Generational Mentorship within the LGBTQA+ Community

Candice Nichols, Director of the LGBT Community Center of the Desert in Palm Springs, California, says that “for many in the L.G.B.T.Q. community, no matter how old, their ‘chosen family’ may be their only base of support.” This highlights the importance of creating a community that assists not only with basic human needs but also guidance, emotional support, and shared lived experience with one another. Generational mentor, Lawrence Washington, felt similarly that “people do what they have to do to survive, until they find these families.”

When people come out to their families and friends, they may be faced with severe backlash leading to trauma or lifestyle changes including rejection, physical abuse, homelessness and disconnection from support systems. This is where generational mentorship can serve to rebalance. It is the pillar to creating a space for community members to take care of each other and feel welcomed and loved.
Like in many family dynamics, generational mentorship allows for both the mentee and mentor to learn from and grow alongside each other. In a society where community members can still experience hate, harassment and abuse, we can view these options as alternative methods to providing spaces in our communities that welcome and support individuals of all identities.

How to Be Supportive of and Stand in Solidarity with the LGBTQ+ Community

Pride Month offers many ways to show support for and stand in solidarity with members of the LGBTQ+ community. Support also needs to be longstanding, beyond June to create real impact. Here are ways to show solidarity:

1. Educate yourself about the range of sexualities and the fluidity and complexity of sexual identity. You can use our crossword puzzle below for a fun way to learn!

2. Honor friends, family members, classmates, or coworkers who identify as a member of the LGBTQ+ community by bringing attention to Pride and its meaning. Hang a rainbow flag, attend a Pride parade, or post a supportive messaging on your social media page!
3. Use appropriate pronouns. When introducing yourself, share your pronouns and ask how others identify.

4. If someone shares their coming out story with you, they have decided to confide in you. Acknowledge the responsibility they have given you with that information and assure them it will stay private with you unless otherwise requested.

5. Listen, come from a place of learning, and show empathy.

6. Speak up against hate! If you hear someone making a joke directed at gender identity or sexual orientation like “that’s so gay,” let them know that it is unacceptable. Do not support businesses with discriminatory policies.

7. In professional or academic spaces, remember to include voices from the community, centering those that are marginalized.

**Tips to Support**

1. Educate yourself
2. Honor those who identify as a member of the LGBTQA+
3. Use appropriate pronouns.
4. Acknowledge your responsibility
5. Listen, come from a place of learning and show empathy
6. Speak up against hate
7. Include voices from the community
RBHS New Jersey Medical School, Out List

Our spotlight of the month highlights RBHS’s very own New Jersey Medical School! The Sexual and Gender Minority Committee is home to the Out List, which serves to create visibility of the LGBTQ+ and Allies community on campus. Anyone who is featured on the list hopes to create connection and serve as a resource, role model, or mentor.

Crossword Puzzle Time!

Dive into our puzzle HERE and test your knowledge of the ABC’s of the LGBTQA+ community.

As you complete this crossword, you may come across terms that others may define differently. We recognize the variety of definitions for each term. It is important to approach conversations with an open mind, understanding everyone has their own voice and words for their experiences.

References


