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Straight Allies

What Every Super-Rad Straight Ally Should Know

One of the most unique aspects of the Gay-Straight Alliance model is that it brings together LGBTQ individuals and straight allies to combat homophobia. Here are some ways to encourage straight allies (or potential allies) to become more actively and effectively involved in your GSA.

TEN WAYS HOMOPHOBIA AFFECTS STRAIGHT PEOPLE

1. Homophobia forces us to act "macho" if we are a man or "feminine" if we are a woman. This limits our individuality and self-expression.
2. Homophobia puts pressure on straight people to act aggressively and angrily towards LGBTQ people.
3. Homophobia makes it hard to be close friends with someone of the same sex.
4. Homophobia often strains family and community relationships.
5. Homophobia causes youth to become sexually active before they are ready in order to prove they are "normal." This can lead to an increase in unwanted pregnancies and STDs.

6. Homophobia prevents vital information on sex and sexuality to be taught in schools. Without this information, youth are putting themselves at a greater risk for HIV and other STDs.
7. Homophobia can be used to hurt a straight person if they "appear to be gay."
8. Homophobia makes it hard for straight people and LGBTQ people to be friends.
9. Homophobia along with racism, sexism, classism, etc. makes it hard to put an end to AIDS.
10. Homophobia makes it hard to appreciate true diversity and the unique traits that are not mainstream or "normal."

For more info, see Homophobia: How We All Pay the Price, edited by Warren J. Blumenfeld, Boston: Beacon Press: 1992.

"HOMOWORK": WAYS TO FIGHT HOMOPHOBIA AS A STRAIGHT ALLY

1. Organize discussion groups in class or after school to talk about the "Ten Ways Homophobia Affects Straight People."
2. Always use neutral labels like "partner" or "significant other" instead of "boyfriend," "girlfriend," etc. when writing papers or talking to others.
3. Bring up LGBTQ issues in conversations with friends or discussions in class.
4. Interrupt anti-LGBTQ jokes, comments or any other behaviors that make homophobia appear OK.
5. Put LGBTQ-positive posters in the halls and classrooms or wear shirts, buttons, etc. that promote tolerance.
6. Don't make assumptions about peoples' sexual orientations or gender identities. Assume there are LGBTQ people in all classes, sports, meetings, daily life, etc.
7. Don't assume that "feminine-acting men" and "masculine-acting women" are not heterosexual.
8. Don't assume that "macho males" or "feminine females" are heterosexual.

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