



# LGBTQ Inclusive Religious Resources and Better Practices

## Hidden Intersections Exist

Americans strongly support laws that would protect LGBTQ people from discrimination in the workplace:

- 71% of Americans favor laws that would protect gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people against discrimination in jobs, public accommodations, and housing.<sup>i</sup>
- Solid majorities (including 79% of Democrats and 58% of Republicans) of both political parties and every major religious group support workplace non-discrimination laws for gay and lesbian people.<sup>ii</sup>
- 75% of Americans incorrectly believe that it is currently illegal under federal law to fire or refuse to hire someone because they are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender. Only 15% of Americans correctly say that such discrimination is legal under federal laws.<sup>iii</sup>

## LGBTQ People Often Religiously-Identified

- 77% of LGB adults in America say that they believe in God (compared to 89% to straight adults).<sup>iv</sup>
- 59% of LGB Americans identify as religiously affiliated, compared to 78% for heterosexuals.<sup>v</sup>

## Address Behavior, Not Belief

Belief does not equal behavior, so particularly in the workplace, it is important to ensure employees are behaving appropriately with their colleagues and following organizational policies and practices. Beliefs are personal. They may drive behaviors, but may not always do so.

This is particularly important to remember when it comes to the intersection of LGBTQ and religious communities in the workplace. It may not be appropriate or even useful to engage in potentially contentious debate about people's beliefs, but expectations around appropriate behavior with colleagues and clients are set by the organization's missions and norms.

## **Utilize Tanenbaum's Competencies for Respectful Communication**

Tanenbaum recommends utilizing its Competencies for Respectful Communication as guidelines for engaging in conversation around LGBTQ and religious topics. These topics can be difficult to discuss, as people may be bringing their own histories and assumptions to conversations. An excerpt of our Competencies is below. You can find our Respectful Communication handout on our website at [shorturl.at/gjrP7](http://shorturl.at/gjrP7).

- Avoid “Spokesperson Syndrome” – use “I”
- Platinum Rule: Treat others how they would like to be treated. What does respect look like to someone else? The only way to know is to ask.
- Be curious and ask respectfully. (Sometime may I ask you about...?)
- Identify and debunk stereotypes.
- Acknowledge and apologize for mistakes made.

## **LGBTQ Inclusive Religious Organizations to Know**

- Affirmation LGBTQ Mormons, Families & Friends
- Call to Action (Catholic)
- Eshel (Orthodox Jewish)
- Gay and Lesbian Vaishnava Association (Hindu)
- Gay Buddhist Fellowship
- LGBTQ Humanist Council
- Muslims for Progressive Values
- Many Voices (Black church movement)

## **Shared Programming Ideas for LGBTQ and Faith-based Employee Resource Groups**

- Food/toiletry drives
- Educational programs (e.g., suicide/mental health awareness)
- Volunteer days (e.g., working at local public school to do cleanup, food pantry)

- Events with multiple ERGs (e.g., LGBTQ, Interfaith, Latinx)
- Disaster relief fundraising
- Shared D&I forums (e.g., featuring multiple focus areas)
- Showing up (e.g., just committing to being visible at key events to understand more)

## Contact Us

For more information and resources, or to learn about the trainings we offer on the intersection of LGBTQ and religious diversity in the workplace, please contact us as [workplacediversity@tanenbaum.org](mailto:workplacediversity@tanenbaum.org), or visit [tanenbaum.org/programs/workplace](https://tanenbaum.org/programs/workplace).

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<sup>i</sup> PRRI, America's Growing Support for Transgender Rights (2019).

<sup>ii</sup> PRRI, Emerging Consensus on LGBT Issues: Findings from the 2017 American Values Atlas (2018)

<sup>iii</sup> PRRI, "A Shifting Landscape: A Decade of Change in American Attitudes about Same-Sex Marriage and LGBT Issues" (2014)

<sup>iv</sup> Pew Research, Lesbian, gay and bisexual Americans are less religious than straight adults by traditional measures (2019).

<sup>v</sup> Pew Research, Lesbian, gay and bisexual Americans differ from general public in their religious affiliations (2015).