

LGBTQIA+ Definitions & Resources



Here are some of Holistic's recommended best practices that you can integrate into your workplace culture to create an inclusive space for all.

Helpful Terminology

What is sexual orientation?

Someone's sexual orientation is defined by the gender(s) of the people that they're typically romantically, physically or emotionally attracted to. Disclosing of this information is always the individual's choice. As a best practice, do not assume someone's sexual orientation and wait for them to tell you how they identify.

What is gender identity?

Someone's personal conception of their gender and the framework for how they see themselves. As a social construct, gender varies from society to society and one's relationship with their gender can change over time. How someone identifies and/or expresses their gender does not need to align with gendered societal norms. Common terminology includes:

- Cisgender: someone's gender identity aligns with their sex assigned at birth
- Transgender: someone's gender identity differs from their sex assigned at birth
- Non-binary: someone's gender identity is outside of the traditional male/female binary. No one pronoun or gender presentation encapsulates the non-binary spectrum.

Where do pronouns come into play?

Pronouns are how we address people in day-to-day speech. Often, individuals who identify as men use he/him and individuals who identify as women use she/her. However, some individuals identify with pronouns that aren't inherently gendered (e.g., they/them, ze/zir).

If ever in a situation where you are unfamiliar with someone's pronouns, there are a couple of routes to take. If there exists a comfortable working relationship, it's always recommended to ask:

"My apologies but I missed your pronouns when you were introducing yourself. Mine are he/him!"

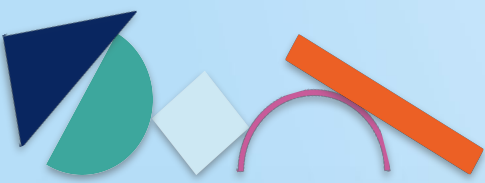
If the situation hasn't presented itself to ask, we encourage the approach of referencing your coworker directly by name:

"[Employee Name] is great, let's assign [name] similar projects in the future!"

People's pronouns can be static or dynamic. Learning and using someone's preferred pronouns is a way to validate their humanity, but not an invitation to ask about your coworker's personal history.

Who are we referencing when we say "LGBTQIA+"?

LGBTQIA+ is an acronym that stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Asexual. The + represents that more identities exist than could ever fit into a 7-letter acronym. Some identities included in the + are Two-Spirited, Genderqueer, Pansexual; this is a welcoming community open for self-definition.



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Tips for Inclusion

Integrate Gender-Inclusive Language Practices

Begin to use language that isn't gender-specific. This is a radical act of inclusion that can help you avoid microaggressive interactions of assuming someone's gender or sexual identity. Some examples of gender-inclusive language practices include:

- Using language like 'partner', 'spouse', or 'significant other' when referring to someone else's significant other instead of assuming a gendered title (i.e. wife/husband/boyfriend/girlfriend) unless otherwise told previously
- Using 'folks' when addressing a crowd rather than 'ladies and gentlemen'
- Using 'Mx.', a gender neutral honorific, when unsure of the gender identity of who you are addressing

Don't Make Assumptions

Understand that everyone shows up to work differently. Even if well-intentioned, assuming someone's sexuality or gender identity based on their presentation or mannerisms is a form of subconscious bias manifestation and should be checked through self-education and personal recognition.

Introduce Yourself With Your Pronouns

It's as easy as saying, "*Hi, my name is [insert name] and I use he/him/his pronouns.*" This provides your coworker with an opportunity to disclose their pronouns at their own discretion.

- If you miss the chance to introduce yourself with your pronouns, there are other ways to both inform your colleagues and learn how they prefer to be addressed! Renaming your Zoom to include your pronouns or having pronoun stickers available for the office is a good way to start.
- Have this become common practice! When only trans or gender non-conforming individuals are expected to share their pronouns, it can create a situation where someone feels singled out. When everyone shares collectively, a culture of non-assumption is created.

One LGBTQIA+ Individual Cannot Speak for the Entire Community

Never expect one LGBTQIA+-identifying individual to have all the answers to your potentially unwanted questions. Take it upon yourself to self-educate on legislation, to read up on current events, to seek out opportunities to listen to individual lived narratives, etc.

Honor Everyone's Identity Respectfully

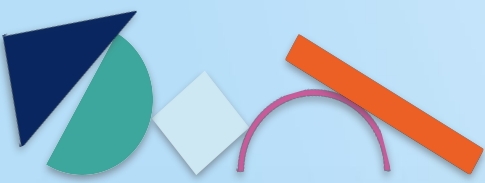
Once an individual has come out, always refer to them and/or their partner how they explicitly prefer. Examples of microaggressive instances of disrespect can be:

- *Misgendering* is when you use a pronoun for someone that differs from their preferences
- *Deadnaming* is when you use someone's birth name rather than their chosen preferred name

If you accidentally slip up, apologize swiftly and meaningfully. Most importantly, use the correct name and pronouns during future instances of interaction.

Take Every Opportunity to Be an Ally!

Regardless of your own identity, it's important to do as much as you can to support and empower your colleagues. If everyone integrates these simple, day-to-day practices into their daily life, the entire workplace will benefit.



Tips to Create an Inclusive Workplace Structure



Physical

Accessible Restrooms Whenever possible, ensure that there is, at minimum, one bathroom in your physical office that is explicitly marked as gender-neutral and accessible to every single employee.

LGBTQIA+ Employee Resource Group An ERG is the perfect opportunity to foster community among LGBTQIA+ employees. This space can be meant for both social support and provision of organizational resources.

Be Public and Transparent About Your Support Make sure you have clearly-stated missions and values that align with promoting the wellbeing of your LGBTQIA+ employees.

Dress Code If your workplace has a dress code, be sure the policies regarding certain clothing or accessories (e.g. earrings, nail polish) is uniformly enforced across all gender identities.

Policies, Procedures, and Values

LGBTQIA+ Benefits One way to be inclusive with your workplace benefits is to ensure that employees have access to affordable gender-affirming healthcare (e.g. Hormone Replacement Therapy, gender affirming surgeries, etc).

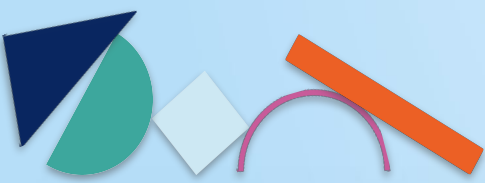
Training Resources There are an [innumerable amount of workplace advantages](#) to seeking out LGBTQIA+ inclusive workplace education for your company, including Holstic's Gender Inclusivity in the Workplace training. Some resources are free -- this resource guide, articles that detail [updated workplace discrimination laws](#), internalizing publicly-available [workplace narratives of LGBTQIA+ identifying individuals](#). We encourage you to be creative in how you incentivize your employee's personal growth through workplace initiatives.

Observance of Key Holidays While some may not be nationally-recognized, the following page includes a number of key dates throughout the year that celebrate an aspect of the LGBTQIA+ lived experience. There are many [ways for your workplace](#) to recognize these days and awarenesses in the workplace. Inclusion can be as simple as sending a celebratory acknowledgement through one of your company's Slack channels! Remember as well that different countries will have their own important dates to commemorate and celebrate.

Workplace Anti-Discrimination Policy Create and clearly communicate your workplace's policy regarding anti-discrimination so employees can trust that they will be supported and that change will occur if they report identity-based harassment through the proper channels.

Remote-Specific

Pronouns in Zoom Name and Email Signature Every time you hop on a video call, ensure your name reflects both your name and your pronouns. We also recommend you include your pronouns next to your name in your email signature which is a small, powerful act of inclusion called a microinclusion.



Resources & Important Dates



For Employees Who Identify as LGBTQIA+

[Know Your Rights](#) Learn more about Title VII and ways to report to the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission (EEOC) if you've experienced discrimination.

[You're Not Alone](#) Here are a few resources that might help if you do feel isolated:

- **[Trans Lifeline](#)** Peer-to-peer support hotline run by and for transgender people
- **[The Trevor Project's Mental Health Support Resources](#)** Resources to help explore the intersection of aspects of mental health with LGBTQIA+ identities
- **[GLMA, Health Professionals Advancing LGBTQIA+ Equality](#)** Access to a directory of LGBTQIA+ competent healthcare providers along with educational resources to help LGBTQIA+ individuals navigate improving the quality of their healthcare.

Important Dates to Note in the US

Celebrating these days internally and externally to recognize your LGBTQIA+ employees is a great way to show your support. Internally this might look like holding space for celebration or acknowledgement during a team meetings. Externally, we advocate that you share your company's commitment to creating an inclusive workplace for all employees.

<i>March 31</i>	Transgender Day of Visibility
<i>October 11</i>	National Coming Out Day
<i>June</i>	Pride Month
→ <i>June 12</i>	Pulse Remembrance Day
→ <i>June 28</i>	Anniversary of the Stonewall Riots
International Gay Pride Events	See how your community celebrates Pride!

