

LGBTQ+ CONFIDENCE

CONFIDENCE IN EVERYDAY LIFE

At work, college and in the spaces between

ARTICLE 4 • BY MAGGIE LEAROYD



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Confidence is not something we only need during major life events. It is present in the everyday moments that shape our lives—introducing ourselves to new people, speaking in meetings, attending college, applying for jobs, building friendships or simply walking into a room feeling comfortable with who we are.

For many LGBTQ+ people, these everyday situations can involve additional considerations. Questions such as "Is this a safe place to be myself?", "Should I tell people about my partner?" or "Will I be accepted if people know who I am?" are decisions that many heterosexual and cisgender people may never have to think about.

These ongoing decisions can affect confidence, wellbeing and a sense of belonging. While society has become increasingly inclusive in many areas, discrimination and prejudice still exist, meaning some LGBTQ+ people continue to assess whether it feels emotionally or physically safe to be open about their identity.

Building confidence does not mean feeling obliged to disclose personal information or to challenge every difficult situation. Rather, it means developing trust in yourself, making choices that reflect your values and recognising that you have the right to be treated with dignity and respect wherever you are.

This article explores how confidence can be nurtured in workplaces, educational settings and everyday life while recognising that every person's circumstances and experiences are unique.

Confidence Looks Different for Everyone

Confidence is often mistaken for extroversion or fearlessness.

In reality, confidence might look like:

- Speaking up during a meeting.

Asking for help.

Applying for a promotion.

Correcting someone respectfully.

Making new friends.

Attending a social event.

Introducing your partner naturally.

Choosing not to hide who you are.

Confidence is about acting in line with your values, even when something feels uncomfortable.

Feeling Safe to Be Yourself

One of the foundations of confidence is psychological safety.

Psychological safety means feeling able to be yourself without fear of humiliation, discrimination or unfair treatment.

This may include feeling comfortable:

- Expressing your identity.

Asking questions.

Sharing ideas.

Being honest about your experiences.

Challenging inappropriate behaviour respectfully.

Seeking support when needed.

When people feel psychologically safe, confidence naturally grows.

Confidence in the Workplace

Work occupies a significant part of many people's lives, making workplace culture an important influence on wellbeing.

Inclusive workplaces often demonstrate their commitment through:

- Clear equality and inclusion policies.

Respectful leadership.

Inclusive language.

Zero tolerance for discrimination or harassment.

Employee networks.

Fair recruitment and promotion processes.

Feeling respected at work supports both confidence and job satisfaction.

Deciding Whether to Come Out at Work

For some LGBTQ+ people, deciding whether to come out at work is an important consideration.

There is no right or wrong decision.

Some people feel comfortable being open from the beginning.

Others may choose to share personal information only with trusted colleagues—or not at all.

The decision should always be based on what feels safe and appropriate for the individual.

Confidence comes from making informed choices that respect your own wellbeing rather than feeling pressured by others.

Managing Difficult Conversations

Occasionally, people may encounter questions or comments that feel intrusive or inappropriate.

Examples might include:

- Questions about your personal relationships.

Assumptions about your identity.

Misgendering.

Stereotypical comments.

Jokes that feel uncomfortable.

Responding confidently does not require confrontation.

Sometimes a calm response such as:

- "I'd rather keep that private."

"Actually, that's not correct."

"I'd appreciate you using my correct name and pronouns."

is enough to communicate your boundaries respectfully.

Building Confidence in Education

Schools, colleges and universities can be places of enormous personal growth.

Confidence often develops through:

- Joining clubs or societies.

Participating in discussions.

Building supportive friendships.

Accessing student wellbeing services.

Speaking to trusted tutors.

Exploring personal interests.

Educational settings should be places where everyone feels able to learn without fear of discrimination.

Everyday Confidence

Confidence is built through everyday experiences rather than dramatic moments.

Examples include:

- Starting conversations.

Trying something new.

Shopping without worrying about judgement.

Holding a partner's hand if it feels safe.

Attending community events.

Travelling independently.

Expressing personal style.

Small acts of authenticity reinforce self-confidence over time.

Dealing with Discrimination

Unfortunately, some LGBTQ+ people may still experience discrimination or prejudice.

If this happens, remember:

- Discrimination is never your fault.

You deserve to be treated with dignity and respect.

You have the right to seek support.

You do not have to deal with discrimination alone.

Support may be available through employers, educational institutions, trade unions, community organisations or legal advice services where appropriate.

Seeking support is a sign of strength, not weakness.

Finding Inclusive Communities

Confidence often grows when people feel connected.

Supportive communities may include:

- LGBTQ+ organisations.

Workplace networks.

University societies.

Community groups.

Sports clubs.

Volunteering opportunities.

Online communities.

Belonging helps people feel seen, understood and valued.

Building Professional Confidence

Professional confidence develops through experience and learning.

Helpful strategies include:

- Recognising your strengths.

Continuing professional development.

Asking questions.

Seeking constructive feedback.

Celebrating achievements.

Setting realistic goals.

Learning from mistakes.

Confidence grows through action, not perfection.

Being an Ally to Yourself

Many people know how to support others but struggle to offer themselves the same kindness.

Being your own ally means:

- Speaking kindly to yourself.

Celebrating your progress.

Respecting your own boundaries.

Trusting your decisions.

Accepting that confidence develops over time.

The relationship you have with yourself influences every other area of your life.

Remember That You Belong

One of the most powerful confidence-building beliefs is recognising that you belong.

You do not have to:

- Earn acceptance.

Hide who you are.

Change your identity.

Meet other people's expectations to deserve respect.

Everyone deserves to feel safe, included and valued.

Key Takeaways

Confidence is built through everyday actions rather than dramatic moments.

Psychological safety supports confidence in work, education and social settings.

There is no right or wrong decision about coming out; personal safety and wellbeing should guide individual choices.

Healthy boundaries help people navigate difficult conversations respectfully.

Inclusive communities strengthen confidence and wellbeing.

Professional confidence develops through learning, experience and self-belief.

Every person deserves respect, dignity and the opportunity to live authentically.

Final Thoughts

Confidence at work, in education and throughout everyday life is not about never experiencing uncertainty—it is about trusting yourself to navigate challenges while remaining true to your values. For many LGBTQ+ people, confidence also involves making thoughtful decisions about when, where and with whom it feels safe to share personal aspects of their identity. These decisions are deeply personal, and there is no single path that is right for everyone.

As confidence grows, everyday situations that once felt overwhelming often become more manageable. This growth is supported by positive relationships, inclusive environments and the knowledge that you deserve to be treated with dignity and respect, regardless of your sexual orientation or gender identity. Confidence is strengthened each time you advocate for yourself, celebrate your achievements or choose authenticity over fear.

Ultimately, confidence is not about seeking permission to be yourself—it is about recognising that your identity, your experiences and your voice all have value. When people are able to participate fully in work,

education and their communities without hiding who they are, they are not only more confident—they are also more likely to flourish, contribute and build meaningful, fulfilling lives.