

# GENDER MINORITIES MILITARY POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS



**Trevor Bell, M. S.**

*Naval Research Enterprise Internship Program  
Kansas State University  
Manhattan, KS 66506*

**Dr. Daniel P. McDonald, Director  
Hope Research Center**

**Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute**

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*Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute  
366 Tuskegee Drive, Patrick Space Force Base, FL 32925*

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## **Brief History of Sexual and Gender Minority Laws in the U.S. Military**

Records of the history of sexual and gender minorities in the military are sparse. The United States military banned sexual and gender minorities from not only serving, but also from disclosing their sexuality and/or gender identity due to laws against sodomy and cross-dressing (Nation, 2015). In 1952, the American Psychiatric Association released the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Health Disorders* (DSM), which listed homosexuality and gender identity as mental health disorders (Drescher, 2015). The military barred individuals with mental disorders from serving due to concerns about their ability to perform their duties. In line with this policy, President Dwight D. Eisenhower issued Executive Order 10450 (1953) and prohibited the enrollment of sexual and gender minorities in the Federal government. This ruling allowed the United States to prevent enrollment of sexual and gender minorities in the military. This executive order extended to then-currently enrolled Service members who, if found engaging sexual or gender diverse practices, would receive a dishonorable discharge from duty).

From 1953 to 1993, the military discharged about 1,500 Service members annually, with over 100,000 Service members discharged by the 1980s. In addition to costly discharges, Service members steadily filed court cases to argue against discharges (see Doe v. Alexander [1981], Leyland v. Orr [1987], and Matlovich v. Secretary of Air Force [1978]). Although courts overturned many of these cases, the costs associated with fighting court cases and discharging Service members continued to increase. Amid budget concerns regarding this subject, the National Defense Research Institute (NDRI) with prepared and presented a study investigating the impact of sexuality on performance in the military (Rostker et al., 1993). The conclusions of the study suggested that sexuality had no impact on Service member readiness, unit cohesion, or job effectiveness. As such, “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” (DADT) passed in 1993, which allowed

sexual minorities to serve in the military unless they openly disclosed their sexual orientation (Don't Ask, Don't Tell [DADT], 1993). However, DADT only directly addressed sexuality; thus, the military still banned gender minorities from serving and/or disclosing their identities.

Questions continued to arise about sexuality and gender identity in general society, the American Psychological Association conducted a series of studies, all related to sexual minorities. Ultimately, this association issued a final statement in 2004, echoing NDRI's results that homosexuality did not affect quality of life and/or work performance (American Psychological Association, 2004). Subsequently, the American Psychiatric Association removed homosexuality from the DSM (Drescher, 2015). Activists, both within the military and outside of the military, pushed the government to reconsider policies aimed at barring sexual and gender minorities in the military as more studies concluded there was not performance decrement (National Defense Research Institute, 2010). In 2010, President Barack Obama rescinded DADT. As open sexual minority Service members increased, the military extended spousal and familial benefits to same-sex partners (Shinkman, 2013), and military equal opportunity included sexuality as a protected entity. These policy changes further cemented sexual minority rights in military spaces.

As sexuality gained more visibility and acceptance, gender identity remained further behind in military spaces, as policies did not address this issue. On the other hand, the American Psychological Association continued investigating gender identity. Their findings concluded that, like with sexuality, there were no negative effects associated with gender identity (American Psychological Association, 2009). In 2013, the DSM replaced gender identity disorder with gender dysphoria (Russo, 2017). This removed the label of "disorder" placed upon gender minorities, and it allowed openings for insurance coverage of treatment. As hormone

replacement therapy and gender reassignment surgery procedures grew more accepted by insurance companies and the public, military officials were still dismissing Service members on the grounds of gender identity due to unknown potential performance consequences associated with procedures. In 2015, the National Center for Transgender Equality (James, 2016) surveyed 27,715 gender minorities in the United States, with about 4,989 being active duty or military veterans. Of those that were serving at the time ( $N = \sim 124$ ), 52% concealed their identities, meaning about 64 Service members reported never disclosing and/or having others suspect them of being a gender minority. Of those whose identities were known or suspected ( $N = \sim 60$ ), 23% reported that their leadership and/or commanding officer took actions to discharge (James, 2016). With questions still unanswered about the impact of gender identity, in 2016, the RAND Corporation assessed readiness implications, health associated costs, and estimated health care needs for gender minorities (Gereben et al., 2016). The study concluded that the number of gender minorities who would seek treatment would represent a negligible increase in health care costs and minimal impact on job readiness. Thus, President Obama repealed the transgender military ban.

Following the election of President Donald Trump, in 2017, his administration reevaluated the RAND study. The administration reinstated the transgender Service member ban, citing concerns of the medical costs the RAND study estimated. Service members, who were or had received gender reassignment procedures, served with members of their assigned sex at birth (Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness [OSD(P&R)], 2020). As Service members continued to receive diagnoses of gender identity dysphoria and chose to seek treatment, the cost of dismissing transgender Service members arose once again; however, the ban remained in effect.

After the election of President Joe Biden, the administration re-evaluated the RAND study and chose to comply with the research study's recommendations. Biden issued Executive Orders 13985 (2021) and 14004 (2021), prohibiting the dismissal of transgender Service members and allowing them to openly serve with their preferred gender identity. Thus, as of 2022, the current military policy emphasizes gender identity as a protected entity in military spaces (OSD[P&R], 2021).

### **Analysis of Current Policies Regarding Gender Minorities**

Current military policies stem from Executive Orders 13985 and 14004. Both orders allow sexual and gender minority Service members to serve openly and in gendered units of their choice. The policies also state that the DoD will seek to broaden its knowledge of historically underrepresented communities and fund specific programs aimed at understanding sexual and gender minority Service members.

Although the U.S. military holds comparable policies to promote diversity and inclusion geared toward sexual and gender minorities, other military spaces and civilian government spaces around the globe have structures we can look to as examples of how to advance current policies. The following section will consider recommendations for sexual and gender minority policies and research based on other military and government spaces. Policies are primarily from military and foreign spaces with a high ranking for sexual and gender minority diversity and inclusion initiatives.

## **Recommendations for Sexual and Gender Minority Policies and/or Competence Training**

### **Low-Level Recommendations**

#### ***Language Training and Language Reassessment***

Training pamphlets, manuals, and diversity and equity curriculum can be remodified to include gender-inclusive language beyond gender-biased or gender-neutral terminology. For example, gender-inclusive terminology would emphasize the use of “his, her, their” rather than “soldiers” or “Serviceman.” Gender-inclusive terminology represents voices that were previously silent (e.g., non-binary individuals who use they/them pronouns). Picture edits in handbooks could include a diverse selection of gender presentation (e.g., a transgender military member serving in their preferred gender unit). Instructors and commanding officers can make an additional effort to incorporate gender-neutral terms during verbal instruction. For more information on incorporating gender-inclusive language and dynamics in the classroom, see *Teaching Gender in the Military: A Handbook* (Balon et al., 2016, p. 118).

#### ***Recognition of Sexual and Gender Minority Military History***

Incorporating these sexual and gender minorities into current unit history can highlight the contributions of diverse voices that have contributed to military success. Some sexual and gender minority military activists of note include the following:

1. Monica Helms – She was the first woman to join Phoenix chapter of United States

Submarine Veterans Inc, which had only been open to men (Daileida, 2012). She created the transgender pride flag commonly used today (Fairyrington, 2014). In an interview with a magazine, she recalled a memory from her time on the U.S.S. Flasher, where she “thought it would be cool to put on a bra and panties. I did, and then, I heard a knock. I heard a key going in the lock, and I jumped in my bed and pretended I was sleeping ... I was beyond

scared...during my time in the Navy, I never had anyone to confide in or tell” (Wheatley, 2020). Her sentiments toward being alone is a common experience transgender soldiers have reported (Ogburn, 2020).

2. Frank Kameny – The army discharged him for being openly gay, and he was the first to appeal his discharge to the Supreme Court (Kameny v. Brucker, 1960). His dismissal from duty heavily impacted his job prospects. Kameny continued to advocate for his case, saying he should be “examined as an individual” (Schuster, 2019). He did not win his court case, but he was president of the Mattachine Society of Washington (activists for gay rights) and continued to provide advice and help for others who were dismissed or facing dismissal.
3. Harvey Milk – He was an openly gay Navy officer who served on the San Francisco Board of Supervisors and had a Naval ship named after him to recognize his accomplishments, despite his resignation due to his sexual orientation (Kaur, 2019)
4. Bree Fram – She is the current highest ranking transgender officer in the U.S. Space Force. Bree currently runs the SPART\*A organization, which aims to help active-duty gender minorities in the military. She is a well-known transgender rights activist within the military. She came from a line of military members and wanted to join because she “wanted to be part of something larger than myself, protect all the amazing things I had been given, and able to defend those things.” In the same vein, Bree recognizes that the current administration could still work on its approach to gender minorities in the military. She mentions that “Some individuals are still experiencing challenging circumstances with their commanders. Not everything is perfect. This is a new policy. We have to, not only give time to all the policy to work, but also educate people on what it means” (Teeman, 2021).

5. Autumn Sandeen – She was the first U.S. Navy veteran to change her gender identification on military records (Grindley, 2013). During a keynote speaking event at Harvard, she said, “On this day when LGB people serve openly, transgender people will still serve in silence. The solution of one problem brings us face to face with another” (Merrigan & Nguyen, 2011). In another interview, she was hopeful her process of document change would help others, stating, “In a very direct way, documenting and publishing procedures will give other trans military retirees a template for how to accomplish changing their own DOD documented gender” (Grindley, 2013).
6. Sheri Swokowski – She was the Director of Manpower and Personnel for Wisconsin Army and Air National Guard (Swokowski, 2017). Her journey to self-discovery took a long time during her career but peaked in 2007 after she took the role of lead instructor at the Army Force Management School. She recalled an instance of discrimination as “The day after I came back, came back as Sheri, the director, a retired 3-star, he welcomed back and the second sentence out of his mouth was we’ve already hired your replacement... There was nothing that changed about my skill set, my ability to do the job, the only thing that changes was really how I looked” (McGrew, 2022). Her determination to continue serving her nation led her to become a senior analyst at the pentagon. Sheri continues her advocacy for transgender soldiers.
7. Shane Ortega – He was an Army Staff Sergeant and Marine Corps veteran who executed over 400 combat missions in Iraq and Afghanistan (Godfrey, 2015). Shane Ortega was in the military for 10 years, half of which he chose to live openly as a transgender man. In a 2015 interview, he mentioned how he was addressed as a female officer and wore the female crew member uniform. He said, “I look ridiculous. The biggest is a size 20. It only fits my arms.”

He further mentioned mentoring others who kept their gender identity a secret and expressed concerns for a transgender woman he knew who was terrified to transition publicly in an all-male force (Mohney, 2015).

### ***Guest Speakers in Classrooms and Training Spaces***

When an instructor lacks expertise in a subject, outsourcing to someone with more knowledge is key to learning. Military subject-matter experts (SMEs) can be a substitute for certain training lessons. Bringing in these SMEs provides real-world expertise and training for problems officers could face. They can also provide information to DEOMI about problems that military members are currently experiencing. The purpose of the guest speaker, whether first-hand or allyship, is to provide perspectives to others who may not have that knowledge (Kubal et al., 2003). Transformational learning theory assumes that the adults can take new information and use it to control their own learning (Mezirow, 2000). Adults can use the perspectives they learn from educated guest speakers to challenge preconceived stereotypes and common resistances to gender minorities (e.g., unpacking fears behind perceptions of transgender soldiers having unfair advantages). Guest speakers must provide room for an educational learning space that allows students to voice thoughts that they might be afraid to voice in normal conversations (e.g., stereotypes of other groups they hold).

### ***Explicit Resources for Service members Undergoing Treatment***

Gender minority Service members must navigate their own pathways to reach what they need (e.g., therapy, hormones, etc.). Swokowski's (2020) dissertation conducted in-depth interviews with several gender minorities in the military. One major finding of the study was the lack of provider expertise, gender-affirming support, and status of medical updates (e.g., status of surgical waivers). As such, there is a need to provide contact information to doctors and

therapists covered by their insurance plans to alleviate confusion. Pamphlets can also be designed to contain basic information about the process of coming out to various groups (e.g., family or unit commanders), therapists in and around the base camp, support help lines (e.g., transgender hotline, suicide hotline), information on the process of transitioning (female-to-male and male-to-female), and lists of supporting officers who could help guide a Service member to the right spot. These would start to address some of the major concerns identified by Swokowski (2020).

## **High-Level Recommendations**

### ***Mentorship Programs***

One existing problem identified by surveys with sexual and gender minority Service members is the lack of support and guidance they receive (Swokowski, 2020). The New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) created the Overwatch program, which consists of regular, reserve, and civilian volunteers who work to support personnel and advocate for policy change. A specific budget geared toward furthering diversity and inclusion in the New Zealand Military funds this program (Overwatch, n.d.). This program is purely voluntary and involves both active duty and retired Service members. Service members can reach out to their network for knowledge and access to materials that have helped previous Service members. Implementing a similar program to incorporate gender minorities across all armed forces would allow them to establish a knowledgeable network for support navigating transition-related issues.

### ***Working with Gender Minority Organizations***

A continuous problem with gender minorities is the lack of consultation when creating policies. Often, organizations create and implement policies without seeking out SMEs (not just in the military but other places as well). To remedy this, New Zealand chose to reach out to sexual and gender minority organizations to address given issues and develop policies (Directorate of Diversity and Inclusion, n.d.). NZDF outsourced to an NGO called Rainbow Tick. The Rainbow Tick organization has an accreditation process, called Rainbow Tick. This accreditation process evaluates organizations on (a) policies, (b) staff training, (c) staff engagement and support, (d) external engagement, and (e) monitoring. They provide suggestions and modifications to help increase the efficacy of a plan. This partnership ensures that organizations create and write policies geared toward gender minorities in a way that include this group. Currently, the U.S. does not have a Rainbow Tick program; however, there are other organizations that can provide guidance. There are two main organizations in the United States: (a) SPART\*A (<https://spartapride.org>) is an organization that supports active duty and veteran gender minorities, and (b) Transgender American Veterans Association (<https://transveteran.org>) assists gender minority veterans with navigating health care and educating policymakers. Other organizations exist within inner-city lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT) + community centers (e.g., San Diego Trans Military Discussion Group) or VA medical centers (e.g., Veteran's Pride Support Group at Robert J. Dole VA Medical Center).

### ***Diversity and Outreach at All Levels***

Current diversity training targets specific officers designated to handle given issues (such as equal opportunity advisors). It is important to have one or multiple higher-ranking officials in charge to handle situations, but diversity training and outreach can benefit Service members of

any level. This would offset literature suggesting that transgender Service members are more likely to come out to higher ranking officers than unit peers (McNamara et al., 2021). Previous unit-based training focused on critical race theory, which brought forth complaints from the Armed Services (Cotton, 2021). These complaints focused on feelings of exclusion from the group majority (e.g., White soldiers feeling targeted) and feelings of forced engagements. Training should focus on adult and transformative learning (Balon et al., 2016). This is where the adult learner assumes responsibility for their own learning, has their own valued experience, does not need others to tell them what to learn, and receives learning that contains relevant real-world application. To engage adult learners, transformative learning requires the learner to challenge their own assumptions by stepping into a different perspective. Using their own experiences, learners modify their own views as they gather more information on a given subject. Learners can use their own perspectives to help give input for others to learn from their experiences. Utilizing this technique, can allow Service members to feel included and valued, regardless of their identity. Encouraging active participation will alleviate feelings of forced engagement and invite the learner into the problem space.

### ***Training Courses Geared Toward Gender Minorities***

In addition to training at all levels, DEOMI should develop new training courses to approach specific issues with sexual and gender minorities. Sexual and gender minorities require extra course focus because of the high rates of sexual harassment they experience compared to all other groups (Morral & Schell, 2015; Schuyler et al, 2020). This is especially true for transgender Servicemembers, who represent a larger portion of sexual harassment than LGB counterparts (Schuyler et al, 2020; Klemmer et al., 2022). Additionally, certain command bases could be more likely to experience higher-level problems because of anti-transgender policies

against hormone replacement therapy or gender-affirming surgeries. The Army War College developed a similar course, the Operational Gender Advisor Course, based on NATO's guidance (Army War College, n.d.). This course aims to teach military personnel skills and knowledge to operationalize gender perspectives and meet requirements of the United Nations Security Council Resolution. The seminar course learning objectives center on comprehension, knowledge, analysis, application, evaluation, and synthesis of gender considerations and advocacy policies. NATO also provides resources for gender education and training packages (NATO Allied Command Transformation, 2022). The gender advisor position integrates gender perspective into NATO's missions and operations. Their training package provides guidance and best practices to integrate and teach gender perspective on the strategic-operational level, tactical level, and pre-deployment level.

### **Future Research Studies and Questions for Gender Minorities**

1. Perceptions of sexual and gender minorities between civilian and active military sectors
  - a. Quick Background: Historically, policies toward gender minorities have affected active-duty Service members more than civilian workplaces. As such, sexual and gender minorities still worked in civilian sectors, which could have increased acceptance rates in this sector.
  - b. Research Question of Interest: Are civilian government workers more likely to accept sexual and gender minorities in their workplace than active military members?
2. Attitudes of acceptance toward stealth versus gender diverse Service members
  - a. Quick Background: "Stealth" groups of transgender populations adhere to their preferred gender's roles (e.g., masculine transman). Research has shown that people are more

likely to accept stealth transgender individuals than those who are more gender diverse (e.g., non-binary; Anderson, 2020; Prusaczyk & Hodson, 2020).

- b. Research Question of Interest: Are Service members, who can pass as their preferred gender (i.e., stealth), more accepted by their units than Service members who are in early stages of their transition?
3. Attitudes of acceptance toward Service members who choose to follow gender roles of their preferred gender vs. Service members who mix gender roles from preferred and assigned gender roles
- a. Quick Background: In line with question #2, research has shown that gay men who violate gender roles (e.g., more feminine) are less likely to be accepted (Prusaczyk & Hodson, 2020). It is possible that violation of gender roles could also apply to transgender individuals stronger than gay men.
  - b. Research Question of Interest: Is acceptance for a sexual and gender minority person higher when the Service member takes on gender roles of their preferred gender than when they do not (e.g., a masculine transwoman or a feminine transman)?
4. Perceptions of ability to lead missions of sexual and gender minority higher-ranking Service members

Research Question of Interest: Are sexual and gender minority leaders seen as capable of high skills by their units compared to non-sexual and gender minority leaders?

5. Open survey on unique challenges faced by sexual and gender minority Service members
- Research Question of Interest: Are there unique challenges that sexual and gender minorities face in the military compared to the civilian life (e.g., access to hormones and/or therapists based on station orders)? If so, how can we alleviate the differences?

6. Differences in acceptance between military branches
  - a. Quick Background: Literature evaluated for the annotated bibliography below have shown high rates of transgender enrollment into the Army and Airforce. Experience with transgender individuals can increase one's likelihood to support the integration of transgender Service members in the military (Ender et al., 2017).
  - b. Research Question of Interest: Do military branches differ in their acceptance rates of sexual and gender minorities? If so, are there training differences or inherent mission difficulty that makes differences in these groups?
7. Differences in enrollment between branches
  - a. Quick Background: In line with question #6, higher rates of enrollment into Army and Air Force suggest that gender minorities have more interest in certain branches. Conducting a focus group aimed at understanding these groups' decisions to join each branch could help identify underlying diversity differences between branches.
  - b. Research Question of Interest: Why are certain military branches more likely to recruit gender minorities than other branches?

### **Measures for Conducting Sexual and Gender Minority Research**

All the mentioned scales measure how open someone is about their sexual orientation in the workplace.

1. The Daily Heterosexist Experience Questionnaire (Balsam et al., 2013)
  - a. This scale surveys the minority stressors that arise from heterosexist experiences in LGBT individuals in all contexts of their lives.

- b. Modified by Schvey et al. (2020) to create a Stigmatizing Experiences in the Military Questionnaire to target frequency of discriminatory experiences by transgender Service members.
2. Workplace Sexual Identity Management Measure (Anderson, Croteau, Chung, and DiStegano, 2001)
  - a. Measures the identity management strategies for being explicitly out or covering (e.g., avoiding being associated with LGB).
  - b. Lance, Anderson, & Croteau (2011) further improved this scale.
3. Workplace Heterosexist Experiences Questionnaire (Waldo, 1999)

Measures minority stress from heterosexist experiences (direct or indirect) in their workplace.
4. Disclosure Scale (Griffith and Hebl, 2002)

Measures the extent to which one is out at their own workplace.
5. The Outness Inventory (Mohr & Fassinger, 2000)

Measures the extent to which participants' sexual orientation is known by others in all aspects of their lives.
6. Coworker Reactions Scale (Griffith and Hebl, 2002)

Measures how disclosure of one's sexual orientation affect how coworkers treat, felt comfortable with, or were accepting of LGB workers.
7. LGBT Climate Inventory (Liddle et al., 2004)

Measures how supportive one's workplace climate is of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

8. Work Environment Scale (Driscoll, Kelley, & Fassinger, 1996)

Measures how one's workplace climate is related to homophobia or discrimination of sexual orientation.

9. Workplace Disclosure Scales (Driscoll Kelley, & Fassinger, 1996; Tejeda, 2006; Day & Schoenrade, 1997)

## Annotated Bibliography

All the following articles are peer-reviewed articles except for Ogburn (2020). This study is a dissertation that contained important information related to transgender Service members, and as such, remained in the bibliography.

Badgett, M. V., Durso, L. E., Mallory, C., & Kastanis, A. (2013). *The business impact of LGBT-supportive workplace policies*. The Williams Institute.

<https://safe.menlosecurity.com/doc/docview/viewer/docN2D968A199D48bbd948c6514e646bff3dc4806dfb11aedb8648ac62c0181e6f4e4f3658c39ad3>

This report investigated 36 published research studies that evaluated the impact of LGBT-supportive employment policies and workplace climates on business outcomes. Authors aimed to answer whether LGBT-supportive policies bring about the specific benefits mentioned or other similar economic benefits that may impact the bottom line. The authors split the policy effects into immediate, secondary, and individual organizational. The immediate effects for implementing LGBT-supportive policies were less discrimination ( $N = 3$  studies out of 5) and increased openness in the workplace ( $N = 8$  studies out of 9). The authors theorized this could be related to increase in LGBT-supportive workplace climate leads to increased openness. Secondary effects included improved health and well-being outcomes ( $N = 16$  studies out of 20), increased job satisfaction ( $N = 11$  studies out of 15), improved relationships with coworkers and supervisors ( $N = 4$  studies out of 4), and higher commitment and other positive workplace behaviors and attitudes ( $N = 17$  studies out of 21). This could be due to an increase in LGBT-supportive policies, LGBT-supportive work climate, increased openness about being LGBT, and/or less discrimination. Only four of the 36 studies looked at individual effects on transgender respondents. They found that (a)

LGBT-supportive workplace climates increased job satisfaction, commitment, and other positive behaviors and attitudes, and improved health and well-being outcomes ( $N = 3$  studies out of 4); and (b) increased openness, job satisfaction, commitment and other positive behaviors and attitudes, and improved health and well-being outcomes ( $N = 3$  studies out of 4). Lastly, the effects on organizational outcomes showed seven potential outcomes: (a) changes in health insurance costs, which is offset by savings in overall healthcare costs and increased productivity; (b) lower legal costs from litigation related to discrimination; (c) greater access to new customers that require contractors to have nondiscrimination policies or domestic partner benefits; (d) more business from individual consumers who want to do business with socially responsible companies; (e) more effective recruiting of LGBT and non-LGBT employees who want to work for an employer who values diversity; (f) increased creativity among employees; and (g) greater demand for company stock because of expected benefits of diversity policies. Thus, they concluded that LGBT-supportive policies benefitted companies and had the potential to expand the business economically.

Dietert, M., & Dentice, D. (2015). The transgender military experience: Their battle for workplace rights. *SAGE Open*, 5(2). <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244015584231>

The purpose of the study was to gather interview data from transgender active duty personnel about their experiences with workplace discrimination, suggestions for policy changes, and their views on the overturn of DADT. In total, researchers interviewed 11 active-duty personnel (82% [ $N = 9$ ] being male-to-female and 18% [ $N = 2$ ] being female-to-male). Two of interviewees were from foreign military spaces (e.g., Royal Navy and Royal Canadian Air Force). All interviewees had more than two years of experience at the time of the study. Each chain of command dealt with diversity and inclusion differently. Some were

more open to including gender minorities, while others were more likely to discharge them. This led to higher levels of fear and confusion for gender minorities. One of the primary reasons for enlisting in the military was to align their biological sex with their gender identity (e.g., an attempt to reassure themselves they were their biological gender). Many of the reported discriminations arose from feelings of fear when addressing their potential gender identity with someone else, rumors about their transitioning and/or others talking about their transition without their knowledge, being outed by others, and being unsure who to trust with their identity.

Dunlap, S. L., Holloway, I. W., Pickering, C. E., Tzen, M., Goldbach, J. T., & Castro, C. A. (2021). Support for transgender military service from active-duty United States military personnel. *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*, 18(1), 137–143.

The study aimed to discover military views of including transgender Service members in active duty. The study recruited 540 active-duty Service members from all four branches of the U.S. military. Of the participants, researchers excluded 58 because they identified as transgender Service members. In all, 66.7% of the sample were cisgender males ( $N = 324$ ), 57.0% White ( $N = 277$ ), 60.7% heterosexual ( $N = 295$ ), and 41.4% in the Army ( $N = 201$ ), with a median of 4 years of Service. Overall, 66% of participants ( $N = 322$ ) supported transgender Service in the military. Of those who identified as LGB ( $N = 187$ ), 87% of them supported transgender Service members; whereas, of those who identified as heterosexual, 57% of heterosexual/cisgender respondents supported transgender Service members. LGB and women Service members reported the greatest support (81% and 75%, respectively), while heterosexual and male Service members had lowest support of transgender Service (56% and 62% respectively). Black and Latinx Service members had the highest support for

transgender Service members (69% and 75% respectively), while 64% of White Service members supported transgender Service member. This article implies that training and/or interventions about transgender Service members could be geared toward White, heterosexual, male Service members to increase understanding and empathy toward transgender Service members.

Ender, M. G., Ryan, D. M., Nuzkowski, D. A., Spell, E. S., & Atkins, C. B. (2017). Dinner and a conversation: Transgender integration at West Point and beyond. *Social Sciences*, 6(1), 27. Using an interview protocol, 21 focus groups of undergraduate cadets and Army officers ( $N = 110$ ) were interviewed about their experiences with transgender people, personal perceptions of the impact of transgender people serving, and perceptions of how other cadets and soldiers think about transgender people serving. Many of the interviewees considered transgender synonymous with a binary gender spectrum (e.g., only female-to-male or male-to-female), while a few considered it a broader spectrum of gender characteristics. Most interviewees had no direct experience with anyone who was transgender or in the transgender community. Instead, the majority mentioned having experience with media perceptions of transgender individuals. More than half of the cadets and almost all the officers interviewed had minimum to modest experiences with the LGBTQ+ community. A small group of cadets had direct familiarity with transgender people. The major concerns for integrating transgender people included social issues (e.g., privacy and physical standards), psychological dimensions (e.g., well-being), and economic issues. Privacy issues were geared toward private bathrooms, showering situations, living arrangements, and physical standards for physical training. In terms of well-being, officers were more concerned with well-being of the transgender Service member, while the cadets were more concerned about

the cisgender cadets. Most cited tolerance as a potential concern for well-being, indicating that tolerance issues could crop up from other soldiers. The focus groups were also asked for recommendations and solutions for overcoming major issues they identified. Recommended changes included single physical training standards, gender-neutral bathrooms, and education more than training. Logistical changes centered on hygiene privacy (e.g., curtained showers or closed stalls), allowing people to choose their own roommates, and gender-neutral community restrooms. Lastly, cadet and military members were asked if they could lead or be led by transgender cadets or officers. The overwhelming majority said yes for leading, but several questioned subordinating to a transgender leader. Another minority of cadets felt comfortable subordinating to and serving with transgender soldiers who did not “flaunt” their transgender identity. The study revealed key insights into what cadets and officers do and do not know about the transgender community.

Huffman, A. H., Mills, M. J., Howes, S. S., & Albritton, M. D. (2021). Workplace support and affirming behaviors: Moving toward a transgender, gender diverse, and non-binary friendly workplace. *International Journal of Transgender Health*, 22(3), 225–242.

The authors examined the connection between gender-affirming behaviors, workplace satisfaction, and openness at work. Gender-affirming behaviors were encouraging proper pronoun/title usage, discouraging derogatory comments, and providing appropriate restroom access. Researchers hypothesized that implementing and upholding all three gender-affirming behaviors would be positively related to supervisor support, coworker support, and trans-friendly organizational culture. They surveyed trans-related participants ( $N = 263$ ) for the study, with most participants (59%;  $N = 153$ ) indicating that they had or were transitioning at their workplace. The remaining participants were either not transitioning but

planning to or were not transitioning and did not plan to. Use of gender-affirming pronouns/titles linked to higher satisfaction across all scales compared to the other behaviors. Bathroom access did not significantly relate to any of work-related scales. Discouragement of derogatory comments was only related to perceptions of a supportive climate, but not to perceptions of supervisor supportiveness. When looking at specific, actionable support, transgender employees reported higher job satisfaction and openness. Thus, actionable support means more to transgender employees than all other gender-affirming behaviors.

Law, C. L., Martinez, L. R., Ruggs, E. N., Hebl, M. R., & Akers, E. (2011). Transparency in the workplace: How the experiences of transsexual employees can be improved. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 79(3), 710–723.

The current study aimed to explore workplace experiences, individual characteristics, and organizational characteristics that influenced transgender employees' attitudes toward work. Of the 88 transgender employees who completed the study, 30.7% identified as transmen ( $N = 27$ ) and 69.3% ( $N = 61$ ) identified as transwomen. Transmen experience significantly more positive coworker reactions compared to transwomen, but researchers found no differences in job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job anxiety, or turnover intentions. Disclosing one's identity was positively related to job satisfaction and affective commitment, whereas it was negatively related to job anxiety and continuance commitment. Disclosure was not related to normative commitment or turnover intentions. Organizational supportiveness predicted job satisfaction, affective commitment, and normative commitment, but it did not predict continuance commitment or turnover intentions. Supportive organizations, centrality of one's identity, and outness to family and friends positively predicted the likelihood of

disclosing gender identity. Coworkers' reactions fully mediated the relationship between disclosure and job satisfaction, affective and continuance commitment.

McNamara, K. A., Gribble, R., Sharp, M. L., Alday, E., Corletto, G., Lucas, C. L., Castro, C. A., Fear, N. T., Goldbach, J.T., & Holloway, I. W. (2021). Acceptance matters: Disengagement and attrition among LGBT personnel in the U.S. military. *Journal of Military, Veteran and Family Health*, 7(S1), 76-89. <https://jmvfh.utpjournals.press/doi/full/10.3138/jmvfh-2021-0017>

Using study data from the U.S. Department of Defense (2017–2018), the authors investigated how perceptions of cohesion and belong affects retention in the workplace. Of the 544 respondents, 248 identified as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender ( $N < 10$ ). Transgender Service members perceived lower LGBT acceptance than non-LGBT Service members. Cisgender LGB Service members did not differ in perception of LGBT acceptance than non-LGBT Service members. Transgender Service members perceived lower unit cohesion than both cisgender LGB and non-LGBT Service members. Cisgender LGB Service members reported lower unit cohesion than non-LGBT Service members. Factors associated with planning to leave the military were having fewer years of service, having never deployed, and perceived lower unit cohesion. Factors associated with uncertainty in military career intent were LGBT identity, being non-White, having served for fewer years, having never deployed, perceived poor workplace climate for LGBT, and lower unit cohesion.

McNamara, K. A., Lucas, C. L., Goldbach, J. T., Castro, C. A., & Holloway, I. W. (2021). “Even if the policy changes, the culture remains the same”: A mixed methods analysis of LGBT Servicemembers' outness patterns. *Armed Forces & Society*, 47(3), 505–529.

The purpose of the study was to explore outness of Service members after the repeal of DADT and the transgender ban. A total of 248 active-duty LGBT Service members completed a survey about openness in the military, and researchers selected 42 of them selected to participate in a more in-depth interview. Of those who completed the online survey only, 13% ( $N = 32$ ) identified as transmale, and 11% identified as transfemale ( $N = 26$ ). Most of the sample was White (66%;  $N = 164$ ) and primarily from the Army (42%;  $N = 105$ ) and Air Force (29%;  $N = 71$ ). 73% of the sample ( $N = 180/247$ ) were out to unit leaders. Bisexual, cisfemale Service members were least likely to be out to unit leaders. Officers were less likely than Service members to be out to their leaders. Transgender Service members were more likely to be out to unit leaders (88%;  $N = 50/57$ ) and more likely to be out to leaders than cisgender LGB participants. Of the sample, 85% were out to non-LGBT friends in their units ( $N = 211/247$ ) and to other LGBT friends in their units (93%;  $N = 198/212$ ). Bisexual, cisgender male Service members were less likely to be out to friends than gay men or lesbian women. Of the sample, 76% were out to medical providers (76%;  $N = 184/242$ ), with transgender Service members more likely to be out to providers than cisgender LGB Service members. Bisexual, cisgender male Service members were less likely to be out to providers than gay men. Of the sample, 71% were out to counselors or mental health professionals ( $N = 123/173$ ) with transgender Servicemembers more likely to be out to counselors than cisgender LGB Service members. Bisexual Servicemembers were less likely to be out to counselors than gay men or lesbian women. Qualitative interview data gave in-depth, personal explanations to why this might occur given the groups.

Moradi, B. (2009). Sexual orientation disclosure, concealment, harassment, and military cohesion: Perceptions of LGBT military veterans. *Military Psychology, 21*(4), 513–533.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/08995600903206453>

A total of 445 lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender U.S. military veterans participated in interviews to discuss sexual orientation disclosure, concealment, and harassment with unit social and task cohesion. Of this population, 35% of veterans served in the Army, 72% identified as men, while 3% identified as transgender. Participants reported moderately high levels of sexual orientation concealment, low levels of sexual orientation disclosure and sexual orientation-based harassment in their units. They also reported moderate levels of social cohesion and high levels of tasks cohesion. Thus, the findings showed that sexual orientation disclosure related positively to perceptions of unit social cohesion. Through social cohesion, LGBT military veterans reported disclosure behaviors were related indirectly and positively to perceptions of task cohesion within their units. LGBT veterans that reported sexual orientation-based harassment were negatively related to perceptions of social cohesion and task cohesion. Lastly, the LGBT veterans' reports of sexual concealment behaviors were negatively related to perceptions of social cohesion and indirectly to perceptions of task cohesion. Ultimately, sexual orientation disclosure and harassment linked directly with social cohesion but only indirectly with task cohesion.

Lewis, M. W., & Ericksen, K. S. (2016). Improving the climate for LGBTQ students at a Historically Black University. *Journal of LGBT Youth, 13*(3), 249–269.

The study recruited a focus group of six LGBTQ students from a historically Black college or university (HBCU). They also recruited 30 faculty members with unknown sexual orientation to discuss needs to benefit LGBTQ students at the HBCU in two additional focus

groups. All three groups answered 10 open-ended questions about the perceptions of campus and classroom climate toward LGBTQ students. There was a need to form appropriate training to educate heterosexual/cisgender students and faculty to strengthen a nonbiased climate. Administration and faculty mentioned the importance of implementing policies, which include basic steps, such as developing a nondiscrimination announcement to include in all publications, providing health and other benefits to domestic partners to increase pool of qualified faculty, and developing a web link to direct potential and current students to gay-friendly websites for supportive resources. Establishing LGBTQ-friendly curriculum is also important. Most mentioned “Safe Space,” which provides formal sensitivity training to faculty who receive a “Safe Space” sticker advertisement upon completing training. Lastly, researchers found student organizations to contribute to a supportive climate. Providing support for these organizations can nurture student success.

Ogburn, R. (2020). *Exploring Gender Dysphoria Among Active-Duty Transgender Service Members in a Right-To-Serve-Openly Military* [Doctoral dissertation, Walden University]. ScholarWorks. <https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/dissertations/8965/>

This dissertation aimed to understand gender dysphoria in current transgender military Service members experience of gender dysphoria, role conflict while on active duty, and role stress while on active duty. Eight active-duty Service members self-identifying as transgender participated in structured interviews. All participants served for at least 6 months. Of the participants, 62.5% were male-to-female ( $N = 5$ ). Related to RQ1, each participant described experiences leading to psychological distress, including major depression, social isolation, and negative self-view. Participants also experienced rejection and/or trust breaches by superiors and peers, meaning some felt forced to live multiple lives

(e.g., on duty vs. off duty) or avoided coming out to their organizations for fear of mistreatment. Related to role conflict, many reported verbal outlets, destructive behavior, and self-stress management for dealing with role conflict. The most common was self-isolation, avoiding social events, crying or yelling with friends, and utilizing self-stress reduction techniques (e.g., weight training, writing). Lastly, participants managed stress in line with role conflict, varying from drinking abuse to writing their feelings out. Ultimately, this dissertation revealed key insights from transgender Service members about how they cope with hiding their identity and/or experiencing mistreatment.

Philip, J., & Soumyaja, D. (2019). Workplace diversity and inclusion: Policies and best practices for organisations employing transgender people in India. *International Journal of Public Policy*, 15(3/4), 299–314.

The purpose of this study was to investigate policies and best practices based on viewpoints of transgender employees, human resource managers in charge of diversity and inclusion, and activists who work for welfare of transgender people. Researchers interviewed 15 people for insights into perceptions of well-being in the workplace. Of the 13 interviewees, 38.5% identified as transgender women ( $N = 5$ ), 61.5% identified as cisgender women, and 15.4% identified as cisgender men. Researchers used five themes to analyze given interview questions and answers. Theme 1 looked at challenges in employment of transgender people in India. Most reported lack of qualified people to hire, unwillingness to hire because of tedious process of change at the organizational level, and discrimination or inability to connect to coworkers. Theme 2 was preparing organizations for inclusive work culture, which includes sensitizing workers, emotional support for transgender employees, adequate leave and financial support for surgical treatment, and counseling. Theme 3 directly asked for

recommended policies and practices for transgender employees. Most respondents pointed toward ensuring gender-neutral policies, insurance accommodations, and a strong anti-sexual-harassment policy. Other employees mentioned including testing job applicants about gender inclusion and trans-inclusion scenarios to evaluate diversity training and sensitivity. They also establish company policies that address dress-code, use of facilities, and gender self-identification for records or surveys. Theme 4 assessed retention and performance of transgender employees by giving adequate time to adjust to the workplace and conducting training and development programs. The last theme looked at the benefits of employing transgender people. They mentioned that transgender people improve the culture of the organization by helping employees become more emphatic and generous, and that the retention rate increases.

Schvey, N. A., Klein, D. A., Pearlman, A. T., & Riggs, D. S. (2020). A descriptive study of transgender active-duty Service members in the U.S. military. *Transgender Health*, 5(3), 149–157.

This study aimed to gather descriptive statistics for the transgender population for active-duty Service members in the U.S. military. A total of 194 Service members (48.7% transmale, 70.3% Non-Hispanic White, 44.1% Army) completed a survey on health behaviors, depression, anxiety, and stress, risky behaviors, and eating disorders. Most respondents ( $N = 163$ ) reported undergoing some measure of gender affirmation. Nearly all participants (99.5%) were out to at least one person, but only some were out to their primary care physician (79%), chain of command (74%), and/or supervisor (69%). Most of the respondents were enlisted (86.6%). Mood symptoms showed that 34.1% of respondents met criteria for moderate to severe depression, 28.3% for moderate to severe anxiety, and 21.7%

for moderate to severe stress. Over half of the sample (56%) were overweight and 11% were obese. Of the participants, 25.8% reported a binge-eating episode and 34% reported compulsive exercising. For risky behaviors, 29% reported smoking, 70.4% reported drinking alcoholic beverages no more than three times per month, and 81.5% reported no lifetime drug use. When looking at subgroup data, transfemales were more likely to be non-Hispanic White (86% vs. 68%), more likely to have children (56% vs. 17%), and less likely to have taken steps toward affirmation (76% vs. 92%). Transfemales had significantly better physical health (and were more likely to have disordered eating), while transmales had significantly better mental health. This study allows insight into subgroups of the transgender military population, which is particularly useful for developing courses and/or sensitivity training.

Schvey, N. A., Klein, D. A., Pearlman, A. T., Kraff, R. I., & Riggs, D. S. (2020). Stigma, health, and psychosocial functioning among transgender active-duty Service members in the U.S. military. *Stigma and Health*, 5(2), 188.

Researchers surveyed 174 gender minority Service members (50.6% transmale, 71.3% non-Hispanic White, with 7+ years of military experience) about stigmatizing situations of gender minorities within the military, health seeking experience, psychosocial functioning, eating pathology, risk behaviors, and coping strategies. Of those who responded, 44.8% were enlisted in the Army. Nearly all respondents (93%,  $N = 162$ ) reported at least one stigmatizing experience within the military. Of these reported experiences, they included uniform wear (79.3%), bathroom use (77.0%), and changing one's name and/or gender marker in the Military Health System (66.7%). Other common experiences reported were overhearing colleagues talk behind one's back (60.3%), being teased or harassed by coworkers (42.0%), and being teased or harassed by a direct supervisor or chain of command

(23.6%). Frequency of stigma did not differ by gender identity, race, gender-affirmation status, Service, or rank. Stigma in the military was significantly associated with overall negative mental health, greater depression, and more stress. An open-ended question probed the worst experience of transgender-related stigmatization faced by respondents. In all, 112 respondents replied, and some answers include multiple experiences; thus, researchers identified 120 unique experiences. They identified nine categories, including general workplace bullying or harassment (e.g., jokes about transgender people), negative career implications (e.g., denial or promotion), Department of Defense policy (e.g., transgender ban at the time of the study), barriers to gender-affirming medical care and services (e.g., providers' lack of cultural competence), being labelled mentally ill, being misgendered, and discomfort in gendered space.

Wax, A., Coletti, K. K., & Ogaz, J. W. (2018). The benefit of full disclosure: A meta-analysis of the implications of coming out at work. *Organizational Psychology Review*, 8(1), 3–30.

This meta-analysis aimed to investigate whether disclosure of sexual orientation positively related to job satisfaction, social support, and organizational climate, as well as whether disclosure of sexual orientation is negatively related to organizational discrimination.

Twenty-four studies examined disclosure of sexual orientation in the workplace; 50% of studies combined gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals, 17% were broadly inclusive of all same-sex-attracted individuals, and the remaining 33% focused on single identification of LGBT members. The relationship between disclosure of sexual orientation and job satisfaction was not generalizable due to variation in the studies. Disclosure of sexual orientation and social support were moderately positively related to one another. The authors theorized that this could be that supportive coworkers and supervisors help create a safe

workspace. There was also a strong positive relationship between disclosure of sexual orientation and perceived organizational climate as well as a moderate negative relationship between disclosure and perceived organizational discrimination. Theory suggests that disclosure can serve to enhance an organization's climate and/or lessen discriminatory organizational practices. Lastly, perceived organizational climate yielded strong relationship with disclosure, followed by social support, perceived organizational discrimination, and job satisfaction.

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### **Additional Readings and Materials**

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