



# ONE TEAM



TOP

# 15

ESSENTIALS



## 1. RECOGNIZE THE REALITY OF HOMOPHOBIA, BIPHOBIA AND TRANSPHOBIA IN SPORT AND SCHOOLS.

Recognising that homophobia, biphobia and transphobia exists and are a problem in sport and schools is an important beginning to addressing the problem. Learn about how homophobia, biphobia and transphobia as well as heteronormativity and cisnormativity look in the sport and school environments, as well as their impact on athletes and team performance. Learn about the impact of gender norms and stereotypes and how you can challenge them.

## 2. EDUCATE YOURSELF ABOUT LGBTQ+ ISSUES

Take time to learn about LGBTQ+ and gender creative identities, gender norms and stereotypes, and phobias heteronormativity and cisnormativity – what they are, how they manifest, and their impact. Keep up with current events and familiarize yourself with the Canadian Charter of Rights and your provincial or territorial Human Rights Code or Act. Understanding these things will help you to be more aware of the challenges facing LGBTQ+ children, youth and families.

## 3. RECOGNIZE YOUR OWN BIAS

Understand your own bias and its limitations as it relates to creating LGBTQ+ safer and inclusive spaces. If you are straight and/or cisgender, there will be things you don't notice or are not aware of that exclude and create barriers for LGBTQ+ and gender creative individuals. Similarly, you may have preconceived ideas and attitudes about gender, gender norms, gender conformity and LGBTQ+ people in general. Recognizing your biases means you can recognize how they play out in the classroom, gymnasium or field, then work towards a greater understanding of what makes for an LGBTQ+ safer and inclusive space, and help to create such spaces. Talking about bias with students encourages them to be critical thinkers and learners, and provides an opening for discussion.

## 4. CHECK YOUR ASSUMPTIONS

We live in a heteronormative and cisnormative world, so it's common to assume that everyone is straight and cisgender. Gender norms and stereotypes impact our assumptions about what and who boys and girls should like, what they should wear, and how they should act. Challenge the idea that gender is binary and consider that it exists along a continuum.

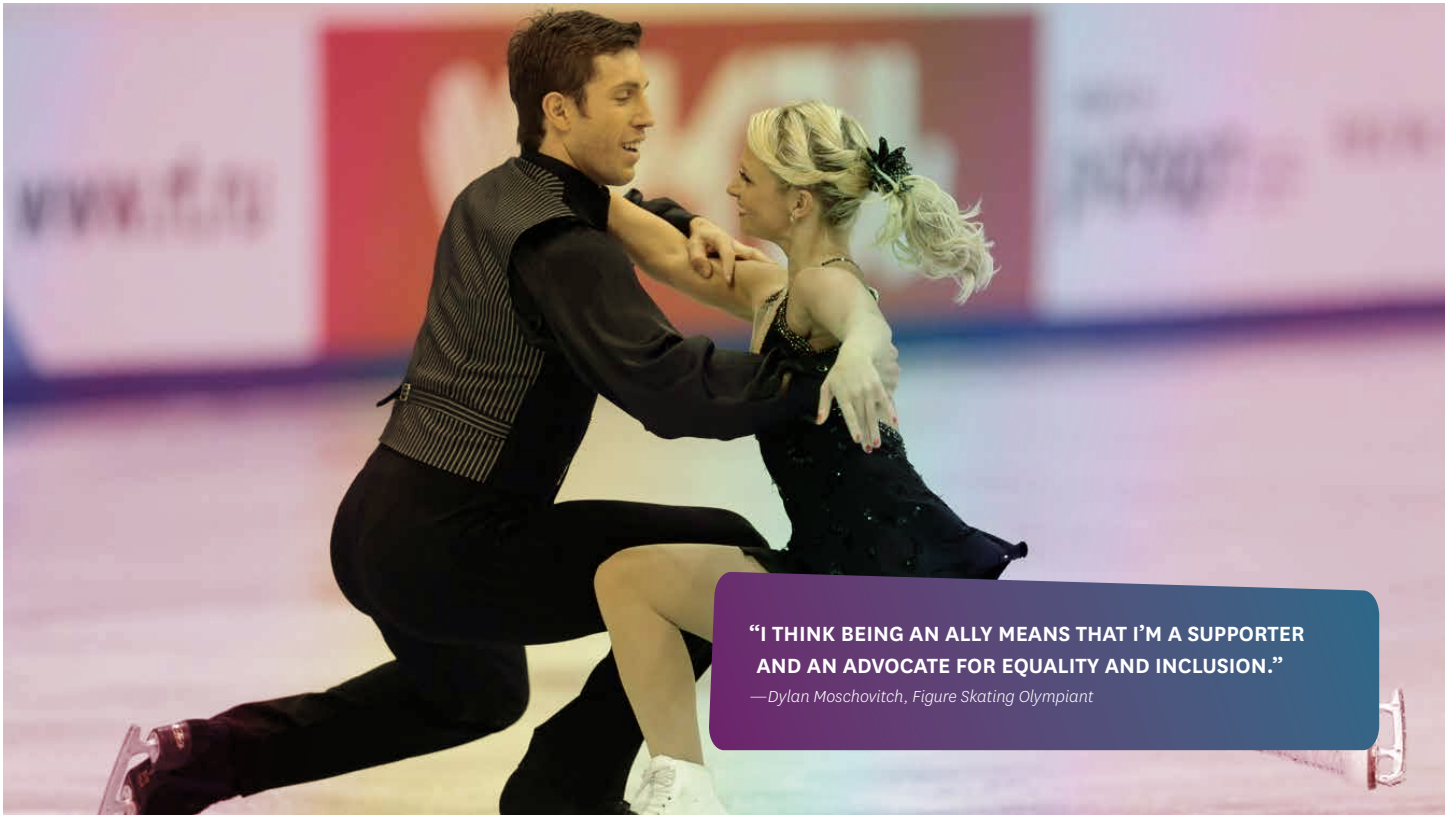
## 5. CREATE LGBTQ+ SAFER AND INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENTS

Challenging assumptions, gender norms and stereotypes, and being inclusive of various types of families is a way to start creating safer and inclusive classrooms and schools for gender creative and LGBTQ+ students and families in the early grades. Infusing LGBTQ+ issues into the curriculum and challenging heteronormativity and cisnormativity at all levels helps to challenge the stigma, break the silence, and foster inclusion and acceptance. In middle and high schools, Gay Straight Alliance groups (GSAs) help LGBTQ+ students and allies to raise awareness, talk about issues, and challenge homophobia, biphobia and transphobia. Being aware of and challenging heteronormativity and cisnormativity and how they result in the exclusion and invisibility of LGBTQ+ individuals is also part of creating LGBTQ+ safer and inclusive environments since we learn what has value by omission and commission. Clear expectations around treating everyone with respect, as well as ensuring policies and practices support LGBTQ+ inclusion is crucial.

**PERSONALLY, ONE OF THE THINGS I BECAME AWARE OF IN SPORT ENVIRONMENTS IS THAT OFTEN PEOPLE MAY HAVE A GREAT PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH SOMEONE AND FEEL LIKE THEY'RE AN ALLY TO THEM, BUT THEY MAY NOT BE CREATING A SAFE SPACE IN TERMS OF THEIR LANGUAGE, OR THE JOKES THEY TELL (OR LAUGH AT).**

- Una Lunder, Canoe/Kayak Olympian





**“I THINK BEING AN ALLY MEANS THAT I’M A SUPPORTER AND AN ADVOCATE FOR EQUALITY AND INCLUSION.”**

—Dylan Moschovitch, Figure Skating Olympiant

## **6. STAND UP AND SPEAK UP**

Intervene when you encounter LGBTphobic words, behaviour or policies. Speak up against heteronormativity and cisnormativity in policy, practice and language. Help raise awareness about these issues by pointing them out and speaking up. Encourage others to do the same.

## **7. USE LGBTQ+-INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE**

Using gender neutral language helps to create LGBTQ+ inclusive and safer environments. Using words like partner, spouse, parent, letter carrier, firefighter, etc. allows for those people to be of any gender and doesn’t assume heterosexuality or gender identity. This use of language allows people to share more of who they are, if they choose, because your choice of words doesn’t assume their sexual orientation or gender identity. Similarly, the use of singular gender neutral pronouns such as “they” is also becoming more common as gender creative and trans individuals seek out options that don’t reinforce gender as binary (which “he” and “she” do).

## **8. LINK WITH PARTNERS**

Collaborate with organizations like You Can Play, Egale Canada Human Rights Trust, PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays) and other LGBTQ+ groups in your community to raise awareness about LGBTQ+ safer and inclusive spaces as well as LGBTQ+ people in sport. Some communities have LGBTQ+-specific sports teams who may be interested in helping with instruction.

## **9. BE AN ALLY**

Allies are tremendously helpful in creating LGBTQ+ safer spaces. Standing up for respect and inclusion for others sends a strong message. Having zero tolerance for LGBTQ+ bullying and harassment and dealing with it when it occurs gives students the tools to stand up for themselves and others. It also lets them know who they can turn to for support. Within the sport environment, allyship is especially important among physical education teachers and coaches. Participate in LGBTQ+-specific or inclusive events and activities.

**“I WANT TO PUSH OUR EVOLUTION TO EVOLVE AT A QUICKER RATE. WE’VE GOT TO A POINT WHERE THINGS ARE MORE SUBVERSIVE AND HIDDEN BUT IT DOESN’T MEAN THAT ITS SHIFTED. OUR YOUNGER GENERATIONS ARE MORE OPEN TO THE CHANGE, BUT THEIR LANGUAGE HASN’T EVOLVED.”**

—Brock McGillis, Hockey Player

## 10. PROVIDE OR BE A ROLE MODEL

Having role models who identify as LGBTQ+ helps all students recognize that LGBTQ+ people exist and are successful, and that being LGBTQ+ is one part of a person's identity and doesn't limit what they can do. The more athletes who come out as LGBTQ+, the more the culture in sport will change and the easier it will be for LGBTQ+ and gender creative students to participate in sports and feel safe and welcome to be who they are. Additionally, a positive relationship with a teacher, coach, program leader or other significant person in their lives who is an LGBTQ+ ally provides a role model for how to treat all people with respect and dignity.

## 11. USE LGBTQ+-INCLUSIVE AND TRANS-SPECIFIC POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Develop, promote and enforce policies and practices that are LGBTQ+-inclusive and support respect regardless of gender, gender identity, gender expression or sexual orientation. The more specific these policies are in mentioning these identities, the more effective they are.

Specific policies around support for trans and gender creative students are also important. For example, flexible dress codes, gender inclusive bathrooms or gender-neutral options, all-gender sports teams and providing safer change room options are examples of policies and procedures that support trans and gender creative students and create safer spaces while sending a message of inclusion to the school community.

## 12. PROVIDE LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Seeing LGBTQ+ people in positions of leadership provides role models for LGBTQ+ students and helps to break down stereotypes. People in positions of leadership include coaches as well as team captains or spokespeople. Leaders who can be out about their sexual orientation or gender identity can inspire LGBTQ+ children and youth to pursue their interests.

## 13. RECOGNIZE THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA AND MARKETERS

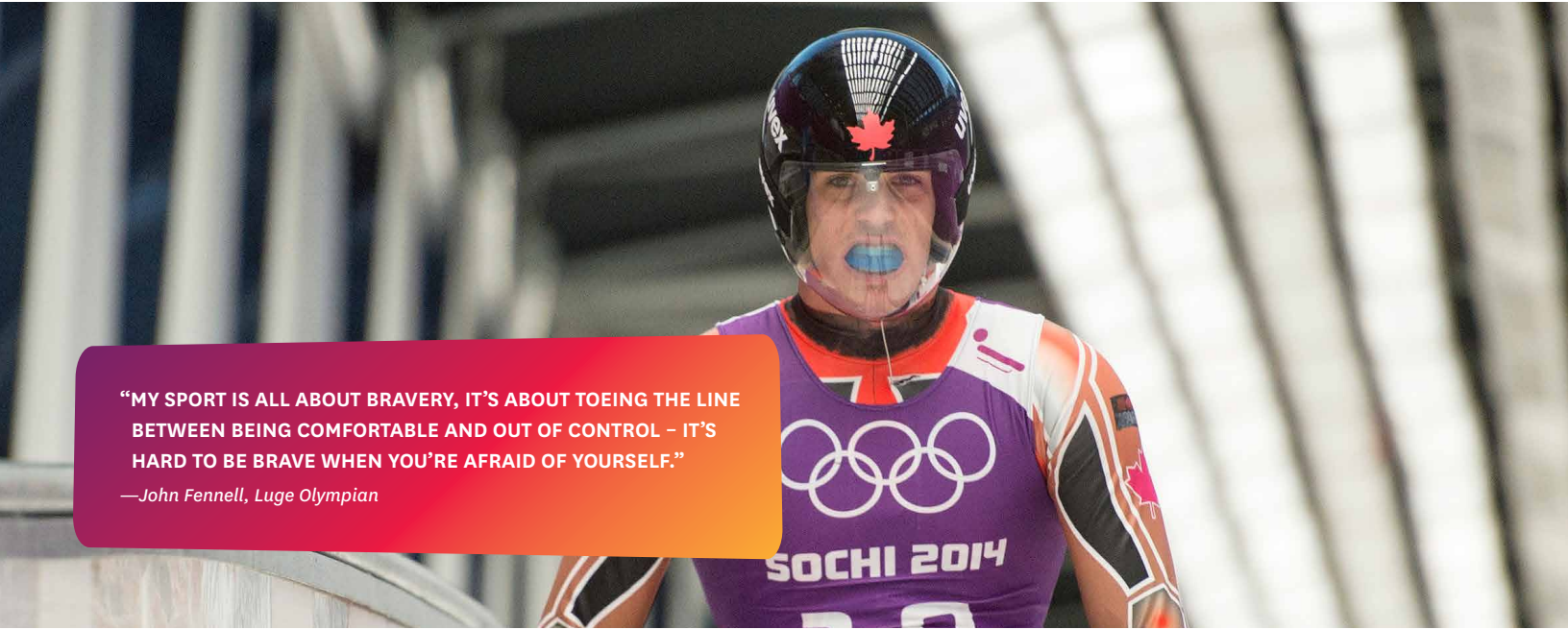
While it may seem outside our scope of control, as consumers and leaders we have opportunities to influence. We need to recognize and address how the media and marketers portray LGBTQ+ people and reinforce heteronormativity and cisnormativity as well as homophobia, biphobia and transphobia. We can help students and participants to become more media savvy and encourage them to challenge and disengage from harmful messages and images.

## 14. PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!

Use every opportunity to use gender-neutral language, challenge norms and assumptions about gender and sexual orientation, and speak up against LGBTphobias. Learn from your mistakes! When you make a mistake, simply acknowledge it, apologize, commit to doing things differently and then do so.

## 15. BE BRAVE

Creating any kind of change takes courage. Be brave and surround yourself with other allies and resources that support you and this work.



**“MY SPORT IS ALL ABOUT BRAVERY, IT’S ABOUT TOEING THE LINE BETWEEN BEING COMFORTABLE AND OUT OF CONTROL – IT’S HARD TO BE BRAVE WHEN YOU’RE AFRAID OF YOURSELF.”**

—John Fennell, Luge Olympian