

Supporting Health of LGBTQIA+ Students at ODU

This form aims to provide useful information to ODU faculty and staff about how to support LGBTQIA+ students. The sections below provide useful definitions and facts about LGBTQIA+ individuals, as well as actionable items to support LGBTQIA+ students on campus.

What does LGBTQIA+ mean?

LGBTQIA+ (often seen as LGB, LGBT, or LGBTQ+) is an abbreviation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual communities (+ refers to other identities that are a part of this community). This acronym is used broadly to refer to a community of individuals whose identity is based on their sexual orientation (i.e., type of sexual, romantic, physical, and/or spiritual attraction one feels for others), gender identity (i.e., internal perception of one's gender, and how they label themselves), or gender expression (i.e., external appearance of one's gender identity). For more terminology info, click [here](#).

What do I need to know about LGBTQIA+ students' mental health and safety?

Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death among college-aged youth (CDC, 2019). LGBTQIA+ youth are more likely to think about and attempt suicide compared to their cisgender (i.e., gender identity matches an individual's sex assigned at birth) and straight/heterosexual peers ([Trevor Project, 2020](#)). Approximately 1 in 3 LGBTQIA+ youth report being physically threatened or harmed in their lifetime due to their LGBTQIA+ identity ([Trevor Project, 2020](#)). Victimization significantly increases the likelihood of mental health problems and suicide attempts. Importantly, we know that safe spaces, acceptance, respecting pronouns, and affirming environments can have a powerful impact on LGBTQIA+ groups and reduce rates of negative mental health outcomes, including suicidal thoughts and behaviors.

Here are some tips for how YOU can create a more inclusive environment for LGBTQIA+ students at ODU!

How can I create a more inclusive environment for LGBTQ+ students?

1. Respect students' identities – pronouns and chosen names:

- Let students identify themselves. For instance, ask them to fill out index cards with their pronouns and chosen name or create a survey that allows students to privately self-identify (pronouns and chosen name) to the instructor. Include questions like "What is my name?" "What do I like to be called?" and "What are my pronouns?"

[\(Click here for more information\)](#)

- Watch helpful videos. [Video: 'Ask Me': What LGBTQ Students Want Their Professors to Know](#)
- Avoid using gendered language in classroom examples, assignments, and when addressing students:
 - Instead of ("ladies and gentlemen," "boys/girls"), use neutral words like "scientists," "readers," "athletes," "writers," "artists," "scholars," etc. To refer to the larger group, use non-gendered terms such as "y'all", "folks", "students".

2. Share/include your pronouns (he/him/his; she/her/hers; they/them/theirs) with your students:

- Share your pronouns on the first day of class ("I'm Professor Smith, my pronouns are she/her")
- Put your pronouns on your syllabus with your contact information
- Add pronouns to your Zoom name:
 - Click Participants. Next to your name, click the down arrow next to "More" and choose "Rename". Change your name to include your pronouns (e.g., Dr. Smith (she/her))
- Include your pronouns in your email signature when communicating with students. Example below:
 - PROFESSOR NAME, PhD
Pronouns: he/him/his

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3. Become Safe Space certified:

- Become an ally of the LGBTQIA+ community through ODU's Safe Space training. Information about Safe Space training can be found [here](#).
- If you are already Safe Space certified, mention it during class during the first day. Explain what your role is as a faculty member who's an LGBTQIA+ ally (consider an "elevator speech" of under 1 minute). Include Safe Space certification in your signature along with pronouns.

4. Add an Inclusive statement to your course syllabi:

- Example of an inclusive welcome statement in syllabus:

"In this course, each voice in the classroom has something of value to contribute. Please take care to respect the different experiences, beliefs, and values expressed by students and staff involved in this course. We support ODU's commitment to diversity and welcome individuals of all ages, backgrounds, citizenships, abilities, sexes, genders, gender identities, sexual orientations, races, ethnicities, family statuses, geographical locations, education levels, languages, military experiences, political views, religions, socioeconomic statuses, and work experiences."
- [Click here for additional sources on diversity and inclusion for university syllabi.](#)
- [Click here for an email template for students to edit and send to professors indicating their pronouns and chosen name.](#)

What are resources for LGBTQ+ students at ODU and in the community?

- ODU organizations and program links:
 - [Queer Mentor Program](#)
 - [Sexuality and Gender Alliance \(SAGA\)](#)
 - [Office of Intercultural Relations](#)
- Mental Health @ ODU:
 - ODU Counseling Services ARE available! Call 757-683-4401, press option #1 to schedule an appointment, press option #2 to speak with a counselor right away. All ODU counselors are Safe Space trained and allies of the LGBTQIA+ community.
- Mental Health Local:
 - [LGBT Life Center](#), Call: 757-640-0929
 - [Transgender Assistance Program of Virginia](#)
 - [Equality Virginia Resources](#)
 - [Off-Campus Referral Network for Counseling Services](#)
- Mental Health National:
 - [Trevor Project Resources](#)
 - Hotline Available 24/7 Call: 1-866-488-7386, Text: START to 678-678, [To chat, click here](#).
 - [Trans Lifeline](#): Call: 1-877-565-8860, Available 10am-4am EST.
 - [Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays \(PFLAG\)](#)
 - [Support page for individuals, families, or allies](#)
 - [Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation \(GLAAD\) resource list](#)
 - [Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network \(GLSEN\) resource list](#)

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