



ONE TEAM

TIPS

ON CREATING LGBTQ+ SAFER SPACES IN SCHOOL



Philippe Beaudry, fencing



TIPS ON CREATING LGBTQ+ SAFER SPACES IN SCHOOLS - FOR TEACHERS & COACHES

Here are some initial steps that you can take in order to help make your school, classroom, gymnasium or teams safer and more inclusive and welcoming spaces for all participants:

1. Be explicit about your respect for and inclusion of all people, your position as an ally, and your expectations of students and team members in helping to create LGBTQ+ safer and inclusive spaces.
2. Set up your classroom or team as an LGBTQ+ safer space on day one and establish rules that support acceptance and respect for everyone regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. For classroom teachers, have a discussion about what this means and hang up reminders such as rainbow Pride Flags and posters illustrating a variety of types of individuals and families. For coaches, talk about zero tolerance for homophobic, biphobic and transphobic behaviours and language. For older students, link the discussion of respect for all people regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or other characteristics to your provincial or territorial Human Rights Code or Act, your school's Code of Conduct or any school board/division/district equity policies.
3. Reflect on your own biases and remember that these affect how you teach and what you are teaching.
4. Use gender-neutral and inclusive language as much as possible, such as "hello students" versus "hello boys and girls."
5. If gender doesn't have anything to do with the content of activities and exercise, avoid gendering them. For example, rather than ask students to form lines according to gender, form lines using birthdays from January to June and July to December.
6. Check curriculum/assignments/activities/forms for LGBTQ+ inclusivity and any assumptions that are being made.
7. Incorporate books with lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, Two Spirit, queer, questioning and gender creative characters and books written by LGBTQ+ authors and have them available on bookshelves in your classroom, and in the library.
8. Show respect for students as critical thinkers and agents of social change by using lesson plans that deal with human rights and social justice.
9. Where appropriate, be straightforward and open about the possibility of same sex relationships and gender identities that challenge the idea of gender as binary.
10. Include LGBTQ+ content into sexual health education.
11. Contact local LGBTQ+ organizations for help or to bring in speakers.
12. Find out your school's policy regarding LGBTQ+ and trans-specific matters such as use of name and pronoun. If this is missing, or not easy to access, work with administration to change it.
13. Help your school set up gender-neutral or gender-inclusive washrooms.
14. Create a flexible or gender-neutral dress code to enable a student's right to dress in a way that is reflective of their gender identity and expression.
15. Support the development of a trans-inclusive GSA (Gay Straight Alliance) club in the school.
16. Be an ally: challenge heteronormativity and cisnormativity when you see it in policy and practice.
17. Be an ally: challenge homophobia, biphobia and transphobia when you see or hear it.
18. Be positive and supportive if a student comes out to you. Ask if they need information and support and whether you can assist in any way.

SPORTS-SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS:

19. Ensure that students have the right to participate in gender-segregated sports and gym class activities in accordance with their gender identity..
20. Accommodate locker room accessibility, which may include use of a private area (washroom, or Phys. Ed. Instructor's office), or a separate changing schedule (just before or after the other students have changed).
21. Coaches: ask for the team captain's help in setting a positive and respectful tone for all.
22. Coaches and physical education teachers can demonstrate leadership through vocal support of and participation in LGBTQ+ initiatives.

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT SETTING UP A GSA AT YOUR SCHOOL BY VISITING MYGSA.CA

STRATEGIES FOR WORKING WITH LGBTQ+ ATHLETES AND COACHES

FROM LEADING THE WAY. WORKING WITH LGBTQ+ ATHLETES AND COACHES, CAAWS 2014

1. ESTABLISH AN INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT OF OPENNESS AND RESPECT FOR EVERYONE, REGARDLESS OF ETHNICITY, RACE, GENDER, RELIGION, CLASS, SIZE, OR SEXUAL OR GENDER IDENTITY:

- A. Understand your own beliefs and feelings about LGBTphobias, and recognize and act upon the important leadership role you play as a coach.
- B. Assess how welcoming your team environment is to those who are LGBTQ+.
- C. Describe acceptable behaviours, clarify disrespectful behaviours, and highlight behaviours that demonstrate an inclusive environment of openness and respect.
- D. Act quickly to address LGBTphobic language, jokes and actions that ridicule or put down LGBTQ+ people, women or any minority groups.
- E. Deal with any discrimination or problems that the athlete or coach encounters from teammates, training staff, parents, supporters or other coaching staff.
- F. Ensure the team locker room is a safe place, free of unwanted sexual attention, taunting or teasing. Use language and images inclusive of diverse families, friendships, and sexual and gender identities; for example, extend invitations to include boyfriends and girlfriends, husbands, wives and partners or significant others. Be aware that other countries have strict laws about being LGBTQ+. Take the time to know whether a country or city is safe for all team members.

2. PROVIDE STRONG, POSITIVE LEADERSHIP THAT MODELS FAIR AND RESPECTFUL BEHAVIOUR:

- A. Be mindful of your own attitudes and beliefs.
- B. Avoid assumptions or judgements based on stereotypes or rumour. Assume there are LGBTQ+ members involved with your team - either directly as athletes, coaches or training staff, or indirectly as family members or friends.

- C. Never ask someone about their sexual orientation or gender identity. However, it is important to be respectful of people's pronouns; if you're not sure what pronouns people use, ask!
- D. Be ready for when someone who is LGBTQ+ comes out to you. Make sure you have easy access to resources and the proper systems in place to support LGBTQ+ people.
- E. Make your support for LGBTQ+ team members, whether there are any or not, visible and intentional, using LGBTQ+ inclusive language.
- F. Be open to speaking with athletes, coaches or other support staff who have questions or express concerns.
- G. Become a visible ally, show your support by wearing a positive space pin or sticker or taking part in other ally initiatives.
- H. Become more familiar with LGBTQ+ issues in sport. Know what resources are available to assist those who are LGBTQ+ and may be struggling (the Resources for Further Reading section as a start).
- I. If you are LGBTQ+ yourself, consider taking steps to live your sport life more openly as an "out" coach.

3. PUT IN PLACE THE NECESSARY ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORKS TO ASSIST YOU IN WORKING WITH LGBTQ+ ATHLETES AND COACHES:

- A. Ensure your organization has an equity policy and/or code of conduct that prohibits discrimination on the basis of perceived sexual orientation or gender identity.
- B. Ensure your policies and processes are inclusive and non-discriminatory (e.g., selection criteria, playing time, dating policies, rooming policies, leadership nominations).
- C. Educate staff, team members and volunteers on their responsibilities for being respectful and non-discriminatory to all, regardless of their own personal beliefs.

LA GALAXY (MAJOR LEAGUE SOCCER) CAPTAIN LANDON DONOVAN DEMONSTRATED HIS ALLYSHIP TO GAY TEAMMATE ROBBIE ROGERS AND OTHERS WHEN HIS LOCKER ROOM MESSAGE TO PLAYERS WAS INCLUSIVE OF ROGERS' RELATIONSHIP

"SATURDAY AFTER THE GAME, MANDATORY NIGHT OUT... PLAYERS ONLY (NO WIVES, GFS, BFS, SIDE PIECES)"