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LGBT+ Inclusion @ Work:  
A Global Outlook

## A letter from

## Michele Parmelee and Emma Codd

**The past few years** have seen many organizations incorporate a focus on LGBT+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and more) inclusion within their Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DE&I) strategies, with many employers making visible and vocal commitments to LGBT+ inclusion externally through Pride events and beyond.

While this visible and vocal commitment is a positive move, does it impact the lived experience of LGBT+ employees in the workplace? To understand this, Deloitte surveyed 600 members of the LGBT+ community currently in employment across a range of sectors; these respondents were located across 12 geographies and territories around the world, namely: Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Japan, Mexico, Netherlands, South Africa, United Kingdom and United States. The goal was to provide a snapshot of the lived experience of LGBT+ people in the workplace across these countries to understand their daily realities, what organizations are getting right, and what can be done better.

And indeed, many of the findings from the survey are encouraging, reflecting workplace progress over recent years. For example, most respondents reported that their employers have made LGBT+ inclusion a priority as part of their HR or

DE&I strategy and our results suggest that this translates into tangible support for many LGBT+ employees in the workplace.

The report also underscores the power of allyship and the positive impact of Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) as a safe space for LGBT+ employees and their allies to connect—with the survey finding that respondents who are members of ERGs are much more likely to report being out at work.

While the overall picture Deloitte's report paints is positive when it comes to programmatic actions taken by employers, the picture is less positive when it comes to the experience of non-inclusive behaviors in a working environment. And it is clear that many employees are more comfortable being out to close groups of colleagues rather than to a wider group of individuals in their workplace. It is these 'everyday culture' aspects that will be critical to fully embedding LGBT+ inclusion in the workplace.

We hope that this research will help organizations better understand the positive impact that focusing on LGBT+ inclusion can have and the most impactful steps that can be taken to create and maintain a truly LGBT+ inclusive culture where everyone can thrive.



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## Key report insights:

### The majority of LGBT+ employees surveyed reported that their employers have incorporated LGBT+ inclusion as part of their talent or inclusion priorities – and they tell us that this is having a positive impact

- Around 80% of respondents report that their employers have introduced LGBT+ inclusion actions and initiatives, with nearly all (95%) believing that this has led to meaningful support for LGBT+ employees across the organization.
- The actions taken by these organizations vary, with nearly 40% citing talking openly about LGBT+ inclusion within the organization, a third citing support of LGBT+ allies programs, and a third reporting that their organization includes LGBT+ inclusion as part of external recruitment campaigns, while nearly a third (31%) say that their employers discuss LGBT+ inclusion externally at forums such as business events.
- These inclusive actions have contributed to a sense of belonging, with over 70% of all respondents indicating that they are more inclined to remain with their current organization because of its approach to LGBT+ inclusion.
- The vast majority (93%) of respondents who work within organizations with a global reach also believe that organization-level communications and actions around LGBT+ inclusion are translating into meaningful support in their home countries.

### Allyship, Employee Resource Groups (ERGs), visible use of pronouns, and the employer's visible external support for LGBT+ inclusion are seen as critical elements to aid LGBT+ inclusion at work

- Respondents cite allyship as a critical element for enabling LGBT+ employees to feel comfortable in their workplaces, with nearly 40% believing that allies speaking up to address non-inclusive behaviors and proactively listening to and learning from their LGBT+ colleagues can help foster more LGBT+ inclusive work environments.
- At organizations with LGBT+ ERGs, half of LGBT+ employees reported the positive impact of having allies support their LGBT+ networks and indicated that this support has been critical to making them feel comfortable being out about their gender identity and/or sexual orientation at work.
- And the ERGs themselves are seen as having a significant impact, with over 90% of those respondents whose employers have ERGs reporting that the group helps them feel comfortable being out at work.
- Visible use of pronouns is also cited as impactful, with more than 70% of LGBT+ employees indicating that visibly using pronouns in email signatures contributes to LGBT+ inclusion; a similar number of respondents cite external visible support from their employers, such as participation in Pride events, as a contributor.



### Despite their positive views on steps taken by employers, LGBT+ employees reported facing non-inclusive behaviors in a work context

- While many respondents cited various programmatic actions taken by their employers when it comes to LGBT+ inclusion, around four in ten (42%) of LGBT+ respondents reported experiencing non-inclusive behaviors at work. And over 80% of these respondents feel that they are experiencing these behaviors more often than their colleagues who are not LGBT+.
- These experiences of non-inclusive behaviors are not necessarily tied to work in a physical office, as one-third of the LGBT+ employees who have experienced such behaviors have experienced them in both office and remote working environments.
- Respondents reported non-inclusive behaviors ranging from those specifically relating to sexual orientation or gender identity to broader unacceptable behavior. Unwanted comments or jokes of a sexual nature (33%) were the most cited behaviors experienced, followed by “jokes at my expense (banter)” (31%). Other behaviors included unwanted physical contact (21%) or being excluded socially (20%). Most LGBT+ respondents who reported experiencing non-inclusive behaviors at work have experienced more than one type of non-inclusive behavior.

### The majority of respondents who experienced non-inclusive behaviors reported them to their employer—and most were satisfied with the response; for those who didn’t report, the rationale varies by gender

- Of those respondents who encountered non-inclusive behaviors, nearly three quarters reported their experience to their employer, with six in ten being satisfied with the response.
- When considered by gender identity, there were minimal differences in responses as to why those who experienced non-inclusive behaviors didn’t report them to their employer (for example, when it came to concerns as to how they would be perceived by colleagues). Women were, however, more concerned than men that their complaints would not be taken seriously (40% compared to 22%) and that the behavior wasn’t serious enough to report (33% compared to 16%), while men were more concerned than women that the behavior would get worse (38% compared to 17%).



### Non-inclusive behaviors could impact retention

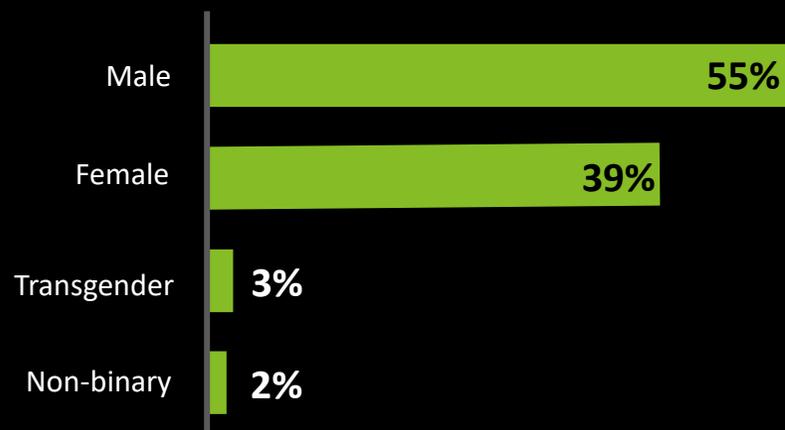
- While (as noted on page 3) over 70% of respondents indicated that they are more inclined to remain with their current organization because of its approach to LGBT+ inclusion, nearly 4 in ten (37%) of all respondents say that they are actively considering changing employers to find one with a more LGBT+ inclusive culture. This is most notable among those who have experienced non-inclusive behaviors at work compared to those who have not.
- LGBT+ employees who have not faced non-inclusive behaviors at work are nearly twice as likely to plan to stay for more than five years in their current roles than their LGBT+ colleagues who have faced such behaviors (30% vs. 16%).

### Despite the programmatic steps taken by employers to further LGBT+ inclusion at work, many LGBT+ respondents choose not to share their sexual orientation and/or gender identity at work beyond their closest colleagues

- Less than half of LGBT+ employees (45%) are out about their sexual orientation to the majority of their colleagues and approximately one-fifth are not open about their sexual orientation to anyone at work.
- Similarly, among LGBT+ employees whose gender identity differs from the one assigned at birth, less than half (43%) reported being out to most of their colleagues. Around one quarter (26%) reported being out to some of their colleagues, while nearly one fifth (17%) reported that they are not out to any colleagues.
- For those respondents who are out to the majority of their colleagues, nine in ten agreed that this is because their workplace culture makes them comfortable being out.
- Of those who are out to some—but not the majority—of their colleagues, over half (57%) attributed this to a preference to keep their sexual orientation private outside their closest colleagues; 36% also said that while their immediate team members/colleagues make them feel comfortable to be out, the organization at large does not.
- For those who prefer to keep their gender identity private outside of their immediate team members, nearly one-quarter (23%) are worried that being out to the majority of their colleagues will adversely impact their career. These concerns suggest that there are still perceived stigmas about being out within their everyday workplace culture.

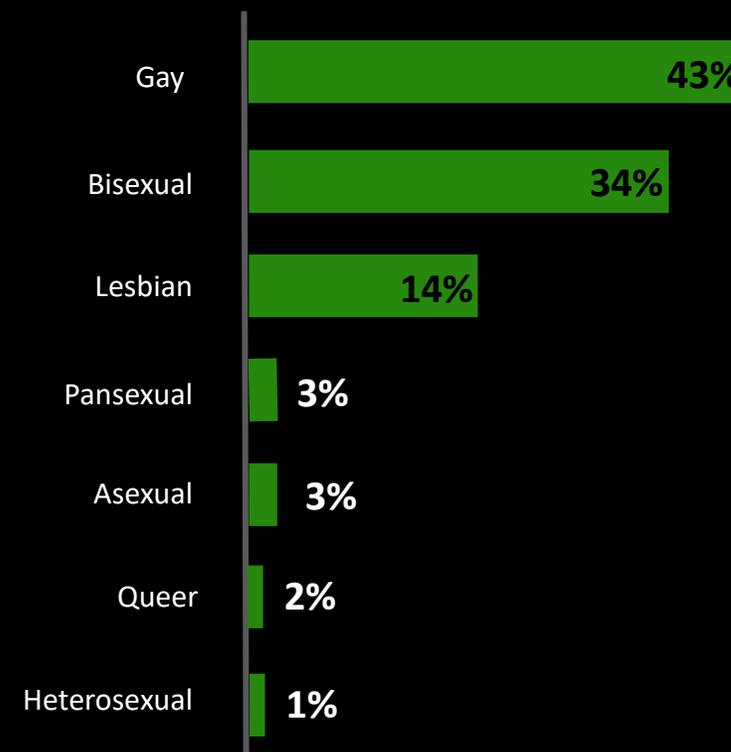
## LGBT+ respondents represent a range of gender identities and sexual orientations

Which of the following best represents your gender identity?



- 600 employees who identify as LGBT+ were polled as part of this survey.\* These employees work across a range of industries.
- The survey, conducted during February 2022, polled respondents from 12 geographies and territories (US, UK, Canada, Germany, Australia, Brazil, Mexico, France, Japan, Netherlands, South Africa, and Hong Kong).
- Over half of respondents (55%) identify as male, 39% identify as female, 3% identify as transgender, and 2% identify as non-binary.
- Over 43% identify as gay, 34% identify as bisexual, and 14% identify as lesbian. Other sexual orientations and identities represented included pansexual (3%), asexual (3%), queer (2%), and heterosexual (1%).

Which of the following best represents your sexual orientation?

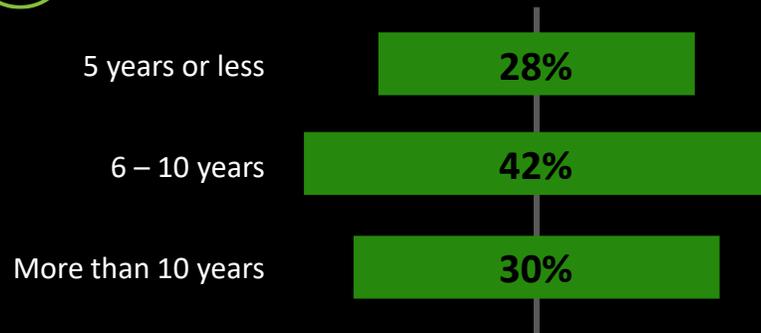


*\*LGBT+ was defined for survey respondents as the following: The LGBT+ acronym (which stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and more) is used throughout this survey for consistency and includes anyone who does not identify as heterosexual and/or cisgender. Deloitte employees were not polled as part of this survey. Respondents who identify as both cisgender and heterosexual were not surveyed.*

The survey also included LGBT+ employees across age, experience, and industry



Experience



- The survey respondents comprised adult LGBT+ employees across age and experience levels with a slight majority being younger than 39. Most employees surveyed have at least six years of workplace experience.
- The survey respondents comprised permanent employees on a full-time basis (93%), permanent employees on a part-time basis (5%), and contractor employees (2%).
- Ten major industry sectors were represented in our sample with the highest representation in the financial services, technology, and consumer industries.



Age



Industry

15%	Financial Services/Banking/Insurance	10%	Business Services
14%	Technology/Media/Telecom	8%	Pharma/Medical/Biotech
14%	Consumer	7%	Energy/Mining/Utilities
11%	Transportation & Logistics	6%	Real Estate & Construction
10%	Hospitality & Leisure	5%	Industrial & Chemicals

## Overall, global employers are taking steps on LGBT+ inclusion

- Most LGBT+ respondents (79%) report that their employers include LGBT+ inclusion as a HR/talent priority within their organizations. In addition, 95% feel that that having LGBT+ inclusion as a HR/talent priority has resulted in meaningful support for LGBT+ employees across the organization.
- The vast majority of LGBT+ respondents (86%) indicate that their employer's approach to LGBT+ inclusion has had a positive impact on their current role, with 72% indicating that they are more likely to remain with the organization because of that approach.
- Respondents point to a wide range of actions demonstrating commitment to LGBT+ inclusion, including communications from leaders about LGBT+ inclusion (the most cited action, at 39%), LGBT+ allies programs (33%), and external recruitment campaigns (33%).
- The majority of LGBT+ respondents (73%) also feel that their organization demonstrating external, visible support, such as attending Pride, translates into more inclusive working practices and workplace culture.

Does your employer include LGBT+ inclusion as part of its inclusion priorities?

79%  
Yes



21%  
No/Don't Know

How global employers demonstrate commitment to LGBT+ priorities\*

39%

Leaders at my employer talk about LGBT+ inclusion in their communications to employees

33%

My employer has established an LGBT+ allies program or group

33%

My organization's commitment to LGBT+ inclusion is included within external recruitment campaigns

31%

Leaders at my employer talk about LGBT+ inclusion outside my organization (e.g. business events)

30%

My employer has established an LGBT+ focused Employee Resources Group

29%

My employer encourages the use of preferred pronouns (e.g. he/him/his) in email signatures

28%

LGBT+ inclusion is considered when it comes to personal security when traveling for work

27%

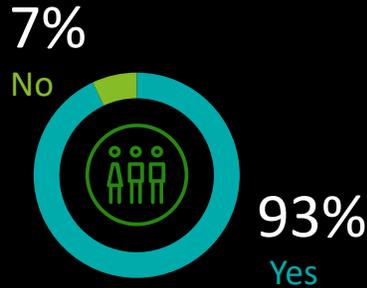
My employer takes part in Pride celebrations

26%

My employer is a member of an external LGBT+ inclusion focused organization

# Among global employers, organization-level LGBT+ inclusion priorities are also having an impact at a local level

Do you believe that your employer's LGBT+ inclusion priorities result in meaningful support for LGBT+ employees in your home country?



## Why do you believe this? (select all that apply)



- My employer will take action against anti-LGBT+ actions and comments in my location
- I am always treated with respect at work
- My direct manager/supervisor makes me feel comfortable being out at work
- I see that LGBT+ leaders are out at work
- My employer makes me feel able to be out at work
- My employer has introduced LGBT+ policies locally
- My employer has conducted LGBT+ inclusion training locally

## Why do you not believe this? (top five selected)

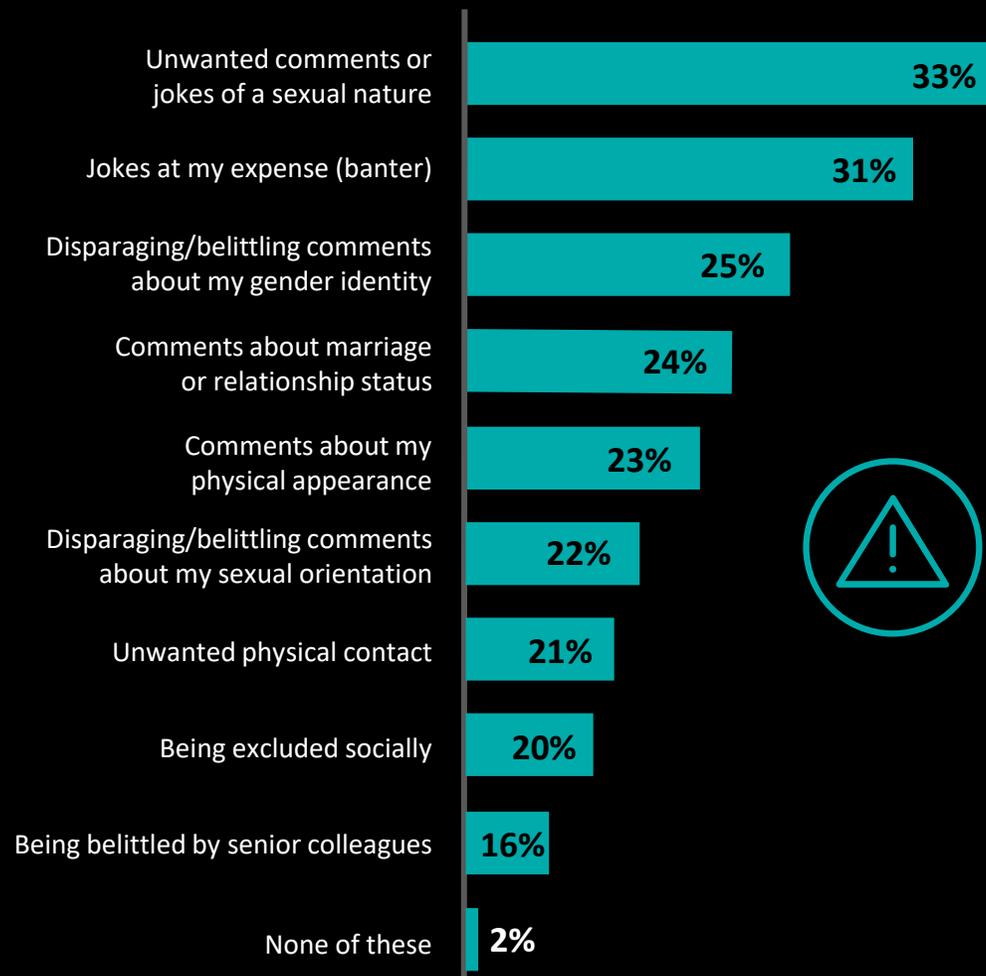


- Of the respondents, 55% work for a global employer. 93% of these respondents believe that their employer's LGBT+ inclusion priorities result in meaningful support for LGBT+ employees in their home countries. Among the 93% working at global organizations who believe their employer's LGBT+ inclusion focus results in meaningful support at the local level, respondents pointed to a range of factors underpinning this belief, such as responses relating to a respectful and inclusive culture (57%), comfort in being out of work (55%), as well as evidence of inclusive policies and training being rolled out locally (49%).
- Among the minority (7%) of respondents at global organizations that do not feel that their employers are providing meaningful local support, respondents cite not seeing LGBT+ senior leaders out at work as a foremost concern (53%). 26% also indicate that they are not always treated with respect at work.

Although most respondents reported that their work environments are LGBT+ inclusive, LGBT+ employees continue to experience non-inclusive-behaviors at work, both in the office and virtually

- Four in ten LGBT+ employees (42%) have experienced non-inclusive behaviors at work. This number is higher among global organizations (52%) compared to organizations based in a single geography (37%).
- Nearly half (47%) of those who reported experiencing such behaviors note that they experienced these non-inclusive behaviors in a physical office while 20% have experienced them in a virtual setting. One third (33%) experienced such behaviors in both office and remote environments.
- When asked whether they believe that they have experienced the behaviors more than colleagues who are not LGBT+, over 80% of those who reported experiencing such behaviors answered yes.
- Behaviors encountered range widely from those specifically relating to sexual orientation or gender identity to broader non-inclusive behavior. Unwanted comments or jokes of a sexual nature (33%), were the most cited, followed by “jokes at my expense (banter)” (31%), disparaging/belittling comments about gender identity (25%), comments about marriage or relationship status (24%), comments about physical appearance (23%), and disparaging/belittling comments about sexual orientation (22%). Nearly one half (46%) of lesbian respondents and one-third of gay respondents (31%) have heard unwanted comments of a sexual nature while at work.
- Other non-inclusive behaviors also included actions such as unwanted physical contact (21%), being excluded socially (20%), and being belittled by senior colleagues (16%).
- Respondents were able to select multiple non-inclusive behaviors and responses showed that most have encountered more than one type of such behavior.

Which non-inclusive behaviors have you experienced? (select all that apply)

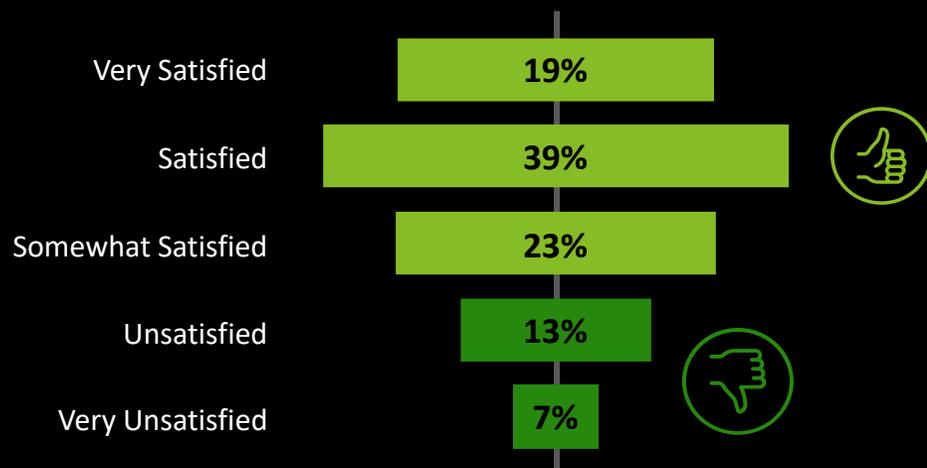


The majority of respondents who encountered non-inclusive behaviors reported them to their employer and were satisfied with the response — but concerns prevented nearly three in ten from reporting

When you experienced non-inclusive behaviors, did you report them to your employer?



How satisfied were you with your employer's response after you reported these non-inclusive behaviors?

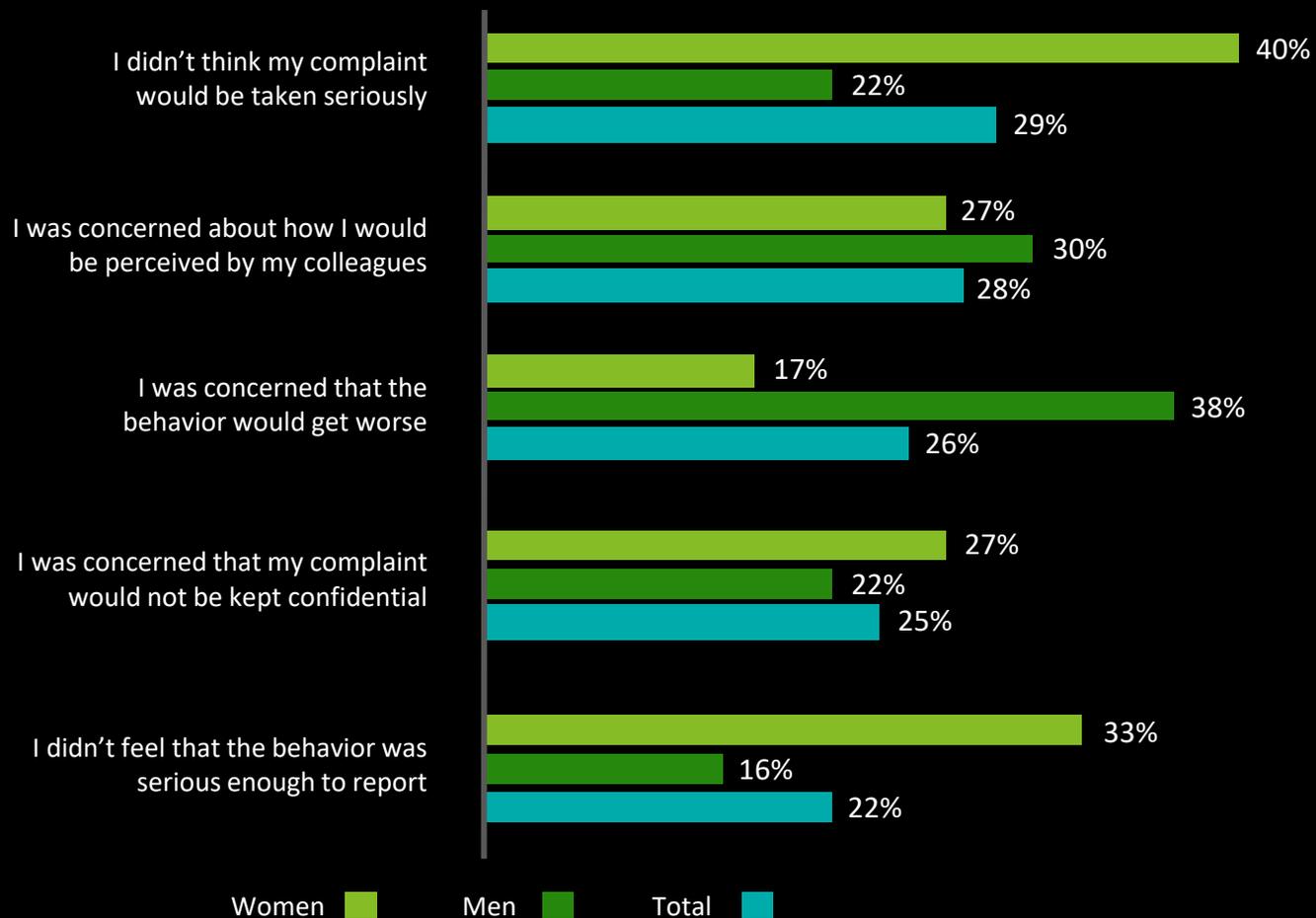


- Of the respondents who experienced non-inclusive behaviors, the majority (72%) reported them to their employers, and six in ten of them were satisfied with their employer's response. Of the remainder, 23% said they were 'somewhat satisfied,' while 13% were unsatisfied and 7% very unsatisfied.
- Over one quarter of those who didn't report cited concern about how they would be perceived by their colleagues if they reported the non-inclusive behavior, with little difference in responses when considered through a gender identity lens. While most other responses (for example: 'I was worried that it was my fault or that I had instigated the behavior') show minimal difference, there are three notable exceptions: women were more concerned that their complaints would not be taken seriously (40% as opposed to 22% of men) and felt that the behavior was not serious enough to report (33% as opposed to 16% of men), while men were significantly more concerned about the behavior getting worse (38% as opposed to 17% of women) if they formally reported.\*
- While the vast majority reported experiencing non-inclusive behaviors to their employer, the reasons provided by those who chose not to report suggest that there is more to be done in reinforcing the understanding that reporting non-inclusive behavior is worthwhile, and will not lead to retaliatory behavior or directly impact an employee's relationship with other colleagues.

*\*This analysis does not include a comparison of global averages to non-binary responses due to the small non-binary sample size. The analysis of responses from women also includes transgender women.*

The majority of respondents who encountered non-inclusive behaviors reported them to their employer and were satisfied with the response — but concerns prevented nearly three in ten from reporting (*continued*)

**Why didn't you report the non-inclusive behavior?\***  
(select all that apply)

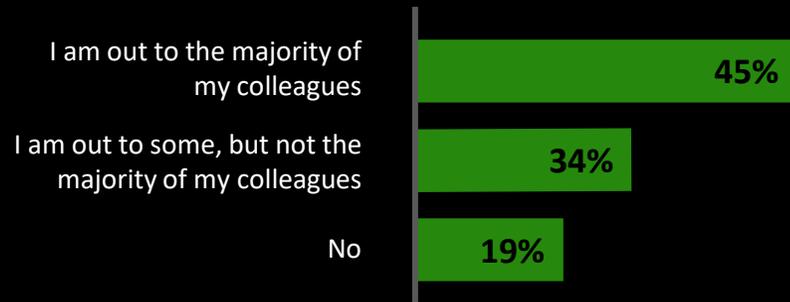


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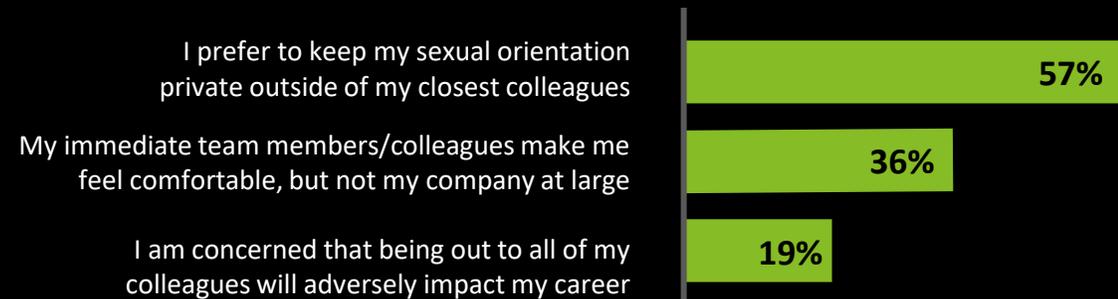
Less than half of LGBT+ employees are out about their sexual orientation to the majority of their colleagues,

a decision driven by personal preference, company culture, and perceived career impact

### Are you open/out about your sexual orientation at work?



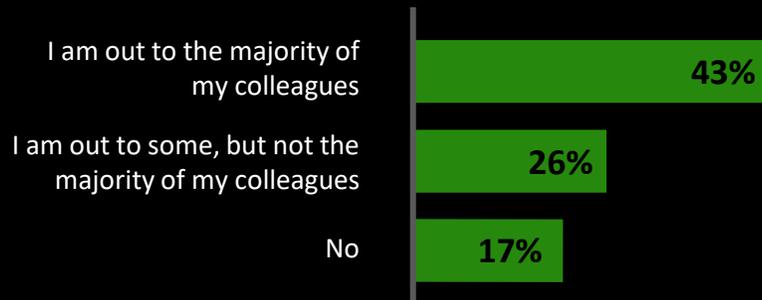
### Why are you out/open about your sexual orientation to some, but not the majority of your colleagues?



- Less than half (45%) of LGBT+ respondents are out about their sexual orientation to the majority of their colleagues, while 34% report being out to some colleagues (but not the majority). Approximately one-fifth of LGBT+ respondents indicate that they are not open about their sexual orientation to anyone at work.
- For those respondents who are out to the majority of colleagues, nine in ten agreed that this is because their workplace culture makes them comfortable.
- Of those who are out to some—but not the majority—of their colleagues, over half (57%) attributed this to a preference to keep their sexual orientation private outside their closest colleagues—36% said that while their immediate team members/colleagues make them feel comfortable to be out, the company at large does not; and nearly one fifth (19%) said that they were worried that being out to their wider group of colleagues will adversely impact their career.
- Notably, lesbian (30%) and non-binary (29%) respondents fear that sharing their sexual orientation with the majority of their colleagues will negatively impact their careers (compared to 19% of respondents who have not shared their sexual orientation with the majority of their colleagues).

Less than half of those whose gender identity differs from that assigned at birth are open about their gender identities to the majority of colleagues at work

**Are you open/out about your gender identity at work?  
(if your current identity differs from the one assigned at birth)**



**Why are you out/open about your gender identity to some, but not the majority of your colleagues?**



- Of those LGBT+ employees whose gender identity differs from the one assigned at birth, again less than half (43%) reported being out to the majority of their colleagues. 26% reported being out to some—but not the majority—of their colleagues, while 17% reported that they are not out to any colleagues.
- Among those who are out about their gender identity to the majority of their colleagues, 93% attribute this to their workplace culture making them feel comfortable.
- The level of comfort among these respondents in being out about their gender identity also varies by experience level. Those with less career experience are more likely to be out at work and vice versa. Indeed, while around half (49%) with less than five years of experience are out to the majority of their colleagues, more than one-fifth (21%) of LGBT+ employees with six to ten years of experience are not open with any colleagues about their gender identity.
- When it comes to those who are out to some, but not the majority of their colleagues, the rationale for the decision is similar to those who responded on sexual orientation, albeit a greater number express concern over career impact. Over half (54%) cited a preference to keep their gender identity private outside their closest colleagues. 35% attribute it to the fact that, while their immediate team members/colleagues make them feel comfortable, the company at large does not; while nearly one quarter (23%) said that they were concerned that being out to their colleagues will adversely impact their career.

## Allyship is fundamental

## to helping LGBT+ employees feel able to be out at work



82%

of LGBT+ employees believe that allyship helps them be out at work

- The vast majority of LGBT+ employees (82%) believe that allyship helps them to be out at work. Transgender employees in particular feel that allyship is a critical component of feeling comfortable being out at work.
- When considering examples of allyship that are most important in this respect, an ally-supported employee resource group (42%) is most cited by respondents. This is followed closely by allies speaking up when they have witnessed non-inclusive behaviors (40%), with 60% of non-binary respondents and half of women respondents citing this. Dedicating time to listening and learning from LGBT+ colleagues is third most cited (38%).

### What examples of allyship are most critical in making you feel comfortable to be out at work? *(select all that apply)*

42%



Allies supporting a LGBT+ Employee Resource Group/Network

40%



Allies speaking up when witnessing non-inclusive behaviors

38%



Allies dedicating time to listen and learn from LGBT+ colleagues

37%



Allies financially supporting LGBT+ events or organizations

34%



Allies reporting non-inclusive behaviors to Human Resources or through formal channels

31%



Allies participating in employer-sponsored events (e.g. Pride parade)

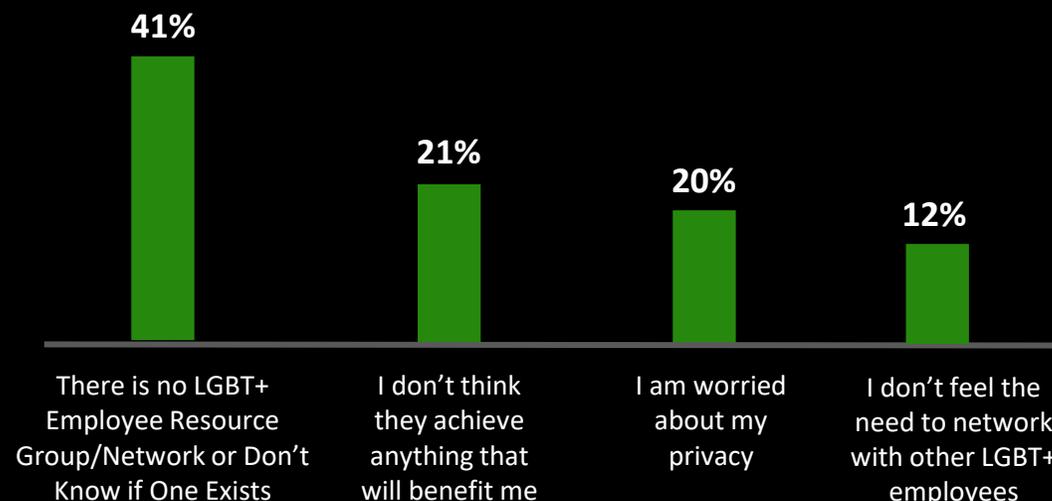
## LGBT+ Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)

play an important role

Are you a member of an LGBT+ Employee Resource Group/Network at your employer?



Why are you not part of an LGBT+ Employee Resource Group?



- Just over half of respondents (53%) are members of a formal LGBT+ ERG or network at work. The membership rate is higher (70%) among global organizations.
- Where they do exist, the majority (93%) of respondents feel that ERGs help them be out at work; a similar number (91%) also feel that the ERG has the full support of the organization.
- Of those respondents (47%) who are not members of an ERG, around four in ten either don't have one at work or don't know if one exists, while 21% don't believe that ERGs will achieve anything for their benefit, and 12% don't feel the need to network with other LGBT+ employees. Finally, a fifth of these respondents are worried about their privacy.

## Inclusion impacts retention

- While over a third of respondents (37%) say they are actively considering changing employers to find a more LGBT+ inclusive culture, almost a third (32%) of these same respondents still expect to be with their current employer for three to five more years while 22% believe they will stay for a further five years or more.
- Those actively considering changing employers are more likely to identify as male (40% of male respondents) and gay (39% of gay respondents) and half of those respondents have experienced non-inclusive behaviors at work.

Are you actively considering changing employers in order to find a culture more inclusive of LGBT+ employees?

37%

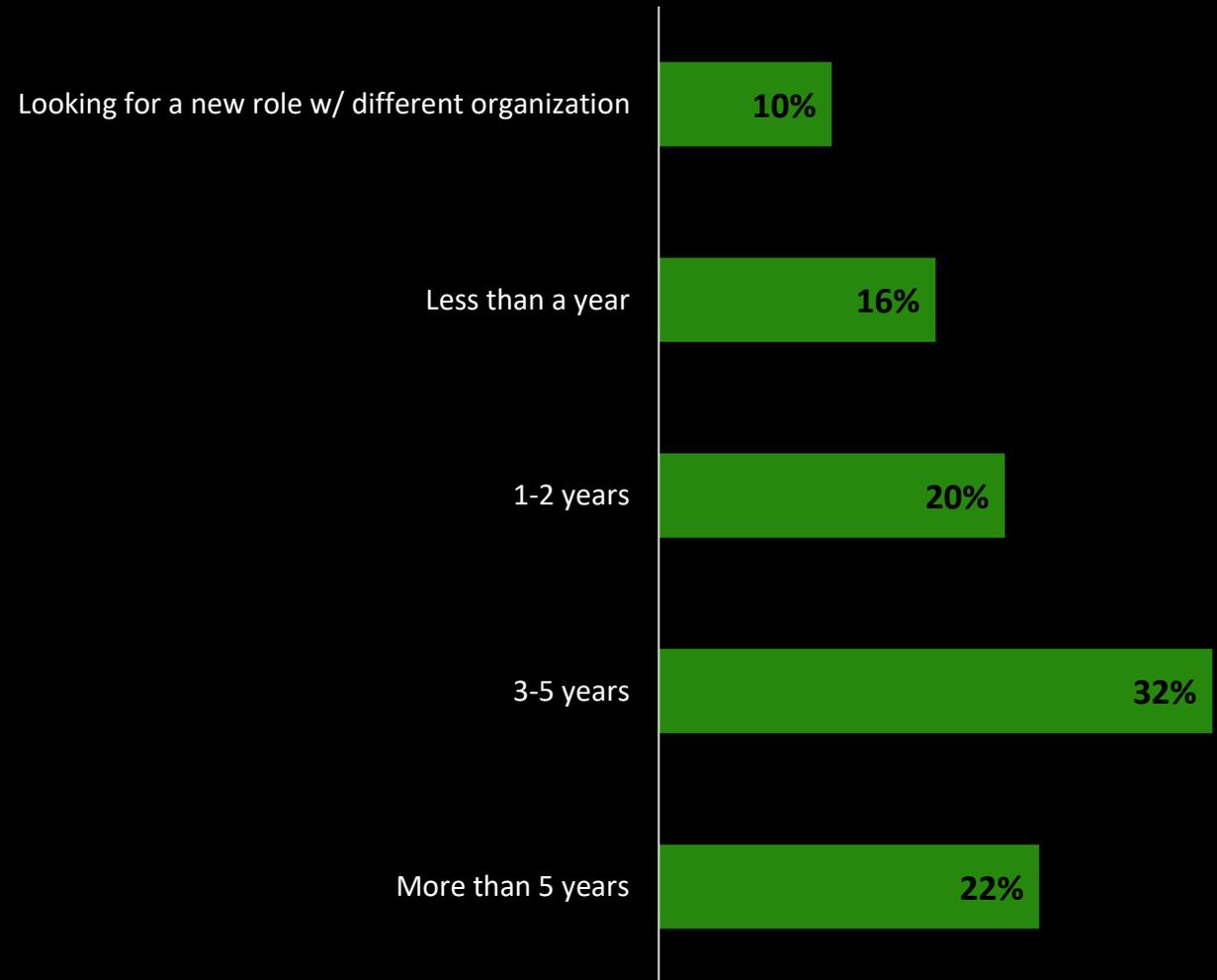
Yes



63%

No

How long do you expect to stay with your current employer?\*



\*Percentages reflect responses only from those who indicated that they are actively considering changing employers in order to find a culture more inclusive of LGBT+ employees (n=224).

## Recommendations:

### Making LGBT+ inclusion a day-to-day reality



As the findings illustrate, many organizations have incorporated LGBT+ inclusion within their talent and HR priorities. This includes implementing many of the top-level policies and strategies to support LGBT+ inclusion in the workplace.

However, while the majority of respondents reported that this focus on LGBT+ inclusion translates into meaningful support within the workplace, far too many respondents also reported experiencing a range of non-inclusive behaviors and many are reluctant to be out at work about their sexual orientation or gender identity beyond their immediate teams.

These findings show that, while progress has been made, there is work still to be done when it comes to LGBT+ inclusion in the workplace – most notably, with the everyday culture required to enable all LGBT+ employees to truly thrive. To this end, the survey points to three critical elements when it comes to LGBT+ inclusion at work:



#### 1. Enable employees to be out at work

LGBT+ employees may only feel comfortable to be out in the workplace beyond their closest colleagues where there is no fear of judgment or career penalty—where the culture is truly inclusive and founded upon respect. This comes from a concerted and deliberate focus on day-to-day culture from the top down—one that enables everyone to believe that they can truly be themselves at work.

While an inclusive culture relies on clear messaging and leaders walking the ‘talk’, it can also be aided by other visible signs of support for LGBT+ inclusion—whether this be the use of pronouns (including by senior leaders) or taking action to further LGBT+ inclusion both internally and externally.



## 2. Provide a workplace where non-inclusive behavior is not tolerated

Respondents' reports of non-inclusive behaviors in a work context reveal that a change is required. This means clear messaging, commitment and action from leaders when it comes to what behaviors are always expected – and the fact that non-inclusive behavior of any form will not be tolerated.

It also means ensuring that routes are available to escalate non-inclusive behavior and—importantly—that people feel able to use these reporting mechanisms without fear of judgment or career penalty.



## 3. Embrace the power of visible and vocal allyship

The respondents were unequivocal about the power of allyship from non-LGBT+ colleagues in enabling LGBT+ inclusion at work. Whether it be through attendance at ERG events, visible and vocal support for colleagues who are marginalized or experiencing non-inclusive behaviors, or educating coworkers about the importance of LGBT+ inclusion, allyship plays a significant and important role in enabling LGBT+ inclusion in the workplace.



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