



How to be an ally to polyamorous and non-monogamous people

Definitions

Relationship Orientation or Lovestyle: “The preference for sexual relationships or lovestyles which are monogamous, nonmonogamous, inclusive, open, closed, casual, committed, serial, or polyfidelitous, etc.” (Anapol 1997:179).

Nonmonogamy: “A lovestyle which allows for more than one sexual relationship at a time” (Anapol 1997:178).

Polyamory: “The philosophy and practice of loving more than one person at the same time” (Potter 1998).

Open Relationship: Relationships in which sexual and romantic connections to others are acceptable and supported.

Tips

- Maintain an open-mind even if it isn't your relationship style
- Be careful about making assumptions about the exclusivity of people's relationships
- Challenge assumptions that traditional monogamy is the only acceptable relationship style
- Talk about healthy relationship skills and behaviors regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or relationship style
- Indicate your openness to such relationships
- Recognize the challenges for people regarding safety, job security, outness, etc.
- Consider your reactions, language, and tone of voice

Language Tips	
Avoid	Try
“I could never do that!”	“How do you feel about your relationship(s)? How does it work for you?”
“Don't you get jealous!?” or “I would be jealous.”	“Is jealousy an issue?” or “How do you handle jealousy?”
“I just really don't understand that lifestyle.”	“Tell me more about your relationship(s).”
“I am sure you'll find the right man/woman someday.” or “Maybe someday you'll settle down into a real relationship.”	“I don't know much about nonmonogamy/polyamory. Can you tell me more about that?”

“You just want to sleep with everybody.” or “You just want to have your cake and eat it too.”	“How do you navigate sexual interactions in your relationship(s)?”
“Oh I see, you have commitment issues.”	"How do you view commitment or fidelity in your relationship(s)?"