

CRF DIGITAL COMMUNITY EVENT DIVERSITY, INCLUSIVITY AND WELLBEING

CRF's Diversity, Inclusivity and Wellbeing Community came together to discuss their recent experiences with inclusion and the new world of work. This summary shares some of the key insights from the discussion.

OVERVIEW OF THE ISSUES

CRF's Commercial Director **Melissa Bull** launched the discussion by reviewing the issues.

Why should we be talking about inclusion in the new world of work? In summary, the changes in the workplace caused by the turbulent business environment are emphasising the need to build more inclusive processes. However, inclusion may be ignored if organisations don't make a conscious effort to focus on it. This is a huge risk to business and will inevitably lead to a growth in exclusion and impact engagement, performance, and retention.

Lydia Collins, Associate Consultant at Included, and Dean Harris, Head of Client Solutions, joined the group to discuss:

- What good inclusion looks like in the new world of work
- The practical steps organisations are taking to create inclusive cultures

SPEAKER



included.

ASSOCIATE CONSULTANT AT INCLUDED, LYDIA COLLINS

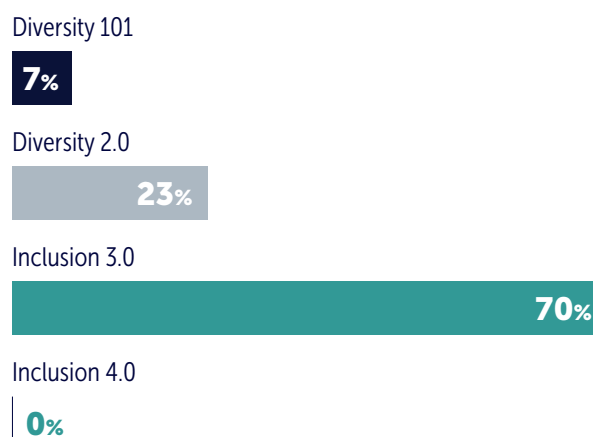
Lydia supports the delivery of client work across Included's 5 key Service areas, with a focus on issues that affect disabled and neurodivergent people like herself. Previously, she worked with the Student Success department of Pearson. As an experienced researcher, Lydia has partnered with the Institute for Public Safety, Crime and Justice in evaluating various intervention projects. As an Associate Lecturer at the University of Northampton, Lydia was awarded an Associate Fellowship of the Higher Education Institute, with acknowledgement for her work towards Diversity and Inclusion at the institution.

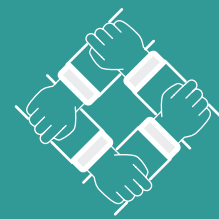
SPEAKER SESSION

- Why do we need to be talking about inclusion as the world of work changes? There is an increased utilisation of technology and an increased potential for flexible and home working. However, this is always going to be of greater benefit to people with greater privilege: affordable central heating; a safe, quiet space to work; a day uninterrupted by caring responsibilities. Flexible working, additional assistance for carers, a stipend for heating costs... these can all help to make working from home more inclusive, or alternatively organisations can offer to cover travel costs for people who want to be included in the office.
- Ultimately, diversity and inclusion is good for people and good for the bottom line. To measure how companies are developing in their capacity and focus for diversity and inclusion, Included uses a maturity model: 1) Diversity 101, which is the bare minimum of legal compliance; 2) Diversity 2.0, which is marketing-led but not necessarily authentic or internal; 3) Inclusion 3.0, where companies begin to embed inclusive policies and processes that accommodates a broad range of personalities and needs; and, finally and occasionally, 4) Inclusion 4.0, which requires companies to abandon old, exclusive systems in order to transform towards a diverse or inclusive workplace. You can read more about Included's model [here](#).

PARTICIPANT POLL

Using Included's maturity model, how would you rate current D&I capacity in your organisation?





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- The aim of these stages is to create an informed approach – thinking about a company's history in this area, their present, and the potential to model the future. Experimentation is good, but when it comes to deliberating about where to spend time/money, collecting and using evidence is key.
- Diverse representation is important, but companies need to prioritise psychological safety, where people of all backgrounds and identities have access to a robust way of communicating without fear of reprisal or limitations of progression. Ethical awareness – fair pay, good conditions, protective policies – also leads to inclusive workplaces and greater psychological safety.
- At its most mature stage, one of the aims of inclusion is respect for community, whether it's local to an office or an online customer base.
- A popular phrase in the disabled community is 'nothing about us without us': when implementing change to affect a particular community, centre the voices of that community first to ensure that you're not making well-intended but unhelpful decisions.



WHAT DOES GOOD INCLUSION LOOK LIKE IN THE NEW WORLD OF WORK?

- Psychological safety manifests in the workplace in a myriad of ways and is a vital part of inclusion.
 - People can end up overly worrying about a community they are not a part of, for example around labels or the collection of data on representation through surveys. To tackle this, data collection can be made voluntary or people can be offered a 'prefer not to say' option. Alternatively, representation can be found through listening groups or informal discussion events.
 - Trust and transparency around data collection can help people to feel more comfortable with offering up survey data – if you're collecting the data, you need to say what it's for and how it will be used. The worst thing to do is to collect data and do nothing with it.
 - One participant explained that they used a 6-week campaign to push demographic data collection across the entire population from 0% to 81%. That participant also joined divisional team meetings to push the campaign and give people a chance to talk about the questions they were being asked in the survey. Education around what disability is, and the language people use to describe disability, may help to improve the accuracy of data in this area in particular.
 - One participant said they are offering people an opportunity to 'self-ID' in a one-off survey, to collect more information on their employee demographics. Several participants said that their employees have

formed into in-person and online communities or 'networks', which people can join as a self-identified member or as an ally, which fostered confidence. Within such groups, differing levels of seniority through 'executive sponsors' can help give credibility to those networks and makes them more sustainability.

- The most mature version of the 'inclusive workplace' is Inclusion 4.0: a truly transformative overhaul of conventional business practices. This is the "*complete transformation and redesign of the system*" – not working within the traditional pillars of business strategy, but completely changing them and putting DEI in the centre focus. You can read more about these pillars [here](#).
 - What does this entail? It's about deconstructing where income goes: it's not going into savings or buybacks, it's going to the local community or to communities that are affected by what the company produces or does. This requires a fundamental shift away from profit and towards reinvestment and sustainable practices.
 - This can lead to a real change in our narrative of work – away from Eurocentric ideals of professionalism and productivity and towards a balance of wellbeing and outputs.



WHAT ARE SOME PRACTICAL STEPS OTHER ORGANISATIONS ARE TAKING TO CREATE INCLUSION?

- A brilliant resource is ERGs (Employee Resource Groups) – but how do you turn ERGs and conversations into practical solutions? They are most useful in attempting work with a narrow focus where a particular community or a specific issue is addressed. For example, Black women and disabled people consistently register the lowest levels of psychological safety at work, so how could this be tackled?
 - An example given was that to support Black women at a major UK bank, executives were asked to sponsor them in all areas of the business. These sponsors then invited their sponsees to meetings and advocated for them. This low cost, low admin approach saw a 67% increase in promotions for Black women. It's important to find ways to provide additional support that makes it part of the standard work responsibilities, so people are not expected to perform additional labour beyond the bounds of the work day and it doesn't become a last-minute exercise.
 - The other area that requires meaningful focus is on disability. The medical model of disability looks at the physical impacts of disability as if the person with disability is the issue, while the social model shifts focus to the inaccessibility of the world around that person and posits that it is not them that needs fixing, but the barriers created by the design of the world around them. The distinction between the two models is very helpful, but



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it does put an onus on employers to create physical and psychological inclusion and provide some education on the difference.

- Taking a specific focus can also help companies to make their broader external work more inclusive as well. At another organisation, they want to dedicate 20% of housing built to refugees, but they were focusing on Eurocentric house builds with the '2 up, 2 down' model. Instead, they opted for multi-generational housing, which is much more useful to recipients.
- Identifying and eliminating bias in the development of new technologies is vital to inclusion in the new world of work, especially where small changes could have wide-reaching implications for customers and employees.
 - A vital example for technology companies is taking time to de-bias their coding – picking out instances of human bias in the production stage to prevent the artificial intelligences from mimicking those same biases in their outputs.
 - An example of an urgent issue for inclusion is products like driverless cars, which have recently been shown to not be as reliable at recognising pedestrians with darker skin tones.
 - In HR, recruitment is an area where we use greater automation, which increases the risk of coded biases in sorting and selecting CVs. To tackle this, maybe try a CV-less approach, or one based on competency questions instead.
 - Using frameworks and tick-lists can help to prevent busy people from overlooking their own potential for bias, by forcing them to consider a series of criteria before making a decision.
- What are some examples for creating a psychologically safe environment in the workplace?
 - Psychological Safety is something that can manifest differently depending on an individual's identity, background, and experiences. For example, as vulnerability is a key part of psychological safety, it's important to remember that vulnerability will look and feel different to someone who is in a privileged majority, than those who are under-represented, under-served, and under-estimated. For example, the cost of vulnerability will vary hugely, depending on a person's seniority, background, and identity, so we encourage companies and communities to pursue psychological safety with this in mind. Of course I would add my usual reminder about being mindful of emotional labour and where this sits – we often see those from minoritised communities shouldering a lot of this labour, so our initiatives should challenge this and ensure we have sufficient resourcing, and support systems in place.

- Other practical suggestions for creating psychological safety include:
 - Anonymous feedback channels paired with Inclusive Leadership and Conflict Resolution training
 - Normalising feedback – with more structure, guidance, and regularity
 - Microaggression awareness and 'upstander' training
 - Clear and effective disciplinary/complaints processes
 - Unconscious Bias training.

FURTHER READING

Included. 2022. **Psychological Safety is Essential for Inclusion at Work.** Article. <https://www.included.com/psychological-safety-is-essential-for-inclusion-at-work>

Mercer. 2022. **Overcoming Racial Inequalities in UK Organisations.** Partner resource. <https://www.mercer.com/content/mercer/europe/uk/en/our-thinking/overcoming-racial-inequalities-in-uk-organisations.html>

The Oxford Group. 2022. **Unlock Innovation with Psychological Safety.** Partner resource. [https://www.oxford-group.com/sites/default/files/Unlock%20innovation%20with%20psychological%20safety_Webv2_FINAL%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.oxford-group.com/sites/default/files/Unlock%20innovation%20with%20psychological%20safety_Webv2_FINAL%20(1).pdf)

crf SAVE THE DATE

 *The next session of the Diversity, Inclusivity and Wellbeing Community:*

Tuesday 23 May at 12.00 BST

Please get in **touch** with any topics that you would like to discuss and feature at the next session.