

Top 10 tips to be an effective rainbow Ally

What is an Ally?

Allies are people who commit to supporting and advocating for the diverse genders, sexes and sexualities (DGSS) community.

1. Listen

One of the most important parts of being an Ally is listening to stories of the DGSS community. Everyone's lived experience is unique, we can never fully know what it's like to be someone else, but we can empathise and continue to learn.

2. Expand your bubble

Read, watch and listen to the stories from DGSS artists and media. Be entertained and informed. Often, core issues that need support aren't represented in mainstream media or press.

Attend a queer film festival like **MQFF Extras**, join a mailing list or follow social media accounts of DGSS community organisations like **Globe, switchboard** or **midsumma**, or tune into **Joy 94.9** or its many podcasts.

Attend DGSS events to show your support. Find RMIT's latest DGSS events [here](#).

3. Recognise your impact and be conscious of your speech.

Recognise that as an Ally, your comments and opinions hold weight with the people in your social circles. The things you say (and the things you don't) influence those around you and help shape their views.

4. Speak up

Anti-DGSS comments and jokes are harmful. Let your friends, family and co-workers know that you find them offensive. When you see the opportunity, try to educate those around you and explain the impact these comments have on people who identify as DGSS.

5. Confront prejudices and biases, even if it is uncomfortable to do so.

Being an ally means challenging homophobic, bi-phobic, intersexist and transphobic ideas and beliefs, even those you notice in yourself. It's important to confront these prejudices and biases, both conscious and unconscious.



6. Be visibly inclusive

Be an ally everywhere, even when the people you are representing aren't present or obviously so. Someone close to you could be looking for support in their coming-out process. Making yourself visible as an ally shows that you can be there for them. Showing rainbow merch or openly communicating that you are an ally has more impact than you might think.

7. Don't assume

Don't assume a person's gender identity or sexuality. Expanding and challenging gender stereotypes will create space for all identities to speak and be celebrated.

8. Ask questions

Being an ally isn't about having all the answers. Terminology is continually evolving and identities are unique to each individual.

If you aren't sure of someone's gender identity - ask. Simply introduce yourself and say, "my pronouns are (she/her, he/his, and/or they/them) do you mind if I ask your pronouns?"

And on that note...

9. Use correct pronouns

When someone shares their gender identity with you, be respectful. Use their correct pronouns. If you accidentally stuff up: apologise, move on, learn and try again. Easy!

When you are talking about people in general, use gender neutral terms. For example, rather than say "he or she" say "they".

10. And most importantly, support the value that all people, regardless of gender identity and sexual orientation, should be treated with dignity and respect.

This list was written and produced through collaboration with the  RMIT ALLY NETWORK



Want to contribute?

Contact inclusion@rmit.edu.au to share your tips on being an effective rainbow Ally.