Ally Engagement:
Chart of Terminology

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TERMS TO USE	USAGE EXAMPLES	TERMS TO AVOID	EXPLANATION
Gay (adj), **lesbian, bi, bisexual**	*"gay men"* *"lesbian couple"* *"He is gay"* *"She is bi"*	Homosexual, same-sex, gay (noun)	Gay is an adjective, not a noun; it is sometimes used as a shorthand term encompassing gay, lesbian, and bisexual orientations (though not transgender people or gender identity). Also, while many lesbians may identify as gay, the term lesbian(s) is clearer when talking only about a woman or women.
Sexual orientation	*"Sexual orientation can be a complex topic to discuss."*	Sexual preference, gay lifestyle, same-sex attractions	The term "sexual preference" is used inaccurately or hurtfully to suggest that being gay is a choice, and therefore can be changed or "cured." Similarly, the term "gay lifestyle" is used to stigmatize LGB people and suggests that their lives should be viewed only through a sexual lens. Just as one would not talk about a "straight lifestyle," don't talk about a "gay lifestyle."
Gender identity, gender expression	*"Everyone should be treated fairly, regardless of gender identity or expression."*	Sexual identity, transgender identity	Gender identity (one's internal sense of gender) and gender expression (how a person outwardly expresses their gender) are not interchangeable terms. Everyone has a gender identity and expression.
Cisgender	*"I am a cisgender woman"*	"Not trans" (everyone has a gender identity, not just transgender people)	Cisgender refers to a person whose gender aligns with the gender they were assigned at birth. It is the preferred word as opposed to "normal" which insinuates transgender people are "abnormal."
Transition	*"He transitioned a few years ago."*	Sex change, sex change operation, pre-op/post-op	Transition is the process a person goes through to live in congruency with their gender. What this process entails varies from person to person.

count on your **community.**

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Transgender (adj)	*"transgender person"* *"transgender advocate"* *"transgender inclusion"* *"trans community"*	Transgendered, a transgender, transgenders, transvestite, tranny	Transgender is an adjective, not a noun. Do not call someone "a transgender" or add an unnecessary "ed" to the term ("transgendered"), which connotes a condition of some kind. Never use the term "transvestite" to describe a transgender person. The shorthand trans is often used within the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community. Always use the name and pronouns that the transgender person uses. If you don't know, politely ask them which pronouns they use.
Genderqueer (GQ), **nonbinary** (NB), **gender non-conforming, queer**	*"Eli doesn't feel like a woman or a man, Eli is genderqueer"* *"Brian identifies as gender non-binary"* *"The term 'queer' has been reclaimed by the gender nonconforming community, they identify simply as queer"*	"Not trans"	Genderqueer is most commonly used to describe a person who feels that their gender identity does not fit into the socially constructed "norms" associated with their biological sex. A person who has gender identities that are not exclusively masculine or feminine. May prefer to use gender neutral pronouns such as one, ze, sie, hir, co, ey or singular "they", "their" and "them" while others prefer the conventional gender-specific pronouns "her" or "him." When in doubt, ask.
LGBT, LGBTA, LGBTQ+, GSM, GSRM	*"John is an ally to the LGBT community"* *"June is LGBTQ+ pride month"*	"Gay (when used collectively, it leaves out any aspect of the community that doesn't identify explicitly with same-sex attraction. The term can also be unintentionally sexist)	An acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender which refers to these individuals collectively. It is also stated as "LGBTA" to include allies, or as "LGBTQ+" with "Q" representing queer or questioning and "+" to represent the other identies such as pansexual, asexual and omnisexual. Most recently the catch-all terms GSM (Gender and Sexual Minorities) and GSRM (Gender, Sexual, and Romantic Minorities) have been proposed.

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