

Becoming an Active LGBTQIA+ Ally



Allyship is an important part of building inclusion, and is something that should be encouraged within organisations. Allies are most effective when they are active, rather than passive, so a few suggested steps include:

BEING ACCEPTING

- Build awareness of the language surround the LGBTQIA+ community (what the letters stand for, what terms are appropriate, etc.)
- Learn about the history of LGBTQIA+ activism
- Explore the current challenges facing the community, which groups are most at risk, both in your own country and other parts of the world
- Celebrate major life events for your LGBTQIA+ colleagues the same as for everyone - engagement, marriage, birth or adoption of children
- Consider some external display of support for LGBTQIA+ people in the communities in which you do business. This could be display of pride flags or joining in the local Pride parade with your colleagues - LGBTQIA+ and allies.
- Be aware that conversations or events that may seem trivial to you might be very impactful, in both positive and negative ways, for people who experienced exclusion based on their identity.

TAKING ACTION

- Take a stand if you witness discrimination, bullying or harassment
- Protect confidentiality. If someone is out to you as LGBTQIA+ doesn't mean you can assume they are out to others. Ask what name and pronouns should be used for someone - or their partner - around other groups of people, to ensure you don't unintentionally out them.
- Make yourself visible as someone LGBTQIA+ people can go to for support, e.g. via wearing a rainbow lanyard or putting a sticker in your office window.
- Proactively seek out LGBTQIA+ perspectives and educative resources, focusing particularly on underrepresented identities.



HAVING HUMILITY

- Understand your privileged position in a genuine way and how it may shape your perspective and biases.
- Approach any situation as a learning opportunity rather than a possibility to get it wrong, making mistakes is an essential part of growing and strengthening your capacity for allyship.
- When someone raises an issue with something you've said or done, don't think of it as criticism but rather an expression of their trust in you to listen.
- Ask questions respectfully, understand that no individual owes you an answer or an explanation.

LANGUAGE

The language we use is vital in communicating our openness to change and commitment to being inclusive organisations. Language is also constantly evolving, it is not a static construct, but moves and shapes to reflect our changing society. Below are some examples of how to include more inclusive language in our workplace world, as well as our day-to-day lives.

Inclusive terms	Non-inclusive terms
Hi all, folks, team, friends, team, everybody, everyone, or specific terms like customers, clients, employees	Hi guys, ladies, gentlemen
Invite partners, spouses to the event	Invite your boyfriend, girlfriend, husband, wife to the event
Chair, chairperson, door attendant, bartender, server etc.	Chairman, doorman, barman, barmaid, waiter, waitress etc.
Sexual orientation, sexuality	Sexual preference
Gender identity, gender expression	Sex, specifically mistaking sex for gender
Trans, trans person, transgender person, trans man, trans woman, non-binary	Transgendered, transwoman, transman (use a space between trans and woman or man, as trans is an adjective, whereas woman or man is a noun)
Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Queer (a reclaimed slur term that many people identify with, but others find offensive)	Homosexuals

