

WHY LGBTQ INCLUSION IN SPORTS?

Let's start with an introduction to the topic.



THE BIG DEFINITIONS

LGBT or LGBTQ is an umbrella term that stands for “lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (or questioning).” LGBT and LGBTQ are acronyms that are continuously evolving to identify and include other members of the LGBTQ community.

An **Ally** is an *active* partner, friend, and visible supporter. In athletics, an ally is someone who works specifically to include LGBTQ players, coaches, and/or fans in a sport.

Casual Homophobia (such as “that’s so gay”) is language used to put down others by equating being LGBTQ with something negative. This type of language contributes to a locker room or sport venue feeling unsafe or unwelcoming.

KEY STATS

In the United States, **50%** of students in grades 6-12 who are LGBT reported being **harassed or bullied** in P.E. or gym class. LGBT students often **avoid athletic spaces** such as locker rooms and athletic fields due to **feeling unsafe or uncomfortable**. (GLSEN, 2013)

In Canada, **64%** of LGBT high school students reported feeling **unsafe at school** (My GSA, 2011); **74%** of transgender high school students reported being **verbally harassed** and **34%** reported being **physically harassed or assaulted** (Egale, 2011).

25% (1 in 4) of non-heterosexual student athletes at US colleges felt pressured to be **silent about their identity** (Campus Pride, 2012).

STARTING THE CONVERSATION

1. Understand that this topic applies to all of us. We all know someone who is LGBTQ - they just might not be out yet.
2. Educate yourself on LGBTQ terminology and get comfortable saying the words lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and LGBTQ.
3. It's okay to not know all the answers. As you start the conversation, research and reach out to find out answers to questions you still have.
4. Start by asking one or two people on your team: “How can we create safer spaces for LGBTQ athletes, coaches, and fans?”
5. Take action to make this a full team conversation.

IT'S ALL ABOUT RESPECT

At **You Can Play**, we assume you have the best intentions. We assume that you want members of your athletic community to feel respected, included, valued, and supported. We also assume that, with the proper tools and guidelines, your teams can become more inclusive and, as a result, more successful.

