LGBTQA+ Mission Statement

The LGBTQA+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Asexual/Aromantic, Allied plus other identities related to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity/Expression) Resource Center works collaboratively to provide education, resources, outreach and advocacy to develop academic and personal success, community, and leadership opportunities.

Our Vision: To help build and sustain a socially just campus community that is welcoming and inclusive of all people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and expression while recognizing our multiple, intersecting and mixed identities.

The LGBTQA+ Resource Center is part of Student Involvement’s outreach and commitment to diversity and inclusion for all students. The Assistant Director in Student Involvement for LGBTQA+ Programs & Services serves as the Director of the LGBTQA+ Resource Center. In addition to the Director, the Center is staffed by a graduate assistant and undergraduate student staff and volunteers.
Inclusive Environments

“If you do not intentionally, deliberately and proactively include, you will unintentionally exclude.”

– Joe Gerstandt

An inclusive environment is one where...

▼ All members feel respected by and connected to one another.
▼ All members contribute to the formation of the group’s goals and to the realization of those goals.
▼ Integration of people’s experiences, knowledge, and perspectives is acknowledged and appreciated.
▼ Equitable access, dignity, and safety for all individual and groups is normative.

Signs of Inclusion

▼ All segments of the population are represented in administrative leadership.
▼ One group does not dominate the discussion at meetings.
▼ Slurs or jokes about people’s identities or personhood are not welcome.
▼ Warm, collegial relationships exist between people of diverse backgrounds.
▼ There is a strong commitment to treat all people equitably and with respect.
▼ Language is inclusive. It is appropriately gender neutral and inclusive.
▼ Non-discrimination policies include sexual orientation and gender identity. LGBTQA+ information is included in all leadership, multicultural and diversity education and workshops.
▼ Sexual, gender, and other minorities find the organization a comfortable place to work.
▼ LGBTQA+ issues, how they relate to the organization, and how policies and activities can be developed that meet the needs of individuals and groups are discussed.
▼ Inequity is acknowledged and addressed.
▼ Attempts to create and maintain an inclusive and welcoming environment are evaluated and updated regularly. Resource allocation is equitable.
▼ LGBTQA+ people would say that the organization is visibly supportive; it is safe for sexual and gender minorities to be visible and open. Support for other minority, underrepresented, and underserved groups is visible and available.
▼ Publications, fliers, posters, and other written materials are monitored to make sure they do not exclude historically underrepresented groups, including LGBTQA+ people.
▼ Variety in appearance is the norm. Multiple, intersecting, and mixed identities are acknowledged.
Visible Signs of Diversity & Inclusion

- Everyone is intentionally welcomed and included.
- Everyone is treated respectfully and environments are intentionally created where people of all identities are able to engage in authentic dialogue about identities, experiences, perceptions and values.
- Individuals and groups are willing to learn about cultural, religious, and other differences; and recognize similarities.
- Policies that are inequitable and/or result in negative outcomes are recognized and there is advocacy for change within the system.
- There are visible signs of inclusion.

Workshops: Diversity & Inclusion, Equity & Social Justice

The LGBTQ+ Center provides presentations, workshops, and cards that can be used to communicate an individual or organization’s commitment to: welcoming and equitable access; actively supporting diversity & inclusion; developing spaces where respectful dialogue about identities, experience, and equity can take place; to address inequity; and acknowledge and respect multiple, intersecting, and mixed identities for people of all sexual orientations, gender identities and expression (SOGIE).

“Inclusive Resource Guide

Creating Inclusive Spaces/Safe Space! An inclusive and safe space is an environment where a person or people with a group identity can feel confident they will be welcomed, treated fairly, and not be exposed to discrimination, criticism, harassment, or any other emotional or physical harm. If a situation occurs, it will be addressed in a fair and appropriate manner. Creating Inclusive Spaces is the workshop affiliated with the Safe Space Card.

Out and Allied! An ally is an individual who is pro-LGBTQ+ and actively committed to diversity and inclusion, mutual respect, and personal safety for all individuals of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and expression. Visit our website http://involved.unl.edu/out-ally-list for a list of some of the individuals on campus who are Out & Allied. The Ally Development workshop, based on bystander intervention, is affiliated with the Ally card.

“Students who view Safe Zone symbols report a more positive perception of the campus climate for sexual minority students” (Katz, Federici, Ciovacco, and Cropsey, 2016).
**Brave Space!** A brace space is any place where individuals can engage in conversation around topics that may be sensitive or challenging. Brave space makes for courageous conversations where people are authentic, honest, and compassionate in exploring the personal and the political. Two workshops related to Brave Space are Mindfulness and Brave Space. Individuals completing one of the workshops can obtain a Brave Space card and/or button.

**Social Justice Supporter!** Social justice supporters recognize and address the commonalities in prejudice and discrimination based on our multiple, intersecting and mixed identities and believes that society should be designed to include everyone. Awareness of power and privilege and striving for equity so all people are physically and psychologically safe and able to participate fully in the economic, social, and cultural life of the country is a priority. The Social Justice Supporter Workshop is affiliated with the Social Justice card and button.

**Safe Space and Ally cards** and related materials can be obtained at the LGBTQ+ Resource Center by visiting the center to pick up a card by signing up for them, learning about the Center, and have the option to be added to a listserv and the university Out & Allied map. It also provides the opportunity to learn about resources, and get information relevant to creating and providing inclusive spaces. To obtain Brave Space and/or Social Justice Supporter cards and buttons, attend a workshop on Brave Space and/or Social justice provided by the LGBTQ+ Resource Center.

Presentations and workshops can be requested by contacting lgbtqa@unl.edu or by completing the Student Involvement presentation request form: http://involved-apps.unl.edu/a/SIPresentation/

**Developing Inclusive Spaces and Ally Development**

- Learn about diversity and social justice.
- Participate in Creating Inclusive Spaces and ALLY Development activities.
- Have visible signs of inclusion: Display your SAFE Space and/or ALLY card on your door.
- Attend a Brave Space or Social Justice workshop to help educate yourself and show support. Display your brave space and/or social justice supporter card.
- Treat everyone with respect and dignity: Provide equal access to programming, services, and resources.
- Use gender neutral/inclusive language in every day conversation. For example, say “partner” instead of “boyfriend/girlfriend”; say “human” instead of the generic “man”; use the term “staffing” instead of “manning” the booth or event.
- Respectfully challenge prejudicial and discriminatory statements when you hear them; interrupt heterosexist and other prejudicial jokes and behavior.
- Call people into the conversation rather than calling them out.
- Educate yourself about LGBTQ+ issues - read magazines, attend films, or LGBTQ+ themed events; support and vote for equal LGBTQ+ civil rights. Stretch your comfort zone.
- Do not assume you know what someone’s sexual orientation or gender identity is; rely on self-identification rather than assuming someone is LGBTQ+ or not.
- Connect with the LGBTQ+ community. Be aware of resources and groups on campus and beyond. Visit the LGBTQ+ Center and/or attend a meeting for Spectrum (234 Nebraska Union), The Change, oSTEM, or connect with other groups connected to the LGBTQ+ community.
Inclusive and Welcoming Environments: Assessing Your Organization’s Status

Inclusive and welcoming environments recognize and support diverse and intersecting identities and go beyond diversity awareness to address inequity in policies and practices. Social Justice Education is both a goal and a process to develop and maintain welcoming and inclusive environments for individuals and groups, recognizing that visual signs of inclusion and context matter.

T F Sexual orientation and gender identity/expression are included in our non-discrimination policy.
T F LGBTQA+ educational programming is provided for all members of our organization.
T F LGBTQA+ information and topics are included in leadership and diversity workshops.
T F There are openly LGBTQA+ individuals in my organization.
T F There is a strong commitment to treat all people fairly.
T F LGBTQA+ individuals find my organization a relatively comfortable group.
T F My organization discusses LGBTQA+ issues, how they relate to the organization, and how we can develop policies and procedures that meet the needs of individuals and the group.
T F Language is inclusive (e.g.; non-gendered; non-stigmatizing).
T F Individuals who actively confront bias and discrimination are supported.
T F My organization regularly re-evaluates and updates our attempts to create a welcoming and inclusive environment.
T F Food restrictions and preferences are taken into consideration.
T F We assess our programs/services to assure they include LGBTQA+ individuals.
T F We don’t assume binary gender or sex identity/expression or heterosexuality.
T F We monitor our publications, fliers, posters, etc. to assure that they are inclusive.
T F LGBTQA+ people would say that my organization is visibly supportive.
T F Members of my organization participate in LGBTQA+ programming and activities.
T F Buildings and restrooms are accessible.
T F Gender inclusive restrooms and changing facilities are available.
T F Sensitivity to different religious, cultural, & ethnic holidays/customs is common.
T F The reality of multiple, intersecting & mixed identities is understood and valued.

“How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.”
– Anne Frank
What does it mean to be Allied?

The four stages of ally development
Evans & Wall (1991)
1. Awareness
2. Knowledge
3. Skills
4. Action

Bystander Intervention
Notice the problem or risk behavior
Have enough information to recognize problem
Feel responsible for dealing with it
Have the necessary skills to act

This is followed by Capacity Building and Community (Tochluk, 2010).

Ally can mean different things to different people. Ally can be an identity, a behavior, approach, and/or a concept. Identity, motivation, and behavior are important components. Allies are often considered to be non-members of a target group who actively support and advocate for members of a target group, while the group itself experiences bias, marginalization and/or discrimination although allies may also experience stigma and marginalization based on their support and connection to a marginalized community. Allies may also be part of the community they are supporting. Allies address situations and concerns to the best of their ability. However, with multiple and intersecting and mixed identities, as well as fluidity of self-identification, the focus for allies is on what they do to help.

**Being allied or allying oneself with another is a behavior.** Rather than focusing on identity or motivation, a focus on behavior emphasizes the need to act to address inequity or problematic behavior. Allies may also be defined as when an individual, group or country unites with another for a common purpose or goal or for a mutually beneficial relationship. http://www.yourdictionary.com/ally
The definition of an ally can also be **conceptual**. Ally or allyship as concepts may refer more to the type of ally one is (e.g., straight ally) or what type of allied behavior is engaged in. For example, a social justice ally underscores the person’s belief in social justice. The definition on ally cards at UNL defines an ally as an individual who is a pro-LGBTQA+ and actively committed to diversity and inclusion, mutual respect and personal safety for people of all sexual orientations, gender identities, and expressions.

**Things You Can do to Demonstrate you are allied to a Marginalized Community:**

1. Don’t make assumptions about how someone identifies.
2. Recognize that all people have a sexual and gender identity and that self-identities may be somewhat fluid. People’s identities don’t change but our understanding, knowledge and experience do.
3. Recognize that we all have multiple, intersecting identities and many people have mixed identities. Recognize that people with a variety of identities exist under a primary identity (e.g., LGBTQA+ people of color; LGBTQA+ people with disabilities; LGBTQA+ people of faith; multiracial identities). Include recognition of other identities in discussions, activities, and events. Work at the intersections of identities as well as with primary identities.
4. Understand that asking, “What are you?” in regards to race, ethnicity, gender identity, etc. can be a very sensitive question for people.
5. Support how someone identifies. Respect everyone’s process.
6. Explore your own identities and explore your identities and the spaces you occupy in the social system as it relates to power and privilege.
7. Learn about social justice issues. Seek to understand the relationships among all forms of prejudice and discrimination, power inequities, and privilege. Be aware of the ways in which you have privilege and use it to advocate for social justice. Empower yourself by using your voice to advocate for equity.
8. Do not attack others for having different viewpoints.
9. Attend events sponsored by or relevant to LGBTQA+ and other diversity issues and programming.
10. Listen, learn, care, and be involved. Work together and support other allies and advocate for equitable solutions.
11. Take ownership of any mistakes and know that being an ally or advocate does not mean you are/are expected to be perfect.
12. Be an informed voter and support equal rights under the law. Know your rights and responsibilities.

Becoming allies also means helping each other heal. It is important that we are able to say and be who we are. Allies have the power to unite together, listen, and learn about others similar to and different from ourselves while recognizing our multiple, mixed, and intersecting identities; to stand up and take action to help someone in need. Allies share the common purpose to stand with each other for another’s well-being, respect, and humanity. It is extending to others what we want and deserve for ourselves.
Where do you stand?
If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has its foot on the tail of a mouse and you say you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality. Archbishop Desmond Tutu

BRAVE Space
The concept of Safe Space can mean different things to different people. For some, safe space is about having space where you can be comfortable and accepted for who you are. Safe spaces may be a specific location where students who experience marginalization are able to gather for community, and access support and resources. For others, safe space may indicate that you are “safe” to be yourself or it may refer to specific spaces.

Classrooms are one space where the agreed upon environment includes managing controversy with civility (also part of the Social Change Model of Leadership Development); students recognize and talk about instances when conversation has impacted another person’s emotional well-being; where students have the ability to “challenge by choice” and opt in and out of challenging conversations; where each individual’s personhood is respected; and where students agree not to intentionally harm each other (Ali, 2017). Commonly constructed safe spaces within classrooms are often designed to have these elements so these spaces have been referred to as a brave space. Ali (2017), refers to classroom spaces as brave space and safe space when talking about the safety of a marginalized identity group.

When distinguishing between safe and brave space in Student Affairs, the LGBTQA+ Center has developed workshops and adapted guidelines to help cultivate brave space outside of the classroom. In this context, Brave Space moves beyond safe spaces by developing environments and community spaces where differing points on a journey of learning and growing is acknowledged; and individuals seek greater knowledge and understanding by engaging in authentic dialogue through active listening and conscious questioning. Brave Space Guidelines encourage an awareness of self and others; being open-minded; and caring and respectful behavior. Other guidelines include:

- Respectively ask rather than label or assume.
- Validate and support the ideas, feelings, or experiences of others.
- Be welcoming while respecting privacy and confidentiality.
- Be considerate of others who are sharing the space.
- Respond rather than react.
- Be supportive of those who respond to hurtful or offensive dialogue.
- Practice forgiveness. Seek peaceful resolutions to conflict.
- Be mindful of language and sexually charged topics, language, or behavior.
- Do not out others.
- All emotions are welcome. Be aware of the impact they may have on others.
- Take responsibility for your impact on a person or space. Clean up after yourself. Manage resources responsibly.
• Contribute to your community.
• Refer people to the best of your ability.
• Do not come to work or study spaces under the influence.
• Ask for help or assistance when needed.

Social Justice Education

Being a Social Justice Educator Means...

▼ Being aware of our own social identities and areas of privilege and power.
▼ Assessing our own values and beliefs and how they impact others.
▼ Recognizing and addressing our internal biases and recognizing personal limits.
▼ Interacting with others in an open, honest, and respectful manner.
▼ Responding to biased comments in and outside of the classroom; addressing inappropriate comments.
▼ Knowing when and where to seek help; reflecting on personal identities and privilege.
▼ Getting to know students and others as unique individuals; not making assumptions about their interests, attitudes, background, identities, knowledge, or abilities.
▼ Being aware of the importance of language; using inclusive language and honoring individual’s identities to make everyone feel welcomed.
▼ Dealing with emotional intensity and related issues appropriately by having a discussion in class.

Inclusive Classroom Assessment:

▼ The syllabus includes a policy for effective and respectful class discussions, as well as the University’s non-discriminatory policy.
▼ Inappropriate or biased student-to-student comments are addressed.
▼ Research on LGBTQA+ individuals or topics is encouraged or included along with information and discussions about how people have different identities and contexts that impact their lives.
▼ Expectations of students are appropriate.
▼ LGBTQA+ related course content is included when relevant.
▼ Assumptions about students’ and faculty sexual orientation or gender identity are not made; wait for students to express their sexual orientation or gender identity so they are not “outed” or misgendered.
▼ Aggressive students are not allowed to dominate classroom dialogue; everyone should have a voice in the classroom.
▼ Inclusive language is usedmodeled. Educators should lead by example by using language that includes all groups and identities (e.g., gender inclusive language).
▼ Use last names or preferred names when taking attendance. Ask what pronouns individuals want you to use for them (allow students to do so discretely (not respond in front of others so they are not pressured to hide their identity or be misgendered). Use of index cards or emails for this can be helpful.
▼ Discussion and dialogue are encouraged; all voices are welcome.
Dealing with Bias/Harassment or Unintentional Exclusion

**Recommended:**
- Deal with in the situation immediately or as soon as possible.
- Confirm the behavior is harmful/hurtful and is not accepted.
- Value the feelings of others by actively listening.
- Take steps to support the victim. Provide appropriate resource information and use resources available.
- Explain why incidents occur and use programming and resources to reduce stereotyping and prejudice towards differences.
- Report illegal or threatening behavior.

**Don’t:**
- Ignore the behavior.
- Impose consequences before finding out what happened from those involved.
- Overreact with a put-down of the offender when imposing consequences.
- Focus on consequences for the offender while ignoring the feeling of the victim.
- Embarrass either party publicly.
- Assume the incident is an isolated occurrence divorced from the overall context in which it occurred.

Clarifying Gender Identity, Gender Expression, Sex Assigned at Birth and Sexual Orientation

**Gender identity** is the internal sense of being male, female, neither, both or somewhere in between. Everyone has a gender identity.

**Gender expression** is the physical manifestation of an individual’s gender identity or how they present themselves. Individuals may or may not express themselves consistent with their gender identity or it may vary. Gender expression may be based on who they are rather than their sex assigned at birth.

**Sex assigned at birth** is the assignment and classification of people as male, female, intersex, or another sex based on a combination of anatomy, hormones, and chromosomes.

**Sexual Orientation** includes physical and emotional attraction to others. It is important to understand the distinctions because these identity components are not analogous to each other. Gender identity and expression are not the same thing as sexual orientation. All of these aspects of personal identity must be taken into consideration when working with any individual.
Definitions & Terminology

**Ally:** An individual who is pro-LGBTQA+ and actively committed to diversity and inclusion for people of all sexual orientations, gender identities and expression; some define allies as non-members of the target group they support (e.g., straight allies).

**Androgynous:** A person who is both masculine and feminine and does not clearly fit into binary perceptions of gender and/or gender roles.

**Asexual/Ace:** Someone who experiences no sexual attraction to others although it may not be an indicator of sexual behavior. It is a spectrum with a variety of identities (e.g., demi-gray).

**Bias Incident:** An event that has the effect of demeaning or degrading an individual or a group and is motivated in whole or in part by the perpetrator’s bias against a particular group. Experiencing prejudice, stigma, or prejudicial attitudes and/or discriminatory behavior.

**Bi-/Pan-sexual:** An individual who has the capacity to be attracted to individuals of more than one gender, not necessarily to the same degree or at the same time.

**Cisgender:** Individuals whose sex assigned at birth matches their gender identity.

**Gay:** Term used in some cultural settings to represent males who are attracted to males in a romantic, erotic, and/or emotional sense; sometimes used to refer to the LGBTQ+ community as a whole; or as a label for anyone who does not identify as heterosexual. Used inappropriately as an insult as in “that is so gay”.

**Gender Cues:** What human beings use to attempt to tell the gender/sex of another person and/or to express one’s sex/gender. Examples include hairstyle, gait, vocal inflection, body shape, facial hair, etc. Cues vary by culture. Gender expression may or may not be congruent with or influenced by a person’s sex assigned at birth.

**Gender Expression:** What human beings use to attempt to tell the gender of another person and/or to express one’s gender. Examples include hairstyle, gait, vocal inflection, body shape, facial hair, etc. Cues vary by culture. Gender expression may or may not be congruent with or influenced by a person’s sex assigned at birth.

**Gender Neutral Pronouns:** Pronounces that convey a gender outside the gender binary, the lack or gender, or uncertainty as to the gender. (S/he, they/them, or zir/hir).

**Heterosexism:** The social assumption that everyone is heterosexual and that heterosexuality is inherently superior to other sexual orientations.
Lesbian: A woman who is primarily attracted to other women physically, romantically, and/or emotionally.

Pink Triangle: The Nazis required male homosexuals to wear an inverted pink triangle in concentration camps. In the 1970’s, gay activists began using the symbol as a way of identifying themselves, and at the same time calling attention to this long-forgotten chapter in gay history, and reclaiming it for future progress. Black triangles were used to label sex workers and lesbians.

Privilege: A special right, advantage, or immunity granted or available only to a particular group or person that is often taken for granted. It may be easier to see where we don’t have privilege than where we do.

Queer: A term reclaimed by activists and sometimes used as an umbrella term for all LGBTQA+ individuals. Some individuals also identify as queer. Not all members of the LGBTQA+ community embrace this term because it has been used as a derogatory term in the past. Context is important when using this term.

Rainbow Flag: Since at least 1979, a flag with six stripes representing six colors of the rainbow has been used as a symbol of the LGBTQA+ community pride, and of the diversity within this community. The original flag, designed by Gilbert Baker, had 8 colors but production was costly so two stripes were eliminated. The flag was used at the San Francisco Pride Parade in 1979.

Sexual Orientation: A person’s sexual identity in relation to the gender(s) to which they are attracted.

Transgender/Trans: An individual who identifies with a gender different than the sex they were assigned at birth. There are a variety of Trans identities.

Transsexual: An outdated term. An individual whose gender identity is different than the sex or gender assigned at birth. Due to being an outdated term, can be considered offensive.

How You Can Help LGBTQA+ Students & Staff

- Use inclusive language
- Listen and be supportive
- Know the resources available on campus
- Join the support network
- Be aware of assumptions and stereotypes and do not use them for information or decision-making
- Create an inclusive environment
- Keep current with LGBTQA+ materials in your office/library
- Be proactive in making changes; do not wait for a problem or issue to occur
- Call someone knowledgeable on campus if an incident occurs or you need information
- Do not tolerate intolerance in the office or with students
- Know that the LGBTQA+ community is not likely to report incidents
- Understand that there may be distrust from students or staff that are LGBTQA+
Attend student group meetings once a year to introduce yourself and your office’s programs and services.

If you are not comfortable with LGBTQA+ issues, recognize this and allow someone who is to work with those students. In the meantime, stretch your comfort zone by learning about LGBTQA+ information and concerns so you can become more able to work with and support LGBTQA+ individuals as well as individuals from other marginalized groups.

Understand the difference between Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity, and Expression (SOGIE).

Include LGBTQA+ information, issues and concerns in trainings.

Know current hate/bias crime laws and procedures.

Implement best practices for SOGIE and other marginalized groups.

Resources

An online reporting system at UNL where individuals can report bias, inappropriate behavior, workplace concerns, discrimination, and random acts of kindness. Reports can be confidential or anonymous.

For more information:  https://bias.unl.edu/

For Additional Resources, check out our online Resource Guide:  https://lgbtqa.unl.edu/education#downloadable-resources

You can also contact the LGBTQA+ Resource Center:
346 Nebraska Union (0453) Center: 402.472.1652
Director: 402.472.1752 or lgbtqa@unl.edu
Graduate Assistant: lgbtqa.ga@unl.edu
Resource Coordinator: lgbtqa.library@unl.edu

Follow the LGBTQA+ Resource Center on:
Facebook: facebook.com/lgbtqaUNL
Twitter: @LGBTQARC
Tumblr: lgbtqarc-unl.tumblr.com
Instagram: @UNLLGBTQA