


Breakout Room 1.4  11:15 - 12:30

6

IMPACTFUL STRATEGIES FOR BI+ INCLUSION AT WORK

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Knowledge & International

Bi+ Nederland

Impactful strategies for bi+ inclusion at work

Moderators:

Daphne & Jojanneke

Bi+ Nederland and Leiden University

Daphne Hermesen (she/her)

Knowledge & International

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Professor of LGBTQ+ workplace inclusion

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Introduction

- Bi+ inclusion and work: an exploration
- Promising strategies for bi+ inclusion
- Recommendations and guide



The team



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Bi+ the basics



What is bi+?

- Umbrella term for everyone with a sexual orientation directed towards more than one gender
- Think of: bisexual, pansexual, queer, fluid

how many people are bi+?

In the Netherlands there are approximately **1 million** people with bi+ feelings or experiences*.



9%
of
women



5%
of
men



over **33%**
of
*transgender
people*
(man, woman, non-binary)

Attraction to more than one gender

(Gezondheidsenquête 2017, in Rutgers 2017; Rutgers 2014)

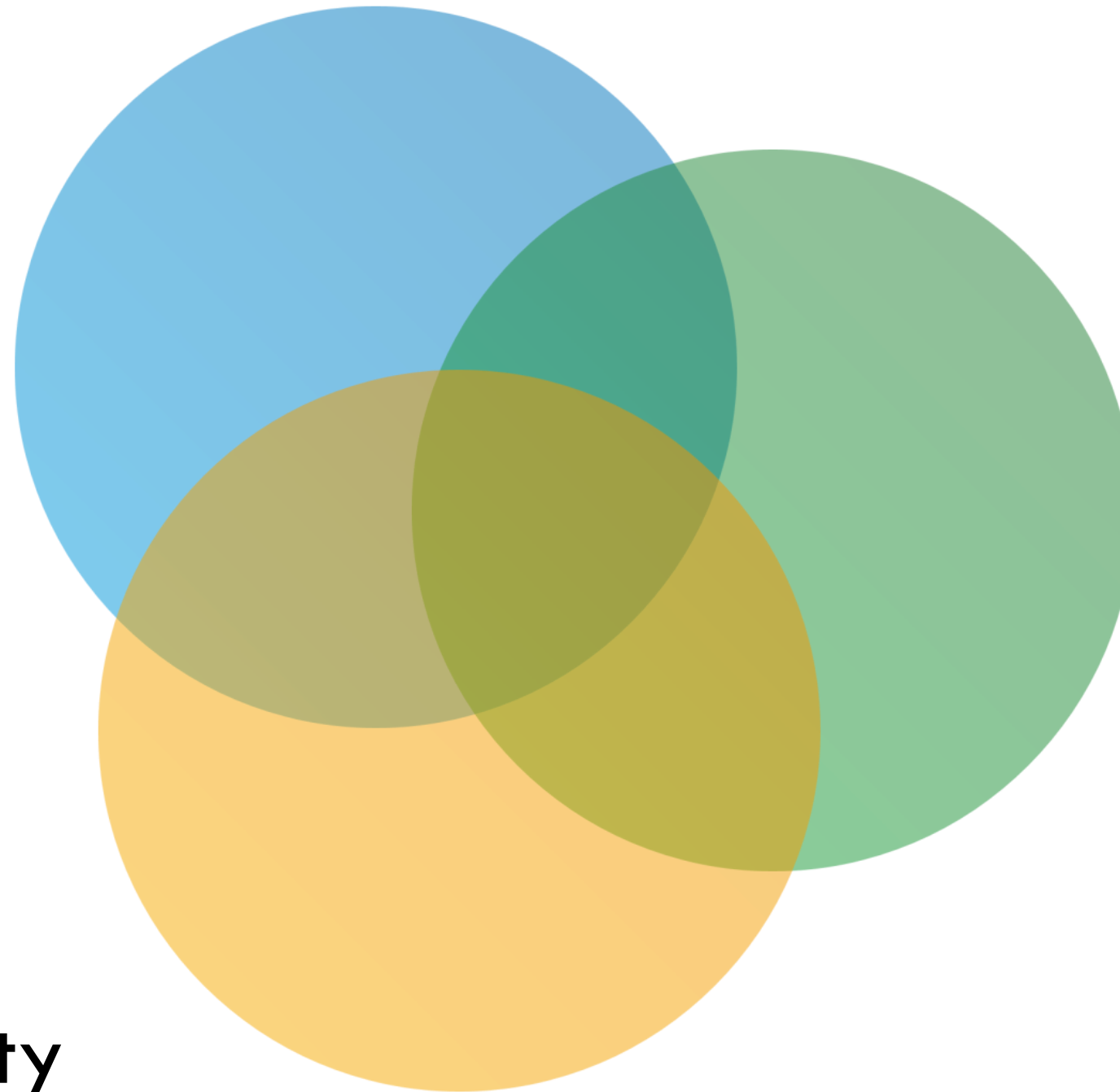


Dimensions of sexual orientation

attraction
sexual/romantic

behavior

identity



Why this exploration?

Bi+ people and work an exploration

Conclusions and recommendations

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2024



Universiteit
Leiden



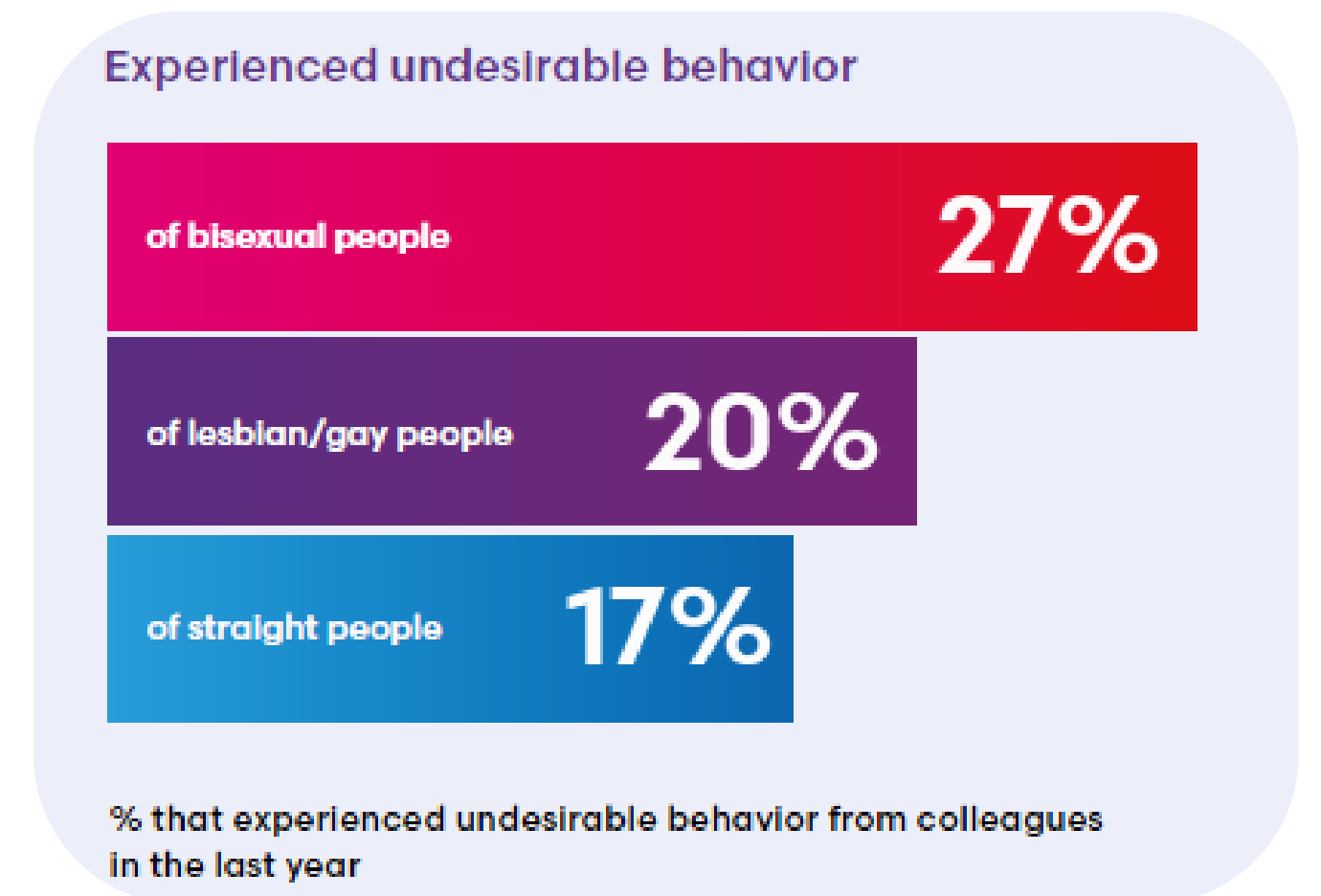
Literature review

Part I: Literature review



Unwanted behavior at work

- Lower satisfaction on working conditions (Kuyper, 2013; Van Beusekom & Kuyper, 2018)
- 25% of bi+ people experiences burn-out symptoms (Van Beusekom & Kuyper, 2018)

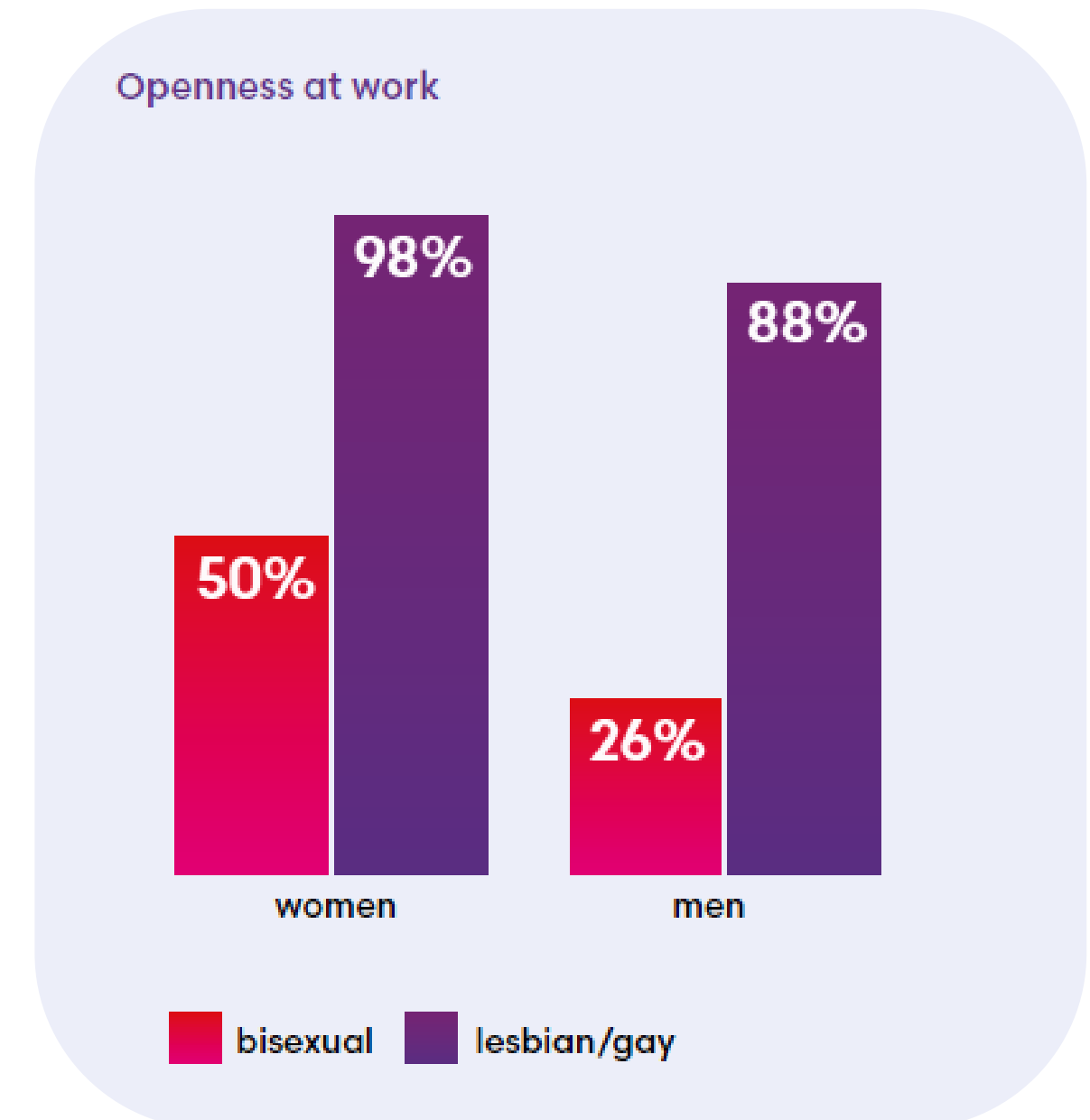


(Van Beusekom & Kuyper, 2018)



Openness at work

- Less openness among bi+ people as compared to lesbian and homosexual people at work (Kuyper, 2013)



Monosexual norm

- Expectation that sexual orientations are directed towards one gender (heterosexual/ lesbian or gay)
- Invisibility, lack of recognition for bi+ people
- 43% of bi+ people state that their sexual orientation is not seen as a serious and/ or stable sexual orientation (Baams et al., 2021)
- 30% experiences that their sexual orientation is not taken seriously by lesbian and gay people (Baams et al., 2021)



Heteroprofessionalism

- Heterosexuality is professional and neutral
- Lower trust and respect for bi+, gay, and lesbian employees



Results bi+ experiences

Part II: Interview results



Navigating openness at work

- Navigation of openness in a **work context**

“I guess I am very much *out and loud* about it. I think that everyone around me knows it. I think that particularly at work that I am much more selective there [...].”

(Daphne, cis woman, 35 years)



Navigating openness at work

- Monosexual norm

“[...] what will always be a thing, is the fact that I always feel that when that has come out, **that I then have to come out again because I’m bi.**” (*Jip, no label, 29 years*)



Navigating openness at work

- Concealment as protection strategy

“I was afraid of not being rehired when my contract ended. [...] So, I kept my private life very much to myself.”
(Elif, cis woman, 28 years)



Navigating openness at work

- Consequences of concealment for the well-being of bi+ employees

"[...] it is very stressful to have to hide your identity "
(Dr. Mary Kite)



Prejudice, microaggression and discrimination

"You have to pick a side, because
you can't have both"
(Levi, trans man, 20 years)

"Do you still have sex with your husband?"
(Barbara, cis woman, 44 years)

"So, then you are actually attracted to the entire
world?"
(Anita, cis woman, 46 years)



Prejudice, microaggression and discrimination

- Intersections of multiple marginalized identities

“I think that the more of those identities that kind of pile up, so those intersections, all those things together, then you will really have to worry about racism and queerphobia and sexism and so on.”

(Carmen, cis woman, 28 years)



Heteroprofessionalism

- Heterosexuality is considered professional and neutral
- Trust and respect for bi+, gay or lesbian employees is less obvious

"Stereotypes about bi+ people are certainly not seen as characteristics of a good employee."
(Dr. Katie Wright-Bevans)



Feedback

- Which findings are most striking to you?
- What information is new to you?



Case

- The D&I team of your company has noticed a need for improved inclusion of bi+ employees in the organization. The team has decided to develop an inclusive team strategy and is asking the LGBTQ+ employee network for input.



Case

- One of the network members, Alex, identifies as bi+. Alex notes that most initiatives within the organization focus on homosexuality and transgender rights, causing the needs of bi+ employees to be overlooked. As a result, Alex sometimes feels unrecognized and misunderstood in daily interactions with their colleagues. Alex expresses a need for awareness training and educational sessions on bi+ inclusion.
- Other network members indicate they struggle to fully understand the concept of bi+ identity and suggest that it is too specific to focus on.



Case

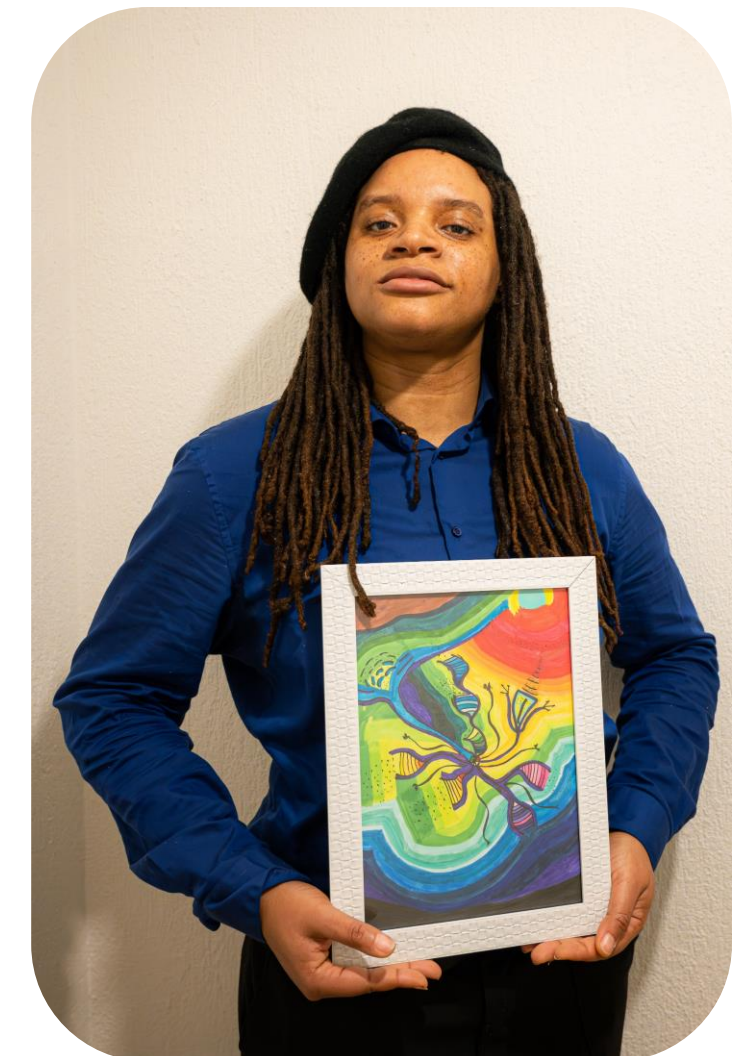
- The D&I team of your company is asking employees for input to promote bi+ inclusion within the organization.
- Alex sometimes feels unrecognized and misunderstood in daily interactions within the team and expresses a need for more awareness about bi+ within the organization.
- Others indicate they struggle to fully understand the concept of bi+ identity and suggest that it is too specific to focus on.

How could the organization best address these different needs and how can they promote a bi+ inclusive culture?



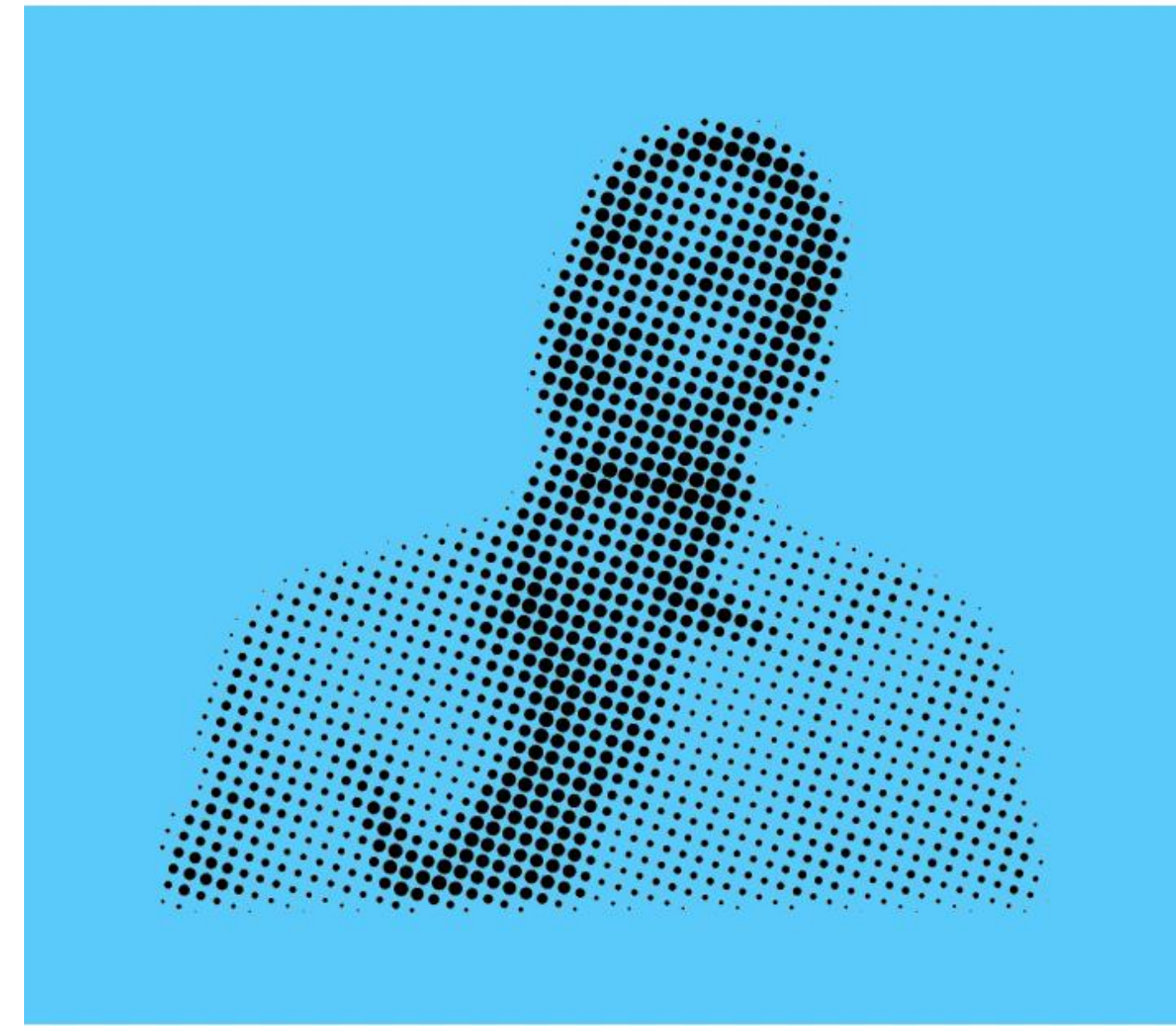
Feedback

- 2 highlights per group



Promising approaches

Part III: Recommendations



Promising approaches

- General lgbtqi+ and D&I approaches do not promote bi+ inclusion

“One of the most important things is the importance of not treating them as a homogenous group. [...] I think that there is a tendency to always talk about lgbti+ and this is a problem. I think that that silences identities.”

(dr. Anna Einarsdottir)



Promising approaches

Visibility and representation

- Explicit attention to recognition, visibility and representation of bi+ people
- Inventorize representation of bi+ people within organisation
- Pay attention to theme days
- Encourage ambassadors or diversity networks

Theme days:

May 24th

Pan Visibility Day

September 23rd

Bi Visibility Day

October 11th

Coming Out Day



Promising approaches

Knowledge

- Offer a training or workshops on lgbtqi+ inclusion
- Outsource training



Promising approaches

Communication

- Redefine professionalism
- Use bi+ inclusive language
- Avoid making assumptions

Not this	But this
Whether you're straight or gay	Regardless of your sexual orientation
Are you into women or men?	What genders are you into? To whom are you attracted?
Gay Pride; gay marriage; lesbian relationship	Pride; open marriage; relationship between women
Heterosexuality and homosexuality	Straight, gay, and bi+; sexual diversity
Bisexuals, bi+- people, Bi+ people	bi+ people

For more examples, check the [Bi+ Inclusive Language Guide](#) ;
(Bi+ Netherlands, 2022, in Dutch).



Promising approaches

Norm setting and culture

- Encourage policies, leadership and interpersonal interactions that make all sexual orientations, including bi+, a matter of course
- Communicate internally and externally as an organization that everyone, regardless of their sexual orientation and gender identity, is welcome and allowed to be themselves
- Offer active bystander training



Promising approaches

- What is your top 3?



Want more information and tips?



- Bi+ Inclusive Language Guide
 - 10 Questions about bi+
 - 10 tips on bi+ inclusion for professionals and volunteers
 - Bi+ Self-scan for organizations
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- Handout Inclusion of bi+ people and work
 - Read the bi+ people and work explorations on the Bi+ Netherlands website

