

**“UNDERSTANDING AND MANAGING  
GAY AND TRANSGENDER ISSUES IN THE  
WORKPLACE”**

**with**

**Brian McNaught**

**A Facilitator’s Guide**

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**Note from Brian McNaught (September 27, 2018)**

**This dvd series was filmed 13 years ago, which is when this guide was written. Our sophistication on these issues is increasing, and will continue to grow as more and more people step forward to share with us their unique experience of their sex, their gender, and their sexual and romantic attractions. With that in mind, let's make a few suggested changes, starting with the title. I recommend changing the name of this series to "Understanding and Managing LGBTQ Workplace Issues."**

**One area in which we have seen huge change is that of identity, with many younger people choosing to refer to themselves as "queer" or "gender queer." The word "queer" is used as shorthand for "I won't be pinned down with a culturally-constructed label. All of sexuality and gender are on continuums."**

**Another significant development in naming gender identity, for some younger people, is the rejection of binary paradigms, particularly sex designations of "male or female." It's not unusual today to see beneath a person's name the pronouns they prefer to have used with them. For an increasing number of people, the preferred pronoun is "their." Again, it's a rejection of confining labels.**

**With transgender issues, you will hear an increasing number of people use the word "alignment" instead of "transition." This word better explains their experience of having their body aligned to match their identity, rather than them transitioning (moving) from one sex to another.**

**Be prepared for words to continue to change. I recommend asking a person the manner in which they'd like to be referred. Be kind to yourself in your effort to be an ally, and have a sense of humor about yourself. In other words, relax. You're doing your best. With your help, others will be enabled to do better in creating a workplace in which everyone feels safe and valued.**

**Overview: This workshop uses a DVD/VHS of a diversity training session conducted by Brian McNaught, an internationally-acclaimed presenter on gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer (GLBTQ) issues in the workplace.**

**Objectives: At the end of the four sessions, participants will feel reduced anxiety about, and increased confidence in, their understanding of, and ability to respond to, issues and questions about sexual orientation, gender identity, and related issues in the workplace.**

**Participants will learn:**

- 1.) why creating a safe and productive work environment is essential to competition and productivity;
- 2.) the distinction between personal values and mutual respect toward others;
- 3.) why GLBT people generally want and need to come out at work but often do not feel safe doing so;
- 4.) how we each have an impact on, and a role in creating, a safe and productive work environment;
- 5.) terminology relevant to GLBTQ people

**Before You Start:**

- 1.) Review the Brian McNaught DVD/VHS.
- 2.) Review the Facilitator's Guide, including the Questions for Discussion and Tips for each segment.
- 3.) Review the book *Gay Issues in the Workplace*.

**Approximate Time Needed:**

**3 hours (1 session) Parts I – IV**

**90 minutes (2 sessions) Parts I &  
II, then III & IV**

**45-50 minutes (4 sessions) One  
part per session**

**Materials Needed:** Facilitator's Guide  
DVD/VHS player  
Workshop DVD/VHS  
Copy of *Gay Issues in the  
Workplace*

**\*Remember:**

- Don't feel you need to be an expert. No one knows everything.
- Valuing diversity is a journey, and learning about diversity takes time.
- Consult with the Diversity Office when faced with difficult questions.

## STATEMENT by BRIAN MCNAUGHT

**“This two hour presentation seeks to build bridges of understanding on gay and transgender issues in the workplace, and to make allies of all employees in the company’s goal of empowering its diverse workforce. There are seven important ‘steps’ that I take to ensure optimum results. They are:**

- 1.) ALLOW FOR UNCONSCIOUS INCOMPETENCE – These issues are a ‘foreign language’ for most people. Ignorance is the parent of fear. People fear and often avoid what they don’t understand. Well-intentioned people make mistakes.**
- 2.) NOT A MORAL DEBATE – Focus on personal behaviors, not personal values. The company values diversity in order to attract and retain the best and brightest employees.**
- 3.) TUG OF WAR – Competition is like a ‘tug of war.’ The ten hands pulling on the rope for our company are black, brown, red, yellow, white, male, female, transgender, gay, lesbian, straight,, old, young, Christian, Muslim, Hindu, atheist, etc. – Make a connection to other issues of diversity. The common denominator is that all people seek to work where they feel safe and valued, NOT tolerated. Assessments should be based on skills and performance and no other factors.**
- 4.) WORDS vs. MUSIC – Though the words may be the same from site to site, the music varies. Understanding, not policies, changes the environment. People’s behaviors, not Codes of Conduct, make us feel welcome. Be aware of your music. Ask all others to do the same.**
- 5.) INFORMATION BUILDS CONFIDENCE – Replace myths with accurate information on Biological Sex, Gender Identity, Gender Role/Expression, Sexual Orientation, the Kinsey Scale, and the Transgender Continuum. Define the terms: homophobia, heterosexism, gay, lesbian, bisexual, homosexual, sexual orientation vs. preference, transgender, transsexual, spouse, and partner. Describe terms to avoid: choice, lifestyle, admitted, roommate, slang. Give examples of inclusive language: ‘Do you have a partner?’ vs. ‘Are you married?’**
- 6.) A FACE ON THE ISSUE CREATES COMMITMENT – Tell your story (or have a gay/transgender speaker tell his or hers.) Allow the audience members to understand in their hearts what it feels like to experience rejection or mere tolerance. The messenger IS the message.**
- 7.) ACTION STEPS – Give ideas of what next might be done: Use inclusive language, speak positively on the issue, ask questions, show support by attending functions sponsored by gay and transgender colleagues, talk about the issues at work and at home, and recommend the training to others.**

**“Change in behaviors will happen most effectively when there is a change in attitudes. Change in attitudes takes a long time. We all need to be patient and to have a good sense of humor. If you have any questions about this process, please don’t hesitate to contact me by writing to [brian@brian-mcnaught.com](mailto:brian@brian-mcnaught.com).”**

**Brian McNaught has been referred to by *the New York Times* as “the godfather of gay sensitivity training.” As an educator on these issues since 1974 , he has spoken at over 200 universities, and, all over the world at dozens of Fortune 500 companies, including Deutsche Bank, Bank of America, Citigroup, JP Morgan Chase, UBS, Chrysler, Ford, Morgan Stanley, Merck, DuPont, Hewlett-Packard, Motorola, S.C. Johnson & Sons, Chubb, SONY, Credit Suisse-First Boston, AT&T, Lehman Brothers, Goldman Sachs, Lucent, NCR, Avaya, the Federal Reserve, the National Security Agency, the Department of State, and the Department of Immigration. He is certified as a sexuality educator, his many books are used as college texts, and he has appeared frequently on Public Broadcast Stations.**

## **USING THIS PROGRAM**

**Opening:** Clarify the purpose. Present a summary of the video’s purpose and benefits.

**“This is a three hour (or 90/45 minute per session) introductory workshop that explores the impact of homophobia and heterosexism on productivity, and examines the means of eliminating unprofessional conduct at work. Participants gain the insights and information they need to help create a safe and productive work environment for all employees.”**

**Transition:** Break down the different segments of the DVD/video to make it easier for participants to understand what they will experience.

**Introduction:** “In Part I – ‘Starting the Discussion – Words vs. Music,’ Brian McNaught provides a framework for how our own behavior and preconceptions can affect our relationships with others. It’s about checking in on ourselves and realizing we have an opportunity to learn, and to contribute to building an inclusive, productive workplace.

**“In Part II – ‘Challenges in the Workplace,’ the program focuses on self-realization as a gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender person, and the challenges he or she faces coming out in the workplace.**

**“Part III, ‘Learning the Language,’ provides an excellent overview of the different terminology relevant to understanding and responding positively to gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, and transgender issues.**

**“Finally, in Part IV, ‘Putting a Face on the Issue,’ we get to hear much of Brian’s powerful, personal story - his self-realization and coming out. In some fascinating and moving anecdotes, he highlights his life, professionally and personally, as a gay man.**

**“Let’s view the first segment, and follow it with a group discussion.”**

**Video: Show Part I of the DVD/video**

**Stop: Pause the DVD/VHS when it fades to black.**

**Facilitate:** Lead a discussion of Part I, “Starting the Discussion – Words vs. Music.”

**Suggested questions:**

1. What is the significance of Brian’s description of people “pulling on the rope?” How do we make sure that everyone is willing to pull on the rope?
2. Brian used the word “music” metaphorically. Why is it important that we be aware of our music?
3. What causes our music to change?
4. How does Brian distinguish personal core values from mutual respect?
5. What is the company asking us to do?

**Tips:**

- We create our own “music.”
- A company can have the right words but not the right music.
- If a company has the right words, it is important for the “music” to match the words.
- When it comes to mutual respect, don’t tell jokes about others; don’t put down other people or groups; you can treat everyone with mutual respect without changing your core values.

**\*\*End Part I (approximately 45 mins.)\*\***

**Transition:** Briefly summarize what was learned in Part I and introduce Part II – “Challenges in the Workplace.”

**Introduction:** “In this segment we will hear how gay, lesbian, and bisexual children realize they are different from their straight family members, friends and classmates. We will learn of the challenges that gay, lesbian, and bisexual people have in coming out in the workplace.”

**Video:** Resume the DVD/VHS with Part II, “Challenges in the Workplace.”

**Stop:** Pause the DVD/VHS when it fades to black .



**Facilitate:**                    **Lead a discussion of Part II.**

**Suggested questions:**

- 1. What do straight and gay, lesbian, and bisexual young people have in common when it comes to their first sexual feelings?**
- 2. How does Brian describe a transgender person? How is transgender different from being gay or lesbian?**
- 3. Whose comfort level should a gay, lesbian, or bisexual person be most concerned with when faced with questions from others? Discuss.**
- 4. What test can we use when we have difficulty deciding if a comment or behavior toward another person is harmful or harmless?**
- 5. Should a gay or lesbian person stay in the closet? Explain your response.**
- 6. If someone comes out to us in the workplace, what should we do?**

**Tips:**

- The more people who come out, the easier it is for everyone, gay or straight, to address/gain acceptance of sexual orientation and gender identity differences.**
- Gay or lesbian people are likely to come out when they feel it is safe. (Define “safe”: career, personal safety, relationships.)**
- Coming out is an ongoing process. You don’t just come out once.**
- Feel a sense of privilege if someone comes out to you. It means they saw something in you that was trustworthy. Thank the person for telling you, and let them know you’ll keep the information confidential if that is what they want.**

**\*\*End Part II (approximately 45 mins.)\*\***

**Transition:** Summarize what was learned in Parts I and II, and introduce Part III, “Learning the Language.”

**Introduction:** “In this segment we will learn the correct meaning of terms that are important to understanding gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender issues in the workplace.”

**Video:** Start Part III of the DVD.

**Stop:** Pause the DVD/VHS when it fades to black.

**Facilitate:** Lead a discussion of Part III.

**Suggested questions:**

1. Define homophobia and heterosexism. How are they different?
2. What two examples does Brian provide of behavior mistakenly considered homophobic?
3. Name some homophobic behaviors.
4. How can heterosexism negatively impact leadership in the company?
5. Define the following: bisexual, transgender, transsexual, gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation.
6. How does the term homosexual differ from gay?
7. How might people treat you differently if they found out you were gay or lesbian?

**Tips:**

- Do not use terms such as choice, preference, or lifestyle. Being homosexual is none of these.
- Gender expression is the way in which a person expresses either traditionally masculine or traditionally feminine roles. It is greatly influenced by culture.
- Homosexual is not an offensive term, but it is more formal than gay.
- The word gay is an adjective. The word lesbian can be a noun or adjective.
- Most scientists believe sexual orientation is pre-determined before birth.

- **Bisexuals outnumber gay and lesbian people but may not necessarily act on their feelings.**
- **Transsexual means someone who has a different gender identity than their biological sex.**
- **Gender Identity is the core sense of being male or female.**
- **A transsexual is someone who may or may not through medical treatment, including surgery, alter his or her biological make-up to match his or her gender identity.**
- **Heterosexism is a value system, a belief that it is better to be heterosexual than homosexual.**
- **Heterosexism prevents a company from valuing and using the talents everyone has to offer, something we need to do to remain competitive. At work, respect for employees is not only company policy but it also affects the bottom line.**
- **Homophobia is fear and hatred of homosexuality in others and in ourselves.**

**\*\*End Part III (approximately 50 mins.)\*\***

**Transition:** Summarize what was learned in Parts I, II and III, and introduce Part IV, “Putting a Face on the Issue.”

**Introduction:** “In this final segment, we will hear Brian tell his own story about self-realization and coming out. His story is informative, sobering, and heartfelt. In his story, we will see how everything we learned in the first three segments links together.”

**Video:** Show Part IV of the DVD/VHS (to the end).

**Gain Commitment:** Ask participants one final question:

“Based on what you learned in this workshop, what can you personally commit to doing to create a more inclusive and safe work environment?”

**List suggestions for creating a more inclusive and safe work environment.**

**\*\*End Part IV (approximately 50 mins.)\*\***

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR USE OF**  
*Gay Issues in the Workplace*

**This book by Brian McNaught (St. Martin's Press, 1993) is an excellent resource on why gay people come out, what it means to be gay, lesbian, or bisexual, how gay people come out, and appropriate language to use. Of particular use may be the guided imagery "A Fantasy" on page 18, and the model for "Homosexual Identity Formation" that begins on page 36. For more information on this book or other resources, go to [www.brian-mcnaught.com](http://www.brian-mcnaught.com).**

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