

How To Begin Creating a More Inclusive and GLBT-Friendly Workplace

Courtesy of Outfront Minnesota
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GLBT=Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgendered

- **First and foremost**, look at the use of language in your organization: forms, policies, and publications.
- Use **GLBT-inclusive language** in new employee orientation, diversity efforts, training programs, and other workplace events and activities.
- **Understand your personal feelings** around the issues of sexual orientation and gender identity. Educate yourself by reading and talking to people.
- **Personally challenge inappropriate** remarks, jokes, and policies.
- **Avoid making assumptions** about someone's sexual orientation or gender identity based on appearance or behavior. Don't assume that everyone is heterosexual or that "spouse" or "partner" always refers to someone of the opposite sex.
- **Share responsibility for open communications**. Work together to build rapport or trust. Ask individuals who are GLBT about terminology and labels you don't understand. Include affected people in decision-making discussions, and be ready to hear honest criticism and honor suggestions.
- **If someone shares information with you** about their sexual orientation or gender identity, ask them to clarify for you whether or not the information is to be kept confidential. Get permission to have further discussions with them if other issues come up.
- **If someone asks you** about another person's sexual orientation or gender identity, consider responding with something like, "That's rather personal; you'd have to ask for yourself," or "I've never asked."
- **If you want to know** about someone's sexual orientation or gender identity, ask them directly, rather than asking others. Because of past experiences, some people may choose not to share information, even when you ask. Respect their right to privacy.