

Pride month: How to be an ally



June is Pride month.

It started as a commemoration of the 1969 Stonewall uprising in Manhattan, but it has evolved to be so much more.¹ Celebrations, including parades, picnics and concerts, fill the month and recognize the impact the LGBTQIA+ community has on history and culture.

When we speak about this community, note that each letter represents its own group with different issues and concerns. Pride month is a chance to educate people about these issues and about how to become an ally to our friends and family members who belong to these marginalized communities.

Pride is ongoing for this community—it's not just important in June. The same goes for being an ally. The Teladoc Health Pride & Allies Business Resource Group (BRG) defines allyship with this simple statement:

“Allyship is how you speak of me when I’m not in the room.”

What does LGBTQIA+ stand for?

L	Lesbian
G	Gay
B	Bisexual
T	Transsexual
Q	Queer/questioning
I	Intersex
A	Asexual
+	New understanding of gender ²

Beau Cobb, Senior Client Executive at Teladoc Health and the Co-Lead of the Pride & Allies BRG, explains that allyship has many facets stemming from your intentions and respect. **To become a better ally, he suggests you:**

Listen

You cannot make assumptions based on a person's looks or actions. Listen when someone tells you their pronouns or name, even if you think you've got it figured out. **"Words have impact, and you have a choice to make a positive or negative impact."**

Educate yourself

Learn about the differences in these communities. There are many resources online. This is preferable to putting members of this community on the spot. **"A lion's share of my friends in the community are burned out from educating others."**



There are many ways to be an ally

You can start by supporting gay-owned businesses or volunteering for organizations that serve these communities. Learn how to make the awkward conversations less awkward.

“ Being an ally means being enlightened about the community and having empathy.”- Beau Cobb

Be deferential

Allow people in the community to lead conversations. **These are their experiences, not yours.**

Don't be afraid to make mistakes

"If you're going to be a good ally, you're going to make a lot of mistakes." **That's the way to learn.**

Correct incorrect statements

Once you have an understanding from listening and learning from your mistakes, you need to "stop it in the wild." When you hear someone using derogatory terms or the wrong name or pronouns, correct them. **Allies speak up.**

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[Go.Livongo.com/STATEOFIOWA/New](https://www.livongo.com/STATEOFIOWA/New).

¹<https://www.loc.gov/lgbt-pride-month/about/>
²<https://www.gsrc.princeton.edu/lgbtqia-101>

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