LGBTQIA+ Inclusion Guide – Committee Hub

**Being a trans ally**

* **Awareness months** - get involved with awareness months such as [LGBT History Month](https://www.ueasu.org/engage/lgbt-plus/) which takes place in February every year and also [Trans Awareness Week](https://www.ueasu.org/engage/transgenderawarenessweek/) that usually is the second week of November.
* **Listen to trans people** - The best way to be an ally is to listen with an open mind to trans people speaking for themselves.
* **Don't make assumptions about someone's gender** - If you're unsure which pronoun a person uses, listen first to the pronoun other people use when referring to them. Someone who knows the person well will probably use the correct pronoun. If you must ask which pronoun the person uses, start with your own. In a group setting where you don't know everyone, identify people by articles of clothing instead of using gendered language. For example, the "person in the blue shirt," instead of the "woman in the front."
* **Misgendering** - Mistakenly misgendering someone doesn’t make you an awful person. If you accidentally use the wrong pronoun, apologise quickly and sincerely, then move on. The bigger deal you make out of the situation, the more uncomfortable it is for everyone.
* **Don't ask about a trans person's genitals, surgical status, or sex life** - It would be inappropriate to ask a cisgender person about the appearance or status of their genitals. It is equally inappropriate to ask a transgender person those questions.
* **Avoid backhanded compliments and "helpful" tips.** - While you may intend to be supportive, comments like the following can be hurtful or even insulting. (ie. "You look just like a real woman." "He's so hot. I'd date him even though he's transgender.")
* **Be careful about confidentiality, disclosure, and "outing."** - Some trans people feel comfortable disclosing their gender history, and some do not. A transgender person's gender history is personal information and it is up to them to share it with others.
* **Respect the terminology a trans person uses to describe their identity** - Trans people use many different terms to describe their experiences. Respect the term (transgender, transsexual, non-binary, genderqueer etc.) a person uses to describe themselves.
* **Know your own limits as an ally** - don't be afraid to admit when you don't know something. It is better to admit you don't know something than to make assumptions or say something that may be incorrect or hurtful.

**Sexuality**

It is important to be aware of the challenges facing LGBTQ+ students and how this may impact their participation in your club or society. Understanding this will help you to put actions in place to try combat these. The impact of negative behaviours in your club or society could lead to a student not coming along to any more of your sessions or not engaging in other student groups. It could also make students feel they can’t be themselves and reluctant to be open with others. In Clubs, some challenges might be fear of discrimination from negative previous experiences from secondary school PE lessons or a lack of visual LGBTQ+ coaches and role models in sport.

**Some steps you can take as a club or society:**

Always challenge homophobic or biphobic language, behaviour or ‘banter’ that is offensive to the LGBTQ+ community. Even if people say language is ‘banter’ or not meant offensively, words and phrases that use sexuality as a joke need to be challenged consistently within your student group. This language isn't always targeted at LGBTQ+ students, it may be targeted at Cisgender and heterosexual students. It is everyone's responsibility to call this type of behaviour out. When incidents occur It’s best to challenge these as soon as they happen. Use questions and explain why someone’s words and actions have an impact.

**What do you mean by that? Can a rugby club really be gay?**

* Talk about the personal impact and make it real. ‘When you use that word it can make someone who is gay or has gay family members or friends feel uncomfortable and unwelcome at our student group.’.
* Make LGBTQ+ challenges more visible by running an event during LGBT History month or at another point during the academic year. You may also want to start your own campaign or if you are a club you could get involved with Stonewall’s rainbow laces. This campaign was created to give sportspeople to show their support for LGBTQ+ people in sport by wearing rainbow coloured shoelaces. Laces might not work for all sports, instead, you might want to wear rainbowed coloured socks, hats etc.
* If someone comes out to you this in an indication that they trust you and this might be the first time someone has talked about their sexuality. It is important that you are a good listener and reassure them that their confidentiality will be respected. Reinforce that they can be themselves and encourage them to feel positive about who they are.
* Celebrate LGBTQ+ people's achievements throughout the year and not just limited to during awareness months. This could be as simple as sharing a positive news article on your Instagram story.