Engaging the Silent Majority: Tools to Empower Allies In the Workplace

**Engaging the Silent Majority: Tools to Empower Allies In the Workplace**

**OUT & EQUAL**

**2017 WORKPLACE SUMMIT**

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Goal: Empower allies in the workplace with tools to create a positive environment for transgender co-workers

✓ Sharing of corporate best in class transgender policies
✓ Personal impact of allyship
✓ Specific research derived ally behaviors to bring back to organizations
✓ Tool-kit to leverage at your corporation
**Vision**

Dow fosters a safe, inclusive, supportive and open working environment for all employees regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression.

**Strategic Intent**

Transform Dow culture such that sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression are irrelevant.

- Network formally recognized in Sept 2000
- >80% of participants are heterosexual employees/allies who support our LGBT Coworkers
- >3100 Participants at 142 Dow sites in 34 countries with 25 active chapters
**The Business Case for Inclusion**

**Inclusion at its Best**

- **30%↑** Employee engagement
- **2X↑** Employee trust
- **20-30%↑** Productivity

Companies that are diverse and inclusive obtain better profits and other outputs, thanks to improved team collaboration and commitment.

- Amicus Brief to SCOTUS, signed by Dow Chemical along with 378 other companies and organizations (March 2015)

**Recruiting and Retention**

- **72%** Potential employees use LGBT policies in job consideration

- **$3 MM** Recruiting cost to replace LGBT employees that leave non-inclusive work groups

**Inclusion is not just the right thing to do, it's the smart thing to do.**

2. Li & Nagar, Div & Perf, MGMT. SCI. 529, 531 (2013).
ENDURE HOMOPHOBIA

73% HIGHER ATTRITION rate in their first three years

~20% Experience verbal or physical ABUSE or VANDALISM

30% DISTRACTED at work

~40% DEPRESSED at work

30% LIE about their personal life at work

1 out of 2 REMAIN CLOSETED at work

7 out of 10 LGBT RESPONDENTS HEAR ANTI-LGBT COMMENTS AT WORK

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EMBRACE INCLUSION & PRODUCTIVITY

32% Improvement in cognitive tasks

20% Better sensory motor skills

30% Higher employee-employee engagement

10% Improvement in risk-adjusted returns

72% Of all new employees research a company’s LGBT policies before considering a job offer.

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GLAD Inclusion. It’s Elemental. Learn more at GLADINTRANET.DOW.COM
Equitable Policies & Practices

1999  Sexual Orientation added to Dow’s non-discrimination policy

2002  Dow extends employee benefits to same-sex partners

2007  Gender identity included in Dow’s non-discrimination policy

2008  Testimony to House Subcommittee on Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions
       Focus: Transgender policies in the workplace

2009  Testimony to Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Government Affairs
       Focus: Domestic partner benefits for federal employees

2011  Bill Hendrix and Dow Featured on PBS in support of ENDA and workplace equality

2012  Dow Testifies in Support of Federal Law Banning LGBT Discrimination (Employee Non-Discrimination Act)

2014  The White House – Dow participates in invitation only roundtable discussion on global LGBT Human Rights

2015  Dow signs amicus brief to the Supreme Court of the United States for Marriage Equality;
       Press releases in Indiana, Louisiana, Texas against State RFRA’s; Support for Australia Marriage Equality

2016/17 Continued active engagement in legislative space
Dow’s Transgender Policies/Practices

2007  Gender identity included in Dow’s non-discrimination policy

2008  Testimony to House Subcommittee on Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions

Focus: Transgender policies in the workplace

2012  Medical coverage for transitioning as designated by the American Medical Association (AMA)

2012  Internal guidelines for transitioning employees and people leaders developed to facilitate transitioning process in the workplace.

2016  First transgender employee utilizes transitioning benefits and learnings are leveraged to updated best practices and guidelines

2016+ Transgender benefits and guidelines are internally and externally reviewed to ensure they industry leading.
Carol’s Journey

... transgender women are like birds hatched underwater; they can't hold their breath forever and no matter how hard they try, can't describe why they feel the need to fly.

... they don't really know if their wings and lungs will work once they leave the ‘safety’ of the sea. But they will die if they stay there.
I lived as a man once. I tried hard (very), but found my life to be without value; I was numb.

Through transition I didn’t expect to find happiness. I didn’t expect to find healing. I didn’t expect to find my voice and meaning.

But I did.

It's amazing what life is like when you can breathe.

And open your eyes.
Gender

• What is it?
  – The first thing one declares about a baby; establishes behavioral expectations
  – Gender is the primary lens through which motivations are inferred
  – An **identity** and a **role**

• What is does *transgender* mean?
  – Trans is Latin for *other side*; antonym is *cisgender*
  – Trans is when the assigned role doesn’t match ones identity; this causes distress called *gender dysphoria*

• Transgender people identify their gender, an objective reality; they do not “identify as” anything

• How does one become transgender?
  – Its congenital; gender identity is part of the physical brain structure
  – It’s a form of intersex and transgender/intersex conditions are noted in all species
    • ~1% of the population’s physical sexed bodies differ in some way from typical
    • Transgender, dealing with brain structure, is of the same frequency (0.6%)
Transition: changing gender expression

• The goal of transition is to fix gender dysphoria
• Gender dysphoria is cured by changing expression to match gender identity to achieve gender congruency through social integration.
  – When young
    • Kids that are consistent, insistent and persistent in their gender identity are allowed to experience life as their verbalized gender.
    • Puberty can be reversibly paused to give them time to mature; later they can experience a primary puberty consistent with their gender identity
  – When older
    • Average age of transition is dropping from mid 50’s to mid-20’s
    • Hormones instruct cells to use the other blueprint when replacing cells; the body slowly reshapes itself as cells die/regenerate: a second puberty
    • Surgery can shape what hormones cannot (hormones can add; only surgery can subtract)
    • Many experience much loss with late-life transition and gaining social acceptance is typically harder
Transition: Workplace

• Gender may be compared to a dance; men and women know what to expect from each other and engage in ritualized steps when they interact.

• It is not enough for a transgender person to change their genitals alone. Social integration requires more.
  – Gender is also a role; looking like Barbie or Ken is meaningless if the person is not operating in their gender.

• The goal within the workplace must be integration
  – The trans person must be knitted into the professional and social fabric of the structure.
  – No one is more attuned to the interaction of the genders than a trans person; token acceptance would be counterproductive.
Workplace transition

Steps for successful workplace transition:

• Corporate policies of diversity need to be in place
  – Recognize the benefits of a diverse and integrated workforce

• Workplace education to promote acceptance
  – ERG’s and events to raise awareness and comfort

• Transgender medical benefits that promote social integration
  – In addition to hormone/GCS/top-surgery, seek to expand medical treatments to address social integration
    • Facial surgery, voice training/surgery, hair removal/transplants, BA, ...

• Have an active program to foster allies
What just happened there?
Why could the person from the minority group NOT speak out in defense of herself?

Acceptance into/by a group is always from someone inside a group granting recognition; this is what an ally is.

https://crackingthecodes.org/
The power of an Ally

- An abuse of power can occur when a bully feels herd-immunity. They may often be unaware of their bias and feel their actions are fully justified and normal.
  - “Everyone feels the same way; I cannot be singled out for retribution for my action/inaction here”

- An Ally is one who breaks the feeling of unconscious herd-immunity/blindness and calls for a conscious end to non-inclusive behavior.

- An Ally must be visible, must speak out.
  - A silent Ally is an oxymoron. If one is not seen to stand up for the minority, it is assumed they are giving power to the majority.

- Displaying inclusive swag is a powerful non-verbal statement.
  - Similarly, tolerating symbols of non-inclusion is devastating.
Research on Transgender and Gender Non-Binary Populations at Work

Dr. Katina Sawyer and Dr. Christian Thoroughgood
Statistics on Transgender Employees

• For transgender employees (i.e., those who do not conform to the traditional male-female binary or who feel that their gender identity does not align with their birth sex, Sawyer & Thoroughgood, 2017), experiences of discrimination are pervasive at work.

• Compared to an estimated 42% of gay employees who report discrimination of some form at work (Center for American Progress, 2013), results of the National Transgender Discrimination Survey revealed that 97% of transgender respondents reported mistreatment or discrimination on the job (National Center for Transgender Equality, 2011).
  • 50% reported being harassed
  • 47% reported an adverse job outcome (e.g., being fired, denied a
  • 32% felt forced to act “traditionally gendered” to keep their jobs
  • 22% were denied access to bathrooms that align with their gender
Why is discrimination harmful?

• Minority stress theory (Meyer, 2003) maintains that stigmatized groups are vulnerable to physical and mental health disparities due to greater exposure to chronic life stressors beyond those experienced by non-stigmatized groups.

• Discrimination and other stigma-related stressors trigger maladaptive cognitive (e.g., negative self-schemas, hopelessness), social (e.g., social isolation), and coping (e.g., alcohol use) processes that confer risk for health disparities (Hatzenbuehler, 2009).

• Research suggests the effects of perceived discrimination on wellbeing are explained by, among other factors, decreased self-esteem (Fischer & Holz, 2007), perceived control (Moradi & Risco, 2006), and feelings of being a burden on others (Baams, Grossman, & Russell, 2015).
What predicts whether transgender employees perceive their workplaces to be inclusive?

• Our work has highlighted that, while displaying gender authentically is important, whether or not coworkers validate employees’ gender identity and expression is a key determinant of employee outcomes (Martinez, Sawyer, Thoroughgood, Ruggs, & Smith, 2017)

• It is really important that coworkers are trained to be allies – meaning that they understand the importance of authenticity and strive to value the authenticity of all employees at work
Training employees to be courageous may help!

• Preliminary data suggests that witnessing courageous acts from other coworkers in the face of discrimination or microaggressions can actually help transgender employees be happier and healthier at work (Thoroughgood, Sawyer, & Webster, in progress)

• Similar to allyship, but more specific, courage at work is what happens when the “rubber meets the road” – are fellow employees willing to stand up for one another when someone’s identity is challenged?

• We have found that courageous acts have a significant difference on how transgender employees view their workplace!
What can transgender employees do to combat stigma?

• While stopping stigma at the root is always the best solution, not everyone is able to find inclusive work environments or to avoid non-inclusive coworkers.

• In the absence of inclusivity at the organizational level, we have found that mindfulness can help to cut down on the negative effects of discrimination at work for transgender employees (Thoroughgood, Sawyer, & Webster, in press; in progress).

• Mindfulness disrupts negative thinking patterns that result from discriminatory behaviors and alleviates negative outcomes related to a lack of inclusivity.

• Mindfulness is a personality trait, but it can also be trained!

“I’ve always found a way to find calm in focusing on the present. I’m able to sort of find a way through really challenging times, even though things are falling apart around me. I tend to find a way to keep marching forward by finding little pockets of peacefulness.”

– Transgender woman, non-profit sector (study participant, October 20th, 2015)
Overall...

- Transgender employees face higher levels of discrimination at work compared to other documented minority groups.

- However, coworkers can play a big role in determining if discrimination is perceived and how discrimination impacts transgender employees overall.

- Further, while it is very important to understand discrimination and its negative effects, solutions to discrimination are also necessary!

- These solutions may be driven by allies and by transgender individuals themselves.

- Equality is everyone’s responsibility – and allies are the key to that equation – but transgender individuals should also be aware of ways that they might be able to enhance their own wellness when facing trying times.

- Happier, healthier employees are a win-win for everyone – and a human rights issue - education will drive more individuals to recognize the moral and business benefits of inclusivity at work.
Empowering Allies Toolkit
Self Reflection

Take a moment to answer the first two questions on your worksheet:

1. How comfortable are you around someone transitioning?

2. Why would you be uncomfortable? (Based on own insecurity, concern for them, how customers would perceive?)

_Ally needs to be mindful of own feelings... the best allies are those comfortable and confident in own gender_
What can you do to be a trans Ally?

• Be your normal self
• Treat people for who they say they are, at face value.
  • If unsure, ask for their pronouns. Its ok to ask questions if they lead.
• Use their correct name and pronouns when they are not there.
  – An ally stands up for someone who has no voice in that place
• Don’t reveal someone’s transgender history
  – It is considered medically privileged information and may create an unsafe situation for them
  – Assume that the trans person is in deep stealth; let them lead in any revelations
• Don’t draw attention to mistakes; keep apologies small and/or just do it right next time.
• Use “When you presented as …” as opposed to “When you were a man/woman...”
• Making people feel comfortable to open dialogue—back and forth; allies don’t have to be perfect and the response to an imperfect comment may lead to more opportunities to learn
• Support legislative protections for gender identity and reducing hurdles to getting identification.
• And do keep a sense of humor – it’s new for everyone!
What are some strategies for resiliency transgender employees can adopt?

• Adopted a “large personality”- outgoing way to break the ice to start a conversation for the unspoken awkwardness
• Practice mindfulness
• Create environments to meet people where they are
As a colleague or manager, what can you do to create an inclusive environment for transgender/transitioning employees?

• Indicate support through non-verbal methods
  – Use LGBT employee resource group pens, mug, lanyard, etc.
  – Post LGBT group or HRC sticker in office

• Check what company policy and practices protect transgender employees. If they don’t exist then start the conversation!

• How can we share strategies that others have been able to harness... emotional intelligence/ personal emotional resources, “olive branch”, educate others

• Be courageous....
How to train employees to be courageous?

-How do we empower transgender individuals to share knowledge and what support they need?
-How do we empowering allies to learn and provide a voice for their transgender colleague?

- Have a clear and open company policy supporting transgender employees.
- Use non-verbal cues to set the tone for an inclusive environment and act as a catalyst to have conversation.
- Help others understand a different perspective by sharing a personal story or a story like the one presented in the video.
- Leverage ERG to share information to educate employees on transgender issues.
- Host an ERG event with a transgender individual to share their workplace integration experience.