

## Biphobia, Transphobia & Heterosexism

- Interacting with a bisexual or transgender person and thinking only of their sexuality, rather than seeing them as a whole, complex person.
- Changing your seat at a meeting or event because an LBGTIQ person is sitting next to you.
- Assuming the gender of a person based on gender stereotypes or the sex they were born.
- Assuming that a person is heterosexual.
- Not confronting a joke for fear of being identified as an LBGTIQ person.
- Being careful about the kind of clothing you wear or your mannerisms so that you don't have a "certain look."
- Assuming that if an LBGTIQ person shows friendliness towards you, she or he is making a sexual advance.
- Not asking about your LBGTIQ co-worker's partner, although you regularly ask about your heterosexual co-worker's spouse.
- Reacting negatively to public displays of affection between LBGTIQ people, but accepting the same displays from heterosexual couples.
- Feeling that LBGTIQ people are too outspoken about their rights.

### Michigan Resources:

**Equality Michigan**, (313) 537-7000  
1-866-962-1147, [equalitymi.org](http://equalitymi.org)

**Transgender Michigan**, (517) 420-1544  
[www.transgendermichigan.org](http://www.transgendermichigan.org)

### Other Resources:

**Parents and Friends of Lesbians & Gays (PFLAG)**, (202) 467-8180, [www.pflag.org](http://www.pflag.org)

**Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network (GLSEN)**, [www.glsen.org](http://www.glsen.org)

### Information provided by the Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay, Transgender, Intersex, Queer, Questioning (LBGTIQ) & Allies Task Force

#### Mission & Goals:

- Enhance and increase access to advocacy and services for LBGTIQ individuals who are survivors of domestic and sexual violence.
- Help develop more supportive and inclusive working environments for LBGTIQ service providers.
- Provide education to member agencies and the public on issues related to heterosexism, homophobia, biphobia and transphobia as they relate to the unique dynamics of LBGTIQ domestic and sexual violence.
- Work to affect positive social change in the LBGTIQ community and the domestic and sexual violence movement.
- Confront heterosexism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and other prejudices in the movement and in member agencies.

For more information about the LBGTIQ & Allies Task Force, please contact:



**Michigan Coalition to End Domestic & Sexual Violence**  
3893 Okemos Rd. Ste B2 | Okemos, MI 48864  
(517) 347-7000 | TTY (517) 381-8470  
[lbgta@mcedsv.org](mailto:lbgta@mcedsv.org) | [www.mcedsv.org](http://www.mcedsv.org)

# Becoming an Ally

A Guide for Service Providers  
& Community Members  
to Help Make Domestic  
& Sexual Violence  
Services More  
Welcoming to Lesbian,  
Bisexual, Gay, Transgender,  
Intersex, Queer &  
Questioning Survivors.

## Key Terms

**Ally:** a person who is a member of the dominant or majority group who works to end oppression in her or his own personal and professional life through support of and as an advocate with and for the oppressed population.

**Bisexual:** a person whose sexual and romantic feelings may be for people of any gender.

**Lesbian:** a woman or girl whose primary sexual and romantic feelings are for people of the same gender..

**Gay:** a man or boy whose primary sexual and romantic feelings are for people of the same gender. While many people use this term only to refer to gay men, others use it as a general term to include both men and women. For example, “the gay community.”

**Transgender:** a person’s behavior or identity that falls outside the stereotypical expectations for their gender.

**Intersex:** a person born with chromosomes, internal and/or external genitalia that is not considered typical for either male or female.

**Queer:** inclusive term for people who are not heterosexual, many younger people in the LBGTIQ community have reclaimed this term.

**Heterosexism:** the concept that heterosexuality is natural, normal, superior and required.

**Homophobia, Biphobia, Transphobia:** thoughts, feelings or actions based on fear, dislike and judgment of LBGTIQ people.

**Outing:** disclosing someone’s sexual orientation or gender identity without their permission.

**Closeted:** when a person does not openly disclose their sexual orientation or gender identity.

## HOW CAN I BE AN ALLY?

### UNDERSTAND

Your stereotypes, prejudices and privilege.

Your own feelings about LBGTIQ issues.

Why you feel it is important to be an Ally.

How heterosexism, homophobia, biphobia and transphobia affect both LBGTIQ and heterosexual people.

### LEARN

Read LBGTIQ newspapers, magazines and books and watch LBGTIQ-themed movies.

Talk with and learn from LBGTIQ friends, family, classmates and colleagues.

Instead of assuming, ask about things you don’t understand.

Say the words gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex out loud!

### INCLUDE

When asking about someone’s relationship, say “partner” instead of “husband” or “girlfriend.”

Remember that there are people in your jobs, classes, neighborhoods and throughout your community who are LBGTIQ.

### SUPPORT

Provide support to LBGTIQ individuals who are subjects of heterosexist, homophobic, biphobic, or transphobic jokes and slurs. This can be done privately or publicly.

Don’t out people unless given permission to do so.

Closeted people in your jobs, classes and neighborhood may be wondering how safe that environment is for them.

### ACT!

Interrupt and confront heterosexism, biphobic, transphobic or homophobic jokes, assumptions or slurs.

Provide correct information when you hear myths about LBGTIQ people.

Risk discomfort and take risks to grow as a person.

Get involved in your local LBGTIQ meetings, organizations and community events.

*-Adapted from the Princeton University LGBT Center Website*