

Stand up and be proud

Be proud to be an ally. Something as simple as wearing a rainbow lanyard can make such a difference in helping people feel comfortable, included and affirmed.

- Be sure to stand up and out against discrimination. If you hear negative or uninformed comments about the LGBTIQ+ community, explain why you think it's offensive or wrong. You could share something you've read, seen or heard that has helped you understand diversity more broadly.
- Call out harmful stereotyping: explain that it contributes to creating an environment in which LGBTIQ+ people feel unsafe to be out or visible.
- Use the platforms available to you to boost and share LGBTIQ+ voices. Share articles from the community, offer places on panels, print off a Pride in Action Network poster and put it up in your work area, or host an event and request the resource you're reading now to hand out.
- If you notice any policies or procedures that need to be updated, let someone know! Get in touch with the Pride in Action Network or make the suggestion directly to someone who can implement change. Recommend that the LGBTIQ+ community be involved to make the process more inclusive.

Want to learn more?

Excellent. Remember, we're all people with different parts to our identities. Being a good ally means acknowledging intersectionality. Consider that just because someone is of the community, doesn't mean that's all they are. They may live many different experiences that can come from race, class, disability, socioeconomic standing, gender, religion, and much more.

The LGBTIQ+ community is strong, resilient and persistent. And together with allies, we're making change happen.

Head to unimelb.edu.au/ally to get started on our list of helpful resources.

5 things you can do as an ally to make a difference

1. Don't make assumptions about someone's gender, sex or sexuality.
2. Call out negative or uninformed comments about the LGBTIQ+ community and explain why you find them offensive. If you're comfortable you could follow up with some resources which could be explored more deeply.
3. Consider including your pronouns in your email signature to create an inclusive culture and normalise the practice, reminding people that pronouns should never be assumed.
4. Attend a free University of Melbourne LGBTIQ+ Awareness Briefing or Ally Training session – details are on our website.
5. And be sure to sign up to and share the Pride in Action Network – unimelb.edu.au/ally

About the University of Melbourne Pride in Action Network

The Pride in Action Network at the University of Melbourne is working to foster an inclusive and supportive workplace and learning environment where diversity is affirmed and celebrated. We connect staff and students who identify as LGBTIQ+, allies, and supporters of the community to participate in events, share information and build resources. We proudly wear rainbow lanyards to outwardly reflect awareness and inclusivity.

unimelb.edu.au/ally

pride-network@unimelb.edu.au

The LGBTIQ+ acronym refers collectively to people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and gender diverse, intersex, queer/questioning, and/or asexual. These distinct but sometimes overlapping groupings are part, but not all, of what we mean when we speak about LGBTIQ+ communities and populations.



HOW TO BE A GOOD LGBTIQ+ ALLY





So, you want to be a good ally? That's great! It's important that the LGBTIQ+ community and its allies work together to create an inclusive society. Yes, it's disappointing that people of diverse genders, sexes and sexualities still experience a range of discriminations that can have negative impacts on their health and wellbeing, but becoming an ally affirms our commitment to kindness and inclusion for everyone.

Why do we need allies?

The support of heterosexual and/or cisgender* allies is very important when speaking out with and for members of the LGBTIQ+ community. Allies help to counter discrimination of marginalised groups.

Learning to be a good ally is rewarding, but it can also be challenging and confronting. As an ally, you need to be willing to listen and grow in understanding and knowledge. Together, we can make our university, and our world, a safer and more affirming place for everyone.

A journey of education and empowerment

If you're at the beginning of your ally journey, consider doing some basic research. Being a good ally takes work and can sometimes be an uncomfortable journey but you'll be hugely rewarded with new understandings of people. There are a range of great and diverse resources available – so check out the list on the Pride in Action Network website to get started. Being proactive and doing this research independently can help take some of the emotional work off the LGBTIQ+ community, who often feel expected to educate others.

It's important to be willing to confront and keep checking in on your own assumptions, prejudices and bias. You may be uncomfortable – be ok with that.

Here are a few basic principles to keep in mind:

- Remember that language is powerful. Use gender neutral language when referring to groups or people you don't know. Replace she/he with they, and use the term 'partner'. Wait for someone to mention their pronouns, or if it feels right, ask politely about their pronoun, eg 'What pronoun suits you best?'
- Don't make assumptions about someone's gender, sex, or sexuality, or assume that everyone is heterosexual or fits into a single idea of gender roles.

* Someone is cisgender when their sense of gender identity corresponds to their sex assigned at birth.

- Understand that people don't have to come out. They don't owe this to anyone, and some will prefer not to come out. And remember, it's up to them to share their personal stories when and to whom it feels right.
- Understand that gender identity (how you personally experience your own gender) and sexuality (sexual feelings, thoughts, attractions and behaviours) can be complex, more than just gay or straight.
- Be aware of normative bias and don't ask questions you wouldn't ask a straight, cis person, eg 'When did you decide you were heterosexual?' Similarly, don't ask invasive questions about sexual behaviours or family formation you'd never dream of asking a straight person.
- While we may refer to LGBTIQ+ people as a community, that doesn't mean we all share the same experiences and values. We're still also individuals. We should take the time to learn from people with different experiences of this broad and diverse group.

Listening is key

As allies, one of the most powerful things we can do is listen to and affirm LGBTIQ+ voices.

Don't be intimidated or scared to be an ally! We all make mistakes. If someone corrects you, be sure to listen, acknowledge and learn from the experience. Then move the conversation on. Check your own insecurity: don't take offence, don't make it about you.

- Always try to be respectful.
- Be open minded and trust in people's experiences when they are sharing about their lives. Be willing to learn from them and think about how you might be able to take actions, big or small, to adjust your own behaviours and help create a more inclusive and affirming environment.
- Ask people how they are and be willing to listen. Be aware they may have experienced things you haven't and could never really understand. Be willing to offer support when you can.
- Be aware that when LGBTIQ+ issues are current social 'hot' topics this can have very negative impacts on individuals. Reach out, and try not to get caught up in confrontations. Focus on inclusion and kindness.