

Dilemma:

"My sexuality is mocked"

Each group has a host.

This dilemma card is for the host and contains:

- A host guide
- A dilemma
- Fact boxes
- A question guide for dialogue one and dialogue two

Host guide

As a host, your role is to facilitate a good, constructive dialogue where everyone gets to speak. Your role is not to participate by sharing your own perspective, but you are welcome to put your perspective into play by phrasing it as a question ("What if they ...?").

Try to be curious ("Why do you think that?") and investigative ("What if they react differently than you assume?").

Aim to make it safe for participants to say or share something vulnerable by making it clear that different perspectives are welcome and that everyone should be respectful.

The dialogue is divided into two parts.

The first part is about giving advice to the person who posed the dilemma, and the second part is about the theme of the dilemma from the perspective of the panellists and their experiences at DTU.

On pages 3 and 4, you will find questions and data, which you can use to qualify the dialogue.

After reading this guide and skimming the question guide, please read out the dilemma to the panel. Give them a moment to reflect on the dilemma. Then initiate dialogue one.

Dilemma:

Thomas works at DTU. He loves his work and feels like his colleagues like him. He and his colleagues generally get along well and like to joke around.

The problem is that the jokes are often at the expense of one of Thomas' other colleagues, who is gay. We will call him 'Preben'. They are also at the expense of Thomas himself... but Thomas' colleagues don't know that. Jokes and insinuations often revolve around gay men—that they are feminine, make scenes, are not real men, hit on everyone, etc. When "Preben" is around, they don't do it as much or justify it by saying "But of course you're not like that" to him. However, there is an unspoken understanding in the group that "Preben" is the weakest link and that they don't need him.

Thomas' partner is a man. He has never told anyone at work that. At first, it wasn't a conscious choice, but after hearing quite a few homophobic jokes, he simply doesn't have the courage to do it. He is afraid of what they will think of him. He therefore spends a lot of time and effort hiding his sexuality and his partner's gender. It is very demanding and stressful.

Furthermore, he feels very sorry for 'Preben' and is also ashamed that he doesn't defend him.

He knows that this will not do in the long run. Firstly, it creates an unwanted distance between him and his colleagues, and secondly, it is uncomfortable and makes him feel like he can't be himself at work. But what should he do?

1

What advice does the panel give?

Dialogue one:

- [Start by hearing each panellist's thoughts on the dilemma so everyone gets the chance to speak from the start]
- "What could the underlying cause(s) for the dilemma be?"
- "What do you think of the options stated by the person who posed the dilemma?"
- "If Thomas speaks up, how can he avoid being accused of not having a sense of humour or being too easily offended?"
- [Feel free to use the data from the boxes to boost the discussion]
- [Other investigative questions]
- "We have to come up with an answer, but you don't all have to agree. What does each of you think the person who posed the dilemma should do?"

40 per cent of Danish LGBT+ people hide their sexuality at work. Poll by Epinion, 2016

"Microaggressions are essentially aggressions in the same way as violence or bullying, but the fact that they happen at the micro-level makes them dangerous because they are hard to spot. For example, if one employee punches another, we all agree that it's not OK. But if a victim of microaggressions points out the problem, there's a risk of others turning on them because they can't see the problem," says management expert Elsebeth Hauge (author of "Lederskam")

2 Dialogue two:

What do you do, and what could you do?

This part of the dialogue focuses on the panellists' own experiences at DTU.

Start dialogue two by telling the panel that the focal point is still the theme of the dilemma, but now they should look at the conditions in their own unit as well as considering other solutions.

Please note that dialogue two may be a bit more sensitive. Aim to create a safe and respectful space for everyone. The goal is still not to agree on everything, but to learn more about each other's perspectives.

- "Do you recognize the dilemma or parts of it, either on a personal level or through observation?"
- "Generally speaking, jokes at the expense of others are exclusionary. Does it happen in your unit? If yes, how do you deal with it?"
- "Do you do something active to create a culture where everyone can be their authentic self at work?"
- "Is there a part of the advice you gave that you practise in your unit? If yes, what? If no, would that be possible?"
- "What else could you do? At individual, group, and organizational level?"
- [Other investigative questions]
- "What will each of you take with you to your unit, either as a point of attention or as possible solutions related to the theme of the dilemma?"