



Mercy Health

Care first

Whole Self @ Mercy Health

Mercy Health LGBTIQ¹ Staff & Allies Network

The Church makes her own the attitude of the Lord Jesus, who offers his boundless love to each person without exception..... We would like before all else to reaffirm that every person, regardless of sexual orientation, ought to be respected in his or her dignity and treated with consideration, while ‘every sign of unjust discrimination’ is to be carefully avoided, particularly any form of aggression and violence.

Pope Francis AMORIS LÆTITIA

¹ See Glossary

1. Rationale

Aren't we already a diverse and inclusive organisation?

We want to create an environment in which all people, regardless of their individual differences, can enjoy a safe and inclusive environment; a workplace culture that doesn't just 'tolerate' or 'accept' diversity but openly embraces it.

- Diversity = Difference
- Inclusion = Working with all differences respectfully

People's personal views, values and beliefs are their own. It's behaviour that inclusion initiatives target. LGBTIQ workplace inclusion is absolutely **not** about trying to change individual values or beliefs. It **is** about workplace behaviour and how we interact with each other in a working / professional relationship.

We don't know why we are the way we are. Therefore we don't judge people as being responsible, or worse, culpable, for their sexual orientation.

Everyone has a sexual orientation. For most of us, it's heterosexual and that heterosexual orientation is on display 24/7, at home, at work, and socially. It's such an intrinsic part of who we are that most of us don't even think about it. Photos, rings, talking about the weekend, getting engaged, having children, family events, anniversaries, phone calls, introducing partners, accompanying partners at events are all examples of this. It would be inconceivable to think that we could hide all of this or pretend it didn't exist.

Everyone should be able to bring their whole selves to work.

Dignity of the Human Person²

Belief in the intrinsic dignity of the human person is the basis of all Catholic social teaching. Human life is sacred and the dignity of the human person is the starting point for an ethical vision of society. This principle is grounded in the idea that the person is made in the image and likeness of God.

I've spoken to a number of our colleagues and we don't seem to have a problem here.

Be mindful of the lens that you are looking through. People work in different departments, different locations, different teams, for different managers and at different management levels. The experience of a few is not the experience of all. We all know that while we talk of a "workplace culture"; workplace cultures can comprise many sub-cultures. One department can have a very different culture to that of another.

² Passion For Justice by Angela Tonhill 2004

Most workplaces have LGBTIQ employees.

Typically 6-10% of employees will identify as LGBTIQ. That means about 420 to 700 of our staff may be LGBTIQ. You cannot know what a person's sexual orientation is by looking at them. An LGBTIQ person cannot know what someone's reactions may be should that aspect of them become known.

There are not enough messages of inclusion to convince someone that their orientation, gender identity or intersex status wouldn't be an issue for discrimination or hurt. As a result, a significant number of employees spend copious amounts of time and energy editing conversations, fictionalising personas and avoiding any real workplace relationships or conversations for fear of being found out.

Positive Acceptance.

When someone can truly be themselves at work, engage authentically with their colleagues and know that any targeted harassment will most definitely be addressed, they are unlikely to want to leave that employment.

And it's a legal requirement.

From August 1, 2013 it became unlawful under federal law to discriminate against a person on the grounds of their:

- sexual orientation
- gender identity
- intersex status

2. Aim of *Whole Self @ Mercy Health*

The aim of the network is to support Mercy Health's commitment to equity and inclusion as it pertains to LGBTIQ employees, enabling each person to bring their whole self to work

Why a network?

Networks provide subject matter expertise and can offer sound advice on, and insight into the inclusivity of policies, communications, advertising, training, culture, new markets and promotions. They can also enhance organisational market reputation and assist in maintaining competitive advantage.

3. Strategic Links

Mercy Health Strategic Objective 3.

Build our organisational capability with particular focus on innovation in the areas of organisational culture, quality and safety, attraction and retention of our workforce and efficient resource utilisation.

Mercy Health Values

Compassion ³	Hospitality	Respect	Innovation	Stewardship	Teamwork
Demonstrate kindness & generosity of spirit. Be open to others' needs.	All people are greeted and made comfortable	Recognise that each person is individual and unique.	Seek opportunities to try new ideas and acknowledge people for their contribution.	Focus on promoting well-being for each person.	Respect the needs and feelings of others and actively seek their perspective.
<p>We have a diverse workforce comprising different people with different experiences. These include age, gender, disability, ethnicity, marital or family status, religious or cultural background, sexual orientation and gender identity. All add to the wonderful tapestry that is Mercy Health.</p> <p>God is found within the uniqueness and dignity of every person which must therefore elicit a compassionate and merciful response to the other.</p> <p>Luke 10: 36-37 <i>"Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?" He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."</i></p>					

4. Key Objectives

- Align the Network Plan to the Mercy Health strategic Plan ensuring LGBTIQ staff are included in the organisation's diversity and inclusion objectives and raise awareness of LGBTIQ inclusion and safety.
- Provide support and advice to the organisation and insight into the LGBTIQ inclusivity of policies, communications, advertising, training, culture, new markets and promotions.
- Create a point of contact and a professional network for LGBTIQ employees and

³ To suffer, feel along with.

straight allies through the provision of peer support, networking, social events and communications.

5. Membership

- Membership is open to all employees both those who identify as LGBTIQ and allies. Members are asked to provide suggestions and feedback to the Steering Committee to improve the Network and be willing to assist with staging events when available.

6. Structure

Whole Self @ Mercy Health Steering Committee

Membership

- Executive Sponsor Adj Prof Linda Mellors, Chief Executive Health Services.
- HR and/or Diversity representation.
- Pastoral Care services representation.
- A team of 8-12 employees comprising both LGBTIQ identifying employees and allies. [Nominations to be sought.]

Steering Committee Initial members and contact persons

Name	Position	Phone	Email
Adj Prof Linda Mellors	CE Health Services	0411 057 119	lmellors@mercy.com.au
Alicia Thomas	Group Diversity & Inclusion Manager	03 8416 7920	Alicia.thomas@mercy.com.au
Kerry Shearer	EO to Group CEO	03 8416 7924	kshearer@mercy.com.au
Jeff Brooks	Clinical Advisor, Aged & Community Care	03 8416 7737	Jbrooks@mercy.com.au
Clare Sullivan	Legal Counsel	03 8416 7881	csullivan2@mercy.com.au
James Lye	Group General Manager Marketing, Communications and Stakeholder Relations	03 8416 7889	jlye@mercy.com.au
Sr Trudy Keur RSM	Pastoral Care Manager Werribee Mercy Hospital	03 8754 3071	tkeur@mercy.com.au

Roles and Responsibilities

Steering Committee Members:

- Meet bi-monthly to discuss events, strategy, progress, issues.
- Contribute via discussion, ideas, assistance at events and accountability for assigned responsibilities.
- Advocate for the network on a casual basis to colleagues.
- Willing to make a visible stand for inclusion (addressing offensive behaviour, being a contact point for the network, being accessible to members).
- Attend at least 2 meetings of the Network each year providing input on strategy, progress against strategy and feedback.

Executive Sponsor:

- Knowledgeable and up to date on the importance of LGBTIQ inclusion.
- Advocate and speak on LGBTIQ inclusion at relevant internal and external events.
- Advocate for inclusion and support the Network at senior levels of Mercy Health.
- Attend at least 2 meetings of the Network each year providing input on strategy, progress against strategy and feedback.

Diversity/HR Member:

- Ensure alignment with and awareness of activities within People, Learning & Culture.
- Attend at least 2 meetings of the Network per year.

Pastoral Care Services Representative:

- Ensure alignment and awareness of activities within Pastoral Care.
- Attend at least 2 meetings of the Network per year.

Whole Self @ Mercy Health Action Plan 2017/18

Goal	Action	Measures	Timeline	Responsibility
1. Raise awareness of LGBTIQ inclusion and safety within Mercy Health.	Launch LGBTIQ Network	a) Network Steering Committee established including sponsor and members. b) Communications Plan developed. c) Launch	Nov 2017	Steering Committee
	Hold events which recognise international days that celebrate LGBTIQ inclusion and safe environments.	a) International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHOT) May 2018 b) Midsumma 2018	2018	Steering Committee
2. Provide support and advice to the organisation on and insight into the LGBTIQ inclusivity of policies, communications, advertising, training, culture, new markets and promotions.	Review of relevant policies and documentation to ensure the use of inclusive language.	a) Audit of documentation becomes part of internal audit process.	2018	Steering Committee
3. Create a point of contact and a professional network for LGBTIQ employees and straight allies through the provision of peer support, networking, social events and communications.	Steering Committee members are accessible by phone and email.	a) Network membership reaches 20 members by end June 2018.	Jun 2017	Steering Committee

GLOSSARY

Allies

People who are not LGBTIQ who are supportive and accept the LGBTIQ person, or people who personally advocate for equal rights and fair treatment. Allies are some of the most effective and powerful voices of the LGBTIQ movement. Not only do allies help people in the coming-out process, they also help others understand the importance of equality, fairness, acceptance and mutual respect.

Bisexual

A person emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to more than one sex, gender or gender identity though not necessarily simultaneously, in the same way or to the same degree.

Gay

A person who is emotionally, romantically and sexually attracted to members of the same gender.

Gender

Sex assigned at birth.

Gender identity

Gender Identity means the gender-related identity, appearance or mannerisms or other gender related characteristics of a person. This includes the way people express or present their gender and recognises that a person's gender identity may be an identity other than male or female.

Intersex

Intersex status means the status of having physical, hormonal or genetic features that are:

- a) neither wholly female nor wholly male or
- b) a combination of female and male or
- c) neither female nor male.'

Being intersex is about biological variations, not about a person's gender identity. An intersex person may have the biological attributes of both sexes, or lack some of the biological attributes considered necessary to be defined as one or other sex. Intersex people typically also have a gender identity and sexual orientation.

Lesbian

A woman who is emotionally, romantically and sexually attracted to other women.

Questioning or Queer

The questioning of one's gender, sexual identity, sexual orientation, or all three is a process of exploration by people who may be unsure, still exploring, and concerned about applying a social label to themselves for various reasons.

Queer was originally a term used in a derogatory sense. Many LGBTIQ youth have embraced this word and given it a rebirth. It can be described as a broad umbrella term for anyone who may identify as being either gender, sexually and/or bodily diverse.

Sexual orientation means a person's sexual orientation towards:

- a) Persons of the same sex or
- b) Persons of a different sex or
- c) Persons of the same sex and persons of a different sex

Some terms used to describe a person's sexual orientation include gay, lesbian, homosexual, bisexual, straight, heterosexual.

Transgender

An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from cultural expectations based on the sex they were assigned at birth. Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation. Therefore, transgender people may identify as straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, etc.