

CREATING A SAFE ZONE AND BEING AN ALLY

This activity will ask participants to brainstorm and analyze the roles that a Safe Zone Ally should take. Give the group a definition of being an ally: "A cisgender and/or straight person who supports and honors sexual diversity, challenges heterosexist and cissexist remarks and behaviors, and explores and understands these forms of bias within their experiences. Also: a supporter." Divide participants into pairs (or a group of three if an odd number of people) and ask each group to get a sheet of paper. On that paper, put a dividing line down the middle. On the top of one side, write, "An effective ally does..." and the other, "An effective ally does not..." Ask participants to brainstorm a list of endings for each sentence. After about 3 minutes of brainstorming, ask people to share out loud some of examples from each side of the paper. Once sharing is done, proceed with the facilitation questions.

FACILITATION QUESTIONS

- What does it mean to be an ally?
- What can we do to reduce our personal biases and become better allies?
- How can being an ally impact your college experience?
- How do you create a climate of a "Safe Zone" within your office, room, classroom, etc?
- How can using inclusive language and terminology in everyday speech help you to become a better ally?

FACILITATOR OBSERVATIONS

- One challenge for us as we serve as allies is speaking up. Knowing how and when to speak up and challenge behavior and speech is important. By speaking up it shows support for a GLBTQ person. By remaining silent the GLBTQ person may feel you are not the ally you say you are. That can be a big responsibility, but know that it is OK to make mistakes and to learn from them. No ally is going to be perfect and few people expect that.
- If you put your heart in the right place and make a mistake, the best thing to do is simply to apologize. Admitting mistakes or failures can be a powerful tool and shows a commitment to learning and growing as an individual.
- We encourage you to go "above and beyond" in your path to becoming an effective ally. You are not alone in any of this process.
- There are many resources out there. Keep an eye on your WOU email for upcoming Safe Zone programs or events. Another major step to supporting the GLTBQ community is taking an Ally 2 training.
- If you see someone with a Safe Zone ally posting on their door, office area, car, etc. they are ally certified through Safe Zone and can be a resource. If a Safe Zone posting is not displayed it simply means that the person has not completed a Safe Zone training. Not displaying a Safe Zone ally sign isn't a testament to their ability at being a resource.