

44 Ways to be an Ally at MSUM

For All

1. Change your language to be as inclusive as possible
2. Try not to assume heterosexuality or gender identity.
3. Take time to think through your personal feelings about LGBTQIA+ people.
4. Avoid tokenizing LGBTQIA+ individuals.
5. Work to ensure the safety of LGBTQIA+ individuals. This safety includes physical and psychological safety, as well as the ability to act without fear of stigma, oppression, or violence.
6. Challenge heterosexist, homophobic, transphobic statements (e.g. “That’s not funny...”) not because it is politically correct to do so, but because it builds a safer, more inclusive campus.
7. Actively participate in the Safe Zone Program.
8. Support the creation and use of all gender/gender-neutral (universal) restrooms and single user restrooms. Avoid staring or attempting to label people’s gender identity in the restroom.
9. Donate to, or organize a fundraiser for, the Rainbow Scholarship at MSUM.
10. Attend a SPECTRUM or Rainbow Dragon Center event.
11. Follow up with a student or colleague who publicly takes a stand on LGBTQIA+ issues. Support these individuals publicly and privately.
12. Include LGBTQIA+ students and colleagues in all information group outings for classes and departments.
13. Make it your personal policy not to “out” people, regardless of how open they are, unless you have their permission.
14. Make it your personal policy to resist introducing people (either in person or in conversations) as your “gay friend” or “lesbian colleague” unless their sexual orientation is relevant or unless you also introduce your “straight friend” or “straight colleague.”
15. Make it your personal policy not to automatically assign characteristics to people based on their perceived or actual gender identity. Notice how your interactions with others change when you do this.
16. Offer to be part of someone’s support network as they are coming out.
17. Remind others that individuals who are coming out are more than their sexual orientation or gender identity and expression. Affirm the human dignity of all.
18. Learn more about community resources. Attend an event and then tells others widely about your attendance, just as you would about other aspects of your life.
19. Invite LGBTQIA+ students to safely provide feedback about whether they feel included on your floor, department, or classroom. Provide opportunities for ongoing feedback.
20. Challenge yourself to not buy into stereotypes.
21. Engage in friendly discussions of LGBTQIA+ concerns.
22. When updating on current events, include LGBTQIA+ news, events, and happenings.

23. Show your support by having a rainbow flag in your office, or by wearing LGBTQIA+ pins, bracelets, or t-shirts.
24. When you hear someone ask, “What does LGBTQIA+ mean?,” stop and explain.
25. Avoid guessing who is LGBTQIA+ and who is not.
26. Commit to being an ally all day, every day, regardless of whether anyone is witness to your acts. Remember that being an ally is not an identity, it is a process and a journey.
27. Educate yourself and others about how to be an ally.
28. Familiarize yourself with the materials and resources available in the Rainbow Dragon Center. Visit the space!
29. Visit the Rainbow Dragon Center website at mnstate.edu/rainbowdragoncenter
30. Share your pronouns when introducing yourself and ask other individuals to do the same.

For Faculty & Staff

31. Prominently display your Safe Zone sticker on your office door or at the entrance of your workspace.
32. Designate your classroom as a Safe Zone. Add a disclaimer on your syllabus and enforce it.
33. Ask LGBTQIA+ constituents for feedback about how your office might better support or serve them. Ensure that there are ongoing opportunities to safely provide feedback.
34. Revise your syllabus to include LGBTQIA+ films, articles, or other readings.
35. Support LGBTQIA+ issues in department meetings; speak up and voice your support so that your LGBTQIA+ colleagues are not the only voices for equity.
36. Familiarize yourself with Minnesota State’s 1B.1 Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination in Employment and Education policy. Learn about other related policies and laws, like Title IX.
37. Respect the request of non-binary, transgender, and other individuals to go by their preferred name and pronouns.
38. Add a variety of partner status options in your unit’s paperwork.
39. Health service providers, sexual violence prevention educators, student affairs advocates, and counselors, among others, should become comfortable with sexual health issues and terminology for LGBTQIA+ individuals.
40. Include LGBTQIA+ stories and materials in publicity for your unit.
41. Be open and prepared to discussing how LGBTQIA+ issues affect students’ financial aid, career options, and relationships with family, etc.
42. If you are not able to answer a question or help a LGBTQIA+ student or colleague, be ready to ask for assistance from the Safe Zone Training facilitators.
43. Invite partners (not spouses) to join in social outings.
44. Do not use “he/she” in your syllabus, policies, procedures, or other documents. We recommend using “they” pronouns instead to be inclusive of all gender identities.