

June 2021

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## Contact EAP

[eap.wa.gov](http://eap.wa.gov)

Toll free: (877) 313-4455

Phone: (360) 407-9490

Interpreters available.

TTY: call 711 via WA Relay

## Pride Month 2021



June is Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer (LGBTQ) Pride Month, a time to honor the 1969 Stonewall Uprising in the Greenwich Village neighborhood of Lower Manhattan, New York City. It's also a time to foster awareness of social justice and equity issues faced by people in LGBTQ communities across the country. See the [June Employee Frontline Newsletter](#) for more information about Pride Month, including events, resources and other links of interest.

## Juneteenth 2021



On June 19th we celebrate Juneteenth, to commemorate the actual ending of the practice of chattel slavery in our country. Also known as "Emancipation Day" and "Freedom Day", Juneteenth has long been celebrated in the African American community. See the [June Employee](#)

[Frontline Newsletter](#) for more information about Juneteenth, including events, resources and other links of interest.

## LGBTQ Mental Health and the Workplace

LGBTQ+ individuals continue to face equality and equity issues related to safety, housing, employment and physical and mental health. To be effective, supervisors must be aware of how different groups, including LGBTQ+ workers and workers from other underrepresented communities, are affected by mental health issues.

LGBTQ+ adults are more than twice as likely to experience a mental health condition in their lifetimes and 2.5 times more likely to experience anxiety, depression and substance misuse and abuse, as compared with heterosexual individuals. Women who identify as lesbian/bisexual are more than 2 times as likely to engage in high-risk alcohol use in the past month as heterosexual women (8.0% vs. 4.4%). The risk of suicide attempts is higher among transgender individuals who identify as African American/black, Hispanic/Latino, American Indian/Alaska Native, or Multiracial/Mixed Race as compared to that of white transgender individuals. These health disparities are closely linked to stigma, discrimination in housing, employment and healthcare and violence against LGBTQ+ individuals.

LGBTQ individuals also face continued daunting challenges at work. Employed LGBTQ individuals have fewer protections than their non-LGBTQ+ colleagues. No federal law exists that prohibits workplace discrimination based on sexual or gender identity. Employees can be fired for being gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender in more than half of US states. LGBTQ+ employees report facing hiring and career-advancement discrimination, in addition to harassment in the workplace at a higher rate than their straight and cisgender counterparts. LGBTQ++ women and individuals of color are more than twice as likely to describe discrimination in the workplace as their white peers and 90% of transgender workers have experienced harassment or mistreatment at work.

## Supporting the Employee



That LGBTQ+ individuals are more likely to struggle with their mental health and experience harassment and discrimination in the workplace underscores the importance of a supportive approach that is designed with LGBTQ+ employees in mind. An inclusive work environment that supports, respects, and protects all employees is a key component of an LGBTQ+ friendly

organizational culture. It results in improved retention rates, job performance and productivity. Below are some ways workplace leaders can support LGBTQ workers:

- Refer to policies that support an inclusive position and that outline expected behaviors of all workers. <https://www.hum.wa.gov/employment>
- Review and modify policy documents and forms to ensure gender neutral-language.
- Encourage training in diversity equity and inclusion (DEI). Workforce Learning and Performance (WLP) offers many opportunities to build competency in DEI. Some examples are below.
  - Leadership Development – Diversity Management (1 day) - <https://des.wa.gov/training/CourseDescription/1643>
  - Personal Development - Diversity and Inclusion (1/2 Day) - <https://des.wa.gov/training/CourseDescription/1986>

- Leadership Development - LLPA: Preventing Discrimination, Harassment and Managing Accommodations (1 Day) - <https://des.wa.gov/training/CourseDescription/1642>
- Risk Management - Sexual Harassment Prevention (1/2 Day) - <https://des.wa.gov/training/CourseDescription/1633>
- Support the [Rainbow Alliance & Inclusion Network](#) (RAIN), a [statewide Business Resource Group](#) (BRG)
- Support gender expression and transition in the workplace. (see resources below)
- Encourage employees to seek support and assistance from the EAP. Supervisors are encouraged to offer the EAP as a supportive resource. Referral types and the referral process are noted on [EAP's site](#).

## Resources

- [Creating a Trans-Inclusive Workplace](#) (Article) – Harvard Business Review
- [Mental Health Disparities](#) (PDF) – American Psychiatric Association
- [Why Workplace Mental Health Policies Must Take LGBTQ+ Experiences Into Account](#) (Article) – Forbes
- [Workplace Mental Health Resources For Black Professionals, the LGBTQIA+ Community, and Coronavirus](#) (Article and resource links) – Mindshare Partners
- [Guide to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity and the Washington State Law Against Discrimination](#) (PDF) – Washington State Human Rights Commission

## Supporting the Supervisor

Supporting employees as they experience and navigate mental health challenges can be taxing for the employee and the supervisor. To obtain support, consult and advice, consider contacting the EAP at (877) 313 - 4455 and asking for an organizational consult with an EAP Counselor.

Important Notices: 1. \*Links to external websites are provided as a convenience. The Employee Assistance Program and the Department of Enterprise Services do not endorse the contents, services, or viewpoints found at these external sites. 2. Information in Frontline Employee is for general informational purposes only and is not intended to replace the counsel or advice of a qualified health or legal professional. For further help, questions, or referral to community resources for specific problems or personal concerns, contact the EAP or other qualified professional.