

# INCLUSION

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GETTING *to the* HEART of

SAFE AND EFFECTIVE TEAMS



***‘Inclusion occurs when a diversity of people feel valued and respected, have access to opportunities and resources, and can contribute their perspectives and talents to improve their organisation.’***

(Diversity Council of Australia).

There’s a myriad of evidence supporting the benefits of inclusion in teams.

Findings from the Diversity Council of Australia’s Inclusion@Work Index states workers in inclusive teams are:

- **Eleven times more likely** to be highly effective than those in non-inclusive teams
- **Ten times more likely** to be innovative
- **Six times more likely** to provide excellent customer service; and
- **Four times more likely** to work extra hard.



At the heart of inclusion, lies the basic premise that **every human being has the right and need to be included**. As a Leader you have a **key role in fostering inclusion in your team** to bring out the best in every individual and your team collectively.

### **But how do you do that?**

Here’s three ways you can help build and maintain inclusion in your team.

## **1: Acknowledge everyone's basic human need (and right) to belong.**

Human beings are social creatures (even the most introverted amongst us). We all have an innate need to belong. At work, in teams, belonging is essential to create trust and make it safe for interpersonal risk taking.

### **Here's how you can help acknowledge this need and right.**

- Recognise and accept each team members unique individual strengths.
- Ensure you ask all members of your team for their input, thoughts, solutions, even if some may be more experienced - helping build confidence and capacity in others as well.
- Look for things that connect your team members and help them see that - rather than things that make them different.

## **2: Challenge behaviours that exclude others.**

Watch for behaviours in your team that create exclusion. These can be unintentional behaviours or it can be as overt and concerning as prejudice and bias. The result is a breakdown of trust at a minimum.

### **Here's how to prevent exclusive behaviours.**

- Watch for behaviours that exclude others. Side whispers, exclusive cliques, negative body language when a team member is speaking, ignoring others, invites out for only some members of the team - are all warning signs to watch for.
- Challenge junk theories of superiority in the team – you can do this by ensuring everyone understands the individual strength, value and benefit of each individual on that team regardless of any other factor, and by avoiding the perception of favouritism.
- Shut down and address through corrective action words or behaviours that have a prejudicial or discriminatory undertone – regardless of intent.

## **3: Model inclusion.**

As the Leader its your role to model the behaviours you want to see in your team and the broader workplace, and for those behaviours to be in line with legislative principles and the principles of a healthy workplace culture.

### **Here's some ways you can model inclusion:**

- Rotate the chairing of your team meetings through each individual member of your team.
- Ask each individual to take turns organising social activities to enhance the personal connections amongst the team. This will ensure activities are equitable.
- Ensure opportunities for special projects, education, acting up – are equally split amongst the team. If there's a capacity problem preventing this ensure you have a plan to address that.
- Check your own bias – it can be frustrating as a leader when someone isn't as invested or capable in a role as you would like them to be. Not all team members bring their best to the team – and there can be many reasons for that. See if you can help turn them around.

## In Summary

There's a myriad of evidence supporting the benefits of inclusion on teams.

At the heart of inclusion lies the basic premise that every human being has the right and need to belong.

As a Leader here's three ways you can foster inclusion on your team:

- Acknowledge everyone's basic human need (and right) to belong.
- Challenge behaviours that exclude others
- Model inclusion



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