

North Carolina Central University

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Fostering Organizational Inclusion

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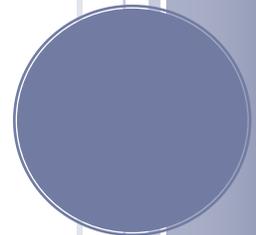
FOSTERING ORGANIZATIONAL INCLUSION

A framework for action and change

This report provides an overview of “inclusion” which is a strategic framework for organizational, individual and societal collaboration and engagement. This information is adapted from a number of resources but most notably the work of the open source network group, The Institute for Inclusion.

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FOSTERING ORGANIZATIONAL INCLUSION

A framework for action and change



Inclusion serves as a framework for individuals, organizations, institutions and communities, locally and globally, to visualize progressive ways to approach decision-making, problem-solving and creativity needed to solve pressing issues of our time. This framework helps by laying out a set of principles and underlying behaviors and practices that can shape change and opportunity.

Civil society has a unique opportunity and responsibility within our countries and around the world to promote and support efforts to move from scarcity of resources to abundance, to shift from a fear mindset to one that focuses on hope and opportunity, to minimize

oppression and optimize empowerment, to move from tolerance of our diversity to the appreciation of the differences we all bring to life, and finally to shift from exclusion and discrimination to inclusion.

DEFINITION OF INCLUSION

Inclusion is the framework from where one actively seeks to engage the unique talents, beliefs, backgrounds, heritages, capabilities, and ways of living that people bring when they are joined in a common endeavor. Inclusion encourages engagement of these differences in a positive way to achieve mutually beneficial outcomes while respecting and valuing the unique and different perspectives represented.

Societal and global challenges will not be successfully addressed without an inclusive

IFI Mission: To impact the world by making inclusion mindsets and behaviors preferred and common practices

mindset, therefore, it incorporates a set of principles, practices, and behaviors that leverage and honor these differences.



PRINCIPLES OF INCLUSION

The following principles were adopted by a group of thought leaders convened by the Institute for Inclusion, an open source networking group of consultants, corporate diversity leaders, non-profit representatives, and governmental professionals. They consider the principles evolutionary and as such

continue to refine and update them.

Individuals, leaders and organizations who support progressive societal inclusion agree to:

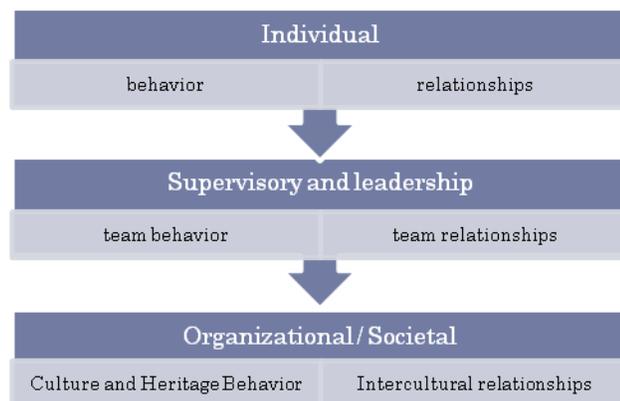
1. Build a foundation of respect, fairness, justice, and equity
2. Recognize and broaden the spectrum of human differences as a source of strength
3. Enhance our individual and collective competence to collaborate across cultures and groups
4. Build systems, processes, and procedures that support and sustain inclusion
5. Work to bring individuals' talents, skills, and perspectives together to complement and enrich each other
6. Promote interdependence as essential to adapting to changing work, environmental and societal conditions
7. Foster teamwork to yield higher levels of productivity, creativity and results
8. Learn and continue to grow from living the Inclusion Principles
9. Ensure those impacted by decisions are systematically included in the dialogue
10. Report progress and learning in applying the Inclusion Principles

INCLUSIVE BEHAVIORS AND PRACTICES

Inclusive behaviors are those practices that leverage and honor the uniqueness of each person's talent, belief, and way of living. They transcend all differences by acknowledging and honoring the group identities people all possess while at the same time not being restricted by those identities.

When someone is defined by the concept of a group, people can be limited by their knowledge or beliefs about that particular group. Instead, inclusion embraces similarities and differences at the individual and group levels for the attainment of a common endeavor.

Behaviors and practices that impact inclusion are at three levels –



Leaders and supervisors drive behavior of their workforces, organizations, volunteers, communities in the way they recognize, celebrate and embrace differences. At the organizational, societal, or governmental levels, policies, doctrines and regulations drive behavior and may impact the way constituents behave with regards to one another. Inclusion seeks to identify those practices which drive exclusive patterns of behavior.

individual, leadership/managerial, and organizational. Individual behaviors are those that can be managed or controlled by the individual. He or she has a choice of how they will behave when confronted with the unique differences of others.

Tools and Tips – Inclusive Behaviors and Practices – For Leaders

An inclusive environment must be a shared responsibility and everyone should be held accountable for their role in achieving success. Leaders have a critical role in creating a safe space that invites people to engage and to enable true dialogue to occur.

At the core of inclusion is enabling people to have insight into why and how decisions are made. Transparency enables individuals to know the “why” behind these decisions. Leaders have a key role in connecting everyday interactions and expectations to the organization’s direction and vision.

Behavior	Details
1. Hold self and others accountable for creating an inclusive culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand and learn from biases. Learn how to reduce them and to expand the range of acceptance and appreciation • Use power and position to challenge inequities at the individual, group, and system levels
2. Invite engagement and dialogue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and participate in forums for dialogue and input • Take the time for authentic conversation • Ask questions and be curious • Explicitly consider and ask who else needs to be included
3. Model bringing one’s self to work, and give permission for and encourage others to do so	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show up authentically. Be vulnerable • Honor the full range of who people are • Encourage individuals to express their identities and cultures • Spend intentional time at dinners, galas, and diverse activities
4. Foster transparent decision-making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the impact of decisions broadly. Make it safe for others to express different perspectives • Accept and model not having all the answers. Share data and information to the fullest extent possible
5. Understand and engage with resistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage as many people as possible in your efforts. Especially seek to engage those who have different points of view • Fully hear and respond to people’s concerns and ideas
6. Understand and talk about how inclusion connects to the mission and vision of the organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paint the big picture • Share the benefit for people and the organization • Consistently discuss why inclusion matters • Recognize your critical role in linking the efforts to individuals

Behaviors and Practices for the Individual

Tools and Tips – Inclusive Behaviors and Practices - At the Individual Level

Be present in the moment as this demonstrates respect (e.g., non-verbal behavior, attention, not distracted, appreciation)

- In person – say hello, make culturally appropriate eye contact, or not, be respectful and aware of non-verbal messages, offer a chair, acknowledge and greet people
- Virtually – take time to find out who is on the call and to learn something about who they are and what they need to contribute their best.
- Use culturally appropriate actions, e.g., bowing to elders, nod, hug, high five, shake hands, kisses, smiles, etc. Do your research ahead of time
- Take time to get to know people before beginning task

When we listen to others carefully, we are hearing deeply (really listen to what is being said) and show interest, creating a safe place to connect and open dialogue and learning.

- Listen as an ally (rather than a skeptic or critic). Bring cultural understanding to your interactions, noting that interruptions, silences, pacing, non-verbal behavior, etc., vary from person to person and culture to culture.
- Listen for understanding before judging or trying to determine your own position

Multiple points of view enhance the possibility of better decision-making and problem-solving and increase people's feeling of engagement and belonging.

- Ask if others should be included in the conversation or process.
- Actively invite new voices and different and alternative perspectives. Provide room for dissenting voices.
- Have the courage to say what you believe needs to be said

To build trust people must have the information needed to make good decisions. The more open and transparent the process and information is, the more people can add value.

- Communicate relevant information
- Share your intent and process

- *Acknowledge, connect, and engage others*
- *Listen deeply and carefully*
- *Engage a broad range of perspectives*
- *Openly share information and seek transparency*
- *Be curious*
- *Lean into discomfort*
- *Increase your self-awareness*
- *Be willing to learn and be influenced by others*
- *Be respectful and demonstrate fairness*
- *Foster interdependence and teamwork*

Tools and Tips – Inclusive Behaviors and Practices to Implement at the Individual Level

When you are curious (rather than being closed or judging) we have the opportunity to learn more about others' points of views

- Get to know people, especially those who are different from you.
- Identify, share and test your assumptions
- Learn how other people and groups may see and experience the world differently from you and your groups
- When there is a difference of perspective addressed, ask why the person holds that perspective rather than arguing or trying to prove them wrong

Leaning into discomfort enables people to take risks and to speak the truth. It takes courage to be willing to speak up and is critical for enabling greater authenticity and connection

- Find and use your voice; encourage others to speak up and use their voice
- Put yourself in new situations
- Use discomfort as an opportunity for learning
- Openly address disagreements – don't avoid differences, engage them

The more we understand ourselves the more we can partner effectively with others. A key to knowing ourselves is to be involved in a continuous process of self learning and increased awareness of self.

- Continue to educate yourself; developing self-awareness is continuous an never-ending process
- Understand your biases and assumptions
- Learn about your own cultural background and influences
- Be culturally sensitive/aware; some concepts don't translate well across language/ culture
- Recognize that people have multiple group identities. Educate yourself on how identities interplay with each other

Our Vision

To create a new reality in which people, individually and collectively, across all backgrounds and identities and in all communities and organizations, live, work, and interact freely and authentically in ways that are mutually beneficial, unfettered by prejudice and systemic barriers.

Tools and Tips – Inclusive Behaviors and Practices at the Individual Level

One of the keys to inclusion is that people feel that they are valued and treated with dignity, respect and fairness.

- Be aware of your biases and how your verbal and nonverbal behavior communicates respect to others.
- Fairness does not equal sameness – be willing to be fair and equitable with each person which does not mean applying strict rules across the board
- Speak up when others are excluded
- Be aware of your tone of voice and its effects
- Honor commitments and do what you say you will do
- Respond in a timely manner to others requests
- Be brave enough to give honest feedback to others

Understanding the role that each individual plays to accomplishing team success is critical to inclusion. Being mindful of the interdependence of all members is a key dimension of inclusion.

- Move from an “I” to a “We” mindset
- Focus on shared outcomes and shared successes
- Recognize who you are reliant on to achieve tasks and who relies on you
- Invite active participation of all team members
- Check in with all team members to assure they feel included
- Continue to solicit and give feedback on the degree to which each person is feeling valued and is adding value to accomplishing goals and objectives.
- Remove barriers which prevent access and accommodation for individuals with special needs

Implementing the Vision

We aspire to develop inclusive environments through processes of co-creation that provide the opportunity to maximize people's voice, engagement, and ability to enhance their own life and the lives of others. This requires radical change at all levels of system and impacts social norms, cultural values, beliefs, behaviors, policies and practices.

INCLUSIVE PRACTICES THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR ORGANIZATIONS

At the foundation of people feeling included is the need to know that policies, practices and processes are respectful, fair, just and equitable.

- Create an environment of respect, fairness, justice, and equity
 - Build into mission, vision and values
 - Make decisions based on stated values
 - Educate stakeholder groups on importance
 - Hold people accountable for respectful behavior

To assure that inclusion is systemically built into the framework of the organization all policies and practices must support the culture of inclusion

- Create a framework for assessing and implementing organizational policies and practices
 - Implement non-discrimination policies, rules and regulations
 - Review all policies to ensure they are inclusive
 - Ensure benefits and their use are aligned with inclusion principles
 - Establish personal and team inclusion policies
 - Follow the laws that regulate respect, fairness, justice and equity for people and the environment

The internal and external organizational policies and practices that support inclusion should be aligned with inclusion principles in order to develop inclusive mindsets and behaviors, and ultimately an inclusive culture.

The behaviors are built into processes, systems, procedures, and practices that govern and guide how the members of the organization behave.

These behaviors determine the rewards, recognition and opportunities provided by an organization and its leaders.

The alignment of behaviors must include the whole organizational system. Examples of policies and practices may include the areas for attracting and recruiting staff, developing products, doing research, conducting community outreach, sales, marketing, governmental relations, and public relations, to name only a few.

INCLUSIVE PRACTICES THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR ORGANIZATIONS

Inclusion must become a way of life, rather than a program or series of activities

- Build systems, processes, and procedures that support and sustain inclusion
 - Make sure the right people are at the table. Think carefully about who needs to be involved
 - Involve individuals impacted by the decision in process
 - Be transparent about information, processes and intentions
 - Establish work practices and forums that create greater organizational understanding of the importance of valuing inclusion and difference
 - Integrate inclusion into business strategies
 - Ensure inclusion principles are included in human resource processes (hiring, evaluations, promotions, etc.)
 - Acknowledge and recognize departments and teams that have demonstrated strong support for diversity and inclusion

Each individual must continually expand their competence and capabilities to effectively work across differences.

- Enhance our individual and collective competence to collaborate across cultures and groups.
 - Educate employees about different cultures and groups and engage with them
 - Build skills for managing conflict, hearing other perspectives, solving cross-boundary issues
 - Enhance employee's collaboration skills through education

Expectations and accountability must be clearly defined early on in terms of the outcomes of inclusion and their interconnectedness to being socially responsible, both inside and outside the organization.

- Define organizational social responsibility (internally and externally)
 - Ensure definition is linked to inclusion

"Companies simply cannot afford to waste their people's contributions. They have a business imperative to value, respect and cultivate the skills, experience and perspective that each person brings to their work. I think that companies are often ahead of our communities in this area, and I believe that they have an important contribution to make in helping to create inclusive societies."

Fred Miller, Kaleel Jamison Consulting Group and co-founder, Institute for Inclusion.

- Be a leader in social responsibility

¹INCLUSIVE PRACTICES THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR ORGANIZATIONS

The more people understand the basis for decisions and the full context in which decisions are made, the more included they will feel.

- Foster transparency throughout the organization.
 - Allow members of the organization to give feedback on major decisions before they are made.
 - Communicate major decisions – and the reasoning behind them to members of the organization
 - Provide mechanisms by which members of the organization can ask questions and have them fully addressed

At the heart of inclusion is the need for people to work together effectively as teams **collaborating** within their department / division and across organizational units and/ or functions and silos.

- Promote teamwork.
 - Raise awareness about the business benefits of effective teamwork, diversity and inclusion
 - Create a culture of interdependence
 - Ensure that inclusive practices and skills are supported in teams
 - Recognize and reward teams for working together and behaving inclusively

An inclusive organization is one that supports a wide range of differences and enables people to bring their differences in meaningful and productive ways to solve organizational issues and goals.

- Create a diverse organization
 - Ensure a diverse applicant pool
 - Reflect the markets you serve, as well as society
 - Hire people based on skill; don't hire based on demographics.
 - Include diversity and inclusion skills in hiring decisions
 - Don't confuse inclusion with representation
 - Value the diversity of backgrounds, views, cultural lenses, and experiences of employees

An inclusive organization is a learning organization. Therefore individuals at all levels must be engaged in a process of continual learning and growth, both individually and collectively.

Foster continual learning and growth

Create space for authentic discussion

Learn from mistakes and successes

Share organizational learning with others

Experiment with different ways of operating; assess the benefits and costs; refine practices accordingly.

¹ The Institute for Inclusion Notes and Data on Inclusion - 2009