

Action List for Addressing Homophobia in Sport

It is necessary to understand that people take time to change behaviours and attitudes. In most cases, individuals need to first be made aware that an issue or problem exists, and then understand it. Once they understand it, they can begin to make changes in their behaviours and actions. This is certainly the case with homophobia. The following action lists are divided into three stages:

Stage 1: Creating Awareness and Understanding of Homophobia

If people in your organization are unaware that there is an issue around homophobia, it is necessary to help them become aware before they understand that there is a need for change. In creating awareness, here are some actions that have proven success.

- ___ Become aware of 'heterosexual privilege' in sport and society. (see *Section 9 of Participant Handout*)
- ___ Educate yourself and colleagues about lesbian and gay issues in sport.
- ___ Assume there are lesbians and gays involved in your organization.
- ___ Provide opportunities for open discussion on homophobia allowing for expression of concern, fears, expectations, challenges.
- ___ Learn the language and terms used to allow for meaningful discussion.
- ___ Provide anecdotes and stories to help others understand other situations. These make powerful messages.
- ___ Monitor your own stereotyped beliefs and challenge them if necessary.
- ___ Ask for opinions about issues facing lesbians in your sport and compile suggestions for change.
- ___ Promote the benefits to your sport of allowing all to be able to participate fully as a whole person, not hiding a part of themselves.
- ___ Involve people in the process making sure they have a clear understanding of the problem and desired outcome.
- ___ Share information regularly and take time to celebrate successes and reward progress.
- ___ Challenge any words or comments that demean individuals because of their sexual orientation.
- ___ Do not make assumptions about people's sexual orientation.

Stage 2: Preparing for Action

- ___ Create a 'Positive Space' where you practice sport.
- ___ Speak out against harassment due to sexual orientation.
- ___ Clearly state the organization/team/club's expectation of acceptance of diversity among all members.
- ___ Prepare a plan for implementing a welcoming and respectful environment, including a clear vision of what it looks like.
- ___ Put a "Positive Space" sticker in your office, locker room.
- ___ Learn to use inclusive language and seize the teachable moment.
- ___ Include sexual orientation in equity and non-discrimination policies and procedures.
- ___ Develop anti-harassment policies and include sexual orientation.
- ___ Educate organizational/team personnel on homophobia and discrimination based on sexual orientation.
- ___ Build a network for support.
- ___ Consider taking steps to live life more openly if you are lesbian or gay – become visible.
- ___ Know what community support is available for lesbians and gays seeking affirmative counseling or support services.

- ___ Answer questions about sexual orientation in ways that do not support or accept prejudice.
- ___ Ensure same sex partners are offered the status and benefits afforded heterosexual partners.
- ___ Ensure expectations for dress and appearance are gender-neutral.
- ___ Ensure sexual orientation is not a factor in hiring, eligibility, awards.

Stage 3: Maintaining

- ___ Set examples through their actions of your leaders.
- ___ Respect the rights of all, regardless of differences.
- ___ Maintain a safe and respectful environment for all.
- ___ Respond to others based on character and ability, not sexuality.
- ___ Celebrate successes.
- ___ Continue to build a critical mass of people committed to the vision.
- ___ Watch for windows of opportunity to make changes.

ACTION PLAN FOR MY ORGANIZATION

As a result of the discussion, I am going to implement the following actions in my organization:

Action 1

- Who will I get involved in this?
- When will I initiate? Complete?
- What will be different as a result of this action?

Action 2

- Who will I get involved in this?
- When will I initiate? Complete?
- What will be different as a result of this action?

