

# 2SLGBTQI+ Inclusion in Sport: How to be an Ally

## Inclusion-first philosophy



We're proud to have athletes, volunteers, coaches, staff and Board members of many gender identities, gender expressions and sexual orientations. Here are some ways that you can help to make everyone feel welcome, safe and included at Special Olympics.

## Steps to create a safe and 2SLGBTQI+ inclusive environment

- 1. Respect people's right to self-identify.** It's the law<sup>1</sup> to respect people's identity in terms of gender expression, gender identity, sex and sexual orientation.
- 2. Athletes participate in the gender category that they identify with.** It is not a requirement that the athlete has had hormone therapy or surgery.
- 3. People use the washroom, change room and other facilities that they feel are the best fit for their gender identity.** It's the law. Self-identification and the individual's personal safety are what count. Advocate for all gender washrooms and change rooms at the arenas, pools and facilities that are being used.
- 4. Use the pronoun and chosen name that the person wants.** If you're less familiar with the pronoun set that someone uses, then search for it on the internet to learn more, and then practice using it.
- 5. Respect people's right to privacy.** Individuals are not required to disclose their sexual orientation, gender identity or history, unless there is a specific, compelling reason. In cases where gender identity and documentation (e.g. passport, driver's license) do not match and are required for travel purposes (e.g. plane, train), Special Olympics will ask the athlete and/or the parent or caregiver how best to provide support. It is paramount to ensure that the athlete's confidentiality is protected while completing any verification process.
- 6. Use inclusive language that works for everyone.** Include all genders and say, for example, "Welcome everyone" instead of "Welcome ladies and gentlemen" or "boys and girls". Use the term "partner" instead of "wife", "husband", "girlfriend", or "boyfriend" to avoid making assumptions about someone's sexual orientation. Include all genders and avoid assuming you know someone's gender by saying "May I help you" instead of "May I help you, Sir" or "Madam" or "Miss". Once you know how someone likes to be addressed, then feel free to use the term that they prefer.
- 7. Be an ally and speak up.** If you hear or see something that is discriminatory, address it. If you see an opportunity to make Special Olympics safer and more inclusive, then act on it. It is our collective and individual responsibility to ensure that everyone feels respected, safe and included.

## Respect people's right to self-identify

<sup>1</sup> Federal, provincial and territorial Human Rights Codes/Acts include gender identity, sex and sexual orientation as protected grounds from discrimination. Gender expression is also listed as protected in all the Human Rights Codes/Acts except those of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and the Northwest Territories.





## What do I do if someone comes out to me?

**Coming out** is when someone discloses their sexual orientation or gender identity to you. Remember that you are being honoured when someone chooses to share this important information about themselves with you.

### Act in allyship

1. **Be open and learn.** Remember that you don't have to fully understand an individual's identity and situation in order to be respectful and supportive. Each person knows their own identity best.
2. **Respect people's privacy.** Never share details about someone's identity (even with their family members) unless they have given you express permission to do so.
3. **Connect the person to helpful supports.** If your beliefs prevent you from being welcoming, then safely connect the individual with someone who can be supportive and positive.

For more information including the "2SLGBTQI+ Inclusion in Sport: Key Terms to Understand", contact [info@specialolympics.ca](mailto:info@specialolympics.ca)



### ALL GENDER WASHROOM



**Anyone may use this space.**

We respect everyone's right to choose the washroom that is appropriate for them.

### Protect the privacy of the individual

