



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

Inclusive Leadership Guide (1/3):

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.

Commitment

Commitment: Commitment is a key trait that an Inclusive leader must possess to be successful. Without being committed to inclusion and diversity, organizations are bound to come up against significant barriers and challenges to compete in a globalized market. The most important reason to be committed, is that leaders were able to view inclusion and diversity as personally aligning with their own views.

How to action this trait:

- » **Remain committed to building an inclusive culture:** Due to the origin of the outbreak, Asian communities have been the target of increased racial aggression. Make support resources available for those impacted by discriminatory or aggressive behaviour. Leverage virtual meetings to reiterate anti-discrimination policies and address bias with the facts.
- » **Be visible:** Increase the frequency of your 1:1 check-ins with your team, particularly those that do not report directly to you. They don't need to be long, and 5-10 minutes works perfectly. This allows them to see, feel and hear that they have access to you. During those check-ins, ask if they need anything. They may not have the same access to equipment and resources. If this is something you can provide, it will set your team up to perform better.
- » **Be available:** Have a virtual coffee chat with someone who is outside of your network. Now is a great opportunity to connect with people, particularly people that you don't know (and that may be different in some way from you). These conversations are an opportunity to build relationships, learn about what drives your co-workers, and potentially provide much needed guidance.

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Cognizance

Cognizance (of bias): To be aware of one's own bias requires: A strong level of self-reflection, self-regulation and honesty; in addition to careful consideration of other factors such as "time pressures and fatigue". Cognizance of bias allows inclusive leaders to make decisions that are both in their own best interest and others.

How to action this trait:

- » **Do some self-examination:** We all have bias and knowing about your own biases is critically important for an inclusive leader. You can use a bias test, such as the Harvard Implicit Associate Test (<https://implicit.harvard.edu>) to help identify those biases and start to think of ways you can move those biases from the unconscious to the conscious.
- » **Seek feedback:** Each person has their own preferred way of communicating, and you can use feedback channels (i.e. internal social media & monitored mailboxes) to avoid missed opportunities and ensure policies are not unintentionally excluding any segment of your workforce. Seek feedback from individuals outside of your "in-group" (the people you are closest to), to obtain a new & unique perspective. Innovation and creativity come from looking for different perspectives.
- » **Be aware of difference:** Everyone will be reacting differently to the COVID-19 situation. Considering this: *We are not 'working from home' by choice; we are at home during a global crisis trying to work.* This global crisis has massive implications. People are experiencing the psychological effects of dealing with a crisis, and everyone will deal with it in their own way. This is normal and to be expected. Considering this, we all need to be gentle, considerate, generous, and forgiving with yourself and others.

Other things to consider

- » Screen time causes fatigue. In our 'normal' lives (pre-lockdown) we would not have been at our computers all day, every day for weeks on end. In an average day, we would usually have more in-person meetings and conversations, helping us to take a break from our screens more often. With all meetings now happening online, this has a different effect on our bodies. Here is some info and tips to reduce the strain: *How Does Screen Time Affect Your Brain, Anxiety & Overall Health?*
<https://www.mindbodygreen.com/articles/can-screen-time-cause-health-issues>
- » Living in the 24/7 information world, we can become overwhelmed by the negative tone of the information, and struggle with maintaining hope. This can cause fatigue as our bodies and minds are overwhelmed by the information. This article is useful for understanding why we might be feeling more fatigued than usual: *Feeling More Tired Than Usual During Lockdown? Psychologists Explain Why:*
https://www.sciencealert.com/feeling-tired-er-than-usual-even-though-you-re-doing-less-here-s-why?fbclid=IwAR0WpJStF_j3a20P5hv3M1U35AM30rf4d3FiwR5Sr8pBobSAFXR8gyNRI8k