SILENCE AND AMBIGUITY REINFORCE INVISIBILITY AND EXCLUSION IN RESEARCH ENVIRONMENTS

Out workers report higher rates of:

- Job Satisfaction
- Productivity
- Positive Attitudes
- Commitment to the work

...in comparison to closeted employees.

Workplace queer-friendliness can be assessed with respect to LGBTQ+ researchers’ openness about their identity.

LGBTQ+ researchers in the Life Sciences are much less likely to disclose their identity to colleagues & coworkers than to their friends & family.

The question is.. WHY?

Openness of Identity among LGBTQ+ People in the Life Sciences

“EVERYONE IN THIS GROUP COULD KNOW”

0 50 100 150 200

Participants

Friends & Family

Colleagues & Coworkers

“I AM NOT OUT TO ANYONE IN THIS GROUP”

LGBTQ+ researchers who feel unwelcome, unsure or unsupported in the workplace are less open about their identity.

ACADEMICS (ESPECIALLY GRADUATE STUDENTS) ARE THE LEAST AWARE OF WHAT LGBTQ+ SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE TO THEM

Percent of respondents that do not know what support is available for LGBTQ+ employees:

- 42% of academics vs. 29% of non-academics
- 58% of grad students vs. 38% of overall participants

DATA ADAPTED FROM YODER & MATTHEIS 2016, JOURNAL OF HOMOSEXUALITY. PAGE CREATED BY THE DEI TASKFORCE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN IN JUNE 2018, GRAPHICS BY LINDY JENSEN.
The national landscape of LGBTQ+ rights in the USA affects the career choices of LGBTQ+ researchers.

In just three years, same-sex marriage went from legal in 6 states to legal in all 50 states.

Same-sex marriage has given LGBTQ+ researchers access to very important rights:
- Spousal packages & spousal hire
- Spouses included on insurance & benefits
- Spouses entitled to pension upon death
- Citizenship opportunities for international queers with domestic partners

However, the United States is still a patchwork of important LGBTQ+ rights.

Absence of pro-LGBTQ+ legislation & policies measurably affects the stigma experienced by individuals.

(PACHANKIS & HATZENBUHLER 2013, BASIC AND APPLIED SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY)

Map of states with pro-LGBTQ+ legislation & policies


Michigan measure up?

- Marriage Equality
- Prohibits employment discrimination
- Prohibits housing discrimination
- Hate crime consideration
- Prohibits public accommodations discrimination
- Bans insurance exclusions for transgender healthcare
- Prohibits education discrimination
- Facilitates gender marker change on official documents

Map data created by the DEI taskforce at the University of Michigan, graphics by Lindy Jensen.
WHAT CAN YOU DO TO SUPPORT LGBTQ+ COLLEAGUES?

interpersonally

**DO:**
- Mention LGBTQ+ culture or rights positively or signal your support in other ways
- Let the individual lead the way when it comes to disclosure
- Politely wait for someone to use or mention their pronouns
- Use neutral pronouns & non-binary language
- Consider the context in which a colleague disclosed to you
- Challenge/"call-in" anti-LGBTQ+ opinions and actions (when you are silent, you are complicit)

**DON’T:**
- Make assumptions about gender identity or sexual orientation based on appearance
- Forcefully confront a colleague you suspect is queer ("outing")
- "Out" anyone to other colleagues or your PI without permission.

institutionally

- Inform ALL students and new hires about their benefits & rights.
- Use explicitly LGBTQ-inclusive language in written policies & benefits (including job offers)
- Create, support, and distribute information on institutional policies that make up for state-level legislative failures
- Inform all students & new hires of anti-discrimination policies & how to seek recourse
- Make LGBTQ-inclusive/supportive policies easy to find online.

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- Pay attention to LGBTQ+ rights issues in your state!
  - Subscribe to your state’s LGBTQ+ rights news on the Human Rights Campaign’s website.

Contact your Congress reps when the time comes!
- **House Representative:**
  - Debbie Dingell
  - Twitter: @RepDebDingell
  - Ypsilanti Office: (734)481-1100
  - D.C. Office: (202)225-4071
- **Senators:**
  - Gary Peters
  - Twitter: @SenGaryPeters
  - Lansing Office: (517)377-1508
  - D.C. Office: (202)224-6221
  - Debbie Stabenow
  - Twitter: @SenStabenow
  - Lansing Office: (517)203-1760
  - D.C. Office: (202)224-4822

The University of Michigan LGBTQ anti-discrimination policies:
- **SPG 601.06** Protects University of Michigan employees and students from discrimination due to sexual orientation
- **SPG 201.89-1** General anti-discrimination and harassment policy (including gender identity and sexual orientation)

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