

5 Components for Creating LGBTQ-Inclusive Spaces

An LGBTQ-inclusive space allows individuals to come out *if they choose to*, within an environment of respect, acknowledgement, and safety - and recognizes the diversity within LGBTQ communities.

1. Awareness

Raising people's awareness of what LGBTQ-inclusive spaces are and why they are necessary is crucial. *Remember, it's often very difficult to imagine and understand someone else's reality.*

2. Commitment

Commitment to creating LGBTQ-inclusive spaces must come from the top in any organization. This commitment must be communicated clearly and consistently in various ways so that expectations and support are clear.

3. Education

Creating a safe space for LGBTQ individuals to be all of who they are requires a foundation of understanding *before* action. Action without this foundation gives the illusion of inclusion that can make spaces even more unsafe. Workshops, presentations, resources, and discussion all contribute to this foundation *and are ongoing.*

4. Action

Once the education has begun, creating LGBTQ-inclusive spaces includes the obvious and the subtle. Obvious clues such as language, visuals (as applicable), and support networks help demonstrate commitment. Policies and procedures (and their application) are the necessary subtle supports for this commitment.

5. Vigilance

Creating LGBTQ-inclusive space is an ongoing process. Continued discussion, education, and vigilance are important. Addressing homo/bi/trans-phobia, heterosexism, and cis-normativity is crucial, as well as continuously creating opportunities for inclusion. *Remember, inclusive spaces are proactive as well as reactive.*

Coming soon: A Little Guide to Creating LGBTQ Inclusive Spaces (available on our website).