



Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion Centre canadien pour la diversité et l'inclusion

Inclusive Leadership Guide (3/3):

Leading inclusively during this pandemic

Now more than ever, we need our leaders to act inclusively when managing teams. In 2016, Deloitte University Press published *The Six Signature Traits of Inclusive Leadership: Thriving in a Diverse New World* (<https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/topics/talent/six-signature-traits-of-inclusive-leadership.html>).

The report identifies six key areas that define an inclusive leader. Many of these traits must be cultivated over time – very few people possess all of them near the beginning of their diversity and inclusion journey. But have no fear, developing and more consistently applying these traits in your everyday interactions, is possible. This Tip Sheet focuses on two of those traits and provides recommendations for bringing the trait to life in your day to day activities.

Cultural Intelligence

Cultural Intelligence: Being culturally intelligent is critically important to an inclusive leader. It is through that knowledge that they are able to navigate different cultural settings in an effective manner. Cultural competence is about more than just memorizing different cultural frameworks. It's about understanding one's own culture and how that impacts your own worldview, as well as how cultural stereotypes can affect your beliefs about others.

How to action this trait:

- » **Be an active learner:** Take an active interest in learning about other cultures. Look for those opportunities to experience other cultures. Go into those situations with zero expectations and let go of all preconceived notions. In times of isolation, TV can be a source of that information through watching shows that you wouldn't normally watch. Also, consider reading and finding content online that can help you expand your understanding.
- » **Be willing to adapt:** Be open to different ways of doing things. Understand that people from different cultural backgrounds may have different ways of approaching problem-solving and decision-making. That doesn't make it right or wrong – just different. Show a willingness to adapt by being open to a new perspective on a familiar process, interaction or decision to be made. You may find that the different way is in fact, a better way, or that a combination of different ways can sway the day!

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Collaboration

Collaboration: Collaboration is about how individuals work collectively to solve problems, or develop new products and solutions. Collaboration among people that are of the same background (whatever that background may be) tends to be easy and comfortable. Collaboration may be more difficult and uncomfortable when the people on the team come from different lived experiences. Inclusive leadership is about creating space where collaboration can occur, even when it's not so easy.

How to action this trait:

- » **Create space for difference:** In situations where you have team members from diverse backgrounds – beyond ethnocultural diversity – ensure that you are giving them opportunity to have a voice in discussions and decisions. Give people the opportunity to speak and explicitly call on people to share their thoughts. If you see someone is not actively sharing, understand that their reason for not sharing is likely not a lack of interest. It may be cultural, or they may be an introvert. Discuss the situation with them and ensure you are creating space where they can speak, if they choose to.
- » **Empower people:** Ensure that you empower your people to address challenging situations themselves, and don't feel the need to step into everything. When someone comes to you asking about how to deal with a situation, turn it around: ask them how they would deal with it, provide some coaching, and then let them deal with it.
- » **Seek out diversity:** If you are putting together a project team, bring together a group of people that takes you out of your comfort zone. Involve people that not only have personal characteristic diversity, but also diversity of thought. From the outset, discuss the diversity in the group, and how people work best. Ensure that there are no in-groups or out-groups. There is just one group. Keep a watchful eye on how things are progressing and if you anticipate a situation arising, take appropriate action to address the team conflict when it occurs.

Other reading on...

Cultural Intelligence:

- » Five Ways to Build Cultural Intelligence, Simma Lieberman, 2012
<https://alanweiss.com/five-ways-to-build-cultural-intelligence/>
- » Cultural Intelligence, Working Confidently in Different Cultures, MindTools
<https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/cultural-intelligence.htm>
- » 6 tips on how to develop cultural intelligence, Terence Brake, 2019
<https://countrynavigator.com/blog/expert-view/develop-cultural-intelligence/>

Collaboration:

- » 10 Top Qualities of a Great Collaborator, Elise Hymes, 2015
<https://medium.com/teamwork-and-collaboration/10-top-qualities-of-a-great-collaborator-4c1fe0a06a2e>
- » The 3 Most Important Ways Leaders Empower Others, WeathBuilders
<https://wealthbuilders.org/blog/2016/07/08/3-important-ways-leaders-empower-others/>
- » When Empowering Employees Works, and When It Doesn't, Lee, Willis, Wei Tian, 2018
<https://hbr.org/2018/03/when-empowering-employees-works-and-when-it-doesnt>