



Supervisor NEWSLETTER

Employee Assistance Program
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Support for LGBTQ+ Community in the Workplace

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While progress has been made for LGBTQ+ rights, many organizations are still working toward establishing a safe and accepting place for all employees, especially those in the LGBTQ+ community. Successful organizations continuously work toward inclusion in their workplace to create a more positive work environment. Despite this progress, many challenges still exist for these employees.

Discrimination Against LGBTQ+ Community

Employee discrimination is one of many workplace challenges that needs to be addressed to show support for the LGBTQ+ community. Many report unfair treatment or harassment in the workplace at some point during their careers. Transgender and gender non-conforming employees often face the most backlash, struggling to fit into the rigid confines of traditional gender norms.

In 2020, the Supreme Court ruled that discrimination based on gender identity or sexual orientation is illegal under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. However, the journey towards establishing a safe and inclusive workplace requires more than legal compliance, it necessitates a shift in organizational culture.

LGBTQ+ training in the workplace helps ensure that your staff understands the barriers that the LGBTQ+ community faces both in life and in the workplace, how best to support the LGBTQ+ community and how to be an ally.

Isolation

Because so many employees in the LGBTQ+ community don't feel understood, it can be isolating. Establishing Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) dedicated to LGBTQ+ employees and allies can provide support networks and other resources that help foster an inclusive workplace.

Underrepresentation

Catalyst reports that LGBTQ+ employees make up 5.9% of the workforce in the United States but are underrepresented in leadership roles. Just 25 of the 5,670 board seats in Fortune 500 companies are held by openly LGBTQ+ directors and only 2 of those are held by LGBTQ+ people of color. Organizations must actively work to dismantle the barriers to advancement for LGBTQ+ employees, ensuring equitable opportunities for growth and leadership.

How Organizations Can Combat These Problems

With the many challenges that LGBTQ+ employees face, there are some things that you can do to help every staff member feel accepted at work and show support for the LGBTQ+ community.

- Establish Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) that offer support and career resources.
- Include protections for sexual orientation and gender identity in nondiscrimination policies.

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- Offer inclusive benefits, such as domestic partner benefits, that respect all family structures.
- Create all-gender facilities that respect everyone's privacy and identity.
- Normalize the use of pronouns in the office to honor each individual's identity.
- Educate your staff about workplace challenges for LGBTQ+ employees

As an organization, finding ways to ensure that every employee feels heard, valued, and respected is always important. This sense of belonging allows your team to work together more cohesively and to be more productive too. Embracing and utilizing tools like the Diversity Calendar are helpful steps in this journey. They not only offer valuable insights into LGBTQ+ inclusion but also guide your organization in evolving into a truly diverse and inclusive workplace.

What Ways Can I offer support to those in the LGBTQ+ community while at work?

Some easy ways to support the community at work and beyond are to be affirming and respectful. Always actively listen to learn more about their story and to be an ally. Have an open-door policy as a DEI leader where all employees can voice concerns, make suggestions for accommodations, or report discrimination without fear of retaliation.

What is LGBTQ+ inclusion in the workplace?

LGBTQ+ inclusion in the workplace occurs when employees of all sexual orientations and gender identities feel safe, supported, respected, valued, seen, and heard. This sense of belonging is important for all employees to want to be productive, to be more creative and innovative, and best of all, to stay at their job.

References:

<https://www.diversityresources.com/support-for-lgbtq-community-in-the-workplace/>