

CULTURAL INCLUSION


# LGBTQ

RESOURCE GUIDE



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>3</b>	<b>Diversity &amp; Inclusion Mission</b>	External Indicators of Support
<b>3</b>	<b>Our Policy</b>	Indicators for LGBTQ families specifically
<b>4</b>	<b>Who's Who</b>	<b>Working With An Athlete Who Identifies As Transgender</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Vocabulary</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>By the Numbers</b>	Transgender Etiquette
	General Statistics	Facilities
	Harassment/Bullying	Competition Rules
	Critical Ages of Awareness	<b>28</b>
	Importance of Acceptance When Someone Comes Out	<b>Safe Sport</b>
	What are the Risk Factors for LGBTQ youth and young adults?	Electronic Communication, Anti-Bullying, Travel
<b>13</b>	<b>Creating a Safe Space</b>	Model Locker room Policy
	Policy	Healthy Sexual Development
	Education	Transgender Inclusion: Best Practices for a Minor
	Preparing for Common Scenarios	<b>30</b>
	Stopping Micro-Aggression	<b>Resources</b>
		<b>31</b>
		<b>References</b>



**ALWAYS ACT WITH  
THE ASSUMPTION  
THAT THERE ARE  
LGBTQ MEMBERS ON  
YOUR TEAM**

# DIVERSITY & INCLUSION MISSION

USA Swimming is committed to a culture of inclusion and opportunity for people of diverse backgrounds, including, but not limited to, race, age, income, ethnicity, religion, gender, gender expression, and sexual orientation.

## OUR **POLICY**

The USA Swimming Code of Conduct prohibits discrimination against any member or participant on the basis of age, gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, sexual orientation, gender expression, genetics, mental or physical disability, or any other status protected by federal, state, or local law (304.3.3).

## WHY **THE GUIDE?**

The intent of this resource guide is to help coaches, parents and clubs provide a safe and inclusive environment for all of its athletes. The guide was created due to growing requests from our membership to provide resources and tools to help navigate this topic.

# WHO'S WHO?



## ◀ TOM LUCHSINGER

- Fifth in the 200 meter butterfly at the 2013 FINA World Championships
- Gold in the 200 meter butterfly at the 2013 US National Championships
- Three-Time member of the USA Swimming National Team
- 10-time NCAA All-American swimmer for the University of North Carolina
- 5 time individual Atlantic Coast Conference champion
- 12 time Atlantic Coast Conference Medalist
- Named Swimmer of the Year 2013 by the Atlantic Coast Conference

### **DATES HE WILL NEVER FORGET:**

**August 27, 2014:** The corner of 87th and Lexington in Manhattan at a restaurant called Bocado: This was the first time I ever mumbled the three words "I am gay."

**September 28, 2014:** Room 6909 of the Hyatt Regency O'Hare in Chicago: I told my parents on the telephone, after an internally stressful appearance with the Fitter & Faster Swim Tour—I was afraid of how people would react to me teaching their children if they knew I was a gay man.

**December 15, 2014:** 303 International Circle, Suite 10 in Hunt Valley, Maryland: I came out publicly in order to help people who continue to struggle.



## LAWRENCE (BRUCE)

### HAYES

- Gold medal in the Men's 4x200 meter Freestyle Relay (1984 Los Angeles Olympic Games)
- Three U.S. national titles, seven medals at the 1983 World University Games and three golds at the 1983 Pan American Games
- Recipient of the 1984 Phillips 66 Performance of the Year Award
- Member of the UCLA men's swimming team that won the NCAA Championships in 1982
- In 1990, he became the first Olympic gold medalist to compete in the Gay Games
- Inducted into the Texas Swimming and Diving Hall of Fame in 2012

"I came out to my family in 1988 and to the public in 1990 when I competed in Gay Games III in Vancouver. At that time, there were very few prominent athletes who were out. Today – 26 years later – it's gratifying to see how much has changed. Most people now understand that being a gay man and an amazing athlete are not mutually exclusive and, as a result, more accomplished athletes are comfortable coming out. I'm proud to have played a small part in that."



### RYAN

- Gold medalist in the 4x200 meter freestyle relay and bronze medalist in the 400 meter freestyle (2015 Pan American Games)
- Member of the U.S. National Team (2012-15)
- Gold in 400 meter freestyle and the 800 meter freestyle (2013 U.S. Open)
- Five time NCAA All-American Honorable Mention swimmer at University of Michigan (2016: 500 and 1,650 yard freestyle, 800 yard freestyle relay, 2015; 1,650 yard freestyle and 800 yard freestyle relay)

"It took time for me to find the vocabulary to express how I defined myself. Until I did that, I couldn't explain that to anyone else. Words and their meanings have power, and as part of the LGBTQ community, I wish to use words to establish solidarity and build a network of support for people of all identities."

As a genderqueer swimmer, I have to balance the love I have for my sport and my team with the struggle of lacking a space to express my identity. Being an athlete is an important part of who I am, but I believe that as a community, we need to expressly welcome everyone to experience all that this arena has to offer."



## ABI LIU

- Head coach of PEAK Swimming
- Chief Operating Officer of Saratoga Star Aquatics and head coach of Milpitas Star Aquatics (swim schools)
- Member of the Chinese National team for 7 years, broke the national record in the 200 meter backstroke, was 2x National Champion, won gold at the 1993 FINA World Cup, and silver at the 1994 Asia Games
- Recruited to the Chinese National Team at age 13 as the youngest swimmer on the team at the time
- Currently coaches USA Swimming and Pacific Swimming Age Group

Record Holders through Olympic Trial and National qualifiers

- Involved in growing learn to swim programs in the Bay Area
- As a member of the LGBTQ community; she and her wife mentors and support young athletes in and out of the pool

“My entire life swimming has been a big part of my identity. I decided I needed to be true to myself and the rest of the world about being a proud member of the LGBTQ community. When I did, the swimming community not only embraced and accepted me, my openness gave others the strength to do the same.”

## CHIP PETERSON

- Gold in the 10K open water event:
  - World Championships (2005)
  - Pan Pacific Championships (2006, 2010)
  - Pan American Championships (2015, Silver 2007)
  - National Championships (2005, 2006, 2007)
- Gold in the 1500m freestyle at the Pan American Games (2007)
- USA Swimming Board of Directors Athlete Representative (2015-2016)

“I live in Durham, North Carolina with Cameron, my partner of 5 years, and our dog, Lola. My swimming ‘family’ has always been an incredibly supportive group of people. A large amount of my social support structure while I was coming out came from my teammates and swimming friends. Both the physical activity of swimming and the friendships I made through swimming helped me through some of my toughest moments.”





## JEFF COMMINGS

- Bronze in the 100 breaststroke (1991 Pan American Games)
- Member of the USA Swimming National Junior Team (1989-1991) and National Team (1993-1994)
- Former swimmer for the University of Texas, Austin; 9-time All American and 4-time Southwest Conference champion
- Second-oldest male American swimmer at the 2012 U.S. Olympic Trials, where he competed in the 100 breaststroke
- Has broken nearly 20 FINA Masters world records and nearly 30 U.S. Masters Swimming national records

- First Masters championship meet was 2002 Gay Games in Sydney, Australia; won five gold medals and set five meet records
- Co-founder of the Dolphins of the Desert Swimming Academy
- Author of *Odd Man Out – An Autobiography: True Stories of a Gay Black Swimmer*

“Publicly coming out as a gay man in 1999 destroyed the demons I carried with me about my place in society. Living my life openly has allowed me to succeed in many areas, especially in the pool, where I am almost swimming as fast as I was in my 20s! Though many feel staying in the closet is the safest place to be, swimmers are lucky because they are a part of one of the most inclusive and welcoming sports in the world.”

## SCHUYLER BAILAR

- First openly transgender athlete to compete in any sport on an NCAA Division 1 men’s team
- Member of the Harvard varsity swim team
- Member of the record breaking National Age Group record relay team in the 15-18 400 M.R. (2013)
- Has swum competitively since age 7

- His historic story has hit Facebook’s top-trending news and has been recounted globally in hundreds of media outlets from The Washington Post and 60 Minutes to The Ellen Show
- MTV cited his story in their list of “2015’s Best Moments for the Trans Community” and BuzzFeed named him one of the “11 Transgender people who are shifting our views.”

“Being transgender is not an illness. It’s part of my identity—it’s part of who I am.”

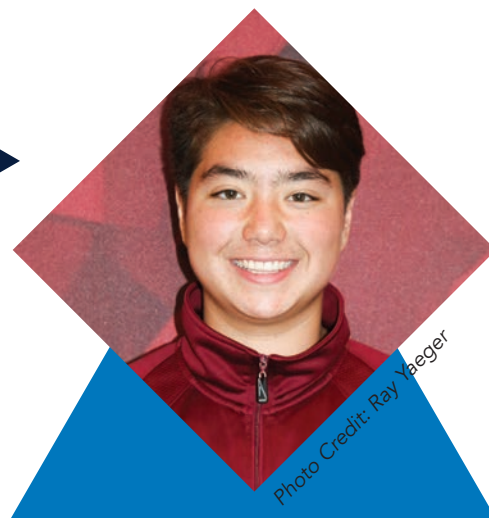
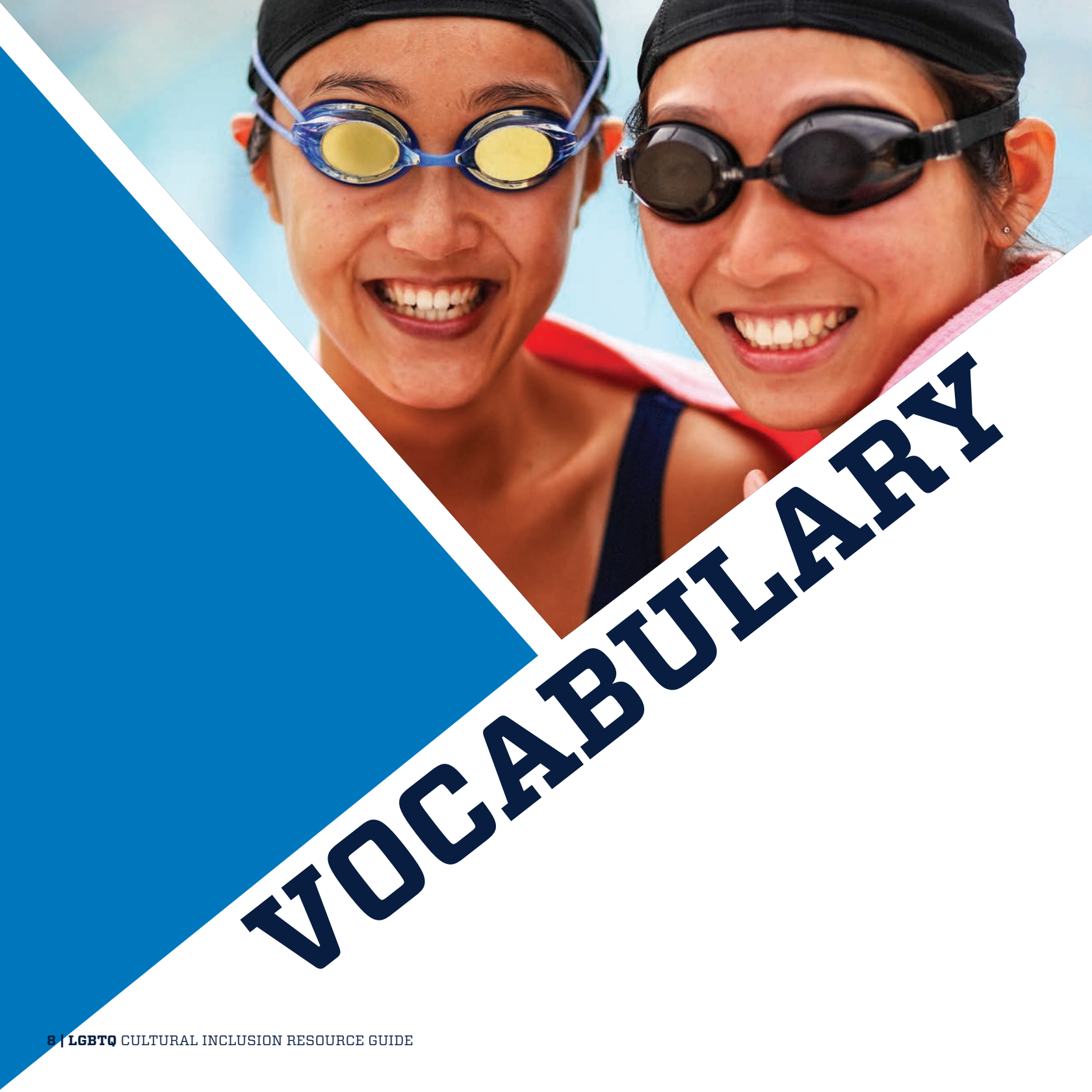


Photo Credit: Ray Yaeger



# VOCABULARY



# “YOU DON’T HAVE TO KEEP UP, YOU JUST HAVE TO KEEP OPEN,”

ANNA MADRIGAL,  
TALES OF THE CITY

## LGBTQ

**Lesbian:** A woman who is attracted to other women.

**Gay:** Any person who is attracted to persons of the same gender.

**Bisexual:** Any person who is attracted to persons of both genders.

**Transgender:** A person whose gender identity or gender expression differs from the sex assigned at birth.

**Questioning:** An individual who is uncertain of their gender identity or sexual orientation.

*Please Note—you may see LGBTQIA sometimes used in place of LGBT or LGBTQ. It is an abbreviation for lesbian-gay-bisexual-transgender-questioning-intersex-ally.*

## DEFINITIONS

**Intersex:** A person born with genitalia that doesn’t fit standard categories of male or female. May include full or partial sex organs of both male and female anatomy, or ambiguous sex organs.

**Ally:** A person, group, or organization advocating for a non-dominant social group, working together for equity and social justice.

**Gender Identity:** A person’s internal feeling of being a specific gender; relates to whether an individual feels comfortable in the gender they were assigned at birth.

**Gender Expression:** Refers to the ways which we each express masculinity and femininity. Each of us expresses a particular gender everyday- by the way we style our hair, select clothing or even by how we physically present ourselves through speech or mannerisms.

**Genderqueer or Gender Fluid:** A gender identity that does not fit into either male or female.

**Gender Binary:** The classification of sex and gender as two distinct forms of masculine and feminine.

**Homophobia:** Having negative feelings and/or attitudes towards homosexuality and persons who identify as being LGBTQ.

## TERMS TO AVOID<sup>1</sup>:

Language regarding the LGBTQ community is constantly changing, and people may not always know if their terminology is offensive. A term may be inoffensive to some LGBTQ identified people, but very offensive to others. As a general rule, don’t use a word unless you are sure that it is respectful. When in doubt, ask.

Here is a quick list of words to avoid:

- Queer
- Homosexual, Hermaphrodite
- Gaydar
- Queen
- Lifestyle, Preference, Choice, Alternate Family
- Transvestite

**3.8%**

OF ADULTS IN THE U.S.  
IDENTIFY AS LGBT.<sup>2</sup>

**8%**

8% OF MILLENNIALS IN THE U.S. IDENTIFY AS LGBT:  
1% AS LESBIAN, 2% AS GAY, 4% AS BISEXUAL AND  
1% AS TRANSGENDER.<sup>3</sup>

# BY THE NUMBERS

**6**

MILLION AMERICANS  
IN THE U.S. HAVE  
AN LGBT IDENTIFIED  
PARENT.<sup>4</sup>

**2M**

THERE ARE NEARLY  
2 MILLION SAME-  
SEX COUPLES IN THE  
UNITED STATES, OF  
WHOM 780,000  
ARE MARRIED.<sup>5</sup>

**\$884b**

THE LGBT COMMUNITY  
WAS ESTIMATED TO  
HAVE A BUYING POWER  
OF \$884 BILLION, IN  
2014.<sup>6</sup>

LGBT PEOPLE MAKE UP SIMILAR PERCENTAGES OF ALL ETHNIC GROUPS.<sup>7</sup>

## HARASSMENT/BULLYING<sup>8</sup>

- Over 28% of LGBT student-athletes report harassment on a sports team due to their sexual orientation or gender expression.
- LGBT students often avoid athletic spaces at school because they feel unsafe.
- 75% of LGBT students don't feel comfortable talking to gym teachers or coaches about LGBT issues.



## CRITICAL AGES OF AWARENESS<sup>9</sup>

- Between ages 4-6, kids are aware that they are different than others.
- Between ages 9-11, kids are aware of sexual attraction.
- Between the ages 14-16, kids develop an awareness of sexual orientation.

\*Ages are approximate and this is a general timeline.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF ACCEPTANCE WHEN SOMEONE COMES OUT<sup>10</sup>

When someone comes out about their sexual orientation, a lack of acceptance from others can be detrimental to their mental health. For many, it can lead to depression, drug use, risky sexual behavior, and suicidal ideation.

FAMILY ACCEPTANCE	LIFETIME SUICIDE ATTEMPTS	CLINICAL DEPRESSION	ILLEGAL DRUG USE, LAST 6 MONTHS	STD DIAGNOSIS EVER
Extremely Accepting	25%	17%	48%	25%
Very Accepting	55%	33%	51%	20%
A Little Accepting	43%	46%	68%	33%
Not at all Accepting	81%	70%	78%	60%

## WHAT ARE THE RISK FACTORS FOR LGBTQ YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULTS?<sup>11</sup>

	HETEROSEXUAL YOUTH	LGB YOUTH
Ever bullied?	16%	25%
Forced into Sex?	6%	16%
Homeless as a teen?	3%	25%
Ever depressed?	23%	44%
Attempted suicide?	6%	22–37% (depends on study)
Attempted suicide in the past 12 months	4.2%	21.5%
Considered suicide?	<1%	50%



# CREATING A SAFE SPACE

“DURING MY MANY YEARS AS A CLOSETED ATHLETE, THE SPORT PROVIDED ME WITH A HEALTHY OUTLET FOR FEELINGS I COULD NOT AND DID NOT WANT TO UNDERSTAND. INSTEAD OF TURNING TO DRUGS OR ALCOHOL TO COPE—LIKE SO MANY PEOPLE DO—I TRANSFORMED MY EMOTIONAL STRUGGLE INTO PHYSICAL PAIN, TAKING OUT MY FRUSTRATION ON THE WATER.”

—TOM LUCHSINGER

## CLUB POLICY

Teams can foster an inclusive environment by creating policies that prohibit discrimination on the pool deck, in locker rooms and at meets.

The Safe Sport section of this transgender inclusion guide (page 28) provides information on model locker room protocol your team can adopt.

We encourage clubs to also insert LGBTQ specific language into their existing code of conduct and anti-bullying policy. Model policies with this language can be found on USA Swimming's Diversity & Inclusion resources page: [www.usaswimming.org/diversity](http://www.usaswimming.org/diversity).

Here are a few things to consider when creating or updating team policies:

- Evaluate your current policy. Does the policy protect against bullying in general? Does it specifically protect against LGBTQ-based harassment?
- Designate someone to train members of your team about LGBTQ issues, the new policy, and ways to stop inappropriate behavior. Make sure this person is either already trained or can be trained on LGBTQ inclusion.
- If you or members of your staff are uncomfortable having this educational discussion, ask someone from your local LGBTQ resource centers to help. University advocacy

groups are also a good place to get started or contact a USA Swimming Diversity and Inclusion staff member: [inclusion@usaswimming.org](mailto:inclusion@usaswimming.org).

- Use LGBTQ specific language to update your team's policies, code of conduct and anti-bullying policy. Prohibit harassment based on gender identity, gender expression, and an athlete's decision to break gender norms.
- Include specific examples of what might constitute harassment based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression (i.e. demeaning or inappropriate language, bullying, etc.).
- Communicate often with your parents and swimmers and give them contact information to reach out with follow up questions.
- Always strive to create a safe, open dialogue with your team.

*\*Recommendations based on the "Best Practices: Creating an LGBT- inclusive School Climate" factsheet by Teaching Tolerance<sup>12</sup>*

# EDUCATION

Club policies are most effective when understood and supported by all members of the team. Educating key stakeholders about LGBTQ issues will foster non-discrimination and inclusion. Education might be as simple as a 15-20 minute conversation at the start of practice where the head coach explains team policies and discusses the importance of LGBTQ inclusion. A more extensive discussion could occur during a team meeting or parent event.

When educating your athletes, parents, and coaching staff, emphasize the importance of making everyone feel welcome and safe on your team. Refer to USA Swimming's Code of Conduct (304.3.3) or your own team policies and make team expectations clear.

In this section, we discuss common questions in regards to educating your team.

## 1. WHO SHOULD I DISCUSS LGBTQ INCLUSION WITH?

Everyone on your team plays a unique and important role. The expectation of safety and respect must be understood and accepted by ALL members of your team. It is recommended that education should extend to coaches, staff, facility owners/ liaisons, parents, and athletes, in this order.

Why educate each group?

- **Coaches and staff** - educating administrators can lead to improved anti-bullying policies and encourage them to have inclusion in mind at all times.
- **Facility owners/liaisons** – open communication and a good working relationship with your facility managers is paramount especially in the realm of transgender athletes, where accommodating locker room requests is an important step to creating a safe space. See the facilities section on page 26.
- **Parents** – parents can reinforce anti-bullying policies set by your team.
- **Athletes** -- swimmers can identify inappropriate behavior and understand why it is wrong. They can influence the actions of their peer group, and report harassment when they witness it. Communication can also reassure LGBTQ athletes and parents that your team will provide support and resources.

## 2. WHAT SHOULD I TALK ABOUT?

Here are key topics to cover with your team.

TOPIC	GOAL
Vocabulary and key terms	Eliminate offensive language
Statistics—who and how many people identify as LGBTQ	Build empathy and understanding
The impact of bullying and unacceptance on LGBTQ depression, drug use and suicide among LGBTQ people	Build empathy and understanding
Forms of harassment and unconscious aggression	Empower team members to recognize bullying when it occurs and report it. Build empathy and understanding
Club's current policy around LGBTQ members of the team	Understand expected behavior and the consequences of violating policy. Recognize and report violations.

## 3. HOW SHOULD I DISCUSS EACH TOPIC?

How you educate members of your team depends on who you are talking to. We recommend approaching athletes, parents, coaching staff and administrators separately and in different ways. It is also wise to split your swimmers up into age groups. Your discussion with senior swimmers will be very different from your discussion with young athletes. All groups should cover the topics that we mentioned, but to differing degrees.

If you do not already have anti-bullying/non-discrimination policies in place, work to educate your team administrators first and update your policy with LGBTQ specific language. Use your team's written policy to frame your conversation with parents and athletes.

### COACHES AND STAFF:

- Always have a conversation with your administrators and staff before approaching the parents and athletes.
- Have someone facilitate an open and honest conversation. If you are uncomfortable facilitating this conversation, ask someone from your local LGBTQ resource centers to help. University advocacy groups are also a good place to get started or contact a USA Swimming Diversity and Inclusion staff member: [inclusion@usaswimimg.org](mailto:inclusion@usaswimimg.org).
- Start by discussing why LGBTQ inclusion is important. Talk about statistics, stories, vocabulary, and the impact of bullying.

- Transition into a discussion about current team policies. Do you have a policy for anti-bullying and locker room monitoring? Does the policy get enforced?
- Discuss the current culture of the team. Is the culture of the team welcoming to LGBTQ athletes and families? (For example: Are safe space symbols displayed? Does your team offer sensitivity and inclusion training to its members and volunteers?)
- Would a LGBTQ athlete feel comfortable enough to continue swimming? To come out?
- Would LGBTQ parents feel comfortable having their child on your team?
- Discuss how a change in policy will be received by your membership.
- Talk to coaches about what their role is, and establish a uniform way of discussing LGBTQ inclusion to athletes and parents.
- Discuss inclusion in other areas: disabilities, race and ethnicity, gender, age, language. Stress that your focus is inclusion of EVERYONE.
- Let parents know you will be discussing this topic beforehand. If something occurs before you are able to hold this educational session, be sure to communicate it with the parents as soon as possible afterwards.



## **EDUCATING YOUNG ATHLETES - THROUGH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL:**

When talking to young swimmers about LGBTQ inclusion, it's important to be age appropriate. Here are a few tips:

- Let parents know you will be discussing this topic beforehand. If something occurs before you are able to hold this educational session, be sure to communicate it with the parents as soon as possible afterwards.
- Don't go into great detail with scary statistics.
- Don't worry about explaining the more complicated vocabulary words. Stick to basic vocabulary (gay, lesbian, ally, etc.) and basic examples of words not to use (hurtful or demeaning words such as weird, queer, abnormal, etc.)
- Explain that it's wrong to be a bully and what to do if they see someone being mean.
- Have more than one discussion, but keep each conversation short.
- Throughout the entire conversation, emphasize love, relationships and respect for all people.
- Stress that your focus is inclusion of EVERYONE.

## **EDUCATING MIDDLE SCHOOL TO COLLEGE AGE SWIMMERS:**

- Use statistics and stories.
- Emphasize that they can make a difference.
- Explain how to identify and intervene during instances of bullying or inappropriate language by peers. Tell them who they should report inappropriate behavior to.
- Stress that inclusion is about safety and respect.
- Discuss privacy and respect. Ask them to imagine their deepest secret being exposed.
- Discuss hurtful language and ways to be supportive.
- Talk clearly about your expectations and explain why inclusion is so important to the team.
- Discuss inclusion in other areas: disabilities, race and ethnicity, gender, age, language. Stress that your focus is inclusion of EVERYONE.

If you are uncomfortable facilitating this conversation, ask someone from your local LGBTQ resource centers to help. University advocacy groups are also a good place to get started or contact a USA Swimming Diversity and Inclusion staff member: [inclusion@usaswimimg.org](mailto:inclusion@usaswimimg.org).

## **PARENTS:**

- Emphasize that you want to make children feel safe and included.
  - Encourage them to imagine how they would feel if their child were bullied.
  - Ask them to think about what giving up swimming would mean for their child. Is it fair to exclude an LGBTQ swimmer who loves swimming as much as your child?
  - Use statistics and stories.
  - Teach vocabulary words.
  - Have someone facilitate an open and honest conversation. Parents should be able to voice their concerns.
  - If you are uncomfortable facilitating this conversation, ask someone from your local LGBTQ resource centers to help. University advocacy groups are also a good place to get started or contact a USA Swimming Diversity and Inclusion staff member: [inclusion@usaswimming.org](mailto:inclusion@usaswimming.org).
- Discuss inclusion in other areas: disabilities, race and ethnicity, gender, age, language. Stress that your focus is inclusion of EVERYONE. Encourage them to talk to you privately if they have more questions, or if you feel that a parent is being openly disrespectful.
  - Devote a parent meeting to this discussion, then follow up with short personal conversations. Thank them for their openness and candor. Say, "I know that last week's parent meeting brought up some new topics. The team feels strongly about incorporating values of inclusion to all. Do you have any concerns?"
  - Use yourself as a model by letting them know that these are issues that are fairly new to be discussing in our culture. Say, "I know LGBTQ issues may not have been discussed in the past, but we are most concerned with the safety and well-being of the athletes, and want every athlete to succeed in an inclusive environment."
  - Emphasize that team policies extend to all volunteers.

# PREPARING FOR COMMON SCENARIOS

Here we will discuss scenarios that you or other members of your team may encounter.

## **AS A COACH, WHAT DO I DO WHEN AN ATHLETE COMES OUT AS LGBTQ?**

- Listen.
- Be open and respectful.
- If you are unsure about anything, ask.
- Ask if they have come out to others or if they prefer to keep the information private.
- Honor confidentiality; never “out” someone.
- Ask how you can help. What do they need from you and the team?
- For transgender athletes, ask which pronouns they use, and if they need any accommodations.
- Only with their permission, talk to their parent to get a sense of how their home life might be supportive or detrimental to their health and well-being.
- Discuss the current policies in place to protect the athlete against harassment. Revise if necessary.
- If the athlete is open about their sexual orientation, discuss inclusion with their peers.
- Be an ally: correct offensive behavior and stand up for the LGBTQ athlete.

## **AS AN ATHLETE, WHAT DO I DO WHEN A PEER COMES OUT AS LGBTQ?**

- Listen.
- Be open and respectful.
- Ask if they have come out to others or if they prefer to keep the information private.
- Ask how you can help. What do they need from you to feel comfortable?
- Honor confidentiality; never “out” someone.
- Be an ally: correct offensive behavior and stand up for the LGBTQ athlete as an equal.

## **AS A PARENT, WHAT DO I DO IF MY CHILD COMES OUT TO HIS OR HER SWIM TEAM?**

- Speak to the head coach about existing policies.
- Establish open and ongoing communication with the head coach.
- Be an ally: correct offensive behavior among other parents and athletes.
- Talk to your child about whether or not they feel included on the team. Discuss with coach when necessary.
- Ask your child and your head coach how you can help.

# STOPPING **MICRO-AGGRESSIONS**

Micro-aggression is the subtle discrimination experience by marginalized groups in their everyday life. It can take the form of backhanded comments or can be unintentionally used by well-meaning people. Micro-aggressions are considered a common form of harassment/bullying by adults and children.

If you notice inappropriate comments by parents, athletes, or staff, explain that they are contributing to hurtful stereotypes. Micro-aggressions are often used by people that don't realize they are being disrespectful. Here are a few examples of common micro-aggressions.

"That's so gay"

"Wow, two girls, that's hot"

"I'm not sleeping in the same room as a gay guy"

"I'm not homophobic, but..."

"You're too pretty to be a lesbian"

"I like gay guys who aren't, like, too gay, you know what I mean?"

"Are you sure you're [insert sexual orientation or gender identity]?"

"What you do behind closed doors is none of my business."

One strategy for addressing micro-aggressions from athletes is to repeat back the meaning of what the person said. For example, if you hear someone say "You're too pretty to be a lesbian," ask them to consider what that statement just inferred. Say, "When I hear you say that, it sounds like you're saying all lesbians are ugly. Please be more careful with your words." Explain why words may be hurtful and discuss the danger of stereotyping. Ask the person to avoid discussing people in terms of their sexual orientation and gender identity.

As always, consider who you are talking to and use that to decide the best approach. Talking to parents about micro-aggressions will require great tact: don't use a scolding tone, remain polite and friendly, and always address them in private. If diplomacy is not your strength, identify someone on your staff who is good at having hard conversations and ask them to have the hard conversation. You can also ask someone from your local LGBTQ resource centers to help. University advocacy groups are also a good place to get started or contact a USA Swimming Diversity and Inclusion staff member: [inclusion@usaswimming.org](mailto:inclusion@usaswimming.org).

### **HOW DO I DEAL WITH A PARENT HAVING DIFFICULTY WITH THESE POLICIES OF INCLUSION?**

- Listen.
- Be patient.
- Remain polite, but firm.
- Explain why inclusion is the primary goal.
- Encourage them to imagine their child in a situation where they might be bullied or harassed.
- If you are in front of a large group, ask them to speak to you privately after the group meeting.
- Refer to your team's policies and procedures for guidance.

### **HOW DO I DEAL WITH ATHLETES HAVING DIFFICULTY WITH THESE POLICIES OF INCLUSION? WHAT DO I DO WHEN I WITNESS HARASSMENT OR INAPPROPRIATE LANGUAGE?**

- Address the problem right away.
- Be very clear with your expectations.
- Refer to your team's policies and procedures for guidance.
- Let them know that they have violated your policy (if that is the case), and remain true to the consequences laid out in your team policy.
- If the athlete was disrespectful in front of other swimmers, discuss the situation with your entire team.

- Address the individual one-on-one and ask why they did what they did.
- If inappropriate terms or phrases were used, explain why this is not inclusive, and discuss respect and equality.
- Remember that as the adult, you must react when you see harassment in any form. If you don't, children will come to expect adults to do nothing. This can create a hostile environment for the whole team.

### **WHAT DO I DO WHEN A CHILD REPORTS BEING BULLIED?**

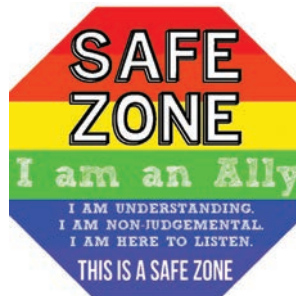
- Remember that it is extremely difficult for a child to report harassment; only 20% of youth report.
- Assure the child that they are a welcome member of the team, and that you will do everything you can to address the problem.
- Discuss the situation with the child's parents. Explain how you plan to address the problem.
- Speak to the "bully" individually. Ask what they did or said, and explain why it is inappropriate. Refer to your written policies and procedures for guidance. Remain true to the consequences laid out in your team policies.

## EXTERNAL INDICATORS OF SUPPORT

Many athletes look for signs and symbols that indicate that a club or sports team is LGBTQ inclusive. Equality symbols like equal signs, safe space decals, and rainbow logos indicate a safe environment without requiring athletes to disclose their sexual identity. Positive signs and symbols empower the athlete, and empowered athletes are healthier, happier, faster swimmers.

Symbols can be very subtle. Small stickers and logos placed on the back of a coach's clip board, at the top of the team white board, on the team website, or on handouts can immediately signify a welcoming environment.

**HERE ARE A FEW LOGOS YOUR TEAM MIGHT CONSIDER.** You can order stickers online, or print out rainbow/safe space images to tape up. Another idea is to create a rainbow with colorful tape.



### **INDICATORS FOR LGBTQ FAMILIES SPECIFICALLY**

Clubs may have athletes from LGBTQ families that greatly value inclusion for themselves and their child. When researching programs for their child, LGBTQ parents will likely look for external indicators to tell them if a club is a good fit. Here are a few ways to signify that both children and parents are welcome:

- On all forms and team documents that refer to parents, use the neutral “parent or legal guardian” rather than “mom or dad.”
- To the extent that the team uses photos of families on the website or marketing materials, make sure that same-sex parents have an opportunity to be represented (with their consent).
- Place rainbow or inclusive imagery on the club website or explicitly state in your mission statement that you are an inclusive team.
- As you would with any family joining the team, invite all parents to be a part of the team by volunteering, observing practices, and discussing their child’s progress on the team.

**WORKING WITH AN ATHLETE WHO  
IDENTIFIES AS TRANSGENDER**



## TRANSGENDER ETIQUETTE

If a member of your swim club discloses their transgender identity, remember to listen, be supportive, remain non-judgmental, educate yourself, and ask about pronoun and name preferences.

Using the correct gender pronouns (he/him/his, she/her/hers, they/their/theirs, among others) is a very important way that coaches can make transgender people feel accepted on the team. If at any time you are not sure what pronoun to use, refer to the person by their name and ask the person what pronouns they use. **A transgender person might tell you that they prefer gender neutral pronouns: they/them, sie/hir (pronounced see/hear) or zie/zim.**

Here are a few basic rules of transgender etiquette:

- Affirm the person's identity by using the pronouns they ask you to use; it is helpful if you identify your own pronouns first and then ask what pronouns they use.
- If you are unsure of one's gender identity, try to avoid pronouns, or use "their."
- It is okay to make a mistake, just be willing to correct yourself, apologize, and move on.
- Create an open discussion with your athlete, and ask when you are unsure.

- Be careful not to "out" anyone publicly. If someone comes out to you, it does not mean that they want everyone to know.
- If you have a general question about transgender people, try a credible source like the Human Rights Campaign.
- Respect the person's privacy.
- Remember that you do not have the right to know any medical or anatomical info about anyone else's body—so don't ask just because you are curious.
- Refrain from asking for their "birth name."
- Don't tell them it's hard or uncomfortable for you.
- Keep in mind that not all transgender people have similar experiences.
- Don't compare a transgender person's experience to a non-transgender person's experience.
- Once a transgender athlete feels safe and validated, you will want to establish an open and honest working relationship as you move forward. The Safe Sport section of this resource guide goes into greater detail about ways to accommodate a transgender athlete, including talking with your athlete about competing at meets, and changing their member registration to the correct gender.



## FACILITIES

Under Safe Sport's recommended practices for the inclusion of minor transgender athletes should be permitted to use the locker room, changing facility, and restroom consistent with their gender identity. Transgender athletes should never be forced to use a separate changing area. However, when requested by a transgender athlete or their family, transgender athletes should be provided access to a gender-neutral space.

Gender-neutral facilities create safe spaces for transgender athletes who may fear harassment from their peers. Separate facilities may be especially helpful for transgender athletes who undergo physical changes as they transition from one gender to another.

Most new construction requires a third bathroom/locker room to be built for gender neutral use, but most swim teams still practice in old buildings that may not have these facilities available. Here are a few tips to accommodate in an aging facility:

1. Convert a family changing area or other existing space to a gender neutral locker room.
2. **Change signage when appropriate to use gender-neutral language like "Gender Inclusive" or "All-Gender." Make sure images on signs are also gender neutral.**
3. Accommodations need to be convenient, and properly located (i.e. close to the pool, large enough for changing).
4. Work with your building manager to discuss options and optimize the outcome.
5. Work with your local LGBTQ alliance organization to get advice.
6. Contact USA Swimming Facilities Department for help (719) 866-4578 or [www.usaswimming.org/facilities](http://www.usaswimming.org/facilities)

## COMPETITION RULES

Rules and policies regarding transgender athlete participation in competitions can be found on the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and FINA websites. Always refer to their websites for the most up-to-date policies.

- <http://www.olympic.org/ioc>
- <http://www.fina.org/>

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- **Trans\*Athlete:** A resource for students, athletes, coaches and administrators to find information about transgender inclusion in athletes at various levels of play. [www.transathlete.com](http://www.transathlete.com)
- **NCAA Inclusion of Transgender Student:** [https://www.ncaa.org/sites/default/files/Transgender\\_Handbook\\_2011\\_Final.pdf](https://www.ncaa.org/sites/default/files/Transgender_Handbook_2011_Final.pdf)
- **Pride in Sport: Guidance for Swimming Governing Bodies on LGBT Inclusion:** [http://www.prideinsport.info/wp-content/uploads/prideinsport-swimming\\_guidance.pdf](http://www.prideinsport.info/wp-content/uploads/prideinsport-swimming_guidance.pdf)



# SAFE SPORT



In this section, we provide an overview of relevant policy and best practices provided by USA Swimming Safe Sport.

### **1. ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION, ANTI-BULLYING, TRAVEL:**

All clubs are required to have policies for electronic communication, anti-bullying, and team travel. We encourage clubs to review and update their current policies to address LGBTQ related issues. Model policies can be found on the Safe Sport website:

- [www.usaswimming.org/toolkit](http://www.usaswimming.org/toolkit) → Model Policies and Guidelines

### **2. MODEL LOCKER ROOM MONITORING POLICY**

Physical and verbal harassment often occurs in locker rooms due to the lack of supervision. As coaches, parents, and administrators, it can be scary to think that what happens in the locker room is beyond your control. Safe Sport provides a model locker room monitoring policy online to help clubs cultivate a safe locker room culture.

- [www.usaswimming.org/toolkit](http://www.usaswimming.org/toolkit) → Model Policies and Guidelines → Model Policy Locker Room Monitoring

### **3. HEALTHY SEXUAL DEVELOPMENT**

As children development mentally, emotionally, and physically, it can be helpful to understand the timeline of healthy sexual development. Coaches and parents need to be aware of the changes affecting children they work with on a daily basis.

Safe Sport's Healthy Sexual Development fact sheet outlines normal sexual behavior from ages six to eighteen. This relates to all children exploring their sexuality, not just LGBTQ youth.

- [www.usaswimming.org/toolkit](http://www.usaswimming.org/toolkit) → Safe Sport Basics → Fact Sheet: Healthy Sexual Development

### **4. TRANSGENDER INCLUSION: BEST PRACTICES FOR A MINOR**

A minor transgender athlete member should be allowed to participate in accordance with their gender identity, irrespective of the gender listed on the athlete's birth certificate or other records and regardless of whether the athlete has undergone any medical treatment.

A list of recommended practices for the inclusion of transgender athletes can be found on USA Swimming Safe Sport's website.

- [www.usaswimming.org/toolkit](http://www.usaswimming.org/toolkit) → Model Policies and Guidelines → Inclusion of Transgender Athletes Best Practices

**USA Swimming Diversity and Inclusion**

[www.usaswimming.org/diversity](http://www.usaswimming.org/diversity)

(719) 866-4578

**USA Swimming Safe Sport**

[www.usaswimming.org/protect](http://www.usaswimming.org/protect)

(719) 866-4578

**USA Swimming Facilities Department**

[www.usaswimming.org/facilities](http://www.usaswimming.org/facilities)

(719) 866-4578

# RESOURCES

**PLFAG: Parents and Friends of  
Lesbians and Gays**

[www.pflag.org](http://www.pflag.org)

**Outsports: A Voice for LGBT Athletes**

[www.outsports.com](http://www.outsports.com)



# REFERENCES

1. Dr. Chris Downs, 2015, The Downs Group LLC. Used with permission.
2. Newport, Frank. (2015, May 21). Americans Greatly Overestimate Percent Gay, Lesbian in U.S. Gallup. Retrieved from <http://www.gallup.com/poll/183383/americans-greatly-overestimate-percent-gay-lesbian.aspx>
3. Jones, Robert, Cox, Daniel. (2015). How Race and Religion Shape Millennial Attitudes on Sexuality and Reproductive Health. Retrieved from Public Religion Research Institute: <http://publicreligion.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/PRRI-Millennials-Web-FINAL.pdf>
4. Gates, Gary J. (2013). LGBT Parenting in the United States. Retrieved from The Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law: <http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/LGBT-Parenting.pdf>
5. Gates, Gary J., Newport, Frank. (2015, April 24). An Estimated 780,000 Americans in Same-Sex Marriages. Gallup. Retrieved from <http://www.gallup.com/poll/182837/estimated-780-000-americans-sex-marriages.aspx>
6. Witeck Communications, Inc. (2015, June 10). America's LGBT 2014 Buying Power Estimated at \$884 Billion. Retrieved from <http://www.witeck.com/pressreleases/americas-lgbt-2014-buying-power-estimated-at-884-billion/>
7. Gates, Gary J. (2014). LGBT Demographics: Comparisons among population-based surveys. Retrieved from The Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law: <http://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/lgbt-demogs-sep-2014.pdf>
8. Huff Post 2/20/13 Cavan Sieczkowski. Majority of LGBT Youth bullied in gym class and feel unsafe, research suggests.
9. Dr. Chris Downs, 2015, The Downs Group LLC. Used with permission.
10. Caitlyn Ryan and colleagues, The Family Acceptance Project, 2015.
11. Jiang, Y., Perry, D. K., & Hesser, J.E. (2010) Adolescent suicide and health risk behaviors: Rhode Island's 2007 Youth Risk Behavior Survey. *American Journal of Preventative Medicine*, 38(5), 551-555.
- Almeida, J., Johnson, R. M., Corliss, H. L., Molnar, B. E., & Azrael, D. (2009). Emotional distress among LGBT youth: The influence of perceived discrimination based on sexual orientation. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 38(7), 1001-1014.
- Eisenberg, M. E. & Resnick, M. D. (2006). Suicidality among gay, lesbian and bisexual youth: the role of protective factors. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 39(5), 662-668.
- Hatzenbuehler, M. L. (2011). The social environment and suicide attempts in lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth. *Pediatrics*, 127(5), 896-903.
12. Teaching Tolerance. (2013). Best Practices: Creating an LGBT- inclusive School Climate [Fact Sheet]. Retrieved April 28, 2016, from [http://www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/general/LGBT%20Best%20Practices\\_0.pdf](http://www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/general/LGBT%20Best%20Practices_0.pdf)



“I HOPE THAT THERE COMES A TIME WHEN PEOPLE DON’T HAVE TO BE BRAVE TO COME OUT AS WHO THEY ARE AUTHENTICALLY. I IMAGINE AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE EVERYONE IS SUPPORTED UNCONDITIONALLY, AND THAT IS AN EXCITING FUTURE TO ENVISION.”

—G RYAN

