

# Professionalism & Productivity: LGBT "Safe Spaces"

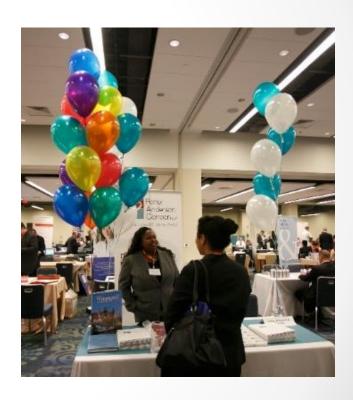
EVENT, MM/DD/YYYY

#### Presenters

- D'Arcy Kemnitz, Executive Director, National LGBT Bar Association
- Shannon Minter, Legal Director, National Center for Lesbian Rights
- Lori Lorenzo, Deputy Director, Leadership Council on Legal Diversity

## Agenda

- What is a Safe Space?
- Workplace discrimination
- Using appropriate terminology
- Transgender concerns
- What allies can do



### Objective

Create a professional environment where all employees, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression, can be most productive and best able to serve their clients' diverse needs.

## What is a "Safe Space"?

An environment in which everyone is respected and valued without regard to sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression

 An entire workplace or campus can be labeled a "safe space" based on its commitment to this core principle.

#### In Practice...

In practice, a safe space takes the form of a particular person or office that has committed to being a resource and advocate for LGBT needs.

- Human Resources
- Career Services
- LGBT affinity group leader
- A partner or diversity officer



## Why is it Necessary?

- Meets demand for diversity.
- Helps take the step from recruitment to retention.
- Leads to happier, healthier and more productive employees.



## A Safe Space Requires...

#### Trustworthiness

 Employees need to know that concerns will be taken seriously and that privacy and confidentiality are respected

#### Commitment

- A true "Safe Space" is a long-term presence and resource
- Needs to have the support of organizational leadership

#### Knowledge

 Willingness to learn and ability to direct others to appropriate resources

#### Visibility



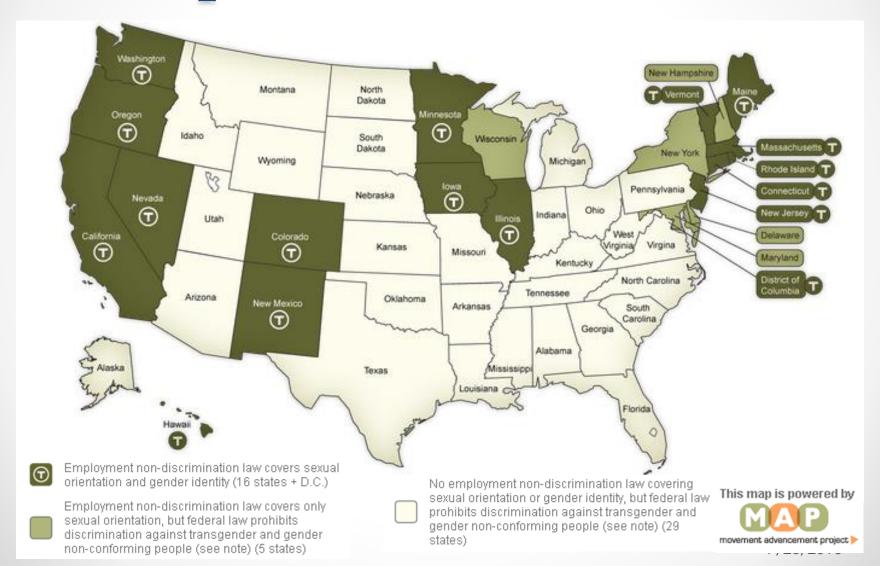
#### Scenario 1

You are an ally and are giving a presentation and have substituted the word "partner" for "husband." Afterwards an audience member comes up to you and asks you if you are gay.

What do you do?



### Workplace Discrimination



## Employer Investment in Equality

- Nondiscrimination policies
- Domestic partner/spousal benefits
- Active recruitment of LGBT talent
- LGBT workplace affinity groups
- Support for the National LGBT Bar Association and Lavender Law
- Participation in LGBT advocacy coalitions
- Creation of "safe spaces"



## Ongoing Challenges

## Creating a comfortable, professional workspace for all.

- Appropriate terminology
- Coming out and being out at work
- Gender identity and expression
- Addressing bias in interactions with LGBT coworkers, applicants and clients

## Activity

- What has your organization done to create a safe space for LGBT employees and clients?
- How should companies promote safe spaces?



## The TOOLBOX: What Allies Need to Know to Create a Safe Space

Footer Text

#### We Are Lawyers: Words Matter

#### **Understand and Use Appropriate Terminology**

- Sexual Orientation: Describes an individual's emotional, physical and/or romantic attraction to another person.
- Gender Identity: A person's deeply held internal sense of being male, female or somewhere else on the gender spectrum.
- **Gender Expression**: How a person chooses to communicate their gender identity to others through clothing, hair, styles, mannerisms and social interactions that are perceived as masculine, feminine or somewhere else on the spectrum.
- **Transgender:** An umbrella term that can be used to describe people whose gender expression is non-conforming and/or whose gender identity is different from their birth-assigned sex.
- **Gender Transition:** Refers to the process through which a person modifies their physical characteristics and/or gender expression to be consistent with their gender identity.