



BEST PRACTICES FOR AN LGBTQTT FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT

1. **USE GENDER INCLUSIVE AND NON-HETEROSEXIST LANGUAGE.** Do not assume that you know someone's sexuality and/or the gender of hir romantic/sexual interests. Use inclusive language even if you know someone is heterosexual. Help educate and encourage others to use inclusive language, as well.
2. **ASSUME THAT ANYONE COULD BE LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, QUEER, TWO-SPIRITED, TRANSGENDERED OR HETEROSEXUAL.** Don't assume that everyone is heterosexual "unless you know otherwise" or that everyone should be heterosexual. Similarly, don't assume that someone is LGBTQTT based on stereotypes or assumptions about hir friends.
3. **DON'T THINK OF LGBTQTT PERSONS SOLELY IN TERMS OF THEIR SEXUALITY.** Just as the lives of heterosexual people include far more than their attraction to members of the opposite sex, LGBTQTT persons also have friends, skills and multifaceted interests unrelated to their sexuality. Don't define anyone by hir sexuality.
4. **REMEMBER THAT AN INDIVIDUAL'S SEXUALITY INVOLVES MORE THAN SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR.** It includes attraction, companionship, intimacy and emotional attachments as well as sexual activity.
5. **DON'T "OUT" PEOPLE.** Do not force anyone to disclose hir sexuality. Also, if you know that someone is LGBTQTT or is questioning hir sexuality, don't assume that you may tell anyone else. Be sensitive to the fact that some people are "out" in some areas of their lives, but not in others.
6. **TALK ABOUT SEXUAL DIVERSITY.** Maintain an inclusive group, classroom, living or workspace by talking openly and respectfully about LGBTQTT issues when they come up. Treat these issues as you would any other issue.
7. **CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR LGBTQTT FOLK TO TELL THEIR STORIES.**
8. **EDUCATE YOURSELF.** If there are things you don't know or understand about LGBTQTT issues, do some research, ask questions or contact a group that deals with these issues. Use any discomfort you have with LGBTQTT issues as opportunities for growth. Understand heterosexual privilege.
9. **DON'T ENGAGE IN HOMOPHOBIC JOKES, COMMENTS, SLURS OR OTHER BEHAVIOURS.** Speak up against these when you witness them. If you don't, your silence condones and encourages such behaviours. If you are unsure about language, listen to the words people use to describe themselves.
10. **RECOGNIZE INTERSECTIONS AND SIMILARITIES OF PREJUDICE.** Heterosexism and other forms of oppression and discrimination have similarities and areas of overlap. For example, a black lesbian may experience homophobia, racism and sexism.
11. **BE NON-JUDGMENTAL.** Being LGBTQTT is not something to be ashamed of or judgmental about. Homophobia, not sexuality or gender identity, is the problem. Homophobia and heterosexism are learned and often unintentional, and can be unlearned.
12. **ENGAGE IN INCLUSIVE PRACTICES.** Create work, study and living environments in which gender and sexual diversity are included, modeled and valued. Understand that this benefits everyone.

Adapted from the UBC brochure *Recognizing Heterosexism and Homophobia: Creating an Anti-Heterosexist, Homophobia-Free Campus.*

