FOSTERING AN INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT

An inclusive environment is the product of small steps taken by many like-minded individuals over time. Below are practical tips you can incorporate into your everyday life to contribute to creating a welcoming and inclusive environment. Importantly, these actions can also help you learn from and adapt to the changing modern world.

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1

Use language with care

- Avoid adjectives like "vulnerable" and "high-risk". These terms can reinforce stigmas, suggesting that a trait is inherent to a group rather than caused by outside factors.
- Avoid dehumanizing language; use first-person language instead. Always refer to people as people, not as cases or entities.
- Avoid using words with violent connotations when referring to others.
- Enhance your awareness of and seek to address microaggressions, which are subtle actions that convey bias and often cause intentional harm.

2

Allow for self-identification

Use inclusive and appropriate terms to describe ability/disability, age, gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, etc.

- Regarding **disability status**, instead of suffers from, use has
- Regarding **age**, instead of elderly, use older person
- Regarding **gender**, instead of opposite sex, use different sex
- Regarding **sexual orientation**, instead of husband / wife, use spouse
- Regarding **race**, instead of an Asian, use an Asian person

3

Give and accept constructive feedback

Giving feedback:

- <u>Find the right time:</u> Find a balance between setting aside enough time to self-reflect and giving feedback shortly after the event occurs.
- <u>Avoid blame:</u> Focus on the behavior rather than the person and provide positive and actionable suggestions for improvement.
- <u>Be respectful and stay on point:</u> Avoid muddling your feedback with unnecessary elaborations.

Accepting feedback:

- <u>Keep an open mind:</u> While it may be your first instinct to defend yourself from receiving feedback, remember to demonstrate a willingness to consider the other person's perspective.
- <u>Ask clarifying questions:</u> This can prevent future misunderstandings and foster productive engagements with the other person.
- <u>Look for what is actionable and move forward:</u> Accepting feedback also involves committing to a growth mindset and learning to be resilient against discomfort.

4

Foster a sense of belonging for all

- Support the social, emotional, physical, and mental health needs of others.
- Validate the other person's emotions and circumstances by showing empathy.
- Avoid assumptions and challenge stereotypes. Ask respectfully curious questions when you want to learn more about a person or a topic. Demonstrate humility and self-reflect to ensure your intention is to learn, not to scrutinize.
- Highlight others' contributions.
- Celebrate your peers, teams, colleagues, and mentors.

Sources:

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