.tolerance.org

BRYANT RESOURCES

24-hour Bias Incident Hotline

232-6920

A bias incident is an action that is motivated by bigotry and bias regarding a person's real or perceived race, religion, national origin, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, or gender status.

Bryant Pride

pride@bryant.edu

Bryant Pride is one of Bryant University's fastest growing student organizations. Our group serves as the voice for a gay, lesbian, bisexual, curious, transgender and straight allies

Counseling Services

232-6045

The mission of Counseling Services at Bryant is to provide a private confidential place to sort out issues and make individual decisions. By discussing matters with a counselor, students have the ability to understand themselves and others and live a more satisfying life. All conversations are kept confidential within professional and legal guidelines.

The Gertrude Meth Hochberg Women's Center

232-6854 - www.bryant.edu/womenscenter

The mission of the Center is to provide a centralized space to coordinate activities that educate the campus about women's issues and to create a more just and equitable environment for the Bryant community.

LGBTQ & Allies Faculty and Staff Caucus

Co-chairs: Kristy Almeida-Neveu x6417 and Judy McDonnell x6389

The mission of the caucus is to cultivate and sustain a welcoming and affirming climate on campus for LGBTQ employees, students and their families and visitors.

Women on Call Program

258-4209

The Women on Call (WOC) program is a 24/7 campus response team for students who have experienced incidents of sexual assault, sexual harassment and relationship violence. All calls are confidential.