

LGBT+

Tips for Inclusion

Ask questions. A closer look.



- **It is okay to say ‘gay,’ ‘lesbian, and ‘transgender’:** feel comfortable using these words. People identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or many other ways. It is okay to have conversations about people’s gender or sexual identities if you both are comfortable with it (i.e. when asking a question, you might wonder “As a lesbian woman, have you ever felt you couldn’t bring your full self to work?”)
- **Personal pronouns need to be respected:** you cannot always know what someone’s preferred gender pronoun is by looking at them (i.e. he/she/they). When someone is referred to with the wrong pronoun, they may feel disrespected/alienated. Ask someone for their preferred pronoun when meeting them:
 - **David:** “Hi Taylor, my name is David. My pronouns are he/him/his. What pronouns do you prefer that people use for you?”
 - **Taylor:** “Hi David. My pronouns are she/her/hers.”This may take some getting used to and mistakes may happen. An easier-to-remember solution is using ‘they’ as a personal pronoun for someone until they correct you.
- **It’s okay to make a mistake with language:** If you make a mistake or say the wrong thing, own it, sincerely apologize and ask to be corrected. When an ally asks for help, we all benefit – you gain education and the LGBT+ community feels empowered by the presence of a true ally.
- **Being LGBT+ is not a ‘lifestyle’:** There is no singular lifestyle that LGBT+ people live, much like there is no singular heterosexual lifestyle. Being LGBT+ is not a choice.
- **Do not minimize or invalidate LGBT+ experiences:** Recognize that although you may not share these experiences, they are still very real and impactful. Respect these experiences and acknowledge their validity. Strive to be a good listener and encourage them to speak freely.
- **Coming out as an ally is important:** Be an active voice that stands up against discrimination and exclusion of the LGBT+ community. Being an ally matters to the success of LGBT+ talent.

How to start the conversation

Break the ice! Build rapport just like you would in everyday meetings and conversations. Start with:



- Getting to know each other: education, skills, work history, career path, industry interests
- Let them know you are interested in learning and sharing about both of your experiences
- And you can **weave in questions** about the LGBT+ community, the person and their experience:
 - Let them know you have an inclusive environment through your language. Ask about “partner” vs. “wife/husband”. “Are you dating anyone?” instead of “do you have a boyfriend/girlfriend?”
 - Even if a person isn’t LGBT+, they may have close connections to the community. Language can be powerful so use terms like “family” in place of “mom and dad”.
 - Ally commitment: do you have a close connection with an LGBT+ individual (i.e. family member, close friend) that provides them extra insight into LGBT+ success factors.



**Diversity
works here.**