



Sexuality in the Workplace: Organizational Control, Sexual Harassment, and the pursuit of Pleasure

Creating an Inclusive Workplace: Understanding Sexual Diversity

What does diversity mean to you? How is it reflected in your workplace and what policies do you have in place to protect diversity? Respecting sexual diversity in the workplace means respecting fellow co-workers' and/or employees' basic human rights to work in an environment that is free of discrimination and harassment.

Sexual Diversity: is a term used in the context of sexual orientation that acknowledges the definition of sexuality to be pluralistic.

But sex is private, why do we have to think about it in the workplace?

The idea that discussions about sexuality should not occur in the workplace is a reflection itself of a subtle form of discrimination. Sexuality is present in the workplace when someone has a photograph of a partner on their desk, when someone wears a wedding ring, when we think about human resources policies such as parental leave, partner benefits, and who is and isn't invited to work events.

Everyone benefits from a Sexually Inclusive Workplace.

An inclusive culture at work creates a space where everyone feels comfortable and secure enough to be themselves. No one should have to hide an important part of their identity! Organizational changes of inclusivity requires the participation of everyone! Individuals should not be tokenized for their identity and therefore expected to represent an entire community. As such, LGBTQ allies are important participants in this process.

Guidelines to Creating an Inclusive Workplace:

1. Create space for LGBTQ individuals to feel loved, accepted, and included without reservation
2. Encourage the organization and employees to challenge commonly held assumptions of heterosexism and ciscentrism
3. Act in support of others by asking the right questions about workplace practices and prompting organizational change as necessary

Website: <http://www.drde Wit.com/>
Twitter: @drde Wit
Facebook: Stephen de Wit—Sexologist
Instagram: drde Wit
Snapchat: dr.de Wit

4. Understand what they know and what they still need to learn about sexual orientation and gender identity
5. Think critically about who to support LGBTQ individuals
6. Seek clarification about what kind of support LGBTQ individuals are looking for at work
7. Stand up for LGBTQ rights in the Workplace
8. Teach others about how to be an ally and what being an ally truly means.

Sexual Harassment Policy in Ontario

Sexual and gender-based harassment are forms of discrimination. Under the Ontario *Human Rights Code* sexual harassment is “engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct that is known or ought to be known to be unwelcome.” Sexual harassment does not have to be sexual. It can also mean that someone is bothering you because they think that you don’t act, look or dress in the way that a man (or boy) or woman (or girl) should. It can include:

- asking for sex in exchange for something, like offering to improve a test score, offering a raise or promotion at work, or withholding something like needed repairs to your apartment
- asking for dates and not taking “no” for an answer
- demanding hugs
- making unnecessary physical contact, including unwanted touching
- using rude or insulting language or making comments that stereotype girls, women, boys or men
- calling people unkind names that relate to their sex or gender
- making comments about a person’s physical appearance (for example, whether or not they are attractive)
- saying or doing something because you think a person does not fit sex-role stereotypes
- posting or sharing pornography, sexual pictures, cartoons, graffiti or other sexual images (including online)
- making sexual jokes
- bragging about sexual ability
- bullying based on sex or gender
- spreading sexual rumours or gossip (including online)



Know Your Rights!

The Ontario *Human Rights Code* says every person has the right to be free from discrimination based on sex—and this includes sexual harassment. Sometimes when a person speaks up about sexual harassment they can experience reprisal or punishment. The code prohibits reprisal, which includes such things as being hostile to someone, excessive scrutiny, excluding someone socially or other negative behaviour because someone has rejected a sexual advance or other proposition (such as a request for a date).

If you are someone you know is being harassed, you can ask the person to stop and you can ask someone in authority to take steps to stop it from happening. Employers and others who provide services in Ontario have a legal duty to take steps to prevent and respond to sexual harassment. The Ontario government also requires all health care regulatory colleges to have in place a patient relations program that includes measures for preventing and dealing with the sexual harassment of patients.

As an employer, you must have an employee harassment policy in place that deals with harassment complaints. A harassment policy serves to protect you and gives you the opportunity to develop guidelines for best practices.

Notes:

We hope you enjoyed yourself today. If you have any further questions we invite you to see Stephen after this presentation where he will be signing his book.

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Snapchat: dr.de Wit