# Does he mean it? The role of sincerity in ally motivations and behaviors

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# Does he mean it? The role of sincerity in ally motivations and behaviors

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## Abstract

Allyship is a two-step process that involves both acknowledgement of inequality with sincere motivations, and behaviors to enact social change (Ashburn-Nardo, 2018; Drury & Kaiser, 2014). Yet, the majority of previous allyship research has only examined allyship as *either* acknowledgement of inequality with sincere motivations to act as an ally (Moser & Branscombe, 2021) or behaviors that demonstrate allyship (Cihangir et al., 2014; Hildebrand et al., 2020). Three studies (total $N$ = 1,079) bridge both aspects of this definition of allyship and demonstrate the critical role of ally sincerity at both steps of allyship: the motivational and behavioral levels. Study 1 ($n$ = 306) found that behaviors that align or do not align with stated allyship intentions impact perceptions of the self-identified ally and inform women's expectations of treatment at an organization. Women shown an ally who subsequently confronted a sexist comment indicated significantly higher anticipation of identity-safety and positive treatment at the organization, relative to women shown an ally who ignored or agreed with the sexist comment. Additionally, Study 1 found that perceived ally sincerity mediates these downstream consequences. Study 2 ($n$ = 297) manipulated ally sincerity by varying the motivations given by men to act as an ally. Findings of Study 2 indicated that women shown a sincerely motivated ally were significantly more likely to view the organization positively and expect positive treatment, compared to women shown either type of insincere motivation. Study 3 ($n$ = 476) replicated and extended Studies 1 and 2 by contrasting motivations to self-identify as an ally and the behaviors of the self-identified ally following a sexist event to examine the interactive effects of sincerity in motivation and consistency of ally behavior on women's perceptions of male-dominated environments. Study 3 demonstrates that both sincere motivations and behaviors to disrupt the status quo are necessary for effective allyship. Studies 1 – 3 examine the iterative process of

updating impressions of allies with the introduction of information that either aligns or misaligns with stated intentions. The results of these studies complicate previous optimistic findings regarding identity-safety cues by demonstrating that aspects of an environment that signal identity-safety at one time point can be reinterpreted to signal identity-threat with the introduction of new conflicting information. These studies offer a novel contribution for understanding allyship processes and the role of sincerity in allyship.

*Keywords:* allyship, gender, intergroup relations, updating impressions

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# Introduction

People who publicly state their feminist intentions to support gender equality in the workplace but who do not actually do so frequently come to be viewed as untrustworthy, or even traitors of the cause. On March 10, 1997, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* debuted on television. In the years following, this television show has been lauded for its feminist themes and strong representation of women. Indeed, academic texts and college courses have been dedicated to unpacking the show's strengths and blind spots. Much of the praise for this show was directed toward its director, Joss Whedon, who was one of the first male directors to openly self-identify as a feminist and an ally with the gender equality movement. However, in the twenty years after *Buffy*'s debut, many actresses who worked on *Buffy* and other Whedon shows have come forward with their experiences of harassment and hostility from the self-identified feminist Joss Whedon. Fans of Whedon's series have responded with feelings of outrage and betrayal after learning about his actual non-feminist treatment of women.

Whedon's actions demonstrate an insidious problem of allyship wherein advantaged group members only indicate their identification as an ally to the extent that they are able to receive credit for their actions from others, commonly referred to as performative allyship (Radke et al., 2021). Critically, an ally is an individual who recognizes the need for further progress in the fight toward equal rights, champions egalitarian ideals, and strives to promote inclusivity (Ashburn-Nardo, 2018; Drury & Kaiser, 2014). The majority of social psychological research on allyship has been relatively uncritical of the concept and largely demonstrated the positive effects of allyship (Hildebrand et al., 2020; Johnson et al., 2018; Moser & Branscombe, 2021). It remains possible that members of advantaged groups may claim to recognize discrimination and proclaim their intentions to disrupt the biased status quo, yet have self-serving

motives or fail to behave in ways consistent with these intentions. Such discrepancies between stated intentions and actual behavior cast doubt on the sincerity of the proclaimed intentions. The example of Joss Whedon, and more recent theorizing on the motivations to act as an ally (Kutlaca et al., 2021; Radke et al., 2020; Selvanathan et al., 2018) underscore that allyship may not always be sincere or positive. The current studies apply a critical lens to the construct of allyship to examine how the motivations and behaviors of allies can either undermine or enhance the effectiveness of allyship.

The current studies investigate the role of sincerity in both the motivations and behavior of an ally. Members of disadvantaged groups often do not know the motivations someone has to act as an ally. This uncertainty of the sincerity of motives often leads members of disadvantaged groups to be suspicious of an ally's true intentions (Burns & Granz, 2022). While many allies are motivated by a sincere wish to increase gender equality (Kutlaca et al., 2021; Radke et al., 2020; Selvanathan et al., 2018), others may be motivated by performative reasons (i.e., gains in individual social capital; Radke et al., 2020) or organizational pressures (i.e., workplaces incentivizing their employees to signal workplace inclusivity; Dover et al., 2019).

We begin by first examining how the behavior of a coworker who had previously self-identified as an ally can undermine or increase the extent to which the coworker is seen as sincere. We further investigate how behavior that is (in)consistent with allyship intentions impacts women's overall evaluations of their anticipated treatment in a male-dominated environment. Next, we manipulate the sincerity of an ally's motivations to commit to gender equality allyship and test whether knowledge of these motivations impacts women's view of a self-identified ally and overall workplace perceptions. Finally, Study 3 builds upon Studies 1 and 2 by manipulating both the motivations and behaviors of a self-identified ally to examine the potential interactive

effects of sincere (vs. insincere) motivations and actual behaviors that are consistent (vs. inconsistent) with allyship intentions.

### *Gender Inequality*

Although gains have been made toward gender equality (Horowitz & Igielnik, 2021), women still face discrimination and systematic oppression, particularly women of color (Wingfield, 2019). In fact, in nearly every human society existing structures ensure that power and dominance are granted to men over women (Brown, 1991). Sexism is expressed and upheld in ways that frame women in both a positive and a negative light, termed ambivalent sexism. Ambivalent sexism theory claims that sexism incorporates both seemingly positive views of women – benevolent sexism, and negative views of women – hostile sexism (Glick & Fiske, 1996). Benevolent sexism is a viewpoint that constricts women to gender roles related to prosociality and intimacy and is subjectively positive in tone, while perpetuating masculine dominance and women's dependence on men. Hostile sexism aligns more closely with traditional definitions of prejudice (e.g., Allport, 1954) and encompasses negative attitudes toward women. Hostile and benevolent sexism are positively correlated such that people often simultaneously hold both positive and negative attitudes toward women (Glick & Fiske, 1996). This means that women are seen as "wonderful" to the extent that they conform to traditional gender roles but not when they deviate from those expectations (Eagly & Mladinic, 1994; Glick & Fiske, 2001).

Ambivalent sexism maintains patriarchal structures (Brandt, 2011). Hostile sexism emphasizes male superiority and dominance over women while benevolent sexism portrays women as weak and needing of men's protection. Socialization of gender roles, societal values of chivalry, and traditional representations of heterosexual marriage encourages the adoption of

ambivalent sexism among both men and women. The positive views of women associated with benevolent sexism encourages women to be complicit in gender inequality by framing male dominance as a necessary protection for women (Becker & Wright, 2011). Endorsement of benevolent sexism by men and women makes gender inequality a particularly insidious and difficult to combat form of oppression.

Sexism impacts many dimensions of men's and women's lives but has largely been studied within the workplace. Research on workplace sexism has placed particular emphasis on leadership (Ryan & Haslam, 2005; Ryan et al., 2011; Ryan et al., 2016), business (Hekman et al., 2017), and science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) (Betz et al., 2013; Cohen & Swim, 1995; Dasgupta & Stout, 2014; Drury et al., 2011; Heilman, 2001; Murphy et al., 2007; Shaffer et al., 2013; Stout et al., 2011). These fields remain largely male-dominated, despite efforts to increase the gender diversity of their employees (NSF, 2018). Although organizations engage in strategies to reduce gender bias, cultural defaults of masculinity remain the foundation of many such organizations. These masculine defaults perpetuate a culture that rewards and incentivizes behavior typically associated with the masculine gender role (Cheryan & Markus, 2020). Practices such as self-nomination for promotion, and expectations of assertiveness and brilliance, while seemingly gender neutral, often advantage men over women (Bian et al., 2019; Deiglmayr et al., 2019), and signal lack of fit to women. These perceptions of male-dominated fields, scientists, and leaders as highly masculine (Nosek et al., 2002) harm women's ability to relate to women scientists (Pietri et al., 2018), decreasing interest in such fields (Cheryan et al., 2012; Diekman et al., 2011). The default of masculinity in organizational behaviors and exemplars communicates lack of fit to women in male-dominated environments (Cheryan & Markus, 2020). Contexts that signal lack of fit regarding organizational values (Hoffman &

Woehr, 2006) or colleagues (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006) decrease women's commitment to remain in organizations (Schmader & Sedikides, 2018). Women who persist in male-dominated fields or positions often attempt to assimilate to masculine defaults by highlighting their masculine traits, reinforcing the status-quo wherein masculinity is normative (Faniko et al., 2016).

Many male-dominated environments are overtly hostile, biased, or discriminatory toward women (Funk & Parker, 2020) in addition to continued underrepresentation, exclusion, and unnecessarily masculinized environments. Women are less likely to receive job offers (Sheltzer & Smith, 2014) and receive lower starting salaries when applying for research positions in STEM (Moss-Racusin et al., 2012) compared to equally qualified men. Gender bias within a STEM organization decreases women's aspirations and positivity toward the organization, even when the organization had undergone diversity training (Moss-Racusin et al., 2018). Bias within these organizations is often perpetuated through differential treatment. Women are met with hyper-supervision on work-related tasks though they are less likely than men to receive sufficient instruction (Yoder & Berenson, 2001) or mentorship (Milkman et al., 2012).

Differential treatment, the prioritization of masculinity and reward structures for those who conform to masculine standards all signal to women that they may not be valued within an organization. According to the cues hypothesis, aspects of an environment that signal lack of fit elicit identity-threat (Murphy et al., 2007; Murphy & Taylor, 2012), wherein one experiences a sense of vulnerability when anticipating negative evaluations or treatment based on one's social category membership (Steele & Aronson, 1995). Underrepresented group members, such as women in male-dominated fields, are vigilant for these cues to inform their expectations of belonging and respect (Murphy et al., 2007). Furthermore, stigmatized identities are the most

salient in contexts where one may be devalued (Branscombe et al., 1999) which furthers the need for vigilance to these cues.

Conversely, environments can communicate identity-safety and thereby assuage identity-threat concerns. Identity-safety cues communicate to members of disadvantaged groups that their identities are valued and welcomed with an aim to disrupt stereotypes related to various stigmatized identities (Autin et al., 2013; Davies et al., 2005). Identity-safety cues can manifest in a variety of ways. Common identity safety cues include organizational diversity statements (Plaut et al., 2009; Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008), role models or exemplars who hold similarly disadvantaged identities (Chaney et al., 2018; Pietri et al., 2018), and allyship from men within an organization (Hildebrand et al., 2020; Moser & Branscombe, 2021). Identity-safety and identity-threat cues are complex, with the potential to shape perceptions of various aspects of an environment (Kruk & Matsick, 2021, Murphy & Taylor, 2012) including interest in an organization (Murphy et al., 2007; Pietri et al., 2019), commitment and identification with an organization (Button, 2001), and perceptions of organizational trust and fairness (Purdie-Vaughns et al., 2008).

### *The Need for Allies*

Given overrepresentation of men in male-dominated fields, emerging research has begun to identify how men within male-dominated organizations can leverage their position as a high-status group member to create more inclusive spaces for women (Chaney et al., 2018; Cihangir et al., 2014; Hildebrand et al., 2020; Johnson et al., 2019; Johnson & Pietri, 2020; Johnson & Pietri, 2022; Moser & Branscombe, 2021; Moser & Branscombe, 2022-a). Whereas past inequality research has typically focused on women's willingness to engage in collective action toward gender equality (e.g., Garcia et al., 2010; Radke et al., 2016; van Zomeren et al., 2008),

allyship research emphasizes the importance of participation from advantaged group members in advancing equality efforts. The focus on women's likelihood to collectively act against gender inequality is problematic as it undermines consideration of the role of perpetrators of sexism by focusing solely on women's responsibility to fix the biased status quo, rather than addressing the root cause of inequality. Ignoring the historical and systemic causes of inequality allows advantaged group members to rationalize gender inequality as due to a tendency among disadvantaged group members to engage with less demanding work, which reinforces meritocratic views regarding workplace success (Whelan, 2013; Williams, 2015).

Framing gender inequality as a women's issue not only focuses the onus of responsibility for societal change on the disadvantaged group but implies an inherent competition between the disadvantaged and advantaged group wherein the advantaged group must release power to allow for the advancement of other groups (Danbold & Huo, 2017; Subašić et al., 2008). Such zero-sum beliefs increase advantaged group member's resistance to social change efforts (Branscombe, 1998; Stefaniak et al., 2020). Creating opinion and behavioral change among men is imperative as men not only are the main perpetrators of ongoing sexism (Pew Research, 2021) but hold higher societal status and power necessary to create meaningful change (Pew Research, 2019).

Men who engage in activism for gender equality violate expectancies because they are the main perpetrators and beneficiaries of sexism. Expectancy violation theory argues that observers evaluate people more extremely when behaviors violate an expectation due to stereotypes based on group membership (Burgoon, 1986; Branscombe et al., 1993; Jussim et al., 1987). Observers express greater surprise and are less likely to view the action as self-interested when an advantaged group member, relative to a disadvantaged group member, expresses

support for the disadvantaged group as this behavior violates group-based expectancies (Eagly et al., 1978). In line with this prediction, observers evaluate messages of gender equality as more legitimate and serious when delivered by a man compared to when women advocate for gender equality (Gulker et al., 2013). Whereas women must weigh the anticipated costs and benefits of their actions when deciding to speak against sexism due to the possibility of backlash (Kaiser & Miller, 2001), men are less inhibited by potential consequences as they are less likely to experience backlash (Hekman et al., 2017; Kaiser & Miller, 2001). Messages that aim to promote change incur less reactance from ingroup members (Rosenberg & Siegel, 2016), particularly when the message is delivered by a highly prototypical ingroup member (Di Bernardo et al., 2021). As members of the advantaged group in male-dominated fields, men, relative to women, are perceived as having significantly more influence over the attitudes and behaviors of other men within an organization (Moser & Branscombe, 2022-b). As such, men are more receptive to messages of gender equality that come from another man than a woman (Czopp & Monteith, 2006; Gulker et al., 2013; Subašić et al., 2018).

More broadly, long-term social change often occurs after public opinion shifts to prioritize the rights of the disadvantaged group rather than upholding the status quo (David & Turner, 1999; Subašić et al., 2008). Social change initiatives create larger opposition to authorities upholding bias when an advantaged majority stands in solidarity with a disadvantaged group (Subašić et al., 2008). The participation of advantaged group allies in social movements is crucial for effective and sustained social change.

***What is an ally?***

An ally is an individual who recognizes the need for further progress in the fight toward equal rights, champions egalitarian ideals, and strives to promote inclusivity (Ashburn-Nardo,

2018; Drury & Kaiser, 2014). Allies are motivated beyond just self-regulating their own prejudice and engage in behavior that supports social justice (Brown & Ostrove, 2013). Effective allyship requires two steps: recognition of bias and actions taken to reduce inequality (Ashburn-Nardo, 2018; Brown & Ostrove, 2013, Droogendyk et al., 2016; Louis et al., 2019). Allies demonstrate a form of intergroup helping that extends beyond social support. Indeed, forms of social support that were not targeted at reducing inequality, such as friendship from advantaged group members, did not increase women's identity-safety and anticipated respected within male-dominated settings. In fact, women's anticipation of respect and identity-safety in the presence of an advantaged group friend did not significantly differ from a control where no support was present (Moser & Branscombe, 2022-b).

### *Positive Effects of Gender Equality Allyship*

Allyship for gender equality from men is an impactful way to create more welcoming environments for women (Chaney et al., 2018; Cihangir et al., 2014; Hildebrand et al., 2020; Johnson et al., 2019; Johnson & Pietri, 2020; Moser & Branscombe, 2021; Pietri et al., 2018). In environments displaying overt sexism, women were less likely to experience identity threat when a sexist comment was confronted by a man ally, and affirmed by a bystander, than when the comment was not confronted (Hildebrand et al., 2020). Confrontations against sexism by men that were motivated by egalitarian values, versus paternalistic values, similarly led women to express empowerment and well-being (Estevan-Reina et al., 2020). Instances of discrimination based on gender that were privately labeled as such by men colleagues led women to report greater confidence, increased women's likelihood of filing a complaint, and decreased women's stereotype-confirming behavior, relative to when sexism was suggested by a woman (Cihangir et al., 2014).

Allyship from men is also impactful in environments that do not display as overtly sexist yet still signal that women's identities may not be valued. Proactive allyship occurs when members of advantaged groups foster environments that signal identity safety to members of disadvantaged groups (De Souza & Schmader, 2021). Environments that situate masculinity as the default increase women's sense of identity-threat and decrease women's sense of belonging (Cheryan et al., 2009). In environments displaying such masculine defaults, women were more likely to anticipate respect and support from their colleagues in the presence of a man who self-identified as an ally than when an ally was not present (Moser & Branscombe, 2021). Advantaged group members can demonstrate allyship through fostering environments in which women may be successful in these male-dominated environments. For instance, Black undergraduate students who viewed a White woman professor as displaying allyship through commitment to the student's success experienced a greater sense of belonging than when a professor did not exhibit ally behaviors (Pietri et al., 2018). Importantly, allyship is an identity-safety cue that is not perceived negatively by members of advantaged groups. The presence of an advantaged group ally increased women's beliefs that an organization is procedurally just and fair in its treatment of employees without signaling status threat to other men (Moser & Branscombe, 2022-a).

Allyship can be demonstrated beyond interpersonal interactions. One way that allies may attempt to directly create positive change for a group is through collective action. Collective action by advantaged group members is action taken on behalf of the disadvantaged group (Radke et al., 2020). Men's participation in collective action encourages other men to express solidarity with women, particularly when gender inequality is framed as negatively impacting both men and women (Subašić et al., 2018).

### *A Critical Perspective on Allyship*

To date, the majority of allyship research has implicitly asked participants to take allies at face value, such that participants should believe that someone who confronts sexism (Hildebrand et al., 2020) or commits to act as an ally (Moser & Branscombe, 2021) is sincere in their motivations. However, there is reason to adopt a more critical perspective on allies and their impact. Positive intergroup contact aimed to reduce prejudice can undermine collective action intentions among disadvantaged groups (Dixon et al., 2012; Saguy et al., 2009). Prejudice reduction strategies often encourage people to identify with superordinate groups (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2000), which has the potential to shift attention from the group receiving unequal treatment. Group identification with one's disadvantaged group is a key predictor of collective action (van Zomeren et al., 2008; Tajfel & Turner, 1979) and shifts away from this identity can result in lower collective action intentions. Further, contact between groups is often intended to decrease negative stereotypes and increase positive feelings associated with outgroups (Wright et al., 2005). However, collective anger and placing blame on an advantaged group responsible for oppression are crucial predictors of collective action (Reynolds et al., 2000; van Zomeren et al., 2008).

Different possible actions undertaken by allies may not all be perceived positively. Feminist activists prefer advantaged group allies who are highly trustworthy yet low in influence within the movement and who instead put in work in less visible ways to create societal change (Park et al., 2022). This preference reflects a historical pattern wherein social movements led by influential advantaged group allies often shift the focus of the movement away from disadvantaged group members most at risk (Bernstein, 2005). These advantaged group leaders within social movements aimed toward equality may be perceived as taking over or co-opting a

movement for their own gain. The presence of advantaged group members who hold high status within a movement may discourage disadvantaged group members from engaging in efforts to increase equality (Iyer & Achia, 2021). Further, allyship that utilizes dependency-oriented help, rather than autonomy-oriented help, can reinforce perceptions that low status groups rely on high status groups (Droogendyk et al., 2016). Within gender equality movements, this reinforces paternalist attitudes toward women. Paternalistic views (Estevan-Reina et al., 2021) and group image concerns (Teixeira et al., 2020) are predictors of confronting inequality efforts that serve to reinforce the status quo. Such problematic actions and motivations of allies lead to burnout among activists (Gorski 2019; Gorski & Erakat, 2019).

### *Theoretical Framework of Allyship Motivations*

Recent theorizing has adopted a multi-perspective approach to identify motivations and antecedents of allyship. These theoretical models argue that allies may be driven by sincere or insincere motivations (Kutlaca et al., 2020; Radke et al., 2020) that fulfil different group-based or individual needs (Selvanathan et al., 2019). These disparate motivations are likely to alter the meaning made from the identity-safety cue of allyship.

Radke and colleagues (2020) developed a framework for understanding the antecedents and motivations of advantaged group allies' engagement in collective action with predicted associated behaviors. This framework identified four distinct motivators of advantaged group participation in collective action on behalf of disadvantaged groups: outgroup focused motivation, ingroup focused motivation, personal motivation, and morality motivation. Advantaged group members with outgroup focused motivation tend to identify less with their ingroup and identify more strongly with the superordinate, politicized group identity that subsumes both the ingroup and outgroup sub-identities. Outgroup focused allies are motivated by

group-based anger and are keenly aware of their own privilege. Further, they are less likely to report negative stereotypes or hold prejudice toward the disadvantaged group. People with outgroup motivation demonstrate autonomy-oriented help, both publicly and privately, that prioritizes the needs of the disadvantaged group above their ingroups' needs.

Those who show an ingroup focus as a motivator for allyship on disadvantaged groups' behalf are higher identifiers with their ingroup and are motivated by collective guilt and sympathy for the disadvantaged group. Though engaging in behaviors that seemingly bolster a disadvantaged group, ingroup focused individuals only engage in allyship to the benefit of their own group. Radke et al (2020) argued that people who show this motivation for allyship are more likely to endorse zero-sum beliefs wherein gains to a disadvantaged group indicate proportional losses to the high-status ingroup. Their actions are often motivated by paternalism and exhibit dependency-oriented help. For instance, men who engage in allyship behaviors motivated by ingroup focus may state endorsement of feminism and the need for reform against gender-based violence, but only to the extent that it does not negatively impact men's group status. Men who endorsed zero-sum beliefs and were motivated by an ingroup focus were more likely to sponsor individual women taking self-defense classes than support reforms against gender-based violence through protest (Radke et al., 2018). This behavior seemingly shows support through providing a resource for individual women to protect themselves but does not address systemic issues, thereby maintaining men's higher status in society.

Advantaged group members who exhibit personal motivation to engage in allyship behaviors highly identify personally, rather than at a group level. These individuals strongly endorse individualism and experience pride and joy through demonstrating allyship. Personally motivated allies put their own needs above the disadvantaged group and may only demonstrate

public allyship where they are able to receive credit for their actions from others. This form of allyship may be conceptualized as optical allyship or performative allyship.

The fourth motivation outlined by Radke and colleagues (2020) is morality motivation. People in this category are strongly motivated by moral beliefs of right and wrong. They experience moral outrage when a central moral value is violated regarding a disadvantaged group, leading to actions on the behalf of the disadvantaged group. Similar to those with an outgroup focused motivation, morally motivated individuals identify with a politicized superordinate group based on their moral beliefs. The behavioral outcomes related to morality motivation depend on the moral value that evokes action. Morally motivated allies may demonstrate autonomy-oriented help or dependency-oriented help either publicly or privately, depending on the relevant moral convictions.

***Broader motivations for communicating gender equality***

Inclusion cues are not limited to allies. Many organizations adopt diversity structures to communicate inclusion and attempt to disrupt masculine defaults (Brady et al., 2014; Kaiser et al., 2013). Theorizing on the approaches to communicating inclusive values have outlined three primary motivations (Dover et al., 2019): the justice rational, the instrumental rational, and the signaling rationale. The justice rationale is motivated by moral values and has a primary goal of eliminating discrimination and creating more equitable spaces. The primary goal of the instrumental rationale is to create more profitable and competitive organizations. Organizations that employ an instrumental rationale believe that their organizations are made more competitive by the inclusion of diverse perspectives and experiences. Finally, the signaling rationale intends to communicate organizational values to the general public, current, and potential employees. This motivation has become more prominent as organizations that communicate diversity are

viewed more positively than organizations without explicitly stated diversity values (Avery, 2003; Kaiser et al., 2013; Murphy et al., 2007; Pietri et al., 2018). Further, the signaling rationale is often employed when an organization faces threats to their public image. This is of particular relevance to STEM fields given their historically male-dominated workforces have come under greater scrutiny to increase the diversity within their organizations (AAUW, 2022).

These rationales can be communicated by individual employees in addition to organizational statements and advertising. Current employees are often pressured to enact and communicate gender equality values (Cox & Lancefield, 2021). This creates a motivation for employees to perpetuate inclusive statements for the purpose of the signaling rationale, regardless of their personal beliefs. Thus, this rationale can be considered a motivation to act as an ally that has not previously been explored in the psychological literature.

The current studies will utilize three motivations outlined in previous literature, the sincere, outgroup focused motivation (Radke et al., 2020), the insincere personal focus motivation (Radke et al., 2020), and the personally insincere signaling rationale to communicate inclusion on the behalf of an organization (Dover et al., 2020). These three motivations are common and have yet to be contrasted to each other. Critically, each motivation may be interpreted differently by women. Whereas a sincerely motivated ally may engender identity-safety, insincerely motivated allies may signal lack of belonging. Women may also respond differently to the two forms of insincere allyship. Allyship motivated by organizational expectations to communicate inclusion, while not personally sincere, may still signal that inclusive efforts are being made for women in male-dominated fields, potentially increasing women's expectations of respect and support relative to the performative motivation.

Given these disparate reasons for signaling gender equality values that include both altruistic and non-altruistic motives on the part of those who are advantaged, disadvantaged group members may be uncertain of an ally's motivation. Disadvantaged group members may be suspicious of the motivations of advantaged group allies' participation in social change efforts. Ambiguity concerning an ally's perceived motivation may increase disadvantaged group member concerns that allies are motivated by self-interest or a wish to co-opt the movement (Marshburn et al., 2021; Park et al., 2022). Disadvantaged group members' suspicion of advantaged group allies predicts lowered perceptions of the sincerity of allies (Burns & Granz, 2022). The current studies investigate how sincerity of a gender equality ally impacts women's attitudes toward an ally and anticipated treatment at an organization. Sincerity can be communicated through the motivations that an ally provides and through an ally's subsequent behaviors following a sexist event. To date, no studies have examined sincerity at both the motivational and behavioral level to assess how sincerity impressions impact women's perceptions of an ally and male-dominated work environments.

### *Impression Formation of Gender Equality Allies*

When meeting someone for the first time, people employ numerous social cognitive processes to form an impression. These initial impressions help inform our understanding of whether someone may be beneficial or a potential threat, and the extent to which they have the ability to enact their intentions. The dimensions of warmth and competence (Fiske et al., 2002) have been found to account for the majority of global impressions regarding others (Wojciszke et al., 1998). The dimension of warmth includes two distinct subcomponents: sociability, the ability to cooperate with others and form connections, and morality, the perceived social correctness of a target based on trait evaluations of honesty and sincerity (Brambilla & Leach, 2014; Brambilla

et al., 2019; Goodwin, 2015). Morality evaluations are critical for global evaluations of others and are more decisive than information regarding competence or sociability (Brambilla et al., 2011; Brambilla et al., 2013; Brambilla et al., 2019; Leach et al., 2007). Moreover, overall impressions of others are more strongly influenced by perceived moral qualities than sociability or competence, regardless of whether a target is a stranger or a familiar person (Brambilla et al., 2011; Goodwin et al., 2014).

Impression formation and perceived morality of others are important for women entering male-dominated fields. Women are highly vigilant for signals that communicate lack of fit in environments that have been historically exclusive toward women (Murphy et al., 2007). Employees at an organization are a vast resource that an incoming employee may use to gather information about the extent to which the work environment is welcoming. Consistent with research emphasizing the relative importance of morality in impression formation (Brambilla et al., 2011; Brambilla et al., 2013; Brambilla et al., 2019; Leach et al., 2007) introductions from advantaged group colleagues who communicate gender equality as a personal moral and commit to allyship results in positive impressions of the advantaged group colleague by women, relative to when information regarding a target's gender equality morals is not provided (Moser & Branscombe, 2021; Moser & Branscombe, 2022-a; Moser & Branscombe, 2022-b).

Women develop similar impressions of organizations in addition to impressions of individuals. These impressions are shaped by environmental cues that may signal identity-safety or identity-threat (Kroeper et al., 2022; Murphy et al., 2007). The meaning ascribed to these cues shapes how women construe the organization in addition to the psychological experience of being a member of the organization (Kroeper et al., 2022).

### *Updating Impressions*

Initial impressions of others and organizations are not static, and can change as new information is presented that is either consistent or consistent with the initial impression. Thus, impressions of individuals and organizations is an iterative process that can be updated with the introduction of new information (Cone & Ferguson, 2015; Cone et al., 2017; Crocker et al., 1983; Mann & Ferguson, 2015; Mann & Ferguson, 2017; McConnell et al., 2006; Mende-Siedlecki et al., 2013; Okten et al., 2019; Park, 1986; Reeder & Coovert, 1986; Wyer, 2010). Impressions of others are likely to be updated when information is provided that drastically changes the meaning of an initial evaluation (Mann & Ferguson, 2015; Wyer, 2010), or when incongruent information is attributed to a dispositional cause rather than a situational cause (Crocker et al., 1983). Moreover, information that is inconsistent with a previous moral impression will result in greater impression change than when morality is not mentioned (Brambilla et al., 2019).

Therefore, a cue that was once considered authentic and indicative of identity-safety can be updated when new information calls that authenticity into question. For instance, organizations that exaggerate their gender diversity in recruitment materials can inadvertently signal identity-threat when women discover that the organization actually lacks gender diversity (Kroeper et al., 2021). Similarly, organizations that promote gender diversity as a goal but maintain non-diverse leadership, such as an all-male board of directors, are viewed as having less behavioral integrity and less attractiveness than organizations that demonstrate consistency in stated values and actual gender diversity, or does not mention gender diversity as an organizational value (Windshield et al., 2016).

People may promise allyship yet fail to act as an ally when presented with an instance of sexism. Inconsistency in an ally's stated values and actual behaviors is likely to lead women to

update their impressions of the ally. A commitment to allyship communicates gender equality as a moral value. Because information that is not consistent with previous moral impressions produce greater impression change (Brambilla et al., 2019) than when new information is consistent with moral impressions, women's impressions of male allies are especially likely to change given information that the ally acted in ways inconsistent with this stated value. Additionally, women may make dispositional attributions for inconsistent stated values and actual behaviors and conclude that the person is not sincere in their commitment to allyship.

Misalignment between stated values or intentions and actual behaviors leads observers to perceive a target as low in behavioral integrity (Simons, 2002). Because people often judge the morality of an act based on motivations, intentions, and actual behaviors (Ames & Fiske, 2015), lack of behavioral integrity is often interpreted as hypocrisy (Effron et al., 2018). Observers are especially likely to view an actor as hypocritical when claiming an undeserved moral credit (Effron et al., 2018). An ally who is motivated by a desire to gain social capital or promote the organization may be perceived as attempting to claim a moral credit without demonstrating behaviors consistent with the moral value claimed.

***Consequences of inconsistent motives and actions***

People often have negative interpersonal reactions when viewing inconsistencies between another's intentions and actions (Bhatti et al., 2013; Effron et al., 2018; Effron et al., 2015; Greenbaum et al., 2012; Laurent et al., 2013; Sikorski & Herbst, 2020; Wagner et al., 2009). Behaviors elicit moral condemnation when they are perceived to be inconsistent with previously stated intentions or values (Effron et al., 2018; Effron et al., 2015; Laurent et al., 2013). Within the workplace, managers receive blows to their reputation and are viewed as less legitimate when acting against values that they had previously communicated to their employees (Bhatti et al.,

2013; Effron & Miller, 2015) and are viewed as less trustworthy (Simons et al., 2014). Perceiving these inconsistencies between what a leader says and what they do decreases organizational commitment and performance (Cha & Edmondson, 2006; Greenbaum et al., 2015). More generally, actions that are inconsistent with stated intentions are often met with anger, especially when the violation is in relation to a proposed moral value (Batson et al., 2007).

A self-identified ally who is later shown to have insincere motivations or does not demonstrate behaviors in line with allyship intentions are likely to be met with negative evaluations. It is likely that misalignment between stated values, motivations, and behaviors decreases the extent to which the ally is perceived as sincere. Moreover, failure to follow through with stated allyship intentions in the presence of sexism is likely to be met with anger from group members that an ally promised to help. These updated impressions of allies may also transfer to negative evaluations of organizational treatment. Women who have reinterpreted what was once an identity-safety cue to signal identity-threat may anticipate significantly more negative treatment from coworkers.

## Overview of Studies

Three studies explore the consequences of differing motivations for allyship and behavior following statements of allyship intentions from a male coworker in male-dominated settings. Study 1 examines how the behavior of coworker who self-identified as a gender equality ally can either undermine or increase perceptions of that person as sincere. Study 1 additionally examines how behaviors that align or do not align with expectations regarding allyship impact both perceptions of the self-identified ally and informs women's expectations of treatment at an organization. Study 1 also considers how behaviors that are (in)consistent with stated allyship commitments can impact perceptions of sincerity, and in turn, mediate women's beliefs

regarding their anticipated treatment at the organization. Study 2 manipulates sincerity by varying the motivations given by men to act as an ally. Disadvantaged group members are often suspicious of advantaged group allies' intentions, especially when the ally motivations are ambiguous (Burns & Granz 2021). We manipulate sincerity by contrasting three common motivations for men to act as allies: sincere interest in increasing gender equality (outgroup focused motivation; Radke et al., 2020), performative motivation (Radke et al., 2020), and motivation to conform to organizational mandates to communicate inclusion signaling motivation; Dover et al., 2019). Study 3 replicates and extends Studies 1 and 2 by contrasting both the motivations to self-identify as an ally and behaviors of the self-identified ally following a sexist event to examine the interactive effects of sincerity in motivation and consistency of ally gender-equality supportive behavior on women's perceptions of male-dominated environments.

## Study 1

How do women interpret men who self-identify as an ally and then do (versus do not) confront sexism when it occurs? Previous work examining the effects of allyship has asked participants to report perceptions of allies and work environments after exposure to a single interaction (Cihangir et al., 2014; Hildebrand et al., 2020; Moser & Branscombe, 2021; Moser & Branscombe, 2022-a; 2022-b). While a useful starting point, women are vigilant for ongoing cues that signal identity safety or threat (Murphy et al., 2007) in settings where their identities may not be valued, and this vigilance does not stop after a single interaction or introduction to an ally. Rather, people update their impressions of others and workplaces with the introduction of new information (Crocker et al., 1983; Kroeper et al., 2021; Mann & Ferguson, 2015; Mann & Ferguson, 2017; Mende-Siedlecki et al., 2013; Okten et al., 2019; Park, 1986; Reeder & Coovert, 1986; Rydell & McConnell, 2006; Wyer, 2010). Subsequent information can either align or be

inconsistent with initial impressions. Behaviors that are inconsistent with stated values or intentions lead observers to perceive the actor as low in behavioral integrity (Simons, 1992; 2002) Similarly, behaviors that do not align with an ally's previously stated commitment to gender equality may lead women to perceive the ally to be insincere. On the other hand, behaviors consistent with such gender equality commitment are likely to increase perceived sincerity of the ally among women. Expectations of sincerity that are violated through behavior that does not align with stated values may not only color perceptions of a self-identified ally but may also alter perceptions of an organization as a whole (Cha & Edmondson, 2006; Greenbaum et al., 2015). Study 1 investigates how behavior after committing to gender equality allyship can alter perceptions of a man who identified himself as an ally, and women's construal of organizations.

We predict a main effect of allyship behavior wherein women shown a man who had previously self-identified as an ally and subsequently confronted a sexist comment will view the man as more sincere than participants shown a self-identified ally who does not follow through with allyship behaviors. Further, women who are shown a self-identified ally who then confronts a sexist comment will indicate identity-safety, respect, anticipated support confronting future sexism, and view equality as normative to a greater extent than participants shown a self-identified ally who either agrees with the sexist comment or does not say anything.

Study 1 will also test the hypothesis that perceived sincerity of the self-identified ally's intentions will indirectly affect the relationships between the ally behaviors and anticipated identity-safety, respect, support confronting future sexism, retention, and environmental norms of gender equality. We predict that an ally who confronts sexism will be perceived as significantly more sincere than an ally who agrees with sexism or ignores sexism. Increased

perceived sincerity of an ally who confronts, versus ignores or agrees with sexism, will predict women's expectations of identity-safety, respect, support in future confrontations, retention, and environmental norms. Hypotheses and planned analyses were preregistered at https://osf.io/av6u4.

## Method

*Participants.* An a priori power analysis using G*Power (3.1.9.2) with an effect size $f$ = .21 at the standard .05 alpha error probability with 3 groups indicated that 291 participants would be necessary to achieve 90% power. Participants were women recruited through Prolific and were paid $1.50 for their participation in the study. Our sample size was informed by Moser and Branscombe (2022-c) that utilized a similar 3 cell design. In anticipation of potential manipulation check failures, we recruited 315 women participants. Nine participants failed the manipulation check, resulting in a total sample of 306 participants. Participants were predominantly White (80%) with an age range from 18 to 73 ($M$ = 37.52, $SD$ = 13.69). Sixty percent of participants reported they had experience working in a male-dominated environment.

*Design.* Study 1 used a 3 cell (ally behavior: confront sexist comment, agree with sexist comment, or does not respond to sexist comment) between-subjects factorial design. All participants viewed a self-identified ally among coworkers at a potential organization. Participants subsequently read an interaction that depicted sexism and then they were randomly assigned to a condition wherein the ally either confronts the sexist comment, agrees with the sexist comment, or does not say anything.

*Procedure.* This study was ostensibly about people's perceptions of workplaces. At the beginning of the study, participants responded to demographic variables and responded to items measuring gender and feminist identification. These items were asked at the beginning of the

study to make women's gender identity salient. Participants were then asked to imagine working at a company called Intrepid Engineering. Participants were instructed to imagine that they had recently been placed on a new team at Intrepid Engineering and would be introduced to the other members of the team. Following a similar procedure to Moser and Branscombe (2021), participants were introduced to their coworkers via a slideshow that depicted the ostensible coworker team member photographs and short introductions about themselves. All participants viewed 5 men and 1 woman among the team members. For all participants, the description of the final coworker shown stated the coworker's interest in gender equality allyship.

After the introduction to the team members, participants were told that they would be asked to randomly evaluate one coworker from those shown to them. All participants were asked to evaluate the coworker who self-identified as a gender equality ally. These items included participants' perceptions of the coworker as sincere and would enact allyship behaviors. Once participants rated their initial evaluations of the coworker, participants read an interaction wherein the team discussed who was best to lead a specific project. A team member initially nominated a woman at Intrepid Engineering, to which another male coworker responded, "*I just don't think women are assertive enough to lead the new team. And do you think a woman could actually stand up to the other directors? I just don't think women would be effective."* After reading the sexist comment (adapted from Hildebrand et al., 2020), participants were randomly assigned to a condition where the self-identified ally either confronted the sexist comment, agreed with the sexist comment, or ignored the sexist comment. In the confront condition, the self-identified ally responds by saying "*I disagree. Justin, women can be assertive and very strong leaders! Your statement sounds a little unfair and sexist, don't you think?*" Participants randomly assigned to the agree condition read the following response from the self-identified

ally "*I agree. I've noticed that women struggle to be assertive leaders. I don't think it's sexist to admit reality, don't you think?"* Participants randomly assigned to the ignore condition read that the self-identified ally did not say anything. In all interactions shown to participants, the coworkers were identified through the names and the photos they had ostensibly provided during the coworker introductions at the beginning of the study. All materials shown to participants were pilot tested to ensure that the interactions depicted were viewed as realistic, understandable, and appropriately sexist.

Once participants had been exposed to the behavior manipulation, they were again asked to evaluate the same coworker they had previously evaluated. Participants were told they could be asked to evaluate the coworker again after witnessing several interactions that might provide a greater sense of those employees. Again, all participants rated the self-identified ally. These items were the same as the initial evaluation of the coworker, wherein participants were asked to evaluate their beliefs of the ally coworker as sincere and likelihood of enacting allyship behavior. After these evaluations, participants responded to key dependent measures, were debriefed, and compensated for their time.

*Measures.* Unless otherwise noted, all measures were asked on a 1 "strongly disagree" to 7 "strongly agree" Likert scale. See Table 1 for overall means, standard deviations, and correlations between measures.

*Perception of Coworker as an Ally.* Three items, taken from Moser and Branscombe (2021), assessed the extent to which participants viewed the coworker as an ally ($\alpha = .88$; e.g. "This person seems committed to social justice"). Participants responded to these items twice; first after the initial introductions to their coworkers and then after reading about the self-identified ally's behavior following a sexist event.

*Sincerity.* Three items measured the extent to which the evaluated coworker was viewed as sincere (α = .98; e.g., "This person means what they say."). As with the perception of the coworker as an ally, this measure was asked first after initial introductions and then again after learning the self-identified ally's behaviors.

*Identity-Safety.* Nine items (from Hildebrand et al., 2020) assessed the extent to which participants anticipated identity-safety at the organization (α = .97; e.g., "I would feel a sense of belonging in this group.").

*Respect.* Four items, from Simon et al. (2014) measured participant's anticipated respect at the organization (α = .97; e.g., "My coworkers would respect me.").

*Support Confronting Future Sexism.* Four items assessed participants' anticipation of support from their colleagues in confronting potential sexism at the company (α = .97; adapted from Moser and Branscombe (2021), e.g., "I feel that if any sexism occurred while working at Intrepid Engineering, I would have support from my coworkers.").

*Retention.* Two items assessed the likelihood of staying at Intrepid Engineering on a 1 "extremely unlikely", to 7 "extremely likely" Likert scale (*r* = .91*;* e.g., "How likely would you be to stay at Intrepid Engineering?).

*Gender Equality Norms.* Four items measured the extent to which participants viewed gender equality as normative at the organization (Moser & Branscombe, 2021; α = .93; e.g., "It is expected that employees at this company be inclusive.").

*Manipulation Check.* At the end of the study, participants reported whether the self-identified ally either confronted, agreed with, or ignored a sexist comment. Participants who failed the manipulation check were dropped from analysis. Participants additionally answered a

conceptual manipulation check that asked whether employees at the organization who self-identify as an ally are likely to follow through in their behavior if a sexist event occurs.

## Results

Table 1. *Means, standard deviations, and correlations with confidence intervals, Study 1*

| Variable | *M* | *SD* | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Allyship Perception T1 | 5.67 | 1.03 | | | | | | | | |
| 2. Allyship Perception T2 | 3.32 | 2.18 | .00 [-.11, .11] | | | | | | | |
| 3. Sincere T1 | 5.07 | 1.16 | .72** [.66, .77] | .08 [-.03, .19] | | | | | | |
| 4. Sincere T2 | 3.40 | 1.91 | -.01 [-.12, .11] | .92** [.91, .94] | .15** [.04, .26] | | | | | |
| 5. Identity-Safety | 3.12 | 1.57 | .06 [-.06, .17] | .79** [.75, .83] | .15* [.03, .25] | .79** [.74, .83] | | | | |
| 6. Respect | 3.22 | 1.72 | -.03 [-.14, .08] | .76** [.70, .80] | .07 [-.04, .18] | .74** [.68, .79] | .87** [.84, .89] | | | |
| 7. Support | 3.08 | 1.76 | .01 [-.10, .12] | .88** [.85, .90] | .11* [.00, .22] | .84** [.80, .87] | .89** [.87, .91] | .87** [.84, .89] | | |
| 8. Retention | 5.07 | 1.85 | .05 [-.07, .16] | .76** [.71, .80] | .12* [.01, .23] | .75** [.70, .80] | .88** [.85, .90] | .79** [.74, .83] | .85** [.82, .88] | |
| 9. Equality Norms | 3.34 | 1.56 | .06 [-.05, .18] | .72** [.66, .77] | .19** [.08, .30] | .71** [.65, .76] | .84** [.80, .87] | .79** [.74, .83] | .85** [.82, .88] | .78** [.73, .82] |

*Note*. *M* and *SD* are used to represent mean and standard deviation, respectively. Values in square brackets indicate the 95% confidence interval for each correlation. * indicates $p < .05$. ** indicates $p < .01$.

*Manipulation Check.* One-way ANOVA revealed a significant main effect of ally behavior, $F$ (2, 303) = 185.14; $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .55$. Participants who viewed the ally confront the sexist comment ($M$ = 5.37; $SD$ = 1.06) responded that employees at the organization who self-identify as an ally were significantly more likely to enact allyship behaviors than participants shown a self-identified ally who agreed with the sexist comment ($M$ = 2.39; $SD$ = 1.41; $p < .001$) or ignored the sexist comment ($M$ = 2.35, $SD$ = 1.38; $p < .001$). Participants shown a self-identified ally who agreed with the sexist comment or ignored the sexist comment did not significantly differ in evaluation of coworker likelihood of enacting allyship behavior ($p > .99$[1]). Thus, the manipulation was successful.

*Perceived Sincerity.* We performed a repeated measures ANOVA to test whether participants' perceptions of the self-identified ally coworker's sincerity changed after viewing the ally's subsequent behavior following the sexist incident. The behavior manipulation (confront, ignore, or agree with the sexist comment) was the between-subjects factor and time was the within-subjects factor with two levels: Time 1 after initial introduction to coworkers, and Time 2 after the sexist event. As predicted, a repeated measures ANOVA revealed a significant main effect of time, $F$ (1, 303) = 486.84; $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .62$, and a significant main effect of condition, $F$ (1, 303) = 108.29; $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .42$. Additionally, as predicted, the time by condition interaction was significant, $F$ (1, 303) = 223.42; $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .60$. Evaluations of the sincerity of the ally did not differ at Time 1, prior to the behavior manipulation, $F$ (2, 303) = .54; $p = .59$. As hypothesized, participants shown a self-identified ally who confronted sexism viewed the ally as significantly more sincere at Time 2 ($M$ = 5.61, $SD$ = 1.06) than at Time 1 ($M$ = 5.01, $SD$ = 1.17), $t$(102) = -6.97; $p < .001$. Participants in the ignore condition significantly decreased

[1] All pairwise comparisons in Studies 1-3 utilized Tukey HSD tests.

their perceptions of sincerity from Time 1 (5.02, *SD* = 1.25) to Time 2 (*M* = 2.31, *SD* = 1.12), *t* (103) = 19.00, $p < .001$. Similarly, participants in the agree condition viewed the self-identified ally as significantly less sincere at Time 2 (*M* = 2.26, *SD* = 1.09) than Time 1 (*M* = 5.17, *SD* = 1.06), *t* (98) = 18.42, $p < .001$. At Time 2, a significant main effect of condition emerged, *F* (2, 303) = 315; $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .68$, such that women shown an ally who confronted sexism perceived the ally as significantly more sincere than participants shown an ally who ignored the sexist comment ($p < .001$) or agreed with the sexist comment ($p < .001$). Evaluations of the sincerity of the ally at Time 2 did not differ between women shown the ally who agreed with sexism or the ally who ignored sexism ($p > .9$).

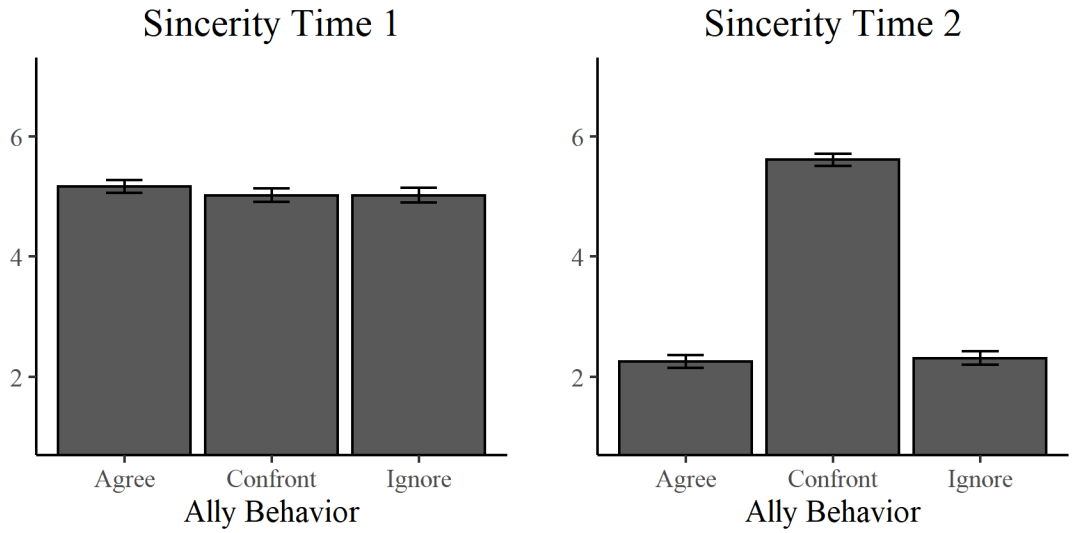



*Figure 1.* Mean evaluations of the self-identified ally's perceived sincerity at Time 1 and Time 2, Study 1. Error bars represent 95% Confidence Intervals.

*Perceived Allyship*. We used repeated measures ANOVA to test whether participants' perceptions of the self-identified ally coworker as an ally changed after viewing the self-identified ally's subsequent behavior. Time was the within-subjects factor with two levels: Time 1 after initial introductions to coworkers, and Time 2 after the sexist event. The behavior

manipulation was the between-subjects factor, with the levels being the confront condition, ignore condition, and agree condition. A significant main effect of time, $F$ (1, 303) = 1071.63; $p$ < .001; $\eta^2$ = .78, and condition, $F$ (2, 303) = 231.63; $p$ < .001; $\eta^2$ = .61, emerged. These main effects were qualified by a significant time by condition interaction, $F$ (2, 303) = 403.98; $p$ < .001; $\eta^2$ = .73. Prior to the behavior manipulation, women did not differ in their evaluations of the coworker as an ally, $F$ (2, 303) = 1.15; $p$ = .32. As predicted, women shown a self-identified ally who confronted sexism perceived the self-identified ally as significantly more of an ally at Time 2 ($M$ = 6.07, $SD$ = .93) than Time 1 ($M$ = 5.54, $SD$ = .99), $t$ (102) = -6.15, $p$ < .001. Participants shown the ignore condition viewed the self-identified ally as significantly less of an ally at Time 2 ($M$ = 2.08, $SD$ = 1.11) than Time 1, ($M$ = 5.72, $SD$ = 1.03), $t$ (103) = 24.15, $p$ < .001. Similarly, participants assigned to the condition wherein the ally agrees with the sexist comment viewed the self-identified ally as significantly less of an ally at Time 2 ($M$ = 1.74, $SD$ = .76) than Time 1 ($M$ = 5.73, $SD$ = 1.02), $t$ (98) = 30.65, $p$ < .001. At Time 2, a significant main effect emerged, $F$ (2, 303) = 684.18, $p$ < .001, $\eta^2$ = .81, such that participants shown the confront behavior rated the self-identified ally as significantly higher in allyship than participants shown the agree ($p$ < .001) or ignore behavior ($p$ < .001). Participants shown the ignore condition perceived the target as significantly higher in allyship than participants shown a self-identified ally who agreed with the sexist comment ($p$ = .03) at Time 2.

*Figure 2.* Women's perceptions of the self-identified ally as being an ally at Time 1 and Time 2.

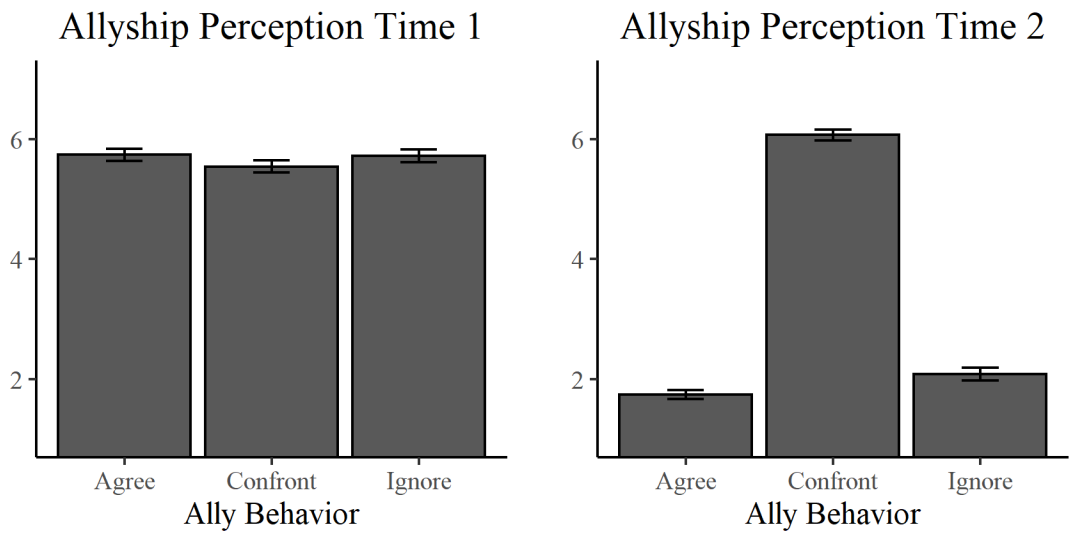



*Figure 2.* Mean evaluations of the self-identified ally as likely to be an ally at Time 1 and Time 2, Study 2. Error bars represent 95% Confidence Intervals.

*Identity-Safety.* As predicted, one-way ANOVA results revealed a significant main effect of ally behavior, $F$ (2, 303) = 155.16; $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .50$, such that participants shown an ally who confronted the sexist comment indicated significantly higher identity safety ($M$ = 4.68, $SD$ = 1.18), than participants shown a self-identified ally who agreed with the sexist comment ($M$ = 2.18; $SD$ = .97; $p < .001$) or who ignored the sexist comment ($M$ = 2.48; $SD$ = 1.15; $p < .001$). Participants shown a self-identified ally who agreed with or ignored the sexist comment did not significantly differ ($p$ = .16).

*Respect.* Results of a one-way ANOVA indicated a significant main effect of ally behavior, $F$ (2, 303) = 143.65; $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .49$. As predicted, participants in the confrontation condition ($M$ = 4.89; $SD$ = 1.13) were significantly more likely to expect to be respected by their coworkers than participants in the agree condition ($M$ = 2.28; $SD$ = 1.15; $p < .001$) or the ignore condition ($M$ = 2.45; $SD$ = 1.40; $p < .001$). Again, participants in the agree condition and the ignore condition did not differ ($p$ = .93).

*Support Confronting Future Sexism.* One-way ANOVA revealed a significant main effect of ally behavior, $F$ (2, 303) = 281.42; $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .65$. In line with predictions, participants shown a previously identified ally who confronted a sexist comment ($M$ = 5.07; $SD$ = 1.07) were significantly more likely to anticipate support confronting potential sexism in the future than participants randomly assigned to a condition where the ally agreed with the sexist comment ($M$ = 1.96; $SD$ = .89; $p < .001$) or ignored the sexist comment ($M$ = 2.18; $SD$ = 1.20; $p < .001$). Participants in the agree and ignore condition did not significantly differ in their expectations of support confronting future sexism ($p = .38$).

*Retention.* One-way ANOVA analysis revealed a significant main effect of ally behavior, $F$ (2, 303) = 131.73; $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .47$. As hypothesized, women randomly assigned to the confront condition ($M$ = 4.83, $SD$ = 1.57) indicated significantly greater intentions to stay at the organization than women randomly assigned to the agree condition ($M$ = 2.04, $SD$ = 1.14; $p < .001$) or the ignore condition ($M$ = 2.31, $SD$ = 1.32; $p < .001$). Women assigned to the agree condition and ignore condition did not significantly differ in intentions to stay at the organization ($p = .49$).

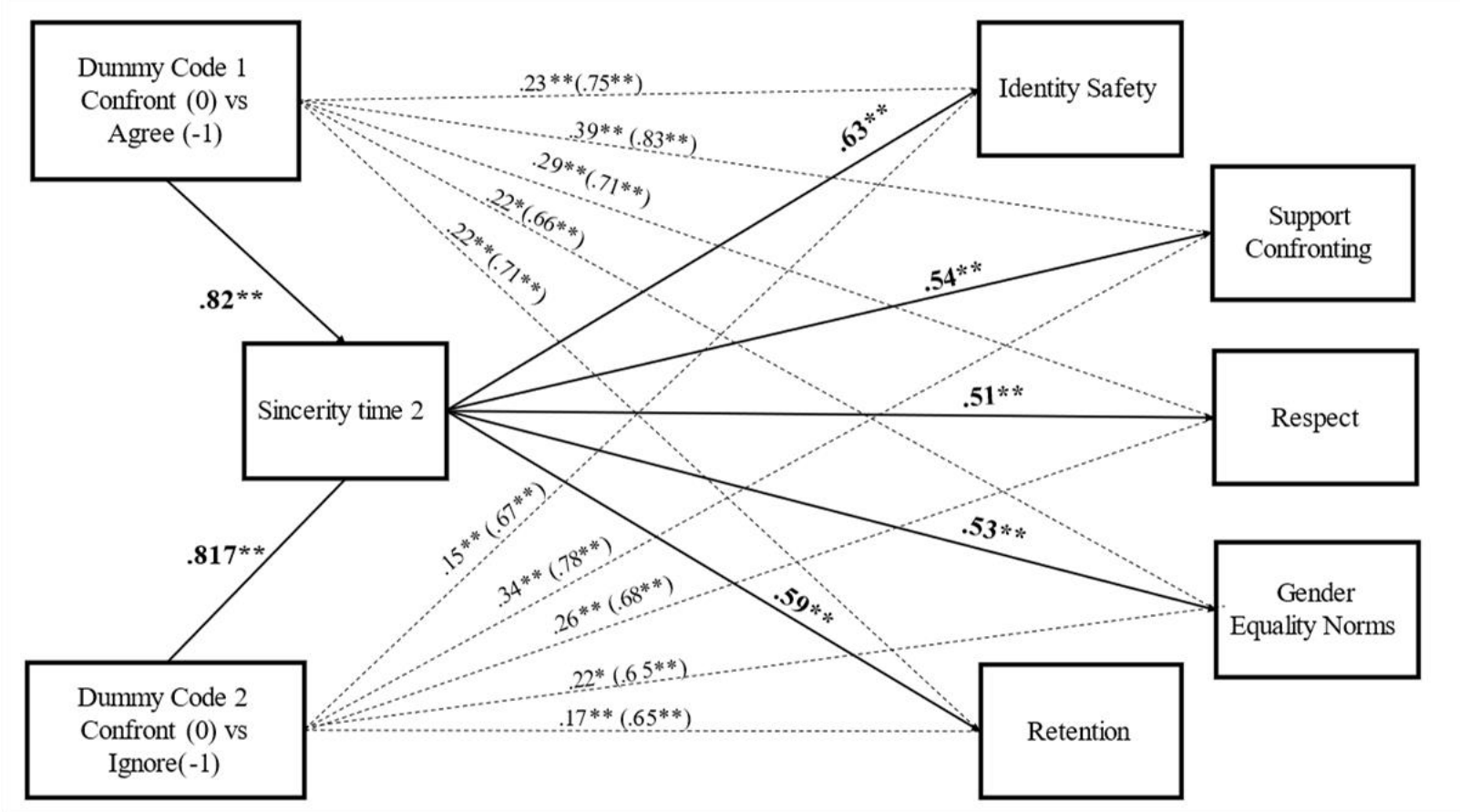
*Equality norms.* One-way ANOVA analysis revealed a significant main effect of ally behavior, $F$ (2, 303) = 114.34; $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .43$. As hypothesized, women randomly assigned to the confront condition ($M$ = 4.78, $SD$ = 1.22) were significantly more likely to anticipate gender equality to be normative at the organization than women randomly assigned to the agree condition ($M$ = 2.59; $SD$ = 1.13; $p < .001$) or the ignore condition ($M$ = 2.63; $SD$ = 1.20; $p < .001$). There was not a significant difference in perceived equality norms between participants shown the agree condition or the ignore condition ($p > .99$).

*Sincerity Mediation.* To test our prediction that sincerity would mediate the relationships between the ally behavior conditions and the dependent measures, we conducted multi-categorical path analysis in R using *lavaan* (version 4.1.2). The confront condition was coded as the reference group to test the hypothesis that women's perceptions of the ally as sincere at time 2 would indirectly affect the relationships between the ally behavior manipulation and the dependent measures of identity-safety, support confronting future sexism, respect, gender equality norms, and likelihood of retention. Dummy 1 indicated the agree condition versus the reference group of confront condition (Dummy 1: 0 0 1) while Dummy 2 contrasted the ignore condition to the reference group of confront condition (Dummy 2: 0 1 0).

As predicted, five significant indirect effects emerged. First, participants shown an ally who confronted a sexist comment relative to an ally who agreed with the sexist comment perceived the ally as more sincere, which predicted identity safety, $\beta$ = 1.72 , *SE* =.21, 95% CI [1.32, 2.16]. Similarly, women shown an ally who confronted the sexist comment viewed the ally as more sincere than women shown an ally who ignored the comment, which predicted identity-safety, $\beta$ = 1.67, *SE* =.20, 95% CI [1.31, 2.09]. Second, increased perceived sincerity predicted greater support confronting sexism in the future for women shown an ally who confronted versus agreed with the sexist comment, $\beta$ = 1.66, *SE* =.21, 95% CI [1.27, 2.07], and for women shown an ally who confronted rather than ignored with sexist comment, $\beta$ = 1.63, *SE* =.19, 95% CI [1.27, 2.00]. Greater perceived sincerity of an ally who confronted sexism predicted higher anticipation of respect from coworkers, relative to participants shown an ally who agreed with the sexist comment, $\beta$ = 1.54, *SE* = .23, 95% CI [1.09, 2.02], or ignored the sexist comment, $\beta$ = 1.51, *SE* = .22, 95% CI [1.10, 1.96]. Increased perceptions of the ally as sincere predicted increased likelihood of retention at the organization for women shown a

confrontation versus an ally who agreed with the sexist comment, $\beta$ = 1.91, *SE* = .26, 95% CI [1.40, 2.43], or for women shown an ally who confronted versus ignored the sexist remark, $\beta$ = 1.89, *SE* = .25, 95% CI [1.39, 2.36]. Finally, perceived sincerity of an ally who confronted sexism predicted beliefs that gender equality was normative at the organization, relative to participants shown an ally who agreed with the sexist comment, $\beta$ = 1.46, *SE* = .23, 95% CI [1.02, 1.94], or ignored the sexist comment, $\beta$ = 1.43, *SE* = .22, 95% CI [1.02, 1.88]. Figure 3 summarizes the results of the mediation analysis.

*Figure 3.* Path analysis of the indirect effect of ally manipulation on identity-safety, support confronting future sexism, respect, gender equality norms, and likelihood of retention via perceived sincerity of the ally at time 2.




Note. Values in parentheses indicate total effects prior to the inclusion of the mediator of perceived sincerity at Time 2. * p<.05, ** p<.01.

## Discussion

In line with the hypotheses, Study 1 found that the sincerity of an ally can be undermined or increased depending on the ally's behaviors following a sexist event. Behaviors that were inconsistent with the coworker's previous commitment to gender equality allyship, such as agreeing with or ignoring a sexist comment significantly decreased the extent to which women viewed the coworker to be sincere, and the extent to which the coworker was seen as an ally. Consistent with previous work on updating impressions (Crocker et al., 1983; Kroeper et al., 2021; Mann & Ferguson, 2015; Mann & Ferguson, 2017; Mende-Siedlecki et al., 2013; Okten et al., 2019; Park, 1986; Reeder & Coovert, 1986; Rydell & McConnell, 2006; Wyer, 2010) these findings demonstrate that women update their impressions of allies with the introduction of new information. The presence of a coworker who had previously committed to allyship but then did not follow through with those intentions and in fact violated them by either agreeing with or ignoring sexism significantly decreased women's expectations of respect, identity-safety, gender equality norms, likelihood of retention, and support confronting sexism in the future. This indicates that the presence of an ally who does not follow through with their commitments not only impacts women's perceptions of the previously self-identified ally but extends to overall evaluations of an organization. Conversely, women updated their impressions of the coworker such that the coworker was viewed as significantly more of an ally and significantly more sincere when the self-identified ally coworker confronted sexism. Exposure to a coworker who committed to allyship and then demonstrated allyship through confronting sexism increased women's expectations of respect, identity-safety, support confronting in the future, and likelihood of staying at the organization, relative to women shown a self-identified ally who ignored or agreed with the sexist comment.

Study 1 found evidence that perceived sincerity of an ally indirectly affects women's expectations of treatment at a male-dominated environment. Participants shown a self-identified ally who confronted sexism perceived the ally to be significantly more sincere than participants for whom the ally ignored or agreed with the sexist comment. As hypothesized, increased sincerity predicted women's evaluations of respect, support, and identity safety, gender equality norms, and retention.

Study 1 builds upon previous research demonstrating the utility of gender equality allies in male-dominated spaces (Chaney et al., 2018; Cihangir et al., 2014; Hildebrand et al., 2020; Johnson et al., 2019; Johnson & Pietri, 2020; Johnson & Pietri, 2022; Moser & Branscombe, 2021; Moser & Branscombe, 2022-a). Emerging theory has emphasized the two-step process of allyship that involves both acknowledgement of inequality and behaviors to enact social change (Ashburn-Nardo, 2018; Drury & Kaiser, 2014; Kutlaca et al., 2020). However, the majority of previous allyship research has only examined allyship as *either* acknowledgement of inequality with commitment to allyship (Moser & Branscombe, 2021; Moser & Branscombe, 2022-a) or behaviors that demonstrate allyship (Cihangir et al., 2014; Hildebrand et al., 2020). Study 1 is a novel contribution to the allyship literature with the inclusion of both acknowledgement of inequality with commitment to engage in allyship behaviors and behaviors exhibited by the self-identified ally in the context of an explicitly sexist event. Previous research on the topic of allyship commitment as an identity-safety cue has implicitly asked participants to take this commitment at face value and has not provided participants with reason to doubt that the ally would behave consistently with these intentions (Moser & Branscombe, 2021; Moser & Branscombe, 2022-a). Indeed, women shown a coworker who provides allyship intentions do expect the coworker to follow through on this commitment (Moser & Branscombe, 2021). These

previous studies have found significant, positive effects of commitment to allyship from men on women's sense of belonging in male-dominated spaces, however, the effects of behaviors that seemingly disconfirm these intentions were unknown. To our knowledge, Study 1 is the first to investigate the iterative process of allyship that involves updating impressions when new information that either confirms or disconfirms expectations is presented.

## Study 2

Allies may have motivations that are not reflective of their stated intentions to support gender equality, leading members of disadvantaged groups to express suspicion of an ally's motivations when their sincerity is ambiguous (Burns & Granz, 2022). Study 1 found that the behavior of an ally following a sexist incident has significant ramifications for women's perceptions of the ally and their anticipated treatment at the organization. Study 2 expands on Study 1 by investigating the role of sincere versus insincere motivations to act as an ally. Although there are multiple motivations for advantaged group members to act as an ally (Radke et al., 2020), Study 2 contrasts sincere allyship to the two foremost insincere motivations for workplace allyship: performative allyship (Radke et al., 2020; Selvanathan et al., 2018) and company expectations to communicate inclusion (Dover et al., 2020). Sincere allyship is motivated by a genuine desire to change current status relations among advantaged and disadvantaged groups (Radke et al., 2020). Performative allyship is a particularly common insincere form of allyship (Fosberg et al., 2021; Ledesma 2021). Performative allyship occurs when an individual is motivated by status concerns and wishes to gain social capital through the credit received for engaging in a political issue. Performative allies put their individual status needs above the disadvantaged group to which they express solidarity and, often, do not sincerely wish for status relations to change (Radke et al., 2020).

Study 2 will also contrast sincerely motivated allies to allies who are motivated by expectations to communicate inclusion from organizations with the aim of increasing organizational reputation. Many organizations wish to signal inclusion to the general public and potential employees because demographically diverse organizations are viewed more positively than organizations that are low in demographic diversity (Avery, 2003; Kaiser et al., 2013; Murphy et al., 2007; Pietri et al., 2018), deemed the signaling rationale (Dover et al., 2020). Organizations may wish for their employees to communicate such inclusion to the public and potential employees, creating a motivation for such employees to proclaim inclusive statements for the purpose of increasing organizational prestige, regardless of employees' actual personal beliefs (the signaling rationale, Dover et al., 2019). This motivation for allyship has not yet been considered in research, and particularly its implications for disadvantaged groups who may learn this is the basis of proffered allyship.

Importantly, the mediational analysis in Study 1 found evidence to support the hypothesis that the perceived sincerity of the self-identified ally mediates the relationships between the ally behavior manipulation and identity-safety, support confronting future sexism, respect, gender equality norms, and likelihood of retention. Given the correlational nature of mediation analysis, we cannot yet conclude that insincerity caused these downstream outcomes. Study 2 addresses this limitation by directly manipulating the sincerity of ally motivations to establish that sincerity is causal in increasing women's perceptions of identity-safety, support confronting sexism in the future, anticipated respect, and likelihood of retention (Spencer et al., 2005). By manipulating the sincerity of the ally's motivation, Study 2 will test whether sincerity directly affects women's expectations of treatment at an organization.

A main effect of the allyship motivation is predicted to affect women's perceptions of the ally and anticipated treatment at the organization. Specifically, women shown a man with sincere motivations for acting as an ally will view that man as more sincere than participants shown a man who provides insincere motivations to act as an ally, either for performative reasons to incur personal gains or due to company expectations. Women shown a man with sincere motivations for allyship will anticipate identity safety and support from their colleagues significantly more than those shown either of the two insincere motivation conditions. A coworker who communicates allyship intentions due to organizational mandates may communicate that diversity efforts are being made at the organization. Therefore, we predict that women shown a man who commits to acting as an ally who is motivated by company expectations will anticipate significantly more identity safety and support from their colleagues than those shown a man motivated to act as an ally due to performative motives. Hypotheses, method, materials, and analyses were preregistered at https://osf.io/z7cx6.

## Method

*Participants.* An a priori power analysis using G*Power (3.1.9.2) with an effect size $f$ = .21 at the standard .05 alpha error probability with 3 groups indicated that 291 participants would be necessary to achieve 90% power. Participants were women recruited through Prolific and were paid $1.50 for their participation in the study. Our sample size was informed by Moser and Branscombe (2022-c) that utilized a similar 3 cell design. We recruited 315 women participants to account for potential manipulation check failures. Eighteen participants failed the manipulation check and were excluded from analysis, resulting in a final sample of 297 participants. Participants were predominantly White (76%), and participant age ranged from 18-92 ($M$ = 37.57, $SD$ = 15.49).

*Design.* Study 2 employed a three cell between-subjects design that manipulated the sincerity of an ally's commitment to allyship (sincere, performative, or company expectations). Participants were randomly assigned to view an ally who is motivated by either interest in increasing gender equality, pressures from the organization to promote inclusivity, or the ally's own interest in being positively regarded by others. All materials were pilot tested to ensure that participants interpreted the ally motivations as intended.

*Procedure.* This study was ostensibly about people's perceptions of workplaces. Participants were first asked to complete demographic questions and items assessing the extent to which one identifies with their gender and as a feminist. Gender and feminist identification were included to make these identifications salient prior to the study. Participants were asked to imagine working at a company called Intrepid Engineering. Participants were instructed to imagine that they had recently been placed on a new team at Intrepid Engineering and would be introduced to the other members of the team. Following a similar procedure to Study 1, participants were introduced to their coworkers via a slideshow where the ostensible coworker team members provided photographs and short descriptions of themselves. All participants viewed 5 men and 1 woman among the team members. For all participants, the statement of the final coworker shown communicated the coworker's interest in gender equality allyship.

As in Study 1, participants were told that they would be asked to randomly evaluate one coworker from those shown to them. All participants were asked to evaluate the coworker who self-identified as a gender equality ally. After this initial evaluation, participants read a filler interaction where an Intrepid Engineering manager explains the purpose of the new team and the team members go through ice breaker activities. At the end of the meeting, participants read a passage where they overhear two coworkers talking, one of whom was the self-identified ally. In

this interaction, one of the coworkers mentions disliking ice breaker activities. The ally coworker then stated that he also found icebreakers to be uncomfortable but was grateful for the opportunity to introduce himself and mention his interest in gender equality. Following this statement, the ally coworker provided his motivation for mentioning gender equality allyship. Participants were randomly assigned to view one of three motivations given by the self-identified ally for mentioning gender equality. Those assigned to the sincere motivation read *"To be honest, I mean it genuinely. It's an important personal value to me, and that's why I do it."* Participants assigned to the performative motivation read *"To be honest I don't really mean it, but I notice that I always get praise and compliments from other people when I say that stuff. It makes me look good; that's why I do it."* Those randomly assigned to view the company expectation condition read *"To be honest I don't really mean it, but corporate is really trying to communicate inclusion and they keep telling us to say that kind of stuff. That's why I do it."* Participants were then asked to evaluate the same coworker they were previously asked to evaluate, which was again the self-identified ally for all participants. After finishing these evaluations, participants were asked to respond to key dependent measures. Finally, participants were debriefed and compensated for their time.

*Measures.* Study 2 used the same measures as Study 1, except in Study 2 the norms of gender equality measure was not included. The retention measure in Study 2 was assessed on a 0 (extremely unlikely) to 100 (extremely likely) sliding scale. See Table 2 for overall means, standard deviations, and correlations between measures.

*Manipulation Check.* Once participants learned of the motivation given by the self-identified ally to be a gender equality ally, participants rated the extent to which they viewed the

self-identified ally as sincere. At the end of the study, participants were asked to select the motivation that the self-identified ally gave for expression of allyship intentions.

## Results

Table 2. *Means, standard deviations, and correlations with confidence intervals, Study 2*

| Variable | *M* | *SD* | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Allyship Perception T1 | 5.69 | 0.95 | | | | | | | |
| 2. Allyship Perception T2 | 3.44 | 2.08 | .20** [.10, .32] | | | | | | |
| 3. Sincere T1 | 5.04 | 1.06 | .71** [.65, .76] | .21** [.10, .32] | | | | | |
| 4. Sincere T2 | 3.12 | 2.15 | .18** [.06, .28] | .95** [.94, .96] | .21** [.10, .32] | | | | |
| 5. Identity-safety | 4.12 | 1.41 | .31** [.20, .41] | .71** [.65, .76] | .36** [.26, .46] | .71** [.64, .76] | | | |
| 6. Respect | 4.74 | 1.43 | .26** [.15, .37] | .62** [.55, .69] | .26** [.15, .37] | .60** [.52, .67] | .84** [.81, .87] | | |
| 7. Support | 4.06 | 1.64 | .23** [.12, .34] | .78** [.73, .82] | .27** [.17, .38] | .75** [.70, .80] | .86** [.83, .89] | .82** [.78, .85] | |
| 8. Retention | 53.56 | 28.05 | .21** [.10, .32] | .67** [.61, .73] | .27** [.16, .37] | .68** [.61, .74] | .82** [.78, .85] | .71** [.65, .76] | .78** [.73, .82] |

*Note*. *M* and *SD* are used to represent mean and standard deviation, respectively. Values in square brackets indicate the 95% confidence interval for each correlation. The confidence interval is a plausible range of population correlations that could have caused the sample correlation (Cumming, 2014). * indicates $p < .05$. ** indicates $p < .01$.

*Sincerity Manipulation Check.* A repeated measures ANOVA was performed to test whether participants' perceptions of the self-identified ally coworker's sincerity changed after becoming aware of the motivations to commit to gender equality allyship. The ally motivation conditions comprised the between-subjects factor and time was the within-subjects factor with two levels: Time 1 after initial introductions to the coworkers, and Time 2 after the overheard conversation that conveyed the ally's motivation. As predicted, the repeated measures ANOVA revealed a significant main effect of time, $F$ (1, 294) = 641.22; $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .69$, and a significant main effect of condition, $F$ (1, 294) = 196.02; $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .5$. Additionally, the time by condition interaction was significant, $F$ (3, 294) = 275.90; $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .65$. As in Study 1, evaluations of the sincerity of the ally did not differ at Time 1, prior to the motivation manipulation, $F$ (2, 294) = 1.41; $p = .25$. As hypothesized, participants shown a self-identified ally who provided sincere motivation viewed the ally as significantly more sincere at Time 2 ($M$ = 5.76, $SD$ = 1.02) than at Time 1 ($M$ = 5.18, $SD$ = .93), $t$(98) = -6.27; $p < .001$. Participants shown a performative motivation decreased their perceptions of sincerity from Time 1 (5.00, $SD$ = 1.15) to Time 2 ($M$ = 1.63, $SD$ = .89), $t$(101) = 22.95, $p < .001$. Similarly, participants shown the company expectation motivation viewed the ally as significantly less sincere at Time 2 ($M$ = 2.03, $SD$ = 1.29) than Time 1 ($M$ = 4.93, $SD$ = 1.08), $t$ (97) = 18.85, $p < .001$. At Time 2, a significant main effect of condition emerged, $F$ (2, 294) = 440.30; $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .75$, such that women shown an ally with sincere motivation perceived the ally as significantly more sincere than participants shown an ally who provided performative motivation ($p < .001$) or company expectation motivation ($p < .001$). Women shown an ally who was motivated by company expectations viewed the ally as significantly more sincere than women shown an ally with performative motivation ($p = .03$) at Time 2.

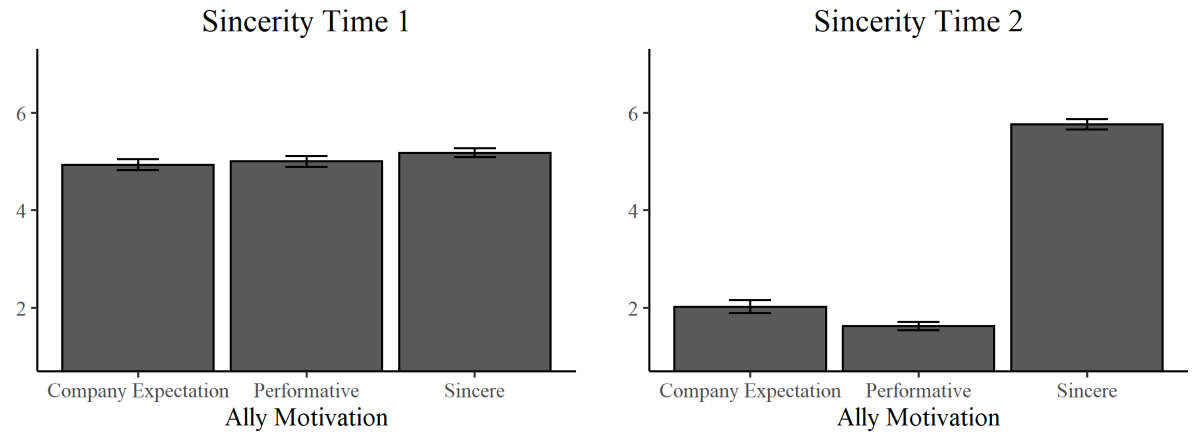



*Figure 4.* Mean evaluations of the self-identified ally's sincerity at Time 1 and Time 2, Study 2. Error bars represent 95% Confidence Intervals.

*Perception of Coworker as an Ally*. Repeated measures ANOVA tested whether participants' allyship perceptions of the self-identified ally coworker were impacted by the motivations to commit to gender equality allyship. The within-subjects factor had two levels: Time 1 after initial introduction to coworkers and Time 2 after the overheard conversation. The between-subjects factor was the ally motivation condition. As hypothesized, a repeated measures ANOVA revealed a significant main effect of time, $F$ (1, 294) = 1016.78; $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .78$, and a significant main effect of condition, $F$ (1, 294) = 215.75; $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .60$. The time by ally motivation interaction was significant, $F$ (2, 294) = 300.75; $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .67$. As in Study 1, evaluations of allyship did not differ by condition at Time 1, prior to the motivation manipulation, $F$ (2, 294) = 1.59; $p = .20$. Participants shown a self-identified ally who provided sincere motivations significantly increased their evaluations of the coworker as an ally from Time 1 ($M$ = 5.83, $SD$ = .93) and Time 2 (6.00, $SD$ = .87), $t$(102) = 3.20; $p < .001$. Participants shown a performative motivation ally decreased their belief that the coworker was an ally from Time 1 (5.67, $SD$ =.96) to Time 2 ($M$ = 1.94, $SD$ = .93), $t$ (100) = 26.48, $p < .001$. Similarly, participants shown the organizational requirement motivation ally significantly decreased the

extent to which they viewed the coworker as an ally from Time 1 ($M$ = 5.69, $SD$ = .97) to Time 2 ($M$ = 2.43., $SD$ = 1.25), $t$ (97) = 21.76, $p < .001$. At Time 2, a significant main effect of condition emerged, $F$ (2, 294) = 456.58; $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .75$, such that women shown an ally with sincere motivation perceived the coworker as significantly more of an ally than participants shown an ally who provided performative motivation ($p < .001$) or company expectation motivation ($p < .001$). Women shown an ally who was motivated by company expectations viewed the ally as significantly more of an ally than women shown an ally with performative motivation ($p = .003$) at Time 2.

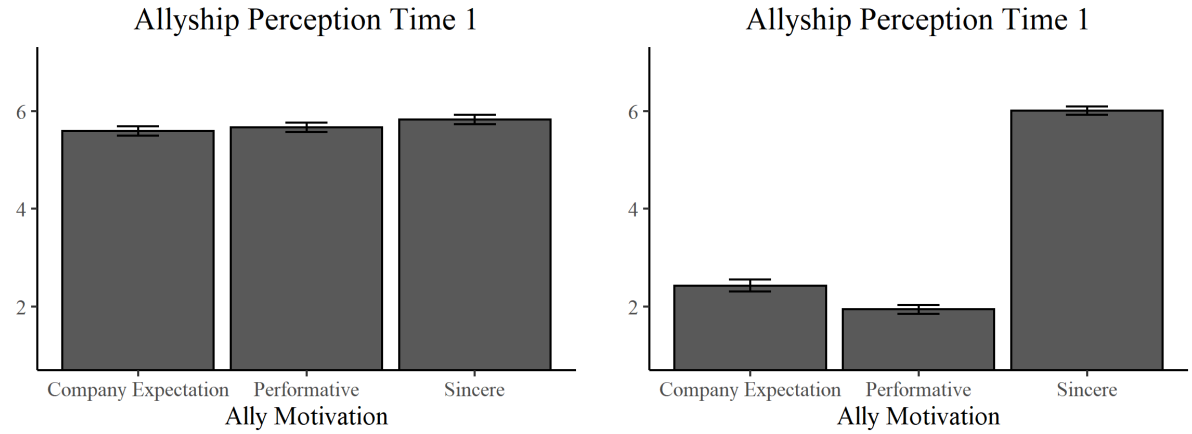



*Figure 5.* Mean evaluations of the self-identified ally as likely to exhibit allyship at Time 1 and Time 2, Study 2. Error bars represent 95% Confidence Intervals.

*Identity-Safety.* One-way ANOVA indicated a significant main effect of motivation, $F$ (2, 294) = 71.47, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .33$. As hypothesized, women shown a sincerely motivated ally ($M$ = 5.27, $SD$ = .88) were significantly more likely to anticipate identity-safety than women shown the company expectation motivation ($M$ = 3.51, $SD$ = 1.32; $p < .001$) or the performative motivation ($M$ = 3.59, $SD$ = 1.24; $p < .001$). Participants shown the company expectation motivation and the performative motivation did not significantly differ ($p > .99$).

*Respect.* ANOVA results revealed a significant main effect of motivation, $F$ (2, 294) = 46.61, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .24$. As predicted, Tukey HSD pairwise comparisons indicated that participants shown a sincerely motivated ally ($M = 4.57$, $SD = .72$) were significantly more likely to anticipate respect from their coworkers than participants shown an ally motivated by company expectations ($M = 4.19$, $SD = 1.53$; $p < .001$) or self-presentation ($M = 4.31$, $SD = 1.35$; $p < .001$). Participants assigned to the performative motivation condition and the company expectation motivation did not differ ($p > .99$).

*Support Confronting Sexism*. One-way ANOVA indicated a significant main effect of motivation, $F$ (2, 294) = 97.64, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .40$. In line with predictions, women shown the sincerely motivated ally ($M = 5.53$, $SD = .94$) were significantly more likely to expect that their coworkers would support them in confronting potential sexism in the future than participants shown an ally motivated by company expectations ($M = 3.34$, $SD = 1.48$; $p < .001$) or performative allyship ($M = 3.33$, $SD = 1.34$; $p < .001$). Again, participants in the company expectation condition or the performative condition did not differ in their expectations of support confronting future sexism ($p > .99$).

*Retention.* A significant main effect of motivation condition emerged, $F$ (2, 294) = 79.71, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .35$. Tukey HSD pairwise comparisons revealed that participants shown a sincerely motivated ally ($M = 77.22$, $SD = 15.55$) were significantly more likely to indicate interest staying at the organization than participants shown an ally motivated by company expectations ($M = 41.71$, $SD = 25.83$; $p < .001$) or performative allyship ($M = 42.10$, $SD = 25.08$; $p < .001$). Likelihood of retention did not differ between the performative allyship and company expectation conditions ($p > .99$).

## Discussion

Study 2 investigated the role of motivation for acting as an ally to examine whether knowledge of ally sincerity colors women's perceptions of a self-identified ally and the anticipated treatment they would receive in the workplace. Specifically, Study 2 contrasted three common motivations to engage in allyship: sincere motivation, performative motivation, and motivation due to organizational pressures to communicate inclusion. Results of Study 2 demonstrated that women update their impression of allies after learning the basis of the ally's motivation. Women increased their perceptions of the ally as sincere and likely to exhibit allyship behaviors after finding out that the stated intentions were sincerely motivated. In contrast, women who found out that the self-identified ally was insincerely motivated, either due to self-interest and a desire to gain social capital, or by company pressures to promote gender inclusivity, significantly decreased their evaluations of the coworker as sincere and as likely to act as an ally from Time 1 to Time 2.

The revised impression of the self-identified ally upon learning of his motivation had downstream consequences for women's expectations of treatment at the organization. The presence of a sincerely motivated ally led women to expect significantly more respect and identity-safety than when the self-identified ally was motivated by performative or company expectation reasons. A similar pattern emerged regarding women's beliefs that they would be supported when confronting potential sexism in the future. Learning that an ally is sincerely motivated, rather than insincerely motivated, increased women's beliefs that they would be supported by their coworkers in the event of sexism. Lastly, knowledge of an employee's motivations to commit to allyship impacted women's future plans to remain at the organization. Women who were shown an ally motivated by a sincere wish to create more inclusive spaces had

significantly higher intentions of remaining at the organization than women shown an ally with insincere motivations, either performative or due to company expectations.

Although women who learned that a coworker was motivated by company expectations evaluated the self-identified ally as significantly more sincere and significantly more as an ally than women shown a coworker motivated by performative reasons, this did not translate to differential anticipated treatment at the organization. Rather, women shown a coworker exhibiting performative allyship or allyship due to company expectations did not differ in their beliefs of treatment or attitudes toward the self-identified ally across all key dependent measures. In line with the cues hypothesis (Kroeper et al., 2022; Murphy et al., 2007), these results indicate that any indication that an inclusion cue may not be sincere significantly undermines the cue as a signal of identity-safety.

Previous research has shown that allyship commitment signals significantly increase women's feelings of identity-safety and inclusion when an ally does not state their motivations (Moser & Branscombe, 2021). This indicates that without knowledge of an ally's motivation, women assume these allyship intentions are sincere. Study 2 demonstrates that these positive inferences can be eliminated when the authenticity of allyship is called into question. These results reveal that the construal women develop of an organization can be significantly affected by the sincerity of the inclusion cue.

## Study 3

Studies 1 and 2 demonstrated the ways that behaviors and motivations of someone who commits to allyship impact women's attitudes towards the organization and towards the coworker. Study 3 seeks to replicate and extend these findings by looking at the potential interactive effect on women who are made aware of both ally motivations and subsequent

behaviors after a sexist event occurs. The different combinations of motivation and behavioral responses to a sexist event are expected to lead women to differentially anticipate identity-safety and treatment at an organization. For instance, learning that a coworker is sincerely motivated to act as an ally yet does not follow through with these intentions after a sexist event may severely undermine the positive effects of sincerely motivated allyship intentions, especially when compared to a sincerely motivated ally who does confront sexism. Similarly, women are likely to interpret a confrontation differently when it is motivated by sincere versus insincere motivations. Confrontations that are motivated by an advantaged group member's wish for social gains may backfire and lead women to perceive the ally more negatively and expect more negative treatment at an organization than confrontations motivated by a sincere interest in increasing gender equality.

Study 3 additionally examines the emotions felt by women when shown a coworker who self-identifies as an ally for sincere (versus insincere) reasons and confronts (versus ignores) sexism. Specifically, anger and gratitude toward a self-identified ally are assessed when motivations and behaviors do (versus do not) align with the stated allyship intentions. An individual who states allyship intentions signals a promise to act as an ally when necessary. Yet, dominant group allies may not always follow through with their intentions when presented with a sexist event. Actions that are inconsistent with expectations can be met with anger (Brambilla et al., 2019), especially when the violation is in relation to a proposed moral value (Batson et al., 2007), such as gender equality. It is likely that motivations and behaviors inconsistent with such allyship commitment provided by the coworker will result in anger and feelings of betrayal. Motivations and behaviors that are consistent with stated intentions are likely to lead to expressions of positive affect and gratitude toward the actor. After exposure to a sexist comment,

women may express gratitude toward a sincerely motivated ally who confronts the sexist comment whereas insincerely motivated allies who confront may not be met with gratitude. In addition to emotions toward the self-identified ally, Study 3 examines overall feelings of empowerment felt by women at the organization. This study will test whether women's feelings of empowerment at an organization are influenced by the presence of an ally who provides either sincere or insincere motivation and confronts versus ignores a sexist comment.

Given the significant correlations between the dependent measures in Studies 1 and 2, Study 3 will additionally conduct a confirmatory factor analysis. Confirmatory factor analysis tests whether each individual item in a measure significantly loads onto the corresponding specified latent construct assess overall model fit for the factor structure. Results of the factor analysis are intended to demonstrate that each construct is distinct, and the individual items correspond well to the construct we are intending to measure.

An interaction is predicted wherein women shown a sincerely motivated ally who subsequently confronts a sexist comment will anticipate identity-safety, respect, support confronting sexism in the future, view equality as normative, and evaluate the ally more positively than participants shown a self-identified ally with sincere motivations who does not follow through with allyship behaviors. In contrast, women who are shown a self-identified ally with insincere motivation who then confronts a sexist comment will indicate identity-safety, respect, anticipated support confronting future sexism, and view equality as normative to a greater extent than participants shown a self-identified ally who does not confront a sexist event, regardless of motivation. Lastly, women shown a self-identified ally with insincere motivation and who subsequently ignores a sexist comment will anticipate the least identity-safety, support,

respect, and environmental norms of equality, compared to the other conditions. Hypotheses and planned analyses were preregistered at https://osf.io/d75rc/.

## Method

*Participants.* An a priori power analysis was conducted using G*Power to determine the necessary sample size. G*Power indicated that 475 participants would be necessary to achieve 90% power with an effect size of $f = .20$ (taken from Moser & Branscombe, 2021, Study 1) with four groups. In anticipation of manipulation check failures, we recruited 480 women participants from Prolific. Four participants failed both manipulation checks and were excluded from analysis, resulting in a total sample of 476. Participant age ranged from 18-75 ($M = 39.41$, $SD = 13.94$). The majority of participants were White (80%), employed (80%), and had experience working in a male-dominated workplace (67%).

*Design.* Study 3 employed a 2 (motivation: sincere vs insincere) by 2 (behavior: confront vs ignore) between-subjects design.

*Procedure.* Study 3 combined the methodology employed in Studies 1 and 2 to examine the potential interaction between motivations and behaviors. As in Studies 1 and 2, participants first responded to demographic variables and items regarding feminist and gender identification. Participants were then asked to imagine working at a male-dominated environment called Intrepid Engineering and were introduced to their coworkers via a slideshow. Again, all participants viewed a coworker who self-identified as an ally. After introductions, participants were randomly assigned to learn that the self-identified ally had sincere or insincere motivations in committing to gender equality allyship. Because women's responses to the two insincere motivations did not differ, these motivations were collapsed to create a single insincere motivation condition. Then, participants read another interaction among the employees where a

decision was being made regarding who would lead a project. As in Study 1, all participants were shown a sexist interaction wherein one of the coworkers said that women are poor leaders, and as such, should not be made the leader of a new project (manipulation adapted from Hildebrand et al., 2020). Then, participants were randomly assigned to view the self-identified ally's response wherein the self-identified ally either confronts the sexist comment or nods and then ignores the comment. After this manipulation, participants responded to key dependent measures that focused on their evaluations of and their emotions toward the self-identified ally, and general attitudes toward the workplace. Participants all first viewed the sincerity manipulation and then the behavior manipulation to allow temporal precedence for sincerity, as we found evidence in Study 1 that sincerity mediates these relationships. Once participants had completed the dependent measures, they were debriefed, and compensated $1.50 for their time.

*Measures.* Participants completed the following measures in addition to the same measures as in Studies 1 and 2. As in Studies 1 and 2, participants responded to items regarding the perceived sincerity and likelihood of allyship of the self-identified ally at two time points: after initial introductions and after the behavior manipulation.

*Empowerment.* Three items assessed the extent to which participants felt empowered at the organization (adapted from Watson et al., 1988; e.g., "I would feel confident at this company.").

*Anger toward self-identified ally.* Five items measured participant anger toward the target coworker who had self-identified as an ally (adapted from Outten et al., 2012; e.g., "The interactions that I read made me feel outraged with this coworker."). Participants responded to these items at the second time point of evaluations of the self-identified ally.

*Gratitude toward self-identified ally.* Four items measured positive affect toward the target coworker who had previously self-identified as an ally (e.g., "The interactions that I read made me feel happy with this coworker). Participants responded to these items at the second time point of evaluation of the self-identified ally.

*Manipulation Checks.* Participants responded to two conceptual manipulation checks to ensure that the manipulations were interpreted as intended. Participants first evaluated the extent to which they perceived the self-identified ally as having sincere intentions and a genuine wish for gender equality to improve at the organization. Participants were additionally asked to evaluate whether those who commit to allyship are likely to follow through with their intentions. Participants were also asked to select the motivation of the ally and the behavior that the ally demonstrated that were presented to them from a list as an additional manipulation check. Those that failed this manipulation check were dropped from analysis ($n$ = 4).

## Results

*Confirmatory Factor Analysis.* A multi-group confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted using the *lavaan* package in R. Each dependent measure was specified as a latent construct with the individual items in each measure as the corresponding indicators. The grouping variables were the four conditions to which participants were randomly assigned: the sincere confront condition, insincere confront condition, sincere ignore condition, and the insincere ignore condition. Results of the CFA indicated good model fit, $X^2_{(df = 774)} = 2241.39$ $p = < .001$; CFI = .954, TLI =.949, RMSEA =.063, 90% CI[.06, .066], SRMR =.035. Each item loaded significantly onto the specified latent construct (see Table 3). The CFA passed invariance testing which demonstrated that the meaning of each construct was the equivalent across all four

conditions. These results indicate that each dependent measure is distinct and fits the hypothesized measurement model.

*Table 3.* Standardized estimates of factor loadings (*SE*) for confirmatory factor analysis, Study 3.

| | | Condition | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Confront | | Ignore | |
| | Collapsed Across Conditions | Sincere | Insincere | Sincere | Insincere |
| **SincerityTime2** | | | | | |
| SincerePost1 | .94 (.06) | .87 (.08) | .82 (.09) | .89 (.09) | .78 (.09) |
| SincerePost2 | .96 (.07) | .88 (.07) | .86 (.09) | .90 (.09) | .69 (.09) |
| SincerePost3 | .98 (.07) | .88 (.07) | .94 (.08) | .92 (.10) | .93 (.06) |
| SincerePost4 | .97 (.07) | .91 (.07) | .93 (.08) | .95 (.09) | .75 (.08) |
| **Allyship Time 2** | | | | | |
| AllyPost1 | .91 (.04) | .79 (.08) | .91 (.08) | .93 (.07) | .90 (.08) |
| AllyPost2 | .74 (.05) | .96 (.09) | .71 (.09) | .70 (.10) | .76 (.10) |
| AllyPost3 | .96 (.04) | .66 (.09) | .92 (.08) | .89 (.08) | .88 (.08) |
| **Empowerment** | | | | | |
| Empower1 | .97 (.06) | .96 (.10) | .96 (.10) | .96 (.09) | .94 (.10) |
| Empower2 | .97 (.06) | .98 (.10) | .98 (.10) | .95 (.10) | .93 (.10) |
| Empower3 | .83 (.05) | .92 (.11) | .84 (.10) | .94 (.09) | .91 (.09) |
| **Anger** | | | | | |
| Anger1 | .95 (.07) | .92 (.07) | .91 (.11) | .86 (.11) | .84 (.09) |
| Anger2 | .93 (.08) | .71 (.11) | .83 (.09) | .80 (.10) | .65 (.08) |
| Anger3 | .92 (.07) | .89 (.07) | .82 (.12) | .86 (.11) | .73 (.11) |
| Anger4 | .90 (.07) | .81 (.06) | .86 (.12) | .85 (.13) | .82 (.12) |
| Anger5 | .90 (.08) | .74 (.07) | .75 (.13) | .71 (.11) | .64 (.12) |
| **Gratitude** | | | | | |
| Gratitude1 | .98 (.07) | .93 (.08) | .93 (.08) | .92 (.08) | .94 (.07) |
| Gratitude2 | .98 (.07) | .96 (.09) | .90 (.08) | .88 (.08) | .92 (.07) |
| Gratitude3 | .96 (.07) | .84 (.09) | .83 (.09) | .90 (.08) | .64 (.08) |
| Gratitude4 | .95 (.07) | .80 (.10) | .75 (.13) | .87 (.07) | .73 (.08) |
| **Identity-Safety** | | | | | |
| Safety1 | .89 (.06) | .88 (.09) | .83 (.11) | .83 (.10) | .76 (.09) |
| Safety2 | .79 (.06) | .80 (.08) | .68 (.12) | .80 (.11) | .70 (.11) |
| Safety3 | .91 (.06) | .87 (.08) | .82 (.10) | .93 (.10) | .85 (.10) |
| Safety4 | .84 (.07) | .80 (.11) | .75 (.12) | .83 (.12) | .77 (.12) |
| Safety5 | .92 (.06) | .87 (.09) | .84 (.10) | .90 (.09) | .91 (.09) |
| Safety6 | .92 (.06) | .89 (.09) | .83 (.09) | .89 (.10) | .88 (.10) |
| Safety7 | .92 (.06) | .81 (.09) | .89 (.10) | .93 (.09) | .88 (.09) |
| Safety8 | .95 (.06) | .93 (.09) | .95 (.10) | .94 (.10) | .88 (.09) |
| Safety9 | .94 (.06) | .82 (.09) | .90 (.10) | .95 (.10) | .91 (.10) |
| **Respect** | | | | | |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Respect1 | .94 (.06) | .91 (.08) | .94 (.11) | .90 (.10) | .93 (.10) |
| Respect2 | .97 (.06) | .94 (.09) | .97 (.10) | .96 (.09) | .91 (.09) |
| Respect3 | .95 (.06) | .92 (.10) | .94 (.11) | .92 (.10) | .95 (.10) |
| Respect4 | .93 (.06) | .93 (.09) | .86 (.11) | .94 (.10) | .92 (.10) |
| **Retention** | | | | | |
| Retention1 | .97 (.06) | .96 (.11) | .96 (.11) | .93 (.11) | .90 (.11) |
| Retention2 | .96 (.07) | .98 (.11) | .92 (.12) | .94 (.12) | .94 (.11) |
| **Support** | | | | | |
| Support1 | .87 (.06) | .79 (.09) | .81 (.11) | .83 (.10) | .78 (.10) |
| Support2 | .96 (.06) | .89 (.08) | .90 (.10) | .94 (.08) | .92 (.08) |
| Support3 | .98 (.06) | .93 (.07) | .95 (.10) | .95 (.09) | .98 (.08) |
| Support4 | .96 (.06) | .91 (.07) | .90 (.11) | .92 (.09) | .94 (.08) |
| **Gender Equality Norms** | | | | | |
| norms1 | .86 (.06) | .72 (.08) | .81 (.11) | .85 (.10) | .76 (.11) |
| norms2 | .60 (.07) | .69 (.09) | .43 (.14) | .74 (.13) | .61 (.16) |
| norms3 | .80 (.06) | .86 (.07) | .67 (.13) | .89 (.11) | .71 (.14) |
| norms4 | .90 (.06) | .86 (.08) | .84 (.12) | .92 (.10) | .77 (.12) |

*Note.* All loadings significant at $p < .001$

Table 4. *Means, standard deviations, and correlations with confidence intervals, Study 3*

| Variable | *M* | *SD* | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Allyship T1 | 5.76 | 0.98 | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2. Allyship T2 | 3.42 | 2.07 | .13** | | | | | | | | | |
| 3. SincerityT1 | 5.18 | 1.05 | .77** | .12** | | | | | | | | |
| 4. SincerityT2 | 3.01 | 1.99 | .15** | .92** | .18** | | | | | | | |
| 5. Safety | 3.22 | 1.48 | .12** | .73** | .14** | .74** | | | | | | |
| 6. Respect | 3.36 | 1.61 | .06 | .67** | .04 | .67** | .89** | | | | | |
| 7. Support | 3.13 | 1.68 | .10* | .84** | .11* | .81** | .87** | .86** | | | | |
| 8. Retention | 3.07 | 1.88 | .09 | .64** | .13** | .68** | .82** | .75** | .78** | | | |
| 9. Anger | 4.42 | 2.00 | -.02 | -.85** | .00 | -.86** | -.70** | -.67** | -.79** | -.65** | | |
| 10. Empower | 3.07 | 1.65 | .07 | .66** | .09* | .68** | .84** | .81** | .82** | .81** | -.67** | |
| 11. Gratitude | 2.85 | 2.08 | .10* | .90** | .12** | .93** | .73** | .66** | .82** | .67** | -.90** | .68** |

*Note. M* and *SD* are used to represent mean and standard deviation, respectively. * indicates $p < .05$. ** indicates $p < .01$. T1 and T2 refer to Time 1 and Time 2. Safety refers to identity-safety, support refers to support confronting sexism in the future, empower refers to empowerment.

*Sincerity.* A repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to test whether participants' perceptions of the self-identified ally's sincerity were impacted by awareness of the motivation and behavior of the self-identified ally. The sincerity manipulation and the behavior manipulation were between-subjects factors. The within-subject factor was time, with two levels: Time 1, after initial introductions to the coworkers at the organization, and Time 2, after the motivation and behavior manipulations. Analysis revealed a significant main effect of time, $F$ (1, 472) = 1454.40; $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .76$, a significant main effect of behavior, $F$ (1, 472) = 153.00; $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .25$, and a significant main effect of sincerity, $F$ (1, 472) = 247.06; $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .34$. The two-way interaction between the sincerity manipulation and behavior manipulation, $F$ (1, 472) = 131.97; $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .22$, was significant. The two-way interaction between time and sincerity manipulation was significant, $F$ (1, 472) = 424.58; $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .47$, and the two-way interaction between time and behavior manipulation was significant, $F$ (1, 472) = 269.90; $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .36$. As expected, the three-way interaction between time, behavior manipulation, and sincerity manipulation was significant, $F$ (1, 472) = 204.00; $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .30$.

At Time 1, the main effect of the sincerity manipulation was not significant, $F$ (1, 472) = .71; $p = .34$, nor was the behavior manipulation, $F$ (1, 472) = .49 $p = .48$. The two-way interaction between the sincerity and behavior manipulation was not significant, $F$ (1, 472) = .59; $p = .44$, and pairwise comparisons indicated that none of the conditions significantly differed ($p$s > .80).

At Time 2, a two-way ANOVA revealed a significant main effect of the sincerity manipulation, $F$ (1, 472) = 921.14; $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .66$, and a significant main effect of the behavior manipulation, $F$ (1, 472) = 725.59; $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .61$. These main effects at Time 2 were qualified by a significant two-way interaction, $F$ (1, 472) = 324.15; $p < .001$; $\eta^2 = .13$, such

that women shown a sincere ally who confronted sexism were significantly more likely to view the self-identified ally as sincere than women shown a sincere ally who ignored sexism ($p <$ .001) or an insincere ally who confronted sexism ($p <$ .001).

Women's perceptions of the ally coworker as sincere were significantly impacted by the sincerity and behavior manipulations. Women who learned that an ally coworker had sincere motivations and subsequently confronted a sexist comment significantly increased their perceptions of the coworker as sincere from Time 1 ($M$ = 5.25, $SD$ = 1.08) to Time 2 ($M$ = 5.99, $SD$ = .91), $t$ (115) = -12.59, $p <$ .001. Participants shown an ally with sincere motivations that did not confront the sexist remark significantly decreased sincerity ratings from Time 1 ($M$ = 5.15, $SD$ = 1.13) to Time 2 ($M$ = 2.43, $SD$ = 1.23), $t$ (122) = 21.48, $p <$ .001. At Time 2 , women shown an ally with insincere motivations who confronted sexism ($M$ = 1.94, $SD$ = 1.05) indicated significantly lower perceptions of the ally coworker as sincere than at Time 1 ($M$ = 5.13, $SD$ = 1.04), $t$ (117) = 24.42, $p <$ .001. Lastly, women shown an insincerely motivated ally who ignored sexism ($M$ = 1.75, $SD$ = .84) significantly lowered their perceptions of the ally coworker as sincere from Time 1 ($M$ = 5.19, SD = .94) to Time 2, $t$ (118) = 29.44. $p <$ .001.

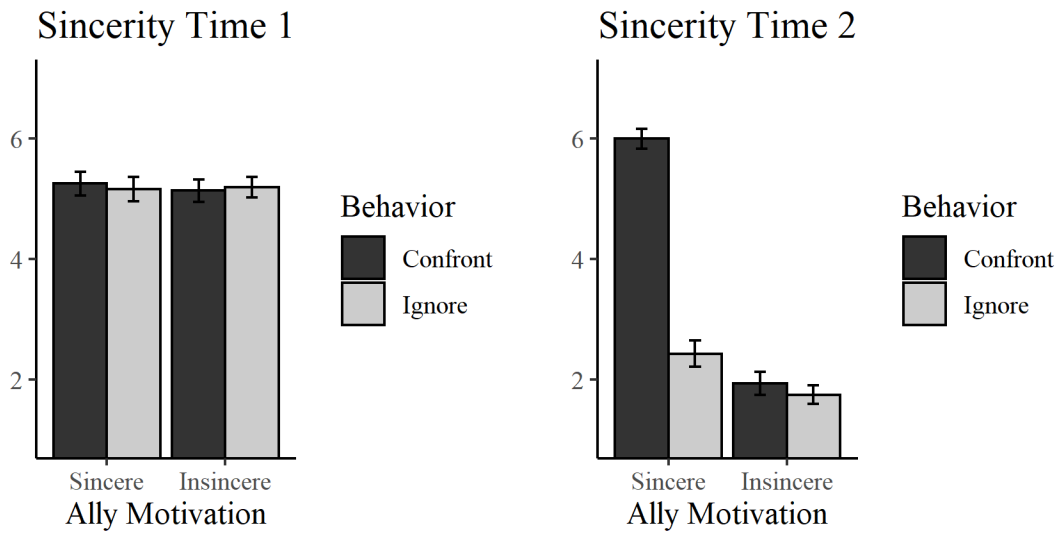


*Figure 6.* Mean evaluations of the self-identified ally sincerity at Time 1 and Time 2. Error bars represent 95% Confidence Intervals.

*Allyship.* A repeated measures ANOVA was used to test whether participants' perceptions of the self-identified ally as an ally were impacted by becoming aware of the ally's motivation and behavior. The sincerity manipulation and the behavior manipulation were the between-subjects factors, and the within-subject factor was time, with two levels: Time 1, after initial introductions to the coworkers at the organization, and Time 2, after the motivation and behavior manipulation. Results of the analysis revealed a significant main effect of time, $F$ (1, 472) = 1410.14, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .75$, a significant main effect of sincerity manipulation, $F$ (1, 472) = 207.45, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .31$, and a significant main effect of behavior manipulation, $F$ (1, 472) = 305.04, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .39$. The two-way interaction between time and sincerity manipulation was significant, $F$ (1, 472) = 217.45, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .32$, as were the two-way interaction of time by behavior, $F$ (1, 472) = 431.10, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .48$, and the two-way interaction of the sincerity manipulation by behavior manipulation, $F$ (1, 472) = 101.56, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .18$. These main effects and two-way interactions were qualified by the predicted significant three-way interaction between time, behavior manipulation, and sincerity manipulation, $F$ (1, 472) = 132.75, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .22$.

At Time 1, the main effects of sincerity manipulation, $F$ (1, 472) = 1.89 $p = .17$, and behavior manipulation, $F$ (1, 472) = .05, $p = .87$ were non-significant. The Time 1 sincerity manipulation by behavior manipulation interaction was non-significant, $F$ (1, 472) = .10, $p = .75$. There were no significant differences between any conditions at Time 1 ($p$s > .51).

At Time 2, a significant main effect of the sincerity manipulation, $F$ (1, 472) = 556.07, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .54$, and a significant main effect of the behavior manipulation, $F$ (1, 472) = 782.71,

$p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .62$, emerged. As hypothesized, a significant sincerity by behavior manipulation emerged, $F$ (1, 472) = 203.71, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .30$. At Time 2, women shown a sincere ally who confronted sexism ($M = 6.43$, $SD = .76$) viewed the self-identified ally as significantly more of an ally than women shown a sincere ally who ignored sexism ($M = 2.43$, $SD = 1.23$; $p < .001$) or an insincere ally who confronted sexism ($M = 3.02$, $SD = 1.34$; $p < .001$). Women shown an insincere ally who confronted sexism rated the self-identified ally as significantly more of an ally than women shown an insincere ally who ignored sexism ($M = 1.91$, $SD = .99$; $p < .001$). Women shown a sincere ally who ignored the sexist comment viewed the self-identified ally as significantly more of an ally than women in the insincere ignore condition ($p = .002$). Participants who viewed an ally who provided sincere motivations and confronted sexism significantly increased their allyship perceptions from Time 1 ($M = 5.85$, $SD = 1.23$) to Time 2, $t$ (115) = -8.95, $p < .001$. Women who viewed an ally who provided insincere motivations and confronted sexism significantly decreased their perceptions of the coworker as an ally from Time 1 ($M = 5.67$, $SD = .97$) to Time 2, $t$ (117) = 18.76, $p < .001$. Similarly, viewing an ally who provided insincere motivations and ignored a sexism remark significantly decreased women's views of the coworker as an ally, $t$ (118) = 28.96, $p < .001$, from Time 1 ($M = 5.70$; $SD = 1.01$) to Time 2. Women who were shown a sincerely motivated ally who ignored sexism reported significantly reduced perceptions of the coworker from Time 1 ($M = 5.82$, $SD = .98$) to Time 2, $t$ (112) = 24.90, $p < .001$.

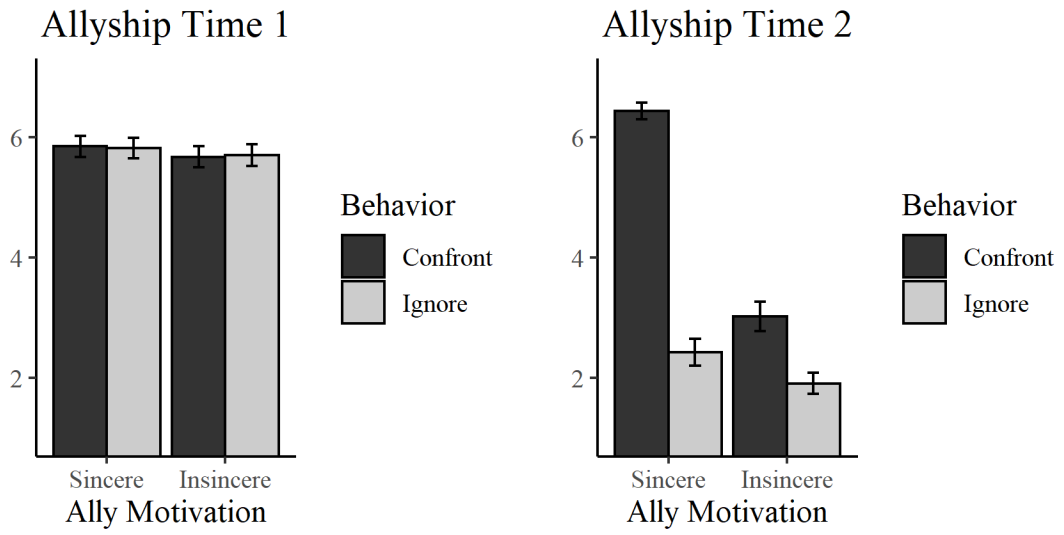



*Figure 7.* Mean evaluations of the self-identified ally as likely to exhibit allyship at Time 1 and Time 2. Error bars represent 95% Confidence Intervals.

*Anger toward self-identified ally.* Two-way ANOVA analysis indicated a significant main effect of sincerity manipulation, $F$ (1, 472) = 642.01, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .58$, and a significant main effect of self-identified ally behavior, $F$ (1, 472) = 597.87, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .56$. These main effects were qualified by a significant interaction, $F$ (1, 472) = 642.01, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .34$, wherein women shown the self-identified ally with sincere motivation who ignored sexism ($M$ = 5.13, $SD$ = 1.30) indicated significantly more anger toward the self-identified ally than participants shown an ally with sincere motivation who confronted sexism ($M$ = 1.54, $SD$ = .83, $p < .001$). Women for whom the ally was insincere but confronted sexism ($M$ = 5.29, $SD$ = 1.32) expressed significantly more anger than women shown a sincere ally who confronted sexism ($p <$ .001). Participants for whom the ally had sincere motivation but ignored the sexist comment expressed significantly less anger than women shown an insincere ally who ignored sexism ($p$ = .004). Women shown an insincere ally who confronted or ignored sexism ($M$ = 5.63, $SD$ = 1.00) did not significantly differ in anger toward the self-identified ally ($p$ = .11).

*Gratitude toward self-identified ally.* Results of a two-way ANOVA analysis revealed a significant main effect of sincerity manipulation, $F$ (1, 472) = 952.07, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .67$, and a significant main effect of behavior manipulation, $F$ (1, 472) = 993.01, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .68$. As predicted, these main effects were qualified by a significant interaction, $F$ (1, 472) = 417.99, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .47$. This interaction revealed that women shown a sincere ally who confronted sexism ($M$ = 6.04, $SD$ = 1.14) expressed significantly more gratitude relative to a sincere ally who ignored sexism ($M$ = 1.90, $SD$ = 1.01, $p < .001$), or an insincere ally who confronted sexism ($M$ = 1.95, $SD$ = 1.04, $p < .001$). Women shown an insincere ally who confronted sexism indicated marginally more gratitude than an insincere ally who ignored sexism ($M$ = 1.62, $SD$ = .84, $p$ = .06). Participants shown a sincere or insincere ally who ignored sexism did not differ in feelings of gratitude ($p$ = .11).

*Empowerment.* A two-way ANOVA analysis revealed a significant main effect of sincerity manipulation, $F$ (1, 472) = 118.66, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .20$, a significant main effect of behavior manipulation, $F$ (1, 472) = 134.30, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .22$, and a significant interaction, $F$ (1, 472) = 46.47, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .09$. This interaction revealed that women reported significantly greater empowerment when a sincere ally confronted sexism ($M$ = 4.67, $SD$ = 1.45) than when an insincere ally confronted sexism ($M$ = 2.70, $SD$ = 1.38, $p < .001$) or a sincere ally ignored sexism ($M$ = 2.60, $SD$ = 1.38, $p < .001$). Participants shown an insincere ally who ignored sexism ($M$ = 2.36, $SD$ = 1.31) or an insincere ally who confronted sexism did not significantly differ in expressed empowerment at the organization ($p$ = .22). Lastly, women shown an insincere ally who ignored the sexist comment or a sincere ally who ignored the sexist comment did not differ in feelings of empowerment ($p$ = .53).

*Identity-Safety.* Two-way ANOVA analysis indicated a significant main effect of sincerity manipulation, $F$ (1, 472) = 152.08, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .24$, and a significant main effect of behavior manipulation, $F$ (1, 472) = 176.08, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .27$. As hypothesized, a significant interaction emerged, $F$ (1, 472) = 62.41, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .12$, such that women shown a sincere ally who confronted sexism ($M$ = 4.78, $SD$ = 1.08) were significantly more likely to anticipate identity-safety than participants shown a sincere ally who ignored sexism ($M$ = 2.74, $SD$ = 1.29, $p < .001$) or an insincere ally who confronted sexism ($M$ = 2.87, $SD$ = 1.21, $p < .001$). Further, participants shown an insincere ally who ignored ($M$ = 2.55, $SD$ = 1.15) or confronted sexism did not differ in evaluations of identity safety ($p = .17$). Lastly, evaluations of identity-safety did not significantly differ for participants shown a sincere or insincere ally who ignored sexism ($p = .58$).

*Respect.* A two-way ANOVA revealed a significant main effect of the sincerity manipulation, $F$ (1, 472) = 110.32, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .19$, and a significant main effect of the behavior manipulation, $F$ (1, 472) = 129.77, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .22$. As predicted, a significant interaction emerged, $F$ (1, 472) = 38.79, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .08$, such that women shown a sincere ally who confronted sexism ($M$ = 4.91, $SD$ = 1.19) were significantly more likely to anticipate respect from their coworkers than women shown a sincere ally who ignored sexism ($M$ = 2.92, $SD$ = 1.40, $p < .001$) or an insincere ally who confronted sexism ($M$ = 3.05, $SD$ = 1.46, $p < .001$). Women shown an insincere ally who confronted sexism expressed marginally more anticipated respect from coworkers than participants shown an insincere ally who ignored sexism ($M$ = 2.61, $SD$ = 1.32, $p = .06$). Participants shown an insincere ally who ignored sexism and a sincere ally who ignored sexism did not differ in their evaluations of anticipated respect ($p = .28$).

*Support confronting future sexism.* Two-way ANOVA revealed a significant main effect of sincerity manipulation, $F$ (1, 472) = 258.54, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .35$, and a significant main effect of behavior manipulation, $F$ (1, 472) = 362.33, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .43$. These main effects were qualified by a significant interaction, $F$ (1, 472) = 107.34, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .19$. This interaction demonstrated that women for whom the ally was sincere and who confronted sexism ($M$ = 5.25, $SD$ = .96) anticipated significantly more support in confronting sexism in the future than women shown a sincere ally who ignored sexism ($M$ = 2.39, $SD$ = 1.21, $p < .001$) or an insincere ally who confronted sexism ($M$ = 2.81, $SD$ = 1.34, $p < .001$). Women shown an insincere ally who confronted sexism anticipated significantly more support confronting sexism in the future than women shown a sincere ally who ignored sexism ($p < .001$). Women's expectations of support for future confrontations did not significantly differ for women shown a sincere ally who ignored sexism or an insincere ally who ignored sexism ($M$ = 2.16, $SD$ = 1.09, $p$ = .34).

*Retention.* Results of two-way ANOVA analysis indicated a significant main effect of the sincerity manipulation, $F$ (1, 472) = 78.93, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .14$, and a significant main effect of the behavior manipulation, $F$ (1, 472) = 146.79, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .24$. As hypothesized, a significant interaction emerged, $F$ (1, 472) = 50.06, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .07$, wherein women shown a sincere ally who confronted sexism ($M$ = 4.94, $SD$ = 1.62) were significantly more likely to indicate intent to stay at the organization than women shown a sincere ally who ignored sexism ($M$ = 2.83, $SD$ = 1.58, $p < .001$) or an insincere ally who confronted sexism ($M$ = 2.61, $SD$ = 1.55, $p < .001$). Women exposed to a sincere ally who ignored sexism or an insincere ally who confronted sexism did not differ in likelihood of staying at the organization ($p$ = .16). Similarly, women shown an insincere ally who ignored sexism ($M$ = 2.32, $SD$ = 1.47), and a sincere ally who ignored sexism did not differ in intent to stay at the organization ($p$ = .72).

*Equality Norms.* Two-way ANOVA revealed a significant main effect of the sincerity manipulation, $F$ (1, 472) = 78.96, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .14$, and a significant main effect of the behavior manipulation, $F$ (1, 472) = 146.79, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .24$. Again, these main effects were qualified by a significant interaction, $F$ (1, 472) = 50.06, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .10$, such that women were significantly more likely to view gender equality as normative in the organization when a sincere ally who confronted sexism was present ($M$ = 4.96, $SD$ = .87) relative to the presence of a sincere ally who ignored sexism ($M$ = 3.12, $SD$ = 1.35; $p < .001$) or an insincere ally who confronted sexism ($M$ = 3.60, $SD$ = 1.2; $p < .001$). Women's evaluations of the extent to which gender equality was normative at the organization did not differ between women shown an insincere ally who ignored sexism ($M$ = 3.28, $SD$ = 1.22) and an insincere ally who confronted sexism ($p$ = .16). Lastly, women shown an insincere ally who ignored sexism and a sincere ally who ignored sexism did not differ in evaluations of gender equality as normative at the organization ($p$ = .72).

## Discussion

Study 3 examined the interactive effect of sincerity of ally motivation and subsequent behavior that is consistent (versus inconsistent) with previously stated intentions. In line with the hypotheses, results of Study 3 revealed a consistent interaction wherein women shown an ally motivated by a sincere wish to improve gender equality who later confronted sexism were significantly more likely to expect that they would be treated with respect and would have support in the future than women shown a sincere ally who failed to follow through on their intentions when presented with sexism, or an insincere ally who did or did not confront sexism. Further, the motivations and behaviors of the self-identified ally translated to downstream consequences for women's interest in staying at the organization and their perceptions of norms regarding gender equality at the organization. Women shown an insincere ally who did or did not

confront sexism, and women shown a sincere ally who did not confront sexism were particularly unlikely to state intentions to remain at the organization. Women shown a sincere ally who did confront the sexist remark were significantly more likely to indicate retention intentions than any other condition.

Study 3 expanded our knowledge of women's reactions to inconsistent motivations and behaviors by examining emotions experienced in response to learning of such motivations and behaviors. An ally who had stated allyship intentions yet provided insincere motivation or did not confront a sexist remark led women to express anger toward the self-identified ally, significantly more than toward a sincerely motivated ally who confronted sexism. These findings are consistent with research indicating that people are likely to express anger and outrage when a moral expectation is violated (Batson et al., 2007; Brambilla et al., 2019; Effron et al., 2018; Effron et al., 2015; Laurent et al., 2013). Freely indicating that one is an ally signals agreement with the moral value of gender equality and intentions to enact that value. Women for whom a sincere ally confronts sexism were significantly more likely to express positive affect and gratitude toward the self-identified ally, whereas in all other conditions women were particularly low in positive affect toward the self-identified ally.

We had hypothesized that women shown a self-identified ally with insincere motivation yet confronts a sexist comment will indicate significantly more positive perceptions of the organization than participants shown an insincere ally who ignored the sexist event. Three measures demonstrated this pattern. Relative to an insincere ally who ignored sexism, women shown an insincere ally who confronted sexism were significantly more likely to indicate gratitude toward the ally, expect support confronting sexism in the future, and perceive the ally coworker as likely to enact allyship in the future. It is likely that this pattern emerged on these

variables but not others because an insincerely motivated ally who confronts sexism provides women with evidence that they will confront a sexist event, even if their reasons for doing so are not entirely authentic. This may lead participants to believe that the self-identified ally would support a future confrontation as this would be consistent with their previous behavior. Similarly, although insincerely motivated, a confrontation against sexism does publicly reprimand sexism, which led women to express more gratitude compared to when sexism was ignored.

Expressed empowerment at this organization, anticipated respect, identity-safety, and belief that gender equality is normative at the organization did not differ between women shown a sincerely motivated ally who ignored sexism or an insincerely motivated ally who did or did not confront sexism. Similar to the results of Studies 1 and 2, this outcome suggests that any evidence that calls the sincerity of the inclusion cue into question can significantly reduce the efficacy of the cue in communicating identity-safety. These results are also consistent with theorizing that the meaning of a cue can be changed with new information, and that members of marginalized groups remain vigilant for such information after a cue is introduced (Kroeper et al., 2022; Murphy & Taylor, 2012).

## General Discussion

Allyship from dominant group members has been a growing topic in theorizing and empirical investigations over recent years. Google Trends indicates a steady increase in frequency that the topic allyship has been searched since the year 2009, with related breakout topics including workplace allyship and performative allyship (Google Trends, 2022). Across three studies, allies were shown to communicate identity-safety, respect, and support to women – but only when the ally was perceived to have sincere motivations and subsequently engaged in allyship behavior through confronting sexism. Study 1 investigated the potential impact of the

behavior of a self-identified ally after a sexist comment is made by another coworker. Women shown a self-identified ally who confronted the sexist comment were significantly more likely to express identity-safety and anticipate respect at the organization than women shown an ally who either agreed with or ignored the statement. Study 1 further demonstrated that women perceived the behavior of ignoring the sexist comment just as negatively as someone agreeing with the sexist remark. The behavior after the sexist comment was made affected women's beliefs that the self-identified ally was or was not sincere in their intentions. Whereas women who viewed a self-identified ally confront the sexist remark significantly increased their ratings of the ally as sincere, women who saw the ally either ignore or agree with the sexist statement significantly decreased their evaluations of the sincerity of the ally. These differential sincerity evaluations indirectly affected the relationships between the behavior of the ally and women's expectations of treatment at the organization.

Study 2 evaluated how the sincerity of allyship intentions affect women's evaluation of the ally and how knowledge of these motivations affect women's perceptions of the treatment they can expect at the organization. Results of Study 2 indicated that the motivations of an ally do change the expectations and construal of the organizational climate. Although nothing overtly sexist occurred, women who learned that a coworker who had identified themselves as a gender equality ally was insincere in their motivations were significantly less likely to expect respect and indicate identity-safety or retention intentions than women given evidence that the ally was sincere. Consistent with Study 1, allies who displayed insincerity either due to performative motivations or motivations to comply with an organization's inclusive policies were not viewed differently by women. In fact, allies who were motivated by a company expectation to signal inclusion did not result in significantly different evaluations of expected respect, identity-safety,

and retention than an ally explicitly motivated by performative reasons. Although a company-induced expectation to communicate inclusion may be a well-intentioned initiative by organizations, it was not perceived as sincere and did not result in positive downstream consequences for women. The different meaning derived from allyship intentions when an extrinsic motivation was known had a substantial impact on women's perceptions of their likely future treatment at the organization. This provides evidence that information that potentially negates what was once thought to signal inclusion can alter the cue to instead represent identity-threat.

Social psychological theory has emphasized that effective allyship entails a two-step process that includes both acknowledgement of inequality with sincere intentions, and behaviors to enact social change (Ashburn-Nardo, 2018; Drury & Kaiser, 2014; Kutlaca et al., 2020). Study 1 examined the behavioral aspect of this definition while Study 2 investigated the motivational aspect of this definition. Study 3 combined these two aspects of allyship by examining how knowledge of both motivations and subsequent behaviors of those who identify as an ally alter the meaning made of allyship and how one may more broadly expect to be treated at an organization. Consistent with theorizing on effective allyship (Radke et al., 2020; Selvanathan et al., 2019), the presence of an ally only increased women's sense of belonging and likelihood of retention when the ally provided sincere motivation and was seen as acting on that by confronting sexism. Confrontations that were insincerely motivated were no more empowering than when a sexist comment was ignored by either an insincerely or sincerely motivated ally. Study 3 additionally addressed the emotional impact of sincere or insincere allies who do or do not subsequently confront sexism. Women expressed considerably more anger when a coworker who sincerely self-identified as an ally failed to confront explicit sexism or when the

confrontation came from an insincere motivation compared to women who were shown an ally who confronted sexism with sincere motivation. Similarly, women shown an insincerely motivated ally who ignored or confronted a sexist remark or shown a sincerely motivated ally who ignored the sexist comment were significantly less likely to indicate positive affect toward the ally coworker. It is likely that women experienced a betrayal of trust when the ally indicated sincere motivation but chose not to act against sexism.

The majority of prior allyship research has only examined allyship as *either* acknowledgement of inequality with commitment to allyship (Moser & Branscombe, 2021; Moser & Branscombe, 2022-a) or behaviors that demonstrate allyship (Cihangir et al., 2014; Hildebrand et al., 2020), despite theorizing that allyship requires both acknowledgement of inequality and behaviors to enact change. The present studies are the first to empirically test both aspects of allyship to determine the relative importance of both components in communicating allyship. Indeed, these studies are the first to empirically provide evidence that both the motivational and behavioral aspects of allyship are necessary for effective allyship. Results of the three studies indicate that neither sincere intentions nor confrontations against sexism alone are sufficient; allies must demonstrate both sincere motivations and behaviors that attempt to uplift members of marginalized groups when bias occurs.

These studies further expand our theoretical understanding of how inclusive cues are interpreted. The cues hypothesis (Murphy et al., 2007) claims that members of marginalized groups are vigilant for information that may signal that their identity is valued or devalued within an environment. This vigilance does not stop after a single cue that may be interpreted as identity-safe or identity-threatening. Rather, marginalized group members continuously update their impressions of environments given new information that is consistent or inconsistent with

initial evaluations (Kroeper et al., 2022; Murphy & Taylor, 2012; Steele et al., 2002). Recent research has shown that men and women alter their evaluations of an organization after learning that the organization intentionally overstated their current amount of diversity (Kroeper et al., 2021), which reduced beliefs that the organization was sincere. Similar to the current studies, decreased sincerity beliefs significantly increased identity-threat concerns and decreased women's intent to stay at an organization, compared to when the organization was sincere in their portrayals of the organization's current diversity (Kroeper et al., 2021). These results show that aspects of an environment that signal identity-safety at one time point can be reinterpreted to signal identity-threat with the introduction of new information. As such, cues taken from an environment are dynamic and subject to change.

These studies provide evidence that impressions of allies can be updated given new information that is either consistent or inconsistent with allyship intentions. In all studies, information that was consistent with the ally's stated intentions increased women's beliefs that the ally was sincere. Information that was inconsistent with the ally's stated intentions significantly decreased women's perceptions of sincerity. This new information drastically changed the meaning of allyship intentions from something shown to signal identity-safety (Moser & Branscombe, 2021) to something that elicits concerns regarding negative treatment. Attitude change toward the self-identified ally may have been especially strong given that communicating allyship implies a moral value. Perceived moral violations result in greater impression change than actions that are not viewed as relevant to morals (Brambilla et al., 2019). The current studies emphasize the importance of the meaning derived from a cue and the ways in which these potential meanings affect the construal of an environment on the part of marginalized groups. While much social psychological research has studied identity-safety cues

(Johnson et al., 2018; Johnson et al., 2019; Kutlaca et al., 2021; Moser & Branscombe, 2021; Pietri et al., 2019), the majority of the prior research has asked participants to take these cues at face value and believe that they are sincere. Given the dynamic nature of identity-safety cues, this approach does not provide information regarding the consequences when these cues are later viewed to be inauthentic. The current studies add to our knowledge of allyship as an identity-safety cue and the ways in which meaning made from allyship can be altered given evidence of ally motivations and behaviors.

***Limitations and Future Directions***

One limitation is that these studies only recruited individuals who identify as women. Gender equality initiatives include equality for those who identify as gender non-conforming or transgender as well as those who identify as either a man or a woman. These studies do not account for the potentially different psychological experience of gender non-binary or transgender people in historically male-dominated settings with the presence of an ally. Gender non-conforming and transgender individuals are more likely than those who identify as cisgender women to experience workplace harassment and stigma (Sawyer & Thoroughgood, 2017), highlighting the need for future research that examines the experiences of those outside of the gender binary.

Because the research question only pertained to women's responses to sincere versus insincere allies, we do not how men might perceive gender equality allies based on their motivations and subsequent behavior. Gender equality allyship research that has included men's responses has found that men's perceptions of male-dominated organizations are relatively unaffected by the presence versus absence of a gender equality ally (Moser & Branscombe, 2022-a). These studies, however, did not provide any reason for participants to question the

sincerity of the ally. Future research should examine how men's views of allies are affected by perceived sincerity of the ally's motivations and subsequent behaviors. Research that examines advantaged group perceptions of allies who demonstrate insincerity in motivations or behaviors would help to address whether insincerity is universally disliked or is of less concern to advantaged group members. It is possible that disadvantaged group members are more sensitive to information that calls sincerity into question than advantaged group members who have less need for inclusion cues.

Participants in the current studies were predominantly White. Although race has not been found to moderate the impact of interpersonal allyship (Moser & Branscombe, 2021), this was only tested when participants had no reason to distrust or question the sincerity of the ally. Because people of color are often suspicious of the sincerity of White allies for racial equality (Burns & Granz, 2022), is possible that women of color may also be more readily suspicious of White men who self-identify as an ally for gender. Because people who hold a marginalized identity are perceived as more likely to believe in equality for other marginalized identities (Chaney et al., 2018), White and Black women may not be equally suspicious of men of color as allies for gender equality. Future research should examine the generalizability of these findings in more racially diverse samples.

These studies asked participants to imagine being present in a particular type of workplace settings—one that is male-dominated and a STEM field, potentially limiting the external validity of the findings. Furthermore, it is possible that women would respond differently to learning of an ally's motivation and subsequent behaviors in actual workplace settings. Future research should examine these questions in studies that utilize working groups with (versus without) the presence of an ally or in more naturalistic settings. The workplace in

each of the current studies was male-dominated. It is possible that ally motivations and behaviors may be interpreted differently in settings that are not male-dominated. Women have less need to be vigilant for identity-threat cues in gender balanced environments than male-dominated environments (Murphy et al., 2007), indicating that women may be less impacted by the presence of an ally in gender-balanced environments. Supporting this prediction, Moser & Branscombe (2021) found that allyship from men had no additive positive effect in environments that were gender balanced. However, Moser & Branscombe (2021) did not manipulate ally behavior or motivations and it is possible that sincerity may impact perceptions of male allyship in gender balanced environments. Future research should extend the domains that gender equality allyship is studied to environments where women are not underrepresented.

These studies used a face valid manipulation of ally behavior such that the ally clearly follows through with their intentions when confronting sexism, but not when sexism is ignored or agreed with. However, the ally motivation manipulation has less face validity. It is not always possible for women to directly learn the motivation that an ally has for acting as an ally. As such, members of disadvantaged groups likely rely on other cues to inform perceptions of sincerity and motivations for allyship. Study 1 demonstrated that the allyship behavior of confronting a sexist event increases the perceived sincerity of the ally. Study 3 complicated this finding by demonstrating that knowledge of insincere motivation negates the positive effects of confronting sexism. Another way that women may infer sincerity of an advantaged group ally is from information given by other women. Allies who are endorsed by other disadvantaged ingroup members are more likely to be perceived as high in allyship, which promotes identity-safety (Johnson & Pietri, 2022). Future research ought to examine other ways that women may infer an ally's motivation.

In all three studies, participants were shown a self-identified ally who committed to allyship behaviors prior to viewing information consistent or inconsistent with these statements. Future research should examine the effects of allyship from those who do not explicitly commit to allyship. It is possible that the negative evaluations of the coworker who ignored sexism or provided insincere motivations would be muted without the explicit promise to act as an ally. Women may attribute confrontations from self-identified allies to dispositional factors whereas confrontations from coworkers who had not previously self-identified as an ally may be attributed to situational factors. Dispositional attributions are more likely to result in impression change than situational attributions (Crocker et al., 1982), which may result in more extreme evaluations for those who had previously signaled commitment to allyship than those who did not mention allyship.

It is also possible that the positive effects of allyship may be muted without prior knowledge that someone intends to act as an ally. For instance, Hildebrand et al., (2020) found that ally confrontations against sexism increased women's feelings of identity-safety, but only when the confrontation was affirmed by another bystander. Ally confrontations that were not affirmed by a bystander did not increase expressed identity-safety relative to when the sexist comment was not confronted. In a sense, women needed evidence against the sexist comment beyond a single confronter to view the organization as identity-safe. It is possible that allyship commitments strengthen the extent to which allyship behaviors are viewed to be effective. Future research should contrast allies who do or do not explicitly commit to allyship to test whether allyship commitments strengthen the effect of allyship behaviors.

The results of these studies complicate previous optimistic findings regarding identity-safety cues. Cues such as allies (Johnson et al., 2019; Moser & Branscombe, 2021), diversity

statements (Kaiser et al., 2013), and gender inclusive language (Johnson et al., 2021) signal identity-safety under the assumption that they are meant sincerely. Studies 1 through 3 demonstrated that any indication that an inclusion cue may not be sincere significantly undermined usefulness of the cue as signaling identity-safety. It is likely that there are conditions under which these and other identity-safety cues may backfire and increase concerns about future negative treatment. Future research should examine the impact of sincerity for women's interpretations of various inclusion cues and the way that disadvantaged group members infer sincerity.

## Conclusion

Three studies demonstrate the importance of sincerity of ally motivation and actual anti-sexist behavior for effective allyship. Across the three studies, we found large effects of allyship from men who provide sincere motivation and demonstrate behaviors to enact change for gender equality for women's attitudes towards a male-dominated organization. These studies are the first to empirically test the two separate components that are theoretically required for effective allyship. Our findings demonstrate the importance of both sincere acknowledgement of gender bias and behavioral actions in the face of sexism for allyship to increase women's sense of belonging and interest in staying at an organization. Additionally, women updated their impressions of an ally after learning of their motives and anti-sexism action or inaction. This is an important consideration because many identity-safety cues have only been studied at one time point, yet interpretations of these situational cues are actually subject to change with added information. Our studies also demonstrate the affective component of sincere versus insincere allyship, indicating that insincere allyship not only results in women's anticipation of negative treatment at an organization but also generates anger at the 'would-be ally'. This is important as

a well-intentioned ally can induce identity-threat and negative evaluations of a workplace if they do not enact these gender equality values when given the opportunity to do so. Organizations that employ allyship training, or individuals who wish to act as allies, need to include consideration of sincerity and actual behaviors that are consistent with gender equality if allyship is to be effective.

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## Appendix

### Study 1 Materials

In this study, we are interested in how people respond to everyday interactions in a company. We would like you to imagine that you work at an engineering firm, called Intrepid Engineering.

You were recently put on a new team for an Intrepid Engineering project and have not yet met everyone you'll be working with. At the first meeting for the project, everyone was asked to introduce themselves and provide some information about what they do at the company.

For the first part of the study, you will be introduced to your coworkers on this team. We are interested in evaluations of coworkers, so you may be asked to provide evaluations of the coworkers selected at random. To view the introductions, please click on the arrow.

Dan: Hi, my name is Dan. I am still relatively new to the company, but my favorite part of the job is getting to come up with new solutions to different problems.

George: Hi, I'm George. I primarily handle client relations. I organize a lot of communication between our clients and our engineers.

Lily: Hello, I'm Lily. My main focus at Intrepid Engineering is to analyze, write up, and communicate our research results in an understandable manner.

Justin: Hey, everyone, I'm Justin. I love being able to be creative with our work at Intrepid Engineering. The management lets us think out of the box when it comes to Research and Development.

Adam: Hi, I'm Adam! My main job is to approve people's ideas. I also work on finding the resources people need to complete their tasks.

Ben: Hi, my name is Ben! One of my biggest aims working here is to make an inclusive environment. I am passionate about gender equality and work to assure that everyone is treated equally. In this team, I promise that you can count on me to be your ally. Other than that, my main job here is to design and implement new strategies to ensure effective and efficient activity in our projects.

**Ally perceptions time 1:**

The coworker that you were randomly selected to evaluate is Ben [picture of Ben]. Please answer the following items based on your initial impression of them.

**Filler interaction:**

*"Great, I'm glad that we got a chance to introduce ourselves," Charles, the manager in charge of setting up the team, says, "Now let's talk about why we're developing this team. As you know, we've acquired several clients in quick succession. We are hoping that this group can be the go-to team for new client relations and initial development of clients' projects."*

*"That makes sense to have one group of initial contacts for new clients who can get a feel for client needs and direct them to the right departments when the time comes," George says.*

*"Sure, I see why we're all from different departments now," Lily responds.*

*"So, let's get into the details?" Justin asks.*

**Please select the arrow to continue.**

*During a management meeting the next week, the Intrepid Engineering leadership meets to go over a new project. They have yet to start this project and are meeting to decide who will be assigned to work on this project.*

Carl: "Alright everyone, thanks for meeting today. First thing we need to do is decide who will be on the Pearson Project. I know that Lily has expressed interest in leading the team."

Justin: "I just don't think women are assertive enough to lead the new team. And do you think a woman could actually stand up to the other directors? I just don't think women would be effective."

**Sincere condition: Ben:** "I disagree. Justin, women can be assertive and very strong leaders! Your statements sound a little unfair and sexist, don't you think?"

**Agree condition: Ben:** "I agree. I've noticed that women struggle to be assertive leaders. I don't think it's sexist to admit reality, don't you think?"

**Ignore condition:** Ben says nothing.

**Ally perceptions time 2:**

Now that you have had a chance to experience more interactions within this team, you will be asked to evaluate the same team member that you were previously asked to evaluate. Please evaluate the same team member on the following dimensions. For reference, you will evaluate **BEN.**

**Study 2 Materials**

**All participants read:**

In this study, we are interested in how people respond to every day interactions in a company. We would like you to imagine that you work at an engineering firm, called Intrepid Engineering. You were recently put on a new team for an Intrepid Engineering project and have not yet met everyone you'll be working with. At the first meeting for the project, everyone was asked to introduce themselves and provide some information about what they do at the company. For the first part of the study, you will be introduced to your coworkers on this team. We are interested in evaluations of coworkers, so you may be asked to provide evaluations of the coworkers at random. To view the introductions, please click on the arrow.

Dan: Hi, my name is Dan. I am still relatively new to the company, but my favorite part of the job is getting to come up with new solutions to different problems.

George: Hi, I'm George. I primarily handle client relations. I organize a lot of communication between our clients and our engineers.

Kelsey: Hello, I'm Kelsey. My main focus at Intrepid Engineering is to analyze, write up, and communicate our research results in an understandable manner.

Justin: Hey, everyone, I'm Justin. I love being able to be creative with our work at Intrepid Engineering. The management lets us think out of the box when it comes to Research and Development.

Adam: Hi, I'm Adam! My main job is to approve people's ideas. I also work on finding the resources people need to complete their tasks.

Ben: Hi, my name is Ben! One of my biggest aims working here is to make an inclusive environment. I am passionate about gender equality and work to assure that everyone is treated equally. In this team, I promise that you can count on me to be your ally. Other than that, my main job here is to design and implement new strategies to ensure effective and efficient activity in our projects.

**Ally perceptions time 1:**

The coworker that you were randomly selected to evaluate is Ben [picture of Ben]. Please answer the following items based on your initial impression of them.

**All participants read:**

After initial introductions, the first meeting for this project beings. Because many of the team members haven't worked together before, the manager asks everyone to participate in several ice breaker activities to allow everyone to get to know each other.

[Filler interaction]

*"Great, I'm glad that we got a chance to introduce ourselves," Charles, the manager in charge of setting up the team, says, "Now let's talk about why we're developing this team. As you know, we've acquired several clients in quick succession. We are hoping that this group can be the go-to team for new client relations and initial development of clients' projects."*

*"That makes sense to have one group of initial contacts for new clients who can get a feel for client needs and direct them to the right departments when the time comes," George says.*

*"Sure, I see why we're all from different departments now," Kelsey responds.*

*"So, let's get into the details?" Justin asks.*

The majority of the meeting is spent explaining the purpose of the new project and delegating initial tasks to get the ball rolling. Please select the arrow to continue.

At the end of the meeting, you overhear the following private conversation while leaving the room.

Adam: *"I hate having to do introductions and ice-breakers. They're always so awkward."*

[Sincerity manipulation]

*"Yeah, I know what you mean," Ben says, "But I'm glad that I got a chance to talk about allyship.* [Self-presentation manipulation: 1/3 of participants will view] ***I notice that I always get compliments when I say that stuff.*** [Company requirement manipulation: 1/3 of participants will view] ***Corporate keeps telling us to say that kind of stuff.*** [Sincere manipulation: 1/3 of participants will view] ***That's an important personal value to me, and I appreciate the chance to say that stuff."***

For the next part of the study, you will be asked several questions about your perceptions of the coworkers in your team and your overall impression of Intrepid Engineering.

**Ally perceptions time 2:**

Now that you have had a chance to experience more interactions within this team, you will be asked to evaluate the same team member that you were previously asked to evaluate. Please evaluate the same team member on the following dimensions. For reference, you will evaluate **BEN.**

**Study 3 Materials**

**All participants will read:**

In this study, we are interested in how people respond to everyday interactions in a company. We would like you to imagine that you work at an engineering firm, called Intrepid Engineering. You were recently put on a new team for an Intrepid Engineering project and have not yet met everyone you'll be working with. At the first meeting for the project, everyone was asked to introduce themselves and provide some information about what they do at the company. For the first part of the study, you will be introduced to your coworkers on this team. We are interested in evaluations of coworkers, so you may be asked to provide evaluations of the coworkers selected at random. To view the introductions, please click on the arrow.

[pictures of the coworker will be included with each introduction]

Dan: Hi, my name is Dan. I am still relatively new to the company, but my favorite part of the job is getting to come up with new solutions to different problems.

George: Hi, I'm George. I primarily handle client relations. I organize a lot of communication between our clients and our engineers.

Lily: Hello, I'm Kelsey. My main focus at Intrepid Engineering is to analyze, write up, and communicate our research results in an understandable manner.

Justin: Hey, everyone, I'm Justin. I love being able to be creative with our work at Intrepid Engineering. The management lets us think out of the box when it comes to Research and Development.

Adam: Hi, I'm Adam! My main job is to approve people's ideas. I also work on finding the resources people need to complete their tasks.

Ben: Hi, my name is Ben! One of my biggest aims working here is to make an inclusive environment. I am passionate about gender equality and work to ensure everyone is treated equally. In this team, I promise that you can count on me to be your ally. Other than that, my main job here is to design and implement new strategies to ensure efficient activity in our projects.

**Ally perceptions time 1:**

The coworker that you were randomly selected to evaluate is Ben [picture of Ben]. Please answer the following items based on your initial impression of this person.

**[All participants will read]**

After initial introductions, the first meeting for this project begins. Because many team members haven't worked together before, the manager asks everyone to participate in several ice breaker activities to allow everyone to get to know each other.

**Filler interaction:**

*"Great, I'm glad that we got a chance to introduce ourselves," Charles, the manager in charge of setting up the team, says, "Now let's talk about why we're developing this team. As you know, we've acquired several clients in quick succession. We are hoping that this group can be the go-to team for new client relations and initial development of clients' projects."*

*"That makes sense to have one group of initial contacts for new clients who can get a feel for client needs and direct them to the right departments when the time comes," George says.*

*"Sure, I see why we're all from different departments now," Lily responds.*

*"So, let's get into the details?" Justin asks.*

The majority of the meeting is spent explaining the purpose of the new project and delegating initial tasks to get the ball rolling. Please select the arrow to continue.

**Motivation Manipulation:**

At the end of the meeting, you overhear the following private conversation while leaving the room.

Adam: *"I hate having to do introductions and ice-breakers. They're always so awkward."*

[Sincerity manipulation]

**Insincere condition** Ben: *To be honest, corporate is really trying to communicate inclusion and they want us to mention it. Plus, I notice that I always get praise and compliments from other people when I say that stuff. It makes me look good; that's why I do it.*

**Sincere condition** Ben: *To be honest, I mean it genuinely. I want to help make spaces more inclusive. Plus, it's an important personal value to me, and that's why I do it."*

**[All participants will read]**

*The next day, the team meets to go over a new project. They have yet to start this project and are meeting to decide who will be assigned to work on this project.*

Dan: "Alright everyone, thanks for meeting today. First thing we need to do is decide who will be on the Pearson Project. I know that Lily has expressed interest in leading the team."

Justin: "I just don't think women are assertive enough to lead the new team. And do you think a woman could actually stand up to the other directors? I just don't think women would be effective."

**Behavior Manipulation:**

**Confront condition: Ben:** "I disagree. Justin, women can be assertive and very strong leaders! Your statements sound a little unfair and sexist, don't you think?"

**Neutral condition:** Ben nods and says nothing.

**Ally perceptions time 2:**

Sometimes people's initial impressions of others are consistent with expectations and sometimes they are not. For this reason, now that you have had a chance to experience more interactions within this team, you will be asked to evaluate the same team member that you were previously asked to evaluate. Please evaluate the same team member on the following dimensions. For reference, you will evaluate **BEN [picture of Ben included].**

**Dependent Measures, Studies 1-3**

<u>Ally Perceptions</u>

1. I would like this person.
2. This person appears to be friendly.
3. This person would stand up against inequality.
4. I could go to this person for advice. (filler)
5. This person would be able to influence the opinions of other coworkers at the company.
6. I think this person would "have my back" in the company.
7. This person has a lot of power in the company.
8. I think this person seems like a good employee. (filler)
9. The person seems committed to social justice.
10. I think this person may be motivated by their own self-interests.

11. I could trust this person.
12. This person means what they say.

Identity Safety (adapted from Hildebrand et al., 2020)

1. I would feel a sense of belonging in this group.
2. Other members of this group would accept me.
3. I would fit in well with this group.
4. I think I could be "myself" around this group.
5. I think that I could trust this group to treat me fairly.
6. I think that my values and the values of this group are very similar.
7. I think I would like to be friends with this group.
8. I think it would be pleasant to be a part of this group.
9. I would enjoy being in this group.

Respect (adapted from Renger, Renger, Miché, & Simon, 2017)

1. My coworkers will treat me as a counterpart who is to be taken seriously.
2. My fellow coworkers will communicate with me as with a person of equal worth.
3. At work my colleagues will treat me as someone with equal rights.
4. My coworkers would respect me.

Retention (7 point likert scale, extremely unlikely to extremely likely)

1. How likely would you be to accept a job offer at Intrepid Engineering?
2. How likely would you be to stay at Intrepid Engineering?

Anticipated future support (adapted from Moser & Branscombe, 2021)

1. I would be able to go to my coworkers for support at Intrepid Engineering.
2. I could count on my coworkers for help if something sexist happened.
3. I feel that if any sexism occurred while working at Intrepid Engineering, I would have support from my coworkers.
4. My coworkers would support me if I confronted sexism.

Norms

1. It is normative for employees at this company to support gender equality.
2. Employees at this company value gender equality.
3. It is expected that employees at this company be inclusive.
4. Most employees at this compare care about diversity.

**Additional measures included in Study 3**

Anger toward Ben (ally coworker) (adapted from Outten et al., 2012)

To what extent does this information make you feel angry toward this coworker?

To what extent does this information make you feel annoyed with this coworker?

To what extent does this information make you feel resentful this coworker?

To what extent does this information make you feel outraged by this coworker?

To what extent does this information make you feel betrayed by this coworker?

Gratitude toward Ben (ally coworker)

To what extent does this information make you feel happy with this coworker?

To what extent does this information make you feel satisfied with this coworker?

To what extent does this information make you feel gratitude toward this coworker?