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**Do Ask, Do Tell: Lessons Learned from Marginalized Gay or Bisexual Males in
Male-Dominated Organizations**

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty of the Weissman School of Arts and Science

Baruch College, The City University of New York

In partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

In

CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS

By

Charles Tienken

May 17, 2023

Under the guidance and approval of the committee,
and approved by all its members, this project has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the Master of Arts in Corporate Communication.
This project also has been presented at colloquium to departmental colleagues and faculty.

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Charles Tienken

May 17, 2023

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Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this research paper is to consider the experiences of gay or bisexual males in male-dominated organizations and apply the lessons learned to help facilitate meaningful culture change in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives. This paper examines the dynamics of hegemonic masculinity, marginalization and hypervisibility as they relate to the perception of professionalism and leadership capabilities of gay or bisexual males in organizational cultures including the military as well as other male-dominated organizations.

Design/methodology/approach: This research uses thematic meta-analysis of recurring themes including numerous peer-reviewed journal articles to assess the current data on the LGBTQ+ experience focusing on gay or bisexual males in male-dominated industries including the military, police, investment banking, sports and other organizations.

Findings: This paper considers the implications of hegemonic masculinity, hypervisibility, marginalization, perceived professionalism and leadership of LGBTQ+ individuals, mostly gay or bisexual males, on the organizational culture of male-dominated organizations. The research questions take these factors into consideration and includes a call to action to improve employee engagement in male-dominated organizations. Previously researched findings in the military, police and other male-dominated organizations can be utilized to create scenarios that can help organizations improve Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives and inspire culture change.

Research limitations/implications: The findings in this paper are from a thematic analysis of male-dominated organizations with an extensive scenario of a hypothetical anonymous military veteran. Future opportunities to expand the research could include accounts of more LGBTQ+ military veterans and police officers including lesbian and transgender individuals.

Originality/value: A hypothetical scenario involving an anonymous military veteran has been created as a group discussion for organizations to utilize to apply the knowledge disseminated in this research project. The goal of this exercise is to encourage dialogue as well as a more proactive approach regarding Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives in male-dominated organizations.

Keywords: hegemonic masculinity, gay, bisexual male, LGBTQ+, male-dominated, military, veterans, marginalization, hypervisibility, inclusive organizational culture, professionalism, and leadership.

Introduction

Centuries of normalized expectations of masculine and feminine behaviors have created a deep-rooted culture of stigmatization of gay or bisexual male members of society who may be perceived as feminine biological men or masculine women. Indeed, the LGBTQ+ community has experienced widespread stigmatization. Gay or bisexual males have been treated horrendously as if they had a serious mental health issue just for being their authentic selves. In some cases, the forces of self-hatred can be so intense and unbearable for gay or bisexual males that their mental and physical health is compromised. Imagine enduring so much discrimination and hatred that the stress of the situation compels you to seek a way to totally erase your identity as a gay or bisexual male. In the 2018 film *Boy Erased*, the lead character, a gay teenage boy named Jared, was sent by his parents to a horrific conversion therapy facility in the southern region of the United States. Likewise, an untold number of LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer/Questioning plus other non-heterosexual categories plus Allies) Americans have attempted a self-directed conversion therapy through actions such as marrying someone of the opposite sex or joining the military to become more heteronormative.

In the aftermath of the social unrest of 2020, many organizations have now tied success measures including executive compensation to the fulfillment of DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) goals. Large companies in the United States are now expected to report the percentage of women, people of color, and other traditionally marginalized or underrepresented groups publicly. Many perceive that there has been increased media scrutiny given to organizations that do not comply with labor laws. For example, organizations that are perceived to have challenges creating a welcoming environment for women and people of color can expect to be highlighted on social media and other corporate communication platforms. In addition, the current long-term

pandemic has raised awareness in general about mental and physical health and wellness for workers. Indeed, the world post-2020 has become much more open regarding conversations concerning mental and physical health and wellness which includes gay or bisexual male members of society. For instance, the increased public awareness on issues affecting transgender individuals in recent times can be perceived by many to be a positive step forward for LGBTQ+ equality in organizational settings. Another factor to consider is the increased number of Generation Z employees entering the workforce. Generation Z employees tend to be radically inclusive, more global, empathetic and passionate about celebrating diversity.

Advances toward inclusive LGBTQ+ policy do not always resolve the underlying issues. For example, the intentions of the Don't Ask, Don't Tell (DADT) 1990's legislation in the United States military may have been good at the time. DADT was widely understood as an advantageous compromise to allow LGBTQ+ soldiers to serve in the military, on the condition that they did not officially disclose their sexual orientation. However, the lingering implications of DADT still negatively impact many gay or bisexual male military veterans today. Mark, McNamara, Gribble, Rhead, Sharp, Stevelink, Castro & Fear (2019) note that "one recent example of a more inclusive policy was the repeal of the U.S.'s 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell and Don't Pursue' (DADT) policy in 2011" (p. 75). This repeal of DADT allows openly gay soldiers to serve with honesty and integrity, which are core military values. However, since gay or bisexual male military members have been conditioned for so long to stay closeted even when they have been allowed to serve since the 1990s, many choose not to disclose their sexuality, even though legally they can serve openly. One could conclude that the long-term repression of gay or bisexual male military service members created an oppressive workplace environment with lingering, present-day implications. Well-intended policies such as DADT can do more

harm than good because a person cannot thrive mentally and physically when part of who they are is forbidden in their workplace. As a result, heteronormative and homophobic military members may have felt forced to serve with gay or bisexual male colleagues resulting in an uncomfortable environment for a large segment of the military population. In fact, gay or bisexual male service members may have felt even more hypervisibility thanks to the increased media coverage of gays in the military.

The gay and bisexual male experience in the United States military and for U.S. military veterans has been under documented due to long-lasting implications of the Don't Ask, Don't Tell era. Companies and organizations globally are looking to increase the population of traditionally underrepresented groups including gay or bisexual male veterans, and disabled individuals. In simplistic terms, a person who is a gay or bisexual male, a military veteran and disabled represents intersectionality or the intersection of various marginalized and historically underrepresented groups. Stereotyping can cause extensive psychological damage to gay men. Barrantes & Eaton (2018) note that "once perceivers believe a man is gay, their expectations of his preferences, abilities and personality invert to those of the female gender role" (p. 550). The bottom line is that more initiatives need to be implemented to counter against automatic assumptions about one's abilities, capabilities and professionalism based solely on gender expression or being perceived as gay within male-dominated organizations.

There is a gap in the research about the experiences of gay and bisexual male military veterans as well as the LGBTQ+ experience in male-dominated organizations more generally. This gap must be addressed because the implications are formidable. For example, Ellsworth, Mendy & Sullivan (2020) reveal, "three in 20 LGBTQ+ women believe their sexual orientation will negatively affect their career advancement at work. For LGBTQ+ men this number is even

higher, at six in 20” (p. 6). LGBTQ+ military veterans are our brothers and sisters who coexist with intersectionality in many different identities simultaneously, including race, class, religion, ability, and gender. While one or more of their identities may grant them some privilege, others are traditionally marginalized. The more members of society are held back from being their fully authentic selves in organizational and professional settings, the more society is limited by missed opportunities. We can maximize the benefits society can enjoy by calling attention to and rooting out discrimination toward the goal of everyone having the opportunity to achieve their full potential in contexts where their identities are affirmed rather than stigmatized.

This thesis will unpack the challenge of hegemonic perceptions of masculinity in male-dominated organizations and reveal the impact of marginalization and discrimination on gay or bisexual male professionals in workplace organizational cultures. The goal of this study is to offer pragmatic findings that could foster a more inclusive workplace culture where everyone matters and can thrive—not just survive—thereby improving the mental and physical health of gay or bisexual male professionals and their allies.

Gay or bisexual male employees may experience daunting challenges of marginalization in male-dominated workplaces. Causadias and Umana-Taylor (2018) define marginalization as “a multidimensional, dynamic, context-dependent, and diverse web of processes, rooted in power imbalance and systematically directed toward specific groups and individuals, with probabilistic implications for development” (p. 707). This results in organizational environments where it is psychologically unsafe to speak up about incidents related to marginalization and discrimination for fear of retaliation. Barrantes and Eaton (2018) highlight three critical themes of discrimination and marginalization affecting gay or bisexual male employees which include stereotypes about gay men, stereotypes about leadership, and stereotypes about the leadership of

gay men. Speice's (2020) findings demonstrate that "not only clothing, but gestures, speech, and other performative elements are all used as ways to subordinate gay men more than others" (p. 1868). Imagine how mentally and physically exhausting it must be for some gay men in male-dominated work environments to feel consistently preoccupied with superficial aspects of life such as clothing selection while on the job. Discrimination based on clothing, voice tone, body language, speech among other aspects of self-expression that may be difficult to control without substantial conscious effort can have a dramatic impact on the mental and physical wellness of gay men in the workplace.

With some instances of marginalization, there are bound to be negative and long-term outcomes for mental health. The perception of marginalization for gay or bisexual males can lead to severe psychological distress. As Hart, Noor, Vernon, Kidwai, Roberts, Myers and Calzavara (2018) detail, men who are marginalized on account of their sexuality at work may experience a "higher diagnostic prevalence of self-reported symptoms of depression and anxiety" (p. 604). Gay or bisexual male individuals who do not have any safe spaces are prone to experience elevated levels of physical and mental stress. Gordon & Meyer (2007) suggest that the analysis of prejudice events, home and familial space, neighbors as perpetrators, school and work environments, and commercial settings and other public spaces are all interconnected to the perceived lack of physical and psychosocial safety for gay or bisexual male individuals. The topic of psychological safety in conjunction with mental health during the pandemic has created the need for a more urgent effort to be proactive about gay or bisexual male employee mental health. Edmonson & Lei (2014) define psychological safety as "an absence of interpersonal fear" (p. 23). In addition, a resurgence in right-wing repressive legislation such as Ron DeSantis' "Don't Say Gay" bill is cause for great concern about eliminating all the progress the LGBTQ+

community has made since the Stonewall Uprising of 1969. When gay or bisexual male individuals experience perpetual hypervisibility due their voice tone, body language and their appearance in the workplace, the result can be a psychologically exhausted employee who will never reach their potential. This project, by unpacking the challenge of perceptions of masculinity in male-dominated blue-collar industries, will offer insights to mitigate these negative mental health outcomes and help organizations create a more inclusive environment for all its members.

Through an interpretation and analysis of existing literature on the topic, this thesis will demonstrate how improving the mental and physical health of gay and bisexual male professionals and their allies can be achieved by facilitating an organizational culture with more inclusivity where everyone can be their authentic selves. This study uses thematic meta-analysis of empirical research on marginalized gay or bisexual male employees from male-dominated industries to help create best practices for a more inclusive workplace.

Dellinger (2002) notes that “workplace culture can be broadly defined as the understandings, behaviors, and symbolic forms including rituals, taboos, and myths that are shared by members of a work organization” (Reskin and Padavic, 1994; Trice, 1993, p. 4). I will illuminate the social significance of hegemonic masculinity to demonstrate how it sustains norms that may be harmful for professionals who do not match a particular definition of masculinity. Indeed, organizations cannot maximize performance if some members of the team do not believe they have a chance to excel in their careers because of how they express their gender identity. This thesis ends with specific lessons learned and communication strategies to consider when implementing best practices for gay or bisexual male employee engagement.

Research Questions

RQ 1: In what ways do hegemonic masculinity, marginalization and discrimination affect gay or bisexual male employee performance, mental health, and sense of inclusion in male-dominated workplaces and organizational cultures?

RQ 2: How can organizations improve best practices to facilitate a more inclusive organizational culture to improve employee engagement for gay or bisexual male professionals in male-dominated organizations or job titles?

Methodology

This study will focus on lessons learned from a thematic analysis of peer-reviewed articles from a range of journals from the academic fields of psychology, sociology, behavioral science, communications management, human sexuality and culture, health and community studies, business management and diversity, and equity and inclusion studies on the gay or bisexual male experience in male-dominated organizations. A meta-analysis is an in-depth analysis of emerging themes occurring as a pattern in extensive research on a specific topic. Placing existing findings in conversation to see what they reveal about one another will allow for a broader understanding of both the problems facing gay or bisexual male workers and what conditions would be necessary for gay or bisexual male workers to thrive in more inclusive environments. The interdisciplinary readings strive to examine the current research available on the gay or bisexual male experience in male-dominated organizations such as the military and the police. This meta-analysis will work to unpack emerging themes to have the results of the compiled research be in

conversation with one another. The Collins Dictionary explains, “A male-dominated society, organization, or area of activity is one in which men have most of the power and influence.” The statistics below published on September 9, 2022, from the career expert website zippia.com article “Military Police Officer Demographics and Statistics in the US” highlights a most recent sample of LGBTQ+ military police officers in the United States. Military police officer demographics were chosen specifically as an example of a hegemonically masculine profession with many employees.

Table 1: Military Police Officer Demographics and Statistics in the US

Research Summary. Using a database of 30 million profiles, Zippia estimates demographics and statistics for military police officers in the United States. Our estimates are verified against Census, and current job openings data for accuracy. After extensive research and analysis, Zippia's data science team found that:

- There are over **67,451** military police officers currently employed in the United States.
- 21.1% of all military police officers are women, while **78.9%** are **men**.
- The average age of an employed military police officer is **39** years old.
- The most common ethnicity of military police officers is White (61.3%), followed by Hispanic or Latino (17.7%), Black or African American (12.1%) and Unknown (4.6%).
- In 2021, women earned 92% of what men earned.
- **7%** of all military police officers are **LGBT**.
- Military police officers are 48% more likely to work at private companies in comparison to government companies.

Military Police Officer Demographics and Statistics [2023]: Number of Military Police Officers in The US (zippia.com) *statistics courtesy of the website zippia.com

The twenty-seven articles selected for this research range in publication from the years 2002 through 2022. Initially, the goal was to include more current publications in the research selected. However, due to the limited availability of peer-reviewed journal articles on the gay or bisexual male experience in male-dominated organizations, I found it necessary to expand the date range of publications selected.

The primary database utilized to compile the research selected for this thesis was Baruch College's OneSearch database. In addition, Google Scholar was used for five articles. I supplemented these findings with reputable definitions and statistics from other sources to support the compiled data set. The key phrases used on Baruch's OneSearch database included: "LGBTQ+ in Male-Dominated Industries," "LGBTQ+ Marginalization and Discrimination in the Workplace," and "LGBTQ+ in the Military and Police" On the search results pages, the first three pages of results were used to select journal articles relevant to the search criteria. In utilizing Google Scholar, the range selected for articles was "since 2019." From the resulting articles, I selected those that focused primarily on gay or bisexual men and omitted from the data set some articles focused primarily on lesbians and transgender individuals.

Although my primary focus in this thesis will be on gay and bisexual men, I included some peer-reviewed journal articles that focused on lesbians and transgender individuals. The rationale behind this inclusion of data from lesbian-themed articles gave some valuable insights into the

dynamics of experiences of female masculinity in male-dominated organizations in contrast to perceived male feminine behaviors in similar settings. Dozier (2019) highlights, “interactions that classify masculine females as predominantly masculine or ‘like men’ denaturalize gender” (p. 1219). The insight from this research provides a stark contrast to experiences of gay or bisexual males perceived to express themselves in feminine ways in male-dominated organizations. Additionally, there is great value in better understanding the experiences of transgender individuals working in male-dominated organizations and the forces of hegemonic masculinity, marginalization, hypervisibility and their impact on organizational culture. Schilt (2006) reveals that “the kind of occupations female-to-male (FTM) individuals held prior to transition also play a role in whether they develop this outsider-within perspective at work. Transmen working in blue-collar jobs – jobs that are predominantly staffed by men – felt their experiences working in these jobs as females varied greatly from their experiences working as men” (p. 474). The unique perspectives of these types of research subjects need to be studied more to better understand the true effects of the role that expectations of hegemonic masculinity that can result in marginalization and hypervisibility can play with a wider variety of LGBTQ+ individuals in male-dominated organizations.

The aftermath of social movements such as the Stonewall Inn uprising of 1969 has resulted in powerful stories of LGBTQ+ pioneers who emerged with resilience in the face of tremendous adversity and danger which includes many military veterans who have served since then. There are so many lessons to be learned from mostly gay and bisexual male participants born as biological males who may have spent a large part of their lives hiding in the closet while striving to survive in male-dominated organizational cultures.

A qualitative approach will enable me to compile emerging themes from the thematic analysis of existing research. In addition, the inclusion of a detailed practical application hypothetical scenario exercise for a group discussion is inspired by an anonymous military veteran's experience and worldview shaped by the themes explored in depth in this research project. The goal of this thesis is to assess the true progress of gay and bisexual male employee engagement in male-dominated organizations based on lessons learned from those who have struggled and continue to struggle to be their best authentic selves in the workplace.

Data Analysis

I analyzed the twenty-six articles in the data set to determine themes emerging as is consistent with the methodology of qualitative and interpretive thematic analysis. In what follows, I organize my analysis according to the three most prevalent themes occurring in the research, taking care to highlight any surprising findings that emerged or that differ from the initial themes of this project of hegemonic masculinity, marginalization and hypervisibility experienced by predominantly gay and bisexual men, in male-dominated organizations along with inclusive organizational cultures. Table 2 below shows an analysis with a summary of all articles utilized in this study in chronological order of their publication, publication including publication date, methodologies, and demographics as well as sample size of involved participants, where applicable. If the article selected in this study does not use a specific methodology to gather new data, then that article is designated "None" in the Methodology/Sample Size of Participants column.

Table 2: Summary of Articles Analyzed

Article	Methodology and Sample Size of Participants (if applicable)
<p>Kirsten Dellinger – Wearing Gender and Sexuality “On Your Sleeve”: Dress Norms and the Importance of Occupational and Organizational Culture at Work (2002), <i>Gender Issues</i>, 20(1), 3–25. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12147-002-0005-5</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 65 In-depth Semi-Structured Interviews total including: • 22 Accountants Interviewed and • 28 Members of Editorial Department Interviewed • Sample Size: 45 women, 20 men
<p>Amanda Diekman, Wind Goodfriend and Stephanie Goodwin – Dynamic Stereotypes of Power: Perceived Change and Stability in Gender Hierarchies (2004). <i>Sex Roles</i>, 50(3-4), 201-215. https://doi.org/10.1023/B:SERS.0000015552.22775.44</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Study 1: 63 university students interviewed (35 men, 28 women) • Median age 19 years • 82.5% European American • 56% politically moderate, 21% conservative, 23% liberal • Study 2: 441 participants interviewed (292 men, 149 women) • 82.3% European American • Median age not reported • 44% politically moderate, 31% conservative, 25% liberal
<p>Kristen Schilt – Just One of the Guys? How Transmen Make Gender Visible at Work (2006). <i>Gender & Society</i>, 20(4), 465–490. https://doi.org/10.1177/089124320628807</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-depth interviews with • 29 FTMs in Southern California from 2003 to 2005 (included 18 open FTMs and 11 stealth FTMs (Female to Males))
<p>Allegra R. Gordon and Ilan H. Meyer – Gender Nonconformity as a Target of Prejudice, Discrimination and Violence Against LGB Individuals (2007). <i>Journal of LGBT Health Research</i>, 3(3), 55–71. https://doi.org/10.1080/15574090802093562</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In person interviews • 396 LGB respondents • 34% White, 33% Black, 33% Latino • 50% Men, 50 % Women • Median Age – 32
<p>Tessa Wright - “A ‘lesbian advantage’”? Analysing the Intersections of Gender, Sexuality and Class in Male-Dominated Work (2010) <i>Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion an International Journal</i>, 30(8), 686–701. https://doi.org/10.1108/02610151111183207</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction and Transport Sectors • Semi-structured interviews • Focus groups • Observation of fieldwork of women in nontraditional work • Interviewed 15 selected experts on employment of women in nontraditional work

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviewed 36 women working in nontraditional work • Interviewed 13 lesbians in nontraditional work (age range 20s to 50s)
<p>Elizabeth S. Cavalier, PhD – Men at Sport: Gay Men’s Experiences in the Sport Workplace (2011) <i>Journal of Homosexuality</i>, 58(5), 626–646. https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2011.563662</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 gay males interviewed recruited through snowball sampling, network sampling and target sampling • Professional Sports Represented: National Football League (NFL), Major League Baseball (MLB), National Hockey League (NHL), Major League Soccer (MLS), NCAA division sports and two club sports. • Age Range: 23-68 • Majority of Participants: Age 30 to 39 • All participants identified by pseudonyms for confidentiality
<p>Mary Bernstein, PhD and Paul Swartwout, MA – Gay Officers in their Midst: Heterosexual Police Employees’ Anticipation of the Consequences for Coworkers Who Come Out (2012) <i>Journal of Homosexuality</i>, 59(8), 1145–1166. https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2012.673945</p>	None
<p>Joshua C. Collins – Stress and Safety for Gay Men at Work Within Masculinized Industries (2013). <i>Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services</i>, 25(3), 245–268. https://doi.org/10.1080/10538720.2013.806878</p>	None
<p>Yue Tan, Ping Shaw, Hong Cheng and Kwangmi Ko Kim – The Construction of Masculinity: A Cross-Cultural Analysis of Men’s Lifestyle Magazine Advertisements (2013). <i>Sex Roles</i>, 69(5-6), 237–249. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-013-0300-5</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content analysis of advertisements • Featured in three men’s magazines • 2008 to 2010 • United States, China and Taiwan
<p>CJ Bishop, PhD Candidate – Emotional Reactions of Heterosexual Men to Gay Imagery (2015) <i>Journal of</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative survey – questionnaire • 83 participants • Age range: 18 to 49 years old • 89% Caucasian

<p><i>Homosexuality</i>, 62(1), 51-66. https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2014.957125</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canadian male university students
<p>Trevor Hart, Syed Noor, Julia Vernon, Ammaar Kidwai, Karen Roberts, Ted Myers and Liviana Calzavara – Childhood Maltreatment, Bullying, Victimization, and Psychological Distress Among Gay and Bisexual Men (2018) <i>The Journal of Sex Research</i>, 55(4-5), 604–616. https://doi.org/10.1080/00224499.2017.1401972</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 304 self-identified gay and bisexual men recruited as part of a larger study • Examined mental health, attitudes, beliefs and sexual risk behavior among HIV-positive and HIV-negative gay and bisexual men • Participants provided written informed consent for both clinician-administered diagnostic tests and self-reported questionnaires
<p>Renzo Barrantes and Asia Eaton – Sexual Orientation and Leadership Suitability: How Being a Gay Man Affects Perceptions of Fit in Gender-Stereotyped Positions (2018) <i>Sex Roles</i>, 79(9), 549-564. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-018-0894-8</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sample Size: 401 undergraduates • 69% women, 31% men • Median Age: 22 • Questionnaire to rate various fictional male workers professionalism based on sexual orientation
<p>Katherine Mark, Kathleen McNamara, Rachael Gribble, Rebecca Rhead, Marie-Louise Sharp, Sharon Stevelink, Alix Schwartz, Carl Castro & Nicole Fear – The Health and Well-being of LGBTQ Serving and Ex-serving Personnel: A Narrative Review (2019) <i>International Review of Psychiatry (Abingdon, England)</i>, 31(1), 75–94. https://doi.org/10.1080/09540261.2019.157519</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">None</p>
<p>Raine Dozier, PhD – You Look Like a Dude, Dude: Masculine Females Undoing Gender in the Workplace (2019) <i>Journal of Homosexuality</i>, 66(9), 1219–1237. https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2018.1500778</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Semi-structured in-depth interviews • 49 masculine females • Conducted between 2009 and 2014 • Age Range: 18 to 58 • Average Age: 36
<p>Travis Speice, PhD – The Okay Gay Guys: Developing Hegemonic Sexuality as a Tool to Understand Men’s Workplace Identities (2020) <i>Journal of Homosexuality</i>, 67(13), 1864–1880. https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2019.1616428</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 in-depth semi-structured interviews • Adult gay men • Convenience and snowball sampling • Age Range: 22 to 52 • 25 White, 5 non-white respondents

<p>Giulio D’Urso, Jennifer Symonds and Ugo Pace – Emergent Forms of Psychopathology and Their Associations with Homophobic Bullying in Adolescents: An Exploratory Quantitative Study (2020) <i>Sexuality & Culture</i>, 24(5), 1418–1431. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-019-09691-7</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 394 adolescents and young adults • 164 boys and 230 girls • Age range: 15 to 20 years old • Written informed consent obtained by sending letters to their parents to inform them of study • Survey questions designed to measure degrees of homophobic bullying
<p>Brodie Lewis, Cassandra Hesse, and Cory Pedersen, PhD – Sexistential Crisis: An Intersectional Analysis of Gender Expression and Sexual Orientation in Masculine Overcompensation (2020) <i>Journal of Homosexuality</i>, 67(1), 58–78. https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2018.1525943</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey 867 male participants • 661 self-identified as straight; 206 as gay • Age Range: 15 to 65 years old • From 43 countries • Measured political views, sex roles and attitudes toward erotica
<p>Evan Senreich, Shulamith Straussner and Catherine Cooper – Health, Wellness, and Workplace Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Social Workers (2020) <i>Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services</i>, 32(2), 209–239. https://doi.org/10.1080/10538720.2020.1722303</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2015, 6112 licensed social workers in 13 U.S. states responded to a 75-item online survey • Topics of mental health, substance misuse, physical health and adverse childhood experiences
<p>Mustafa Ozturk, Nick Rumens and Ahu Tatli – Age, Sexuality and Hegemonic Masculinity: Exploring Older Gay Men’s Masculinity Practices at Work (2020) <i>Gender, Work, and Organization</i>, 27(6), 1253–1268. https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12469</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 in-depth interviews • Management level older gay men • Industries Analyzed: Accounting, Finance, Law Investment Banking and Consulting • Minimum Participant Age: 50 • Age Range Participants: 51 - 65
<p>Peter Newman, Luke Reid, Ashley Lacombe-Duncan, Suchon Tepjan and Susan Ramsundarsingh – A Methodological Scoping Review of Qualitative Research on LGBTQ+ Bullying Victimization: Implications for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (2022) <i>Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services</i>, 34(4), 521–555. https://doi.org/10.1080/10538720.2022.2044424</p>	<p>None</p>

Analysis

Theme 1: Hegemonic Masculinity

The pressure faced by biological males to conform to society's expectations of dominant or hegemonic masculine behavior in male-dominated organizations can be so intense that it can profoundly affect both mental and physical well-being of gay men. The concept of hegemonic masculinity is a fancy academic way of defining dominant masculine behavior. As Ozturk, Rumens & Tatli (2020) illustrate, "we know hegemonic masculinity when we encounter it because it constitutes an ideal type of masculinity; hegemonic masculinity legitimates and sustains the subordination of particular groups of people" (p. 1255). There is a strong power dynamic that requires subjugating the meek to endure harsh environments in order to survive as their full selves in hypermasculine organizations. Speice (2020) illustrates that "being professional means being masculine, which also excludes gayness. Being 'too gay' is seen as non-masculine and unprofessional" (p. 1873). This superficial dismissal of males who do not conform to gender stereotypes can be a source of frustration and downright anger. All the education, hard work ethic and networking that it takes to be successful does not matter if you are too feminine or act gay in the eyes of other macho men as a male. This gut-wrenching realization is beyond upsetting. Gender expression is a complex subject that has recently received increased attention. Dozier (2019) observes that "gender is a primary organizer of social life that serves to produce and maintain inequality" (p. 1219). This concept of hegemonic masculinity along with gender stereotyping promotes expressions such as "man up" that many biological males are indoctrinated to believe starting with their childhood. The repetition of hearing "man up" during interactions with other men shapes how young boys learn what it means to be masculine.

Our childhood experiences shape our world view and how we perceive the world as adults. Speice (2020) illustrates the characteristics that define hegemonic masculinity stating that: “while hegemonic masculinity is characterized with rewarding heterosexuality over gayness, it does not provide us with a tool for understanding the ways that various gay masculinities (or various performances of gayness, period) fit within a hierarchical system of gender and sexuality” (p. 1866). In other words, males in professional settings who behave in hegemonic masculine ways appear to reap the rewards of instantly being respected and taken seriously. We need a framework to better understand how non-dominant gender expression and gender identity play a significant role in creating an engaging environment for gay and bisexual males. As we consider the interplay of workplace performance and performance of worker’s identities, it seems apparent that how one is perceived affects career outcomes and opportunities. The research of Tan, Shaw, Cheng and Kim (2013) elaborate further on the discussion of hegemonic masculinity with the observation that “even though it may not be the most common type of masculinity, it sets the standard against which the achievements of all other men (the majority) are judged” (p. 239). With this framing in mind, it is no wonder so many gay and bisexual men feel psychologically unsafe as they are judged through a biased lens. Table 3 below represents a compilation of some comments of interviewees in this meta-analysis that relate to the dynamic of hegemonic masculinity within organizations.

Table 3: Compilation of Interviewee Comments Related to Hegemonic Masculinity

Article	Interviewee Comment(s)
Kirsten Dellinger – Wearing Gender and Sexuality “On Your Sleeve”: Dress Norms and the Importance of Occupational and Organizational Culture at Work (2002) <i>Gender Issues</i> , 20(1), 3–25. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12147-002-0005-5	“Mark, an accounting manager at <i>Womyn</i> , said, “I think you need to be properly attired... white shirts... and subdued colored suits and ties. Have your shirts starched and stuff like that. It gives you a more corporate impression” (p. 9).

<p>Raine Dozier, PhD - “You Look Like a Dude, Dude”: Masculine Females Undoing Gender in the Workplace (2019) <i>Journal of Homosexuality</i>, 66(9), 1219–1237. https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2018.1500778</p>	<p>“Another participant gained access to knowledge and informal training due to her masculinity: ‘All the auto techs back there are gentlemen... telling me, ‘Hey, we want you to learn this the right way, so you’re not messing up things that you do...’ We do have another girl who’s back there sometimes and she’s learning the ropes... They’re a lot more delicate in their approach in telling her things versus me they’re more straightforward. They’re more like “All right. This is what you need to know.” [There’s] less BS and sugarcoating” (p. 1225).</p> <p>“The participant went on to describe her relationship with other electricians within this context” ‘Men are supposed to be stronger and better at being an electrician...and I’m stronger than most of the men that I’ve worked with. I’m ... naturally a good mechanic. So what has happened for me...is that the men that I’ve worked with spend a lot of time trying to one up me” (p. 1233).</p>
<p>Tessa Wright - “A ‘lesbian advantage’? Analysing the Intersections of Gender, Sexuality and Class in Male-Dominated Work (2010) <i>Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion an International Journal</i>, 30(8), 686–701. https://doi.org/10.1108/02610151111183207</p>	<p>“Looking back on her decisions to train as a carpenter in the 1980s, Kath was conscious of the feminist politics that was promoting women’s engagement in the manual trades” stating “I think the feminism was a big part of it. I think actually there was a real thrill about doing a man’s job. I think it was really thrilling. And I think it was very empowering. Yes, I think it was actually that feeling of breaking ground” (p. 692).</p>
<p>Mustafa Bilgehan Ozturk, Nick Rumens and Ahu Tatli – Age, sexuality and hegemonic masculinity: Exploring older gay men’s masculinity practices at work (2020) <i>Gender, Work, and Organization</i>, 27(6), 1253-1268. https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12469</p>	<p>“We are a leading investment bank, so I think there’s just no question, we just need to occupy that special zone, own the leading edge in everything we do. So you can’t escape the power, the aggression, the competition, the intensity. I live it, I mean, every day there’s something to test you ... I’ve got to fit in with what I do ... lead a testosterone-driven place. (William, banking and finance, 62)” (p. 1259).</p> <p>“I’m close to retirement, so people may very well think I don’t care as much anymore ...</p>

	<p>Obviously, I've got to project a certain dog-eat-dog masculinity in my behavior, that's a given. I still mean business. (William, banking and finance, 62)" (p. 1259).</p> <p>"It's not about being alpha male or type A personality. It's something a bit more nuanced than that ... it's how I compete, it's knowing where to push and where to let go, just understanding the puzzle, how the pieces fit really, understanding who and what matters in the office ... well, also about winning big ... at least some of the time to remain in the magic circle. (Michael, accounting, 61)" (p. 1260).</p> <p>"Ageing is a black mark against you, and it's a much bigger challenge if you're gay. Having to prove you can do this job is like quicksand, it's quite scary to imagine what would happen if I'm too old to pull in new business ... too old to remain at the top of my game. (Michael, accounting 61) (p. 1260).</p> <p>"...when I'm laughing a little much, and talking more, and my voice goes up a little ... I don't like that ... why ape women rather than men? Nothing against women, but what's so special about women that us gay men should feel we need to mimic them? (Thomas, banking and finance, 57) (p. 1260).</p> <p>"I don't have a problem with gay men who are shall we say softer, but what can be cute at the pub will not play well at work. Would I promote someone like that? I would expect it's quite unlikely he will do well, because the kind of people he'll deal with, you know, the typical traders, they won't respect him. Ultimately, I have to prioritize the success of the team, so I'm not sure I'd be willing to gamble. (James, banking and finance, 58) (p. 1260).</p>
<p>Kristen Schilt – Just One of the Guys? How Transmen Make Gender Visible at Work (2006)</p>	<p>"I used to jump into [situations as a woman]. Like at Home Depot, I would hear... [men] be so confused, and I would just step over there</p>

<p><i>Gender & Society</i>, 20(4), 465–490. https://doi.org/10.1177/089124320628807</p>	<p>and say, ‘Sir I work in construction and if you don’t mind me helping you.’ And they would be like ‘Yeah, yeah, yeah’ [I.e., dismissive]. But now I go [as a man] and I’ve got men and women asking me things and saying, ‘Thank you so much,’ like now I have a brain in my head” (p. 483)!</p>
<p>Travis Speice, PhD – The “Okay” Gay Guys: Developing Hegemonic Sexuality as a Tool to Understand Men’s Workplace Identities (2020) <i>Journal of Homosexuality</i>, 67(13), 1864–1880. https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2019.1616428</p>	<p>“When we have meetings, I might dress in dress pants and a shirt, but that’s not for masculinity reasons – not because I’m concerned about the group perceiving my masculinity, it’s about a presentation of an image that shows that I take the work I’m doing professionally” (p. 1871).</p>

The quotes from the above table come from a wide spectrum of LGBTQ+ individuals experiencing uncomfortable and upsetting situations in various male-dominated environments. Researchers have indicated that gay or bisexual males in hegemonically masculine environments can experience actual physical harm in addition to psychological harm. Researcher Bishop (2015) shares the results of a study indicating “in a reaction time task where participants thought they were competing against either a gay or heterosexual man to administer an electric shock, the homonegative group was significantly more aggressive toward a supposedly gay opponent compared to a heterosexual one” (p. 53). This discovery related to the effects of an electric shock confirms the suspicion, for example, that some gay or bisexual males may have had about the force of a dodge ball being thrown with extra aggression at them during grade school recess dodge ball games. The venom and vicious hatred directed at gender nonconforming gay or bisexual males run so deep that it manifests itself in the most primal and automatic ways backed by scientific research. Speice (2010) highlights how hegemonic masculinity manifests within organizations, noting that “hegemonic sexuality is evident in workplace environments. I extend

the use of this term not only to men, but gay men specifically and demonstrate that not only clothing, but gestures, speech, and other performative elements are all used as ways to subordinate some gay men more than others” (p. 1868). In other words, what may be traditionally perceived as effeminate behavior can cause gay or bisexual males to both be assigned to or willingly take on more supporting roles and to be denied—or deny themselves—leadership opportunities.

In addition, Barrantes & Eaton (2018) highlight that “because gay men are seen as having stereotypically feminine gender role traits and characteristics, they may also have difficulty attaining and succeeding in traditional leadership roles” (p. 551). Negative outcomes resulting from one’s inability to project a dominant masculine persona without sacrificing authenticity are most concerning. Ironically, companies and organizations alike carefully craft mission statements claiming that their organization is a place where anyone can succeed. However, if the perception is that one must conform to hegemonic masculine behaviors that are inauthentic and unnatural to succeed, then the mission statement of equal opportunity is just that, a statement. Up until recently, both violence and hostility directed towards gay and bisexual men have been normalized in professional U.S. contexts.

In large, male-dominated organizations, quite often it could be observed that the hegemonically masculine or patriarchal culture is so resistant to change that gay or bisexual males may feel that there may never be any hope of any meaningful or measurable culture change. The chain of command culture encourages silence and blind obedience to get the job done, especially if the work requires quick and decisive responses in the face of danger such as the work of many military and police personnel. In job titles that require a quick physical response to keep employees and the public safe, the chain of command structure is critical to

success when a split-second can be the difference between life and death. For example, if there is an active shooter, the mission of the military police is to protect and serve above all. However, in situations where there is no threat to public health and safety, some gay or bisexual men may perceive they will be unfairly categorized as “rocking the boat” when they question the fairness of any decision made by the organization that may feel exclusionary towards its gay or bisexual male members. When male-dominated organization’s chain of command culture may be so rigid and unforgiving that its gay or bisexual male members do not feel they have opportunities to challenge the hegemonically masculine styles of communication or push back against discrimination. Indeed, Crawford & Andreassen (2016) confirm that “patriarchal culture and its inherent power relations is very difficult to change” (p. 2015). The perceived slow or non-existent pace of change can drastically affect the physical and mental health of the gay or bisexual members of male-dominated organizations. Thus, the stress and pressure of being able to conform to perceived expectations of hegemonic masculinity can be overwhelming for many gay or bisexual males.

In some male-dominated organizations, homophobia plays a significant role in daily interactions and activities. Lewis, Hesse, Cook & Pedersen (2019) found from their research that “participants who expressed more homophobic attitudes had increased blood flow to their genitals, indicating a greater sexual arousal” (p. 60). This provocative insight lends itself to the perception of subconscious and/or unconscious bias in the workplace automatically directed towards non-gender conforming gay males. Many of our reactions mentally and physically stem from centuries of subconscious primal conditioning. The provocative discussion regarding homophobic attitudes resulting in increased sexual arousal suggests that some homophobia could be deep-rooted self-hatred in some individuals for their own internalized homophobia of their

own gay fantasies. The perception of even a slow shift in power dynamics and gender roles offers evidence of progress toward a more egalitarian workplace culture, but also gives rise to resentful hostility towards some gay or bisexual men in present day society who are perceived as feminine acting.

Diekman, Goodfriend & Goodwin (2004) observe that “the ostensibly legitimate basis of the power differential—that men, by virtue of their agentic characteristics, are ideally suited to positions of power—may also be eroding” (p. 201). The increased opportunities for leaders who do not fit the old hegemonically masculine roles, including men who are perceived as effeminate, may add to the collective anxiety of homophobic heteronormative biological males. Schilt (2006) adds to the conversation that “gendered expectations about which types of jobs men and women are suited for are strengthened by existing occupational segregation; the fact that there are more women nurses, and more men doctors comes to be seen as proof that women are better suited for helping professionals and men for rational professions” (p. 468). Occupational segregation due to gender expression creates an oppressive environment of missed opportunities and diminished potential. The best qualified applicants will not apply for certain positions based on the perception that they do not stand a chance of securing the job title based on historical marginalization based on gender expression. Ozturk, Ramens, & Tatli (2020) observe that “some older gay men struggled to avoid being stereotyped as too feminine (e.g., as ‘old gay queens’) and thus being seen as ‘unfit’ and ‘unprofessional’ for work” (p. 1257). Speice (2020) goes further to this thought-provoking statement that “being a ‘sissy’ means being too flamboyant or effeminate and is to be avoided at all costs” (p. 1874). When a drill sergeant says to a male recruit with a high-pitched voice to “find the bass in your voice,” that sentiment may very well

come from society's expectation that the best military forces in the world must be dominated by deep-voiced, macho, stereotypically heteronormative men to project ultimate strength and power.

Imagine a movie about the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan with the lead male soldier being effeminate in voice tone and body language. That movie would be classified as an intentional or unintentional comedy. The effeminate soldier would at some point be coaxed to "tone it down" and find the manly man within themselves. This analysis of the theme of hegemonic masculinity in published literature about men who are not heterosexual working in male-dominated workplaces is integral to understand before one can begin the project of facilitating organizational culture shifts that result in change. In summary, words matter in professional organizational settings. Words begin as thoughts. The deep-rooted factors that influence the thoughts, words and deeds of those who hold power and influence in hegemonically masculine organizations need to be examined more closely and fully to facilitate meaningful culture change for all members in an organization to be at their best. Horrific accounts of gay slurs being uttered with such frequency and venom as illustrated by previous, yet recent research suggests there is a lot more work to be done to counter the toxicity of some hegemonically masculine organizational environments. Unfair categorization as being unprofessional based solely on characteristics such as speech, body language, and mannerisms should be completely unacceptable. Yet a great deal of being marginalized due to non-gender conforming gender expression still goes on today. If a male assigned at birth individual's genetics predispose them to a higher-pitched voice and being perceived as effeminate, they cannot control that without the constant stress of deliberately deepening their voice and being overly aware of their mannerisms. If that same effeminate male individual has the work ethic, people skills, and educational background to succeed, it is in both the organization and individual's best interest to put forth the effort to give them a chance. The

bottom line is that centuries of repetitive media images of heteronormative, deep-voiced males leading male-dominated organizations such as the police and military have created unconscious bias against males who express themselves outside the heteronormative spectrum.

Theme 2: Marginalization and Hypervisibility

Gay or bisexual males suffering in silence due to marginalization, invisibility, or hypervisibility in male-dominated organizations are not sufficiently studied due to the stigma of self-identifying. Marginalization can be defined as treating members of an organization as if they are insignificant as well as not worthy to be considered for career advancement no matter how much they contribute to the success of the organization. In the context of this discussion, invisibility --?can be defined as treating members of an organization as if their non-dominant sexuality does not exist. Furthermore, hypervisibility can be defined as when many members of an organization pay extra attention to the words, actions, body language of individuals who express their sexuality or gender identity outside of established norms. Buchanan & Settles (2019) explain further that

Visibility at work, being seen fully and accurately by others, is important for individual self-determination and authenticity, and for organizational outcomes such as commitment and sense of belonging. Although there has been increasing attention in the organizational literature on marginalized groups' workplace experiences of harassment, discrimination, and identity-based microaggressions, little attention has been given to issues of invisibility and hypervisibility. We conceptualize invisibility and hypervisibility as additional forms of identity-based mistreatment that are in opposition to visibility for marginalized groups (p. 1).

In other words, to mitigate the negative effects of marginalization and discrimination on gay or bisexual male mental and physical health, organizations must first confront the effects of invisibility and hypervisibility on organizational performance. Members of a male-dominated organization may be unaware of their words and actions that may inadvertently contribute to an uncomfortable environment for many its gay or bisexual male members.

The risks associated with coming out at work in traditionally male-dominated organizations and/or job titles for gay or bisexual males may outweigh the rewards of being one’s authentic self. As Collins (2013) illustrates, “making the decision to come out at work carries with it the risk of isolation and discrimination that could be avoided by remaining silent” (p. 248). In other words, if the gay or bisexual male in question could somehow “tone it down” altering his authentic gender expression to act more neutral or masculine, he may be able avoid unnecessary stress and drama in professional settings. However, the heavy weight of carrying that proverbial “suit of armor” can manifest itself in poor mental and physical health diagnoses after the amount of time and energy expended catches up to the human mind and body. Table 4 below represents a compilation of some comments of interviewees in the data set of this meta-analysis that relate to the impact of marginalization and hypervisibility for gay or bisexual male members of male-dominated organizations.

Table 4: Compilation of Interviewee Comments Related to Marginalization and Hypervisibility

Article	Interviewee Comment(s)
Kirsten Dellinger – Wearing Gender and Sexuality “On Your Sleeve”: Dress Norms and the Importance of Occupational and Organizational Culture at Work (2002) <i>Gender Issues</i> , 20(1), 3–25. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12147-002-0005-5	“For example, I feel like, [one of the editors] appraised me in a certain way, like, in the beginning, sort of thought I wasn’t, like, that hip. And then she changed her mind about me...And I feel like every day she sort of looks me up and down” (p. 17).

<p>Raine Dozier, PhD - “You Look Like a Dude, Dude”: Masculine Females Undoing Gender in the Workplace (2019) <i>Journal of Homosexuality</i>, 66(9), 1219–1237. https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2018.1500778</p>	<p>“There’s a huge harassment issue in the military...so then you’re in this position where you’re trusted to hear the locker room chat, but you’re a woman... I do my best to confront and say, ‘Not cool.’ But then it’s like being a kid in middle school where you don’t want to be that person and then you’re eating lunch by yourself” (p. 1228).</p> <p>“My gender expression... puts me in no man’s land...because they don’t know what category to put me in... Like they have to make up a category, and then it’s less about ‘I’m going to treat her like a guy’ or ‘I’m going to treat her like a woman...’ My experience is that I get special consideration because people are forced to make special considerations for me” (p. 1230).</p> <p>“At work, they don’t call me a him/her, they say it’s like an ‘it,’ unidentified. (laughing). It’s a joke. They would say, ‘I am not sure is it a him? Are you a her or is it an it’” (p. 1230)?</p>
<p>Tessa Wright - “A ‘lesbian advantage’? Analysing the Intersections of Gender, Sexuality and Class in Male-Dominated Work (2010) <i>Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion an International Journal</i>, 30(8), 686–701. https://doi.org/10.1108/02610151111183207</p>	<p>“It might be that I thought, well I can leave that one [sexuality] because people have preconceptions about me because I am a person of colour, and then in some situations people will think about you in a certain [way] because you’re a woman, and then add to that the fact that you are also gay, it’s like sometimes you feel like you are just alienating more and more people (Engineer, transport)” (p. 694).</p> <p>“I had witnesses with written letters stating that he had actually spoken to them saying that he wanted me out of the union because I was a lesbian and because I was crap at my job. And all I wanted at the end of the day was basically somebody to turn round and say ‘hold on, the fact that she is a lesbian has nothing to do with it’ (Bus Driver)” (p. 695).</p>

	<p>“I’d have to say, yeh, if I wasn’t the union rep, I wouldn’t be in the union, because I feel that strongly about it. [...] Just suppose a man came out as gay here and said ‘I need help from the union’. I’m sorry I can’t tell him that he’s going to get it because he won’t, I didn’t” (p. 695).</p>
<p>Joshua C. Collins – Stress and Safety for Gay Men at Work Within Masculinized Industries (2013). <i>Journal of Gay & Lesbian Social Services</i>, 25(3), 245–268. https://doi.org/10.1080/10538720.2013.806878</p>	<p>“Dan told us about a co-worker who was targeted because ‘he had tendencies, and I think they kind of focused on him because they thought ‘okay, you like men.’ Dan was unaware of this worker’s sexual orientation, but he told us his co-worker was ‘more feminine’ and isolated because he ‘hung out with women more than men’” (p. 248).</p>
<p>Mustafa Bilgehan Ozturk, Nick Rumens and Ahu Tatli – Age, sexuality and hegemonic masculinity: Exploring older gay men’s masculinity practices at work (2020) <i>Gender, Work, and Organization</i>, 27(6), 1253-1268. https://doi.org/10.1111/gwao.12469</p>	<p>“My worst nightmare is if people saw me as an old queen. We’re in a different world now ... but just like a straight man wouldn’t wish to be known as a dirty old man, I wouldn’t wish to be seen as that old queen irritating everyone ... (Anthony, consulting, 64)” (p. 1261).</p>
<p>Allegra R. Gordon and Ilan H. Meyer – Gender Nonconformity as a Target of Prejudice, Discrimination and Violence Against LGB Individuals (2007). <i>Journal of LGBT Health Research</i>, 3(3), 55–71. https://doi.org/10.1080/15574090802093562</p>	<p>“And they figured I was a young guy and I didn’t speak because I didn’t want them to hear my voice. One pinned me up against a wall – I said something like “Back off, “ and they heard my voice and were like, ‘You’re a fucking dyke’ - and they started hitting me, trying to take my shirt off I was really scared. But then a train came and people got off and I ran away, onto the train” (p. 65).</p> <p>“I would be hanging out with my friends and we were wearing chest bands to make our chests flat – wearing men’s clothing – very butch – holding hands. We looked like boys. This would happen routinely: After hanging out outside a club, cops would harass us - ‘You think you’re a man, dyke.’ - they would throw us against the wall, search us – my friends would get arrested for wearing men’s clothing. That was a law then - ‘male impersonation’” (p. 66).</p>

<p>Kristen Schilt – Just One of the Guys? How Transmen Make Gender Visible at Work (2006) <i>Gender & Society</i>, 20(4), 465–490. https://doi.org/10.1177/089124320628807</p>	<p>“I worked real hard....I had to find myself not sitting ever and taking breaks or lunches because I felt like I had to work more to show my worth. And though I did do that and I produced typically more than three males put together – and that is really a statistic- what it would come down to a lot of times was, ‘You’re single. You don’t have a family.’ That is what they told me. ‘I’ve got guys here who have families’ ...And even though my production quality [was high], and the customer was extremely happy with my work ... I was passed over lots of times” (p. 479).</p> <p>“The woman who hired me said, ‘I will hire you only on the condition that you don’t ever come in the front because you make the people uncomfortable.’ ‘Cause we had to wear like these uniforms or something and when I would put the uniform on, she would say, ‘That makes you look like a guy.’ But she knew I was not a guy because of my name that she had on the application” (p. 481).</p>
<p>Travis Speice, PhD – The “Okay” Gay Guys: Developing Hegemonic Sexuality as a Tool to Understand Men’s Workplace Identities (2020) <i>Journal of Homosexuality</i>, 67(13), 1864–1880. https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2019.1616428</p>	<p>“I would keep getting written up on for tiny – little things! The managers would listen to all my calls looking for issues so that they could write me up. I strived for perfection, but they worked overtime listening to my calls. Finally, the inevitable happened and they pulled me aside to tell me that I wasn’t a good fit for their environment. They didn’t have a good reason to fire me, but they did anyway! And I experienced, well, I’ll put it like this. I was fired – and I think it was because I am a gay black man. I was friends with a nice white lady, and she would tell me, ‘It is so clear. Look around. They don’t want you here. They don’t want a gay black man here.’ And they fired me” (p. 1876).</p>

The quotes above from a wide variety of gay and bisexual men, lesbians and transgender

individuals in professional workplaces capture a common thread of some horrific and disturbing experiences in a range of male-dominated organizations including the use of some extremely offensive gay slurs. There have been increased conversations in many organizations post-2020 about creating organizational environments that mitigate marginalization and hypervisibility for all employees regardless of their identities.

Optimal mental and physical health is a universal goal of all human beings. According to Mark, McNamara, Gribble, Rhead, Sharp, Stevelink, Schwartz, Castro & Fear (2019) “active duty and veteran LGBTQ individuals are concerned that disclosure of sexual orientation or gender identity may put them at risk for disrespectful comments or sub-part treatment in healthcare settings” (p. 90). A gay or bisexual male military veteran, for example, may feel so marginalized and hypervisible that he resists seeking medical treatment due to the fear and implications of being perceived as a gay or bisexual man by a medical provider. This can result in catastrophic illness that could result in death or permanent disability as well as untreated mental disorders that could result in drug abuse or even suicide. The findings of McNamara, Gribble, Rhead, Sharp, Stevelink, Schwartz, Castro & Fear’s (2019) study suggest that in order to avoid these outcomes, “healthcare providers must be culturally sensitive, and ensure all patients feel welcome presenting as their authentic selves, Providers should also be aware that LGBTQ veterans are at higher risk for several health concerns, highlighting the importance of providers inquiring as to patients’ sexual orientation and gender identity in written and oral assessments” (p. 90). The evidence compiled in thematic analysis of this data indicate that prolonged repression of one’s authentic identity for gay or bisexual males has a clear and direct impact on long-term mental and physical health outcomes.

Young males suspected of being gay or bisexual frequently face great difficulties adapting to the heteronormative world around them. The research of Newman, Reid, Lacombe-Duncan, Tepjan and Ramsundarsingh (2022) confirms that “an epidemic of bullying victimization persists among lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and other sexual and gender minority (LGBTQ+) young people” (p. 521). Feeling bullied and marginalized is a common perception of non-gender conforming males in the military and other male-dominated organizations. D’Urso, Symonds, & Pace (2020) add that “homophobic bullying is a form of abuse and aggressiveness (verbal and/or physical) towards gay and lesbian people, or people alleged to be so because they do not fall within heteronormative cultural canons” (p. 1419). Norms of acceptable male behavior are learned in early childhood and passed on from generation to generation. The normalization of the acceptance of a broader variety of gender expression and gender identity will help to mitigate instances of marginalization and hypervisibility experienced by gay males who do not conform to society’s expectations on their gender expression.

The long-term impact of gay males being repeatedly marginalized and hypervisible in male-dominated organizations can no longer be ignored. People will put forth their best efforts when they can simply breathe, relax and be their authentic selves. However, when being one’s authentic self brings heightened visibility based on over-dramatization of one’s words, mannerisms, and body language, it is an extremely heavy burden to bear. If your authentic self is a gay man who happens to not express themselves in hegemonically masculine ways, then you should not be marginalized or discriminated against as well as be treated as a spectacle for others to mock and scapegoat due to being unfairly hypervisible. The intertwining of the role hegemonic masculinity plays along with the effects of marginalization and hypervisibility lead us to pivot on discussion inclusive organizational culture.

Theme 3: Inclusive Organizational Culture

I have analyzed the impact of hegemonic masculinity in the workplace and interpreted findings from the data set about the implications of the marginalization, invisibility, and hypervisibility of gay or bisexual men. In this section, I advance insights that speak to the terms, culture, and policy that would be necessary for fostering an inclusive workplace culture where gay or bisexual men can perform at optimal levels and experience workplace satisfaction. As I have already established, the culture of an organization plays a crucial role in the psychological safety, mental and physical health of gay or bisexual men in male-dominated organizations such as the military. Cavalier (2011) emphasizes that “intent, perception, and action all matter to both the measurement and experience of discrimination” (p. 629). In other words, organizations that have robust DEI policies should begin with the end in mind. There needs to be meaningful, intentional and measurable progress backed by action to ensure that creating a more inclusive organizational culture. It is not enough for male-dominated organizations to “check the box” by simply creating more groups and events to address systemic discrimination against marginalized populations. There needs to be ongoing dialogue to facilitate an environment of open communication to proactively prevent future occurrences of marginalization and hypervisibility due to toxic hegemonically masculine organizational cultures. For example, if the problem is that there are too few openly gay or bisexual male supervisors in construction, an organization can work more closely with their Human Resources department, local colleges and LGBTQ+ organizations to expand the pool of applicants to ensure a more well-rounded and diverse group of new hires to reflect the communities served by the organization.

One can consider the experiences of military and police officers as both organizations have highly heteronormative environments with chain of command hierarchies embedded in their power structures. Bernstein & Swartwout (2012) observe that:

Like the military, the police have historically been resistant to incorporate lesbians and gay men onto the force, have been marked by elevated levels of homophobia and even violence towards lesbians and gay men. What factors influence heterosexuals' expectations about what will happen when lesbians and gay men come out? Are individual factors such as education and homophobic attitudes significant or do workplace policies make more of a difference? Finally, does contact with lesbians and gay men offset prior homophobic attitudes? Are workplace policies that enable gay men and lesbians to feel safe enough to be out beneficial? Will such policies promote or detract from workplace stability (p. 1146)?

To be most successful in an increasingly competitive world, organizations must leverage their greatest assets, their employees. Every employee matters. Each employee must perceive that if they contribute to the success of the organization, opportunities for advancement are available to anyone. Any organizational culture that eliminates members from advancing their careers due to their gender expression or sexual orientation may miss the next great revenue generating or cost saving idea coming from a gay or bisexual male team member.

Table 5 below represents a compilation of some comments of interviewees in this meta-analysis that relate to the dynamic of inclusive organizational culture within organizations.

Table 5: Interviewee Comments Related to Inclusive Organizational Culture

Article	Interviewee Comment(s)
<p>Kirsten Dellinger – Wearing Gender and Sexuality “On Your Sleeve”: Dress Norms and the Importance of Occupational and Organizational Culture at Work (2002) <i>Gender Issues</i>, 20(1), 3–25. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12147-002-0005-5</p>	<p>“Typically, your business department, people who might come into contact with outside people or departments that would typically be considered more conservative in any company – standard business dress. But in most of the other departments, it’s reasonably, you know, dress any way you want. Certainly in editorial, in the art department, it’s, you know, people just come the way they want to come to work” (p. 9).</p> <p>“They had a problem...They specifically said that men were to look a certain way and women something else. So many people complained about that that they had to re-issue the memo. Reword it. Because women felt like they were singled out. That they had to look pretty or they had to look a certain way” (p. 18).</p>
<p>Raine Dozier, PhD - “You Look Like a Dude, Dude”: Masculine Females Undoing Gender in the Workplace (2019) <i>Journal of Homosexuality</i>, 66(9), 1219–1237. https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2018.1500778</p>	<p>“She owns a small physical therapy business with her partner, whom she described as more femme than her: ‘I get much more respect from my employees than she does... We’ve had past employees where she will ask them to do something and they don’t do it. And I ask them to do something and they do it. I don’t have to worry that they will...think that they don’t have to’” (p. 1227).</p>
<p>Tessa Wright - “A ‘lesbian advantage’? Analysing the Intersections of Gender, Sexuality and Class in Male-Dominated Work (2010) <i>Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion an International Journal</i>, 30(8), 686–701. https://doi.org/10.1108/02610151111183207</p>	<p>“If you’re working in a station and you want to put a notice up [...] you might quite feasibly be the only gay person there, people are going to know it’s you and certainly going to say some pretty off-hand remarks like ‘we don’t want that kind of thing here, don’t try and convert us’ or that kind of thing. I know that happens an awful lot (Manager, transport)” (p. 697).</p>
<p>Mustafa Bilgehan Ozturk, Nick Rumens and Ahu Tatli – Age, sexuality and hegemonic masculinity: Exploring older gay men’s masculinity practices at work (2020)</p>	<p>“Ageing isn’t particularly impressive ... and if you’re away with the fairies, talking about social issues like gender pay gap or something, rather than doing a good job earning money for the company, you’re</p>

	<p>toast, the year-end bonus is gone. (Thomas, banking and finance, 57)” (p. 1261).</p> <p>“What I bring to the table is an exceptionally analytical approach. I go into meetings super well-prepared, armed with facts and figures, to protect myself from those who’d like to take me down a peg or two, whether it’s because of their prejudices or our competitive culture ... When it comes to diversity, with ageism and homophobia, I could be emotional about it, but that’s the easy way out. It’s better to win people over with carefully presented evidence which I think beats all the emotional speechifying and posturing. (John, banking and finance, 58)” (p. 1262).</p> <p>“I use my power to seek sensible solutions. It’s not in anyone’s interest to demotivate people or let them waste their talent, so I build bridges to explain that. It’s the most effective route. When there are more LGBT people in senior leadership, then the organization will change anyway, so that’s job done ... So I seek indirect change, but it’s real change, and I am doing it without having to compromise my own power base. (John, banking, and finance, 58)” (p. 1262).</p>
<p>Elizabeth S. Cavalier, PhD – Men at Sport: Gay Men’s Experiences in the Sport Workplace (2011) <i>Journal of Homosexuality</i>, 58(5), 626–646. https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2011.563662</p>	<p>"I mean I already knew I would never come out in front of the team, or to a team ... I’d like to do it maybe to one player, and I’ve thought about it before ... I’m very selective as to who I come out with. I’m not going to go into work with a rainbow shirt on or something. You know? So, I don’t think I’d ... I’d probably get out of there alive ... but probably no other player would ever talk to me again, I’m guessing” (p. 641).</p> <p>“[The locker room] was one of my fears that if a parent of one of my players found out that I was gay, the question is gonna be, ‘Is he in the locker room when you guys are changing, or is he in the locker room when</p>

	<p>you guys are showering, has he ever hugged you or touched you inappropriately or said anything?’ So I was very cognizant of that and, I wouldn’t say I was in fear of that, but it was always in the back of my mind, like, don’t put yourself in a compromising position, that if somebody found out it would look bad” (p. 639).</p> <p>“I would obviously go out with the guys, I’d go to clubs, I’d participate in the whole, you know, trying to pick up girls and occasionally I did. That was just to keep everybody away from me. You know, just to put up a front that I didn’t want anybody second guessing me. You live in a state of absolute fear, at least I was. I mean I was the fear being found out was just frightening as heck” (p. 637).</p> <p>“I have been extremely frustrated by the ... the fact that so few people that work on the collegiate level in athletics have been willing to come out of the closet ... We literally are in every athletic department ... Everybody knows, but nobody talks about it” (p. 635).</p>
<p>Kristen Schilt – Just One of the Guys? How Transmen Make Gender Visible at Work (2006) <i>Gender & Society</i>, 20(4), 465–490. https://doi.org/10.1177/089124320628807</p>	<p>“I have this company that I built, and I have people following me: they trust me, they believe in me, they respect me. There is no way I could have done this as a woman. And I will tell you that as just a fact. That when it comes to business and work, higher levels of management, it is different being a man. I have been on both sides [as a man and a woman], younger obviously, and I will tell you, man, I could have never done what I did [as a female]. You can take the same personality and it wouldn’t have happened. I would have never made it” (p. 480).</p>
<p>Travis Speice, PhD – The “Okay” Gay Guys: Developing Hegemonic Sexuality as a Tool to Understand Men’s Workplace Identities (2020) <i>Journal of Homosexuality</i>, 67(13), 1864–1880. https://doi.org/10.1080/00918369.2019.1616428</p>	<p>“My boss had just kind of figured out that I was gay because I never seemed interested in talking about women at work. He confronted me and advised me that if I wanted to move up the management ladder,</p>

	I shouldn't come out at work. He warned me that people in the auto industry are not very tolerant of gays, so I've just made sure to not let anything slip in regards to me being gay" (p. 1876).
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As evidenced by the findings in the above table, there are numerous individuals including gay men, transgender individuals, and lesbians from all types of backgrounds striving to adapt and thrive in toxic organizational cultures. We know that a large number of organizations have mission statements that are designed to inspire an organizational culture that encourages excellence for all its members. Senreich, Straussner and Cooper (2020) add to the conversation about meaningful experiences in the workplace and beyond observing the critical importance of “favorable thoughts and feelings about assisting others in difficult situations and contributing to the overall wellbeing of society” (p. 221). The mindset of creating meaningful experiences within an organization with a call to action for all its members can create an environment to nurture and facilitate meaningful, lasting inclusive organizational culture change. A common thread among many of the comments compiled in the table on inclusive organizational culture is that the individuals quoted often feel as if they are a spectacle as opposed to a just a person who wants to contribute to the success of the male-dominated organization in question. This data should give any hiring manager in a male-dominated organization cause to pause and reflect if their hiring decisions are somehow partially based on stereotypes and perceptions and biases that are so subconscious or unconscious that they can be easily overlooked.

Any individual's sexual orientation or gender expression should not have any negative impact on one's ability to be a valuable contributor to the success of an organization. Gay or bisexual male members of some organizations experience degrees of frustration highlighted by researcher Wright's (2010) observation of “the gap between the [organization's] public stance

against harassment and their lack of action against a member accused of homophobic harassment” (p. 696). The perception of gay or bisexual male members of any male-dominated organization is critical as to whether their organization has DEI policies that exist in writing only or if they are enforced by decisive action for those who violate the DEI policy. The most concerning aspect of all of this is the widespread perceived “lack of action” if a gay man is brave enough to finally come forward and report homophobic harassment. Documented DEI policies backed by swift, decisive action can be the best deterrent to mitigating marginalization, discrimination and hypervisibility in male-dominated organizations. However, documented DEI policies not backed by action when there are violations of the said policy just ring hollow. Eventually, the word gets out that nothing will happen and there will be no consequences because the organizational culture is inclusive in words only, not in deeds or measurable actions.

The perception of being treated with professionalism can be a powerful force that shapes the careers of gay or bisexual male professionals. Creating a more inclusive organizational culture where all the members of male dominated organizations are valued and treated as professionals is critical to the success of any DEI initiatives. Male-dominated organizations along with their gay and bisexual male members share a responsibility for the role they play in shaping a more inclusive organizational culture in the future.

Ozturk, Rumens, and Tatli (2020) highlight an older gay male’s approach to creating a more positive and inclusive organizational culture in the male-dominated investment banking industry. A gay executive sets the tone embodying leadership by example stating “I use my power to seek sensible solutions. It’s not in anyone’s interest to demotivate people or let them waste their talent, so I build bridges to explain that” (p. 1262). Any gay or bisexual male leader within a male-dominated organization who reaches across the aisle to highlight common ground

with as many colleagues as possible has a much better chance at directly shaping and influencing positive changes resulting in a more inclusive organizational culture.

One way these male-dominated organizations can be more inclusive is to develop more relationships with schools. To facilitate meaningful and more inclusive organizational culture change, male-dominated organizations should consider the research of D'Urso, Symonds and Pace (2020), who found that "schools are key developmental contexts and should safeguard sexual diversity, to ensure that sexual minority adolescents do not become objects on which other can vent their own internal frustrations. This can occur by changing social norms to value communities that incorporate diverse students" (p. 1428). Organizations that connect with students can build a foundation to raise awareness and ensure that more future hires will come to their male-dominated organization with a mindset that anyone can do anything, and inclusion is not an illusion. Actions must match the rhetoric of organizations in terms of their DEI policies being implemented most effectively and impactfully.

In addition, organizations can host more events and activities to be proactive in enforcing policies from the research of Lewis, Hesse, Cook and Pedersen (2020) that "suggest the importance of intersectionality on attitude formation" (p. 72). Organizations that highlight their members who represent intersectionality via internet, intranet, advertisements, social media, and more can greatly benefit from a public relations standpoint as well as increase employee engagement and excitement. Imagine working for a male-dominated organization and you are a gay man who is also a disabled veteran. Imagine having your picture highlighted on social media celebrating you for your intersectionality but more importantly, for your achievements. Images like that send a message to the members of a male-dominated organization as well as its customers that everyone matters; we are all so much more than any one category or dimension of

diversity that we may belong to.

In summary, workplace anti-discrimination policies to protect gay or bisexual males in male-dominated organizations cannot succeed if they are not enforced or in contexts where it is psychologically unsafe to come forward. If common perception is that most discrimination goes unreported, there is clearly still a substantial problem in the average male-dominated workplace environment. The organizational culture is shaped by leadership. Perceptions about leadership include that a good leader will embrace culture change. Ozturk, Rumens & Tatli (2020) note that an organization's "participants' desire to defend their power and privilege in the workplace undermined their capacity to seek transformative change" (p. 1261). This can help to explain why so many male-dominated organizational cultures are so slow and/or resistant to change. To facilitate meaningful and long-lasting culture change an organization should make a measurable effort to increase the number of instances they share examples of abuses of power and privilege. Sharing summaries of stories about leaders in the past who have been subject to disciplinary action including termination without revealing the identity of the person(s) abusing power and authority can send a powerful message to employees that the organization will not tolerate unacceptable behavior. This includes sharing detailed instances of marginalization and creating an uncomfortable work environment for its gay members.

The interconnectivity of hegemonic masculinity and its impact on organizational culture and perceptions of leadership and professionalism cannot be ignored. Imagine having the strongest work ethic along with a commitment to excellence as you demonstrate teamwork yet being excluded from career advancement due to the way you express yourself. An organizational culture that 'checks the box' for its Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives without meaningful cultural change is hollow at best. The key to positive culture change lies in

meaningful and tangible solutions as demonstrated the advice of the study by Dellinger (2002) “by starting at the level of the local workplace culture where we can carefully consider how organizational norms regarding gender and sexuality can be used to block opportunities for particular groups and, in addition, how organizational culture also provides mechanisms for these same groups to challenge, resist, and oppose such blocked opportunities” (p. 23). Still relevant over twenty years later, one key takeaway from Dellinger’s study is to challenge organizations to examine and strategize locally department by department on ways to identify and eliminate any blocked opportunities for any marginalized groups. More importantly, members of a male-dominated organization must feel psychologically safe enough to simply address or question any instances where opportunities have been blocked or denied based on an organizational culture that perpetuates toxic hegemonic masculinity, In addition, male-dominated organizations must actively address and follow up on the studies of d;urso (2020) to eliminate the perception that “acceptable gay identities are characterized as being ‘professional,’ reinforcing the heteronormative ideals of many straight, masculine, workplace cultures. Performances that are deemed to be ‘too gay,’ by bosses, managers, coworkers, are viewed as somehow inappropriate for workplaces” (p. 1878). This conclusion confirms many gay male employees' suspicions that they may feel like they are second-class citizens simply because of how they express themselves.

In short, being constantly told and reminded verbally and nonverbally that you are somehow defective and deficient with limited capabilities due to an organizational culture that is not inclusive can have long-term damaging effects on mental and physical health of gay men in general. Speaking up for oneself and for others can have a great impact. A great communication strategy to foster a more inclusive organizational culture is summarized quite succinctly and effectively by Collins (2013) with an organizational mindset that “the biggest changes often

begin with the smallest ideas” (264). Creating a culture for psychologically safe and open communication is critical to success.

The perceptions of hegemonic masculinity, hypervisibility, marginalization, and discrimination all play a significant role in shaping the organizational culture that affect perceptions of professionalism and leadership of gay men who do not conform to heteronormative hegemonically masculine gender expression including gay or bisexual men who may be military veterans or police officers. Effective communication strategies for driving organizational culture change include sharing detailed accounts of abuses of power, privilege and authority as well as sharing best practices for speaking up to encourage those that would be reluctant to come forward to share their stories. A dialogical approach within organizations to have healthy discussions on DEI topics encourages its members to network more effectively and to fully embrace the true meaning of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in a more active way in their organization. Practical application of DEI policies that require active participation of all members of an organization can be a most effective tool to counteract a toxic and uncomfortable culture of hegemonic masculinity, marginalization, and hypervisibility.

Recommendation: Practical Application: Scenario for Group Discussion (See Appendix A)

One major goal of this meta-analysis was to create practical solutions for male-dominated organizations to make their cultures more inclusive. I have included Appendix A at the end of this thesis that includes a detailed scenario with thought-provoking questions for group discussion. A male-dominated organization’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion department or team can effectively lead the discussion of this scenario to facilitate dialogue in safe spaces within the organization. The goal of this scenario for group discussion is to enable participants to realize that we all must continue to strive for continuous improvement to challenge our own

unconscious biases as we work together to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion within male-dominated organizations.

Conclusion


This research's purpose was designed to provide enough peer-reviewed background knowledge to the reader to effectively perform the practical application exercise. By exploring in-depth the concepts of hegemonic masculinity, hypervisibility, marginalization, perceived professionalism and leadership capabilities and their impact on organizational culture the goal of this research was to facilitate the creation of workplace Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion discussion with a call to action. The discussion can include a detailed scenario to dissect and produce meaningful solutions to drive culture change. The scenario of an anonymous veteran was cagey and provocative on purpose to spark conversation and raise questions and concerns in a healthy, constructive way about subject matter that may be uncomfortable for many. By actively participating in this research project with the scenario involving an anonymous military veteran, the hope is that the takeaways will be much more tangible and meaningful in driving culture change. One gap in the literature is a perceived small amount of research on employee engagement of gay or bisexual male employees in masculinized organizations, especially in the aftermath of the 2020 pandemic. In addition, future researchers could highlight how these findings relate to lesbians as well as transgender individuals to gain a more well-rounded perspective of the LGBTQ+ experience overall in male-dominated organizations.

Regarding the physical and mental health of LGBTQ+ military service members, researchers Goldbach and Castro (2016) point out that “the health care needs of these populations remain for the most part unknown, with total acceptance and integration in the military yet to be achieved” (p. 1). Despite the progress made for gay or bisexual male military

service members, the lingering ramifications of the repressive nature of the U.S. Military's DADT policy justify the need for more research to encourage gay or bisexual male military members to free themselves from oppression and repression due to their gender expression.

Human beings cannot be their best authentic selves in organizations if they do not feel psychologically safe. Companies and organizations compile a large volume of data when there are complaints of discrimination. More work needs to be done to take that data and use the themes emerging from that data to drive culture change. There is a longing for the LGBTQ+ community to finally be able to just breathe and no longer be a spectacle at work, at home, at school or wherever they may be. Let us conclude with another group or individual activity. What resonates with you the most from this poem from acclaimed lesbian poet Rosamond S. King and why?

Breathe. As in. (shadow) by Rosamond S. King

Breathe
. As in what if
the shadow is golden?
Breathe. As in
hale assuming
exhale. Imagine
that. As in first
person singular. Homonym
:  . As in subject. As
in centeroftheworld as in
mundane. The opposite of spectacle
spectacular. This is just us
breathing. Imagine
normalized respite
gold in shadows
. You have the
right to breathe and remain
. Imagine
that
.

Rosamond S. King is an African American, queer, female poet and the author of *All the Rage* (Nightboat, 2021) and *Rock | Salt | Stone* (Nightboat Books, 2017), winner of the 2018 Lambda Literary Award for Best Lesbian Poetry.

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Appendix A

Practical Application: Scenario 1 for Group Discussion

What follows is a hypothetical scenario to facilitate a group discussion and activity to promote a male-dominated organization's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion initiatives. The goal of this exercise is to facilitate a more inclusive environment inspired by an anonymous military veteran's thoughts and self-talk.

One mistake. That is all it takes. I am feeling so inhibited like I cannot make a mistake orally or in writing because I will become a spectacle for public humiliation and scorn in professional settings or elsewhere. I will be unfairly and venomously characterized as being "extra" while I can feel their eyes rolling to the deepest recesses of my soul as I am rhetorically and metaphorically dehumanized swiftly with such a vengeance reduced to a stereotype, doormat and scapegoat. Life is so unfair and cruel. First Pulse and now the Colorado shooting- this is just too much for me. I cannot breathe. I am trying not to lose my mind. I am completely exhausted mentally and physically. He can swagger into the room in person or online with his tall physique, macho voice tone and body language but I cannot. He will get the job and be promoted over me because no one wants to take orders from a short queen like me who is a caricature. He could write the same exact email or say the exact same thing I would say, and I would get raked over the coals while people would think that he is a tough, decisive leader. Besides, I should be grateful that I have a job because not too long ago they would not hire such a "flowery" flamboyant person like me. If it takes me and my beloved marginalized colleagues longer to retire because we are relegated to entry-level positions, so be it. That's the oppressive

system working against us. I need to “man up”. How can I have the audacity to train new hires as well as give a safety briefing or even worse directives to an audience of mostly manly blue-collar men who will be sitting there distracted saying to themselves “what the heck is this? And who does this person think they are”?

I am having nightmares like I am naked in Times Square because there is no sanctuary for me. My home life has never been safe until I could finally afford to live by myself. Even so, I walk on eggshells with my homophobic, sexist and racist neighbors. My professional life has never been safe because I am reduced to marginalization and outright discrimination based on hypervisibility even when I try to be under the radar, even for just one day. Can I be like him for just one day? You know him; he is the deep-voiced male who does not hesitate to say what he thinks or feels should be done. What is it like to have my passion not be misunderstood as drama and being overly emotional or overly sensitive? Can I just go to work without a suit of armor and not have a physical reaction to being around certain colleagues who no matter how much I work to get along with them that they want to make my life unbearable and difficult with such determination and venomous aggression? I am resigned to the fact that I must do twice as much to get half as much.

Even academia is not psychologically safe for me. Sometimes I need to turn my camera off during class and walk away because a classmate is triggering me with their aggressive monopolization of the class with their subtle microaggressions that make me feel like I want to totally lose what little emotional intelligence I have left in me. Why should I bother to finish my master’s degree? They are not rooting for me. They are rooting for him. He is the favorite son. He is in the good old boys’ club. I can’t show up in academia like he does with all his fancy academic words and condescending way of taking over the room. They want me to fail. Besides,

the master's degree is just a piece of paper. I will still not get promoted. I could use some extra money. Forget about being hired as an adjunct professor. I am not the right kind. I cannot just do or say anything decisive without making sure the water is safe for me to dip my toes in. As a result, situations backfire on me because I am inadvertently punishing people who did not hurt me because I expect to be hurt. In my heart I don't want to hate anyone or be unfair to them. So many masculine-acting cisgender men have been so kind to me. I am not thinking clearly. What can I do? What am I going to do about all of this?

When my self-talk allows me to feel like there is no sanctuary or psychologically safe space for me, I find myself at a crossroads. I can choose to play the role of perpetual victim and project negativity everywhere I go because I anticipate being mistreated or even humiliated. Am I a good or dare I say great servant leader who shows great empathy and can be relatable by sharing my vulnerability to help others who are struggling to drive real lasting culture change? Am I a poor, weak leader who is too consumed by internal dialogue showing too much vulnerability and empathy? Is it a mixed bag? I know from muscle memory that pain is fuel and negative energy that can be channeled into empowerment and determination to help myself and others find purpose in life. I imagine rolling all these psychological feces up into a big red ball. Yes. I meant to say feces and not forces. Fertilizer makes the crops grow. I am throwing that big red ball smashing it into a wall with explosive force getting in touch with my masculine side. I chuckle to myself as I remember the kid in eighth grade who picked a fight with me at recess because they thought I was an easy target. I made them cry. All that anger about being abused as an innocent little child and repeatedly bullied and called gay slurs came rushing to my body. I beat them up swiftly and decisively. I did not even get in trouble because the humiliation of getting their butt kicked by someone like me was their punishment for being a perpetual

troublemaker. No one messed with me after that. I was not created to be on earth to be urinated and defecated on by everyone and anyone. I am claiming my rightful place. I will no longer only have a seat at the table so they can just check the box. I insist that I have a voice at the table as well. Too many of us have suffered in silence for far too long. Game over. I listen to Michael Jackson's song "Beat It" and when he sings "they kick you then they beat you then they tell you it's fair, just beat it" as inspiration to keep fighting back. I can say to myself: "what right does anyone have to strip me of all respect and human dignity when they are a human being just like me with issues to work on and a toilet bowl in their house?" All this pain and trauma does not excuse me. I must keep doing the difficult work of self-reflection while realizing the role I play. I have thought, said and done things that are not good. I am a work in progress. I don't mean to spit venom too. Clearly, I am wounded; the wounds run deep. However, I am still here. I'm still standing. Who am I? Who do you think I am? No matter what I choose to be happy.

There are many out there who have similar thoughts and they choose the path of self-destruction and give in to their inner saboteur. So much pain has been repressed and internalized for so long in society. We are seeing the results in the social unrest and a rabid, primal and feral culture consumed with hatred in the world post-2019. The stories and perspectives of marginalized and dehumanized people can be difficult to hear and to tell. However, storytelling can help others in sensemaking of a world that can be so cruel and unbearable. A final thought from Valskov (2014) is that "leaders will always want data, but data only gives us the *what*, and sometimes the *how*. Stories give us the *why*. We naturally seek meaning in what's going on around us and that's why stories can have a big impact in business, particularly at times of change" (p. 147).

Questions for group discussion:

1. From the information given can it be determined with absolute certainty that this military veteran was born male or female? If yes or no, what part(s) of the passage support(s) your answer.
2. Can you determine their sexual orientation with absolute certainty? If yes or no, what part(s) of the passage support(s) your answer.
3. Are there any indications that lean towards male or female at birth? If yes or no, give the specific passage(s) that support(s) your answer.
4. Are there any indications that lean towards the subject being LGBTQ+? If yes or no, give the specific passage(s) that support(s) your answer.
5. Pick one sentence in the passage that resonates the most with you. Explain to the group why. Feel free to share your own personal experiences (without naming names) if it feels safe for you to do so. You can feel free to share experiences from other organizations you have been affiliated with if you feel more comfortable.
6. What are your thoughts about learning more about how your colleagues think who may be different than you or feel as if they are marginalized outsiders in the group?
7. Imagine if the subject never expressed these thoughts. Describe clues in behavior and/or self-expression you have witnessed from colleagues or others who may internalize all their feelings of marginalization and hypervisibility and never come forward.
8. Which sentence in the passage is the most deeply troubling to you and why?
9. Which sentence in the passage is the most hopeful or inspirational to you and why?

10. In one sentence describe an action item you challenge yourself to implement in the way you interact with others professionally going forward based on this discussion.
11. In one sentence describe an action item you challenge yourself to implement in the way you behave or show up professionally because of this discussion.
12. What are your key takeaways from this discussion and activity?