

People are allies for a variety of different reasons, and have different levels of comfort, experience, and knowledge about how heterosexism and homophobia affects both straight people and LGBTQ people. Accordingly, there are many different ways to be an ally. The ideas listed here are a few important actions:

### Make it personal

Work to understand your own feelings about LGBTQ issues

Remember that there are LGBTQ people in your life, including some you are not aware of

Assume that closeted people in your halls, classes, clubs, and jobs are wondering how safe that environment is for them

Don't make assumptions about anyone's sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender history

Recognize and thank the efforts of others to confront inappropriate behaviors

### Be social

Confront individuals who tell anti-LGBTQ jokes—this can be done publicly or privately

Choose to participate in queer-friendly activities regardless of what others might think

Be aware of and confront statements such as "I'm not biased, but..."

Engage people in dialogue about LGBTQ issues

Provide correct information when you hear myths or misperceptions about LGBTQ people

Be public about your support for LGBTQ individuals and issues

Don't disclose others' identities unless you have their permission

### Read up

Read books and magazines and watching movies by, for, and about LGBTQ people

Educate yourself through libraries, trainings, and the internet rather than always relying on LGBTQ people to educate you

Take a class in LGBTQ studies, feminist studies, or a related field

Be a resource - make yourself aware of individuals, organizations, agencies, staff, faculty and courses that deal with LGBTQ issues

### Advocate

Support "out" LGBTQ people and allies who can serve as role models for others

Call out stereotypical representations of LGBTQ people in movies, on TV, or in the news

Use inclusive language like "partner" and avoid using gendered pronouns when not known

Have your clubs or groups sponsor or co-sponsor LGBTQ friendly activities or events

Actively advertise that LGBTQ people are welcome to any events that you organize, especially parties or dances

Identify and work to change discriminatory institutional practices. (i.e. employee benefits)

Implement trainings and diversity education programs in your work, religion, community, etc.

Interested in getting involved? Visit the LGBT Campus Center website at [lgbt.wisc.edu](http://lgbt.wisc.edu) for more resources, trainings, how to volunteer, and more!

*Adapted from "How can I be a better Ally?" Queer Resource Center, Southern Oregon University. [www.sou.edu/su/qrc/betterally.html](http://www.sou.edu/su/qrc/betterally.html)*