

Safe Space® Magnet

Background Information

Many gay and lesbian employees still feel that to be honest and open about their sexual orientation would result in their being treated differently by their peers. This fear leads to a perceived need to hide their sexual orientation and anything about their personal life that might reveal it to others. As a result, employees often experience a sense of isolation. They often do not know whom they can trust when the need arises to discuss personal problems with co-workers or managers. Likewise, co-workers and managers who are supportive of diversity often do not know how to express this support to gay and lesbian co-workers.

The Safe Space magnet program was developed by AT&T as a visible, non-threatening way for personnel to demonstrate that their office is a safe space for gay men and lesbians. The magnet bears a pink triangle, a widely-recognized gay-positive symbol, surrounded by a green circle, the international symbol of acceptance. Displaying this symbol demonstrates to gay and lesbian co-workers that they can feel safe with you.

Why is this important?



Diversity is more than race and gender – diversity is about our differences and our similarities, including race, gender, values, work styles, communication styles, background and personal characteristics. In learning to value diversity, we learn to recognize the value in each employee’s unique capabilities, and to utilize our collective mix of differences and similarities within the workforce to achieve superior performance through teamwork.

The Safe Space Program is designed to provide a non-threatening way for managers and employees to make a statement that homophobia and hostility will not be tolerated in the workplace.

Why the Pink Triangle?

The pink triangle is now a widely-recognized symbol of gay pride and liberation, but its origins are rooted in oppression.

In Nazi Germany, homosexuals were among those persecuted, arrested and placed in concentration camps, and slated for extermination. While Jews were forced to wear a yellow Star of David, homosexuals were forced to wear a pink triangle. While a quarter of a million mostly gay men died in places like Dachau, even liberation by the Allied armies did not bring freedom. Often gay prisoners were forced by their liberators to serve out their sentences in prison.

Today, the pink triangle serves to remind us of that suffering; a symbol of struggle, remembrance, and pride.

How can I participate?

Display the Safe Space magnet in your office area as a visible, non-threatening way to show your work area is a “safe space” for gay men and lesbians and to show unsupportive co-workers that you will not tolerate bigotry or discrimination. The symbol serves as a sign of respect, not approval or encouragement.

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