



Suggestions for Combating Heterosexism and Homophobia

1. Assume that wherever you go, gay, bisexual, and lesbian persons are present and wondering how safe the environment is for them. Do not assume that everyone you meet is heterosexual. Provide safety by making clear your support of lesbian and gay identity.
2. Realize that the cultural oppression of lesbian, bisexual and gay persons is perpetuated in social situations where display of physical affection is exclusively heterosexual. In consideration of this, where it is appropriate and mutually consensual, feel free to be physically affectionate with someone of the same sex.
3. Challenge homophobia and heterosexism whether or not LG or B persons are present. Do not leave it to lesbians and gay men to do it.
4. Remembering that silence is complicity, challenge and heterosexist and homophobic statements and structures as well as the assumptions behind them. Do not promote the institutionalized invisibility of LGB's.
5. When speaking of your romantic partner or spouse, point out that he or she is of the opposite sex, implying that he or she may not have to be.
6. Confront your own fears, negative memories, and bad feelings about lesbian, bisexual and gay persons. Recall, work through, and release those feelings, thereby diminishing their hold on you.
7. Do not assume that a gay, lesbian or bisexual person of the same gender is automatically attracted to you.
8. Change your use of language to be more inclusive. Instead of "do you have a girl/boy friend," you might say "are you seeing anyone." Heterosexism is promoted and maintained powerfully through language.
9. If people assume that you are lesbian, bi or gay because of your friendships, because you are reading a gay or lesbian publication, or because you are being affectionate with someone of the same gender, resist the impulse to deny it. Challenge yourself to experience lesbian/gay/bisexual oppression rather than heterosexual privilege.
10. Respect the profound uniqueness and delicacy of the coming out process for each individual.
11. Challenge the misinformation about lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and gay persons by educating yourself so you can respond to it with correct information and truthfulness.

Suggestions for Working with LGBT Students

- Don't be surprised when someone comes out to you.
- Respect confidentiality. It is imperative that you can be trusted.
- Be informed. It is important that you are aware of the needs of gay, lesbian, transgender, and bisexual students.
- Examine your own biases. If you know that you are unable to be open and accepting around certain issues work with another ally to explore what makes you uncomfortable. If a LGBT student comes to you with an issue that you are not comfortable with, refer her or him to another person.
- Know when and where to get help. Have a list of available resources on campus and in the Austin community.
- Maintain a balanced perspective. Sexual thoughts and feelings are only a small (but important) part of a person's self.
- Understand the meaning of "sexual orientation." Each person's sexual orientation is natural to that person.
- Deal with feelings first. You can be helpful by just listening and allowing a lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender student the opportunity to vent feelings.
- Help, but don't force, lesbian, gay, transgender and bisexual students to move at the pace they feel most comfortable with.
- Don't try to guess who is LGBT or questioning.
- Challenge bigoted remarks and jokes.

Recommendations for Recreational Sports

- Include some LGBT 101 material in orientations of new staff, including new student staff.
- Display ally cards.
- Have GSC materials readily available.
- Co-sponsor events (e.g. Pride Week, Awareness Week) with QSA.
- When recruiting consider placing ads in publications and/or locations targeting the LGBT community.
- Be sensitive and aware in language and images used to publicize facility (i.e. partner).
- Be sure all staff know of gender neutral restrooms available (include this in trainings).
- Display/exhibit information regarding the LGBT community.
- Be aware of hyper-masculine culture and effects on team dynamics.

Other ideas...