



How Athletes Can Increase Inclusivity

The following ways in which athletes can become more inclusive were recorded at the WZ DEI Summit by athletes and nonathletes with the actual identities discussed below. As previously discussed, inclusion is rooted in both feeling a sense of belonging and being valued as a unique individual.

Instilling a Sense of Belonging

Athletes can increase sense of belonging for LGBTQ+ Athletes by...

- Treating everyone with respect.
- Advocating for the wellbeing of LGBTQ+ athletes.
- Educating yourself on LGBTQ+ topics.

Athletes can increase sense of belonging for Athletes of Color by...

- Try to remove remarks or jokes made about someone's race.
- Treating swimmers all the same regardless of gender, race, etc...
- See something, say something.
- Trying to be as open as possible; not getting defensive; listening and being open to conversation; allow person to explain their position.

Athletes can increase sense of belonging for Non-Athletes of Color by...

- Say hi, reaching out.
- Not over-acknowledging me. :)

Valuing as a Unique Person

Athletes can help LGBTQ+ Community Members feel valued as people by...

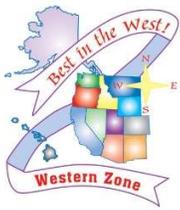
- Treating us with respect.
- Openly talking about LGBTQ in safe environments.
- Asking questions if you have any.

Athletes can help Athletes of Color feel valued as people by...

- Not forcing them into one race or another.
- Not making a person act like someone they don't want to be.
- Asking about who we are and getting excited about learning about us and our background.
- Asking about our background, making sure to ask the question in a non-offensive tone.
- Validating the experiences we've had.
- Trying to understand how I feel.
- Reaching out when you feel like something is off or wrong.
- Recognizing one's privilege.

Athletes can help Non-Athletes of Color feel valued as people by...

- Respect me for who I am.
- Asking me questions, as if you see value in what I have to offer and respect my experience, knowledge, and work.



How Coaches Can Increase Inclusivity

The following ways in which coaches can become more inclusive were recorded at the WZ DEI Summit by athletes and nonathletes with the actual identities discussed below. As previously discussed, inclusion is rooted in both feeling a sense of belonging and being valued as a unique individual.

Instilling a Sense of Belonging

Coaches can increase sense of belonging for LGBTQ+ Athletes by...

- Asking athletes for preferred pronouns.
- Creating a safe environment.
- Using gender-neutral language.

Coaches can increase sense of belonging for Athletes of Color by...

- Educating yourselves on the cultures of their different athletes, to help understand where their swimmers are coming from.
- Checking up on athletes.
- Being more attentive toward their swimmers and notice problems.
- Being willing to talk to swimmers and understand them. (Not staying away from perceived taboo topics.)
- Talking with your swimmers about DEI issues, to show that it is ok to talk to them.

Coaches can increase sense of belonging for Non-Athletes of Color by...

- Saying “hi” and reaching out.
- Introducing yourself.
- Making yourself available.
- Not over-acknowledge me :)
- Saying “I don’t know how to help and I want to help.” and asking “How can I support you?” and “What work do I need to do myself?”
- Understanding people unlike you may not want to talk with you and forcing them to have a conversation may be your power forcing them to have a conversation they don’t want to have. (Forcing them to listen to may be an advantage of power too.)

Valuing as a Unique Person

Coaches can help LGBTQ+ Community Members feel valued as people by...

- Making an effort to include.
- Paying attention to and shutting down bullying and negative comments.
- Reaching out to help struggling swimmers.

Coaches can help Athletes of Color feel valued as people by...

- Making an effort to include .
- Paying attention to and shut down bullying and negative comments.
- Reaching out to help struggling swimmers.
- Advocating for me.
- Welcoming marginalized athletes.
- Respecting all swimmers and their differences.
- Talking to swimmers and trying to understand their problems.

Coaches can help Non-Athletes of Color feel valued as people by...

- Respecting me for who I am.
- Recognizing/celebrating all holidays.
- Understanding, Valuing, and Supporting times of fasting.
- Seeing me. Acknowledging me.
- Listening to me—say “what I heard you say is...” or ask a question about what I say.
- Asking me questions, as if you see value in what I have to offer and respect my experience, knowledge, and work.”



How Officials Can Increase Inclusivity

The following ways in which officials can become more inclusive were recorded at the WZ DEI Summit by athletes and nonathletes with the actual identities discussed below. As previously discussed, inclusion is rooted in both feeling a sense of belonging and being valued as a unique individual.

Instilling a Sense of Belonging

Officials can increase sense of belonging for LGBTQ+ Athletes by...

- Not letting bias interfere with officiating.
- Maintaining safe sport boundaries.
- Using gender neutral language.

Officials can increase sense of belonging for Athletes of Color by...

- Calling out behavior on deck.
- Treating swimmers all the same because we are all human and we all play the same sport.

Officials can increase sense of belonging for Non-Athletes of Color by...

- Say hi, reaching out.
- Treat me like a person.
- Be aware of yourself.
- Acknowledge me beyond my race.
- Not over-acknowledge me. :)
- Understand how exhausting it is for me to have to explain this to all of you.

Valuing as a Unique Person

Officials can help LGBTQ+ Community Members feel valued as people by...

- Are respectful to everyone.
- Know people's pronouns and respect them.

Officials can help Athletes of Color feel valued as people by...

- Identify any implicit bias, but do not let those transfer into officiating.
- Respect everyone.
- Have more multiracial officials and officials of color.

Officials can help Non-Athletes of Color feel valued as people by...

- Respect me for who I am..
- See me. Acknowledge me.
- Ask me questions, as if you see value in what I have to offer, and respect my experience and knowledge and work.



How Teams Can Increase Inclusivity

The following ways in which Teams can become more inclusive were recorded at the WZ DEI Summit by athletes and nonathletes with the actual identities discussed below. As previously discussed, inclusion is rooted in both feeling a sense of belonging and being valued as a unique individual.

Instilling a Sense of Belonging

Teams can increase sense of belonging for LGBTQ+ Athletes by...

- Be accepting and inclusive towards everyone.
- De-stigmatizing arguments about sexuality and gender identity.

Teams can increase sense of belonging for Athletes of Color by...

- Trying harder to reach more diverse communities to draw in more people of color to the team.
- Addressing the shortcomings of the team.

Teams can increase sense of belonging for Non-Athletes of Color by...

Making DEI feel like it is a priority by initiating action and discussion.

Valuing as a Unique Person

Teams can help LGBTQ+ Community Members feel valued as people by...

- Acknowledging the celebration of pride as normal even outside of pride month.
- Actually promote diversity, don't use it as a +1.

Teams can help Athletes of Color feel valued as people by...

- Communicating with me and other members of our team.
- Getting to know me gradually as friendships grow.
- Just show us that you understand that it is not easy to be multiracial and show us the same respect you show everyone else.
- Value and promote outreach programs set up by USA Swimming.
- Do not tokenize an athlete.

Teams can help Non-Athletes of Color feel valued as people by...

- Respecting me for who I am.
- Celebrating all holidays.
- Understanding, Valuing, and Supporting times of fasting.
- Having a potluck to celebrate/value/learn about different foods families eat.
- Providing me with the opportunity to speak.



How LSC's Can Increase Inclusivity

The following ways in which LSC's can become more inclusive were recorded at the WZ DEI Summit by athletes and nonathletes with the actual identities discussed below. As previously discussed, inclusion is rooted in both feeling a sense of belonging and being valued as a unique individual.

Instilling a Sense of Belonging

LSC's can increase sense of belonging for LGBTQ+ Athletes by...

- Promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Hosting events that support LGBTQ+ athletes at the LSC level.

LSC's can increase sense of belonging for Athletes of Color by...

- Providing support to the DEI committee.
- Outreach to make sure more people know about where they can go for help.
- Not host events for "check the box" purposes, but instead to actually change
- Enforce being mindful of racial comments and jokes.
- Emphasize diversity and its importance.

LSC's can increase sense of belonging for Non-Athletes of Color by...

- Having someone there to be welcoming of new people/faces.
- Educating about different identities and how you can be supportive, and provide/educate rules and policies.

Valuing as a Unique Person

LSC's can help LGBTQ+ Community Members feel valued as people by...

- Putting effort into promoting diversity.
- Acknowledging that LGBTQ+ exists.
- Using their power to promote diversity and touch on "taboo" topics.
- More outreach among all LCS and boards.

LSC's can help Athletes of Color feel valued as people by...

- Including DEI in BoD Meetings, Committee Meetings, and making it part of every conversation.
- Including DEI in budget planning-many workshops
- Paying for facilitators.
- Valuing and promoting USA-S outreach programs.
- Continuing to hold DEI meetings to learn what is going well and what can be improved on.
- Keeping informed on the diversity of your region.

LSC's can help Non-Athletes of Color feel valued as people by...

- Respect me for who I am.
- Celebrate all holidays.
- Understand, Value, and Support times of fasting.
- Provide me with the opportunity to speak.
- See me. Acknowledge me. Ask me my opinion. Value my opinion even if it isn't the same as yours.
- Let me have my voice (instead of "giving" me a voice.)
- Listen to me in a way that I know you are listening to me--say "what I heard you say is..." or asking a question about what I say. Also, process what I say.
- Asking me questions as if you see value in what I offer and respect my experience, knowledge, and work.
- Having the Choir sing and the LSC listening to hear the Choir sing!"



Experiences shared by LGBTQ+ Swimmers

The following list of experiences was generated by LGBTQ+ swimmers at the 2021 Western Zone Inclusion Summit.

- Forced into gender binaries
- The transgender athlete debate within sports, etc. can make them feel like a circus exhibit.
- Stereotyped as an LGBTQ+ person
- People wanting a “Gay Best Friend” to seem like they’re inclusive
- Straight white girls idolizing queer white men, but not seeming to like nonbinary or lesbian people
- People saying...
 - *“You’re just trying to be special”*
 - *“You’re not actually as someone who identifies as bisexual”*
 - *“You’re choosing to identify as queer/gay”*
- People who are “tolerant” and seem like they support you.
- Homophobic family members.
- Homophobic people in public.
- Not much of a support system, or adults who can help.
- Fear of having to come out to others.
- Wish that people wouldn’t assume whom I want to date.
- Lack of education about LGBTQ+. Wish that it was taught to kids at a younger age.
- Locker Room problems, hearing people say they feel uncomfortable with queer swimmers in locker rooms
- Being ignored or harassed when come out
- People thinking that I am making LGBTQ+ my whole personality
- Gender binaries in meets and coaches’ language
- Feeling uncomfortable as transgender athlete in swim suits and in the pool
- Being unable/scared to talk to coaches, not knowing if they are accepting or willing to talk about gender identity/sexuality
- Jokes turning into harassment
- Applications to committees being turned down or ignored, and not being advertised to me



Experiences shared by Swimmers of Color

The following list of experiences was generated by Swimmers of Color at the 2021 Western Zone Inclusion Summit.

Challenges Experienced by Multiracial Swimmers of Color

- Wondering if I'm acting white or Taiwanese enough to be 'deserving' of my race.
- I can't be my authentic self because my Asian friends see me as Asian and my white friends seem like white.
- I do not have the strength of connections I want to have with my culture.
- People always assume my race and when I tell them the truth, they judge me by saying I don't act enough like one or the other.
- I've been told that I'm "not white enough" or "not black enough." Why do I need to choose?
- Being told my own race or I'm not enough of the race I am to qualify.
- Feeling like I have to choose one race instead of being able to represent multiple.
- It's hard to relate to my teammates being in an underrepresented community on a team
- It's difficult to fit in because of my race, age, and speed and it's frustrating to relate to my teammates.
- Being told that I don't deserve the good things I've gotten from swimming because I don't look like a swimmer or I didn't "work" for it.
- Feeling left out in my team because there are not a lot of other multiracial athletes

Challenges Experienced by Monoracial Swimmers of Color

- Choosing between the "American" side of our identity and the "ethnic" side.
- Conforming or purposely unconforming with stereotypes.
- Experiencing marginalization in the sport.
- Struggling to fit in/feel included.
- Feeling isolated on team.
- Feeling compelled to talk about racial issues (e.g. the Black Lives Matter Movement).
- Encountering racist coaches on team.
- Being seen as different or as someone who does not belong in the sport of swimming because of my race.
- [Lack of] representation in the sport.



Experiences shared by Nonathletes from Underrepresented Groups

The following list of experiences was generated at the 2021 Western Zone Inclusion Summit by nonathletes from underrepresented groups.

- Doubt the ability I can do something.
- Males are considered first for leadership roles.
- Whites are given credit for successes first.
- Whites are assumed to be qualified, where as People of Color we must prove ourselves.
- Not waited on at restaurants the same way as whites.
- Discrimination can be very subtle.
- My anxiety and discomfort increase when I go into spaces predominantly white/male.
- I need to “code-switch.”
- People stick up for me when I don’t feel I need it and haven’t asked for help.
- Fear of being targeted by my racial identity.
- Assumption that I need reminding of the rules and explanations more than whites do.
- The officials hierarchy is male dominated.
- People are afraid to ask questions.
- I have to physically “make myself bigger” and navigate through other coaches.
- Male coaches have more space on deck.
- I have been assigned race-based nicknames
- I have experienced racial epithets.
- I am objectified, and am constantly conscious of how I dress and how I am seen.
- Higher scrutiny to follow “rules/policies.”
- Experience gaps in resources/access/ability.
- There is a lack of awareness of my challenges by athletes/non-athletes not in the traditional power group.
- Hear “they followed the rules, but...” underground there was mumble, mumble, mumble (unsupportive mumble).