

Stand Up! Speak Out!

ALLY: Say You Have the Courage to Have an Open Mind Guide for Discussion, Reflection or Role Play

LGBTQ youth are verbally harassed at school twice as much as straight youth (HRC report). But *for every 1 LGBT student bullied, 4 straight students are bullied with “accusations” of being gay. Schools that are safer for LGBT students are safer for ALL students.* So, straight boy, straight girl, be brave: Be an Ally!

Vocabulary

Ally: a supporter of equality who stands up for *anyone* who is the target of bias and bullying
dominant group: the social group that enjoys the most power, privilege, visibility, access, etc.
denigrate: to attack the reputation of a person or group of people
demonize: to characterize a person or group of people as evil
gender identity: one’s inner sense of sexual identity, which may differ from one’s biological sex
heterosexism: a prejudiced belief that heterosexuality is assumed, normal, superior, and privileged
homophobe: someone who fears or hates LGBTQ people
LGBTQ: an acronym for lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender, questioning or queer (non-straight)
queer: a formerly pejorative term reclaimed by LGBT people to include all non-straight sexual identities
questioning: someone who has not yet determined his or her sexual and/or gender identity
sexual orientation: the sex of the person(s) to whom one is romantically attracted, relative to one’s own sex
transgender: someone whose gender identity is different from their biological gender
xenophobe: someone who fears or hates foreigners

Straight boy, straight girl, secure in your own sexuality...

Why do you suppose some folks feel so threatened by the LGBTQ community?

1. What messages do we get from society that might give us a sense of *security in our sexual identity*, that how we identify (as a girl or boy, man or woman) is okay, “normal.” Consider sources such as family, friends, recording artists, TV stars, magazine ads, school books.
2. How might *heterosexism* effect how straight people see the world? how LGBTQ people see it? When members of a dominant group assume that all *their* characteristics—color, religion, sexual orientation, etc.—are “normal” or preferred, what message does it send to people with *different* characteristics? **Scenario:** If you identify as straight, imagine you are *not*. Your aunt is visiting. She asks about your social life, who you’re going to prom with, etc. Describe that conversation.

We want to leave behind the times when you’re never safe, when you’re not let in Because of your religion, or your language, your accent, or the color of your skin

3. There has been an increase in homophobic attacks around the world. **Scenario:** Pick one major characteristic of your own—color, ethnicity, religion, language, gender, etc. Imagine *that* characteristic is so *demonized* or hated in your community, that you have to hide it to avoid discrimination or attack. What’s it like to walk down the street, go to school, apply for a job?

Prejudice is prejudice / Xenophobe, homophobe, or member of the Klan

Ignorance breeds hate and fear of different kinds of people we don’t understand

4. How does ignorance—lack of knowledge—breed hate and fear? How does it fuel stereotypes? The Klan is one of over 1,000 hate groups active in the US today that preach racism, anti-Semitism, homophobia, xenophobia, etc. If we share any of their *-isms* or *-phobias*, are we like them? Check out **Southern Poverty Law Center’s Hate Map** online. You’ll see where they are: everywhere.

When someone you know and love / Comes out to you and shares their truth one day

Show them they can count on you / to be an Ally / and love them either way

5. The President of Iran declared, “There are no homosexuals in Iran.” But we know there are LGBTQ people all over the world, including your world. It is understandable that they may hide their identity when their safety is at risk: They are demonized by many clergy, politicians, and hate groups. **Scenario:** A sibling, cousin, friend, or co-worker comes out to you. What do you say?

Say you have the courage to have an open mind / Say you’ll be an Ally for all humankind

6. Why does it take *courage to have an open mind*, to be an Ally? Is it because of fear of what others think? Can it threaten *your* sexuality? Can you find *one friend* (or more) to be an Ally with you?