

## **Being an LGBTQ Ally**

### **By displaying this rainbow sticker in your classroom and school...**

- You are an ally to LGBTQ students, staff, parents, community members, and visitors.
- You are helping to end the oppression of LGBTQ people and children of LGBTQ parents.
- You are committing to educate the school community about homophobia and transphobia, speak out about homophobic and transphobic incidents/practices in your school or community, and promote equal respect and treatment for everyone.
- You are identifying yourself as a “safe” and supportive person for LGBTQ students to talk to about their questions and/or concerns.
- You are pledging to make classroom and school activities inclusive for LGBTQ students, staff, parents and community members.

### **How educators can help...**

- Let others know that derogatory gestures and jokes are not amusing—they cause pain and embarrassment. Challenge your colleagues and students who tell jokes at the expense of a sexual, racial or ethnic minority. As with racial or sexist slurs, challenge students who use names, such as “gay,” “fag,” or “queer,” in a derogatory manner in your presence.
- Use incidents of hate speech or violence to develop a “teachable moment.” Be aware that the LGBTQ student is often uncomfortable, invisible, isolated and needs acceptance from you.
- An LGBTQ student may not identify as such due to denial, the pressure to conform, or need for self-protection. Don’t confront a student who is reluctant.
- If a student tells you that he or she is LGBTQ, thank the student for trusting you and keep it to yourself. Listen carefully; don’t assume you know in advance what it means to this person to be gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, queer or questioning. Keep the door open for further conversation. If the student needs help, refer to the school counselor or other support services.
- Seek opportunities in the classroom to introduce the contributions of LGBTQ people. If a key person in the field is LGBTQ, say so.
- Use inclusive language in the classroom.
- Help students, colleagues and community members to acknowledge heteronormativity and its associated privileges.
- Support colleagues and students in the process of coming out.
- Look for new information on intersections between LGBTQ experiences and your field. The last few years have witnessed a blossoming of scholarship on LGBTQ issues in many disciplines. Encourage students to write on such topics.
- Contact the BCTF’s Committee for Action on Social Justice, or visit our website. We can provide assistance, useful information, and resources.
- Advocate for a discrete anti-homophobic and transphobic policy in your school district.
- Silence encourages and helps perpetuate homophobia and transphobia. Break the silence.

Adapted from Northern Michigan University’s Allies Guide:  
[www.nmu.edu/multiculturalaledandres/node/4#meantobeally](http://www.nmu.edu/multiculturalaledandres/node/4#meantobeally)