

Mediation Strategies to Prevent and Manage Conflict

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What's the state of the employment relationship?

Employees generally report a supportive working environment: the majority say working relationships with colleagues are good/very good

- 3 in 4 agree their colleagues treat people with dignity and respect

But...

- Around 1/3 of employees had experienced conflict in the past 2 years
- 1/4 of employers agreed 'conflict in my workplace is a common event'





Relationships and conflict at work

- A quarter (24%) of employees think that challenging issues like bullying and harassment are **swept under the carpet** (31% in public sector versus 23% private sector)
- 1 in 5 employees overall feel the culture isn't inclusive, agreeing that '**colleagues sometimes reject others for being different**'
- 15% had experienced **bullying**, 8% **harassment** (not sexual), 4% reported **sexual harassment** in past three years



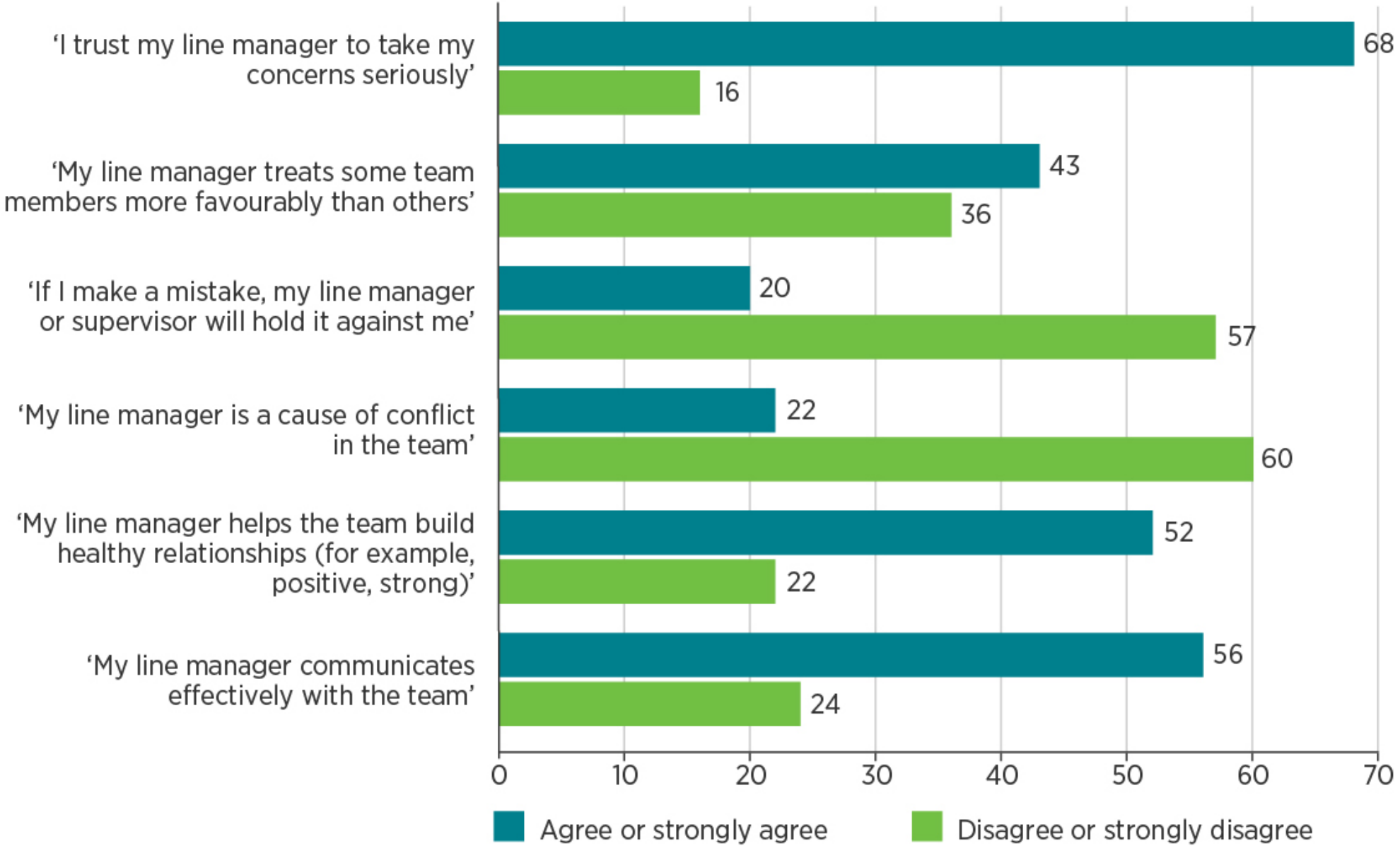
Creating safe spaces to enable employees to speak up



Leaders and line managers play a central role in fostering speak up cultures and managing conflict



Figure 3: What do people think of their line manager? (% of employees)



Base: all employees with a line manager (n=2,041)





A poor resolution rate...

For those reporting conflict, less than half say it has so far been largely or fully resolved

People were just as likely to be dissatisfied as satisfied with how their organisation handled the conflict

Given these findings, how can we reframe resolution?



Lead by example and support line managers to play a positive role



Be clear about expectations and act as a role model



Be alert to simmering tensions and challenge unfair treatment



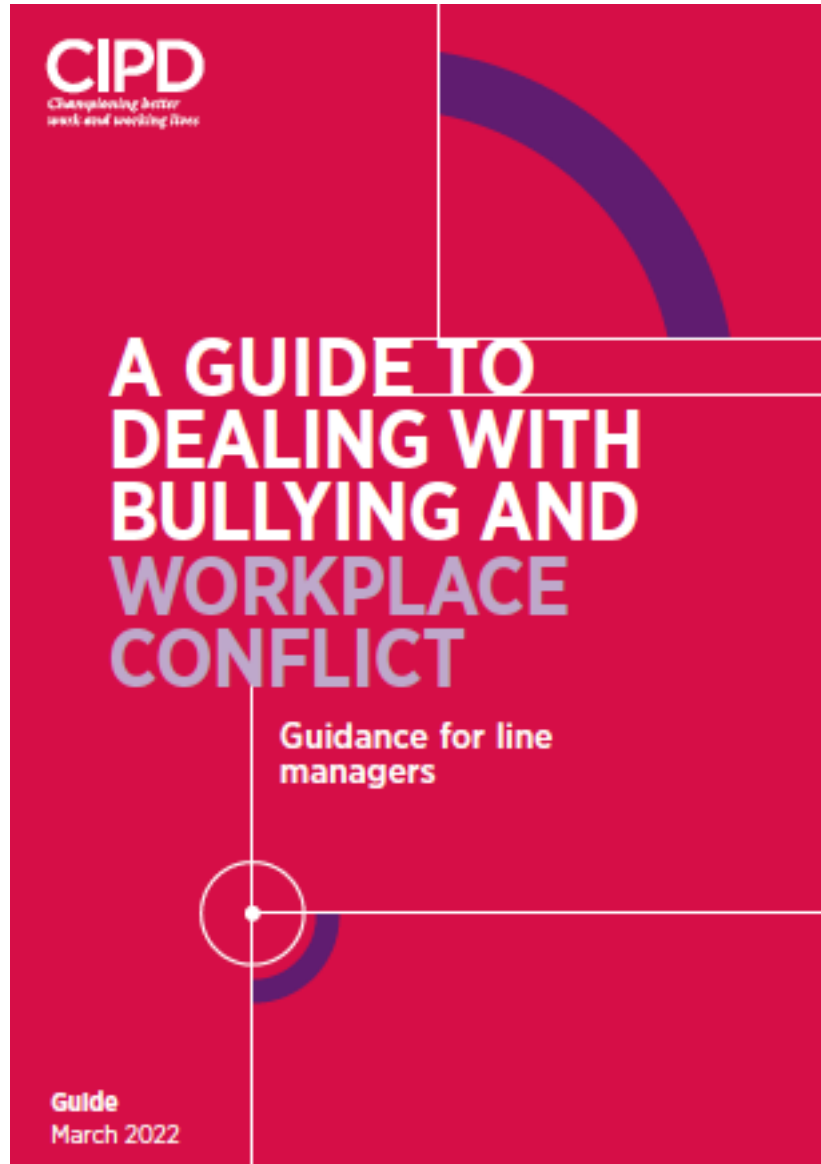
Avoid office politics and foster good working relationships



Encourage feedback and conversations so there's confidence to speak up



Ensure managers intervene early to resolve conflict informally



2 key takeaways:

- Formal policies and procedures need to know their place
- Invest in your own confidence and capability to manage conflict – as well as line managers' !

CIPD resources

[Line manager resources](#)

[CIPD research report](#)

[CIPD Managing conflict guide for managers](#)

CIPD Factsheet: [Mediation at work](#)