

COLLEGE *of*
CHARLESTON

SAFE ZONE



Ally Reference Guide

<http://safezone.cofc.edu>

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INTRODUCTION & WELCOME

A Safe Zone is a place where one can feel free to talk about being lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, allied, and asexual or intersex without fear of criticism or hatred. It is a place where one can feel not only supported, but affirmed. It is a place where individuals are not only accepted, but valued. Welcome to the College of Charleston Safe Zone Ally Reference Guide.

WHAT IS SAFE ZONE? A BRIEF HISTORY

The Safe Zone program, sponsored by the [Office of Multicultural Student Programs and Services](#), at the College of Charleston was initially founded in 2005 to serve as a platform to address the issues facing the LGBTQQAAI community on our campus. We recently partnered with Alliance for Full Acceptance (AFFA) and We Are Family, who graciously provided a grant to help expand the reach and mission of our program even further throughout the campus.

It is unclear as to who first developed a "safe program" on a college campus but the initial chapter was founded on the campus of Ball State University in 1992. Their program was known by two names "Safe on Campus" and "Staff, Administration, and Faculty for Equality on Campus" and was run by the Lesbian, Bisexual, and Gay Student Association. Since that time "safe programs" have been established on college campuses throughout the country and are known by a variety of names such as: Safe Space, Safe Harbor and Safe on Campus.

No matter which college campuses that the "safe program" appears, the main intent is the same---the eradication of homophobia and discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, allied, and asexual and intersex (LGBTQQAAI) people on our nation's college campuses. To this end, the program acts as a bridge between those members of the heterosexual student body, known as Allies, who are friendly to the cause of inclusion and equality for the LGBTQQAAI community. The program is designed to provide a safe, positive environment for student members of the LGBTQQAAI community on campus. The program also serves as a sounding board for members to voice their particular concerns relating to gay/heterosexual relationships on campus and on how to build better communications between the two groups. At present, the organizational leadership for the program here at the College of Charleston is being led by members of the faculty, staff and

student body. Once the program is fully up and running, leadership will be turned over to the student membership. Through collaboration with various other campus organizations and community partnerships such as the Gay/Straight Alliance, the Safe Zone program will afford our students the opportunity to be themselves in a safe environment where they can speak freely and openly about the issues that affect them personally, socially and academically. It is only through constructive dialogue and working together that the issue of homophobia can be addressed and the level of hatred and mistrust alleviated.

MISSION AND OBJECTIVES

Our Mission

The College of Charleston Safe Zone program is sponsored by the [Office of Multicultural Student Programs and Services](#). We are committed to creating and maintaining a safe and inclusive campus environment for all students regardless of their gender identity, expression or sexual orientation. We will increase the campus community's understanding and awareness of issues faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, allied, asexual and intersex (LGBTQQAAI) persons through education and advocacy. It is our vision is to provide a safe space for all members of the College of Charleston.

Objectives of Safe Zone

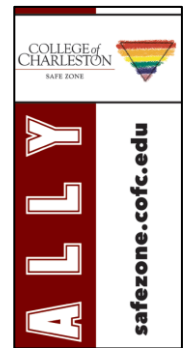
- To make it possible to easily identify Allies who are empathetic and informed about LGBTQQAAI issues who are willing and able to provide support, information, and confidentiality.
- To show a concrete example that the College of Charleston supports LGBTQQAAI people and is working to educate and raise awareness within our campus community.
- To provide training and education to promote Allies for the LGBTQQAAI community.
- To work toward resolving incidences of bias, discrimination and other violations of basic rights of those in the LGBTQQAAI community.
- To collaborate with other campus and community entities to positively impact the campus climate regarding LGBTQQAAI persons.
- To open a dialogue and make LGBTQQAAI issues a matter of conscience.

For more information about Safe Zone at the College of Charleston, please contact the [Office of Multicultural Student Programs and Services](#) or visit safezone.cofc.edu.

SAFE ZONE ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALLIES

Maintain Visibility on Campus

One of your responsibilities as a member of the campus Safe Zone community is VISIBILITY for students on campus. Once you have completed the training, you will receive a CofC Safe Zone door hanger. Post your Safe Zone door hanger in a visible place in your office, work area, residence hall or living space. Maintaining visibility is the key to making your commitment to inclusivity and awareness known to the LGBTQQAAL community. Visibility of Safe Zones on campus also generates discussion about inclusivity with members of the larger College of Charleston community. You will also have the opportunity to have your name and location posted on the Safe Zone Online Interactive Map for students to easily locate you on campus. If you share an office or common space, make sure to post the door hanger on your own desk or bulletin board to avoid falsely including a non-Safe Zone member (this could put both that person and the student in an uncomfortable situation).



Represent the Values and Mission of Safe Zone

Remember that the Safe Zone program exists to provide a welcoming and inclusive environment regardless of sexual identity or gender orientation. Because you represent Safe Zone's mission, you will find that you will come into contact with a wonderfully diverse population with a wealth of experience to contribute to the larger campus community. Be attentive to their issues and always remain vigilant of the dangers of discrimination, intimidation, bullying, hate crimes, hostility, and other forms of intolerance. Face the challenges and joys of creating a Safe Zone with the utmost professionalism, discretion, and care.

Students who may come to you are in a vulnerable situation, and reaching out to a Safe Zone Ally is a big step. Your role as an Ally is to provide as safe a place for that student as you can, so they feel comfortable in knowing they made the right choice in coming to see you.

Remain Neutral and Non-Judgmental

As you continue to provide a safe space for all members of the College of Charleston community, you may discover issues that seem unknown to you or outside the realm of your own personal experience. This is to be expected. You may even find that an issue is contrary to your own spiritual or social ethos. Creating a Safe Zone doesn't mean you have to be an expert on all issues of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression, nor do you have to personally agree with anyone else's actions or opinions to be able to provide him or her assistance. Your responsibility in these moments is to remember your commitment to inclusivity and understanding, and to openly discuss the individual's concerns with an abiding respect for their own choices.

Because you may come into contact with issues that you may not understand or agree with, it is important that you maintain a neutral and non-judgmental tone. If you are unsure of how to proceed with any given issue, don't hesitate to refer the person to a resource on campus or in the Charleston area that may be able to assist him or her. Consult the list of resources available on our website safezone.cofc.edu. Considering bringing the issue (with the person's permission) to the Safe Zone committee for inclusion in follow-up training sessions.

Provide Support, Resources and Referrals for Individuals

Be aware of the available resources and support networks students have at the College of Charleston in addition to Safe Zone. Your role is to let them know where they can turn for help if they need it.

Be sure to maintain appropriate boundaries, for you and the student's well-being. Safe Zone is not meant to be a support group or a substitution for therapy with a professional. In

situations where you think the student may need to speak to a professional, be sure to refer them to the appropriate resources on campus (Counseling and Substance Abuse Services). **Do not** attempt to individually interact with emotionally unstable students or situations where you believe the student or someone around them may be in danger.

Listen

Coming out, or even discussing situations related to questioning one's identity or gender can take a lot of courage for the student, and can be a culmination of months or years of personally dealing with it. If a student shares such information with you, it means they are reaching out to you and may need you to listen. They may simply want to have someone to talk to, to share something personal with, or to just get something off their chests. Listen with compassion and without judgment. As the old saying goes: "good advising requires 90% listening and 10% talking. "

Awareness and Advocacy

As the College of Charleston Safe Zone Mission implies, "we are committed to creating and maintaining a safe and inclusive campus environment for all students regardless of their gender identity or sexual orientation."

As such, being an Ally is more than just posting a sticker on your door or listening to a student. You are part of a larger movement to help increase the campus community's understanding and awareness of gender identity and sexual orientation, through both education and advocacy.

Be aware of the language you use. Use inclusive, non-gender specific language that does not assume the heterosexuality of others. Use terms such as "partner" or "date" instead of "spouse", "wife", "husband", "boyfriend" or "girlfriend."

In addition, as an Ally you serve as a role model for the campus. You will help to dispel myths and misconceptions and are encouraged to support the vision of the College of Charleston Safe Zone program, so that all students are free from forms of discrimination, intimidation, hate crimes, bullying, hostility and intolerance.

Continue Your Commitment to Training

An important part of creating safe spaces throughout the larger community is a strong commitment to be open to additional training. The LGBTQQAAl community continues to face changing political climates, new legal and social developments (both positive and negative), and an increasingly visible presence both on our campus and in popular culture.

These rapid developments necessitate the need for continued training. As a SafeZone Ally, you should plan on attending follow-up workshops, training sessions, or seminars as your schedule allows. After all, education is the key to greater understanding.

You are Not Expected to Be an Expert

As a Safe Zone Ally you are not required, nor expected, to be an expert on LGBTQQAAl issues. Know your own personal limits and boundaries, and refer a student who has questions you cannot answer or needs you cannot provide to a more appropriate campus contact or community resource.

SAFE ZONE ALLY DEVELOPMENT: TOOLS & RESOURCES

FOUR STAGES OF ALLY DEVELOPMENT

Awareness:

It is important to become more aware of who you are and how you are different from and similar to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

Strategies for developing awareness:

1. Conversation with LGBT individuals
2. Attending awareness building workshops
3. Reading about LGBT lifestyles, issues, and

4. Self-examination

Knowledge/Education:

You must begin to acquire knowledge about sexual orientation and what the experience is for LGBT persons in society and your campus community.

Knowledge and education can be gained by:

1. Learning about laws, policies, and practices and how they affect LGBT persons.
2. Educating yourself about the gay and lesbian culture(s) and norms of your community
3. Contacting local and national GLBT organizations for information.

Skills:

Mistakes equal growth, not failure. You must develop skills in communicating the knowledge that you have learned and don't let fear of lack of resources hinder you.

Your knowledge can be communicated by:

1. Attending workshops
2. Role playing situations with friends
3. Developing support connections
4. Practicing interventions or awareness raising

Action:

Action is, without a doubt, the only way that we can affect change in the society as a whole; for, if we keep our awareness, knowledge, and skills to ourselves, we deprive the rest of the world of what we have learned, thus keeping them from having the fullest possible life.

Other Helpful Notes

- Know your sexual and gender identities and get comfortable with the language
- The uniqueness of coming out
- The LGBT culture is not homogenous
- Intersection of identities

Adapted from Evans, N. J. & Wall, V.A. (1991). *Beyond Tolerance: Gay, Lesbians, and Bisexuals on Campus*. USA. ACPA.

THE RIDDLE SCALE

Attitudes Towards Differences: Goal is to move from negative attitudes to positive attitudes

Negative Attitude

Repulsion

Characteristics

People who are different are strange, sick, immoral, crazy, or aversive. This means that Homosexuality is seen as a 'crime against nature.'

Pity

People who are different are somehow born that way and that is pitiful. This is also known as 'Heterosexual Chauvinism.'

Tolerance

Being different is just a phase of development that most people 'grow out of.' This implies superiority. 'I have a very tolerant attitude towards homosexuals.'

Acceptance

Implies that one needs to make accommodations for another's differences; does not acknowledge that another's identity may be of the

same value as own. ‘I accept it as long as it is not flaunted or shoved in my face.’”

<u>Positive Attitude</u>	<u>Characteristics</u>
Support	Works to safeguard the rights of those who are different. May be uncomfortable, but is aware of discomfort & unfairness in society. ‘The ACLU approach.’
Admiration	Acknowledges that being different in our society takes strength. Willingness to look at own attitudes to change them.
Appreciation	Values the diversity of people and is willing to confront insensitive attitudes, both in themselves and others.
Nurturance	Assumes the differences in people are indispensable in society. Views others with genuine affection & is willing to be an ally/advocate.

OARS LISTENING SKILLS MODEL

When dealing with sensitive issues regarding someone’s sexual orientation it takes certain skills that allow one to reflect on the nature of the occurrence and help them to reflect on their current reality. The OARS Listening Skills Model does just that, it allows individuals regardless of age, background or state in life to develop, reflect and have a clear form of communicating their needs and current state of wellbeing.

- Ask Open Ended Questions
- Affirm
- Listen Reflectively
- Summarize

APPRECIATIVE ALLY ADVISING

Utilize the six phases of appreciative advising to create a strong, positive relationship with the individual seeking your support!

(1) Disarm

- Make a positive first impression
- Prove this is a safe, confidential environment
- Begin building rapport -Move locations if necessary

(2) Discover

- Understand the individual and his/her journey thus far
- Celebrate the progress you hear!
- Highlight strengths that have enabled progress
- Listen intently
- Great question to ask: *What prompted him/her to visit an Ally today?*

(3) Dream

- Where does he/she want to go from here?
- How does this connect to other personal, professional, and/or academic goals?
- Great question to ask: *If a miracle happened two weeks from today and everything was perfect in your life, what would that life look like?*

(4) Design

- Create concrete, achievable goals
- Offer only the resources that will support the current goal; avoid offering too many
- Discuss: How will you make progress? Who else can you turn to for support along the way?
- Reiterate those strengths! Be positive!

(5) Deliver

- Allow the individual to put the plan into action
- Be ready to support and encourage

(6) Don't Settle

- Plan *didn't* work? Revisit the plan but keep going
- Plan *did* work? Yay! Set new goals, and keep going
- Take time to receive feedback for yourself as well

Adapted from University of South Carolina Safe Zone Program. Appreciative Advising is an advising technique created by USC's own Dr. Jenny Bloom and co-authors Bryant Hudson and Ye He. Learn more at www.appreciativeadvising.net.

AN IDEAL ALLY IS SOMEONE WHO...

- Commits to understanding the needs of LGBTQQIA individuals and communities and the heterosexism they endure.
- Identifies and celebrates historical contributions of LGBTQQIA identified individuals, communities, and movements.
- Can articulate how patterns of institutionalized oppression disenfranchise LGBTQQIA individuals.
- Pursues knowledge about current policies and legislation effecting LGBTQQIA individuals.
- Understands that coming out is a lifelong process that demands support and celebration.
- Uses gender neutral terms, such as partner or significant other, instead of gender specific terms like boyfriend or girlfriend
- Treats partners of LGBTQQIA friends the same as they would a straight friend's partner

- Avoids stereotypes and makes clear that stereotypes don't represent the entire LGBTQQIA community.
- Confronts homophobic comments.
- Objects to homophobic jokes in all situations.
- Chooses to take a position in support of human rights for LGBTQQIA individuals without first identifying as, "I'm straight, but ..."
- Speaks about the systemic inequities LGBTQQIA individuals face institutionally.
- Avoids expecting an LGBTQQIA individual to speak for LGBTQQIA communities.
- Acknowledges her/his/hir responsibility for cultivating and producing safe and inclusive environments institutionally, politically, and socially for LGBTQQIA individuals
- Promotes coalition building with LGBTQQIA communities.
- Teaches others the importance of outreach.
- Celebrates successes in LGBTQQIA communities.
- Works to take action whenever possible in support of human rights for LGBTQQIA individuals.

ALLY DO'S & DON'T'S...

- Do not assume that everyone you meet is heterosexual.
- Refuse to tolerate anti-LGBTQ comments, attitudes, remarks, or jokes.
- If you want to know something about a person's sexual orientation or gender identity, go to that person directly and ask in an appropriate manner and setting.
- Refuse to propagate rumors.
- Report all harassment or discriminatory behavior to the appropriate officials.
- Respect confidentiality at all times. It is imperative that you can be trusted.
- Display positive materials in support of the LGBTQ community (flyers for activities, posters, cards, Safe Zone Placard, etc.)
- Use inclusive, non-gender specific language that does not assume the heterosexuality of others.
- Educate yourself on issues and concerns of the LGBTQ community and take the initiative to obtain accurate information.
- Keep everything in balance. Don't assume that being LGBTQ doesn't matter or that it is the only thing that does matter. While it is true that being LGBTQ a large part of an

individual's identity, it may not be the most important to them. In other words, being LGBTQ may not be that important to them. On the other hand, remember that being LGBTQ is not being "the same as everyone else" and that there are significant differences between LGBTQ individuals and heterosexual individuals.

- Know your own biases and fears. Know what you are comfortable talking about and be comfortable enough to refer individuals to others when necessary. In addition know your limits. Know when it is necessary to refer an individual to an "expert" who can assist them better.
- Remember that just because an individual is LGBTQ does not mean that is their sole identity or issue. In other words, "not everything is about being gay." There will be times when an individual is dealing with other areas of their identity: their socio-economic status, their religion/faith, their race, or their ethnicity. It is important to be culturally competent across the board to better serve this community.

Adapted from UNC-Charlotte's [Safe Zone Program](#).

COMING OUT

Ally Nurturance during the Coming out Process

1. It takes a lot of courage for someone to come out to you. Listen to all they have to say without interrupting, judging, tuning out or buying into stereotypes about LGBT people.
2. Tell them how pleased you are that they trusted you enough to share something so personal and congratulate them on the bravery it took to be so honest.
3. Let them know that you feel the same way about them as you always have and that nothing has changed (except that you can be even closer than before).
4. Ask questions and show that you are interested in learning about their feelings and experiences. Be respectful and stay away from personal issues (sex, HIV, religion) unless they let you know its okay to discuss with them.

5. If you are feeling uncomfortable or upset, be honest. Let them know you may need some time to process everything, but acknowledge that it is your problem to work out and not their responsibility.
6. Remember that you cannot and should not try to change them--you have an opportunity here to support, not to reform them.
7. Ask what you can do to support them or what they need from you right now.
8. Follow up. The coming out conversation should be the first of many. Continue to check in and ask questions over time.
9. Be open to socializing with their new friends and in a variety of settings, both LGBT and straight. Let them know that they don't have to compartmentalize their lives.
10. Be an advocate. Read up on LGBT issues, wear an LGBT-friendly button or sticker, join a GSA or other LGBT group, and confront homophobia in whatever ways you can.

**Adapted from GLSEN webiste - <http://www.glsen.org/cgi-bin/iowa/all/news/record/1290.html>.*

SAFE ZONE TERMINOLOGY

Ally- Someone who is a friend, advocate, and/or activist for LGBTQAAI community. A heterosexual ally is also someone who confronts heterosexism in themselves and others. The term ally is also generally used for any member of a dominant group who is a friend, advocate or activist for people in an oppressed group.

Androgynous- Term used to describe an individual whose gender expression and/or identity may be neither distinctly “female” nor “male,” usually based on appearance.

Asexual - A sexual orientation generally characterized by not feeling sexual attraction or a desire for partnered sexuality. Asexuality is distinct from celibacy, which is the deliberate abstention from sexual activity. Some asexual people do have sex. There are many diverse ways of being asexual.

Bear - is an LGBT slang term that refers to members of a subculture in the gay and bisexual male communities and to an emerging subset of LGBT communities with events,

codes, and a culture-specific identity. George Mazzei wrote an article for The Advocate magazine in 1979 called "Who's Who in the Zoo?", that characterized homosexuals as seven types of animals, including bears.^[1]

Bears are commonly, but not always heavy-set men and are often characterized as having hairy bodies and facial hair; some are also muscular; some project an image of rugged masculinity in their grooming and appearance. The bear concept can function as an identity, an affiliation, and there is ongoing debate in bear communities about what constitutes a bear, however a consensus exists that inclusion is an important part of the bear community.

Bears are almost always gay or bisexual men. Increasingly, transgender or transsexual men (trans men) and those who shun labels for gender and sexuality are also included within bear communities.

Younger or smaller men who identify with bear culture may also be labeled as **cubs**.

Any bear that is aggressive toward other men is called a **wolf**. These are usually hyper masculine men who in social groups are seen as the leader of the pack.

Biphobia- The fear, hatred, or intolerance of bisexual people.

Bisexual- Refers to persons who are physically, emotionally, sexually, and relationally attracted to either sex.

Cisgender - A person whose gender identity and expression matches the gender typically associated with their biological sex. For example: a female who identifies as a woman.

Coming Out- A short version of the phrase "coming out of the closet" which is a metaphor for disclosing one's sexual orientation or gender identity to others or to one's self.

Cross Dresser (CD) - The most neutral word to describe a person who dresses, at least partially or part of the time and for any number of reasons, in clothing associated with another gender within a particular society. Carries no implications of "usual" gender appearance, or sexual orientation. Has replaced "transvestite," which is outdated, problematic, and generally offensive, since it was historically used to diagnose medical/mental health disorders. (Older term is Transvestite) .

Down Low- Pop-culture term used to describe men who identify as heterosexual but engage in sexual activity with other men. Often these men are in committed sexual relationships or

marriages with a female partner. This term is almost exclusively used to describe men of color.

Drag Queen/Drag King- Used by people who present socially in clothing, name, and/or pronouns that differs from their everyday gender, usually for enjoyment, entertainment, and/or self-expression. Drag queens typically have everyday lives as men. Drag kings typically live as women and/or butches when not performing. Drag shows are popular in some gay, lesbian, and bisexual environments. Unless they are drag performers, most transgender people would be offended by being confused with drag queens or drag kings.

Dyke- A negative term predominantly associated with individuals who identify as Lesbian. The term often refers to an individual who is perceived to be hyper masculine (also referred to as a “Bull-Dyke”). Though the term is predominantly seen as pejorative some groups have co-opted the word as a source of empowerment (e.g. “Dykes on Bikes”).

Faggot- A negative term predominantly associated with gay men. The term often refers to an individual who is perceived to be hyper feminine, implying weakness. The term is originally derived from the Latin word meaning “bundle of sticks” which was used to burn witches at the stake. The word has grown in modern vernacular to also mean “stupid, silly, feminine, lame, weird, or different.” It is not uncommon to hear individuals use this term and not specifically use it as a derogatory term for gay men.

Gay- Usually refers to men who have romantic and/or sexual feelings, attractions, and/or relationships with other men. Some women may also identify themselves as gay.

Gender Expression- Refers to how an individual expresses their socially constructed gender. This may refer to how an individual dresses, their general appearance, the way they speak, and the way they carry themselves. Gender expression is not always correlated to an individuals’ gender identity or gender role.

Gender Identity- An internalized realization of one’s gender and may not be manifested in their outward appearance (gender expression) or their place in society (gender role). It is important to note that an individual’s gender identity is completely separate from their

sexual orientation or sexual preference. Since gender is a social construct, an individual may have a self-perception of their gender that is different or the same as their biological sex.

Gender Neutral- This term is used to describe facilities that any individual can use regardless of their gender (e.g. gender neutral bathrooms). This term can also be used to describe an individual who does not subscribe to any socially constructed gender (sometimes referred to as “Gender Queer”).

Gender Non-Conforming -A person who is, or is perceived to have gender characteristics that do not conform to traditional or societal expectations.

Gender/Sexual Reassignment Surgery - Refers to a surgical procedure to transition an individual from one biological sex to another. This is often paired with hormone treatment and psychological assistance. A “Transsexual” individual must go through several years of hormones and psychological evaluation and live as the “opposite” or “desired” gender prior to receiving the surgery (see intersex).

Gender Role- A societal expectation of how an individual should act, think, and/or feel based upon an assigned gender based on the current binary biological sex system.

Hate Crime- Whoever, willfully causes bodily injury to any person or, through the use of fire, a firearm, a dangerous weapon, or an explosive or incendiary device, attempts to cause bodily injury to any person, because of the actual or perceived religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability of any person (See Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act).

Heterosexual- A person who has romantic and sexual feelings, attractions, and/or relationships with someone considered to be the opposite gender. In our section that discusses gender you will read about how gender is not a binary concept for all people. The majority of people in U.S. culture identifies two genders, men and women and uses the term opposite sex to differentiate them.

Heterosexism- The societal/cultural, institutional, and individual beliefs and practices that privilege heterosexuals and subordinate and denigrate LGBTQ people. The critical element

that differentiates heterosexism (or any other ism) from prejudice and discrimination is the use of institutional power and authority to support prejudices and enforce discriminatory behaviors in systematic ways with far reaching outcomes and effects.

Homophobia-The fear, hatred, or intolerance of people who identify or are perceived to be lesbians or gay men, including the fear of being seen as lesbian or gay yourself. Homophobic behavior can range from telling jokes about lesbians and gay men, to verbal abuse, to acts of physical violence.

Intersex-People who naturally (that is, without any medical interventions) develop primary and/or secondary sex characteristics that do not fit neatly into society's definitions of male or female. Many visibly intersex babies/children are surgically altered by doctors to make their sex characteristics conform to societal binary norm expectations. Intersex people are relatively common, although society's denial of their existence has allowed very little room for intersex issues to be discussed publicly. Has replaced "hermaphrodite," which is inaccurate, outdated, problematic, and generally offensive, since it means "having both sexes" and this is not necessarily true, as there are at least 16 different ways to be intersex.

In the Life- Often used by communities of color to denote inclusion in the LGBTQ communities.

Kinsey Scale- Alfred Kinsey, a renowned sociologist, described a spectrum on a scale of 0-6 to describe the amount of sexual desire within an individual. 0- Completely Heterosexual - 6: Completely Homosexual. In his 1948 work *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*. The Kinsey Scale is often used to dissect the bisexual community and describe the differences between sexual orientation and sexual preference.

Lesbian- Refers to women who are physically, emotionally, sexually, and relationally attracted to other women. The term Lesbian is derived from the name of the Greek Island of Lesbos, where the poet Sappho ran a school for women in 400 B.C. The Greek mythology surrounding the Isle of Lesbos states that its female inhabitants loved one another and did not have any male lovers.

LGBTQQAAI- An acronym used to refer to all sexual minorities: Lesbian, Gay/Gender Neutral/Gender Queer, Bisexual/Bigendered, Transgender/Transvestite/Transsexual, Questioning/Queer, Allies/Androgynous/Asexual and Intersex.

Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act- Passed on October 22, 2009, and signed into law by President Barack Obama on October 28, 2009, as a rider to the National Defense Authorization Act for 2010. Conceived as a positive response to the murders of Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr., authorized the Department of Justice to investigate and prosecute certain bias-motivated crimes based on the victim's actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, or disability.

Men Loving Men (MLM) - Commonly used by communities of color to denote the attraction of men to men.

Men Who Have Sex with Men- The term “men who have sex with men” is used primarily in the health care field to classify men who identify as heterosexual, but engage in sexual activity with other men. The Center for Disease Control primarily uses this term when reporting the number of individuals with HIV/AIDS. Men described to be on the “Down Low” would be an example of this population.

Otter: A gay man who is very hairy all over his body, but is smaller in frame and weighs considerably less than a bear. (Urban Dictionary)

Outing- The act of revealing someone’s gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender identity without permission.

Pansexual, Omnisexual, and Pomosexual- (postmodern sexuality): Sometimes substitute terms for bisexual that rather than referring to both or —Bi gender attraction, refer to all or —Omni gender attraction, and are used mainly by those who wish to express acceptance of all gender possibilities including transgender and intersex people, not just two. Pansexuality sometimes includes an attraction for less mainstream sexual activities, such as BDSM.

Queer- Originally used as a pejorative term to refer to gay men, lesbians, and bisexuals. The term implied that these individuals were unnatural, unusual, or freakish. In more recent years

the term “queer” has been reclaimed as a source of empowerment and pride. The term is also widely used by individuals who do not wish to use what they call “restrictive labels” such as “Gay, Lesbian, or Bisexual.” Therefore the more recent use of the term “queer” is to describe someone who does not subscribe to social norms.

Questioning- The process of considering or exploring one’s sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

Sex- A medical term referring to genetic, biological, hormonal, and/or physical characteristics (including genitalia) which are used to classify an individual as male, female, or intersex.

Sexual Behavior- Refers to an individual’s sexual activities or actions (what a person does sexually). Though often an individual’s sexual orientation is in line with their sexual behavior, it is not always the case.

Sexual Minority - An all-inclusive, politically-oriented term referring to individuals who identify with a minority sexual orientation or gender expression/gender identity.

Sexual Preference- This term refers to an individual’s choice in regards to attraction. Sexual preference can be based on gender/sex, physical appearance (height, weight, race, ethnicity), or emotional connection. It is important to note that sexual preference denotes a “choice” and has a negative connotation when used to describe the LGBTQ population.

Straight- Pop-culture term used to refer to individuals who identify as a heterosexual, meaning having a sexual, emotional, physical and relational attraction to individuals of the “opposite” gender/sex. The term “straight” often has a negative connotation within the LGBTQAAI population, because it suggested that non-heterosexual individuals are “crooked” or “unnatural”.

Transgender- An umbrella term for individuals who blur the lines of traditional gender expression. Transgender individuals recognize the social construct of their genders and thus do not fit neatly within societally-prescribed gender roles as determined by biological sex.

Transvestite- An historical and now outdated umbrella term which refers to people who wear the clothing of the “opposite” gender. These individuals can be transgender, transsexual, cross-dressers, Drag performers, or individuals who express their gender in a unique way. (Cross Dresser current terminology)

Women Loving Women (WLW) - Commonly used by communities of color to denote the attraction of women to women.

Ze - The most common spelling for gender-neutral pronouns. Zie is subjective (replaces he or she) and Hir is possessive and objective (replaces his or her).

Sources consulted:

- College of Charleston Gay-Straight Alliance
- Brown University LGBTQ Resource Center (www.brown.edu/lgbtq)
- International Spectrum, University of Michigan
<http://internationalspectrum.umich.edu/life/definitions>
- Urban Dictionary online <http://www.urbandictionary.com/define.php?term=otter>
- UNC Charlotte Safe Zone website (www.safezone.uncc.edu/allies/ally-manual)
- UNC Greensboro Safe Zone website (<http://www.uncg.edu/shs/wellness/safezone>)

SAFE ZONE SYMBOLS & IMAGERY



Bear Community - The pride flag of the Bear community



Black Triangle - Also, used by the Nazis in Germany. Used to represent lesbian women as "political deviants" since they didn't acknowledge women loving women.



Blue and Pink Triangle - Bisexual pride symbol.



The Human Rights Campaign (HRC) - As the largest national lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender civil rights organization, HRC works for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Equal Rights.



Lambda Symbol - The Greek lambda symbol has been used by the LGBTQQIA community as a symbol of pride.



Pink Triangle - Comes from World War II when thousands of gay men and men perceived to be gay were condemned to Nazi concentration camps and labeled with pink triangles, similar to the way in which Jews were forced to wear the yellow Star of David. Displayed with the point down, the pink triangle has been reclaimed as a symbol of pride and remembrance and can often be found in gay establishments and organizations.



Rainbow Flag - Displayed with the red stripe at the tip, the rainbow flag was designed by Gilbert Baker in San Francisco in 1979 to celebrate the diversity of the lesbian and gay community. It is now recognized by the International Congress of Flag Makers as a symbol of gay and lesbian pride. The rainbow colors have been marketed in many different ways and the rainbow "flag" may be seen in jewelry or other trinkets.



Safe Zone - Is representing a "safe space" where one can feel free to talk about being lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, etc. or question without fear of criticism or hatred. It is a place where one can feel not only support, but affirm. It is a place where individuals are not only accepted, but valued.



Transgender Symbol - A symbol signifying transgender awareness and support.



Transgender flag for awareness and support of the Trans community.

CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES

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College of Charleston Campus

[Office of Multicultural Student Programs and Services](#)

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843.953.5660

[College of Charleston Gay-Straight Alliance \(GSA\)](#)

Contact: Pattie Webster
ppwebste@edisto.cofc.edu

[College of Charleston Student Health](#)

181 Calhoun Street
Charleston, SC 29424
843.953.5520

[Office of Counseling & Substance Abuse Services](#)

Robert Scott Small Building
175 Calhoun Street
Charleston, SC 29424
843.953.5640

[College of Charleston Public Safety](#)

Non-Emergency: 843.953.5609
Emergency: 843.953.5611

Community Resources (**Organizations have local representation*)

*Alliance for Full Acceptance (AFFA)
www.affa-sc.org

Bisexual Resource Center
www.biresource.net

GSA Network
www.gsanetwork.org

Human Rights Campaign
www.hrc.org

Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network
www.glsen.org

National Center for Transgender Equality
www.transequality.org

Intersex Society of North America
www.isna.org

National Gay and Lesbian Task Force
www.thetaskforce.org

*SC Equality Coalition
www.scequality.org

*We Are Family
www.waf.org

Campus Pride
www.campuspride.org