

Stonewall Training

Empowerment

by David Radford

I attended the second part of the empowerment training course run by Stonewall on the 25th February. I was quite pleasantly surprised to see such a wide variety of attendees – everything from the academic sector to government departments and the banking sector.

It was notable that they reported within the workplace the LGBT community is not evenly treated, with 83% of lesbian and gay respondents of a survey stating that they felt their workplace was inclusive of them, while this number dropped to 52% for bi and only 48% of trans respondents. One thing which I was aware of but maybe not as *actively* aware of as I could be was discrimination and bias from within the LGBT+ community towards smaller or less visible groups.

The main aim of the workshop was to help identify the potential shortcomings and problems which arise from making network spaces for LGBT+ members of staff, which can create issues with cliques and exclusion, difficulties breaking into the group and issues of tokenism, and really highlighted the importance of diverse representation in the leadership and decision-making of groups as well as being open to criticism, willing to make changes and above all welcoming to newcomers.

For me, at least the main take-home message of this was to be aware of who I am interacting with and not to make assumptions when planning activities, as well as trying to engage others in decision making. That pub trip or countryside walk might be good for the morale of those attending, but it can cause other issues including financial, religious, family or accessibility problems, which can exclude a whole host of other people from

attending.

Rainbow Office Hours

Now, more than ever, we need to talk. So the Staff pride Network has set up **Rainbow Office Hours**. A chance to make a connection with another LGBTQ+ staff member, or PG student, at the University.

Each month*, the last Friday of the month at 12-1pm, a few of our members will be standing by – check our website for details of who is available. Pick out someone you'd like to talk to, and drop them a line in Teams to check they're not with someone else (i.e. a digital knock on the door!). After that, you two are free to chat about anything and everything. You might have specific things you want to talk about, or it might just be the pleasure of spending some time with someone like you.

We're not a counselling or support service, but we do believe in the power of community – so why not take a moment to make that connection and feel just a wee bit better.

- Sue Fletcher-Watson (she/her): My name is Sue. I'm a cis woman and I'm bisexual. I've been married for 15 years to a cis man and we have two kids – everyone assumes we're a heterosexual couple. I am happy to chat about the experience of being bi (or pansexual) generally and specifically about bi-visibility and bi-phobia.
- Karen Pinto-Csaszar (she/her): I'm Karen and I'm a Student Support Officer at Edinburgh College of Art. I am a cisgender straight woman who is part of the 'BAME' community (Latin-American) and am interested in chatting with staff and students of any orientation about (among

many things) the contribution allies might make in supporting and learning from the LGBT+ community, including and perhaps especially potential allies who may feel interested but hesitant to get involved. I'm also interested in chatting about matters of the BAME community at large, including being a BAME expat!

- Robert (Robbie) Court (he/him): I'm a PostDoc in the School of Informatics specialising in insect neurobiology. Label wise I am Gay, Autistic, Humanist, Dyslexic, Prosopagnosic and have ADHD. I've been with my 'husband' (not got round to the now available paperwork – one day) for over 25years, he came with a son who is nearly 30 now.