

Breaking the Cycle of Invisibility: Sexual Orientation in the Workplace



Sexual orientation is a challenging issue to engage in diversity and inclusion efforts due to the **cycle of invisibility**.

This cycle has **tended to keep gay, lesbian and bisexual in the closet** and their heterosexual **colleagues unaware and under-skilled**.

Lesbian, gay and bisexual people, however, represent **a significant percentage of the workforce and customer/client base of most companies**. **The financial impact of inclusion and exclusion** are significant in a competitive environment, with tightening margins, as companies compete to **hire and retain the best talent** and to **serve the most profitable customers**.

In this **highly interactive and hands on program**, participants will:

- Understand how sexual orientation is a workplace issue that creates bottom line challenges and opportunities
- Experience how the cycle of visibility impacts everyone in the workplace
- Identify often subtle behaviors that can create a sense of exclusion for gay, lesbian and bisexual staff, even when colleagues are well intended
- Apply inclusive skills and behaviors in real workplace situations



Audience:	Leaders and/or Professionals
Length:	2 to 4 hours
Format:	Activities, lecturettes, and skill practice
Modules:	<p>Activity: What did you do this weekend? Experiment with having typical workplace conversations in a way that attempts to conceal personal information</p> <p>Content: Coping Strategies: Hiding, Avoiding and Integrating Explore how these coping strategies impact organizational productivity</p> <p>Activity: Take a Stand Expand the dialogue about the topic by asking people to take a stand on “Agree/Disagree” continuum’s around questions such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Sexual orientation is about what people do behind closed doors and has nothing to do with work.</i>• <i>There are irreconcilable issues regarding belief systems and sexual orientation.</i>• <i>it is safe, career-wise, to be openly gay, lesbian or bisexual here</i> <p>Skill Practice: Case Studies Present common situations at work in the form of case studies and have small groups discuss, evaluate and recommend “best practice” strategies</p>
Materials:	Tailoring of Case Studies Available

