

## **What is the Positive Space Program?**

The Positive Space Program identifies people and spaces on campus that are supportive and welcoming of members of lesbian, bi, gay, trans, queer (LGBTQ) and marginalized orientations, gender identities and intersex (MOGAI) communities.

## **Why do we need a Positive Space Program on campus?**

Social exclusion and invisibility are experienced by members of LGBTQ and MOGAI communities on campus. An on-campus study in 2006, the “Inclusive Communities Project”, showed that LGBTQ and MOGAI students, staff and faculty all experience discomfort in showing affection, displaying photos of their partners, or talking about their children or families. This lack of support goes against McMaster University’s goal of building an inclusive community and is something that the Positive Space Program is meant to address.

## **How do I get involved?**

You can become a Positive Space Provider by attending an orientation workshop, which will provide you with

basic information about issues related to transphobia, biphobia, lesbophobia, homophobia and heterosexism, as well as provide you with an introduction to queer and trans cultures and local resources.

## **How will I recognize a “Positive Space”?**

Positive Space Providers will be given a Positive Space indicator (poster, tent card, or button) to display in their work/study area, and/or on their person, if they do not have their own desk, room or office.

## **Do I need to be a member of an LGBTQ or MOGAI community to take part?**

Absolutely not – everyone is welcome to participate! The Positive Space Program is a way for everyone on campus, regardless of gender identity, sex or sexual orientation to take a stand against transphobia, biphobia, lesbophobia, homophobia and heterosexism.



## **Why focus on this issue when there are many other equity issues that need attention?**

A Positive Space indicator sends out a strong message to the campus community that LGBTQ and MOGAI members are an important part of our diverse environment. People who are LGBTQ and MOGAI represent all ages and abilities and come from diverse racial, disability, ethnocultural, language and faith groups. By creating an environment that is welcoming for LGBTQ and MOGAI communities, we also create one that is welcoming to people from other groups.

## **If an area does not have a Positive Space indicator, does that mean that it is not supportive?**

No. There are many reasons why you may not see a Positive Space indicator. People may not have heard about the program, they may be supportive but do not have control over what is posted in their area, or they may be supportive privately but are afraid of the consequences of showing support publicly.

**If I put up a Positive Space indicator, do I need to provide counselling or advice?**

No. Positive Space Providers offer general support and information, not counselling or advice. If someone needs more than you are able to provide, you should encourage them to visit or call one of the resources listed on the “Resources” list provided to you during the workshop.

**What is the significance of the Positive Space logo?**

The Positive Space logo combines three main elements: the rainbow, the inverted triangle, and an “M”. The rainbow comes from the rainbow flag which has become a recognizable symbol of pride to LGBTQ and MOGAI communities. The inverted triangle is a reminder of the symbols used during the Holocaust in WWII to label gay men (pink) and lesbians (black). The shapes combine to form the shape of an “M” to represent McMaster University.

**Do other universities have Positive Space programs?**

Yes. Many universities have similar programs that address their specific contexts and concerns.

**How do I sign up?**

Please contact the Office of Human Rights & Equity Services at x27581 or [hres@mcmaster.ca](mailto:hres@mcmaster.ca) for more information, or to register for upcoming Positive Space workshops. You can also access more information at the HRES website, which is [www.hres.mcmaster.ca](http://www.hres.mcmaster.ca).

It is also possible for us to provide Positive Space training for your department, work group, or student club on campus.



**positive space**