

Your Employee Assistance Program is a support service that can help you take the first step toward change.

Supporting Diversity as a Manager: Your attitude toward diversity

Today's workforce is more diverse than ever, and colleagues may be a mix of ages, races, religions, and sexual orientations. Your team may also have different lifestyles, work styles, physical and cognative abilities, levels of education, and ways of seeing the world. Your success as a manager depends on your ability to promote a work environment that is inclusive of every person you manage; discourages racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination; and that allows every employee the opportunity to reach their full potential.

➤ **This is the first in a three-part series on supporting diversity as a manager.**

Your attitude toward diversity

To successfully manage a diverse group of people, you must first examine your own behaviour with regard to people from different backgrounds, values, and talents. Here are some questions you might ask yourself:

- Do I spend time getting to know every individual I manage?
- Am I aware of the ways in which the team I manage is diverse?
- Do I recognize and respect people's different talents, abilities, and skills?
- Do I give positive feedback to all the employees I manage when it is deserved?
- Do I give constructive feedback to all the employees I manage when it is deserved?
- Do I ask everyone on my staff what types of developmental opportunities they would be interested in, or do I make assumptions about their interests? For example, do I assume that a woman with a young child wouldn't want a developmental assignment that would result in working longer hours, rather than asking her if she is interested?
- Do I provide everyone on my staff with opportunities for development and advancement? Am I equitable when choosing people for development assignments, special projects, training, and conference participation?
- Do group activities and social events encourage participation by all employees in my group, or do some employees feel a bit shut out because of different life circumstances such as childcare or eldercare responsibilities?
- Do all my employees feel free to share ideas at meetings?

If you answered “no” to any of the above, it may be helpful to reflect on how you can be more inclusive as a manager and as a work team.

Why it matters

Most of us don't think of ourselves as being racist, sexist, homophobic, ageist, biased, or prejudiced. We don't think we make assumptions about what people are interested in based on demographic

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characteristics. However, research shows that employees from racial, ethnic, and other minority groups continue to face negative stereotypes, assumptions, and biases in the workplace. Helping employees defeat negative stereotypes is part of your job as a manager.

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