



Vitality

An EFAP Article for Human Resource and Occupational Health Professionals, Program Administrators, Supervisors, and Key Personnel



2SLGBTQ+ Inclusivity in the Workplace

Today's workplaces must demonstrate that they are safe, inclusive spaces for everyone, so people feel "involved...and supported in all areas of the workplace."¹ Employees, investors, and regulators expect it.

Diversity & Inclusion practices are fundamentally something that helps employers attract and keep top talent; increase revenue and growth; drive innovation; and stand out from their competitors.² Organizations need to act with intention, certainty, and sincerity and recognize that a commitment to re-evaluate their approaches and practices constantly helps demonstrate their integrity. It can be helpful to do deeper dives that examine current states and circumstances for different groups affected by discrimination and marginalization.

Let's consider ways to help ensure your organization has strong 2SLGBTQ+ focused inclusivity activated in your workplace.

Why is it important to periodically review specific types of Diversity & Inclusion initiatives, for example, 2SLGBTQ+ inclusivity?

Diversity & Inclusion should never be considered a "once and done" initiative. If people in your organization are going to take these Human Resources practices and protocols seriously, these rules must offer the intended support.

Having clear and robust policies which:

- builds community
- develops trust
- provides reassurances that contributions by all employees are valued

Experiences of different marginalized groups are in constant flux, influenced by social sentiments, cultural beliefs, and political agendas. Staying up to date can ensure that no one group is excluded or left behind.

Here are nine things you can activate to demonstrate 2SLGBTQ+ inclusivity within your organization:

1. Show support, practice, and use Gender Neutral Language.

- This should form a significant part of your training approach. Manuals, instructions, and customer-facing documents should all be evaluated and updated.
- Focus training efforts on HR, Internal Communications, and recruiters initially for the biggest payoff and then expand to customer-facing roles. Ensure that the rollout includes everyone internally and that they understand the expectations and vernacular.
- Move towards a model that allows people to express their identities freely rather than check boxes from a defined list.

2. Everyone, without exception, must participate in regular Diversity & Inclusion Training opportunities.

- Your goal here is to acknowledge, address, and reduce unconscious bias within the organization.

3. Encourage and seek feedback from all employees.

- This is more than simply through an annual sentiment survey or "suggestion box."
- It requires honest dialogue, recognizing and challenging practices, and welcoming criticisms.

4. Recruitment tips.

- Start with a refresh of your approach to web and social media presence to demonstrate your inclusivity consistently.
- Choose to post vacancies to 2SLGBTQ+ friendly job sites and job boards.
- Show how 2SLGBTQ+ inclusion priorities begin during the interview and onboarding processes and ensure that you disclose company policies that help protect all employees.
- Highlight specific rules on the anti-harassment of 2SLGBTQ+ employees and point out the consequences for those who don't align with the expectations laid out in the policies.
- Take the opportunity to explore sponsorships that support Pride events.

5. Mentoring programs.

- Make 2SLGBTQ+ diversity someone's accountability at a senior level within the organization. They should be dedicated to the mandate and focused on championing rights, supportiveness, and ethics organization wide.
- Recognize people's potential by sponsoring and promoting formal and informal programs that connect mentors and protégés.

6. Examine and update your benefits program.

- Check for inclusive language within your partner benefit companies that you contract services with. Review your own HR policies on leaves and absences.
- Ensure that your employer-sponsored medical benefits include 2SLGBTQ+ friendly coverage.
 - Definitions of partners, spouses and parents should be inclusive.
 - Include services and coverage for gender-affirming therapy, treatment and/or surgeries.
 - Examine specific contract exclusions that could be discriminatory to 2SLGBTQ+ individuals and discuss underwriting practices with the insurer.

7. Provide training for people managers that is ongoing and part of a formal continuous learning-credit model.

- Reinforce confidentiality rules.
- Set expectations for modelling desired and supportive behaviours and addressing employee questions.
- Ensure they know policies regarding harassment and discrimination, so they are equipped to deal with issues confidently and not simply refer them to HR.

8. Bring visibility and develop 2SLGBTQ+ champions within your organization.

- Support people who want to get involved.
- Consider having employees actively contribute to revisiting dress codes to ensure inclusivity and eliminate double standards and discrimination.


9. Measure success.

- Look at your data and demographics to ensure you have information about 2SLGBTQ+ representation within the organization. If you don't, then rework employee surveys to collect them and start to build measurable strategies addressing this around:
 - Representation at all levels and roles.
 - Promotions and recognition.
 - Retention of talent.
 - Organizational effectiveness as it relates to Diversity & Inclusion training.



References:

1. Bush, Matt. (2021 April 13). Why is Diversity & Inclusion in the Workplace Important? Great Place to Work Institute. Retrieved May 20, 2023 from <https://www.greatplacetowork.com/resources/blog/why-is-diversity-inclusion-in-the-workplace-important>
2. Ibid.

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