

## Qualities of an Ally\*

Being an ally on LGBTQ+ issues is the process of working to develop individual attitudes, helping institutions to evolve, and transforming society into one in which gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people matter. This work is motivated by an enlightened self-interest to end homophobia, heterosexism, transphobia, and cissexism.

### An Ally:

1. Works to develop an understanding of sexual and gender minorities, along with their needs and strengths.
2. Aligns with LGBTQ+ persons, responds to their needs and gains from their strengths.
3. Believes that it is in their self-interest to be an ally.
4. Commits themselves to personal growth in spite of the discomfort it may sometimes cause.
5. Is quick to take pride and appreciate successes.
6. Expects support from other allies.
7. Acknowledges and articulates how patterns of oppression have operated in their life.
8. Expects to make some mistakes but does not use it as an excuse for non-action.
9. Knows that both sides of an ally relationship have a clear responsibility for their own change whether or not persons on the other side choose to respond.
10. Knows that in the most empowered ally relationships, the person in the non-homosexual and cisgender role initiates the change toward personal, institutional, and societal justice and equality.
11. Believes that all persons regardless of age, sex, race, religion, ethnicity, national origin, citizenship status, gender, or sexual orientation should be treated with dignity and respect.
12. Does not expect that he or she will automatically bond with or even like every LGBTQ+ person they meet, thus allowing for the fact that people are people, with their own unique characteristics, regardless of their sexual orientation and gender identity.
13. Recognizes some of the powers and privileges heterosexual and cisgender people have and realize that gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people do not. These often include:
  - ability to adopt children through private adopting agencies
  - social activities on campus geared toward heterosexual and cisgender people
  - domestic partner health insurance benefits
  - access to quality health care due to their identity
  - decisions on health-related issues for one's life partner
  - freedom from fear of being outed as LGBTQ+

14. Promotes a sense of community with the LGBTQ+ community and teaches others about the importance of outreach.
15. Recognizes their personal boundaries.
16. Knows when to refer someone to additional resources.
17. Confronts their own prejudices.
18. Has a good sense of humor.
19. Is aware of the coming out process and know it is not a one-time event, and it brings challenges that are not often understood.
20. Understands that LGBTQ+ people receive the same messages about LGBTQ+ people as everyone else. Thus, they often suffer from internalized homophobia, heterosexism, transphobia, and cissexism.

\*Adapted from: Cleveland State University, Office of Diversity and Multicultural Affairs Website.