The goal

The goal of the game is to spark fruitful discussions among participants about issues related to diversity and inclusion, and to help them find solutions together. It is a conversation starter that encourages us to consider, choose and defend (and possibly reconsider) alternative courses of action.

Consisting of a range of real-life dilemmas, this game provides a great opportunity to put yourself in the shoes of others, reflect on different actions and take a stand. The game can also be a good way to exchange opinions or experiences and can act as a step towards finding a common ground on certain principles.
How to play?

1. Dedicate at least 60-90 minutes to the game.
2. Create a team of 2 to 7 participants.
3. For larger groups it is useful to have a facilitator who can make sure everyone in a group speaks up while respecting each other.
4. Try to vary the choice of dilemmas you discuss.
5. Keep in mind that there are no wrong or right answers. The four options presented in each dilemma are only there to help start a dialogue and look for a solution together.
6. Do not judge or criticise other participants. Instead, ask for clarification to understand other opinions.
The goal of the game is to spark fruitful discussions among participants about issues related to diversity and inclusion, and to help them find solutions together. It is a conversation starter that encourages us to consider, choose and defend (and possibly reconsider) alternative courses of action. Consisting of a range of real-life dilemmas, this game provides a great opportunity to put yourself in the shoes of others, reflect on different actions and take a stand. The game can also be a good way to exchange opinions or experiences and can act as a step towards finding a common ground on certain principles.

Authors

This game is a revised version of the dilemma game themed around diversity and inclusion and developed by the members of the Nanophotonics Section from the Debye Institute for Nanomaterials Science of Utrecht University in 2019. The new version of the game contains new, fully reviewed dilemmas to reflect more dimensions of diversity and inclusion. Some dilemmas were adapted from Agterberg R. and Van den Brink, S. (8 August 2018) ‘Diversity dilemmas. How do you deal with them?’, DUB (website).

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Banter #1
On a Monday morning, you are discussing your weekend with several male colleagues. A female colleague walks into the room just as one of your colleagues says “Women are often just not as interested in this kind of job”. What do you do?

A. You stop talking and say hi to her.
B. You continue talking despite her presence.
C. You include her in the conversation.
D. You change topics even though you know your female colleague knows what the previous topic was about.
Banter #2
On a Monday morning, you are discussing your weekend with several female colleagues. A male colleague walks into the room just as one of your colleagues says “Men are just not as skilled at childcare”. What do you do?

A. You stop talking and say hi to him.
B. You continue talking despite his presence.
C. You include him in the conversation.
D. You change topics even though you know your male colleague knows what the previous topic was about.
Laughter with the supervisor

After a long day at a conference, you are having a drink with fellow students and your supervisor. During the conference itself, a female student from a competing group gave a talk, and in a subtle way criticised the recent results coming out of your own group. Your supervisor comments “if the colour of her lipstick matched the colour of her hair better, she would have attracted more attention”. What do you do?

A. You laugh, because all the other students are laughing.
B. You keep quiet and say nothing.
C. You explicitly confront your supervisor with their remark despite the consequences.
D. You reach out to a confidential advisor in your faculty to discuss the supervisor’s behaviour.
Office sharing
Your group has a low number of female colleagues. There are just enough of them to share an office. Without discussion, one day all the women on the floor are suddenly sharing an office. The manager allows this and does not seem to do anything. What do you do?

A. Try to find the reason why the female colleagues decided to share an office.
B. Nothing. It is okay for the women to share an office.
C. All the females in one office, in a way, decreases the diversity in the group. You decide to talk to the manager to split them apart.
D. You propose that office sharing should be randomized without restrictions. This means, however, that some female colleagues are grouped together while others are not.
Team meeting
You suddenly notice that your manager repeatedly criticises a female colleague. Male colleagues are not addressed under similar circumstances. What do you do?

A. You go to Human Resources or to a confidential advisor.
B. You talk to your colleague to see how she feels about this and if she needs help.
C. You do nothing. This might be due to legitimate reasons unrelated to gender. It is none of your business.
D. You talk to the manager in private and stress that their behaviour is unprofessional and inappropriate.
Conference
You are attending a conference where a professor is giving a lecture to a mainly young audience. During his talk the professor states that physics was invented and built by men, and it is therefore no place for women. How do you react?

A You disagree and walk away.
B You wait until the actual talk starts.
C You think this man is delusional and make this clear on social media.
D He has a point. Physics is now negatively biased against men as positions where men are more qualified are now occupied by women just because of their gender.
You have two students, Alice and Bob. Bob tends to make a lot of sexist and racist “jokes”. Alice takes offence and threatens to quit if this does not stop. As a manager you talk to Bob who thinks this is his freedom of speech. He has no intention to change his behaviour. What do you do?

A. You go to a student advisor, which might lead to Bob’s dismissal.
B. You do nothing and let things run their course.
C. You tell Alice and Bob to discuss their problems together.
D. You find a different project such that Alice will never have to see Bob again.
Alice and Bob #2

You are a junior tenure-track group leader. You have two PhD students, Alice and Bob. Bob tends to make a lot of sexist and racist “jokes”. You have witnessed this behaviour. However, Bob is a brilliant student providing you with high-impact papers every few months. Your career depends on his research output. What do you do?

A You go to Human Resources, which might lead to Bob’s dismissal.
B You do nothing and let things run their course.
C You tell Alice and Bob to discuss their problems together.
D You find a different project such that Alice will never have to see Bob again.
Banter #3
On a Monday morning, you are discussing your weekend with several colleagues. A non-binary colleague walks into the room just as one of your colleagues says “I just don’t understand non-binary people”.

A. You stop talking and say hi to them.
B. You continue talking despite their presence.
C. You include them in the conversation.
D. You change topics even though you know your non-binary colleague knows what the previous topic was about.
Personal pronouns
A new colleague named Quinn has joined your team. Quinn has stated that they are non-binary and has asked that everyone refer to them with they/them (in Dutch “die/diens”) pronouns. During meetings without Quinn, your colleagues, including the managers, refer to Quinn as “she” because according to your colleagues, “using they/them is too difficult”. What do you do?

A. Tell Quinn so they know about this and can address it.
B. Correct your colleagues every time they use the wrong pronoun.
C. Nothing. I do not want to offend my managers or cause difficulties.
D. Try to help your colleagues learn how to use they/them pronouns and discuss what they find difficult about it.
Transgender and non-binary people

Transgender person #1
A colleague in your team took a long leave for a hospital appointment. This person got gender affirmation surgery and told the team about it once they returned. You overheard colleagues gossiping about their surgery, saying that this type of surgery should not fall under “medical leave” and should instead fall under “holiday hours”. What do you do?

A You do nothing. This is not your concern.
B You tell your supervisor about your colleagues’ gossip.
C You confront your colleagues directly explaining to them that such gossiping is disrespectful.
D You know someone who also went through the same process, so you will have a drink with them soon and talk about it.
A colleague has come out to everyone as transgender. After coming out, it feels like the team values them less. During the last team meeting, ideas offered by other colleagues overshadowed the ideas of your transgender colleague. What do you do?

A. You do nothing. This is not your concern.
B. You tell your supervisor about it and ask them if they experienced this the same way.
C. You ask a colleague’s opinion about this situation.
D. You know someone who also went through the same process, so you will have a drink with them soon and talk about it.
Being in the closet
Tom is a colleague of yours. He is a gay person and has not come out to his colleagues yet. During a lunch break Tom and a female professor who works in a different team have a conversation about life and family. She tells your colleague that he needs to marry and have kids in order to blend into the community because “it is the way things work here”. You overheard the conversation. What do you do?

A  Confront the female colleague saying that everyone can decide by themselves how to live their lives.
B  Say nothing and ignore the conversation.
C  Tell the female colleague that Tom is gay.
D  Once the conversation is over, speak to Tom to support him.
The “gay” inquisition
At the lunch table, your colleague Iris mentions that she went to the cinema with her girlfriend last Saturday. You did not know that Iris dates women, as it has never come up before. Someone at the table starts to ask Iris a lot of questions about whether she is gay, when she came out, whether she has also dated men, etc. You can tell that Iris is getting uncomfortable. What do you do?

A You try to change the subject.
B You tell the colleague that all the questions are starting to feel uncomfortable.
C You ask Iris whether she feels uncomfortable being questioned like this.
D You do nothing. She chose to bring up her girlfriend – it’s normal that the colleague is curious.
Safe spaces
In the US and the UK, university campuses are becoming ‘safe spaces’, where no one should be judged or criticised based on their gender, sexual orientation, origin or disability. Should Utrecht University also establish this concept?

A Good idea. That way, no one has to feel threatened.
B I do not think that is necessary at the university. You never hear a bad word here.
C You should be able to speak freely at the university, and safe spaces limit freedom of speech.
D If someone thinks a comment is wrong or offensive, you should be able to talk about that. Safe spaces will make it easier to do that.
Sexually abusive behaviour

Sexual proposition #1
A female colleague confides in you that she has had a sexual proposition from her manager. She tells you she does not like it, but she can deal with the situation herself. What do you do?

A You talk to your colleague to see how she feels about this and if she needs help.
B You try to find/hear the other side of the story.
C You report it yourself (or anonymously) to a confidential advisor.
D You encourage her to report the situation to a confidential advisor.
**Sexual proposition #2**
A male colleague confides in you that he has had a sexual proposition from his manager. He tells you he does not like it but he can deal with the situation himself. What do you do?

A. You talk to your colleague to see how he feels about this and if he needs help.
B. You try to find/hear the other side of the story.
C. You report it yourself (or anonymously) to a confidential advisor.
D. You encourage him to report the situation to a confidential advisor.
Sexual proposition #3
A female colleague confides in you that she has had a sexual proposition from her manager. She tells you she does not mind. What do you do?

A) You do nothing. It is not your concern.
B) You discuss it with a confidential advisor.
C) You encourage a relationship only after the power dynamic has ended.
D) You discuss with the colleague in question whether their behaviour is appropriate or not.
Sexually abusive behaviour

Sexual proposition #4
A male colleague confides in you that he has had a sexual proposition from his manager. He tells you he does not mind. What do you do?

A. You do nothing. It is not your concern.
B. You discuss it with a confidential advisor.
C. You encourage a relationship only after the power relationship has ended.
D. You discuss with the colleague in question whether their behaviour is inappropriate.
Fasting
You are not in a dining area but are extremely hungry. However, there is a person in the same room who is fasting for religious reasons. What do you do?

A You start eating.
B You ask the person whether they mind you eating.
C You go to an appropriate area to eat.
D Despite your hunger, you decide not to eat to avoid an awkward discussion.
Bad breath
For a while you have noticed a colleague with bad breath due to fasting. When you speak with them, you are distracted by the smell, making it hard to follow the story. What do you do about it?

A You avoid the colleague in question.
B You tell them about the issue right away.
C You continue working with the person while pretending nothing is bothering you.
D Confronting them directly is rude. Just drop hints until the message is received.
A Muslim colleague

Your colleague, who is Muslim, is often absent for quite a long time (45 mins) at similar times each day. You ask them about it, and they say it’s because they are praying and the prayer room is a 15-20 minute walk away, on the other side of campus. Your manager has started noticing your colleague’s frequent and long absences. You are worried that the manager will get the wrong idea. What do you do?

A. You ask your colleague to take shorter breaks.
B. You advise your colleague to talk to the manager and explain the situation.
C. You go to your manager and explain the situation of your Muslim colleague yourself.
D. You do nothing. It is not your business.
It is just a joke #1
In public, a colleague jokingly addresses another colleague with a derogatory term referring to their ethnicity. As a bystander, what do you do?

A. You take it up with the offender’s supervisor.
B. You immediately (and publicly) point out that you find this behaviour offensive.
C. You later ask the addressed person whether they were really okay with the “joke”.
D. Nothing. The addressed person often refers to themselves the same way, so it is okay.
It is just a joke #2
In the presence of a group, a colleague jokingly refers to another colleague, who is absent, with a derogatory term referring to their ethnicity. What do you do?

A. Nothing. These jokes are made all the time.
B. You immediately point out that this is not okay.
C. You will talk to the offender in private and indicate that this behaviour is inappropriate.
D. You feel uncomfortable but you think complaining is not acceptable behaviour, so you do nothing.
Shaking hands
You are in a meeting with a small group. During an introduction, a group member refuses to shake hands with you and states this is due to their religious beliefs. What do you do?

A. You get offended and show this with your facial expressions.
B. You make a joke about the religious background of the group member.
C. You ask what would be an accepted way of greeting for that person.
D. You show understanding and say that in this country we respect all religions.
Team effectiveness
You are discussing ideas for more effective teamwork with other colleagues. Some of your colleagues blame cultural differences for reduced effectiveness in the team. You have a different cultural background compared to the majority in the team and feel uncomfortable with this remark. What do you do?

A. Ignore the remarks made about cultural differences.
B. Ask colleagues to share more specific examples with you.
C. Explicitly confront your colleagues despite the consequences this might have for your position in the team.
D. Wait until the brainstorm session is over and then speak to your colleagues about your feelings.
International colleague
During a meeting, a Dutch colleague asks an international colleague “how is that done where you’re from?”. What do you think about this question?

A  Fine, it will let you hear a different perspective.
B  Bad, you are singling out this colleague as being ‘different’ by mentioning their cultural roots.
C  You should never talk to a colleague about their origin or gender.
D  It very much depends on the context and the relationship with the colleague.
Drinking at social events
The university has a culture of social drinking. During a reception, wine and beer are offered to all guests. Some guests feel uncomfortable and may not attend the reception. What should the university do?

A The same as usual. The university should always keep up Dutch traditions.
B The university should also organise social events without alcohol.
C All university events should be alcohol free.
D Alcohol should be served at university events only after 17:00 o’clock.
Taking leave

The 1st of July is officially known as Keti Koti, a Surinamese memorial day that commemorates the abolition of slavery. Your Surinamese colleague wants to take that day off. But on that day an important team meeting is on the agenda and your manager does not give permission for a day of leave. What would you recommend to your colleague?

A. They should ignore their manager’s decision and take sick leave that day.
B. They should inform Human Resources about the situation and seek further advice.
C. They should speak to their manager and try to come to an agreement.
D. They should ask the other team members to back them up, and then try to convince the manager at a team meeting.
You are sitting in the pantry eating lunch with Dutch colleagues discussing some distinctive aspects of the Dutch language. A foreign student, who does not speak Dutch at all, comes into the pantry and greets all of you. The student starts to eat their lunch at the table. After you greet them back, what do you do?

A. You switch the conversation to another topic.
B. You keep having the same conversation as before in Dutch.
C. You continue the conversation in English so that the student can hear what you are talking about.
D. You briefly interrupt the conversation and tell the student that they will not understand anything, and continue the conversation in Dutch.
The university wants to increase the number of international students and employees. What is your opinion?

A. Everyone can speak English, so let us just have all communication be in English.

B. If you want to live in the Netherlands, you should learn to speak Dutch. It should be a requirement.

C. All university communication should be done in two languages.

D. Managers should decide for their own team whether communication takes place in Dutch or English.
One’s privacy
As a result of the changes in privacy laws, it is more difficult to register a person’s gender, origin, or disability. Is that a good thing?

A. Fine, one’s privacy should be protected.
B. The university should be able to have the information, but not make it public.
C. How can you even try to make the university more diverse if you are not allowed to know the statistics at all?
D. That is unfair, because many students and employees have already provided this information to the university and the new ones will not have to do that.
Anonymous exams
It is suspected that women and non-Dutch nationals are systemically disadvantaged within the current examination system. To prevent the influence of bias in employees that are grading papers, all examinations should be taken and graded anonymously using only the student number as a reference.

A I do not agree, because this could make it harder for those grading exams to detect cheating.

B This would not have much effect, as teachers would still be able to connect the student to the student ID.

C I agree, but feel this is harder to apply to exams as they are sometimes graded multiples times. The teacher will recognize the work or subject when grading.

D I agree that this will help both groups.
**Hiring policy**

To increase diversity within your group/department, your manager started preferentially hiring people based, for example, on their gender, nationality, marital status or their sexual orientation. How do you deal with this?

**A** You do not say anything. Is there something wrong with this approach?

**B** You confront your manager by saying that people should only be hired based on their qualifications.

**C** You are happy that your group will become more diverse even though this means more qualified people may not get the job.

**D** You propose to your manager that the group should have a say in whether a candidate gets hired.
Multiple candidates
You are a white male manager and you have an open position. You want to make your group more diverse. You have two good candidates: a woman of colour and a white man. You feel the white man is more qualified. What do you do?

A. You flip a coin.
B. You select the woman of colour.
C. If you feel the candidate is more qualified, you hire him.
D. Ask input from someone else, without telling/showing your preference.
Anonymous applications
It is suspected that women and non-Dutch nationals are systemically disadvantaged within the current application system. To prevent the influence of bias in members of selection committees, the application process should be anonymous. Only after deciding on who to invite for first round-interviews, will the names become available.

A I disagree, because this could lead selection committees to simply invite more applicants for the first round interviews.

B I disagree as we would still be able to track applicants through, e.g. past job experiences.

C I agree, but you will still know the candidate’s name and face when moving towards the first stage of interviews.

D I agree that this will help both groups.
Air currents
A colleague has, due to medical reasons, issues with their bowel movements. Out of their control they suffer from a health condition that causes them to regularly pass gas without even noticing when it is coming up. A number of your colleagues make jokes about this behind their back. They treat the colleague in question differently than they do their other colleagues. How do you deal with this?

A You address your colleagues on their behaviour as it is highly inappropriate.
B You comply with the rest and join in with the jokes.
C You ignore it and do not treat the colleague in question any differently than you do the others.
D You discuss this with your manager.
Visual impairment
A visually impaired student wants to write a Master’s thesis in your group. What do you do?

A  Of course you accept the student in your group.
B  You can only accept the student if someone is able to help you with making your materials accessible.
C  You can only accept the student if you get more hours for supervising this student.
D  No, a visually impaired student cannot work in your field.
Medical leave
Your chronically ill colleague has to take medical leave often. You overhear someone gossiping that they are away more often than they are at work, and that it “must be nice to have so much free time”. What do you do?

A. You tell the person that their gossiping is highly inappropriate.
B. You join in the gossip with the rest of the group.
C. You ignore the conversation.
D. You discuss this with your manager. They should be the one addressing this behaviour.
Wheelchair user
A colleague of yours uses a wheelchair. One day, you see them having to perform a difficult manoeuvre to get their wheelchair up a ramp. They have not asked for help. Do you help them anyway?

A. You ask your colleague if they need help.
B. You pretend you do not see your colleague.
C. You immediately go to your colleague and help them get up a ramp without asking.
D. You stand still and observe the colleague.
**Chronic illness**
Most of your team is tired of online or hybrid meetings and would like all meetings to be in person again. However, one of your colleagues is chronically ill and is still concerned about getting COVID. What do you do?

A. You try to convince your colleague to join in-person meetings.
B. You ask your colleague what kind of support/facilitation they need to be able to join in-person meetings.
C. You talk to the team and explain them that an exception should be made to the colleague who is chronically ill.
D. You do nothing. It is their fault they cannot join in-person meetings.