



What Every Super-Rad Straight, Cisgender Ally Should Know

One of the most unique aspects of the GSA model is that it brings together LGBTQIA2+ individuals and straight, cisgender [allies](#) to combat homophobia, transphobia and biphobia. [Studies show](#) that GSAs are found to benefit the wider school climate and not only those who are members of GSAs or the queer students in a school. Here are some ways to encourage straight, cisgender allies (or potential allies) to become more actively and effectively involved in your GSA.

Ten Ways Hatred Towards the Queer Community Affects Straight, Cisgender People

Homophobia, biphobia and transphobia:

1. limit everyone's individuality and self expression by coercing people to speak, dress, and act according to the gender binary. This means that all "men" should be "masculine," and all "women" should be "feminine." Femininity in men, masculinity in women, non-conformity in trans folk, and any attraction besides heterosexual, are all discouraged, which can sometimes lead to prejudice, discrimination, or even violence.
2. put pressure on straight, cisgender people to act aggressively and angrily toward LGBTQIA2+ people.
3. can make it hard to be close friends with someone of the same gender.
4. often result in strained family and community relationships.
5. can cause youth of all gender identities and sexual orientations to become sexually active [before they are ready](#) in order to prove that they are "normal." This can lead to an increase in unplanned pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
6. prevent vital information on sex and sexuality to be taught in schools. Without access to this information, youth of all sexual orientations and gender identities are at a greater risk for [unplanned pregnancies](#), HIV/AIDS and other STIs.
7. can be used to hurt a straight, cisgender person if they "appear to be gay" or are perceived as LGBTQIA2+.
8. make it hard for straight, cisgender people and LGBTQIA2+ people to be friends.
9. along with [racism](#), sexism, classism, ableism, and [other forms of oppression](#) make it hard to put an end to bullying, harassment, and discrimination.
10. make it hard to appreciate true diversity and the unique traits that are not mainstream or "normal."



How to Fight Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia as a Straight, Cisgender Ally

1. Join your school's GSA or, if there isn't one, [create one](#)!
2. Organize discussion groups in class or after school to talk about the above information.
3. Try using gender neutral labels like "partner" or "significant other" instead of "boyfriend," "girlfriend," etc. when writing papers or talking to others. This stops you from perpetuating straight or cisgender as the "norm," by avoiding the assumption that everyone is straight or cisgender.
4. Bring up LGBTQIA2+ issues in conversations with friends or discussions in class.
5. Civilly interrupt anti-LGBTQIA2+ jokes, comments, or other speech or behaviors that make bigotry appear okay. Explain why the comment or action is unacceptable. Asking someone to explain why a "joke" that marginalizes someone is funny helps make them understand the root of the oppression they're perpetuating.
6. Make your school a safe and accepting place. Put LGBTQIA2+ positive posters in the halls and classrooms, or wear shirts, buttons, or other accessories that promote acceptance.
7. Don't make assumptions about others' sexual orientations or gender identities. You can't tell anyone's gender by looking at them and you can't tell anyone's sexual orientation by looking at their partner. Assume that there are LGBTQIA2+ people in all of your classes, sports, meetings, daily life, etc.
8. Make it a habit to ask every new person you meet what pronouns they use and honor them in your speech and writing, even when that person isn't around.
9. Don't assume that "feminine-acting-men" and "masculine-acting-women" are not heterosexual.
10. Similarly, don't assume that "masculine-acting-men" and "feminine-acting-women" do not identify as LGBTQIA2+!