

2025 LGBTIQ+ Workplace Inclusion Symposium

13 November 2025

Leiden University



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Welcome by Michiel Kolman

Workplace Pride Co-Chair and Senior VP at Elsevier



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THE INTERNATIONAL
PLATFORM FOR LGBTIQ+
INCLUSION AT WORK

Program

Welcome	Dr. Michiel Kolman & Prof.dr. Jojanneke van der Toorn
Keynote	<i>LGB with the T: The Challenges and Opportunities of Allyship</i> Prof.dr. Luke Fletcher
Keynote	<i>Beyond For or Against: Understanding Employee Support for DEI Policy</i> Prof.dr. Jojanneke van der Toorn
Panel	<i>Staying the Course in a Changing DEI landscape</i> Prof.dr. Luke Fletcher, Fauzia Aouden, Giovanni van Leeuwen, Looi van Kessel / Moderated by Kshitij Mor
12.00-13.00	Coffee and Tea

Introduction by Joanneke van der Toorn

Professor of LGBT+ workplace inclusion at Leiden University

Meeting tips and rules

- **The symposium is being recorded**
- To ask questions and make comments, **raise your hand**
- **Please use respectful and inclusive language at all times**
- Communicating about the symposium on **social media**?
Please include: @UniversiteitLeiden @WorkplacePride
#lgbtiqinclusion
- Gender-inclusive restrooms across the courtyard

Keynote by Luke Fletcher

LGB with the T: The Challenges and Opportunities of Allyship



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LGB with the T: The challenges and opportunities of allyship

Prof. Luke Fletcher
Professor of Psychology and Human Resource Management
Decent Work and Productivity Research Centre
Manchester Metropolitan University Business School
Manchester, UK

Quick intro

- Joined Manchester Metropolitan University as a Full Professor in January 2025
- Previously Associate Professor at University of Bath (2020 to 2024), Senior Lecturer at Aston University (2016 to 2020), Lecturer at University of Brighton (2014 to 2016).
- Psychologist by background – now at the intersection between strategic HRM and applied psychology
- I live in Birmingham, UK and am a parent with my civil partner to two little dogs



Agenda

- General overview of LGBTIQ+ workplace experiences and the need to focus on the 'T'
- LGBTIQ+ disclosure and authenticity at work
- Allyship as a supportive practice
- A research example, focusing on trans allyship
- Critical reflections on allyship
- Key takeaway recommendations



The experiences of LGBTIQ+ workers

- Heteronormative culture and internalised homo/bi/trans-phobia
- Think manager, think (straight white) male; lack of role models
- Gendered occupations
- Stereotype threat
- Variation and history of legal protection
- Tokenism and corporate fads
- Lack of HR knowledge/skills and policy-practice gaps



LGB with the T

Gender diverse people are more likely to:

- experience a significant negative conflict at work than LGB+ cisgender colleagues (Fletcher et al., 2021);
- be discriminated against in the labour market than cisgender (LGB+ and straight) counterparts – which may also be compounded by race, disability, and social class (Carpenter et al., 2022);
- be victims of crime than (LGB+ and straight) cisgender people (Flores et al., 2021); and
- be the focus of anti-woke/anti-gender/anti-DEI policies, narratives, and agendas (Banerjee & Yesudas, 2024)

Disclosure of Invisible Identities



- Some identities (or stigmas) are more 'invisible' than others
- Invisible identities are 'managed' by the individual
- Actively concealing or faking one's identity is particularly detrimental
- In contrast, disclosure can promote positive attitudes and wellbeing
- Disclosure may qualitatively vary for cisgender sexual minorities versus for gender diverse workers, for example the concept of 'passing'.

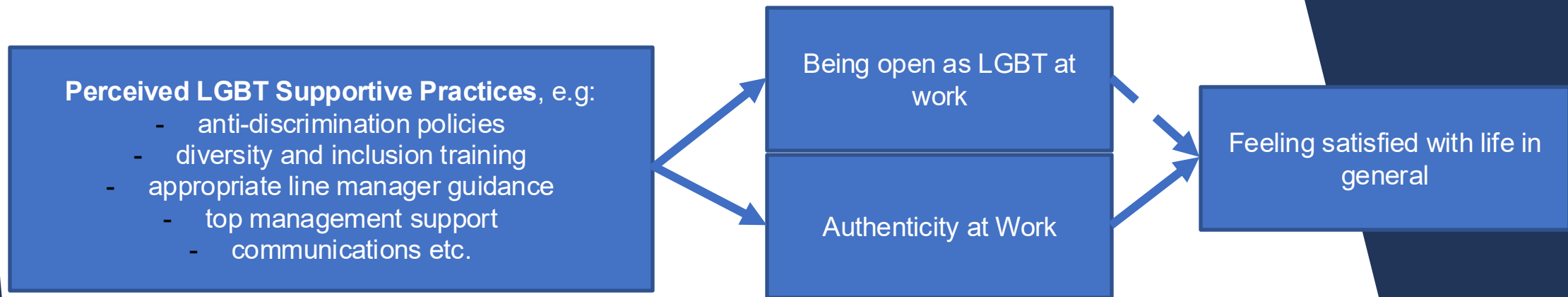
Going beyond disclosure: being 'authentic'?

- Authenticity loosely refers to acting in ways that are congruent or 'in line with' one's 'true' self.



Disclosure and Authenticity – An example

- My [research](#) with Ben Everly finds that:
 - Perceived LGBT supportive practices + linked with disclosure and authenticity
 - Authenticity is potentially more powerful psychological process than disclosure in linking supportive practices to wellbeing



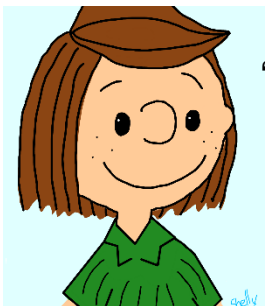
So how can co-workers and managers support LGBTQ+ workers' disclosure and authenticity?



What is Allyship?

Determining a Definition

A person who is a member of the 'dominant' or 'majority' group who works to end oppression in his or her personal and professional life through support of, and as an advocate for, the oppressed population (Washington & Evans, 1991)



'I'm an ally'

Being "an accomplice in conducting activism" through positive action and advocacy with (not 'on') minority group members, even though they may be strangers (Salter & Migliaccio, 2019)



'I'm practising allyship'

A closer look at allyship

(Taken from – Salter and Migliaccio 2019)

- Knowledge and Awareness



- Communication and Confrontation



- Action and Advocacy



Allyship and Inclusion – An example

In a recent paper, myself and Rosa Marvell (University of Portsmouth) conducted two interconnected studies:

Study 1: Allyship Intentions

- Online survey of 209 heterosexual, cisgender UK-based workers
- Shown a hypothetical but realistic workplace scenario:
a co-worker disclosing their transgender identity and intentions to transition at work to their department via an email sent by the department manager.
- After scenario, they were asked to rate to what extent they would show allyship behaviours to the trans worker who is transitioning in their workplace.

Study 2: Allyship Outcomes

- Online survey of 196 transgender and non-binary UK-based workers.
- Examined how their perceptions of trans allyship in their organisation was related to their psychological experiences at work and their wellbeing
- Controlled for general quality of relationships with co-workers.



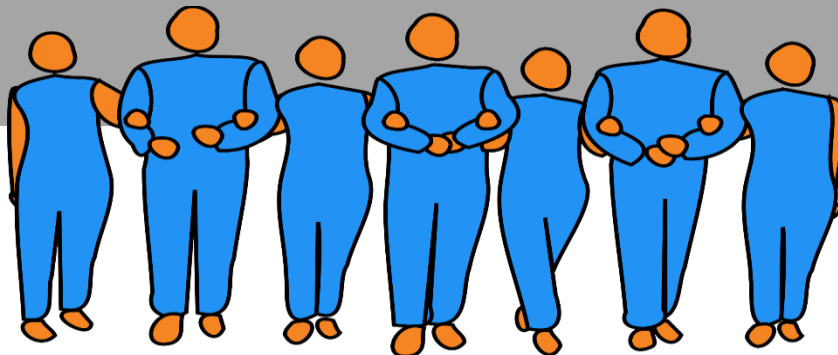
Findings

When the organisation's climate for diversity and inclusion is perceived to be strong:

- the more likely a cisgender, heterosexual employee may show allyship behaviours towards transgender colleagues.
- And this is particularly the case for those who may not be as inclined to support ED&I initiatives

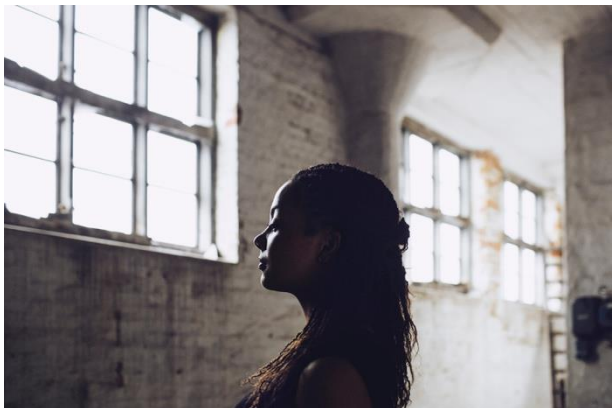
And for transgender workers themselves:

- Perceptions of allyship from co-workers makes them feel psychologically safe and authentic at work
- Psychological safety and authenticity in turn facilitate engagement at work and broader wellbeing.



Some critical reflections about allyship

- Can be tokenistic, performative, and ineffective
- Needs to be supported and reinforced institutionally
- Allyship for all? Conflicting ideologies or rights?
- Allyship as moral superiority – could it mask other problems?
- Requires clear parameters, yet could this dilute impact?



Take away recommendations

- **Create and sustain a strong diversity and inclusion climate**
- **Support LGBTIQ+ colleagues to be themselves at work** but be mindful that they might not want to talk about their identity to you or to others – this varies!
- **Involve and listen to those workers who lack voice and representation**, particularly gender diverse workers and those with intersectional experiences
- **Develop specific allyship initiatives** where appropriate (and seek expert advice where needed)
- **Influence psychological safety and authenticity more directly:**
 - by enforcing anti-discrimination policies;
 - by ensuring all HR policies consider a range of minority/minoritised workers;
 - by encouraging strong (and varied, where possible) LGBTIQ+ role models in the organisation.



Thank you for listening!

Find me on LinkedIn:

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/drlukefletcher/>

Watch out for my edited book coming next year!



Keynote by Jojanneke van der Toorn

*Beyond For or Against:
Understanding Employee Support for DEI Policy*



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DIVERSITY

Why Diversity Programs Fail

by Frank Dobbin and Alexandra Kalev

FROM THE JULY-AUGUST 2016 ISSUE

What is DEI, and why is it dividing America?

LEADERSHIP · DONALD TRUMP

The majority of employers think Trump's DEI and immigration policies are creating 'significant challenges' for their business

Trump pressuring European companies to follow anti-DEI path

Stockholm rejects 'bizarre' US letter
urging city to scrap diversity initiatives



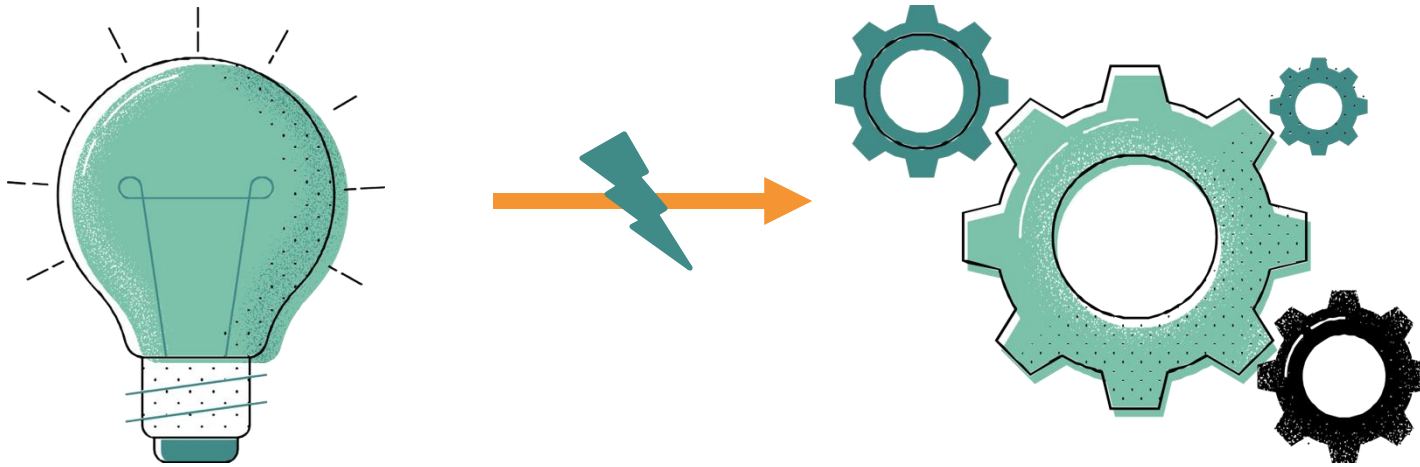
POLITICS

Nearly all Fortune 500 companies still maintain corporate DEI commitments: report

The report comes as companies have begun dismantling their DEI commitments amid public backlash

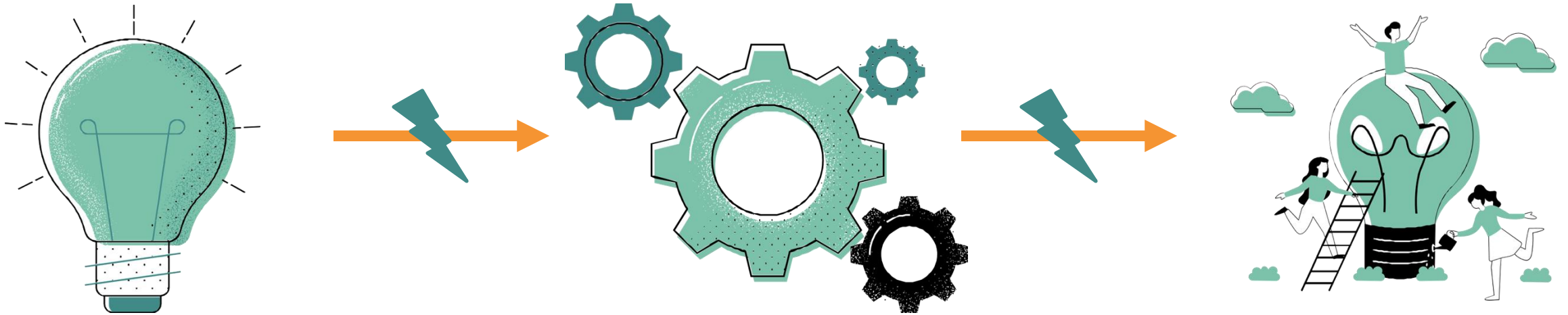
By [Alec Schemmel](#) · [Fox News](#)

Integrated, systematic, evidence-based policy



Nederlandse
InclusiviteitsMonitor

Gap between policy on paper and real experiences in the workplace



Masterclass-reeks

Naar een effectief D&I-beleid

13 jan, 3 feb, 24 feb

Website:

<https://professionals.uu.nl/nl/cursus/cursus-naar-een-effectief-diversiteits-inclusiebeleid>

Mail:

Masterclass-DI@uu.nl





De technische sector doet van alles om meer vrouwen te trekken. Toch klagen die dat ze meer moeite moeten doen om er carrière te maken. © Getty Images

Ⓣ Weerstand tegen 'woke' personeelsbeleid groeit: 'Vooral jongeren zijn buitengewoon kritisch'

“ Resistance to ‘woke’ personnel policy increases: ‘especially youth are exceptionally critical’ ”

Conditions for effective policy

Essential that employees at all organizational levels have the:

- Knowledge
- Motivation
- Ability



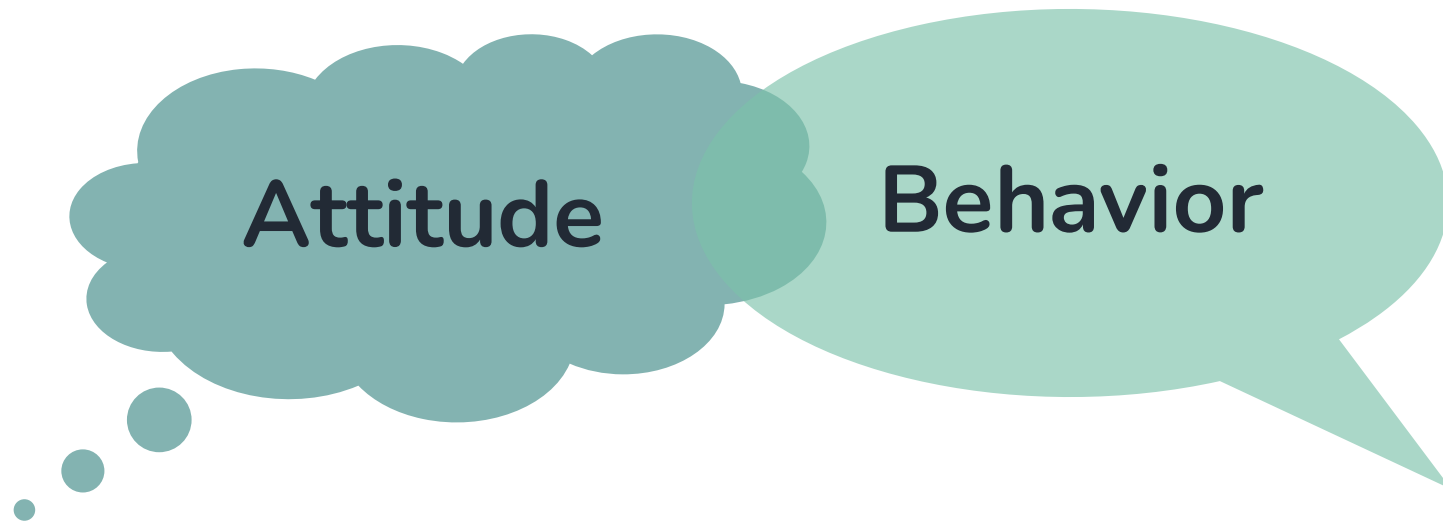
Yonn Bokern



Prof. dr. Naomi Ellemers

What does support look like?





Degree to which an individual finds the D&I policy ...

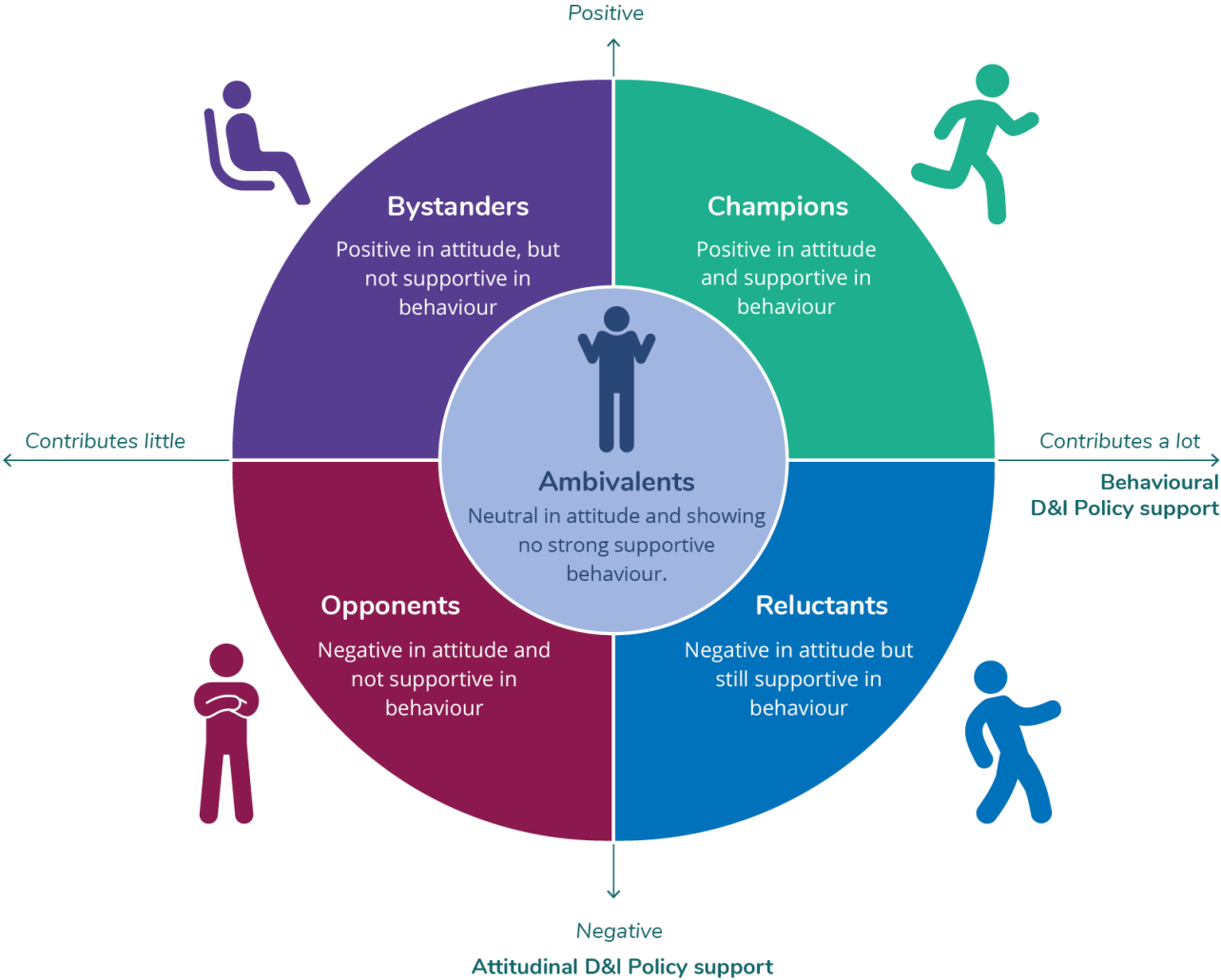
... *good*
... *useful*
... *credible*

Degree to which an individual ...

... *contributes to the **successful implementation** of the D&I-policy*
... *plays an **active role** in letting the D&I policy succeed*
... ***publicly declares support** for the D&I policy*

Avery, 2011; Jansen, Van der Toorn, Bokern & Ellemers, 2024

Support profiles





Champions: Have a positive attitude towards the DEI policy and exhibit supportive behavior.



Reluctants: Do not have a positive attitude towards the DEI policy but do exhibit supportive behavior.



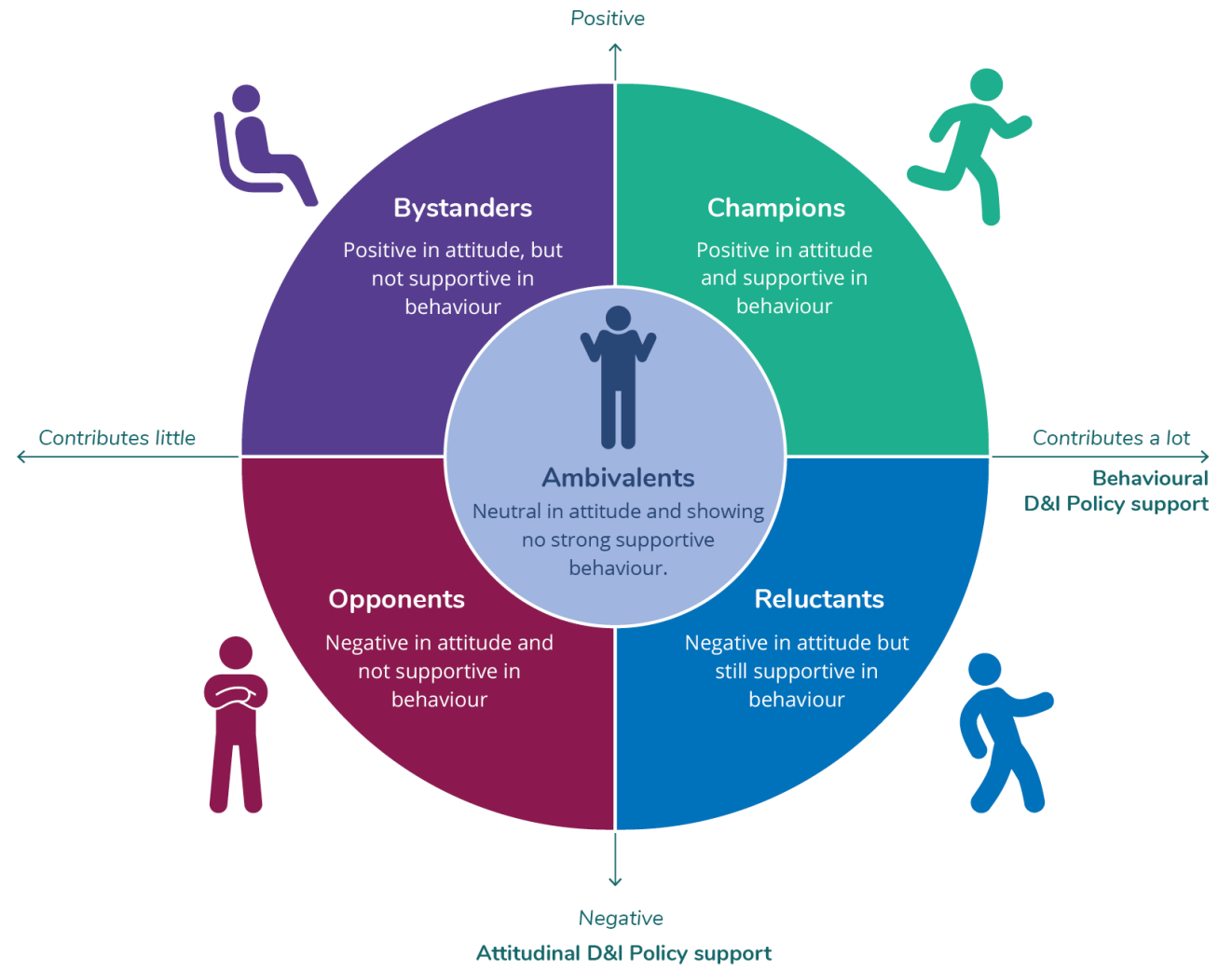
Ambivalents: Have a neutral attitude towards the DEI policy and do not demonstrate explicit supportive behavior.



Bystanders: Have a positive attitude towards the DEI policy but have not yet translated this into supportive behavior.



Opponents: Do not have a positive attitude towards the DEI policy and also do not exhibit supportive behavior.





Champions:

Words and deeds



Reluctants:

No words, but daden



Ambivalents:

Neutral in words and deeds



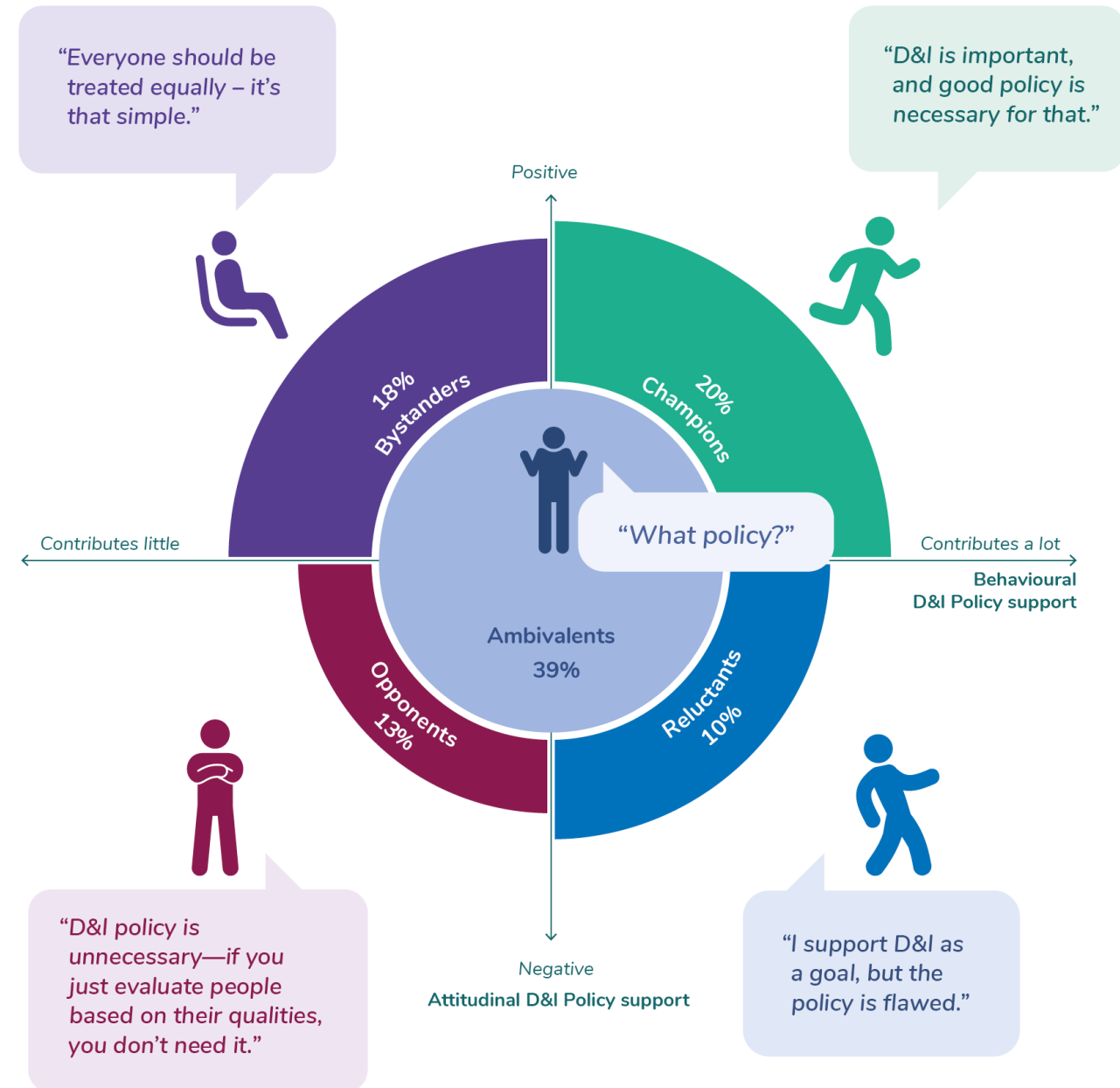
Bystanders:

Words, no deeds



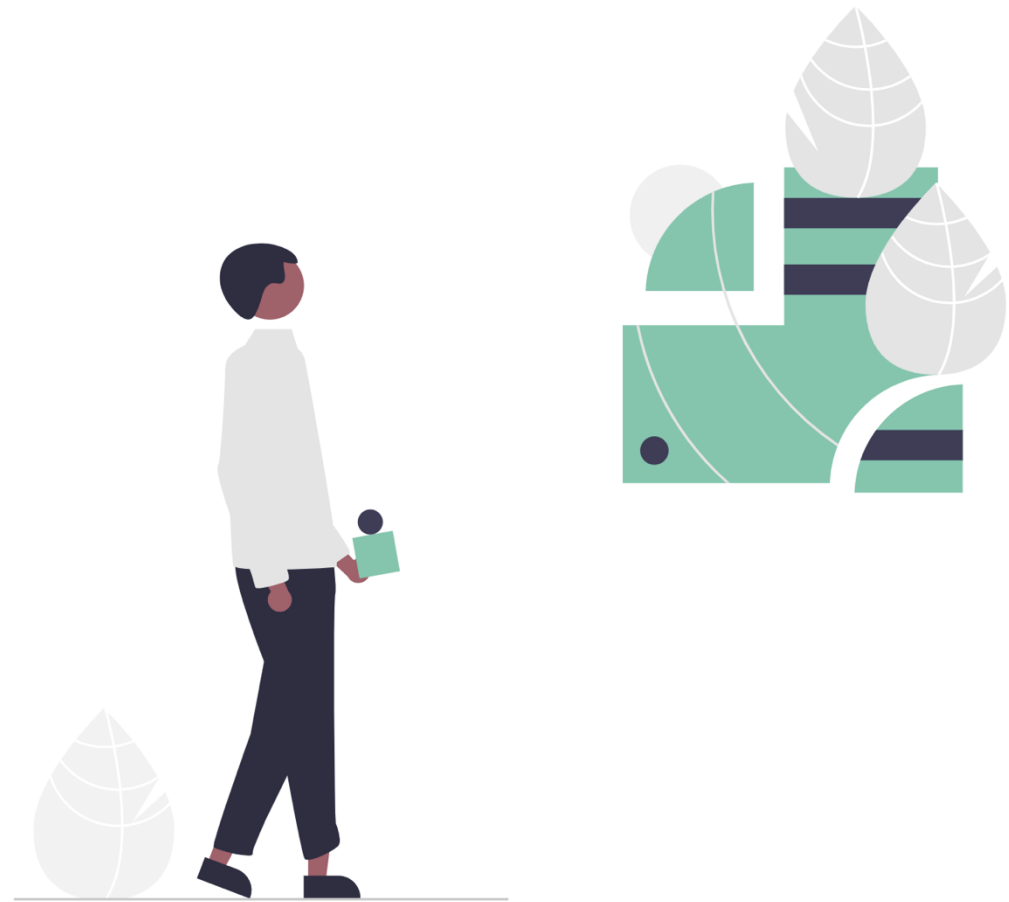
Opponents:

No words nor deeds



27 organizations; 13441 employees

How to deal with resistance?

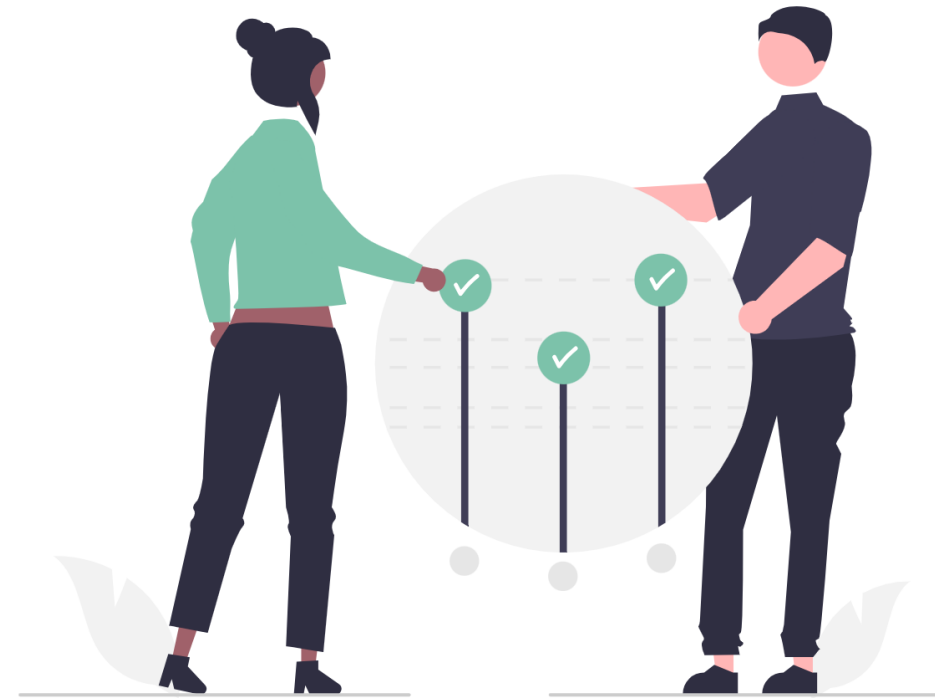


Dancing with resistance

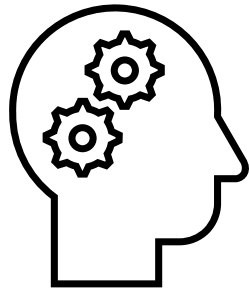


Wasserman, I. C., Gallegos, P. V., & Ferdman, B. M. (2008). Dancing with resistance: Leadership challenges in fostering a culture of inclusion. In K. M. Thomas (Ed.), *Diversity resistance in organizations* (pp. 175–200). Taylor & Francis Group/Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

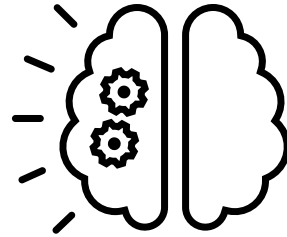
Intent Approach Implementation



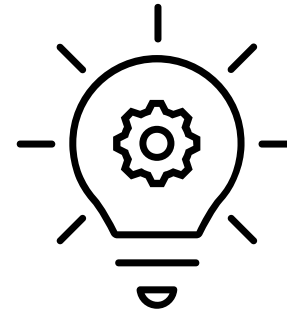
Wright, Patrick & Nishii, Lisa. (2004). Strategic HRM and Organizational Behavior: Integrating Multiple Levels of Analysis. *CAHRS Working Paper Series*. 468.



Knowledge



Motivation



Ability



Champions:

Words and deeds



Reluctants:

No words, but daden



Ambivalents:

Neutral in words and deeds



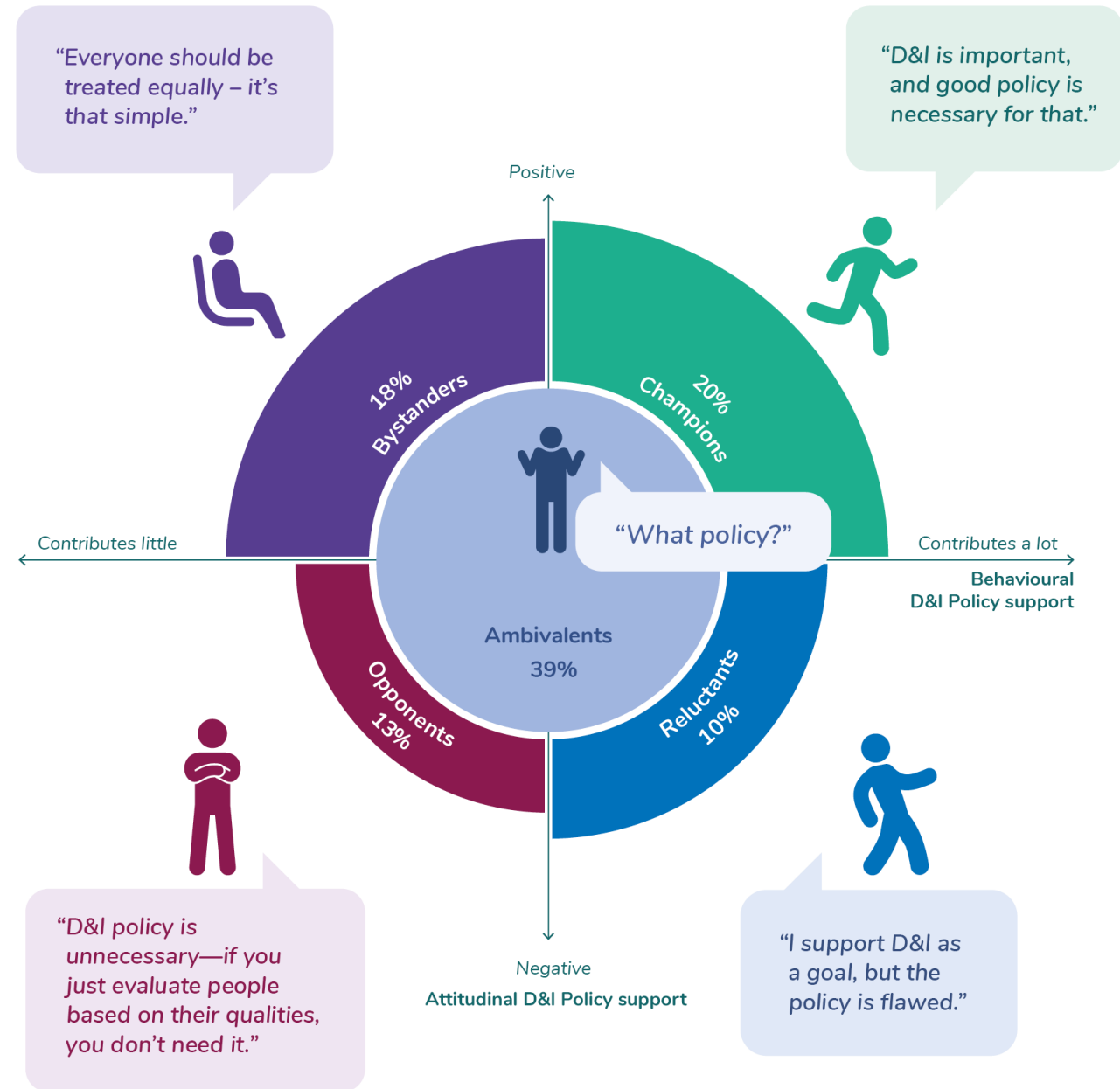
Bystanders:

Words, no deeds



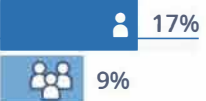
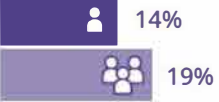
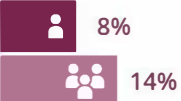
Opponents:

No words nor deeds



From resistance to gain

Practical advice to strengthen support

	Characteristic stance	Distribution of support profiles	What is needed to strengthen support?		
Champions 	Value D&I and are intrinsically motivated to contribute to it.		Express appreciation Actively express appreciation for their commitment and highlight their role model function, e.g. during a team meeting.	Make room for a pioneering role Offer opportunities to take on a pioneering role, for example as an ambassador or member of a working group.	Inspire others Invite them to share experiences and good practices during events or meetings.
Reluctants 	Are engaged but critical: they support D&I, but have concerns about the contents of the policy or how it is implemented.		Take questions seriously Take their questions and concerns about the D&I policy seriously and show understanding for their perspective.	Acknowledge their input Create opportunities for them to share opinions and doubts in a safe setting.	Further develop policy together Offer space to jointly explore how the policy can be improved so it better fits practice.
Ambivalents 	Are not aware of the policy, do not know where to find it, or what it actually entails.		Provide clear explanation Provide accessible information about the D&I policy, e.g. on the intranet and during onboarding and information sessions.	Make information sources visible Clearly show where they can find more information and who they can contact with questions.	Emphasize relevance Point out how the policy also connects to their own work and role.
Bystanders 	Support D&I in principle and endorse the values, but take little action themselves.		Explain D&I goals Clearly communicate the organization's D&I vision and goals and explain their importance, e.g. during team meetings.	Actively invite Personally invite them to contribute, e.g. by sharing an idea or joining a working group.	Lower barriers Make it clear that contributing can be done in low-threshold ways and indicate how much time it requires so it feels achievable.
Opponents 	Have little knowledge of the policy, or consciously reject it — often based on the idea that everyone has equal opportunities as long as they work hard.		Engage in open conversation Enter into dialogue about the meaning of values such as equality and equity and listen to their objections.	Repeat the D&I vision Remind them of the shared vision and values of the organization and explain why D&I is part of this.	Clarify codes of conduct Ensure there is a clear code of conduct that contains the shared norms and values and refer to it when necessary.

 Managers
  Employees

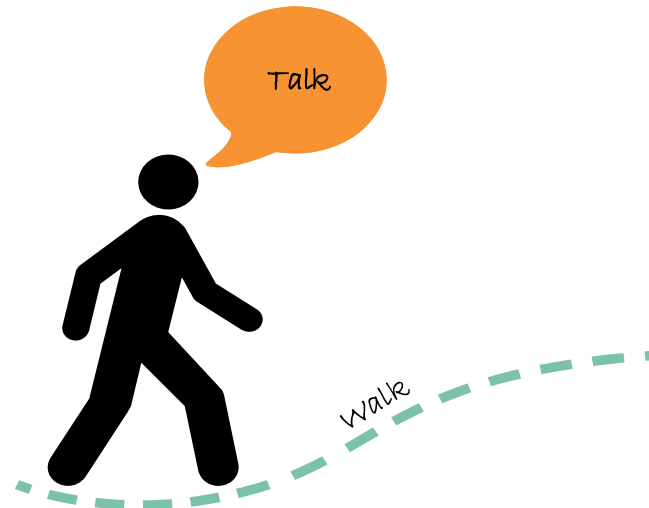
Prevalence of support profiles, based on research among 2,317 managers and 11,114 employees from 27 organizations participating in the NIM.

Contact: nim@uu.nl

More information:

<https://www.ser.nl/nl/thema/diversiteitinbedrijf/projecten/het-moet-wel-werken>

Download the
handouts here:



Panel discussion moderated by Kshitij Mor

Staying the Course in a Changing DEI landscape



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Panel members



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Fauzia
Aouden

Nederlandse
Spoorwegen



Giovanni
van
Leeuwen

Capgemini



Looi van
Kessel

Leiden
University



Kshitij Mor
Moderator

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