

LGBTQ+ Leadership

Benefits of Breaking Boundaries in the Workplace

Introduction:

- There is dearth of research about the experiences of LGBTQ+ leaders; existing literature often focuses on challenges.
- This study focused on exploring the benefits brought by individuals holding both leadership positions and an LGBTQ+ identity.

Method:

- Qualitative interviews with 51 individuals who self-identified as belonging to the LGBTQ+ community as well as holding leadership positions.
- Interview questions focused the interaction of their identity with their leadership roles.



Results:

- Several common barriers were identified, but most participants had overwhelmingly positive experiences at work.
- Positive themes focused on building and supporting an inclusive environment for *all*-- not just LGBTQ+ people.
- Themes identified included ability to promote change, greater emotional intelligence and empathy, strengthened interpersonal and advocacy skills, and the opportunity to be a role model and provide and receive social support.

"Partnership with other marginalized identities to brainstorm and strategize."

"I think that we have that desire to really be sure that we're working, interacting, and creating structures and processes that truly include everyone and are as equitable as possible."

Discussion and Conclusion:

- Understanding the benefits that LGBTQ+ leaders inherently bring to the workplace can support DEI initiatives focused on improving representation and providing leadership opportunities.
- LGBTQ+ leaders' ability to foster connectedness in the workplace underscores the importance of promoting LGBTQ+ leadership.

"Being LGBTQ gives me a different empathy and sensitivity, I think, to all people."

"I think by sharing the status, I create closer bonds."

"I think being queer is my superpower. It gives me a unique way to engage across difference that some other folks who don't hold minority identities may not experience."