

Stages of Becoming An Ally: Dr. Dorothy Riddle's Homophobia Scale (Adapted)



Stage One: Repulsion

Homosexuality and/or gender nonconformity are seen as “crimes against nature.” People who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender are seen as sick, crazy, immoral, sinful, wicked, etc. Anything is justified to change them: prison, hospitalization, negative behavior therapy, electroshock therapy, etc.

Stage Two: Pity

Attitude of heterosexual/gender chauvinism, where heterosexuality and/or traditional gender roles are seen as more mature and certainly to be preferred. Any possibility of “becoming heterosexual” or “normal” should be reinforced, and those who seem to be born “that way” should be pitied.

Stage Three: Tolerance

Homosexuality and/or gender nonconformity are seen as just phases of adolescent development that many people go through and most people “grow out of.” Thus, people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender are less mature than others. People who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender should not be given positions of authority because they are still working through their adolescent behavior.

Stage Four: Acceptance

Acceptance implies there is still something that has to be accepted. Characterized by such statements as “You’re not lesbian to me, you’re a person,” or “What you do in bed is your own business,” or “That’s fine with me as long as you don’t flaunt it.”

Stage Five: Support

Basic American Civil Liberties position: Work to safeguard the rights of people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender. People at this level may be uncomfortable themselves, but they are aware of the homophobic climate, restrictive ideas about gender, and the irrational unfairness.

Stage Six: Admiration

Acknowledges that being lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender in our society takes strength. People at this level are willing to truly examine their own ideas about gender and their own homophobic attitudes, values, and behaviors.

Stage Seven: Appreciation

Values the diversity of people and sees people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender as a valid part of that diversity. These people are willing to combat homophobia and gender-based prejudice in themselves and others.

Stage Eight: Nurturance

Assumes that people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender are indispensable in our society. These individuals view people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender with genuine affection and delight, and are willing to be allies and advocates.