

## Challenging Heterosexism and Homophobia - A Key to Being an Ally

People are allies to the LGBT community for a variety of different reasons, and have different levels of comfort, experience, and knowledge about how heterosexism and homophobia effects both "straight" people and LGBT people. Accordingly, there are many different ways to be an Ally. Individuals are strongly encouraged to be allies so that they can learn, continue to grow as an ally, and to impact their community and the world in ways that are personally comfortable, challenging, and supportive. The ideas listed here are but a few.

- Understand your own feelings around LGBT issues
- Understand why you feel it is important to be an Ally
- Learn how heterosexism and homophobia effect both LGBT people and people who are not LGBT
- Understand your socialization, prejudices, and privileges
- Attend LGBT events, meeting, and programs
- Attend Pride Month events
- Join Queers & Allies (formerly Straight But Not Narrow)
- Learn about the Office of LGBT Student Services, its services, and programs
- Visit the Office and the LGBT Lending Library at 244 Greene Street in Room 306
- Go to the New York City Pride March in June
- Talk with and learn from LGBT friends, classmates, and colleagues
- Don't make assumptions, and ask about things you don't understand
- Risk discomfort, and take risks to learn and grow as a person
- Take an LGBT studies class, or another class dealing with LGBT or Queer issues
- Read LGBT newspapers, magazines (The Advocate, OUT), and/or books
- Go see or rent LGBT-themed movies
- Use inclusive language like "partner" or "date"
- Don't "out" people unless given permission to do so
- Remember that there are people in your halls, classes, clubs, and jobs who are LGBT
- Assume that closeted people in your halls, classes, clubs, and jobs are wondering how safe that environment is for them
- Say the words gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender out loud!
- Talk with friends informally and openly about LGBT events or issues in the news, on TV shows, and in movies
- Do a program in a Residence Hall on LGBT issues
- Interrupt, confront, or react to heterosexist or homophobic jokes, slurs, comments, or assumptions--this can be done privately or publicly
- Provide support to LGBT individuals who are targeted or subjects of heterosexist or homophobic jokes, slurs, comments, or assumptions - this can be done publicly or privately
- Provide correct information when you hear myths and misperceptions about LGBT people
- Critically consider media presentations of LGBT issues and call, email, or write the appropriate parties with complaints, suggestions, or praise
- Learn about gay pride signs and symbols - wear a "Str8 but not Narrow" button or similar sticker
- Have clubs to which you belong sponsor or co-sponsor LGBT or LGBT-friendly activities or events
- Sign a petition
- Participate in an AIDS Walk
- Participate in Pride activities
- Vote pro-LGBT
- Go through training and post a Safe Zone cards

PrideWorks Conference for  
LGBT Youth and their Allies  
November 16<sup>th</sup> 2010

Downloadable from:

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