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# Standing in the Gap: A Guide for LGBTQ+ Advocacy

This guide is your starting point for understanding how to support and advocate for LGBTQ+ rights and inclusion. Whether you're working to create safer, more inclusive environments in schools, workplaces, or your community, this module will provide you with the knowledge and tools to make a meaningful impact. Together, we can foster understanding, acceptance, and equality for all.



**Introduction**



**What is an LGBTQ+ ally?**



**LGBTQ+ Key Terms**



**Navigating the World as An LGBTQ+ Individual**



**Advocating for LGBTQ+ Youth**



**Community Building**



**Advocating for Policy Change**





## References

# Introduction

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## Standing in the Gap: A Basic Guide for LGBTQ+ Advocacy

Welcome to this introductory guide for LGBTQ+ Advocacy.

# Lesson Objectives

In this module, you will:

- 1 Gain a comprehensive understanding of essential LGBTQ+ advocacy terms and concepts to build a solid foundation for further learning.
- 2 Explore the significant milestones and events in the history of LGBTQ+ civil rights to understand the progress and ongoing challenges in the movement.
- 3 Learn about the challenges facing LGBTQ+ individuals in our society, from mental to physical health.
- 4 Understand special considerations when advocating for LGBTQ+ youth.
- 3 Learn effective strategies to foster an inclusive environment that respects and supports LGBTQ+ individuals in various settings.
- 4 Discover ways to create and maintain support networks that provide essential resources and community for LGBTQ+ advocacy.
- 5 Develop skills to effectively advocate for policy changes and initiatives that promote equality and protect the rights of LGBTQ+ individuals.

**CONTINUE**

# What is an LGBTQ+ ally?



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In this section, you will learn about what it means to be an LGBTQ+ ally.

But before we continue, let's take a moment to see how much you already know about LGBTQ+ history.

Which of the following events is considered a pivotal moment in LGBTQ+ history?

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- ☐ The Stonewall Riots
- ☐ The Women's March
- ☐ The Civil Rights Act
- ☐ The March on Washington

**SUBMIT**





What is an LGBTQ+ Ally?

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## **What is an Ally?**

An ally is someone who is not part of a socially and/or politically persecuted community. Allies play a crucial role in amplifying the voices of those who are often ignored or

overlooked. They use their privilege to advocate for equal rights and opportunities, striving to create a more inclusive and equitable society. By educating themselves and others, allies contribute to breaking down systemic barriers and fostering understanding and empathy.

Explore the cards below to learn more about the crucial role that allies play in securing LGBTQ+ rights.

## Amplify Voices —

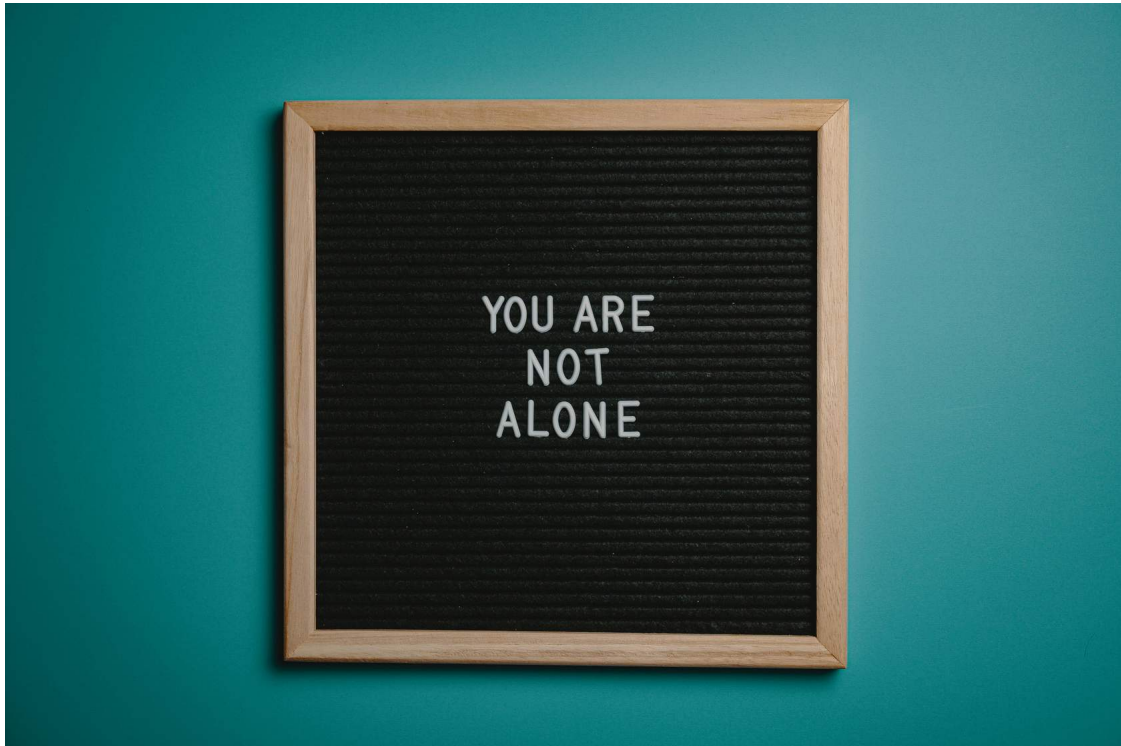
Allies amplify the voices and experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals, allowing their concerns to be heard and considered in both social and professional spaces.



## Bolster Mental Health —



When allies are visible, LGBTQ+ individuals feel validated in their identities. This validation leads to a sense of belonging, which reduces feelings of isolation and improves mental wellness outcomes.



## Reducing Discrimination —

Advocacy from allies challenge discriminatory practices and create safe, inclusive spaces for LGBTQ+ individuals in schools, workplaces, and communities. As a result, public perception of LGBTQ+ individuals can become more favorable over time.



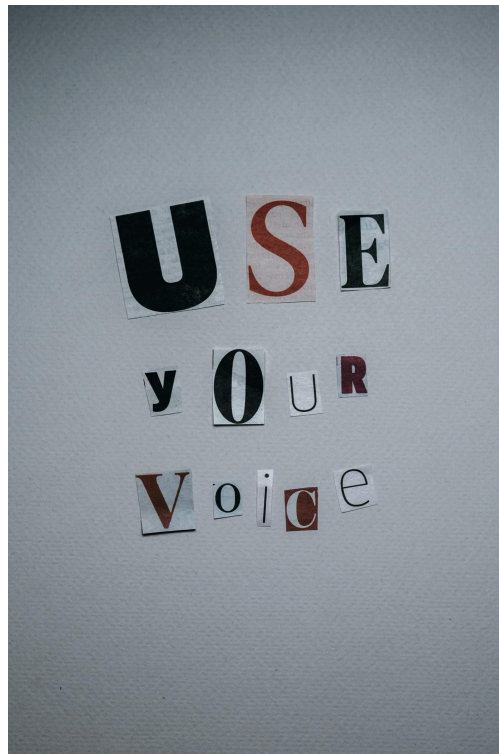
## Raising Awareness —

Many people find it difficult to relate to the LGBTQ+ experience. Allies can educate others and encourage them to empathize with LGBTQ+ experiences and concerns.



## Promoting Policy Change —

Allies can use their privilege and influence to encourage local and national policies that are equitable and inclusive of the LGBTQ+ community.



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Reflection:

What are some things that you have already been doing as an ally to help the LGBTQ+ community?

**CONTINUE**

# LGBTQ+ Key Terms

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**CONTINUE**



In this section, you will learn key terms that are used within the LGBTQ+ community.



# Gender Expressions

When we talk about the LGBTQ+ community, we can divide identity expressions along two lines - by gender expression or by sexual orientation.

A person's gender expression refers to their internal sense of who they are. They may identify as male, female, both, neither, or something else entirely.

Click on the following cards to learn the definitions of each gender term.

Intersectionality

The concept that various aspects of a person's social and political identities (i.e. gender, race, sexual orientation) come together and contribute to an individual's unique experiences of either discrimination or privilege.



Gender Binary

The concept that gender is divided into two distinct categories - male and female.

Non-Binary

Non-binary individuals do not fit within the traditional gender binary. They may identify with having aspects of both genders, neither, or something else altogether.

Two Spirit

In some indigenous North American cultures, this term is used to describe a person who embodies both masculine and feminine qualities. Two spirit is a unique gender identity, and may have specific roles to fulfill within the community.

Cisgender

A person who identifies with the gender they were assigned with at birth.



The diagram consists of a large light gray rectangle. A vertical green bar is positioned on the left side of this rectangle, extending from the top to the bottom. A horizontal green bar is positioned at the bottom of the light gray rectangle, extending from the left edge to the right edge. The word 'Transgender' is centered within the light gray area, to the left of the vertical green bar.


Transgender

A broad term for individuals who do not identify with the sex or gender assigned at birth.

## Sexual Orientation

On the other hand, sexual orientation is about who individuals are emotionally, romantically, or sexually attracted to.

Click on the following cards to learn more about each sexual orientation.



Queer

Queer refers to an individual who does not identify as exclusively heterosexual or cisgender. Historically, this term has been used as a slur but the LGBTQ+ community has been reclaiming the term minus its negative connotations.

Gay

A person who is emotionally, sexually, or romantically attracted to someone of the same gender. Can be used by males or females.

Lesbian

A person who identifies as a female who is sexually, emotionally, or romantically attracted to another woman.

Asexual

An asexual person either doesn't experience romantic/sexual attraction towards other people.

Bisexual

A person who experiences romantic, sexual, or emotional attraction to more than one gender.

Pansexual

A pansexual person experiences sexual, emotional, or romantic attraction to others regardless of their gender or sexual identity.

**Intersex**

An intersex person is someone born with physical sex characteristics (such as chromosomes, hormones, or anatomy) that do not fit typical definitions of male or female bodies. While this is neither a gender or sexual orientation, the intersex community is included in the LGBTQ+ community.

An intersex person may or may not align with the sex assigned to them at birth. Likewise, they may identify as gay/lesbian, bisexual, pansexual, or something else.

Advocacy for intersex individuals usually revolves around ending unnecessary medical interventions to get the intersex individual's body to conform to society's gender binary.



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By embracing intersectionality, the LGBTQ+ allies can better advocate for those who face multiple layers of



marginalization, ensuring no one is left behind in the fight for equality.

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# Navigating the World as An LGBTQ+ Individual



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## Heading

[Discuss the challenges of being a queer person in modern day United States]

# Advocating for LGBTQ+ Youth



Unfortunately, suicide and suicidal ideation are very common among LGBTQ+ youth. According to the Trevor Report 2024 LGBTQ+ Youth Mental Health Study, at least 39% of LGBTQ+ youth reported considering it in 2023, with 12% having attempted it. Within the family unit, families who reject the gender and/or sexual identities of their young LGBTQ+ family members, the youth were 8 times more likely to attempt suicide.

While mental health access would greatly help reduce these numbers, allies have a powerful influence on reducing the suicide rates in LGBTQ+ youth. Those who had at least one safe adult were 40% less likely to report a suicide attempt (Trevor Report LGBTQ+ Youth Mental Health Survey, 2024).

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# Community Building

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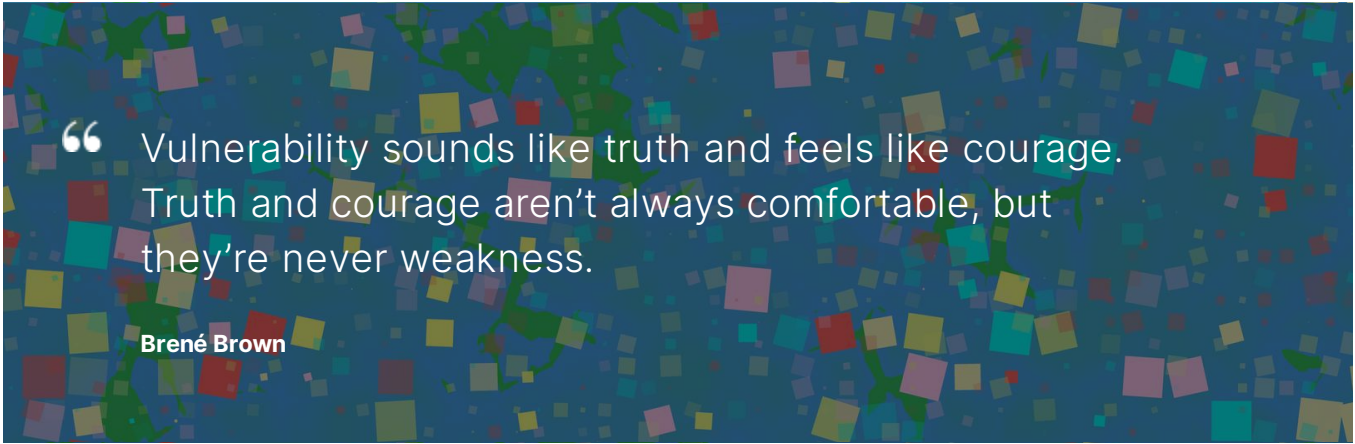
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[Introduce the concept of safe spaces here and how to foster them]



## Community Building

[Importance of community and how to build one for LGBTQ+ individuals]



“ Vulnerability sounds like truth and feels like courage.  
Truth and courage aren't always comfortable, but  
they're never weakness.

**Brené Brown**

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Thank you for completing this course!

Lesson 7 of 8

# Advocating for Policy Change



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[Where do we begin advocating for inclusive policies?]

# References



- 2024, The Trevor Project LGBTQ+ Youth Mental Health Survey
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