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Gays' Discrimination at the Workplace Decreases Productivity

An issue that affects both employer and employee

Being gay in a straight society is a difficult task, as rejection comes from all sides. A new research made on over 500 American gay, lesbian and bisexual employees discovered that "fears about disclosing a gay identity at work had an overwhelmingly negative relationship with their career and workplace experiences and with their psychological well-being." "These findings were both striking and disturbing; those who reported more fear of the negative consequences of full disclosure had less positive job and career attitudes, received fewer promotions, and reported more physical stress-related symptoms than those who reported less fear.", wrote the authors from the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee and Rice University in their article published in The Journal of Applied Psychology. Being gay and working in a perceived non-supportive environment comes with great costs. "Those who feared more negative consequences to disclosure reported less job satisfaction, organizational commitment, satisfaction with opportunities for promotion, career commitment, and organization-based self-esteem and greater turnover intentions than those who feared less negative consequences. They reported more (job) role ambiguity, more (job) role conflict, and less workplace participation. LGB employees who feared more negative consequences also reported greater psychological strain than those who feared less negative consequences.", wrote the authors. Psychological strain was defined as stress-connected job issues like work-linked depression, and work-linked irritation. "Other research show that more accepting work environments are associated with lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) employees being healthier and more productive. The research also provides some additional facts concerning the need for public policies protecting against job discrimination," said Robert-Jay Green, executive director of the Rockway Institute, a national center for LGBT research and public policy affiliated with Alliant International University. "Employees who are not afraid of being fired or held back from promotion because of their same-sex orientations are psychologically freer to put their full creative energies into work. This, in turn, saves employers' time and money. It a win-win for all concerned." The authors signaled that the decision to come out is extremely challenging, especially in the case of the homosexual employees unnoticed by employers, and the threats were real, not just imaginary, being even aggravated by the fact that laws prohibiting discrimination based on sexual choice are lacking in 31 states, freeing discrimination in practice. One research had showed that 25 to 66 % of lesbian or gay workers are discriminated, 37 % only by the fact that the others "sniffed" they were gay or lesbian. Over 10 % were physically harassed, over 22 % were verbally harassed and about 31 % had to abandon or were fired from their jobs due to discrimination. Other researches made on transgender population came with similar results, which face discrimination in 20 - 57 % of the cases. In Virginia, 20 % of the transgender subjects were denied employment, 13 % were fired, and 31 % were harassed. "As other recent surveys have shown, the vast majority of Americans think that it is unfair to discriminate against people for personal characteristics that are unrelated to their actual job performance. For example, the May 2007 Gallup Poll reported that 89% of Americans believe that employment discrimination against lesbian and gay people should be illegal", said Green.