Managers are facing increased pressure & need to ensure *diversity & inclusion (D&I)* in their companies. Traditional initiatives focus on changing individuals, not systems,² & have found limited success³,⁴. Below are some easy-to-implement *behavioral approaches* & *structural interventions* to improve D&I in an organization.¹,⁵

### Behavioral Insights to Cultivate D&I

- **Attraction & Recruitment**
  - Use gender-neutral language
  - Incorporate visual cues
  - Show your inclusive climate
  - Anonymize applicants when appropriate

- **Screening & Selection**
  - Practice structure & consistency
  - Evaluate candidates “horizontally”

- **Promotion, Advancement, & Retention**
  - Make the option to negotiate explicit
  - Communicate & signal growth mindset about performance
  - Encourage applications for promotions
  - Make use of “opt-out” promotions
  - Find alternatives to self-evaluations
  - Rethink performance rating scales

### Organizational Culture

- Endorsement of D&I by leaders
- Incorporate accountability & transparency checks
- Incorporate endorsement of D&I by leaders

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1. [Behavioral Insights to Cultivate D&I](#)
2. [Managing D&I](#)
3. [D&I Initiatives](#)
4. [Success in STEM](#)
5. [Implementing D&I](#)
Applying Behavioral Insights to Cultivate Diversity & Inclusion

**Attraction & recruitment**

- **Use gender-neutral language**
  Male-dominated fields tend to use more masculine language in job ads (e.g., competitive, dominant), which can dissuade some applicants. Neutral wording can attract more women & people in general.

- **Incorporate visual cues**
  Include pictures of diverse employees in job ads, but only if it is an accurate depiction of your workforce.
  If diversity is low, share future plans & milestones for diversifying.

- **Be specific**
  - Specify required qualifications as concretely & objectively as possible
  - Change default on job ads to include part-time, job share, hybrid, work from home or flexible working (& make sure those options are actually available)

- **Show your inclusive climate**
  Diversity statements can attract minority groups, but need specifics (i.e., numeric diversity goals).
  Create with care & data, & test multiple versions.
  Make sure that the values espoused in these statements are enacted throughout your workplace culture.

**Screening & selection**

- **Practice structure & consistency**
  Use the same questions & order for all applicants (reduces bias & better predicts job performance), & develop a scoring system & identify hiring criteria in advance.

- **Anonymize applicants when appropriate**
  Hide identifying demographic information on applications, unless needed for a specific hiring goal.

- **Evaluate applications as sets**
  Evaluate “horizontally” (question by question across all applicants) & where possible hire in groups, comparing candidates together shifts focus to performance-based evaluations.

**Interview Questions**
1. Tell me about yourself
2. Interest in position
3. Behavioral question
4. Analysis

**Candidate Rubric**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Score</th>
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**Read more details about these approaches in the full chapter of the book, Behavioral Science in the Wild.**
Applying Behavioral Insights to Cultivate Diversity & Inclusion

Promotions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rethink performance rating scales</th>
<th>Find alternatives to self-evaluations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6/6</td>
<td>Use 360 peer evaluation of a worker’s specific behaviors instead of self-evaluations</td>
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</table>

### Performance reviews

Rethink performance rating scales

Review workers on scales **out of 6** or another number, /10 or /100 are associated with perfection & brilliance, & can lead to bias.

Find alternatives to self-evaluations

Use 360 peer evaluation of a worker’s specific behaviors instead of self-evaluations.

### Promotions

**Make use of “opt-out” promotions**

Automatically consider all staff past a pre-determined qualification for promotion unless they opt-out; opt-in can result in a gender gap.

**Encourage staff to apply**

Experiment with explicitly encouraging employees of different identities to apply for opportunities.

**Make the option to negotiate explicit**

Frame negotiations as asking (neutral language) & have clear information about what a good final agreement includes & what options are available.

### Practice, communicate, & signal a growth mindset

**Fixed mindsets can reduce collaboration, innovation & trust, & cause achievement gaps; communicate a growth mindset through policies, norms, & leadership messages**

### Endorse D&I & practice inclusive leadership

Without inclusive leadership, changing policies does not benefit underrepresented groups; leaders need to actively endorse & enact D&I.

Create an environment where everyone:
- has a chance to speak at the table
- is valued for what they bring to the team
- is safe to make mistakes & share perspectives

### Incorporate accountability & transparency checks

Include accountability & transparency checks in decisions like hiring & advancement. Treat D&I like any other initiative; include milestones, progress checks, & metrics.

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Small changes can have big results, especially when focusing on systems. Creating lasting D&I requires commitment, experimentation, & evaluation of interventions. Start small, but think big, from rehousing systems to on-the-ground protocols.
References


About Project RISE

How can we educate adults about implicit bias in a way that fosters mutual respect and creates a more inclusive culture in the workplace? Project RISE (Realizing Identity-Safe Environments) will harness our understanding of implicit bias, intergroup contact, & social identity threat to create a more “identity safe” workplace culture. Interventions designed to create identity-safe contexts have been shown to narrow the gender gap in academic performance. Project RISE aims to create positive cultural change for women & men in science and engineering by: (1) educating participants about implicit bias, (2) framing perceptions of organizational interactions between men and women in the organization, and (3) providing them with a clear understanding for how to combat bias. Learn more: successinstem.ca/projects/rise

About Engendering Success in STEM (ESS)

Engendering Success in STEM (ESS) is a research partnership focused on evidence-based solutions to foster positive working environments for people in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math). We bring together social scientists, STEM experts, and stakeholders in STEM industry and education to use an evidence-based approach to break down barriers people face to their pathway to success. Canada’s Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council reviewed and funded this project.