Creating Equitable and Inclusive Workplaces

The purpose of this practice brief is to (1) introduce our approach to equitable and inclusive workplaces; (2) examine some key strategies for creating equitable and inclusive workplaces; and (3) make connections between equitable workplace creation and community well-being. EDs/CEOs, managers, frontline staff, consultants, volunteers and community residents can use this practice brief in order to implement some of the key commitments in the D&I Charter of Peel.

INTRODUCING THE ISSUE

Workplaces are microcosms of society; attitudes, values, beliefs and behaviour of individual employees (conscious or unconscious) have a profound impact on the policies, practices, leadership styles and underlying assumptions that shape organizational culture. Whether the space is static, mobile, collaborative, or virtual, creating an equitable and inclusive workplace – where the principles of respect, safety, accessibility, and equality of opportunity apply to the overarching structure and everyday functioning of an organization - is essential to fostering individual wellbeing and community prosperity.

As defined by the D&I Charter Initiative, equitable & inclusive workplaces are defined as SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENTS with structures and systems that ACCEPT PEOPLE for who they are and the uniqueness they bring, that ACCOMMODATE DIVERSE NEEDS and that allow people to PERFORM AT THEIR BEST.

In the context of changing population demographics and the growth of the labour market (PDC 2011-2015), the creation of equitable and inclusive organizational infrastructure is key to cultivating a more motivated and innovative workforce, and ensuring the building of sustainable communities.

‘HOW TO’: TIPS AND SUGGESTIONS

There are a number of key strategies that can be employed by everyone in order to begin the creation of equitable and inclusive workplaces:

- **Reflect on your assumptions, attitudes and behaviour:** Being aware of your biases and taking action to manage them will positively impact your relationships with others at work.
- **Seek out training opportunities:** All employees can benefit from increased knowledge/skill-building around diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) in the workplace.
- **Create a safe environment:** Being respectful of others (in the design of spaces, in the use of language, in relationship-building) will nurture an environment of psychological safety.
- **Get involved in organizational policy development:** A transparent and participatory policy development process that values employee input is essential to changing/improving organizational culture.
- **Be adaptable to change/ new approaches:** Inclusivity and equity in the workplace hinge on the ability and willingness to change behaviour, practices, policies – and value those changes.
- **Start a resource group/form a committee:** DEI committees and employee resource groups are proactive ways of supporting colleagues and moving the work forward.
- **Have conversations with your team/colleagues:** Creating space to ensure/reinforce equitable and inclusive behaviour will encourage greater participation and equitable collaboration.
- **Be an active listener:** Listening to others with an open mind and remembering that ‘everyone belongs’ will help in understanding different points of view.

RESOURCES & MORE INFORMATION

- PowerPoint – Creating Equitable and Inclusive Workplaces
- Webinar – Creating Equitable and Inclusive Workplaces
- D&I Charter Practice Brief 1.2 – Supporting Inclusive Leaders and Change Champions

MAKING CONNECTIONS: EQUITABLE WORKPLACE CREATION AND HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

When you commit to creating equitable and inclusive workplaces, you are:

- Starting to ‘live’ the commitments in the Charter!
- Improving people’s quality of life by making them feel valued and respected at work.
- Creating an opportunity to reflect on the impact of attitude and behaviour change both within and outside the workplace.
- Contributing to a more vibrant, productive, engaged and connected community.

WHICH CHARTER COMMITMENTS AM I IMPLEMENTING?

- Ensuring equitable and inclusive behaviours, practices, policies with regular review.
- Supporting inclusive leaders and change champions.
- Dedicating resources, including people, time, and/or money to equity and inclusion.
- Building transparent and accountable relationships and systems.
- Recognizing individuals and organizations implementing best practices in equity and inclusion.