



LGBTQ Ally

A **straight ally** is a cisgender or heterosexual person who recognizes the discrimination faced by the LGBTQ community due to their gender identity, expression, or sexual orientation. They are not themselves part of the queer rainbow family but support LGBTQ+ causes and fight for a more inclusive world.

Having Conversations

Having conversations about life as an LGBTQ person may feel strange at first, especially if these aren't conversations you're used to. It is normal to feel a little awkward, or to be a little afraid of saying the "wrong thing" and making it "weird."

Here are some ways to help start an open dialogue:

Ask respectful questions to show you are interested:

- What was it like growing up?
- How did you know it was the right time to come out?
- What has the coming out process been like for you?
- How are you holding up?
- What can I do to support you?

Be honest:

- Tell them that this is new for you – and if you feel awkward, say so.
- Ask them to be honest with you about what you say or do that may make them uncomfortable.
- Tell them if they do or say something that makes you uncomfortable. But at the same time, examine why you feel uncomfortable and see if that's a feeling you can change.
- Be as open and honest as you would like them to be with you.
- Tell them if you need a little time to process the information.

Be reassuring:

- Explain to them that revealing their sexual orientation or gender identity has not changed how you feel about them, even if it takes a little while for you to digest what they have told you.
- Remind them that you still care for and respect them as much as you ever have or more.