E-learning Diversity and Inclusion
Module 3

LGBTQI+-friendly HR policy

This e-learning module is partly based on the e-learning HR Policy and the inclusive workplace from KliqWorks

Congratulations! You have found your way to the e-learning module on diversity and inclusion.

In this third module, we'll take a closer look at how organisations can make their policies LGBTQI+ friendly.

But before we start with this, we would like to take a moment to consider the terminology. Because let's face it, it's not the easiest abbreviation.

Do you know what the letters LGBTQI+ stand for?

Indicate the answer you think is correct.

❑ Lesbian, Gay, Bigender, Transgender, Queer, Intersex

❑ Lesbian, Gay, non-Binary, Transgender, Questioning, Intersectionality

❑ Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex

❑ Lesbian, Gay, Bigender, Transgender, Questioning, Intersectionality

Oops… you clicked an incorrect answer.

[Click here to try again.](#)

Congratulations! You have clicked on the correct answer.

The letters in LGBTQI+ stand for:

|		
L Lesbian - women with a sexual or romantic attraction to women.	**G Gay** (homosexual) - men with a sexual or romantic attraction to men.	**B Bisexual** - persons with a sexual or romantic attraction to persons of more than one gender identity.
T Transgender - A term describing that the sex you were assigned at birth does not match your gender identity. For example, if you were assigned the female sex at birth, but you don't feel a woman, you are trans person.	Q Queer - This is a way to refer to your gender identity and/or sexuality. It is often used by people who are still finding out exactly where they are within the LGBTQI+ spectrum, as an umbrella term or by people who want to make a clear statement against cisgender and heteronormativity.	I Intersex (intersex) - The term describes people whose sexual characteristics do not fall within the classical divide of M/F. Intersex variations are simply variations where a person's body does not fully fit within what we culturally regard as typically male or typically female.

Did you know that...

- ...there are different abbreviations used to refer to people who are not heterosexual? Some examples: LGB, LGBT, LGBTI, LGBTQ, LGBTQI, LGBTQI+, LGBTQIA+, LGBTQIA*+.

- ... the + has been added in order to be inclusive for persons who don't identify with one of the letters?

- ... it is important to use the right abbreviation in the right context? If you are only talking about gay, lesbian and bisexual people, use the abbreviation LGB; if you want to be as wide and inclusive as possible, use one of the abbreviations with a + behind it.

- ... there is another more inclusive way to map out the colourful diversity of sexual preferences, gender identities and the like? You can do this using - you guessed it - an abbreviation: SOGIESC.
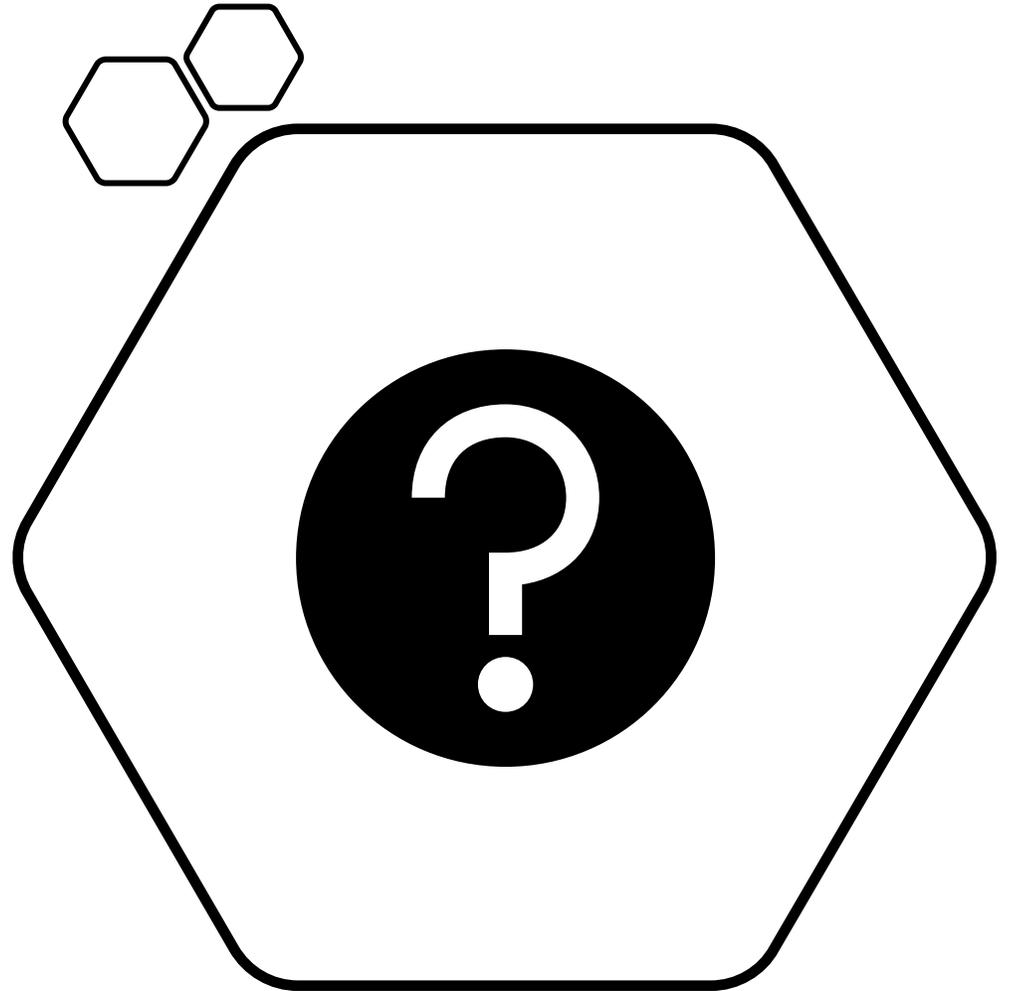
SOGIESC stands for Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity & Expression and Sex Characteristics. Do you have an idea of what these terms stand for? A frequently used image to explain this further is the gender unicorn. Do you know what's on the gender unicorn and what it represents?
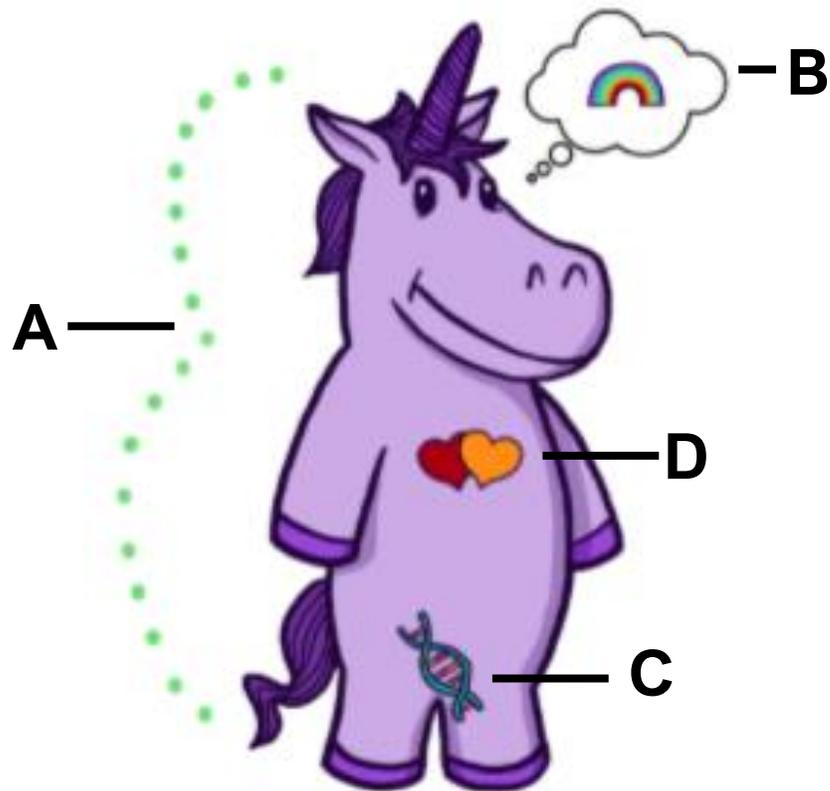
❑ A = Gender identity, B = Gender expression, C = Sex characteristics, D = Sexual orientation

❑ A = Gender identity, B = Gender expression, C = Sexual orientation, D = Sex characteristics

❑ A = Gender expression, B = Gender identity, C = Sexual orientation, D = Sex characteristics

❑ A = Gender expression, B = Gender identity, C = Sex characteristics, D = Sexual orientation
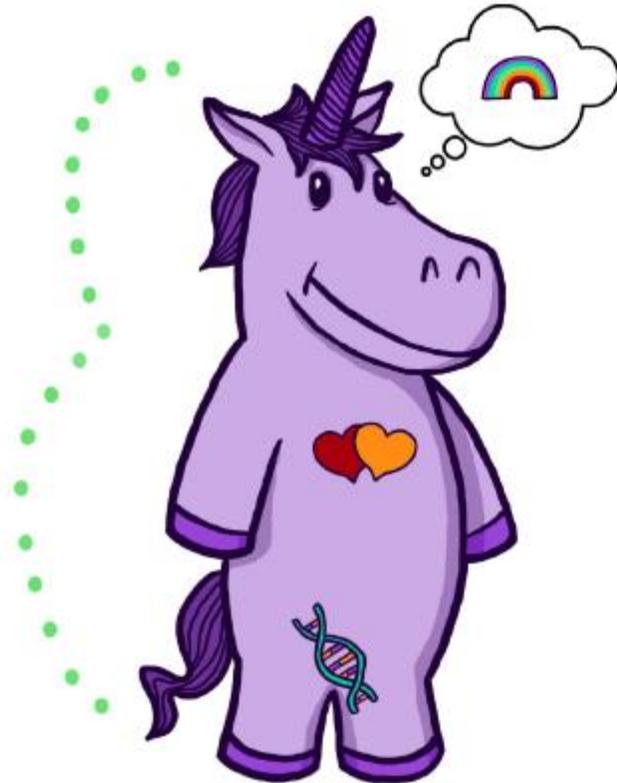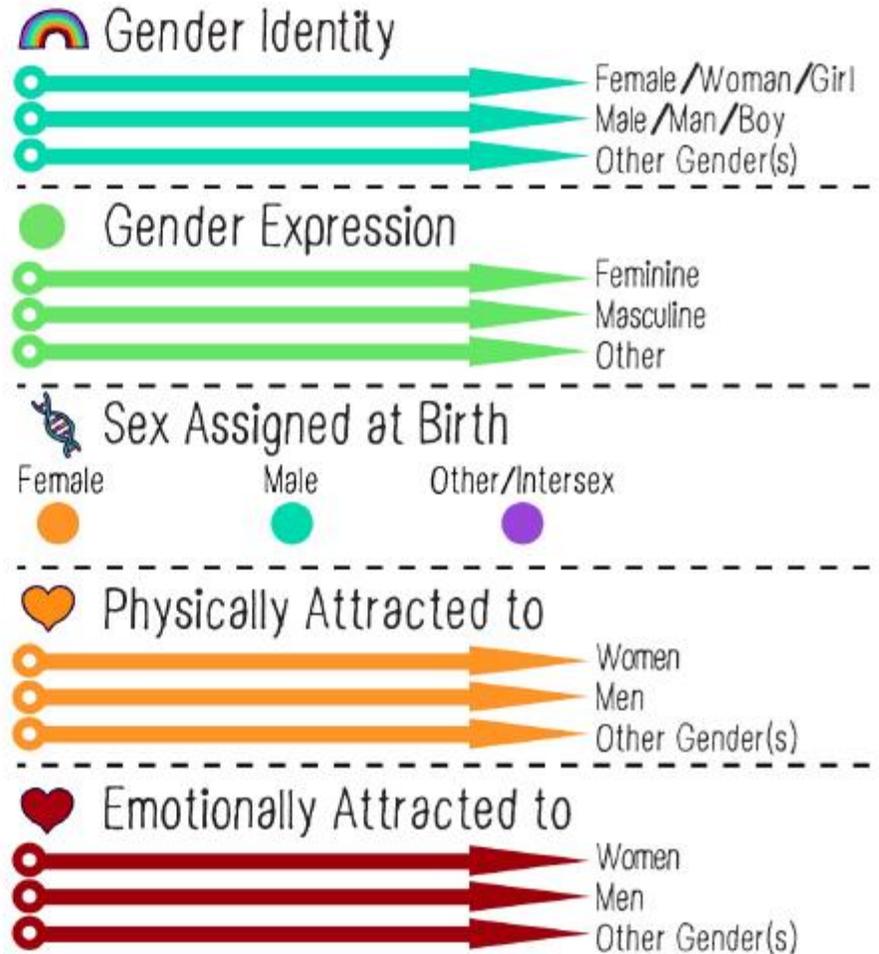
Oops… you clicked an incorrect answer.

Click here to try again.

Congratulations! You have clicked on the correct answer.

You can find the full picture of the gender unicorn here.

Based on what you learned from the gender unicorn, which of the following statements is FALSE?

❑ Biological sex is determined at birth

❑ Gender identity is your inner experience

❑ Biological sex and gender identity mean the same thing

❑ Your biological sex and gender identity do not always match

Oops… you clicked an incorrect answer.

[Click here to try again.](#)

Congratulations! You have clicked on the correct answer.

Set out here you can also see the difference between biological sex and gender identity.

Sex Assigned at Birth

Female　Male　Other/Intersex

Gender Identity

Female/Woman/Girl
Male/Man/Boy
Other Gender(s)

Why is it important to pay attention to LGBTQI+ employees in my organisation?

Because LGBTQI+ employees still experience discrimination in the workplace or when looking for work. This can affect their mental health both at work and in their personal lives.

Which of the statements below is FALSE?

❑ An European study shows that around 1 in 5 LGBTI employees experience discrimination at work.

❑ Lesbians are less likely to find work and earn less than heterosexual women.

❑ LGBTQI+ persons belonging to another minority group are particularly vulnerable to discrimination at work.

❑ There is a glass ceiling for homosexual men: they are less likely to move into the highest positions in organisations.

Oops… you clicked an incorrect answer.

[Click here to try again.](#)

Congratulations! You have clicked on the correct answer.

The assertion that lesbian women are less likely to find work and earn less is perhaps not true, but they do face another obstacle: they are less likely to be promoted to senior management positions. So for them too, a glass ceiling seems to exist.
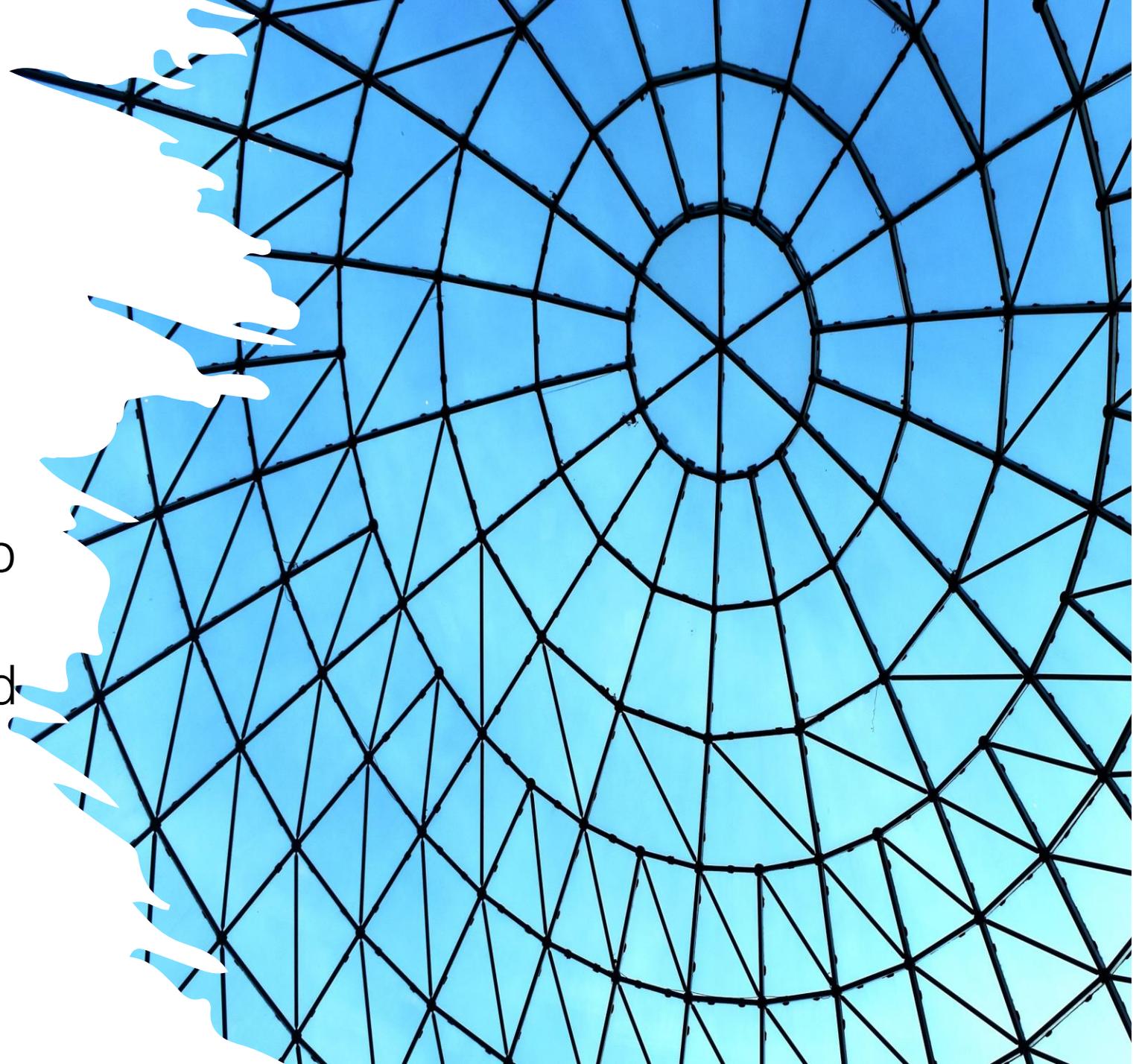
In your opinion, which person is most likely to be discriminated against?

❏ A white homosexual man

❏ A lesbian Muslim woman

❏ A black trans person

With this question, we would like you to take a moment to consider the concept of intersectionality.
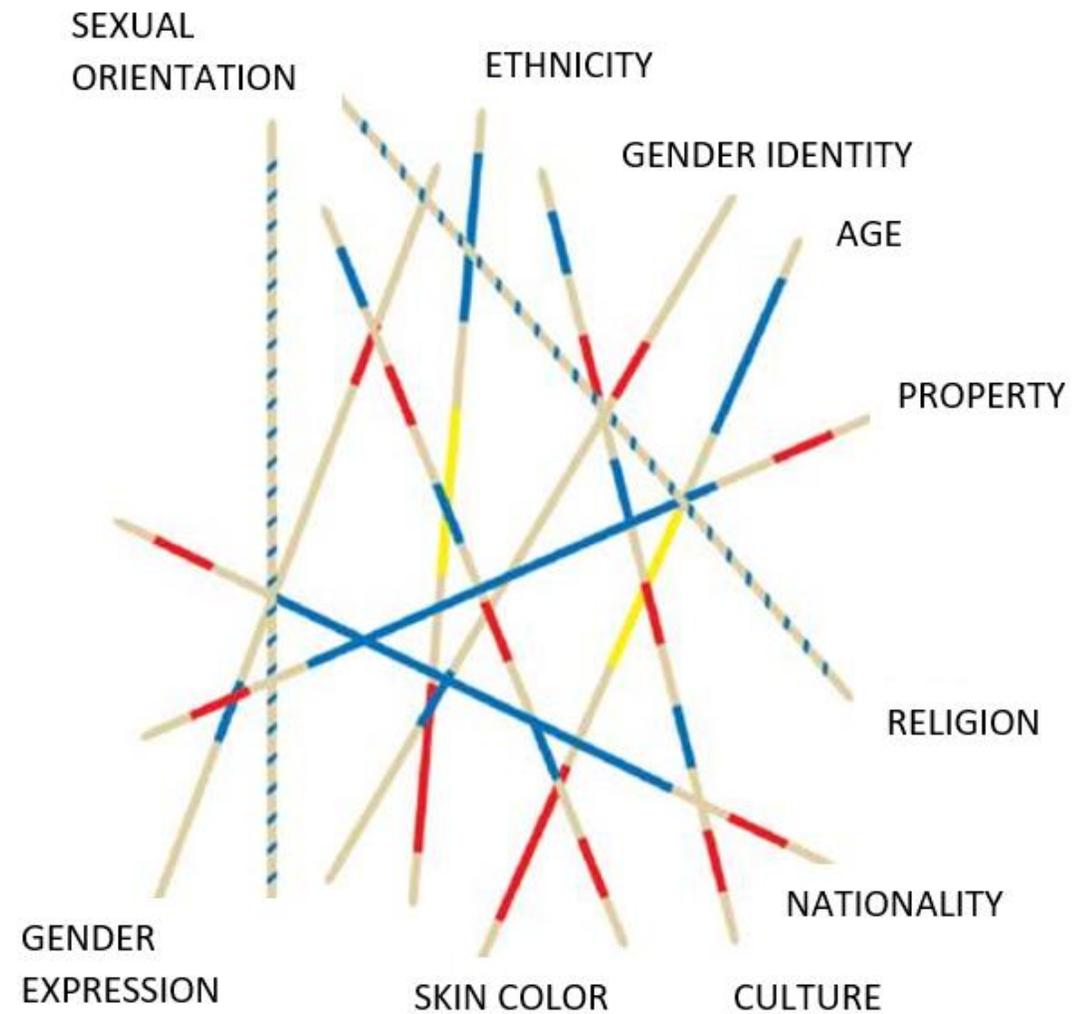
Intersectionality is the idea that different parts of your identity such as your skin colour, age, sexual orientation, ... all influence each other.

When analysing inequalities, you should look at more than just one of those parts of someone's identity. Instead, you should take the various aspects into account. You may benefit from some aspects, while this is not the case at all for other aspects.

- The white homosexual man could benefit from their sex and skin colour, but not on the aspect of sexual orientation.

- The lesbian Muslims may be disadvantaged on the aspects of sex, ethnicity and sexual orientation.

- The black trans person may be disadvantaged on the aspects of gender identity, gender expression and skin colour.

Discrimination and "other" treatment of LGBTQI+ employees is not always visible. It does not always happen consciously or is not always intended in this way. Nevertheless, it can still leave its mark. Watch this [video](#).

Is this something that could happen in your organisation?

There are only few organisations where this could not happen. But being aware of it is a first step in the right direction.

We just saw a few examples of how LGBTQI+ employees are still suffering disadvantages in the workplace, and that this can have a negative effect on their mental health.

You could consider it a **moral obligation** to do something about this. If this argument is not convincing enough, here are two more arguments.
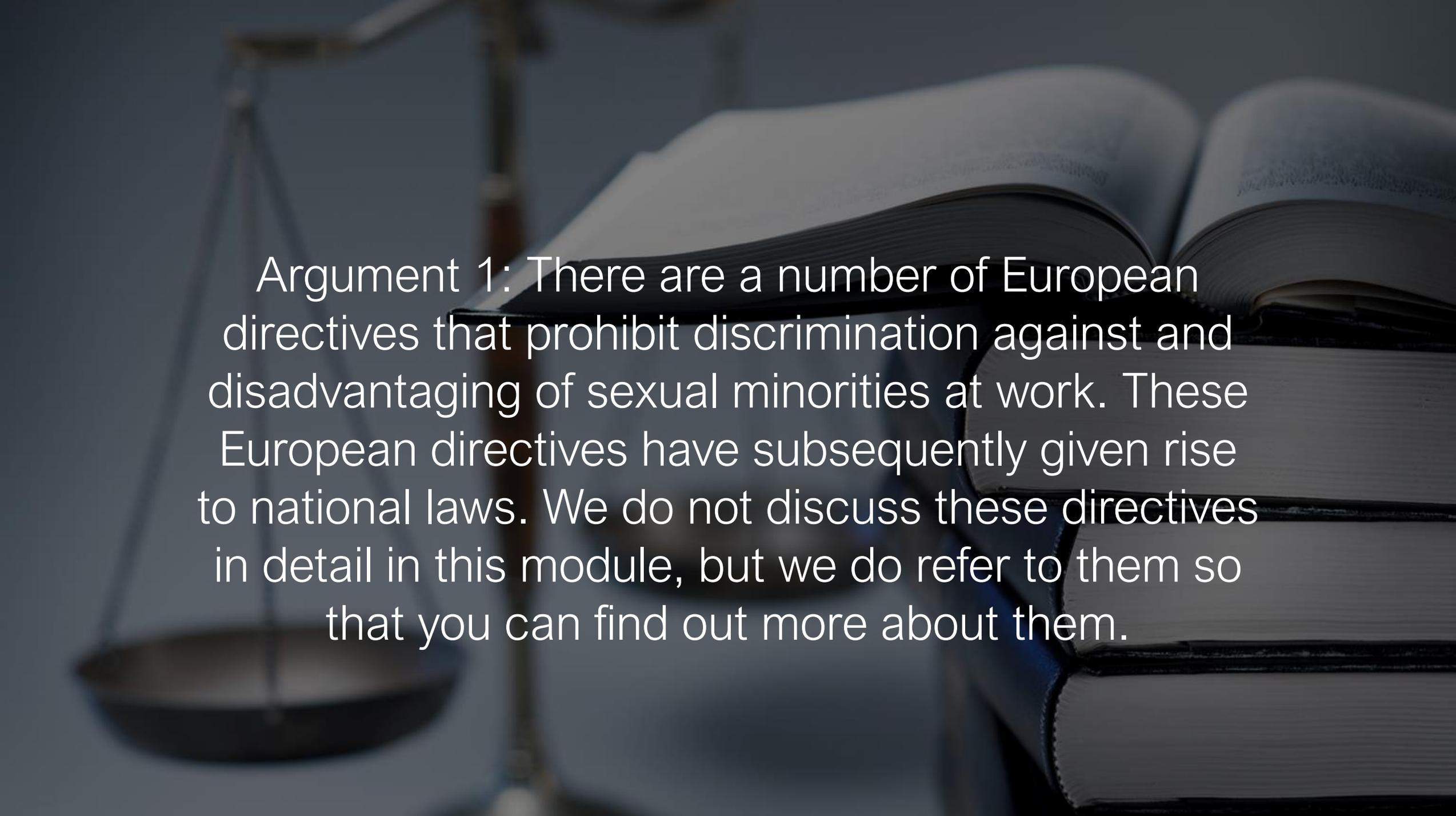
Argument 1: There are a number of European directives that prohibit discrimination against and disadvantaging of sexual minorities at work. These European directives have subsequently given rise to national laws. We do not discuss these directives in detail in this module, but we do refer to them so that you can find out more about them.

Directive 89/391/EEC

This Directive deals with the adoption of measures to improve **worker health and safety**. This includes **all aspects related to work**, including the mental health of employees.

Special attention must be paid to the **most vulnerable groups**. This Directive already highlights possible vulnerabilities in certain groups which should be taken into account.

Directive 2000/78/EC

This Directive deals with **equal treatment in employment and occupation** and prohibits discrimination based on **religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation**.

For more information, watch the following [movie](#) on this Directive.

Directive 2006/54/EC

This Directive deals with equal opportunities and **equal treatment of men and women in matters of employment and occupation**. This Directive also protects against discrimination based on gender reassignment.

Argument 2: Diversity (including gender identity and expression and sexual orientation) benefits employees and the organisation.

Watch this video, which highlights some of the benefits of having diversity in gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation. Can you think of other things?

On the next slide, you can find some of the advantages of diversity that are discussed in this video.

# Examples of benefits of diversity at work

- Better performance
  - Different profiles bring in different perspectives
  - Better decision making
  - Higher creativity
  - Better teamwork

= Economic advantage for organisations

- Advantages for society as a whole

Just hiring employees with diverse backgrounds is not enough. You may have diversity in your workforce, but you cannot yet reap the rewards of this.

You need to work and continue to work on an inclusive organisation. Not with one-off symbolic actions, you need to integrate diversity and inclusion into your organisation's policy. This module provides some practical guidance on how to achieve this.
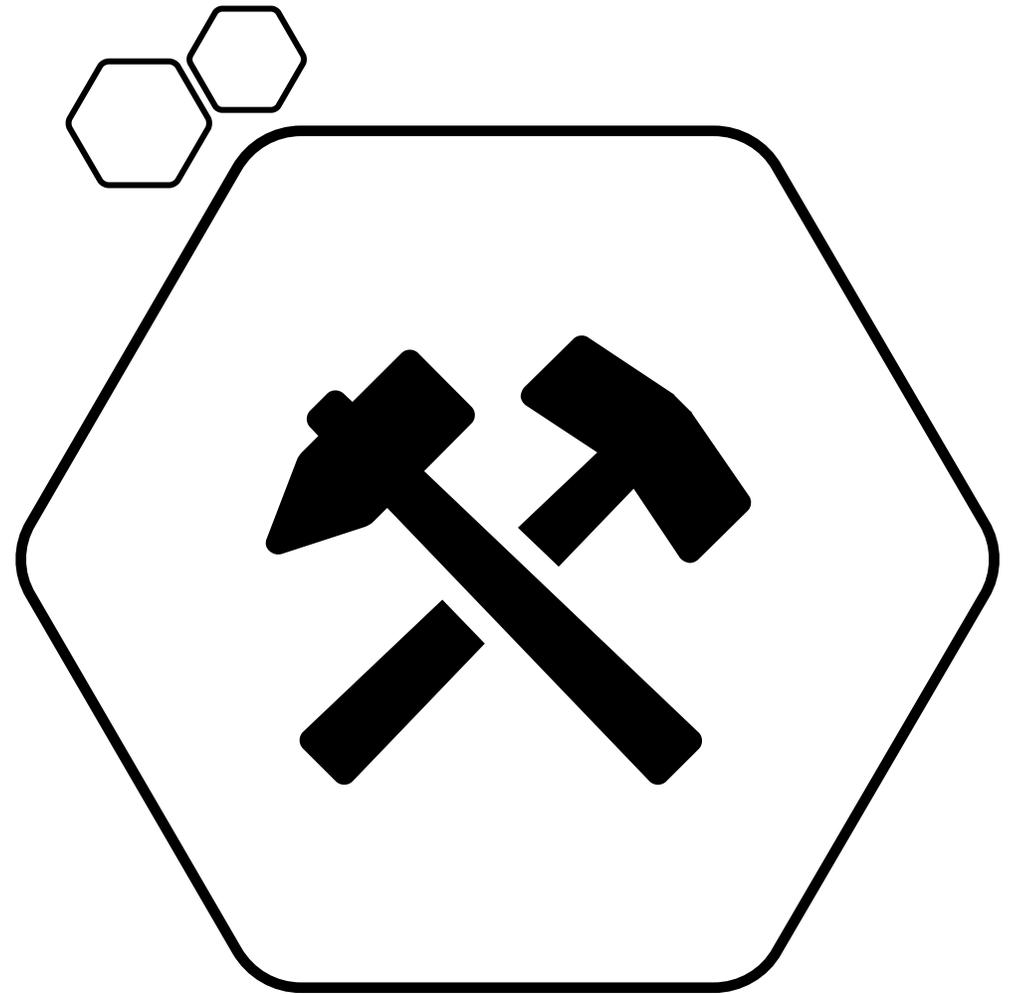
To IDAHOT* or not to IDAHOT?
* International Day Against Homo- and Transphobia

Is it a good idea as an organisation to display the rainbow flag on IDAHOT, for example?

- Yes, because this way LGBTQI+ employees can feel recognised and this can have a positive impact on their well-being.

- No, because when this is only a one-off action to improve one's own image, whereas within the organisation, for example, LGBTQI+ employees face discrimination, this may have a counterproductive effect.

It must therefore be part of the bigger picture.

What % of LGBTI workers in Europe say that they keep their sexual preference hidden at work?
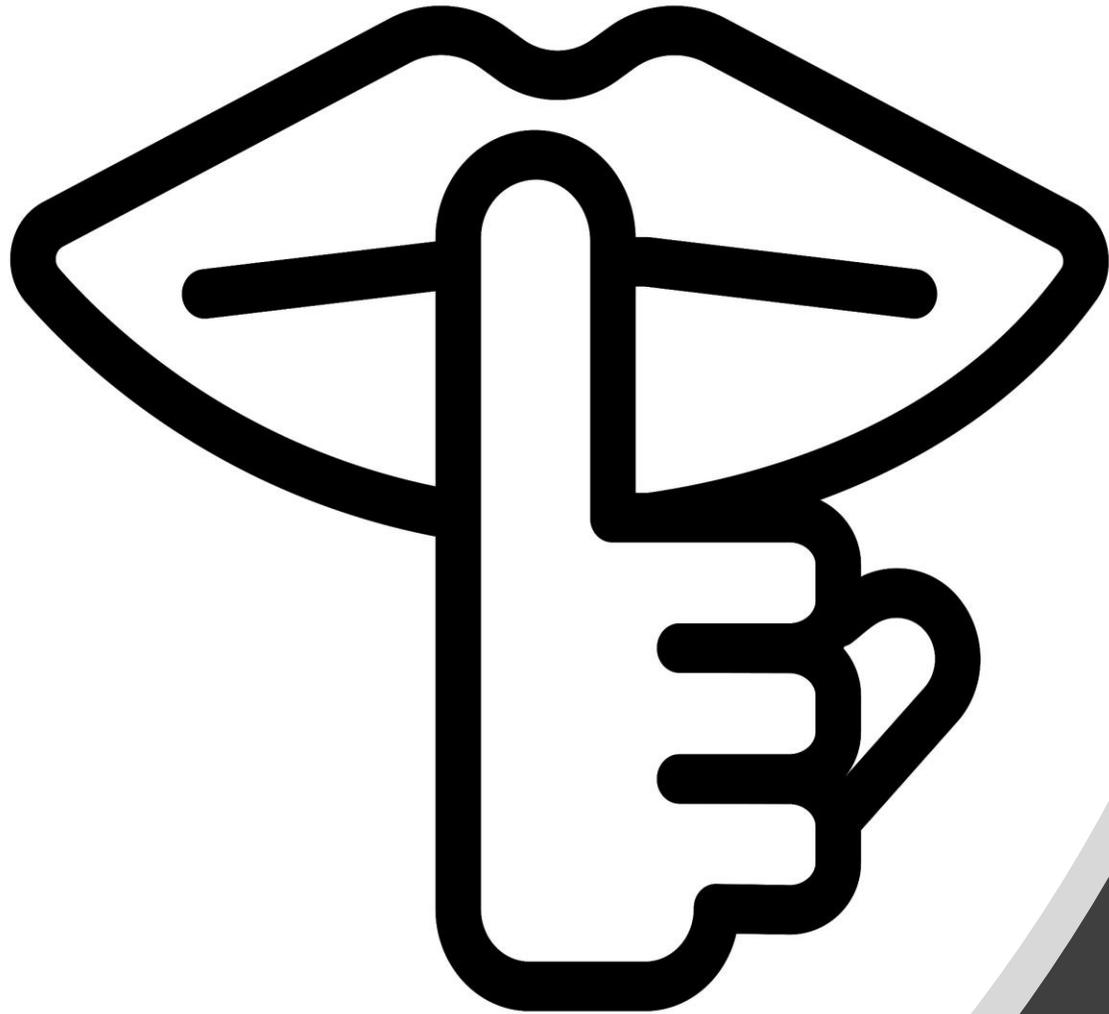
- ☐ Approximately 1/10
- ☐ Approximately 1/5
- ☐ Approximately 1/4
- ☐ Approximately 1/2

Oops… you clicked an incorrect answer.

[Click here to try again.](#)

Congratulations! You have clicked on the correct answer.

The 2019 FRA study found that 26% of LGBTI respondents indicated that they would hide their sexual preference at work.

What can influence someone's choice of whether or not to hide their sexual preference at work?

❑ They hide it as they fear receiving negative reactions from colleagues

❑ They hide it because it is not relevant for the work they perform

❑ They are open about it because it allows them to be more authentic at work

❑ All of the above are correct

Oops… you clicked an incorrect answer.

[Click here to try again.](#)

Congratulations! You have clicked on the correct answer.

Whether or not you are open about your sexual orientation at work, both options have their advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, disclosing your sexual preference increases satisfaction because one can be more oneself, and on the other hand, one can more easily become a victim of discrimination. The organisational culture plays an important role in this: in an open and inclusive organisational culture, LGBTQI+ employees are more likely to be "out" and feel better.

The fact that the choice on whether or not to disclose your sexual preference at work is a difficult one, one that starts a continuous cognitive process, is illustrated by the diagram below "The cost of thinking twice", and this is just the "simple version".
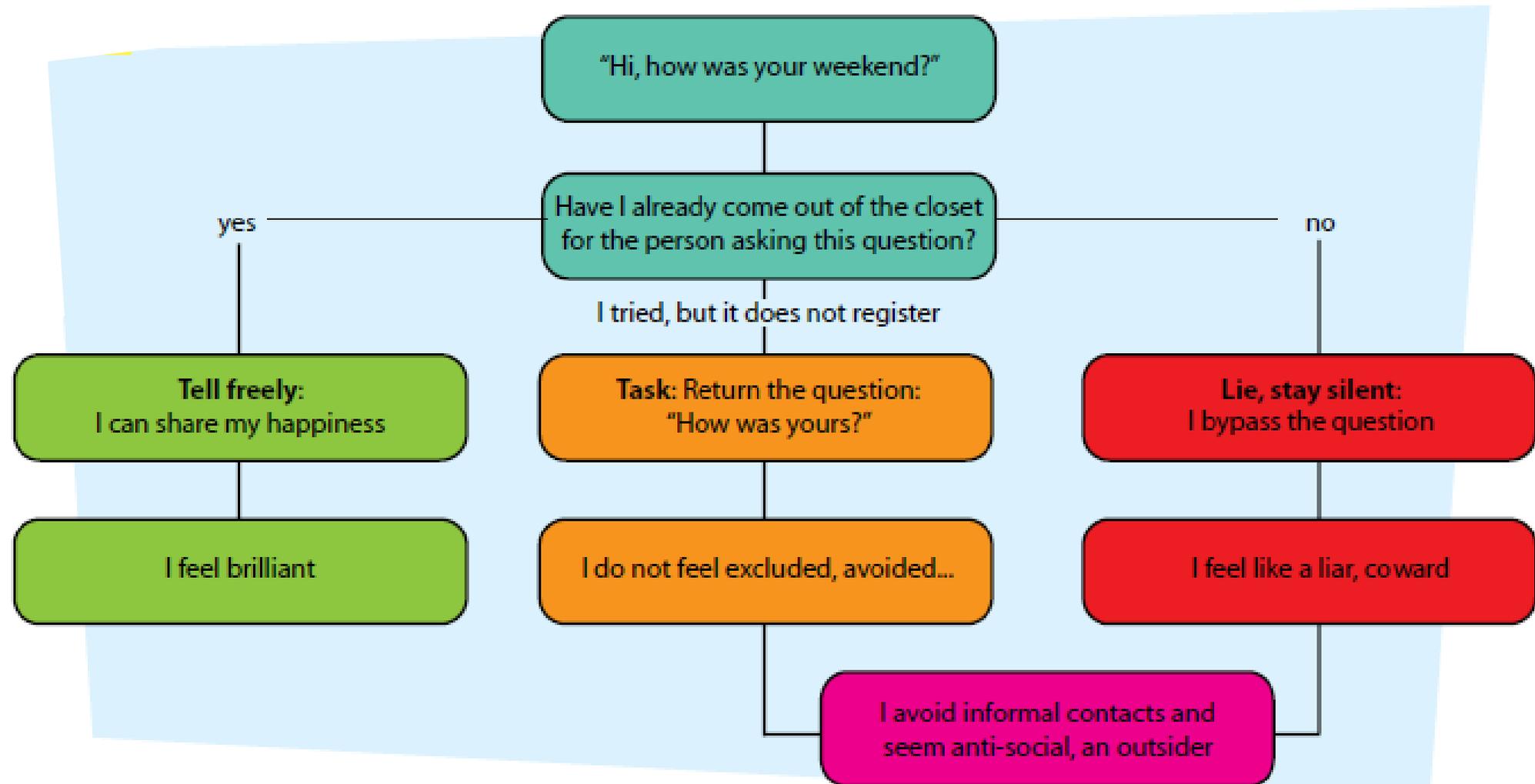
Are there many employees in your organisation who you know belong to the LGBTQI+ community?

❑ Yes

❑ No

Why could this be?

Are there no LGBTQI+ employees in your organisation?

Or maybe there are, but you just don't know?

How can you create more openness towards LGBTQI+ employees?

CONTINUE

Do you take them into account when drafting your policy?

❑ Yes

❑ No

Well done!

CONTINUE

Then it's great that you've found your way to this e-learning module. Below we provide a number of tips to make your policy more LGBTQI+ friendly.

What can you do to attract LGBTQI+ employees? Imagine Samira, a lesbian girl, or Charlie, a non-binary person, having a very interesting profile that may suit a job vacancy in your organisation. How can you draw up the vacancy in such a way that they feel compelled to apply for your organisation?

Take a look at the job advert below.
Indicate what can be improved by clicking on the text.

WANTED: TALENTED   M/F

Oops… you clicked an incorrect answer.

[Click here to try again.](#)

Congratulations! You have clicked on the correct answer.

By adding M/F to your vacancy, you will exclude potential employees who do not identify as being male or female. This can be resolved very easily by placing M/F/X in your vacancy, or why not F/M/X? You could also write 'Wanted: Motivated colleague!' and leave 'M/F/X' out completely.

You can include an inclusive invitation to apply at the end of an inclusive vacancy. Which of the following invitations is most inclusive?

❑ We encourage everyone to apply for this position

❑ We encourage everyone to apply for this position, regardless of gender, age, origin, sexual preference, disability, etc.

Both sentences indicate that everyone can apply for the position. But by adding gender, age, origin, sexual preference, disability, etc., you also explicitly address these groups. This increases the chances that they will also apply. You can make it even stronger by, for example, adding that diversity is seen as an added value within the organisation.

On the next page you can find an inclusive text to include in a vacancy.

[organisation name] wants to reflect our society. We believe that diversity drives quality. Candidates are selected based on their qualities and skills, regardless of education, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, sex characteristics, origin, age or disability. If you are considering applying but have some questions, please let us know.

In addition to an inclusive job advert, it is also important that potential employees find their way to your organisation.

Take a closer look at your recruitment policy:

- Which recruitment channels do you usually use?

- How could broaden your recruitment scope?

It is also important that they feel welcome in the organisation. Potential employees may take a look at your website before applying. What can you do to ensure that all potential employees feel engaged and welcome in your organisation?

Some tips:
- Make diversity and inclusion part of your vision and mission. You can make this very explicit, for example, by having the CEO speak about this or by signing a diversity charter and posting it on your website.
- Make diversity and inclusion visible in words (use inclusive terminology) and images (use a diversity of employees in images) on your website.
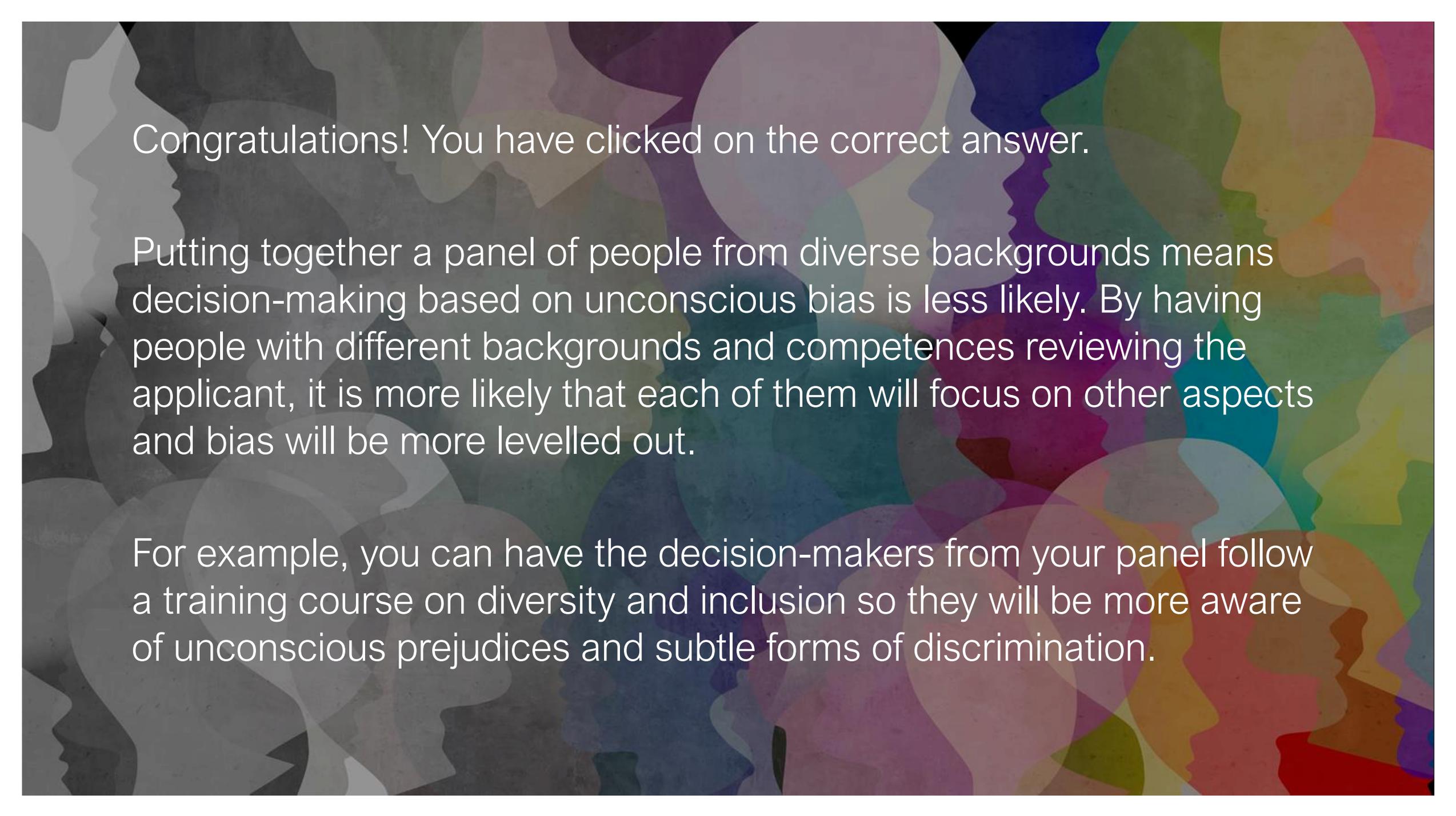
When an applicant with a diverse background is invited to a job interview, which selection panel is the most likely to yield the greatest success for this applicant? Click on the correct photo.

Oops… you clicked an incorrect answer.

[Click here to try again.](#)

Congratulations! You have clicked on the correct answer.

Putting together a panel of people from diverse backgrounds means decision-making based on unconscious bias is less likely. By having people with different backgrounds and competences reviewing the applicant, it is more likely that each of them will focus on other aspects and bias will be more levelled out.

For example, you can have the decision-makers from your panel follow a training course on diversity and inclusion so they will be more aware of unconscious prejudices and subtle forms of discrimination.

Inclusive use of language in the workplace

What will you take away from this video?

The message we want to share with this video is integrated into the exercise on the next slide.

Exercise: inclusive language use in the workplace

Sam has been working as a garden contractor for 15 years. He came out as a trans man a few months ago. When Sam meets a customer he worked with last year, he explains his situation. The customer responds very positively. Shortly afterwards Sam hears the customer talk to his colleagues about him. The customer says: "I think it's great that she made that choice. It will definitely have been an intense process for her."

How would Sam feel when he hears this?

❑ Sam feels good: the customer clearly respects Sam's gender identity.

❑ Sam does not feel good: the customer does not respect Sam's gender identity (unconsciously).

Oops… you clicked an incorrect answer.

[Click here to try again.](#)

Congratulations! You have clicked on the correct answer.

Despite the customer's **warm response**, Sam **does not feel good**. When the customer talks to his colleagues about him, the customer refers to Sam as 'her' and 'she'. By referring to Sam as a woman **the customer (unconsciously) rejects Sam's new gender identity**.

Below are a few tips on how to use language in your organisation.

Tips on inclusive and gender-neutral language use

- Use 'partner' instead of 'husband' or 'wife'.

- Use 'parent' instead of 'mother' or 'father'.

- Only ask about the gender of people if it is really necessary.

- Add a third answer option, such as 'other' or 'x' when polling for a person's sex or gender identity.

- Make it easy to change the gender on documents.

- Make sure that an employee can always amend this data (or have it amended).

Source: Flemish government (Belgium)

Tips on inclusive and gender-neutral language use

- Use a neutral approach in emails and letters. For example, "Dear colleague" or "Dear customer" instead of "Dear Sir" or "Dear Mr (surname)".

- Address people directly in texts by writing 'you' and use the plural form to refer to people. Avoid using "he", "she" or "he/she".

- Strive for a similar ratio of images of men and women in different areas of interest.

- Use gender-neutral job titles (e.g. prenatal care professional instead of midwife).

- Describe competences as behaviour, not personality traits that are gender-related.

- Use gender-neutral icons. Eg.

In the video we saw examples of deadnaming and misgendering. What is meant by this?

❏ Deadnaming: others using the birth name of a trans person

  continuously, consciously or unconsciously.

  Misgendering: addressing a person with the wrong pronoun.

❏ Deadnaming: saying goodbye to the birth name during a
  transition.

  Misgendering: addressing a person with the wrong pronoun.

Oops… you clicked an incorrect answer.

Click here to try again.

Congratulations! You have clicked on the correct answer.

Deadnaming and misgendering do not always take place maliciously or intentionally. However, it is important to highlight it and make people aware that it can be offensive to address someone in a way they don't see themselves. In this way, they can learn from this and respond in a more respectful way next time.

Note: Sometimes it is OK to use the deadname, for example in the context of a testimonial. But this must be done with the consent of the person.

Reflection exercise: Trans man Sam

In a previous exercise, we discussed Sam, who revealed a few months ago that he is a trans man. As an organisation, what could you do to best support Sam? Take a moment to consider the following questions:

- Have the procedures in your organisation been adapted so that employees can change their gender role in the workplace?

- Are there inclusive facilities in the workplace?

- How does your organisation support employees undergoing transition?

- Can trans persons contact a confidential counsellor to discuss how they can communicate about this with their manager and/or direct colleagues? Are confidential counsellors trained to deal with any questions in this regard?

Inclusive facilities: example toilet room

Which of the two images below is the most correct image for a gender-inclusive toilet?
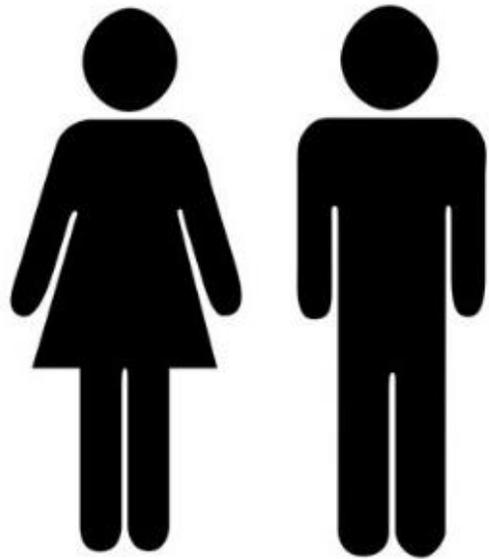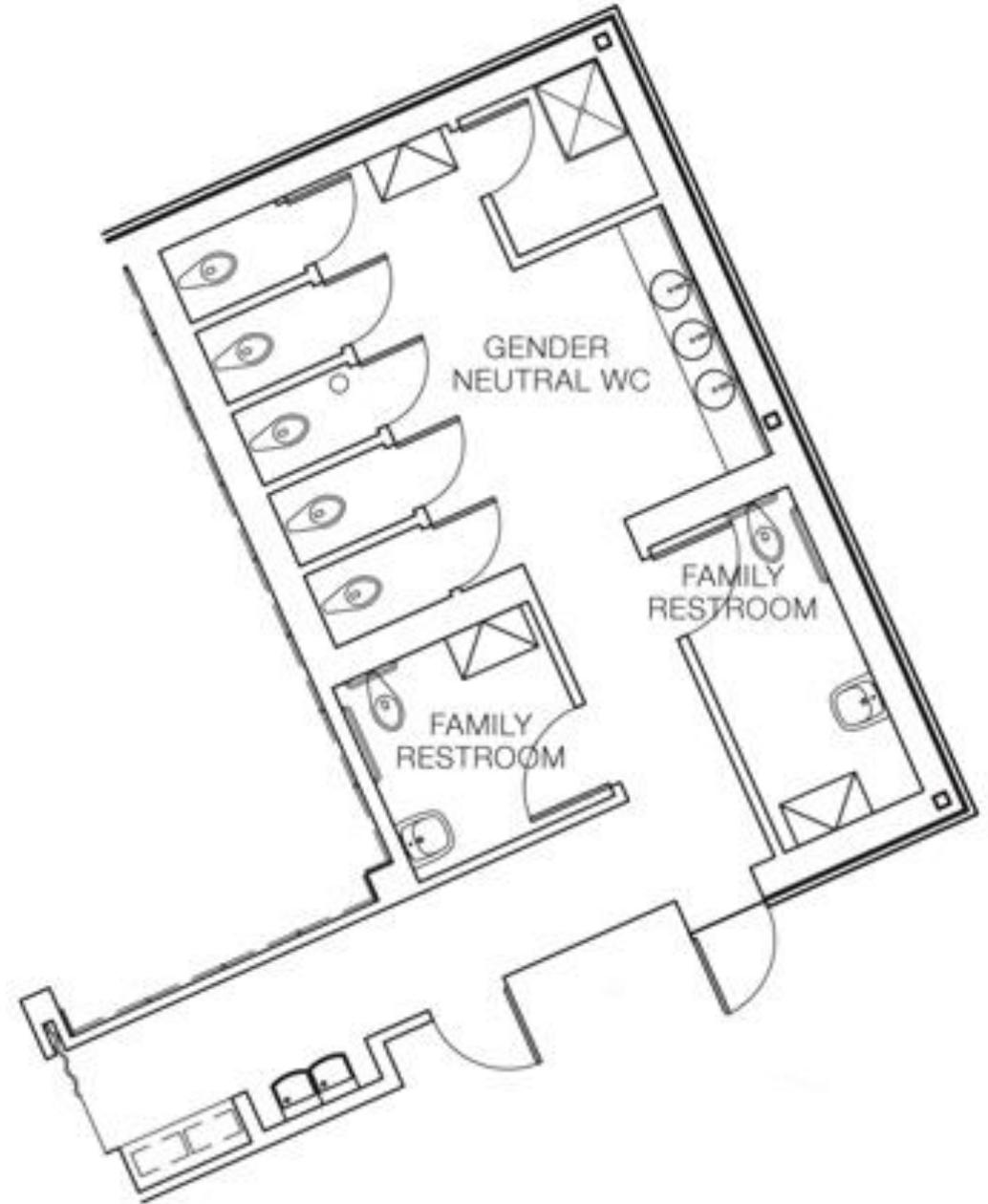
Oops… you clicked an incorrect answer.

Click here to try again.

Congratulations! You have clicked on the correct answer.

An example of an inclusive toilet room and some inclusive icons are shown here.

GENDER NEUTRAL WC

FAMILY RESTROOM

FAMILY RESTROOM

Why is this an inclusive toilet space?

- There is one entrance for all toilets.
- The toilets are given an icon by a toilet (i.e. not a man or a woman) and the urinals are given an icon of a urinal (i.e. not a man).
- All toilet rooms, including urinals, are closed.
- There is a changing table in the room, so that fathers can also change their baby easily and without embarrassment.
- There is also a children's toilet and a toilet for disabled persons in the same room.

Towards a proactive inclusive HR policy

In order to draw up an optimal and proactive inclusive HR policy, it is important to think about this in advance and to actively seek information.

- Check what legislation applies with regard to, for example, co-parenting, name change, transition, etc.

- Then look at the possibilities for further support in the context of the organisation.

In this way, you can already process this information within the systems and procedures of your organisation and you can take immediate action.

Where can you find more information on SOGIESC in Europe?

ILGA Europe (https://www.ilga-europe.org/): ILGA-Europe are a driving force for political, legal and social change in Europe and Central Asia. Our vision is of a world where dignity, freedoms and full enjoyment of human rights are protected and ensured to everyone regardless of their actual or perceived sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics.