

Good Practices for LGBTQIA+ Inclusion

Because about 10% of people are LGBTQIA+, so chances are you encounter some every day.
And because an affirming, safe environment helps families and communities thrive.*

Good Practice	Examples	Why?
Use non-gendered language to refer to people as a group.	Good morning, everyone. Welcome, honored guests. Friends, it's time to gather. Folks (or people), I want to thank you for... <i>(Not ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls.)</i>	People who are intersex, nonbinary, or otherwise gender nonconforming feel excluded when binary (male/female) terms are used.
Use non-gendered language to refer to people's family and friends.	Your parents and guardians. Your children. Your friends. Your partners. Your spouses. <i>(Not your mom and dad, husbands and wives, girl/boyfriends.)</i>	People who are or have LGBTQIA+ family and friends might feel excluded or hesitant to participate if you assume heterosexual, cisgender as the norm.
During introductions, offer your name and pronouns. Use neutral pronouns for others if unsure of their gender identity.	I am Chris, and my pronouns are she/her. My name is Ryan, and my pronouns are they/them. You can pair up with Ryan; they are working on the same issue. If you misgender someone, simply apologize and move on.	Using correct names and pronouns is respectful. Intersex and trans people feel hurt by misgendering and might withdraw as a result. <i>Too much</i> focus on pronouns can "out" or embarrass people.
Use inclusive examples and materials in discussions, initiatives, and events.	In stories, books and art, discussions of issues, events, etc., include selections that reflect LGBTQIA+ experiences (and other forms of diversity).	People feel accepted and inspired when examples reflect their identities. This also fosters acceptance (not marginalization) of people who are "different."
Display "safe space" symbols in homes, offices, and community spaces.	Rainbow ribbon, bracelet, etc. Pride month displays. Safe space stickers (e.g., https://www.glsen.org/safespace).	People feel safe, let go of stressful vigilance, and feel comfortable participating fully.
Stop anti-LGBTQIA+ words and behavior.	Stop. In this group we respect all people. [Use same strategies that you would for racism, ableism, sexism, etc.]	All people see that homophobic, transphobic bullying is unacceptable. LGBTQIA+ people feel safer.
Support people who come out.	Listen, focus on person (not your reaction), respond and ask questions respectfully, connect person to resources if desired (see back side), and respect privacy if not out to family/friends.	People will remember your first reaction forever. Reacting respectfully will encourage them to develop trust and take positive steps for their wellbeing.
Accommodate physical/psychosocial needs.	Provide all-gender bathrooms and facilities, or allow people to use those aligned with their identity.	People feel affirmed and supported, so they use their energy for positive purposes rather than anxiety.

*Estimates of the LGBTQIA+ population vary widely. In a November 2016 Harris poll, 5% to 20% of respondents identified as LGBTQIA+, depending on age. In the poll, millennials were four times as likely as seniors to identify as LGBTQIA+, probably because greater social acceptance enables them to "come out" with less fear of rejection and violence.

Glossary

Sex assigned at birth	Sex (male, female, intersex) assigned to an infant at birth based on visible sex organs, including genitalia and other physical characteristics.
Intersex	Born with ambiguous physical characteristics that appear neither typically male nor female; often assigned a gender and subjected to surgery to create appearance of that gender.
Gender expression	External appearance of gender identity, usually expressed through behavior, clothing, haircut, or voice.
Gender identity	Deeply held sense of being a girl/woman, boy/man, some of both, or neither; might or might not align with sex assigned at birth.
Cisgender	Having a gender identity that aligns with sex assigned at birth.
Transgender	Having a gender identity that does not align with sex assigned at birth; encompasses trans male, trans female, and terms below.
Nonbinary	Having a gender identity that is neither girl/woman or boy/man, or is some fixed or shifting combination of both. Also called genderqueer.
Genderqueer	See nonbinary.
Genderfluid	Having a gender identity that shifts throughout the day, week, month, or year.
Agender	Not identifying with any gender.
Sexual orientation	Inherent emotional, romantic, or sexual attraction to other people.
Lesbian	Woman emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to other women.
Gay	Emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to people of the same gender.
Bisexual	Emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to two genders (usually male and female) to varying degrees.
Pansexual	Emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to people of any sex or gender, including cis and trans.
Asexual	Not sexually attracted to anyone (of any gender).
Aromantic	Not romantically attracted to anyone (of any gender).
Queer	Having any type of LGBTQIA+ identity. Used to reclaim the term from pejorative use to self-identify with the LGBTQIA+ community.

Learn More

Talking with kids about LGBTQIA+ issues: <https://www.hrc.org/resources/talking-with-kids-about-lgbt-issues>

How to be an LGBTQIA+ ally: <https://www.hrc.org/blog/how-to-be-an-lgbt-ally>, <https://www.pflag.org/sites/default/files/guide%20to%20being%20a%20straight%20ally.pdf>

Resources for LGBTQIA+ Folks and Allies

Lexington Pride Coalition: lexpridema@gmail.com

Greater Boston PFLAG: <http://www.gbpflag.org>

School GSAs: Check each school

OUT MetroWest: <http://outmetrowest.org/>

BAGLY: <https://www.bagly.org/>

Boston Glass: <https://jri.org/services/health-and-housing/health/boston-glass>

Youth On Fire: <http://www.aac.org/youth-on-fire/>

LGBT Aging Project: <http://fenwayhealth.org/the-fenway-institute/lgbt-aging-project/>

Crisis and Other Mental Health Resources

You are not alone. Please seek help from affirming, experienced sources!

The Trevor Project (all LGBTQ+), 866-488-7386, <https://www.thetrevorproject.org>

Trans Lifeline, 877-565-8860, <https://www.translifeline.org/>

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 800-273-8255, <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/help-yourself/lgbtq/>

Find a therapist: Call resources above and at left for referrals; search therapist directory by sexuality, gender, and LGBTQIA+ issues <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists/massachusetts>