



**COACHES' GUIDE FOR SUPPORT AND INCLUSION
OF LGBTQ+ STAFF, ATHLETES, AND VOLUNTEERS**

WELCOME

Welcome to the LGBTQ+ Guide for Inclusion! This resource aims to guide team leaders in supporting their LGBTQ+ staff, athletes, and volunteers. More importantly, this resource aims to aid coaches and team leaders in creating a space that is both inclusive and equitable for all swimmers.

USA SWIMMING MISSION

“USA Swimming is the National Governing Body for the sport of swimming in the United States. We promote the culture of swimming by creating safe and healthy opportunities for athletes and coaches of all backgrounds to participate and advance in the sport through clubs, events and education. Our membership is comprised of swimmers of every age and ability, all the way up to the Olympic Team, as well as coaches, officials and volunteers.”

DEFINING THE ACT OF INCLUSION

“The act of Inclusion is one’s ability to accept and include others around you despite their differing opinions, cultures, perspectives, values, and/or experiences. Thus, inclusion is the tool to help every USA Swimming Member feel accepted, welcomed, and safe on and around the pool deck.”

Leland Brown III, Program Director, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion USA Swimming

YOUR COMMITMENT TO INCLUSION

In and around the pool, every athlete, volunteer, and staff member deserve a part of the community. No matter the athletes’, volunteers’, and/or staff members’ diversity, their talent, potential, and passion belong here in swimming, and as a Team Leader, it is your responsibility to lead USA Swimming in this commitment to all athletes, volunteers, and staff members.

12 WAYS TO SUPPORT AND INCLUDE YOUR LGBTQ+ STAFF, ATHLETES, AND VOLUNTEERS

1. [Educate yourself](#) frequently on LGBTQ+ culture, community, and current issues.
2. Set an uplifting and inviting tone on your team.
3. Develop a [zero-tolerance team policy for bullying and harassment](#) & address all instances of name-calling, bullying and harassment immediately.
4. [Be kind](#) and demand your team be kind to each other.
5. Avoid using and amplifying [LGBTQ+ stereotypes](#).
6. Respect and utilize everyone's self-identified [pronouns](#).
7. Have [recurring check-ins](#) with LGBTQ+ athletes and their families around team inclusion.
8. Get to know [Safe Sport's policies](#) on bullying, discrimination, and harassment.
9. Get to know USA Swimming's policies and procedures around [Suit Waivers](#) and [Competition Category Requests](#).
10. Frequently [celebrate athlete differences](#) and converse about the value of having different skills within a team setting.
11. Create a simple yet impactful recital of respect for your team and post it around your facility (i.e. *"I will treat every teammate, regardless of their gender, race, and ability, with respect and fairness"*).
12. [Audit](#) your team culture periodically with an anonymous, mid-season and end-of-season team survey.

USA SWIMMING'S RESOURCES FOR LGBTQ+ SUPPORT AND INCLUSION

Athlete Support Plan

The Athlete Support Plan aids in developing a shared understanding and a plan of action for your transitioning athlete. The athlete support plan aims to guide parents, athletes, coaches, officials and team support staff through potential questions and conflicts that may arise.

Swimsuit Coverage Waiver Request

Requests for an exemption due to religious or medical reasons shall be submitted to the Chair of the USA Swimming Rules & Regulations Committee's designee via e-mail at inclusion@usaswimming.org.

EXTERNAL RESOURCES FOR LGBTQ+ SUPPORT AND INCLUSION

- [Game Plan for Coaches: Creating Safe and Inclusive Teams for LGBTQ+ Athletes](#)
- [How Coaches Can Emphasize LGBTQ+ Inclusion](#)
- [Pink Manta Ray Educational Resources](#)
- [PFLAG Advocacy Resources](#)
- [NCAA Champions of Respect - Inclusion of LGBTQ Student-Athletes and Staff](#)

A SHORTLIST OF LGBTQ+ TERMINOLOGY FOR COACHES TO REMEMBER

Ally - Someone who supports and stands up for the rights and dignity of individuals and identity groups other than their own. An ally will mostly engage in activism by standing with an individual or group in a marginalized community. [RISE Glossary October 2021 Update \(risetowin.org\)](#)

Cisgender - A term used to describe a person whose gender identity aligns with those typically associated with the sex assigned to them at birth. [Glossary of Terms - Human Rights Campaign \(hrc.org\)](#)

Gender - An elaborate set of cultural norms around reproductive sex used to define and communicate a person's role in society. Gender norms can dictate how a person speaks, dresses, behaves, and even what professions are available to them. Gender identity describes a person's inner sense of where they fit - or don't - within these norms. [Glossary | Bi.org](#)

LGBTQ+ - An acronym that collectively refers to individuals who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer, sometimes stated as LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) or, historically, GLBT (gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender). The addition of the Q for queer is a more recently preferred version of the acronym as cultural opinions of the term queer focus increasingly on its positive, reclaimed definition (see Queer). The Q can also stand for questioning, referring to those who are still exploring their own sexuality and/or gender. The “+” represents those who are part of the community but for whom LGBTQ does not accurately capture or reflect their identity. [PFLAG National Glossary of Terms | PFLAG](#)

Non-Binary - An adjective describing a person who does not identify exclusively as a man or a woman. Non-binary people may identify as being both a man and a woman, somewhere in between, or as falling completely outside these categories. While many also identify as transgender, not all non-binary people do. Non-binary can also be used as an umbrella term encompassing identities such as agender, bigender, genderqueer or gender-fluid. [Glossary of Terms - Human Rights Campaign \(hrc.org\)](#)

Transgender - An adjective to describe people whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. People who are transgender may also use other terms, in addition to transgender, to describe their gender more specifically. Use the term(s) the person uses to describe themselves. It is important to note that being transgender is not dependent upon physical appearance or medical procedures. A person can call themselves transgender the moment they realize that their gender identity is different than the sex they were assigned at birth. [GLAAD Media Reference Guide - LGBTQ Terms](#)

Transitioning - A term used to refer to the process—social, legal, and/or medical—one goes through to affirm one's gender identity. This may, but does not always, include taking hormones; having surgeries; and changing names, pronouns, identification documents, and more. Many individuals choose not to or are unable to transition for a wide range of reasons both within and beyond their control. The validity of an individual's gender identity does not depend on any social, legal, and/or medical transition; the self-identification itself is what validates the gender identity. [PFLAG National Glossary of Terms | PFLAG](#)

Sexual Orientation - The sexual attraction toward other people or no people (see Asexual). While sexual activity involves the choices one makes regarding behavior, one's sexual activity does not define one's sexual orientation. Sexual orientation is part of the human condition, and all people have one. Typically, it is attraction that helps determine orientation. [PFLAG National Glossary of Terms | PFLAG](#)