

Ch. 12: Career Development of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Individuals

This chapter seeks to bring to light the need for society to accept without any concern or question the sexual orientation of people. It shares the general idea that counselors, specifically career counselors, need to know about the work needs of those who have sexual proclivities that are different from heterosexuals. An interesting distinction is the author's understanding of the difference between sexual orientation and sexual identity. The need for this distinction or its effect on career counseling was unclear. According to the writer, the definitions imply they are fluid and open to change.

Further, it is pointed out that gender is another category with various personal interpretations. All these factors have set these groups up to likely have stigmas that, depending on their level of public advertising of their ideals, can lead to feelings of having been discriminated against. Younger clients struggling with their sexual identity/ orientation may take this same apprehension into their career search. This pattern may further convolute this process. Counselors must recognize this distress.

There are many concepts and ideas from this chapter to consider. One such idea is the concern for LGB people, which is that 52.8% experience discrimination, with 53% having heard jokes regarding lesbian and gay people at their workplace. I wonder what the percentage is for other groups, such as the heterosexual groups. I can, to this day, remember a very crude joke asked of my dad's activities on his honeymoon by his coworkers. In some groups, these jokes may be very inappropriate and off-color. In other groups, these jokes indicate an acceptance as part of their friend group. It seems these types of jokes have a high probability, regardless of sexual preference or gender identification, generally being heard as vulgar filth; however, there

are large segments of the general workforce (e.g., construction sites, factories, industrial sites) where this type joking is not only allowed but expected as part of the workplace's cultural dynamic. Another area I wonder about is the overgeneralization of facts to support one's claims. The author shares that lower-income workers are more likely to 'endure' the issues discussed in this chapter, whereas higher-income earners are less likely to stay. This concept initially sounds like a real point to drive home; however, this holds for most factors affecting jobs across the board (e.g., workplace safety concerns, tasks that may be humiliating, lack of enjoyment with work tasks generally). This writing shares five ways Chung sees people act LGB ideals out (acting, passing, covering, implicitly out, and explicitly out). The implication is that LGB persons should not have to play these games but should be free to be who they want to be. How would we feel if we applied other social constructs still considered taboo or inappropriate to the same standard? Imagine saying a habitual fornicator, adulterer, or swinger should not have to play these same games. Where is it or when is it appropriate to have culturally accepted norms or standards and then be expected to fall in line with them? Should an employer be able to refuse employment to a person to work the cash register in their place of business who has a face tattoo of a half-naked woman on their face? If it is okay, what makes it okay? If not, what makes it not okay? Could the same principle be applied to a transgender person who demands to dress in a manner that distracts a place of business's personality or intended motif? In some of these conversations, the person acting outside of the generally accepted normality of life is the one whose life impact seems to take precedence. Should there be a discussion of the possible or even likely detrimental effect this will have on the workplace or the employer's bottom line? The most pressing question that needs discussing is when a person's preferred method of sexual stimulation

became a matter for the workplace and job satisfaction? Much of society has looked the other way for decades regarding marital unfaithfulness, habitual porn viewing, sex trafficking, casual drug use, and on and on the list could go. The military used to have a 'do not ask, do not tell' approach to matters deemed immoral and thus were grounds for dismissal from the military. Another area of discussion would be around the author's perceived need to accept lifestyle choices that may be contrary to a person as an individual or an employer as the leader of an organization. When can a worldview conflict be expressed? When a heterosexual couple has a baby and their coworkers throw a baby shower, is it appropriate or inappropriate discrimination when the predominantly Judeo-Christian workforce does not throw the same shower for a homosexual couple adopting a baby? Some would say it is inappropriate and would have this business suffer financial loss, stop the practice of baby showers for all people, or begin to throw baby showers for all, even when this is a direct attack on nearly all employed at the same facility. These are all tough questions to consider when weighing the potential outcomes for all involved.

It is essential for master-level students to consider these ideas and to know where they stand regarding these conversations. Students must understand the facts of the issues to avoid pushing their value system on those with varying or opposing views. It is also necessary to know the line between assisting someone who shares a value system view in direct opposition to yours and encouraging them to do something that would cause you to have internal conflict. For Christians, this could be an arduous struggle to overcome at times. It may help to consider the idea from 1 Corinthians. Christians are to judge other Christians, but God should judge those outside Christ's body. If a person chooses to live outside of Christ, we as counselors can give them aid to overcome the current struggle, even though the temptation is to help them see the

cure, which is to be in Christ. Christians can only hope their kindness will be enough to help them catch a glimpse of God's greatness.