

Poynter's Heterosexual Ally Development Model

Status 1: Pre-Contact (Non-identification)

Heterosexual person in Status 1 and 2 begin to abandon heterosexism and homophobia. Some awareness of different sexual orientations exists as movie, books, magazines, and newspapers (media) cover GLBT issues. This person will not have a close contact with a GLBT person(s). Will believe that heterosexuals and heterosexual relationships are superior to GLBT people and their relationships. Will have a strong negative attitude toward GLBT people. Will not identify as an ally.

Status 2: Contact and Retreat

Heterosexual person has a personal contact with a GLBT person that is a family member, friend, or co-worker. Heterosexuals are still normal and superior to GLBT people. This personal contact leads to a discovery that GLBT people are human beings. Some heterosexuals may experience a hyper vigilance or be focused on associations with GLBT people which leads to a close relationship with the GLBT community. Personal contact is a transition to status 3 that will lead to an increase in knowledge, awareness and reduction in negative attitudes.

Retreat: Heterosexual person will be essentially closed to GLBT issues and understanding due to a variety of issues such as religious beliefs, cultural beliefs, conformity to masculine ideals (if male) and gender roles, and will possess a dualistic reasoning based on these previous issues. This person will retreat to a Status 1.

*Some heterosexual people may begin to identify as an ally (Status 3 and 4) without a personal contact due to less restrictive religious beliefs, liberal views, and moral development such as a desire to help others or to please an authority figure. Status 2 will be temporarily skipped. This person will eventually experience a Status 2 contact, but until then will have varied development as an ally.

Status 3: Internal Identification

Heterosexuals in Status 3 and 4 begin to develop a positive identity as an ally to the GLBT community. Ally in Status 3 does not publicly identify as an ally yet, but further initial contact with the GLBT community will occur. Communication with other heterosexual people that publicly (Status 4) identify as allies will occur. The new ally will begin to realize the importance of being supportive of GLBT people and begins to practice these supportive and advocacy skills in a limited fashion. Will possess less negative attitudes toward GLBT people and a higher level of awareness and knowledge.

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Status 4: External Identification

The heterosexual will have pride in being an ally to GLBT people. Realization of how much fuller their lives are since they know "out" GLBT people and include them within their lives. Respect and appreciation for the similarities and differences among people with different sexual orientations. Ally will have low negative attitudes and a high level of awareness and knowledge. Ally will have some supportive and advocacy skills and will know other heterosexual allies among their friends, family, and colleagues. Feelings of alienation from other heterosexual people that are not allies will occur as a result of public identification as an ally. Various coping strategies will be used when dealing with negative responses and attitudes toward the ally.

***Developed by Kerry Poynter (1997)**