



SPORTS MEDIA

LGBT+

Communicating LGBT+ Inclusion

Sports Media LGBT+ Tips for Pride Month

Conversation
starters

Listening and learning

“I think we should talk more about LGBT+ inclusion.”

- ***The response you might get...*** ‘It doesn’t bother us’ or ‘it doesn’t matter if someone’s LGBT+ or not’.
- ***What you can say...*** ‘It’s a part of someone’s identity that’s very important to them, and we mustn’t shrug it off. There could be a situation that’s affecting someone that we ourselves haven’t sensed.’

“Would someone feel comfortable to come out as lesbian, gay or bi in our club or sport?”

- ***The response you might get...*** ‘People shouldn’t have to come out any more these days’.
- ***What you can say...*** Try using the UHT mnemonic - ‘I understand from what you said that you want there to be less pressure on someone who’s LGB - that’s good. However, saying this could come across as discouragement - people often come out because it helps to build their self-confidence, and it’s also a positive statement about the people around them. Therefore, a different response would not only be more encouraging, but would also reflect well on us.’

"Have we thought about why this conversation is relevant in a sports environment such as ours?"

- **The response you might get...** 'Sport has nothing to do with sexuality.'
- **What you can say...** 'Actually, there are lots of examples of LGB athletes whose performances have improved considerably when they've been able to be their authentic selves. We know performance is linked to mental wellbeing and naturally we want everyone to be the best they can be.'

"If someone was questioning their gender identity within our club or sport, would they feel sure of being supported?"

- **The response you might get...** 'There's nothing to suggest someone wouldn't be welcome.'
- **What you can say...** 'This could be seen as us saying that we have nothing to suggest they *would* be welcome either - it looks like we're side-stepping, or worse, that we're complacent - a 'goes without saying' approach. Let's send a message so there's no doubt.'

"How can we make a positive impact in Pride Month?"

- **The response you might get...** 'We'll look like we're 'virtue signalling'.'
- **What you can say...** 'Let's start with one or more internal activations that LGBT+ people and allies can show support for. These will help us to create a message that's reinforced by our own inclusion work.'



Practical internal steps for Pride Month



- Gather whatever information is available to you on LGBT+ inclusion and representation in your environment; identify where more detail is needed
- Be a part of an event related to LGBT+ inclusion, and invite colleagues to join you – likely to be virtual this month
- Invite someone in to speak – try to set up a special Zoom drop-in with a Stonewall Sport Champion, for example
- Use everyday signs of inclusion - email signatures, a mention of Pride in the internal newsletter, rainbow lanyards or pins (if you're back in the office)

Involving LGBT+ people



- If someone comes forward with an initiative, help them present it to a wider group and work with them to amplify the message
- If you become aware of LGBT+ inclusion work being undertaken elsewhere in your sport, seize the opportunity - be proactive, welcome the learnings, channel in a positive approach
- Ask for feedback and suggestions from LGBT+ people on what you've done so far
- Don't over-reach – be respectful of the different levels of visibility that LGBT+ people navigate
- Collective responsibility reduces pressure – try to form a working group
- Always keep in mind what successful inclusion would look like in your sport

Getting the message right

Personal stories / 'coming out' stories

- Power of the narrative means the person doesn't have to be 'a big name' to make a big impact
- Make it a collaborative process so that when the story is published, the support is immediate and clear



- Reach out and ask LGBT+ people who are out within a smaller sporting environment if they are interested in getting involved
- Write a draft story in the first person - address any potential issues constructively, and consider involving a team-mate, captain, or senior leader
- Offer some media training to the person sharing their story; look around for examples

Supporting campaigns and network groups

- [This Wasps / Premiership Rugby video](#) is a great example of an effective short campaign film including someone who's LGBT+ and an ally, backed up by further storytelling online
- Make your media widely accessible – share it with sports publishers; stream events live on social and make them discoverable afterwards
- Once an LGBT+ network is established, set objectives you can share as a mission statement
- Recognise the diverse experiences within that group and reflect those in your comms

Practical external tips for Pride Month

- 'Happy Pride' posts on social - try to back these up with a blog, Q&A, or article with an LGBT+ voice
- Representation means not showing only one 'type' of LGBT+ person - for example, try to make people of colour feel welcome
- Be open to different interpretations of Pride - these might include celebration, protest, or self-expression
- Don't repeat your standard comms tactics - do things differently, and ask for amplification of your message
- When reaching out for media coverage, provide good quality imagery that supports visibility - both portrait and landscape



Sports Media LGBT+ can help you connect the dots!
 Reach out to us - jon@sportsmedialgbt.com