



# 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 CAPITAL LETTERS ARE TO BE READ ALOUD TO THE GROUP.

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

## Workshop agenda (Time: 1 hour)

1. Introduction (5 mins)
2. Where do you stand as an ally? (10 mins\*)
3. Quiz (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 (attached)
  - 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 takes a stand against oppression. An ally works to be a part of social change rather than being part of the oppression.

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 out 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, PREFERRED GENDER PRONOUNS (or PGP's), AND ONE WORD TO DESCRIBE HOW YOU ARE FEELING TO BE AT THIS WORKSHOP RIGHT NOW.

PGP'S ARE PRONOUNS THAT AN INDIVIDUAL PERSONALLY IDENTIFIES WITH. ASKING PGP'S IS A WAY TO RESPECT EACH PERSON'S UNIQUE IDENTITY. GENDER PRONOUNS CAN INCLUDE:

- She/her/hers
- He/him/his
- Zie/hir/hirs (pronounced "zee/heer/heers")
- They/them/theirs
- Or all or no pronouns

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

**NOTE:** You may already know one another, but it's good to have introductions as a way to welcome each other to the space and make participants comfortable with speaking in the group. The facilitator should stand in the front of the room so that everyone can see them. They should speak in a loud, clear, and confident voice so that they everyone can hear them.



# Where Do You Stand As An Ally?

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  
Materials: Sign-in Sheet

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.

**NOTE:** You may need to push chairs or desks aside to make sure to have enough room for all participants to stand in a circle.

THIS ACTIVITY WILL HELP US LEARN WHERE WE STAND AS ALLIES 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. 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 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 HARRASSED. (wait) THANK YOU. STEP BACK.
6. STEP INTO THE CIRCLE IF SOMEONE YOU KNOW HAS BEEN HARASSED BECAUSE OF THEIR SEXUAL ORIENTATION OR GENDER IDENTITY. (wait) THANK YOU. STEP BACK. 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 gaining factual information about LGBT youth in schools.

Duration: 10 min

Materials: No materials needed

RIGHT NOW, WE ARE GOING TO SEE HOW MUCH WE KNOW ABOUT BULLYING AND HARASSMENT OF LGBT STUDENTS AT OUR NATION'S SCHOOLS. I AM GOING TO READ OUT A FACT FROM GLSEN'S 2009 SCHOOL CLIMATE SURVEY. 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: 85%)
2. BLANK % OF STUDENTS VERBALLY HARASSED BECAUSE OF THEIR GENDER EXPRESSION. (ANSWER: 64%)
3. BLANK % OF STUDENTS HAD BEEN PHYSICALLY HARASSED AT SCHOOL IN THE PAST YEAR BECAUSE OF THEIR SEXUAL ORIENTATION. (ANSWER: 40%)
4. BLANK % OF STUDENTS REPORTED HAVING BEEN PHYSICALLY HARASSED AT SCHOOL BECAUSE OF THEIR GENDER EXPRESSION. (ANSWER: 27%)
5. 5. BLANK % OF LGBT STUDENTS SAID THEY MISSED A WHOLE DAY OF SCHOOL BECAUSE OF FEELING UNSAFE, COMPARED TO ONLY 6.7% OF A NATIONAL SAMPLE OF STUDENTS. (ANSWER: 30%. THAT MEANS THAT LGBT STUDENTS ARE 4 TIMES MORE LIKELY TO SKIP SCHOOL BECAUSE OF FEELING UNSAFE!)
6. 6. BLANK % OF STUDENTS WHO WERE HARASSED OR ASSAULTED IN SCHOOL DID NOT REPORT THE INCIDENT TO SCHOOL STAFF. (ANSWER: 62%)

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

**NOTE:** These statistics come from GLSEN's 2009 National School Climate Survey. See the whole report at [www.glsen.org/research](http://www.glsen.org/research). All percentages have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

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 OUR SCHOOL IS BETTER, WORSE OR THE SAME?



# 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.

Materials: No materials needed

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.

Participants should pair up to the 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.

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!

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



# 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: For this exercise you will need: 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.

NOW EACH GROUP IS GOING TO PRESENT THEIR DEFINITION TO THE GROUP. 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.

**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.



Ally: (n.) An ally is a member of a privileged group who takes a stand against oppression. An ally works to be a part of social change rather than being part of the oppression.

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 the "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.

They safely intervene when they seem someone being bullied or harassed.

They attend GSA meetings.

Allies participate in the Day of Silence.

Allies don't make fun of people's gender expression.

Allies don't say "That's so gay" or "No homo".

THESE ARE ALL REALLY GREAT IDEAS, AND I HOPE YOU HAVE TAKEN NOTES SO THAT YOU  
CAN PUT SOME OF THESE IN ACTION!



# Closing

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

Duration: 5 min.

Materials: No materials needed

BEFORE WE FINISH, WE HAVE A FEW MINUTES 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 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.