

## Ally 101 Workshop

Facilitating an Ally 101 workshop is a great way to encourage people to act as allies to LGBT students in your school. Use this guide to help you facilitate your own workshop to engage participants in activities that will get them thinking critically about where they stand as allies and how they can become better allies to LGBT people.

### Workshop Goals

This workshop has the following goals:

- To provide understanding about what an ally is
- To increase belief of why allies are important
- To encourage effective ally behavior

### How to Read the Workshop

Each section lists the name of the activity, the time allotted for that exercise, and a list of the materials needed. The parts in italics are directions, actions or notes.

**The parts in bold are to be read to the group. You don't have to read these words verbatim, but these are examples of how the facilitator might speak to the group.**

Note boxes are additional things to keep in mind to help strengthen your workshop.

### Workshop Agenda (Total time: 1 hour)

1. Introduction (5 mins)
2. Evaluating Our Allyship (10 mins\*)
3. Numbers Game Show (10 mins)
4. Listening Partnership (10 mins)
5. What is an Ally? (20 mins\*)
6. Closing (5 mins\*)

\* If you have more or less time you can adjust these sections to offer more time for discussion.

### Preparation (Pre-Workshop)

- Collect all the materials needed for the workshop, including:
  - Sign-in sheet
  - Large flip chart paper
  - Markers
  - Prizes for the Numbers Game Show (optional)

If you can't get all the items listed above, don't worry. Just make sure everyone brings something to write with and some paper.

- Pick someone to keep time during the meeting.
- Write the following definition of the word ally on a piece of flip chart paper or white board:  
Ally: (n.) An ally is a member of a privileged group who advocates against oppression. An ally works to create social change rather than participate in oppressive actions.

Keep this definition hidden until the "What is an Ally" section of the workshop.

- If possible, arrange chairs so that participants can see each other, in a circle or a semicircle.

NOTE: As people enter, ask them to fill in the sign-in sheet.

## Introduction

Introductions help participants to get to know each other and feel welcome in the space.

Duration: 5 min.

Materials: Sign-in sheet

**Hello everyone! Welcome to the Ally 101 workshop. We are so excited to have all of you here. Today we are going to learn about how we can use our experiences to become effective allies to LGBT people in our school and community.**

**Now let's get started with introductions. Let's go around the room and say your name, personal gender pronouns (or PGP's), and one word to describe how you are feeling to be at this workshop right now. For those who are new to PGP's, these are the pronouns that you would like others to use when referring to you, such as she/her/hers, he/him/his, they/them/theirs, and many others.**

*The facilitator should begin and then have the group continue clockwise around the room. This activity should go quickly with each participant answering in only a few words. The facilitator should encourage people to be brief if participants begin to give longer answers.*

## Evaluating Our Allyship

This activity will provide an understanding of participants' allyship to LGBT youth. In this exercise, participants answer questions silently by stepping into the circle.

Duration: 10 min.

*All members gather in a large circle. You will ask a question and ask members to SILENTLY indicate their Answer to the question by stepping into the circle. Wait a brief moment after participants have stepped inside the circle and then ask them to step back to the circle.*

**This activity will help us learn how we experience and express our allyship right now. I will read a series of statements. If this statement is true for you, silently step forward into the circle. If it is not true, remain standing where you are.**

- 1. Step into the circle if you have heard people say “that’s so gay” or “no homo” in school. *(wait)* Thank you. Step back.**
- 2. Step into the circle if you’ve heard people make negative comments about someone’s gender at school, being called a sissy, being told to stop acting too much like a boy, etc. *(wait)* Thank you. Step back.**
- 3. Step into the circle if you don’t feel you can be open about your sexual orientation and/or gender identity or expression at school without the threat of being bullied or harassed. *(wait)* Thank you. Step back.**
- 4. Step into the circle if you have been harassed because of your sexual orientation or gender identity. *(wait)* Thank you. Step back.**
- 5. Step into the circle if someone you know has been harassed because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. *(wait)* Thank you. Step back.**
- 6. Step into the circle if you have intervened when you heard or saw someone being harassed. *(wait)* Thank you. Step back.**

**Thank you, everyone. This activity hopefully got us thinking about ourselves and our school community.**

## The Numbers Show

This activity highlights the experiences of LGBT students in schools. Participants will learn more about the importance of the issues while learning the facts about LGBT youth in schools.

Duration: 10 min.

NOTE: Have fun with this activity! As a bonus, have buttons, stickers, wristbands or other little giveaways as prizes for correct answers.

Right now, we are going to see how much we know about bullying and harassment of LGBT students in our nation's schools. I am going to read out a series of facts from GLSEN's 2013 National School Climate Survey where we'll have to fill in a blank. If you want to guess at the answer, raise your hand. I'll take three answers for each. The one closest to the actual number wins!

1. Blank % of LGBT teens reported having been verbally harassed at school because of their sexual orientation. (Answer: 74%)
2. Blank % of students report being verbally harassed because of their gender expression. (Answer: 55%)
3. Blank % of students had been physically harassed at school in the past year because of their sexual orientation. (Answer: 36%)
4. Blank % of students reported having been physically harassed at school because of their gender expression. (Answer: 23%)
5. Blank % of LGBT students who experienced higher levels of victimization said they missed a whole day of school in the past month, compared to only blank% of students who experienced lower levels. (Answer: 59%, 18%, respectively)
6. Blank % of students who were harassed or assaulted in school did not report the incident to school staff. (Answer: 57%)

*After all the statistics questions have been answered, ask a few questions to generate a discussion:*

- Did any of these statistics surprise you? Why or why not?
- How do these facts make you feel?
- Do you think these statistics reflect the experiences of LGBT students at our school? Why or why not?

NOTE: These statistics come from GLSEN's 2013 National School Climate Survey. See the whole report at [www.glsen.org/nscs](http://www.glsen.org/nscs). All percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

## Listening Partnership

The listening partnership will allow participants to connect with each other by sharing their personal experiences with bullying, while processing their own connection to the issue.

Duration: 10 min.

**Right now, we are going to learn more about each others' experiences with allies, being an ally and bullying. In a moment, everyone will need to find a partner sitting near you, preferably someone you don't know very well. Choose one person to go first. I'll give you a topic and the first person will have one minute to speak to your partner on this topic. After one minute I'll say "switch" and the second person will have a minute to share. Then I'll say "stop" and give the next topic. Remember, you don't have to share anything you aren't comfortable sharing.**

NOTE: It's important to stay on time! Make sure to get participants' attention when it's time to switch and stop.

*Participants should pair up with a person near them. If there are an odd number of participants, the facilitator should join the person without a partner.*

**The first topic is: Describe a time you were bullied and/or witnessed bullying. You may begin sharing.**

*Keep time and when one minute has passed call: **Switch!***

*Read the topic again if necessary. After another minute, tell pairs to: **Stop!***

**Next topic: Describe a time when you could have been an ally to someone else.**

*Keep time and when one minute has passed call: **Switch!** Read the topic again if necessary.*

*After another minute, tell pairs to: **Stop!***

*Take a minute or two for the group to reflect on and share what this activity brought up for them.*

## What Is An Ally?

Participants will break into small groups to brainstorm the definition of the word “ally.” After they have finished, all groups will come together to share their ideas. Following this, the facilitator will expand on and clarify the definition.

Duration: 20 min.

Materials: Flip-chart paper (about 4-5 sheets), markers, ally definition (prepared earlier)

**In this activity, we are going to think about what it means to be an ally. We’re going to start by separating into three groups in a moment.**

*Go around the room and have participants count off into 3s—1, 2, 3. Ask for all 1s to get in one group in one part of the room, 2s in another part of the room and 3s in another. Give each group a piece of chart paper and a marker.*

**In this group you’re going to brainstorm about what it means to be an ally. We’re going to start by trying to come up with a definition of “ally.” Try thinking about who an ally is and what an ally does or should do. Remember, in this workshop we’re talking about allies to LGBT youth. Pick a person in each group to be the recorder and write your definition on the flip-chart paper. I’ll give you a few minutes.**

*Give the group 5 minutes to discuss and develop their definition.*

NOTE: It’s helpful to warn groups before their time is up. If the group will discuss for 5 minutes, make sure to tell them when they have one minute remaining.

**Now each group is going to present their definition to the group. Please select one person to present. Each group will have one minute. Who wants to go first?**

*If no one wants to go first, select Group 1 to begin.*

NOTE: Be sure to encourage each group and compliment them on their definition. Creating definitions is tough; make sure to recognize that they’re working hard!

**Here is another definition of ally that was provided in this workshop:**

*Put up the piece of chart paper that has the definition of “ally” written on it.*

*Ally: (n.) An ally is a member of a privileged group who advocates against oppression. An ally works to create social change rather than participate in oppressive actions.*

**So now let’s think about what an ally can do to show that they are an ally. What should an ally to LGBT students at our school do or not do?**

*On a sheet of flip-chart paper or on a white board, write “Action” at the top. Ask for participants to call out their answers or raise their hands. Record their ideas on the sheet. Encourage participants to write down the ideas on their own paper.*

*Possible responses could include:*

- *Allies intervene when they hear homophobic language.*
- *Allies safely intervene when they see someone being bullied or harassed.*
- *Allies attend GSA meetings.*
- *Allies participate in the Day of Silence and other LGBT-related observances.*
- *Allies don't appropriate LGBT identities.*
- *Allies take initiative to learn about LGBT issues from a variety of sources and perspectives.*
- *Allies recognize their privilege and use it to advocate for marginalized groups, not speak over them or for them.*
- *Allies correct others if they hear someone being misgendered.*

*Wrap up this exercise by affirming everyone's suggestions and suggesting constructive modifications when necessary.*

**These are all really great ideas, and I hope you have taken notes so that you can put some of these into action!**

## Closing

When the workshop is over, it is necessary to provide the participants with a sense of accomplishment and closure.

Duration: 5 min.

**Before we finish, we have a few minutes left if there are any questions.**

*Take and answer questions from participants.*

**Thank you so much for participating today! All of you are on your way to being great allies to LGBT students in our school. Keep up this important work! We will be in touch in the near future about more Ally Week activities. If you have not already signed the sign-in sheet, make sure you do before you leave today. Thanks again!**

NOTE: Be sure to provide contact information for your GSA or organization so people can keep in touch with you after the workshop.

## Follow-Up

The day after the workshop, send a follow-up email to all the participants thanking them for their participation. Attach notes taken during the workshop, including the ACTIONS from the “What is an Ally” section.