

The Diversity Forum
WINS
Diversity is Strength

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(She/Her)

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Human Values: Key to Workplace Inclusion

By Donna Gallant

When we think about workplace values to support inclusion, a few that come to mind are the values of: integrity, respect and safety. While these are all important, the most important of all is often excluded. Can you think of what that might be?

For respect to truly be demonstrated, we must be able to discuss, share, and learn. We must assume the best of each other. Reciprocate. We must practice what I call 'Radical love'. Radical love for humanity.

For me, inclusion in the workplace begins with radical love. Radical love, with a generous dose of kindness, a pinch of courtesy and an equal amount of childlike curiosity will make the difference needed. I believe workplaces that embrace radical love will lead the revolution required to make things right in the world. While this may sound like a sixties throwback, radical love is absolutely necessary as we move into a better and more promising future.

"Inclusion in the workplace begins with radical love"

Radical love for humanity. If every act we pursue is out of love for humanity - how can we go wrong? I am talking about the kind of love that makes forgiveness possible- the kind of love where we are always looking for what's best for each other. Unselfish, unbiased love. The kind of love where we dare to ask questions of each other and to learn about each other - without judgment. This is not easy to do, we live in a society where we must walk a narrow line, always careful with language, always careful not to offend. Unfortunately, this kind of workplace leads way to subtle resistance that eventually turns to hostility. Rules and processes replace feelings. Workplaces become numb to authentic human interactions and caring. Rules and processes replace and therefore, define human interaction. However, if we choose to act with radical love, and if we choose to be the reason someone smiles in our workplaces, maybe we can be the difference the world needs.



"...if we choose to be the reason someone smiles in our workplaces, maybe we can be the difference the world needs..."



Donna Gallant (She/Her) CPHR, SHRM-SCP is the Human Resources, Payroll and Benefits Manager at Archdiocese of Halifax-Yarmouth

Showcasing Community Voices

“What are some of the basic human values that you associate with being inclusive and creating a psychologically safe environment for marginalized and racialized individuals? Please share your reason.”

Sydney Elaine Butler (They/Them), Neurodiversity Consultant at Accessible Creates

Some of the basic human values I associate include respect, empathy, and consideration. You have to have consideration in understanding that people have different lived experiences and realities than you do, and what might be true for you, might be very different for someone else. Listen and take into consideration what they tell you about their life and their experiences. You have to respect everyone’s truth and understand why you may not always agree with someone. You have to respect them and the decisions they make in order to make sure you are inclusive. Lastly, I associate empathy with being inclusive and creating this type of environment, because you have to be understanding of someone’s circumstance and be able to be aware and sensitive. This is because we all have different experiences and experience the world very differently. Being willing to be aware and sensitive to someone’s experience allows us to create a more inclusive environment.



Manpreet Dhillon (She/ Her), Principal Inclusion Officer at Veza Global

The basic human values that I associate are compassion, connectedness and continuous learning. When we see individuals as the human that they are, we can treat them in a way that involves them and considers what safety would mean for them. Compassion is important when remembering each person’s journey is different, and we may not understand what it took for them to arrive here. Connectedness reminds us that we are all more similar than we are different when we look for commonalities. Continuous learning is a great indicator of a growth mindset, allowing new perspectives to be considered and engaged.



Malvina Rapko (She/ Her), Founding Culture Officer at Cultural Bridges Inc.

For psychological safety to be effective, employers and employees need to believe the policies and trust the process. As humans, we know that we can trust when we feel trusted ourselves. Workplaces can create procedures and protocols that outline the shared beliefs amongst coworkers, however if an employee does not trust the validity of these written words turning into actions, then psychological safety will not have its desired effect. Unless you know that you are included and you have experienced proof that your ideas, suggestions, and questions are valued, you will not risk your position to speak up and to share. This holds true for most people, especially for those of us who are marginalized or racialized. It is everyone’s responsibility to bring authenticity, cultural humility, and compassion to the workplace. When we are honest with ourselves and our limitations, we are more likely to create compassionate and genuinely welcoming environments. We can do this by truly recognizing everyone as individuals. We all have our own backstories. When these values are brought into the workplace, a true sense of safety and security is created for individuals to contribute to the creation and action of a truly psychologically safe environment for all.



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Annie Singh (She/ Her), Senior Manager at Toronto Region Immigrant Council

Imagine stepping into a space where your voice matters; where ideas, questions, and even mistakes are met with openness rather than punishment. For marginalized and racialized individuals, this is the essence of psychological safety – an environment that not only values their unique perspectives, but encourages them to express thoughts, take risks, and seek feedback without fear of humiliation or rejection. Creating an inclusive and psychologically safe haven for marginalized and racialized individuals begins with empathy – putting ourselves in their shoes, understanding their experiences, and acknowledging their challenges. Respect is fundamental as it sets the tone for how individuals treat each other. When everyone is treated with respect, marginalized individuals are less likely to experience discrimination or microaggressions, leading to a safer and more inclusive atmosphere. Open-mindedness is the bedrock of inclusion as it encourages a willingness to consider different perspectives, ideas, and ways of thinking, and to learn from experiences different from ours. Embracing empathy, respect, and open-mindedness creates an environment where marginalized voices are not just heard but celebrated.



Luki Danukarjanto (He/Him), Chief Career Catalyst at FOCUS inspired

I would certainly incorporate empathy and compassion. Everyone is navigating their own challenges. Regardless of the racial background or any specific group we identify with, we all belong to the human race. If everyone is engaged in learning and practical exercises aimed at implementing empathy and compassion then inclusivity and psychological well-being would become customary.

Karolina Kural (She/ Her), DEI Manager at Kinaxis

For me DEI is all about humanity, compassion, curiosity and making the world a better place. It's a big part of my professional life as a DEI Manager and personal life: relationships with loved ones, raising a child and so on. I think one of the most important things to remember about creating a safe environment at work and outside of it, is that safe doesn't always mean comfortable. It means being able to have a dialogue, difficult conversations, being able to apologize. It's also focusing on making things better rather than believing that we are not at fault or part of the problem. Even if we are not, we can always do more. It's about being vulnerable and showing that you are human. It's about allowing others and ourselves to make mistakes and learning from them.



From the Newsstand

Insights from WINS' Living Fully with Disabilities Visible and Invisible Event

WINS' event at the City Hall on June 22nd, offered a captivating panel discussion and keynote speech that touched on crucial aspects of living with disabilities. The event delved into significant questions, providing enlightening solutions for employers and employees with disabilities.



Maria Shibaeva-Escarraga, *Strategic Consultant, Event Attendee interacting with Rayhan Azmat, Keynote Speaker & other attendees*

The event's emphasis on continuous effort for diversity and inclusion progress was particularly impactful. The panel discussion by Assad Mallick, Juan Olarte, and Dean Delpeache on proactive engagement, ongoing education, and cultivating an empathetic environment for people with disabilities resonated deeply. It was refreshing to witness a genuine commitment to change, backed by actionable strategies that empower individuals to contribute to a more inclusive society. The panelists shared practical strategies like proactive engagement, ongoing education, and fostering empathy, empowering attendees to contribute to a more inclusive society.

The keynote speech where Rayhan Azmat (VP Finance at Cineplex), related his journey, and the transformative role that was played by his employers and managers in empowering him on the road to success was powerful and moving. Rayhan's resilience and perseverance as a person living with a disability is truly inspiring.

In summary, the event offered a roadmap for change by exploring diverse disability perspectives, and providing actionable strategies. Attendees left with inspiration to actively participate in creating a more inclusive future for people with disabilities in their workplace. The event would not have been possible without the sponsorship by: HUB International, Canada Life, Kinaxis, Rockwell Automation, Weichert, and TMX.

View Keynote Speech on  YouTube <https://youtu.be/re3CMNzEwj0>



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