

## **What is Cultural Diversity**

Cultural diversity refers to having a variety of cultures or human societies within a specific region. Cultural diversity is possible when individuals accept, acknowledge and value the different ways in which people interact and live in the world. Cultural diversity is based on an understanding that even if people have cultural differences, they desire the same things: acceptance, well-being, security, esteem and equity.

Cultural diversity is based on the idea that people should not ignore or discard their cultural identities but rather value and maintain them. The foundation of cultural diversity is that every race or culture contributes positively to social and economic development. A culturally diverse society is characterized by differences in culture, economic background, ethnicity, age, disability, education, geographical background, physical appearance, language, race, political affiliation, sexual orientation and religious beliefs.

Cultural diversity depends on the flow of human population across borders, and it is a source of creativity, innovation and social exchange. Policies for participation and inclusion of all people promote social cohesion, peace and the vitality of a culturally diverse society. Cultural diversity is a means to a more emotional, spiritual, intellectual and moral existence. The idea of cultural diversity should be promoted and taught.

# Diversity & CCW

## 1. Establish a sense of belonging for everyone

For each individual to bring their best self forward, a sense of belonging must first be established. Having a connection to an organization or group of people that makes you feel you can be yourself not only results in greater engagement and creativity it's a psychological need.

But these changes take time, and they aren't always linear, you don't just fast-forward to belonging. You have to go through the hard work of focusing on diversity and creating that inclusive culture so you can get to the belonging.

It's not a one-size-fits-all approach, either — that's why it's so important to share best practices and be open to trying new things. The good thing is that as you're working on diversity, you can also work on inclusion, and vice versa. It's all interconnected.

## 2. Empathetic leadership is key

Diversity and inclusion are often treated as a single initiative. But for real change to happen, every individual leader needs to buy into the value of belonging — both intellectually and emotionally.

You have to make sure leaders are equipped to make the story their own, feel it within themselves and be able to explain why they care; why it matters.

Part of this process requires tuning in to empathy; each person remembering a time when they were excluded, shamed, interrupted, and so on, so they can apply those lessons outwardly. Leaders have to feel it within themselves; then they can identify the relationship with feeling excluded or making others feel excluded. That's a critical starting point.

## 3. Inclusion is ongoing

It isn't enough to teach employees what it means to be inclusive. Like any form of behavior change, inclusion requires individuals to identify key moments in which to build new habits or "microbehaviors" (daily actions that can be practiced

and measured). And when these habits are put into action in an environment that supports honest conversations and healthy tension, real change becomes possible.

## 4. Maximize joy and connection, minimize fear

People are wired to react with fear and distrust when their beliefs are challenged. While fear can be a powerful motivator, it also encourages people to narrow their perspective possibility — and elevating the power of shared experiences and storytelling to do so — creates greater potential for positive change.

Then you can focus on creating moments that continue the momentum. You need to not only point out where there's room for improvement, but spotlight the moments of success and celebrate them.

## 5. Forget 'fit' and focus on helping individuals thrive

Creating a culture where every individual can contribute their full potential requires investigating the systems and processes in your organization. Fit can be dangerous, because it can exclude. You have to first be able to identify and bring to life your values, mission and purpose.