

Tips on how to practice LGBTQI2S allyship

Allyship is a verb; it is the continuous practice of doing the work of standing up for marginalized groups. Allyship is not an identity we can claim where we can give ourselves credit for previous practices. Instead, the title of being an ally should only be bestowed to us by the groups that we have continually stood up for and stood in solidarity with.

Here are some tips on how to practice continuous allyship for LGBTQI2S people:

LEARN	PRACTICE	REFLECT
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Listen to the experiences and perspectives of LGBTQI2S people.2. Respect the experiences and perspectives of LGBTQI2S people.3. Acknowledge their validity (even if you don't understand them).4. Look for opportunities to expand your understanding (learn through media, attend events, meet LGBTQI2S community members, and learn about local services and supports).5. Remember your learning is your responsibility – avoid asking LGBTQI2S people to answer all of your questions (not all LGBTQI2S people are comfortable acting in an educator role nor is it their responsibility to provide you with education).	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Intervene when you witness offensive behaviour or language.2. Use inclusive language to ensure that all feel welcome and respected.3. Challenge policies, practices, and procedures that exclude or fail to address LGBTQI2S people.4. Apologize regardless of intent. Everyone makes mistakes in an ally role, how you respond after an error is brought to your attention is what matters most.5. Make your apology swift and move on, dwelling on your mistake and how you feel makes you the center of attention.6. Be courageous! Don't be afraid to learn, ask for more information and provide support.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Be open to feedback and think critically about how your behaviour or actions might impact other people.2. Reflect on and question the stereotypes and negative assumptions held by yourself and others.3. Avoid assuming how people identify. Listen for, or politely ask, what pronouns people use.4. Always assume LGBTQI2S people or their loved ones are in the room. Consider how they might be impacted by the tone, spirit, and direction of the conversations you are having.5. Observe the way other folks around you act as allies, even within the smallest ways.6. Remember, everyone's experience of gender and sexuality is different and it is impossible (and unfair) to ask one person to speak on behalf of an entire identity group!