

Four Levels in Ally Development

Awareness: It is important to become more aware of who you are and how you are different from and similar to lesbian, gay and bisexual people.

Strategies to do this include:

1. Conversations with gay, lesbian and bisexual individuals
2. Attending awareness building workshops
3. Reading about gay and lesbian lifestyles, and
4. By self-examination

Knowledge/education: You must begin to acquire knowledge about sexual orientation and what the experience is for lesbian, gay, and bisexual persons in society and your campus community.

You can do this by:

1. Learning about laws, policies and practices and how they affect the lesbian, gay and bisexual person
2. Educating yourself about the gay and lesbian culture and norms of this community
3. Contacting local and national gay and lesbian organizations for information

Skills: You must develop skills in communicating the knowledge that you have learned.

You can do this by:

1. Attending workshops
2. Role playing situations with friends
3. Developing support connections, and
4. Practicing interventions or awareness raising

Action: Action is, without a doubt, the only way that we can affect change in society as a whole, for, if we keep our awareness, knowledge, and skills to ourselves, we deprive the rest of the world of what we have learned, thus keeping them from having the fullest possible life.

Information condensed and adapted from Evans, NJ and Wall, VA (1991) Beyond Tolerance: Gays, Lesbians, and Bisexuals on Campus. USA: ACPA