



GLOBAL WELLNESS
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EMPOWERING WELLNESS WORLDWIDE

Awareness Action Kit - SEXUAL ORIENTATION -

Global Perspectives on Inclusive Well-Being:
The Role of Health and Wellness Coaching in
Fostering Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and
Belonging

Empowering Individuals, Leaders, Service
Providers, and Advocates of DEIB Through the
Lens of Health and Wellness Coaching

- 2024 -



WELLNESS COACHING INITIATIVE
GLOBAL WELLNESS INSTITUTE

Welcome!

We are thrilled to introduce you to our **Awareness Action Kit**, designed to kickstart your journey into understanding the invaluable intersection of Health and Wellness with Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging.

This kit offers you a practical, actionable, and easily digestible resource to delve into the profound impact that Health and Wellness can have in fostering a culture of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, And Belonging.

Directly excerpted from our comprehensive 130-page whitepaper, "Global Perspectives on Inclusive Well-Being: The Role of Health and Wellness Coaching in Fostering Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging," these resources are a simple gateway to a deeper understanding.

We invite you to download the complete whitepaper along with its accompanying PowerPoint presentation and 11-page infographic, available [HERE](#).

Within the whitepaper, you'll explore 10 distinct areas of diversity, each accompanied by its own Awareness Action Kit:

- 1. Race and Ethnicity**
- 2. Age and Generations**
- 3. Gender**
- 4. Sexual Orientation**
- 5. Religion and Spirituality**
- 6. Disability**
- 7. Socioeconomic Status and Social Determinants of Health**
- 8. Health Status**
- 9. Neurodiversity**
- 10. Weight Bias and Stigma**

Each kit provides insights into the definition of the specific type of diversity, why it's crucial, how Health and Wellness Coaching can play a pivotal role in supporting it, and real-life "Voices from the field" to enrich your understanding.

Additionally, each Awareness Action Kit comes complete with a "**Questions for Discussion Guide**" to prompt thoughtful reflection and dialogue, as well as essential "**Contact Information**" to reach out for further support or inquiries. There is an **(11th)** separate **Glossary of Terms Awareness Action Kit** to enhance your comprehension across all areas covered.

Happy discovering - we're excited you've joined us!
The Global Wellness Institute Wellness Coaching Initiative Team.

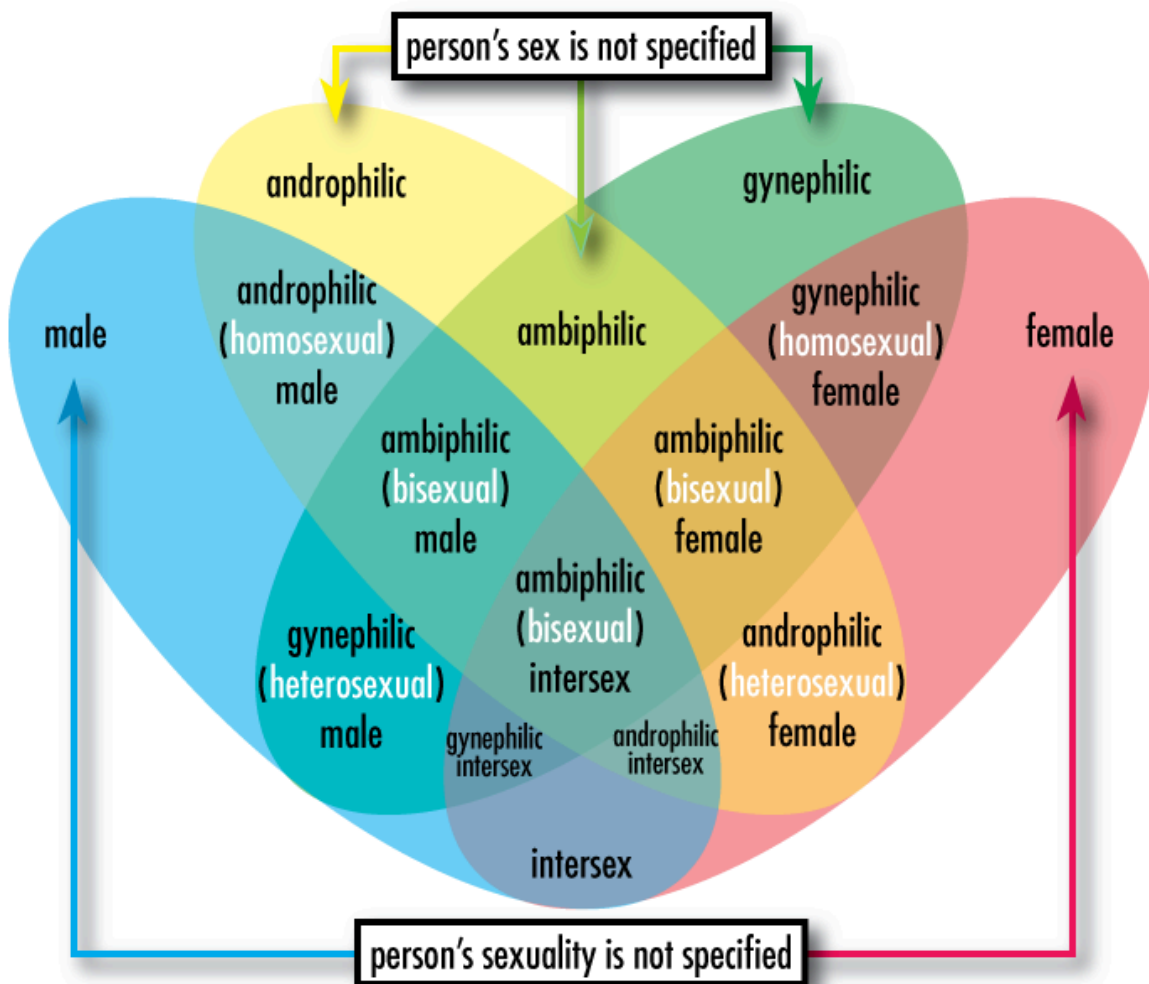
XIII. Sexual Orientation



X. Sexual Orientation

- **What it is**

Sexual orientation is the term given to a person’s pattern of emotional, romantic, and/or sexual attraction to individuals of the same gender (homosexual), opposite gender (heterosexual), or both genders (bisexual). It is an integral aspect of a person's identity and is often categorized into various labels such as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or straight. It is one of the primary dimensions of diversity.



Source image: Wikipedia, 2023

- **Why it matters**

A person's sexual orientation can significantly impact their self-esteem, how they relate to others, feelings of belonging, and overall well-being. It may take time and challenge to understand and acknowledge one's sexual orientation and come to a place of self-acceptance, find social support within communities, and manage romantic and sexual relationships.

It is essential that we understand the unique challenges faced by sexual minority individuals, and advocate for policies that protect their rights. It is worth noting that the US Gallup study in 2022 reported that 7.2% of the population identified as LGBT (Gallup, 2022). Research shows that these individuals may have experiences that include:

- Higher rates of mental health challenges such as depression, anxiety, and suicide ideation compared to heterosexual individuals.
- Physical health risks — gay and bisexual have a higher risk of HIV/AIDS.
- Poorer healthcare experiences.
- Substance abuse — often used as a coping mechanism for stress and discrimination experiences.
- Poor social support and relationships – some family, friends, and elements of society may reject their sexuality which again can favoring isolation, loneliness and negatively impacting mental and physical health.

Sexual orientation has been said to be the “last acceptable bias” (Sullivan, 2008). While many people understand that racial and ethnic stereotypes are off-limits, it is not unusual to hear comments that are derogatory about homosexuals or lesbians (Henneman, 2004; Sullivan, 2008). Only 40% of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender workers report experiencing fair treatment at work, and 22% of heterosexuals say they would feel uncomfortable working with gay or lesbian co-workers (Henneman, 2004). Members of the LGBTQ+ are underrepresented in corporate environments with 40% closeted at work (Balinson et al., 2020; Dupreelle et al., 2020).

A February 2022 Gallup study found that significantly fewer LGBT employees strongly agreed that their organization cares about their well-being, is fair, or will do the right thing about ethics or integrity issues. About twice as many non-LGBT employees strongly agree with these perceptions. The study further showed that LGBT employees were less likely to be “thriving” with 40% LGBT opposed to 56% of non-LGBT and that LGBT employees were nearly twice as likely to have experienced depression and anxiety (Gallup, 2022).

- **How Health and Wellness Coaching can support this diversity**

Health and Wellness Coaches can effectively support individuals of diverse sexual orientations by cultivating an inclusive and welcoming space. This involves incorporating inclusive language and explicitly communicating a commitment to diversity.

Coaches refrain from making assumptions or relying on stereotypes regarding a person's sexual orientation, recognizing the individuality of each client's experience. Employing an open, humble, accepting, and curious line of questioning encourages a deeper understanding of their unique health and wellness journey.

"Coaches hold an unconditional positive regard as they empower the client to achieve their goals, using a process of discovery." (Global Wellness Institute, Wellness Coaching Initiative, 2022)

Additionally, coaches should be well-informed about the unique health and medical risks as well as specific health disparities LGBTQ+ people face, resources, and referral organizations catering to the specific needs of the LGBTQ+ community. Keeping abreast of current research, trends, and best practices in LGBTQ+ healthcare ensures coaches provide relevant and informed support. It is crucial to view sexual orientation as one of the many facets of a person's identity, understanding that it may not necessarily be the most significant.

Ultimately, coaches can play a pivotal role in fostering equality, inclusivity, and a society that embraces diversity by recognizing and respecting different sexual orientations within their coaching practice.

- **Voices from the Field**

"As a gay woman, I choose my health professionals carefully. I'm 55 and have lived through enormous changes in attitudes towards those of us who don't fit the norm. Coming out was a painful process in the early 90s in Scotland. I carried a great deal of shame around my sexuality. It was a big deal to tell friends and family. My mother was devastated and told me that I should never tell my father as he would never welcome me home again. For 8 years I didn't tell him. Thankfully we reached a place where I was accepted and eventually my partner and I felt loved by my mum and dad. It has been a long road to this place of me being able to be open and out and proud.

Being open with health professionals about who I am is very important to me. I don't want to be coached by someone who doesn't 'get' me. There are a lot of assumptions in this world. Forms still have tick boxes for

*married/divorced/de facto/single. Male/female. This is so old-fashioned!
Every single time I am reminded that I am an outsider.*

Working with my fantastic Health and Wellness Coach felt right from the beginning. She talked with such respect and positivity about the great relationship I have with my partner of 27 years who is very supportive to me in managing my health. After a few sessions, my coach mentioned that her son was gay. Hearing this felt like a warm hug, strengthening our connection.

I work as a health professional in research and recognize that in our field there is still systemic bias. I have experienced, however, that Health and Wellness Coaches are true allies to the well-being of the LGBTQ+ community, thanks to their non-judgmental, open-minded, and client-driven agenda”.

— Anonymous coachee testimonial, Australia

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Want to contribute?

Health and Wellness Coaching Connection Blog Space.

It is our mission to empower individuals and businesses around the world to confidently partner with wellness coaches, optimizing health and well-being and clarifying wellness coach specialties and global guidelines through education and community resources. The GWI WCI Blog is one of these resources intended to advance the global Health & Wellness Coaching Community by providing accessible, evidence-based articles related to the field of Health & Wellness Coaching. Blogs will be posted on our area of the [GWI website](#) and cross-posted on LinkedIn.

Learn more here :

[Wellness Coaching Connection Contributor Guidelines](#)
[Blog-Newsletter Submission Form](#)

Please email us (gwiwci2023@gmail.com) if anything is unclear or if you have questions. We look forward to receiving your submissions!

Questions for Discussion Guide

Complementing our research, this Questions for Discussion Guide serves as an organized tool to facilitate ongoing discussion and contemplation on the pivotal role of Health and Wellness Coaching within the realms of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Intended for educators, students, and readers, this guide provides a structured framework for further exploration, encouraging thoughtful analysis and collaborative dialogue to advance inclusive practices in the field.

- What does a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace/ world/ community where everyone belongs look like/feel like?
- What are the gaps in your organization around this type of diversity?
- How might you champion greater inclusion in your day to day?
- How can you champion more inclusion and awareness around this diversity?
- What might be a personal obstacle to embracing this type of diversity?
- What unconscious bias might you have in this type of diversity?
 - How might you explore your unconscious bias?
- What is the greatest challenge for you concerning this type of diversity and why?
- Who might support you to better understand this type of diversity?
- In what context might you find this type of diversity most relevant (i.e. Workplace? Schools? Community?)
- Where (country, location, venue) might this type of diversity NOT be a challenge and why?
- What has been your personal experience with this type of diversity - from the outside or inside?