



# TIPS ON HOW TO MAKE YOUR (ONLINE) CLASS A SAFE SPACE FOR LGBTQ+ STUDENTS

Office for the Advancement of Teaching  
Office of the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs  
University of the Philippines Diliman



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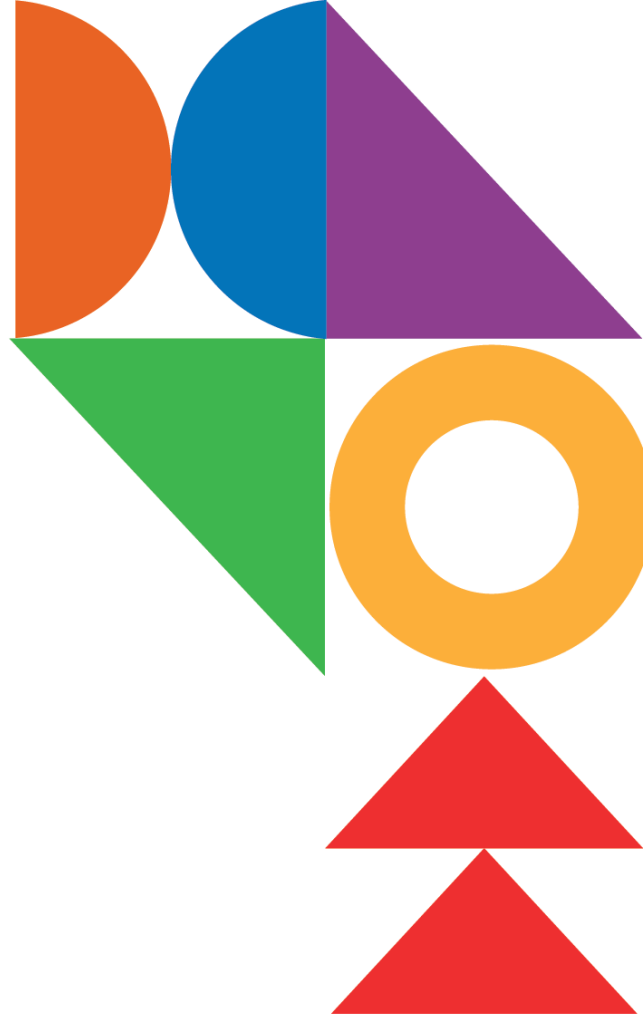
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## Acknowledgements

This manual is based on the GLSEN Safe Spaces Kit that aims to help faculty foster safe spaces for LGBTQ+ students.

A huge thanks to Asst. Prof. Beatriz A. Torre, of the UP Diliman Department of Psychology and Chair of the Psychological Association of the Philippines LGBT Psychology Special Interest Group for the source materials of this manual.

To learn more about creating safe spaces, you may visit [www.glsen.org](http://www.glsen.org). You may also follow the Psychological Association of the Philippines LGBT Psychology Special Interest Group on Facebook and Twitter for more resources.



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# WHAT IS A SAFE SPACE?

In the current context, the term “safe space” describes places or groups that seek to **provide respect and emotional security**, often for individuals from historically marginalized groups.

## Why do we need Safe Spaces for LGBTQ+ Students?

- Majority of LGBT students feel unsafe at school and are likely to skip class/es to avoid bullying, name-calling, and harassment.

- This anxiety can stem from constantly having to anticipate the need to respond to judgment, unsolicited opinions, violence, mockery, or even having to explain yourself.

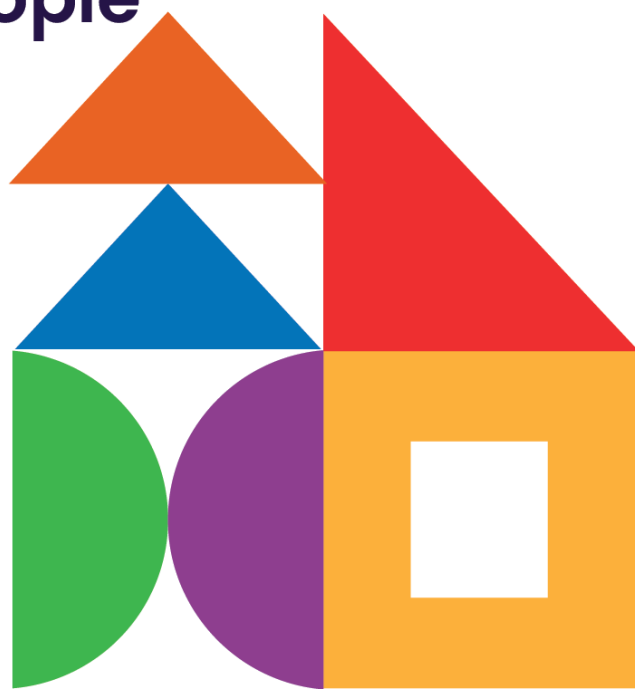


# WHY DO WE NEED SAFE SPACES FOR LGBTQ+ STUDENTS?

- LGBT students with supportive educators feel safer at school, skip fewer classes, and earn higher grades than students without supportive educators.
- Instructors can shape their classes into spaces in which both majority AND minority students feel safe and welcome.
- Some challenges include:
  - Teacher's self-awareness (i.e. awareness of own attitudes, including biases and prejudices)
  - Teacher's knowledge and skills related to LGBT experiences.

## What happens when people constantly feel unsafe?

It can emotionally, physically, and mentally affect outcomes and performance in school, work, and other domains.



# TIPS ON MAKING YOUR CLASS A SAFE SPACE

**01**

## Be visible as an ally.

Research shows that just knowing that there is a supportive educator at school can help LGBT+ students feel better about being in school.

You can try:

- Wearing a rainbow pin or bracelet.
- Displaying LGBT-supportive materials in your classroom or office.
- Incorporating LGBT-inclusive topics, activities, and examples in your classes.

**02**

## Support students when they COME OUT to you.

Coming out: the process through which an LGBT person becomes aware of their sexual orientation or gender identity, and shares this identity with others.

Coming out and receiving support is beneficial to LGBT+ individuals' mental health, physical health, and overall wellbeing.

## 02

## Support students when they COME OUT to you.

### ✓ Do:

- Appreciate the student's courage.
- Assure and respect confidentiality.
- Offer support, but don't assume a student needs help.
- Listen, listen, listen.

### ✗ Dont:

- Say "I knew it!" or "It's just a phase."
- Disclose the information to others without your student's consent.
- Confuse sexual orientation with gender identity and expression.

## 03

## Respond to ANTI-LGBT language or behavior.

- Educators can make a difference by intervening in anti-LGBT namecalling, bullying and harassment. Address anti-LGBT name-calling, bullying and harassment immediately and use it as a teachable moment.

"That language/behavior is unacceptable."

"What do you mean by that?"

"How do you think a gay person might feel?"

- Offer to support the targeted student.
- Responding helps create a safe space and lets other students know that anti-LGBT behavior will not be tolerated.

## 04 Educate others.

- Teach students to respect others.
- Include positive representations of LGBT people, history and events into your curriculum.
- Engage other school staff about anti-LGBT bias and ways to create safer schools.

## 05 Recognize and respect students' lived names, pronouns, and titles.

- Using pronouns creates safer and more inclusive spaces for people to be themselves knowing that other people are going to respect their identity, including their gender identity.
- Try your best. Apologize if you do make a mistake and correct it.





06

## Discuss ground rules and expectations from the start of the class.

- Promote an atmosphere of respect and provide clear policies against stigmatizing speech/behavior.
- Remind students that written communication (i.e., email, chat, or discussion boards,) can lack tone clarity and is more likely to be taken out of context or misinterpreted.
- Encouraging students to “think before you click/send.”

07

## Provide clear, thorough, and honest discussion on the guidelines on privacy and confidentiality.

- Make a commitment to treat all students’ assignments as confidential (but acknowledge limitations).
- Provide specific and direct guidelines about sharing personal information provided by other students:
  - ✓ Set ground rules that forbid students from letting people who are not enrolled in their class read their peers’ writing.
  - ✓ Request that they be alone during video or audio discussions.
  - ✓ Communicate the expectation that no one will copy/paste or otherwise distribute another student’s contribution to the class.



To learn more about creating safe spaces, you may visit [www.glsen.org](http://www.glsen.org)

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LGBT Psychology  
Special Interest Group  
Psychological Association of the Philippines





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