

Capital Training

Positive Inclusion

Over the past few years, Capital Training, a private training organisation that works with at-risk youth, has welcomed learners who have turned to them because they have been bullied out of school.

"They have endured hate, bigotry, ignorance and intolerance all because they are part of the LGBTIQ community," says Capital Training Resource Developer Rodney August. "Their peers have driven them to the point of self-harm and drug dependence just because of who they love or what gender they identify as."

Capital Training helps youth to achieve NCEA qualifications. The organisation has 43 staff spread across six centres in the Wellington region.

"We weren't happy with young people coming to us feeling abused and misunderstood. We decided to do something about it and believed that it should start with our staff," says Rodney. "We decided to start small and create one safe place for our learners and staff who are part of the LGBTIQ community."

That started by adopting a morals-based recruitment method for staff. When a staff member is recruited, they are brought on as much for their values as their skills. Management recruit staff who share the values held by Capital Training, including inclusiveness.

The implementation of values-based recruitment happened at the management level and trickled down through the Human Resources team. During recruitment interviews, qualitative personality questions were asked in order to judge if a candidate's values were aligned with those of Capital Training.

Creating the right team through recruitment allowed the creation and implementation of an equality policy that protected the rights of anyone, regardless of their sexuality.

Capital Training encourages staff to learn about and become accustomed to the LGBTIQ community. Staff have been trained in how to deal with learners who are suffering from depression and anxiety because of their sexuality. It has created close, positive ties with youth service providers in order to offer staff support when dealing with difficult matters that can arise due to depression in students

Capital Training has also experienced a growing number of transgendered youth coming into its classrooms and developed a transgender policy that protects the rights and dignity of transgendered staff and learners.

The organisation introduced the transgender policy in team meetings where staff could learn about and discuss the content of the policy and what they should do in particular situations.

"It seems small, but one of the main points in the policy is detailing where a person, who is transgendered, can use the bathroom," says Rodney.



“We deal with at-risk youth, many of whom have been the victims of abuse, so it was imperative that we keep them feeling safe while also meeting their needs as transgendered individuals. We ended up opening the staff bathrooms for transgendered people if they chose to use them.”

Capital Training has found the changes have affected the wider community. The organisation believes it is producing graduates and staff members who are open and accepting of the LGBTQI community and who champion and protect the rights of that community. Learners and staff who are part of the LGBTQI community are thriving, with the confidence to be who they want to be and pursue a career that they want.

Tutor David says that Capital Training is the best working environment that he has ever experienced. “My sexuality is not an issue, which I think reflects the growth of New Zealand society. It is about the person here at Capital Training, not their sexuality and I think that starts with management. Management model inclusivity and do an excellent job at recruiting staff based on values as well as skill. One of the major recruitment objectives seems to be in recruiting people with good values in order to create an inclusive culture within the staff.”

David believes that because of the example that management has set and its value-based recruitment method, the culture at Capital Training has evolved from being accepting to “we don’t actually see the difference.”

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