Ideas for Allies:
A Starter List for Taking Action!

🌟 Be a Better You!

1. **Educate Yourself.**
   - Educate yourself on LGBT identity, issues, concerns, needs.
   - Understand LGBT terms and how to use them appropriately.
   - Learn about Heterosexual Privilege and how it works.
     - Read books
     - Attend events, meetings, or programs
     - Gain insight by talking to LGBT people
     - Read your Ally Program Participant Manual! 😊
     - Take classes

2. **Know Yourself.**
   - Reflect on what you learned about LGBT identity, from where, and examine how that influences you.
   - Examine your own biases and fears. Be willing to look at the areas with which you are uncomfortable. Be willing to talk about your doubts, fears, and uncertainties with others, so that you can address them.
   - What are your deepest feelings and beliefs concerning homosexuality and gender? If you are uncomfortable with these issues, this will be communicated to others. Your ability to be open and accepting will be limited by unexamined beliefs and attitudes.
   - Acknowledge and take responsibility for your own prejudices.
   - Examine your privileges & be honest about them.
   - Be clear about your motives.
   - Be willing to be uncomfortable so that you can learn and grow.
   - Develop awareness about the assumptions you make.

3. **Prepare yourself**
   - Imagine situations you might face and visualize responses; role play and practice.

🌟 Change the World a Little Bit Every Day

4. **Evaluate your interactions with others**
   - Do not assume that everyone you meet is heterosexual.
   - Always assume LGBT people are present.
   - Don’t be surprised when someone comes out to you.
   - Don’t make assumptions about people’s sexual orientation or gender identity based on their appearance or behavior.
   - Do not assume that you know or understand someone’s gender identity based on knowing their biological sex.

Created by Margaret M. Cook, M.S.Ed.
http://wmpeople.wm.edu/site/page/mmcook
- Do not assume that just because someone uses a particular label to describe their identity, that it means the same thing to them that it means to you. You may have a different understanding of that label than someone else. Ask, “Tell me what being _____ means to you?”

5. **Set a Standard for Respect.**
   - Refuse to tolerate anti-LGBT slurs or jokes. Silence may communicate that you condone the prejudice.
   - Ask others that any anti-LGBT humor displayed in common areas be removed completely or placed within private office or living spaces.
   - Take a stand against prejudice and discrimination. Report all harassment or discriminatory behavior to the appropriate officials.
   - Advocate for fair policies and laws

6. **Make yourself approachable**
   - Be aware of the cues/signals you send through the language you use, when you are silent vs. when you speak up
   - Demonstrate your comfort level by talking openly about LGBT topics
   - Be trustworthy; respect confidentiality
   - Be a good listener
   - Make yourself visible

7. **Provide personal support**
   - Be affirming of LGBT people and their experiences
   - Inquire about their lives
   - Include them and their partners
   - Share their joys
   - Be a good friend
8. Assess the Environment Around You & Take Steps to Improve It

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-Inclusive Community (Intolerant, Prejudiced, Homophobic)</th>
<th>Inclusive Community (Accepting, Supportive, Respecting)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▪ Teasing, joking, criticism for being “different”</td>
<td>▪ Differences accepted and celebrated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Inappropriate humor, language tolerated</td>
<td>▪ Inappropriate humor, language challenged</td>
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<tr>
<td>▪ Open expression of prejudice</td>
<td>▪ Expressions of prejudice challenged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Expectation that everyone is heterosexual and/or traditionally gendered</td>
<td>▪ Expectation that people of differing sexual orientations and gender identities are part of the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Perpetuation of stereotypes or myths</td>
<td>▪ Stereotypes and myths about LGBT people challenged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ No expressed community standards of respect</td>
<td>▪ Expressed community standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ LGBT-identified people afraid to be open</td>
<td>▪ Comfort in expressing one’s LGBT identity</td>
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<tr>
<td>▪ Negative role modeling by persons of influence</td>
<td>▪ Positive role modeling by persons of influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ No efforts at education about LGBT identity</td>
<td>▪ Proactive efforts to educate about LGBT identity (self and community)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Language, images, décor not inclusive of LGBT identity</td>
<td>▪ Use of inclusive language, images, decor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ No publicity about LGBT events</td>
<td>▪ LGBT events publicized</td>
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<tr>
<td>▪ No LGBT events sponsored</td>
<td>▪ LGBT events sponsored</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ No LGBT resources publicized</td>
<td>▪ LGBT resources publicized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Silence about LGBT identity and issues</td>
<td>▪ LGBT topics openly discussed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Discrimination and harassment ignored, minimized</td>
<td>▪ Discrimination and harassment taken seriously and responded to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Assumptions made about identity based on appearance, behavior</td>
<td>▪ No assumptions about identity based on appearance, behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Rumors about identity tolerated</td>
<td>▪ Rumors about identity challenged</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ LGBT people discouraged from being out</td>
<td>▪ LGBT people supported in being out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Differences in opinion, belief responded to with hostility, lack of respect</td>
<td>▪ Differences in opinion, belief responded to respectfully</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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