

# Best practices for supporting LGBT staff

## LGBT terminology and cultural information

**Ally:** A non-LGBT person who actively supports the civil rights of LGBT people.

**Assigned sex / biological sex:** The sex assigned to each child at birth typically based on an examination of the external genitalia.

**Biphobia:** Fear and intolerance of bisexual people.

**Bisexual / bisexuality / bi:** The internal experience that determines whether we are physically and emotionally attracted to men, to women, to both, or neither (asexual).

**Cisgender:** Someone whose gender identity and assigned biological sex are not in conflict. Non- transgender.

**Coming out:** An ongoing process of becoming aware of one's sexual orientation or gender identity, accepting it, acting on it and sharing it with others.

**Down-low:** Slang term that refers to men who have sex with men but are either closeted or do not identify as gay. Most often associated with and has its origins in African American culture in the US

**Gay man / homosexual:** A man who feels love, affection, and sexual attraction toward men.

**Gender binary:** The idea that human gender exists in two forms: masculine and feminine. Also describes a society that divides people into male and female gender roles, gender identities and attributes.

**Gender expression:** How one represents/expresses their gender identity to others, a combination of behavior, dress, hairstyles, voice, body characteristics or other gender-related behaviors.

**Gender identity:** Internal sense of being male, female, or something in between (gender is considered a continuum and not strictly a binary concept). Since gender identity is internal, one's gender identity is not necessarily visible to others.

**Gender role:** The accepted behaviors, thoughts, and emotions of a specific gender based upon the views of a particular society or culture.

**GLOBE:** A Business Resource Group (BRG) within the Deloitte firms founded in 1995. While its name refers to

Gay, Lesbian, or Bisexual Employees, GLOBE's mission is to aid in the talent acquisition, advancement, development and retention of LGBTIQ employees.

**Heterosexism:** Institutional policies and interpersonal actions that assume heterosexuality is normative and ignores other orientations. The belief that heterosexuality is superior to other orientations.

**Heterosexual / heterosexuality / straight:** A person who feels love, affection, and sexual attraction to persons of a different gender.

**Homophobia:** Fear and intolerance of homosexual people and/or of same sex attraction or behavior in the self or others.

**HRC:** The largest lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) lobbying group and political action committee in the United States, claiming over 725,000 members and supporters. The HRC mission statement is: "HRC envisions an America where gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people are ensured equality and embraced as full members of the American family at home, at work and in every community."

**In the closet:** Keeping one's sexual orientation or gender identity secret.

**Intersex:** A person who is born with external genitalia, chromosomes, or internal reproductive systems or other biological markers that are not traditionally associated with either a "standard" male or female.

**Lesbian / homosexual:** A woman who feels love, affection and sexual attraction toward women.

**LGBT:** An initialism referring collectively to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people. In modern usage, the term LGBT is intended to emphasize a diversity of "sexuality and gender identity-based cultures" and is sometimes used to refer to anyone who is non-heterosexual instead of exclusively to people who are homosexual, bisexual, or transgender.

**Omnisexual / pansexual:** A person who feels love, affection and sexual attraction regardless of their gender identity or biological sex. Thus, pansexuality includes

potential attraction to people (such as transgender individuals) who do not fit into the gender binary of male/female.

**Partner:** A term commonly used to describe an LGBT person's significant other / mate / spouse.

**Queer:** An inclusive, unifying umbrella term for people who are LGBTIQ, particularly used by teens and young adults. Historically, "queer" has been used as a derogatory word to demean LGBT people; it should not be used freely by non-queer people.

**Real life experience:** Refers to the period of time in which some transsexual people live full time outwardly expressing their gender identity. Many medical protocols require this prior to SRS.

**Sex reassignment surgery (SRS):** Surgical procedures that alter one's body to better conform to a person's gender identity. Many different procedures comprise sex reassignment surgery.

**Sexual orientation:** The internal experience that determines whether we are physically and emotionally attracted to men, to women, to both, or neither (asexual).

**Transgender:** Umbrella term for people whose gender identity, expression, or behavior is different from that typically associated with their assigned sex at birth (includes but is not limited to transsexual people, cross

dressing, androgynous people, bi-gendered, two-spirit, gender queer, gender fluid and gender non-conforming people).

**Transitioning:** The process of moving toward full time expression of one's gender identity. This typically includes undergoing physical changes through hormones and/or sex reassignment surgery.

**Transphobia:** Fear and intolerance of gender-variant and/or transgender/transsexual people

**Transsexual:** Shorthand for a person diagnosed with transsexualism, a medical label for the condition when a person's assigned biological sex doesn't match their internal gender identity. Often transsexual people alter or wish to alter their bodies through hormones or surgery in order to match their gender identity. Commonly used terms are 'female to male' (FTM); 'male to female' (MTF).

**Transvestite / cross dressing / drag queen / drag king:** A person who dresses, either full time or part time, in clothing traditionally associated with the opposite sex. For example, Drag Queens/Kings are usually lesbian, gay or bisexual and sometimes cross dress for social occasions.

**Two-spirit:** American Indians who fulfill one of many mixed gender roles found traditionally among many American Indian and Canadian First Nations indigenous groups.

### Major LGBT celebrations

#### Pride

June is LGBT Pride month but local Pride events are held all year.

#### Day of Silence

April 25, 2008; April 17, 2009

#### National Coming Out Day

October 11

#### LGBT History Month

October is recognized as LGBT History Month.

#### Transgender Day of Remembrance

November 20

#### World AIDS Day

December 1

### LGBT symbols



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