



FACTSHEET

RECOMMENDATIONS

This factsheet outlines practical steps to create a more inclusive workplace culture. These recommendations are drawn from the rapid evidence review, *What can employers do to foster inclusive culture?*, prepared by the Global Institute for Women's Leadership (GIWL) for Business in the Community (BITC).

Confrontations

Confronting colleagues who you see or hear acting in a non-inclusive way can be intimidating. It can also be difficult to be sure what you witnessed was discriminatory and deciding whether the incident is serious enough to intervene.¹ However, research shows that confrontation can have beneficial results.

- **Calm confrontations**

Publicly confronting those acting in a discriminatory way in a calm manner (rather than in a hostile one) can embolden those who witness it to call out non-inclusive behaviour in the future as well as causing the confronted person to reflect on their behaviour. If the Confrontation is tackled privately can be positive too.²

¹ Ashburn-Nardo, L., Morris, K. A. & Goodwin, S. A. The Confronting Prejudiced Responses (CPR) model: Applying CPR in organizations. *Academy of Management Learning and Education* 7, 332–342 (2008).

² Woods, F. A. & Ruscher, J. B. 'calling-out' vs. 'calling-in' prejudice: Confrontation style affects inferred motive and expected outcomes. *Br. J. Soc. Psychol.* bjs0.12405 (2020). doi:10.1111/bjs0.12405

³ Drury, B. J. & Kaiser, C. R. Allies against Sexism: The Role of Men in Confronting Sexism. *J. Soc. Issues* 70, 637–652 (2014).

- **Confrontations by allies**

If a man confronts another man who has been discriminatory towards a female colleague on the basis of gender, this is what is termed confrontation by an 'ally'. Research shows this type of 'ally' confrontation is more persuasive.³ However, research also shows that when women and ethnic minorities confront prejudice they report greater workplace belonging and satisfaction and better relationships with colleagues.⁴

Leaders and Line Managers

If you are a leader or a line manager you are central to the fostering an inclusive culture in your organisation.

- **Interpersonal skills**

Research shows that interpersonal skills of leaders and line managers are fundamental to creating an inclusive workplace. Managers who work in a collaborative way, who are seen to be empathetic and who are versatile have been rated as more supportive of diversity and inclusion by those they manage.⁵ One piece of research even showed where leaders are rated as more ethical there was less workplace bullying.⁶

⁴ Rattan, A. & Dweck, C. S. What happens after prejudice is confronted in the workplace? How mindsets affect minorities' and women's outlook on future social relations. *J. Appl. Psychol.* 103, 676–687 (2018).

⁵ Mulqueen, C., Kahn, A. & Kirkpatrick, J. S. Managers' Interpersonal Skills and Their Role in Achieving Organizational Diversity and Inclusiveness. *J. Psychol. Issues Organ. Cult.* 3, 48–58 (2012).

⁶ Stouten, J. et al. Discouraging Bullying: The Role of Ethical Leadership and its Effects on the Work Environment. *J. Bus. Ethics* 95, 17–27 (2010).

- **Strong relationships between supervisors and supervisees**

The quality of relationships between supervisors and supervisees can have an impact on inclusion. When supervisees are in a good relationship with their leader it can act as a marker of status which influences fellow co-workers to then also accept and value them as members of the team.⁷

Conversely, if supervisors/supervisees have a strained relationship this not only negatively impacts their feelings of inclusion but will have wider ramifications on their co-workers' perceptions too. Supervisors should make an active attempt to know each of their supervisees personally and think carefully about the language they use to ensure it doesn't exclude anyone.⁸

Communication

Company communications can often be the first way that both employees and external stakeholders understand an organisation's level of commitment to creating an inclusive workplace.

- **Thoughtful about language and imagery**

The way organisations choose to communicate who they are through corporate copy, branding and imagery is important for fostering inclusion, particularly amongst ethnic minority employees.⁹ Your visual identity should be as inclusive as possible to make employees and prospective employees feel your organisation will welcome

them. Can they see themselves in your corporate identity?

- **Identity conscious approaches**

Research shows that it is beneficial to adopt an 'identity conscious' approach to communications.¹⁰ Conveying that you appreciate the differing concerns and experiences that different groups experience is more effective than blanket statements about diversity.

- **Social marketing approaches**

'Social marketing' (sometimes known as 'social norms messaging') is an approach which communicates to people that most of their peers hold certain beliefs. This influences what people understand to be 'normal' and therefore influences their behaviour. This is shown to be more effective than having rules to follow. In a workplace context this could be used to model positive inclusivity behaviours around gender, sexuality, disability and race, for example.¹¹

Diversity Training

We are all familiar with workplace diversity training schemes. Some elements of these programmes have been found to be more useful than others. Here are some of the key insights from the research:

⁷ Scandura, T. A. Rethinking leader-member exchange: An organizational justice perspective. *Leadersh. Q.* 10, 25–40 (1999).

⁸ Chrobot-Mason, D. Managing Racial Differences: The Role of Majority Managers' Ethnic Identity Development on Minority Employee Perceptions of Support. *Group and Organization Management* 29, 5–31 (2004).

⁹ Chrobot-Mason, D. & Thomas, K. M. Minority Employees in Majority Organizations: The Intersection of Individual and Organizational Racial Identity in the Workplace. *Hum. Resour. Dev. Rev.* 1, 323–344 (2002).

¹⁰ Purdie-Vaughns, V., Steele, C. M., Davies, P. G., Dittmann, R. & Crosby, J. R. Social Identity Contingencies: How Diversity Cues Signal Threat or Safety for African Americans in Mainstream Institutions. *J. Pers. Soc. Psychol.* 94, 615–630 (2008).

¹¹ Campbell, M. R. & Brauer, M. Incorporating Social-Marketing Insights Into Prejudice Research: Advancing Theory and Demonstrating Real-World Applications. *Perspect. Psychol. Sci.* 15, 608–629 (2020).

- **Think long term and keep positive**^{12 13 14}

One-off training sessions, which are not part of a longer-term approach, can be ineffective and can prompt backlash amongst some participants.

Diversity related training should form part of a wider programme which incorporates varied approaches. Additionally, participants are more likely to be engaged in the sessions if they are framed in a positive manner, rather than blaming individuals or laying down strict rules.

- **Keep it active**

Unsurprisingly the most effective diversity trainings have proven to be the ones where participants play an active role, with tasks, games¹⁵ and role plays in contrast to those where participants sit and passively listen. The interactivity has been shown to increase levels of civility in the workplace.^{16 17}

- **Mix it up**

Diversity training is also more effective when those from diverse backgrounds mix within the training group.^{18 19} Ensuring a diverse training group helps members to increase their knowledge about people who are different from themselves, which in turn reduces stereotyping and increases empathy.²⁰

- **Make it accountable**

When diversity training is linked with the creation of diversity committees or taskforces the research shows this makes it more valuable.²¹ Creating a structure of responsibility about meeting goals and living up to values helps to utilise the skills learnt within diversity training programmes.

¹² Bezrukova, K., Spell, C. S., Perry, J. L. & Jehn, K. A. A meta-analytical integration of over 40 years of research on diversity training evaluation. *Psychol. Bull.* 142, 1227–1274 (2016).

¹³ Kalinoski, Z. T. *et al.* A meta-analytic evaluation of diversity training outcomes. *J. Organ. Behav.* 34, 1076–1104 (2013).

¹⁴ Dobbin, F. & Kalev, A. Why diversity programs fail. *Harvard Business Review* 2016, (2016).

¹⁵ Shields, S. A., Zawadzki, M. J. & Johnson, R. N. The impact of the workshop activity for gender equity simulation in the Academy (WAGES-Academic) in demonstrating cumulative effects of gender bias. *J. Divers. High. Educ.* 4, 120–129 (2011).

¹⁶ Osatuke, K., Moore, S. C., Ward, C., Dyrenforth, S. R. & Belton, L. Civility, Respect, Engagement in the Workforce (CREW). *J. Appl. Behav. Sci.* 45, 384–410 (2009).

¹⁷ Leiter, M. P., Laschinger, H. K. S., Day, A. & Oore, D. G. The impact of civility interventions on employee social behavior, distress, and attitudes. *J. Appl. Psychol.* 96, 1258–1274 (2011).

¹⁸ Bezrukova, K., Spell, C. S., Perry, J. L. & Jehn, K. A. A meta-analytical integration of over 40 years of research on diversity training evaluation. *Psychol. Bull.* 142, 1227–1274 (2016).

¹⁹ Kalinoski, Z. T. *et al.* A meta-analytic evaluation of diversity training outcomes. *J. Organ. Behav.* 34, 1076–1104 (2013).

²⁰ Allport, G. W. *The nature of prejudice. The Nature of Prejudice* (Addison-Wesley, 1954). doi:10.4324/9781912282401

²¹ Kalev, A., Kelly, E. & Dobbin, F. Best Practices or Best Guesses? Assessing the Efficacy of Corporate Affirmative Action and Diversity Policies. *Am. Sociol. Rev.* 71, 589–617 (2006).