

# COMING OUT: IN THE WORKPLACE

## INFORMATION TO KEEP IN MIND

- Remember that sharing your LGBTQ identity is a choice, first and foremost. Coming out at work has its benefits, but they should not be prioritized above your safety or comfort level.
- New York is one of only 21 states with full LGBT non-discrimination employment laws. Know your rights as they pertain to your state. Visit <https://www.hrc.org/state-maps> for more information.

## SOME QUESTIONS TO HELP YOU GAUGE THE WORKPLACE ATMOSPHERE:

- Does your employer have a written non-discrimination policy? Does it specifically cover sexual orientation and/or gender identity/expression? Does insurance cover domestic partner benefits?
- Is there a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer employee resource group at your workplace?
- What's the overall climate in your workplace? Do people tend to make derogatory comments or jokes? Are any of your co-workers openly LGBTQ?
- What are your work relationships like? Do people discuss their personal lives? Are they asking questions about yours? Is the atmosphere friendly or guarded?

## TIPS TO HELP YOUR COMING OUT GO SMOOTHLY, SHOULD YOU DECIDE TO DO SO:

- Establish a plan
- Identify someone who is LGBTQ or LGBTQ-supportive and talk to them first
- Take a breath. People will often take their cues from you on how to talk and feel about LGBTQ issues. The more casual you are, the more likely they are to follow your lead.
- Talk about LGBTQ-related news stories, movies, TV shows or other topics as a way to signal your views or start the conversation
- Start with placing an LGBTQ sticker on your laptop or a photo of a partner on your desk. Seeing how your coworkers react to these smaller steps will help you navigate your course of action.

## BENEFITS OF BEING OPEN AT WORK:

- Eliminates the need to hide or mislead
- Makes deeper friendships possible
- Breaks down barriers to understanding
- Builds trusting work relationships
- Let's us bring our "whole selves" to work