



# An Inclusive Sport Wales



**Participant Handbook**

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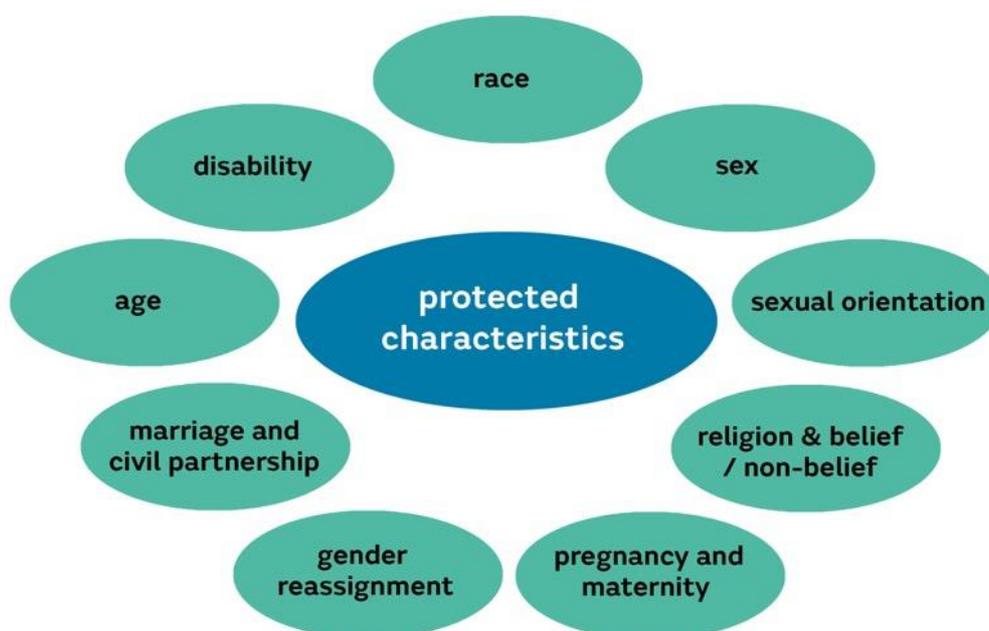
## Introduction

This programme is designed to support Sport Wales in building an inclusive culture. This is a culture that enables every member of staff to thrive: to use their full potential in contributing to the work; to enjoy being part of a supportive community; to experience a happy and healthy workplace.

It is important that we understand some of the key concepts of ED&I (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion).

## What We Mean By 'Diversity'

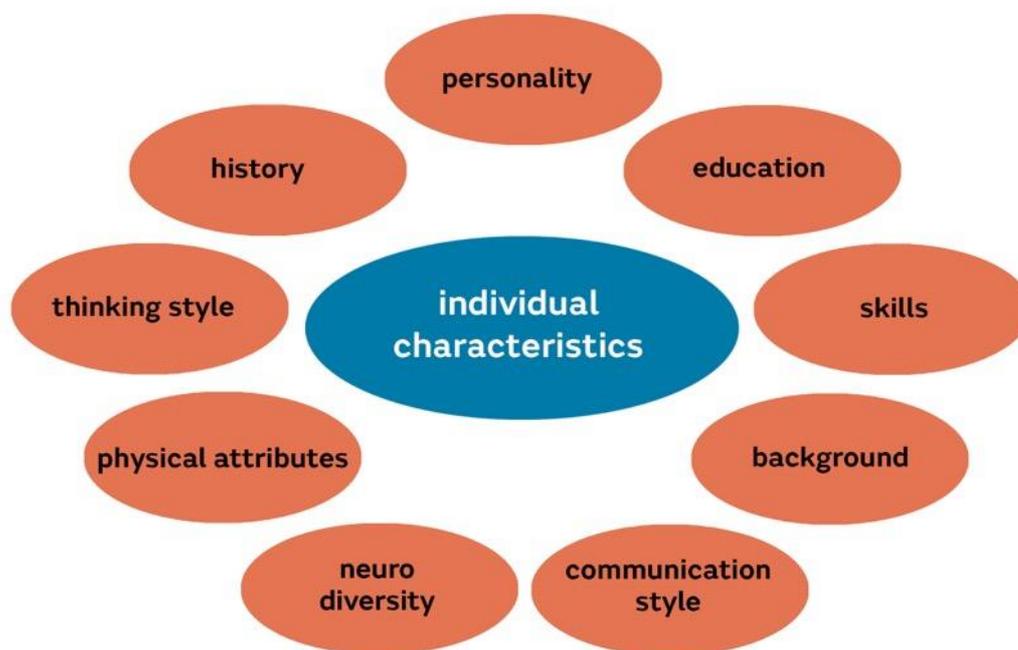
When people think about equality and diversity, their minds often go straight to the **protected characteristics**. These are the 9 characteristics that are legally protected from discrimination, harassment and victimisation under the Equality Act (2010):



These are important because they are the characteristics most likely to attract discrimination in the workplace, the provision of goods and services and in wider society. It is worth noting that:

- **We are all there** – this is not just about protecting ‘minority groups’. Everybody has at least some of the characteristics listed
- **Intersectionality** – most people will have a number of the characteristics, e.g. a 70 year old, gay, Muslim man or a 17 year old, disabled, black woman and this may multiply the barriers and discrimination they face in society.

It is also important that we consider the full range of diversity beyond the protected characteristics. Every individual is a complex, multi-faceted being, with many attributes and experiences, such as:



It is vital that we take this full range of diversity into account when we are considering inclusion at Sport Wales.

### Diversity of thinking

Sport Wales, like many modern organisations, relies mostly on the mental, rather than physical endeavours of its staff, on their ideas, innovations and decisions. If the diversity of individual thinking is harnessed in a collective process, the quality of decisions and ideas is greatly enhanced. (see 'Rebel Ideas' in the reading list below for evidence of this assertion). Here, all the other characteristics come into play, as the way an individual thinks is shaped by their cultural background (national and regional), sex, age, brain development, life experiences, education, personality, etc.

## What We Mean By 'Inclusion'

Inclusion is the way in which people are made to feel valued for their differences and enabled to make their unique contribution to Sport Wales. It is possible for an organisation to have a very diverse workforce (protected and individual characteristics) but for none of the benefits to be unleashed because its culture prohibits people from expressing their difference. To reap the benefits to Sport Wales, its **diversity** must be accompanied by an **inclusive** culture.

# The Benefits Of Diversity + Inclusion

The following are widely acknowledged benefits:

For the Individual	For Sport Wales employee performance	For Sport Wales organisational performance
Increased motivation and commitment	Reductions in absenteeism / turnover	Enhanced reputation
Increased job satisfaction	Improved employee relations	Attraction of high-calibre applicants
Better work / life balance	Increased employee productivity	Mirroring service-users
Reduced stress	Increased innovation and creativity	Reduced litigation
	discretionary effort	

## Discretionary Effort

This is how real value is added to the organisation. If people feel valued and included, they tend to 'go above and beyond', putting in that extra bit of care, thought and sometimes time, that can increase the productivity and quality of output.

## The Evidence

There is a growing body of research evidence supporting the existence of these benefits. For example:

- A study by professor Chad Sparber, found that an increase in racial diversity of one standard deviation increased productivity by more than 25% in legal services, health services and finance.
- A McKinsey analysis of companies in Germany and the UK found that return on equity was 66% higher for firms with executive teams in the top quartile for gender and ethnic diversity than for those in the bottom quartile. For the US, the return was 100% higher

### More evidence can be found at:

- Department for Business, Innovation & Skills – BIS Occasional Paper No. 4 The Business Case For Equality And Diversity, 2013  
[click here](#)
- The Centre for Talent Innovation - Innovation, Diversity and Market Growth, 2013  
[click here](#)
- Harvard Business Review – The Other Diversity Dividend  
[click here](#)
- Capterra - 7 Studies That Prove the Value of Diversity in the Workplace  
[click here](#)

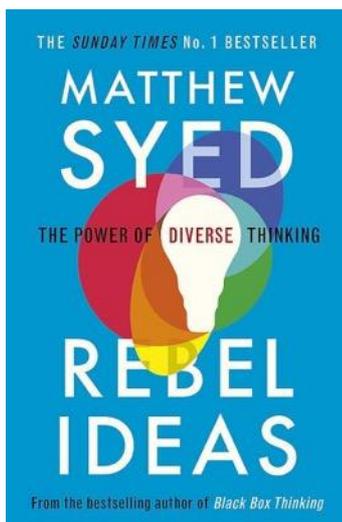
## Further Reading

### On The Equality Act:

- The 'Introducing The Equality Act' booklet on the course support website

### On Diversity And Inclusion:

- Rebel Ideas. Matthew Syed, John Murray (Publishers), 2021
- The Value Of Difference – Eliminating Bias in Organisations. Binna Kandola, Oxford: Pearn Kandola, 2009



# How To Build An Inclusive Culture

Catalyst is a global non-profit organisation dedicated to increasing inclusion. In 2021, they published **Getting Real About Inclusive Leadership - Why Change Starts With You.**

It is aimed at managers, who are crucial in creating an inclusive culture, but it is also invaluable for all staff, irrespective of position:

1. So that everybody knows what they should expect regarding inclusion, from managers and colleagues
2. Because everybody needs to take a leadership role in creating an inclusive culture



The research presents the main characteristics of organisations that have inclusive cultures:

## The Hallmarks of Inclusion

### Everybody Feels:

- **VALUED** - appreciated and respected for their unique perspectives and talents
- **TRUSTED** - make meaningful contributions and are influential in decision-making
- **AUTHENTIC** - bring their full self to work and express aspects of themselves that may be different from their peers
- **PSYCHOLOGICALLY SAFE:**
  - Latitude** - feel free to hold differing views and make mistakes without being penalized
  - Risk-Taking** - feel secure enough to address tough issues or take risks

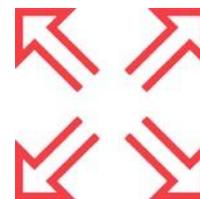
## The Core Inclusive Behaviours

Catalyst elaborates the core behaviours that build an inclusive culture.

### Everybody Needs To:



## Lead Inward & Lead Outward



### Lead Inward

We need to have **Curiosity** and **Courage**

- **Curiosity**
  - About **ourselves**, why we have certain attitudes to some people, why we behave in certain ways. See later for unconscious bias
  - About **others** - learning from the people around us, particularly from their differences
- **Courage** - to act in accordance with our principles, even when it involves personal risk-taking or is uncomfortable. Saying or doing nothing is not neutral, it colludes with non-inclusive behaviour. See later for challenging non-inclusive behaviour.

### Lead Outward

We Need **Accountability** and **Allyship**

- **Accountability** - hold others and self accountable for non-inclusive behaviours and attitudes
- **Allyship** - actively support people from underrepresented / marginalised groups. See later for Allyship

**We will look at 3 of these qualities in more detail: curiosity, allyship and courage**

## Further Reading

You can read the full report at:

[Click Here](#)

## Curiosity – About Ourselves and About Others

We need to understand how our own prejudices and unconscious biases about others might inadvertently exclude them.

### Conscious Prejudice

We all have prejudice (pre-judgement) about some characteristics in other people that can trigger the stereotypes we have stored in our memory. These stereotypes can have their origin in:

- The wider society around us: in the media, culture, education system, etc.
- Our personal experiences: our family as we grew up, friends and colleagues, direct personal encounters

#### What we can do about it

- **Identify** what your prejudices are and where they came from – own them, don't hide them!
- **Educate** yourself – swap your assumptions with facts by researching the characteristic that triggers you and, if it is possible and ok with them, by getting to know someone with that characteristic, going beyond your pre-judged image to the real person behind it.

### Unconscious Bias

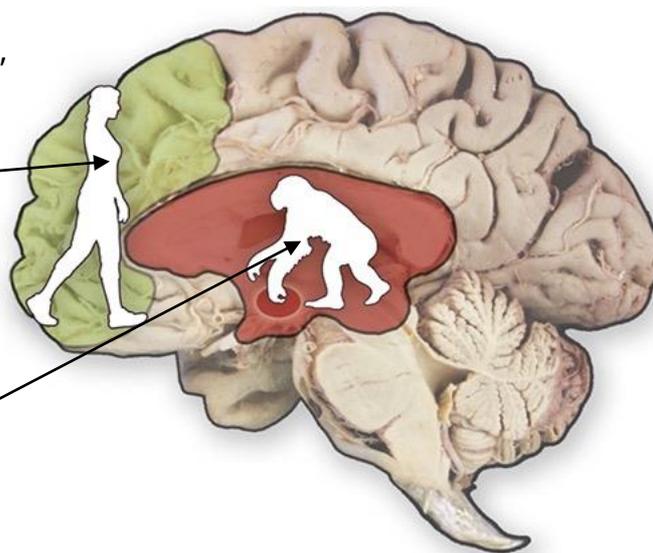
The functioning of the more automatic parts of our brain can produce distortions in the way we think and perceive the world around us. Being aware of these cognitive biases helps us to minimise the negative effects they can have on our decision making.

#### Pre-Frontal Neo Cortex

The 'human', rational part of our brain, responsible for reason, logic and judgement. It uses up so much of our body's resources that it is only used when really necessary – it is lazy!

#### The Limbic System

The animal, 'chimp' part of our brain, responsible for keeping us alive through our fight, flight, freeze mechanism. It is much faster and stronger than the human.



**Remember:**

The human is lazy and the chimp is strong. It is not that the chimp is bad and the human good. We need the emotional and rational sides of our brain to work together, to balance each other out. But, more often than we'd like to think, it is the chimp that is guiding our decisions about people and situations, especially when it is on high alert or agitated, such as when it is:

- **Rushed** – in need of a quick decision
- **Tired** – the human is far less likely to get a look in
- **Emotional** – if your chimp is angry or upset, it is in automatic fight, flight, freeze mode
- **Hungry** – if your glucose levels are depleted, you may not have the energy to power your human brain, giving free-reign to your chimp



Source: PosterEnvy

**These are the Danger Zones**

**Cognitive Biases**

There are over 150 different biases listed in the literature but 5 are particularly important for your work because they affect the way you interact with your colleagues:

- **Stereotype Bias** – our chimp works with highly simplified ‘thumbnails’ of types of people, to make a quick decision on whether they are likely to be a threat or an opportunity. Just a few characteristics are enough to categorise people and



society provides us with some readymade ‘thumbnails’ that are often ingrained from our early lives, such as gender, racial and age-related stereotypes. Your chimp can access these and influence your behaviour before your human gets a chance to weigh-up the actual person in front of you.

Source: Getty / abd-rodrigo / Martin Klimek / ZUMA Press / Alamy

- **Confirmation Bias** – once your chimp has made its first assessment of someone, it is much easier to hold onto this belief than to change it. You will tend only to notice those things that confirm your beliefs about a person and to unconsciously disregard anything that goes against it. This is the halo or horns effect and it can make it very difficult for someone to demonstrate their true potential.



- **Affinity Bias** – we are drawn to people with whom we feel an affinity – our ‘in-group’, and to avoid people who are in our ‘out-group’. We are less likely to consider their needs and value their opinions. Over time, this tends to narrow the diversity of an organisation’s talent pool and can contribute to:



- **Group Think** – the tendency for a group to conform in their thinking and to disregard ‘rebel ideas’, particularly under the influence of hierarchy dynamics, where the ideas of the most ‘powerful’ will dominate. It often leads to poor decision making and missed opportunities.



- **Presence Bias** – the tendency to be more focussed on people or things that are right in front of you and forget about those that are not – ‘out of sight, out of mind’. This could become a particular problem now, when hybrid working means that people are not always present in the office.



Source: Getty / Martin Klimek

## Further Reading

For a full list of cognitive biases:

[Click Here](#)

## Making The Unconscious More Conscious

You can do this by:

- doing an **Implicit Association Test**. This is an online test, developed by Harvard University, to identify unconscious biases towards or away from a range of characteristics. Its validity is still the subject of debate, but it can give a useful insight into areas where you need to be particularly careful to reduce potential bias. The book ‘Blindspot’ in the reading list below, charts the development of the IAT.



You can take the tests by clicking the link below. Please note:

- from the dropdown menu, choose the country most relevant you
- you will need to allow good time as you will be asked to do a series of ‘calibration’ tests first
- be prepared to be stressed – it is designed to trigger your chimp!

[Click Here](#)

- looking out for **Golden Nuggets**. These are moments when you realise that you have made an incorrect assumption about someone because of an unconscious bias you have. Remember that this could be a positive or negative assumption that turned out to be wrong. You may be shocked by and even ashamed of the mistake you made but get over that quickly and see it as a valuable golden nugget of insight into your unconscious mind and one that can help remind you of where you need to take extra care.



Source: GoGraph

### These can both help you identify your Hot Spots

These are particular characteristics in other people (race, age, religion, accent, hair colour, etc.) That you know are likely to trigger a negative or positive bias in you.



Source: PosterEnvy

### What we can do about it

We can't be constantly alert to our biases and taking steps to reduce their impact. That would be utterly exhausting because these unconscious processes never stop. But we can identify key points when we do need to take action to reduce bias:

- When the action or decision could have a significant impact on another person
- When you are in a **Danger Zone** (rushed, tired, emotional, hungry)
- When you are interacting with someone in your **Hot Spot**

### THEN YOU NEED TO SLOW THINGS DOWN!

You need to create some space, to allow your human to catch up and check out your chimp's reaction. Here's an example you may be familiar with:

*You receive an email and something in it really annoys you, you might be furious. You want to reply immediately, telling them exactly what you think. But you don't. You wait, let it sink in for an hour or so, maybe even overnight and then you draft a response.*

Unleashing an angry chimp is very tempting but it can cause a lot of unnecessary damage. We need to check our emotional response with some rational thinking, and this can take a little longer to achieve.

## Using Inclusion Nudges

We need to apply this approach to other areas of our working lives and we can do this using **nudges**. These are small, practical actions you can take that influence your behaviour or others', without them really thinking about it. No one likes being told what to do, but we can shape behaviour with a gentle nudge in the right direction.

### Personal Nudges

- Use a **keyword or action** - a word like 'pause' or an action like taking a deep breath
- Find a **trusted person**, someone who will be objective and ask their opinion – use their human to check your chimp.



Marissa Mayer

Michelle Obama

Albert Einstein

Source: Martin Klimek / ZUMA Press / Monica Schipper/Filmmagic/Getty Images

- Use **counter stereotype images** - if you know that a certain characteristic triggers bias in you – maybe age, skin colour, gender, find an image of a person that completely contradicts the stereotype and have it around you – on the office wall, as your laptop or phone wallpaper. There is plenty of research showing that exposure to such positive images can influence our subconscious attitudes. ('Blindspot', Chapter 8 – see reading list below)
- Use **intention implementation planning** - if you are aware of an unconscious bias you have, develop a self-talk script for yourself :
  - a **goal intention** – e.g. "I will not be prejudiced".
  - and**
  - an **implementation intention plan** – e.g. "If I see a dark face, then I'll ignore the skin colour."Repeating these statements before an interaction will tend to reduce biased responses.  
(The Value of Difference', Chapter 6 – See Reading List Below)
- **Mindfulness** is an excellent way to learn how to be more aware of your own thought processes and slow down your automatic responses to the world.

- **Allow Different Ways To Register Ideas**

Build in a variety of ways to gather ideas, proposals, evaluations, etc. E.g. people can submit in writing in advance, everybody writes on a post-it at the beginning of a meeting (before discussion) and all ideas are read out, breaking up a meeting into pairs for discussion.



- **Golden Silence**

At the beginning of meetings, participants read a carefully drafted document summarising the issues to be discussed. This is done in silence, giving everyone time to consider their own responses. When discussion begins, the most senior person speaks last. This has been cited as one of the most important strategic advantages of one of the world's most successful companies – Amazon.

- **Taking a 5-minute brain break**

Choose key moments in your meetings, e.g. after a long discussion and before you move to make a decision, and allow a 5 minute break. This is not a tea break or a time to check emails, this is 5 minutes for everyone to do whatever relaxes and 'grounds' them – a short walk round the office or outside, a mindfulness exercise, reading a few pages or listening to some music, for example.

- **Re-fuelling**

As your brain uses up its reserves of glucose, your ability to over-ride biases and make rational, evidence-based decisions is impaired. Provide some means of people topping up their energy at key points. Be aware of the diversity of your team (health issues, personal preferences, etc.) and offer a range of refreshments.

- **Bias Busting**

When you reconvene following a 5-minute Brain Break or Re-fuelling break, take a few minutes for everyone to consider if they think any biases or unevidenced assumptions have crept into the meeting discussion.

- **Allocating Someone To Be The Sceptic**

A team member is given the role of Sceptic - to question all decisions and ideas, ensuring that proper consideration is been given. Rotate the role so you don't end up with a permanent sceptic!



- **Engaging An Outside Eye**

Invite someone from outside the team to observe the meeting and give objective feedback on content and process.

- **Argue For The Other**

If clear groups are forming around ideas, ask them to swap ideas temporarily and develop arguments to support the opposing idea.



- **Silent Sense Check**

Once a decision has been reached, ask everyone to write a summary to check that you all have the same understanding.

- **Use Checklists**

To make sure people aren't inadvertently excluded from events or processes, develop checklists of the considerations necessary for inclusion.

### *Organisation Nudges - Selection / Recruitment Processes*

- **Group Interview**

Interview groups of candidates together. This counteracts our tendency to evaluate against the 'norm' (the unconscious image in our head of what we like or feel comfortable with) and nudges us to evaluate against other candidates. It is important to get a good balance of candidates in the group to avoid minorities feeling inhibited.

- **Two-Part Interview**

After the standard interview, the panel retire to make a quick evaluation of strengths and weaknesses and further questions they would like to ask the candidate. They also flag any implicit associations they have noticed and challenge these by asking questions like "if she was a 'he', would we have thought the same?", etc. The panel re-join the candidate to ask further questions and conduct an evaluation of the interview.

- **Interrupter Bell**

Panel members have a hotel reception type bell, which they ring whenever they feel that the discussion is based on assumptions or biases about the candidate, rather than evidence. This can also be used in any talent development / review context.



- **Inclusion / Exclusion Selection Methodology**

Starting with a blank list and selecting people who meet the selection criteria is much less likely to trigger unconscious biases and stereotyping than starting with a full list and excluding those who don't meet them.

- **Advertising Posts**

This is a big issue and you should seek full guidance on the impact of unconscious processes in job postings, but here are two examples:

- Focus on a short list of essential job requirements, rather than a long list of 'desirables' – women are likely to apply only if they feel they meet at least 85% of the requirements, for men the figure is 40 – 60%.
- Try putting your proposed text into the gender decoder:

[click here](#)

### *Whole-Team Nudges*

- **Outgroup Contact**

The best way to reduce prejudice towards another, 'out' group is to enable contact – to 'humanise' them. If there is conflict between different teams, find a way of them getting an insight into each other's worlds. Do they know what each other's issues, difficulties, achievements are? The best conditions for this exchange are ones in which all parties:

- Have equal status
- Share common goals
- Are ready to cooperate
- See it as important
- Have the support of the 'authorities'

(*'The Value of Difference'*, Chapter 6 – See Reading List Below)

### Further Reading:

The Chimp Paradox. Prof Steve Peters, London: Vermilion, 2012

Thinking, Fast and Slow. Daniel Kahnemann, London: Penguin, 2011

Inclusion Nudges Guidebook. Tinna C. Nielsen, Lisa Kepinski. Amazon, 2016

The End of Bias. Jessica Nordell, London: Granta, 2021

The Value of Difference – Eliminating Bias In Organisations. Binna Kandola, Oxford: Pearn Kandola, 2009

Blindspot – Hidden Biases of Good People. Mahzarin R. Banaji, Anthony G. Greenwald, New York: Delacorte Press, 2013

## Allyship – Actively Support People Who Are Excluded

Often, allyship is seen as something that white people can do to support people of colour, using their position of privilege to speak out against racism or by refusing to benefit from the advantages their colour can bring in our society. However, we (and Catalyst) think it is something that anyone can do to support any colleague who is experiencing exclusion or discrimination. It could be that they're the subject of office banter, regularly overlooked or made to feel excluded by non-inclusive processes. If you see it happening, you can lend them your support in doing something about it.

Acts of allyship generally fall into one of three categories:

- **Speaking up** – if you witness someone being treated or spoken of unfairly
- **Extending opportunities** – to help overcome the barriers they may face
- **Challenging the status quo** – to ensure that all systems and decision-making processes are equitable

It is best if you talk to them about how you can help. The last thing they may want is someone swooping in like a superhero to save the day – this could really undermine their confidence as well as risking making the situation worse. However, sometimes you might need to take action before you've been able to discuss it with them. Don't put off saying or doing something.

If you can see the need for you to be someone's ally and you're uncertain how to go about it, you can get advice from the Met Office Ally Community.

[click here](#)

And have a look at the excellent article, 'A Tale Of Three Allies'

[click here](#)

## Courage - To Act In Accordance With Your Principles, Even When It Is Uncomfortable

This means **challenging** any non-inclusive behaviour or processes you see around you. Challenging someone else can be very difficult, particularly if you perceive the person as being powerful, but saying nothing is not neutral – your silence only colludes with their unacceptable attitudes and behaviours. If, for any reason, you feel unable to challenge directly, you can seek the assistance of an ally, or contact HR.

## Two Types Of Challenge:

- **In the moment** - this often means challenging when other people are around. Someone says or does something that you think is disrespectful or discriminatory in the office. This is where you need to say something! It doesn't matter that you've let it go in the past. This is where you now draw a line for everyone. You don't need to make a big issue of it, you can just state that you don't like it. Here's a good model, called the **WIN** tool. You state:

1. **W**hat you object to, e.g. "You are making jokes about ..... again."
2. The **I**mpact it has on you, e.g. "It makes me very uncomfortable when you do that."
3. What you want **N**ext, e.g. "I'd prefer it if you didn't make jokes about ....."

Of course, it doesn't mean that the behaviour will immediately stop and you may need to calmly and patiently restate your opposition every time the unacceptable behaviour occurs.

It is important to avoid conflict that might make the issue more difficult to address by damaging your relationships with others. If your requests are ignored, then you should seek advice from HR.

- **A deeper conversation** – this often means arranging a time when you can have a private discussion about the issues of concern. Sometimes, to change the behaviour, all you will need to do is make them aware of what is unacceptable and the impact it is having on others. Sometimes, however, it may be that the behaviour is underpinned by discriminatory attitudes and beliefs that will be harder to change. In this case, you need to consider what your aim is for the meeting: you are not going to change their mind with one discussion, the best you can do is to sow some seeds of new thinking.

There is an approach called **motivational interviewing**, that can significantly increase people's readiness to embrace change. Rather than trying to force change on people, motivational interviewing seeks to clarify and resolve their ambivalence by encouraging them to weigh up the pros and cons of change, and by doing so, address their concerns.

Motivational interviewing uses four techniques:

1. **Build rapport** by showing that you want to understand the other person. Begin by showing that you are willing to see the problem from their point of view, e.g. "I understand that you like to have a laugh." Or "I know that you don't have a high opinion of ..."
2. **Roll with resistance.** Arguing will just result in them digging their heels in and becoming even more defensive. Ask questions and keep the

conversation focused on the facts. Resistance is a signal that you need to change your approach. If the person point-blank refuses to change, help them to understand and acknowledge the consequences of their behaviour. Ask a question such as, "What do you think will happen if you keep doing things the way you are?"

3. **Amplify any discrepancy.** Point out any discrepancies you notice between what the person says and their actual behaviour. Say something like, "you seem to be telling me that you want to be part of a happy team, but some of the things you do are making people unhappy."
4. **Empower the other person.** Find one small thing they can commit to changing. Help them develop a workable plan. But remind them that it is their responsibility to implement it.

Although a single conversation isn't going to transform someone's core beliefs and attitudes, discussing their mixed feelings about change in a supportive way can help kick start the process. Motivational interviewing is a highly skilled approach, but you can take some of the principles above and try them out to improve conversations like these. If you'd like to know more:

## Further Reading

Motivational Interviewing: Helping People Change (Applications of Motivational Interviewing). Miller R. William & Stephen Rollnick, London: The Guilford Press, 2013