What Kind Of An Ally Are You?

1. Active Oppression

- Laughing at or telling jokes about GLBT people.
- Making fun of people that don’t fit traditional notions of gender roles and sexual identity.
- Verbal and/or physical harassment.
- Working for anti-GLBT legislation, i.e. employment and housing discrimination, etc.
- Gay-bashing and other forms of violence.

2. Indifference & Ignorance

- Business as usual attitude.
- Passive acceptance of actions by others which demeans GLBT individuals. i.e. walking away and/or not confronting, behaviors.
- Ignoring the topic, i.e. lack of programming, discussions, training.
- Adopting a liberal attitude of “What people do in the privacy of their own bedroom is none of my business. I just don’t want to hear about it.”
- Being friendly before you knew someone was GLBT but ignoring them after.

3. Oppression Through Lack of Action

- If you here a friend telling a demeaning joke recognizing it as oppressive, not laughing at this joke but not saying anything to your friend.
- Being uncomfortable but not confronting. i.e. noticing something on the exterior of a door which is inappropriate but not saying anything.
- Students or young people sitting around labeling individuals based upon stereotypes and staff member or adult not confronting.
- Avoiding participating in activities, such as this program, based upon what others might think.

4. Confronting Oppression

- When you hear an inappropriate joke you would go beyond not laughing and would confront the joke teller by saying, “Jokes that put down GLBT people are not funny.”
- Making a choice to participate in activities regardless of what others might think.
- Be aware of and confront statements such as “I am not prejudice, but . . .”

5. Growing as an Ally

- Read books and journals by, for and about GLBT people.
- Be aware of and sensitive to issues that GLBT people face.
- Attend cultural events like Twin Cities Pride Parade and Festival.
- Listen to GLBT music, attend GLBT films, etc.
- Educate yourself; don’t rely on GLBT people to be the experts.
- Make yourself aware of individuals, organizations, agencies, staff, faculty and courses which deal with GLBT issues.
6. Becoming Active as an Ally

- Educate others, engage people in dialogue about the issue. Present programs to others.
- Be “out” and public about your support for GLBT individuals and issues.
- Be willing to speak on behalf of the person(s)/group being targeted
- Recognize the efforts of others to confront inappropriate behaviors.
- Encourage and promote an atmosphere of RESPECT. Acknowledge, appreciate and celebrate differences among individuals and within groups.

7. Challenging Systems

- Create a climate where individual and cultural diversity is recognized and celebrated
- Work for GLBT positive legislation. i.e. human rights, civil rights, etc.
- Address GLBT issues through training.
- Support “Out” GLBT people who can serve as role models for others.
- Change discriminatory institutional practices. Identify and work to change such practices. i.e. employee benefits, etc.

http://www.debradavis.org/gecpage/ally.html
WHAT is an ALLY?

An Ally is a person who is a member of the dominant or majority group who works to end oppression in his or her personal and professional life through support of, and as an advocate for, the oppressed population. Allies to racial, religious and ethnic minorities have been remarkably effective in promoting positive change in the dominant culture, and only recently has their instrumental position been extended to the area of sexual orientation. The past few years have witnessed the development of heterosexual Ally organizations which have attempted to make the culture of a campus or workplace more aware and accepting of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered individuals.

12 POWERS OF AN ALLY

1. The power to understand that the world is enriched by everyone – including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender people.

2. The power to believe in the equality and dignity of people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and their right to live and pursue freedom from discrimination, intolerance and bigotry.

3. The power to grow as an individual in your own personal development as a result of knowing and accepting those with different sexual orientations and gender identities/expressions.

4. The power to deeply learn about the civil injustice and human indignity faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual transgender people today.

5. The power to lend your voice to those silenced, stand together and take action for others.

6. The power to listen with your heart, not with your ear ready to respond.

7. The power to lend hope and love to someone who feels alone, isolated and without a place to go.

8. The power to live with discomfort, take risks and challenge humanity to change.

9. The power to acknowledge your own privilege and be willing to use your privilege to advocate for others.

10. The power to have a vision, a dream, a passion for an inclusive, multicultural world for all people.

11. The power to create a ripple-effect of change one person at a time.

12. The power to be who you are for someone else.

Ways of Being an Ally

1. Making space for people who are targeted to speak, listening
2. Speaking up against injustice when members of the targeted group feel unsafe to speak, or are not present; engaging other people who are privileged who may be more willing/able to listen to another person from the privileged group
3. Validating people in the targeted group, providing support, helping them understand their experiences in the context of systemic oppression

Characteristics of an Ally

1. Has an understanding of what oppression is, and the needs of the target group.
2. Is committed to the personal growth required (despite the probable discomfort and pain involved).
3. Expects to make some mistakes but does not use that as an excuse for inaction.
4. Works to educate other members of the non-target group.
5. Committed to the idea that people in the target group have valid and often painful, lived experiences and that they have perspective and information which non-target members need to hear.

First they came for the communists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a communist;
Then they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a socialist;
Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out—because I was not a trade unionist;
Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—because I was not a Jew;
Then they came for me—and there was no one left to speak out for me.
- Pastor Martin Niemöller