

LEARNING INTENTIONS

- » Consider the impact of heteronormativity on LGBTI people
- » Create a definition of an 'ally'.
- » Classify ways to be a supportive friend or ally for LGBTI people versus disrespectful behaviours.
- » Consider ways they can each be a good ally for people who are LGBTI.

OUTLINE

The idea of students and teachers becoming allies or supportive friends for their peers is an important one that applies across the school community. A good ally is someone who makes an effort to understand other people's experiences of the world that may be different from their own and does whatever they can do to make sure everyone is treated fairly. This lesson asks students to consider the qualities an ally would have and to begin to see the importance of becoming allies for their LGBTI peers.

SUGGESTED PROCEDURE

1. Group Discussion: What is 'Heteronormativity'?
2. Interactive Exercise: What Is An Ally?
3. Activity: Jordan's Video
4. Small Group Exercise: How to be a Great ally
5. Writing Exercise: My Ally's Pledge

ACTIVITY METHODS

GROUP DISCUSSION: WHAT IS 'HETERONORMATIVITY'?

Explain to the students that international research clearly indicates that every school community is likely to have LGBTI students, whether they are

visible or not.^{3,4,5,9} Around 1 in 10 people are same sex attracted⁹, up to 1 in 25 people are transgender or gender diverse⁴ and around 1 in 60 people are born with intersex bodies.³ This type of diversity is a normal part of a range of human experiences and has existed in some form in societies and cultures throughout history.

Despite this, young people still grow up in a world that is widely heteronormative. Heteronormativity describes a belief-system that reinforces that same sex attracted, intersex, and gender diverse people are somehow less 'normal' than everyone else. For example, a heteronormative view might be that a person who is assigned the male sex at birth, will always grow up to identify as a male and will always go on to have romantic and sexual relationships with females. While this is a common experience for many people it is certainly not the case for all LGBTI people. Because of heteronormativity LGBTI people often face exclusions as well as direct or indirect discrimination due to their bodies, gender and/or relationships.^{2,5,7,11,13}

Explain the above paragraph in your own words to students before inviting them to think of everyday examples where this world-view is reinforced. Some suggestions include: asking new parents whether their baby is a boy or a girl; always asking boys if they have a girlfriend rather than a boyfriend or a boyfriend; telling a girl not to express herself in masculine ways because it is not 'lady-like'.

Reducing heteronormativity in schools can have good outcomes for everyone, not just the LGBTI students.^{5,6,7,11,13}

INTERACTIVE EXERCISE: WHAT IS AN ALLY?

Explain that an ally is someone who stands up for others and ask students to write down a potential definition of what it means to be an LGBTI ally.

This program is clearly trying to debase heteronormative relationships and families and is trumping alternative modes of being while devaluing normal, functional male-female relationships.