

How to be a great ally to the LGBT+ Community

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It's not all rainbows and glitter...

Over the last few years the UK LGBTQ+ community has made great progress towards acceptance and equality, though this progress has not been equal for all people living under the rainbow's arch. Despite this, there are still people who are either unaware or not accepting of our rights. The 2018 Government Equalities Office National LGBT Survey showed that:

- X **More than 2/3 of LGBT respondents avoid holding hands with their partner for fear of a negative reaction from others.**
- X **In the 12 months prior to the survey, 2 in 5 people had experienced an incident related to their LGBT identity, such as verbal harassment or physical violence.**

IDAHOBIT?

The 17th May marks the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, Intersexism and Transphobia, a day to raise awareness of rights violations against the LGBTQ+ community. As a community we are better together and the best way to eliminate all of the 'phobias is to build strong, fierce bridges of allies within and outside of the community. Exposure and communication can be highly effective at nudging the opinions of others. It can be hard for people to hate when things are up close and personal.

"You can't be what you can't see", Marian Wright Edelman, American Civil Rights Activist.

As allies, "up close and personal" means:

- ✓ **Being prepared to demonstrate your tolerance, acceptance, and unquestioning of LGBTQ+ people to others**
- ✓ **Encouraging people to see an alternative point of view**
- ✓ **Empowering other people to be an ally by showing your empathy and compassion.**

How do I be a good ally?

This might, of course, generate heated debate. We have found that debunking arguments based on religion, accepted cultural norms, or beliefs only closes down the conversation. We therefore suggest the following approach:

- 🌈 **Ask them whether they know any people from the community.**
- 🌈 **Give examples of LGBTQ+ people in your life and be prepared to demonstrate and justify how you accept them.**
- 🌈 **Seek out LGBTQ+ communities, give space to their voices and use them as a counter argument towards the haters.**
- 🌈 **Use these authentic local stories and share them with the local populace to help change points of view.**
- 🌈 **Explain that you're not asking people to be gay, you're just asking for tolerance.**
- 🌈 **Join the network**

What if I witness an incident?

Homophobia, Biphobia, Intersexim and Transphobia are criminal and discrimination offences. If you see someone being abused then:

- ✓ **Stand by their side, talk to them and ask them if they are ok**
- ✓ **Question the abuse where it is coming from**
- ✓ **State your case as to why it is wrong**

At work report to your line manager, talk to the Speak up Guardian (Jen Watson), or contact the employee relations team.

Outside of work report to the Met Police: <https://www.met.police.uk/advice/advice-and-information/hco/hate-crime/how-to-report-hate-crime/>

Further information: <https://may17.org>