



LGBTQ+ Inclusion Recommendations

USRowing celebrates the vast differences within our sport and the individuals who bring their whole selves to the boat. To ensure clubs have the resources they need to make their clubs more inclusive, we put together guidelines.

Getting Started: The Seven Pillars of Inclusion

The Seven Pillars model is a broad framework to give sports clubs and associations a starting point to address inclusion and belonging. It is about giving you an overarching view of the common elements that contribute to creating inclusive environments in our rowing clubs. The seven pillars are:

- **Access** - Physical access is just one part of the equation. Make sure your environment is welcoming physically but also attitudinally.
- **Attitude** - Good intentions don't always translate to positive outcomes; know your WHY.
- **Choice** - Find a way for everyone to participate at the level of their choice.
- **Partnerships** - Create mutually beneficial partnerships in the community.
- **Communication** - Speak and listen so that you hear from all members - that might mean adapting your communication style and/or protocols.
- **Policy** - Make your commitment known and have protections in place for discussions when things go off course.
- **Opportunities** - New opportunities don't happen by chance. Be intentional about the changes you make so all people have a fair opportunity.

For more information about the Seven Pillars - [Play by the Rules](#) [excerpt taken from chapter six of USRowing's Level 2 Coaching Certification by Dr. Jenny Withycombe]

LGBTQ+ Inclusion in Athletics:

- [Policy Tips from the Athlete Ally](#)
- [Gender Spectrum](#) [customized resources based on what role you play in a young person's life and what you're looking for]
- [Game Plan for Administrators and Athletic Directors](#)
- [NCLR's On the Team Resource](#) [best practices start on page 35]

- [NCAA Resource on LGBTQ+ Inclusion](#)

Operational Best Practices:

- **Athlete Registration:** Club and team registration forms should be inclusive and ask about the following:
 - Gender: *What is your gender? _____ [Ideally, you can keep it open-ended and a write-in. If not, make sure you have a non-binary option.]*
 - Pronouns: *What are your pronouns? _____ [Ideally, you can keep it open-ended and a write-in. If not, make sure you have a non-binary option.]*
- **Visual Affirmation:** Signal that you are an organization where belonging is valued by having a rainbow flag or logo on your website, in-person events, and more.
- **Uniforms:** When it comes to uniforms, our recommendation is to have a few universal options for all athletes – not gender-specific clothing choices.
- **Facilities, Overnights, and Travel:**
 - All-gender restrooms should be available at all facilities and the location signage should be made clear to all athletes.
 - All athletes should be assigned to share accommodations based on their gender identity, with a recognition that privacy may be important to athletes of all genders. Identity should not be the basis to implement privacy accommodations. Rather, access to private changing, bathing, and restroom spaces should be available to all athletes.
 - To ensure gender-diverse athletes feel supported at their home boathouse and on the road, we recommend having a confidential conversation around establishing safety protocols and supports reflective of the athlete's individual needs and developing an athlete support plan. It is always important to get the athlete's prior consent about whom should be included in this conversation, including parents/caregivers. [Here is a conversation guide we borrowed from swimming.](#)

Language Matters! Click on the links below to review some helpful resources on words that work and words that don't.

- [Glossary of LGBTQ Terms](#)
- [Together We Thrive Gender Terminology PDF](#)
- In general, be intentional about how you phrase questions and conversations with young people. For example:
 - Do not say: "Are you going with a boy to prom?" to an athlete on your girls' team. Instead consider: "Are you going solo, in a group, or with a date to prom?" or "What are your plans for prom?"
 - Respect people's gender identity and pronouns. Consider adding your pronouns to your email, business cards, Zoom account, and more to show that you respect others' pronouns.
 - Be aware that language and the identities of people can be fluid. Adjust as needed without making a big deal of things.

Training: *If you're seeking coaching or training as an individual or a club, please check out the following resources.*

- [Coaching Peace](#)
- [Training Institute](#)
- [Doc Wayne](#)
- [Pneumos](#)

Resources for Parents and Caregivers of LGBTQ+ Youth:

- [Say Yes and Portland Public Schools Guide](#)
- [Being an Ally to a LGBTQ+ Athlete](#)
- [Other support and a place to take action](#)
- [Genderbread.org](#)
- [Self-Esteem Resources for Non-binary Youth](#)

Resources for LGBTQ+ Athletes:

- <https://www.youcanplayproject.org/>
- <https://www.glsen.org/>
- <https://www.athleteally.org/>
- <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/>
- <https://www.glaad.org/>

If you have a resource to share that is not represented here that you'd like to share or you have ideas to help make rowing more inclusive across the country, please reach out to jennie.trayes@usrowing.org.