

LGBTQ+ Inclusion in Philanthropy

By C.W.A (2016)

In 2012, Bill 33, Toby's Act (Right to be Free from Discrimination and Harassment Because of Gender Identity or Gender Expression) was passed by the Provincial Government of Ontario. This allowed for Gender identity and Gender Expression to be included in the Ontario Human Rights Code. Often, organizations and companies adopt the Human Rights Code into the inclusive and anti-discrimination policies. One strategy to determine if an organization is keeping their policies updated is to see if gender identity and gender expression are included in such policies, since it the recent addition to the clause. Surprisingly, in my experience spot-checking this update, many organization have failed to update their policies to include gender identity and expression, which was made possible in 2012. If the updated Human Rights Code was not been amended in your organizations policies, then your organization and management lack the ability to value diversity. Many of the following resources and information are listed on the website of the organizations listed below. The web addresses will be found in the appendix.

Needless to say, the first step to creating a welcoming space for the LGBTQ+ community is to modify the organization policies to welcome all gender identities and forms of expression. Here are key resources to help your

organization achieve its goals to be an inclusive space for the LGBTQ+ community:

519 Community Centre:

The 519 creates custom curriculums for each organization, providing training that's relevant to their context. Individual modules can be selected based on many unique requirements, such as:

- LGBTQ Inclusive Environments (workplace and service provision)
 - Trans Inclusive Environments (workplace and service provision)
- Creating Authentic Spaces: Fostering environments that are inclusive of gender identity and gender expression
- LGBTQ Inclusive Learning Environments (schools, colleges and universities)
 - Inclusive Care Environments for Older LGBTQ People
 - LGBTQ Inclusive Sport and Recreation Environments
- Meeting the Needs of LGBTQ Newcomers and Refugees
 - Inclusive Environments for LGBTQ Families
- Inclusive Shelter Environments for LGBTQ Youth and Adults
 - Queer-Positive Prenatal Class
- Queer and Trans Family Planning (in partnership with The LGBTQ Parenting Network)

Training from the 519 Community Centre is affordable, and can create a framework to transform an organization to be more inclusive for all.

Pride at Work:

Pride at Work Canada was founded in May 2008 by a group of dedicated individuals with a vision – to improve the climate of inclusiveness for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans-identified (LGBT) employees in the workplace. Building Pride, a resource for LGBT inclusion in the workplace, has been developed with the support of the [Ontario Trillium Foundation](#). Through a series of online tools, individual and organizations can access information and resources on a wide variety of topics to help create positive change in their companies and communities. For example, information and resources to address:

- Legal issues and rights in the workplace
 - Combating anti-gay bullying at work
 - Which organizations to turn to for assistance
 - Starting an Employee Resource Group
 - How to be an Ally
 - LGBT Inclusion Index

LGBT Giving Network:

The LGBT Giving Network brings together organizations to work together to engage and cultivate lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and allied donors to

help secure leadership gifts and long-term financial support to build stronger LGBT communities in Canada. It provides forums for member agencies to come together at the LGBT Philanthropy Conference as well as through community networking events. The donor recognition event provides an opportunity for members to profile and celebrate their supporters. The Network also strives to provide regular philanthropy education and tools to assist member agencies.

Opportunities available to members/public:

- LGBT Philanthropy Conference
 - Network Events
 - Volunteer Opportunities
 - Fundraising resources
- Peer support as a fundraiser or philanthropist
- Platform to discuss issues in LGBTQ culture and fundraising with peers
 - Scholarships for professional development

SOY – SAVING OUR YOUTH:

Supporting Our Youth (SOY) is an exciting, dynamic community development program designed to improve the lives of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transsexual and transgendered youth in Toronto through the active involvement of youth and adult communities. We work to create healthy arts, culture and recreational spaces for young people; to provide supportive housing and employment opportunities; and to increase youth access to adult mentoring and support.

Such resources at this organization consist of:

- Advocacy support
- Social Services
- LGBTQ Health Services
- Scholarships for professional development
- Toolkits to combat homophobia and violence

RAINBOW HEALTH ONTARIO:

Rainbow Health Ontario (RHO) is a province-wide program working to improve access to services and promote the health of our lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer (LGBTQ) communities. We provide valuable resources for all stakeholders including: community groups, service providers, researchers, policy makers and educators. RHO works to improve access to services for LGBTQ communities across the province by:

- Providing training to service providers about LGBTQ health
- Providing trans specific training, weekly mentorship calls and consultations through our Trans Health Connection program
 - Sharing information and resources
 - Encouraging, promoting and sharing research
 - Consulting on public policy issues
- Providing consultations to organizations across the province to develop their capacity

- Host Canada's only LGBTQ health conference
- Support annual Breakthrough Projects
 - LGBTQ affirming service directory

PFLAG CANADA:

PFLAG Canada is a national charitable organization, founded by parents who wished to help themselves and their family members understand and accept their non-heterosexual children. The "coming-out" process can be a critical time for families. When the adjustment period is particularly long or painful, relationships can become permanently damaged, resulting in a lifetime of emotional scars. People cannot always rise above the challenge of accepting themselves or their family member, and the results can be devastating, even fatal. We support these families through today, and give them hope for a better tomorrow. PFLAG Canada is a national voice that speaks for a more accepting Canadian society by providing support, education and resources on issues of sexual orientation and gender identity. Through PFLAG Canada Chapter and Contact network, we actively assist in the recognition and growth of gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, two-spirit, intersex, queer and questioning persons and their families and friends, within their diverse cultures and societies.

PFLAG Canada supports, educates and provides resources to all individuals with questions or concerns, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Why does LGBTQ inclusion matter in philanthropy?

Regardless of a persons' race, religion, disability, class, etc. they could be part of the LGBTQ+ community. Especially in the past few years, where as World Pride came to Toronto, Toby's law came into existence, Ontario altered the health education curriculum, as few examples of cultural development towards diversity, this allows for a prosperous future and great opportunity to engage LGBTQ+ leaders, philanthropist, as well as foster a younger generation that can be supported and protected in a society that wants them to succeed, and contribute. Organization must enhance their policies and value diversity to ensure they can foster a safe space for LGBTQ+ people.

Conclusion:

While organizations have waited until the amendment of the Human Rights Code to include gender identity and gender expression, leaders should be accountable and take action to create safe spaces, rather than waiting for government to reinforce necessary change. This may be radical, but such innovation will enhance the working culture and allow the company or organization to champion diversity and to be inclusive.

Appendix:

Organizational websites to access toolkits and resources:

- 1) The 519 Community Centre - www.the519.org

- 2) Pride at work – www.prideatwork.ca
- 3) LGBT Giving Network – www.lgbtgivingnetwork.org
- 4) SOY - www.soytoronto.org
- 5) Rainbow Health Ontario – www.rainbowhealthontario.ca
- 6) PFLAG - www.pflagcanada.ca