

SUPPORTING LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER INCLUSION IN A CONSERVATIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT

Lessons Learned

2013 EXCEL Conference



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AGENDA

- LGBT and Related Terms Defined
- How To:
 - ❖ Establish Trust Between LGBT Representatives and Management/EEO/Diversity/HR staff
 - ❖ Engage Contractor management/workforce
 - ❖ Establish a LGBT Employee Resource Group
 - ❖ Keep the Momentum When Leadership Changes
- Wrap Up and Questions/Answer Session

DISCOVERING OURSELVES: GENDER

An inherent and intrinsic part of who we are

- First awareness of gender: usually very young, even preverbal
 - Develops before and distinct from romantic orientation
 - Expressed in clothing choice, toy choice and pretend play
 - We give more room to girls who act like boys than we do to boys who act like girls
 - Can be rigid or fluid, but cannot be changed
 - For more gender fluid or less clear-cut gender identities, the understanding of oneself as “trans” may come in adolescence or even adulthood
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- The same spectrum of people we find in all walks of life exist within the transgender community.

KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

- **Sexual/Romantic Orientation:** A core aspect of our identity defining who we love and are attracted to; believed to be developed by the time we reach adolescence
- **Lesbian:** A woman who is attracted to another woman or women
- **Gay:** A man who is attracted to another man or men; also used as an umbrella term for the lesbian, gay and bisexual community
- **Homosexual:** Someone who is attracted to the same gender
- **Bisexual:** Someone who is attracted to both genders
- **Pansexual:** Someone attracted to all gender identities

KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

- **Gender Assignment:** Based on body parts; how the doctor defines a newborn's sex
- **Gender Identity:** Based on internal sense of who we are; it can appear very early, even pre-verbal. Can be clear and stable; can be fluid.
- **Gender Expression:** How we express our gender in dress, movement, gestures, etc. May be mildly different from what others expect of us or it may be so bold as to be considered "variant." Aka gender creative
- **Transgender or Trans:** An umbrella term for any person whose gender identity differs from their gender assignment
- **Cisgender:** When our gender assignment and gender identity agree
- **Stealth:** When a trans person does not want it known that he or she is transgender

How To:

ESTABLISH TRUST BETWEEN THE PARTIES

LGBT Representatives and Management/EEO/HR/Diversity staff

- Include LGBT language in all diversity presentations and other communications.
 - Invite LGBT and straight allies to brown-bag lunches to open a dialogue about issues in the workplace.
 - Listen to the stories, no matter how difficult it can be. Record and use them to educate others about the hostility.
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How To:

ENGAGE MANAGEMENT & THE WORKFORCE

- Make them understand that there are issues; that LGBT members of the workforce are still targeted with discrimination and hateful acts by coworkers. Use real examples shared with you by your LGBT employees.
- Address backlash by managers and the workforce when there is a harsh reaction to a gay activity in the workplace or community (e.g., parade; announcement about LGBT activities).
- Always tie educational efforts back to the value of diversity in general.

How To:

ESTABLISH A **LGBT** EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUP

- Establish Trust
 - Solicit Interest
 - Start Informally
 - Partner with other Groups
 - Executive Champion
 - Willing Leaders (Gay and Straight) to Lead the Operations
 - Set Objectives to Support the Mission of the Agency
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How To:

KEEP THE MOMENTUM WHEN LEADERSHIP CHANGES

- Share the Presentation with the New Leader
 - Give the New Leader the Opportunity to:
 - ❖ Show Support
 - ❖ Understand the Issues
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WRAP-UP

- Good News
 - The change in recent laws are favoring non-discrimination and equality for LGBT employees
 - The Agency now has several active and engaged ERG's for LGBT employees.
 - Questions?
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SOURCES AND RESOURCES

- PFLAG
 - Out and Equal Workplace Advocates
 - Human Rights Campaign
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