



Leader Tool

Celebrating and supporting diversity and inclusion

Celebrating Harmony Week 15 - 21 March 2021 *Everyone Belongs*

Recent data from the Diversity Council of Australia reveals that if you work in an inclusive team, you are 19 times more likely to be very satisfied with your job than workers in non-inclusive teams, 4 times more likely to stay with your employer and 2 times more likely to receive regular career development opportunities.¹

Inclusive Teams:

19x

...more likely to be very satisfied with your job

4x

...more likely to stay with employer

2x

...more likely to receive regular career development opportunities

The advantages of diversity are obvious; organisations that effectively bring employees of different backgrounds together cultivate robust solutions by considering diverse perspectives and ideas. Their people work collaboratively and efficiently due to a mutual respect for their individual differences. They are often more productive, and innovation is more likely to be an outcome, as they feel valued when their individual strengths are acknowledged.

So how do we work towards harmony? Here are some strategies:

One size will NOT fit all. It's important to understand why racial, cultural, gender and age-based stereotypes are harmful and also to ensure day-to-day practices allow all employees to feel that they belong. Inclusive practice does not mean that all employees are treated the same way, regardless of their individual backgrounds. This would be to ignore the main principle of inclusion, which is that each employee is unique and has their own particular set of needs and strengths. It takes time and effort to understand the background of each person in your team and to know how to make them feel valued and bring the best out of them.

Diversity and inclusion takes effort. There are system and checks we can put in place, but unconscious bias remains. We are all products of our culture, family, education, relationship and work-life experiences, and these experiences shape the way we respond to and see the world. On top of that, we are in a hurry! Psychologists suggest that people tend to be 'cognitive misers'; we use short-cuts by applying rules and assumptions about people to try and gain a quick understanding of them. We think that if someone is of a particular age, country, religion, culture, gender, sexual orientation, relationship status, or generation, then we can instantly know a range of things about that person.



Celebrate diversity. Research shows that diverse teams outperform others, but they also perceive that diverse teams are harder work. This highlights the importance of making sure your people understand the “why”. Acknowledging the success of diverse teams and connecting team members with the outcomes can help.

You can't do it alone. As a leader, you can protect your team from the pitfalls of bias and blinders by ensuring that they bring diversity to decision making. In this way, you can move from a narrow to a wide view taking account of unique perspectives.

It's a journey. Our commitment to lifelong learning and development includes cultural competency. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are the most common group excluded in the workplace.² At AccessEAP, our people, participate in specific training to gain knowledge, skills and confidence to work more effectively with Indigenous colleagues, customers, companies and communities. Together, we'll create a better environment to help Indigenous people thrive, and we'll enable organisations to benefit from a more productive workforce.

We are here to support you so that you can better support your people. If you have any further questions or would like to discuss a specific concern contact our Manager Support Hotline or your Relationship Manager. As always, as your EAP we are here to support your people whatever the nature of their concerns, please contact AccessEAP on **1800 818 728**.

1. <https://www.dca.org.au/research/project/inclusion-index>
2. <https://www.dca.org.au/topics/aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islander-peoples>

