



# ReachOut e-Diversity News

An Electronic Publication of the Ohio Developmental Disabilities Council

## This Month: CREATING AN INCLUSIVE CULTURE

1. Inclusion Starts at the Top!
2. Hidden Bias Exists
3. Are You Listening?
4. Personal Commitment

December 2017 Edition | Volume 11, Issue 6

Read, Pass on to Friends,  
Family Members, Colleagues  
& Constituents



Don't  
Miss an  
Issue!

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## CREATING AN INCLUSIVE CULTURE

This month's ReachOut e-Diversity News Focuses on inclusion. As Mahatma Gandhi was believed to have said, "No culture can live if it attempts to be exclusive." Exclusivity breeds exclusion, while inclusion fosters belonging and connection. Research indicates that people want to feel included, heard, and valued. They will go above and beyond if the essential need of belonging is met. Learn more in this month's ReachOut e-Diversity News!

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## Inclusion Starts at the Top!

Organizational leaders play an important role in setting the tone for the shift towards an inclusive organizational culture. According to CultureFactors Inclusive Whitepaper, inclusive leadership encompasses five main aspects of a leader's approach to working with others in the organization. These five facets of inclusive leadership are interrelated, and often lead to one another depending on the environment.

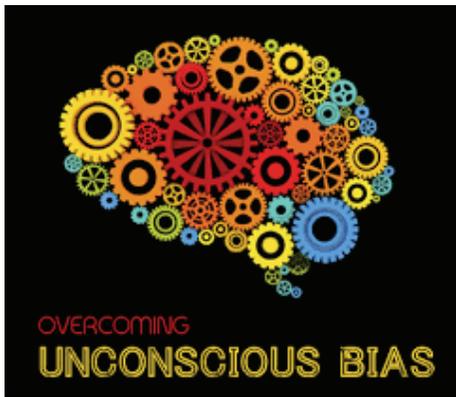
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## Did You Know?

**An inclusive culture... 6x more likely to be innovative....6x more likely to anticipate change and respond effectively.**

## Hidden Bias Exists



**We all carry unconscious biases.** That is, we hold assumptions about social groups that, without our awareness or conscious control, shape our likes and dislikes and our judgments about people's abilities, potential, and character. (Banaji, M. R., & Greenwald, A. G., 2013).

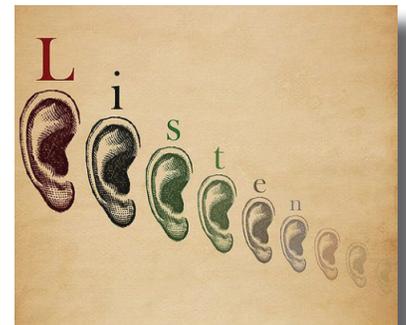
The human brain is hard-wired to make decisions rapidly, drawing upon our assumptions and experiences without our awareness. In evolutionary times, humans needed to make instantaneous judgments--about who and what was safe, favorable, and valuable – as a matter of survival.

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## Are You Listening?

If there is one communication skill you should aim to master, then listening is it. Listening is key to all effective communication. Without the ability to listen effectively, messages are easily misunderstood. As a result, communication breaks down and the sender of the message can easily become frustrated or irritated.

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## Personal Commitment

**iNCLUSION  
STARTS  
WITH** 

Ensuring inclusion takes personal commitment but where do you start? Treating people right, personal competence, improved communication skills, understanding, support for new ideas are only a few ways to improve iNCLUSION. Also there is a need to understand the diversity elements you personally bring to your organization. These suggestions will help!

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The purpose of "Reach Out" e-Diversity newsletter is to promote interagency collaboration and coordination that result in agencies providing culturally competent services to the unserved/underserved populations in Ohio



Reach Out e-Diversity News is produced by The Outcomes Management Group, Ltd.

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## CREATING AN INCLUSIVE CULTURE

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While having an organizational culture that values diversity is necessary, it is not sufficient. Focusing on diversity has directed attention to recognizing, appreciating and valuing differences.

As such, organizations have focused on ensuring there is diversity in the workforce

and on their boards. Many believed that increasing diversity in the organization would result in increased engagement, productivity, satisfaction, and innovation. While there has been success in increasing diversity, the expected benefits have not always materialized. Having a diverse board and workforce is not enough. In addition to increasing diversity, it is necessary to focus on creating processes that integrate, manage, and nurture the diversity so that the desired benefits can be obtained. This process is inclusion.

As Mahatma Gandhi was believed to have said, "No culture can live if it attempts to be exclusive." Exclusivity breeds exclusion, while inclusion fosters belonging and connection. Research indicates that people want to feel included, heard, and valued. They will go above and beyond if the essential need of belonging is met. If inclusion is not present, diversity may be achievable, but not sustainable. So what drives an inclusive culture? This newsletter focuses on 4 key drivers:

- Leadership actions
- Increasing awareness of implicit biases
- Listening to understand
- Taking personal ownership

In each article, you are called to take action, recognizing that each action you take will create a more inclusive organizational culture.



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## Inclusion Starts at the Top!

Organizational leaders play an important role in setting the tone for the shift towards an inclusive organizational culture. According to CultureFactors Inclusive Whitepaper, inclusive leadership encompasses five main aspects of a leader’s approach to working with others in the organization. Inclusive leaders are Supportive, Equitable, Entrusting, Encouraging, and Enabling. These five facets of inclusive leadership are interrelated, and often lead to one another depending on the environment. In other words, all facets must be present to some extent, but may vary in degree for different situations.

For additional information on Inclusive Leadership visit [www.culturefactors.com](http://www.culturefactors.com)



The tables below provides examples of the “do’s and don’ts” for each facet of inclusive leadership.

### Supportive

#### Do

- Advocate for others’ needs
- Back others’ ideas and opinions
- Share information
- Sees others as important to the group
- Consider the best interests of others when making important decisions
- Make others feel valued and appreciated

#### Don’t

- Talk bad about others behind their back
- Hoard information
- Prioritize their own needs and interests above that of others
- See themselves as the most important member of the group

### Equitable

#### Do

- Treat others fairly
- Respect others
- Ensure employees are respecting each other
- Consider impact of decisions on equity perceptions

#### Don’t

- Play favorites
- Allow bias to influence decisions
- Fail to address perceptions of inequity



## Entrusting

### Do

- Consult with and involve others when making major decisions
- Delegate decision making authority where appropriate
- Allow others to determine work processes

### Don't

- Make important decisions all on their own
- Make all decisions (large and small)
- Doubt or second-guess decisions delegated to others



## Encouraging

### Do

- Solicit opinions from others
- Seek out others' perspectives
- Provide opportunities for others to speak up
- Wait for others to voice their opinions

### Don't

- Create an environment where others are unwilling to share their ideas & perspectives
- Dismiss or downplay suggestions from others

## Enabling

### Do

- Understand how others can contribute
- Create opportunities to maximize those contributions
- Meet privately with others to ensure their ideas are considered

### Don't

- Allow obstacles to hinder others' potential contributions
- Foster an environment where differences of opinion are not valued
- Fail to consider non-traditional ways for others to contribute



- Select one facet
- Implement 1 DO for a week and make note of its impact
- Identify when you engage in a DON'T make note of its impact
- Share your discoveries with ODDC on one of its social media platforms



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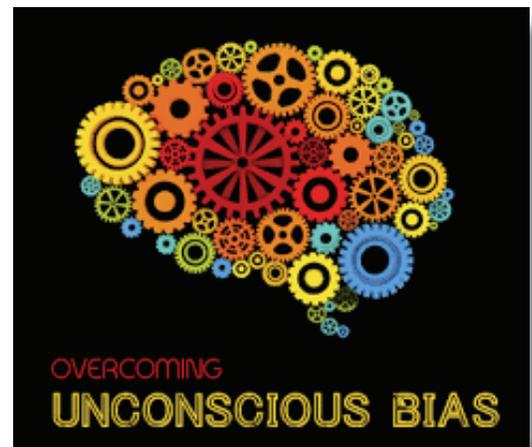
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## Hidden Bias Exists

**A father and his son are in a car accident. The father dies at the scene and the son, badly injured, is rushed to the hospital. In the operating room, the surgeon refuses to operate, saying, "I can't operate on this boy. He is my son."**

This well-known brain teaser has puzzled readers for decades. Studies have shown that as many as 75 percent of people cannot solve it, and those who do figure it out take several minutes to grasp that the boy's mother could be the surgeon. (Reynolds D.J, Garnham A., & Oakhill, J., 2006) One of the most important things we can do to promote an inclusive culture is to correct for the unconscious biases that we all have. Despite having good intentions, when we hear the words "surgeon" or "CEO," the image that pops into our minds is often male. Similarly, when we hear the words "nurse" or "administrative assistant," a female might quickly come to mind. These are implicit, automatic associations. They happen outside of our awareness, and they often happen in direct contrast to our consciously held, explicit beliefs.



**We all carry unconscious biases.** That is, we hold assumptions about social groups that, without our awareness or conscious control, shape our likes and dislikes and our judgments about people's abilities, potential, and character. (Banaji, M. R., & Greenwald, A. G., 2013).

The human brain is hard-wired to make decisions rapidly, drawing upon our assumptions and experiences without our awareness. In evolutionary times, humans needed to make instantaneous judgments--about who and what was safe, favorable, and valuable – as a matter of survival. Indeed, a quick determination of whether or not a person was in one's "in group" could be lifesaving. This implicit, hidden processing remains incredibly useful today. We are constantly bombarded by massive amounts of information through all of our senses. Our hidden, automatic associations enable us

to manage all of this information efficiently but not always effectively. Completely unbeknownst to our conscious brain, we are constantly making lightning- fast generalizations about the people, places, and things we encounter. These generalizations are useful much of the time, but they often miss very important distinctions.

**We have biased brains.** Race, gender, and age are some of the categories that come to mind when we think about biases.



However, people carry unconscious biases, both positive and negative, about a myriad of characteristics that can be much more subtle. For example, we hold stereotypes based on height and weight, marital or parental status, foreign or regional accents, country or region of origin, introversion or extroversion, just to name a few. It can be harder to recognize the differential treatment that might occur based on these subtler biases. For example: Does the single mother seem unreliable? Does a person's accent make you think they will be difficult to work with? Does a man seem more capable of providing security in the workplace? At every point of contact, unconscious biases can lead people to make decisions and act in ways that inadvertently undermine an organization's goal of creating a diverse and inclusive work environment.

Additionally, we might unwittingly send subtle messages to the people around us through our body language, word choice, and behavior. The following are examples.



- An employee jokingly asks a male and female co-worker who share an office: "Who does the dishes?"
- A male co-worker expresses surprise at a female co-worker's skill at a "typically male task"
- A third generation Asian American is complimented for his perfect English

Such communications can diminish engagement and undermine relationships.

**Hidden bias is universal.** It does not make us bad people. Once we come to this understanding, we are in a better, more comfortable position to talk about our bias, recognize its harmful (albeit unintended) effects, and accept the challenge to work on counteracting the biases that we all have.



If you haven't taken the Harvard Implicit Association Test (IAT), take it and get a better understanding of your attitudes.  
<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/faqs.html>



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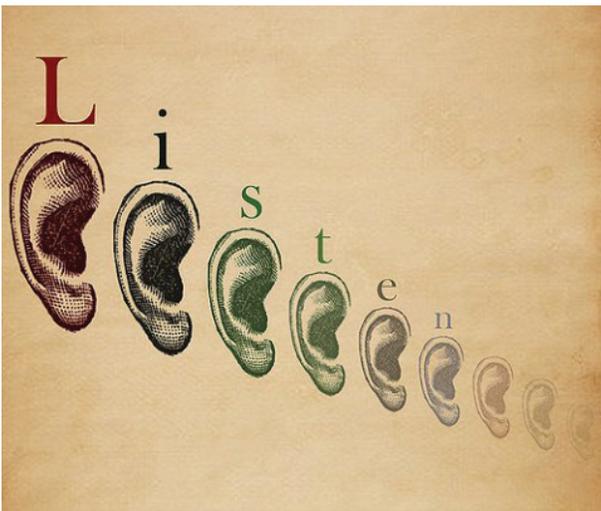
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## Are You Listening?

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### Hearing Vs Listening

**Hearing** refers to the sounds that enter your ears. It is a physical process that, provided you do not have any hearing problems, happens automatically.

**Listening** is the ability to accurately receive and interpret messages in the communication process.

### 10 Principles of Effective Listening

#### 1. Stop Talking

**Don't talk, listen.** When somebody else is talking listen to what they are saying, do not interrupt, talk over them or finish their sentences for them. **Stop, just listen.** When the other person has finished talking you may need to clarify to ensure you have received their message accurately.

#### 2. Prepare Yourself to Listen

**Relax. Focus on the speaker. Put other things out of mind.** The human mind is easily distracted by other thoughts – what's for lunch, what time do I need to leave to catch my train, is it going to rain – try to put other thoughts out of mind and concentrate on the messages that are being communicated.

#### 3. Put the Speaker at Ease

**Help the speaker to feel free to speak.** Remember their needs and concerns. Nod or use other gestures or words to encourage them to continue. Maintain eye contact but don't stare – show you are listening and understanding what is being said.

#### 4. Remove Distractions

**Focus on what is being said.** Don't doodle, shuffle papers, look out the window, pick your fingernails or similar. Avoid unnecessary interruptions. These behaviors disrupt the listening process and send messages to the speaker that you are bored or distracted.

#### 5. Empathize

**Try to understand the other person's point of view.** Look at issues from their perspective. Let go of preconceived ideas. By having an open mind we can more fully empathize with the speaker. If the speaker says something that you disagree with then wait and construct an argument to counter what is said but keep an open mind to the views and opinions of others.

The word  
LISTEN  
contains  
the same letters  
as the word  
SILENT.

— Alfred Brendel

## 6. Be Patient

**A pause, even a long pause, does not necessarily mean that the speaker has finished.** Be patient and let the speaker continue in their own time, sometimes it takes time to formulate what to say and how to say it. Never interrupt or finish a sentence for someone.

## 7. Avoid Personal Prejudice

**Try to be impartial.** Don't become irritated and don't let the person's habits or mannerisms distract you from what the speaker is really saying.

Everybody has a different way of speaking - some people are for example more nervous or shy than others, some have regional accents or make excessive arm movements, some people like to pace whilst talking - others like to sit still.

Focus on what is being said and try to ignore styles of delivery.

## 8. Listen to the Tone

**Volume and tone both add to what someone is saying.** A good speaker will use both volume and tone to their advantage to keep an audience attentive; everybody will use pitch, tone and volume of voice in certain situations – let these help you to understand the emphasis of what is being said.

## 9. Listen for Ideas – Not Just Words

**You need to get the whole picture, not just isolated bits and pieces.** Maybe one of the most difficult aspects of listening is the ability to link together pieces of information to reveal the ideas of others. With proper concentration, letting go of distractions, and focus this becomes easier.

## 10. Wait and Watch for Non-Verbal Communication

**Gestures, facial expressions, and eye-movements can all be important.** We don't just listen with our ears but also with our eyes – watch and pick up the additional information being transmitted via non-verbal communication.



Read more at: <https://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/listening-principles.html>

### Did You Know?

**“The most basic and powerful way to connect to another person is to listen. Just listen. Perhaps the most important thing we ever give each other is our attention.” Rachel Naomi Remen**



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## Personal Commitment

**i Become culturally competent.** Take the time to learn about different cultures, races, religions and backgrounds represented by your colleagues. Ask your coworkers to share some of the customs and practices associated with their cultures. Become familiar with diversity-related terms and, if you err, apologize and ask for help.

**i Treat people in a way they wish to be treated rather than the way you wish to be treated.** Common social activities and practices that are comfortable for you may not be comfortable for everyone. Do not tell offensive jokes that may alienate those who are different from you — even if they are not present at the time.

**i Be a spokesperson for diversity issues that are not necessarily your own.** Any organization will find it difficult to ignore the powerful voice created when groups representing different diversity dimensions unite.

**i Welcome ideas that are different from your own, and support fellow teammates.** The creativity that comes with diversity can help you generate new ideas or improve a process already in place. It can also make work more interesting, engaging, and fun.

**i Understand the diversity elements you personally bring to the organization.** Diversity comes not only in the form of culture, race, and gender but also includes elements such as socio-economic background, education level, geographic location, sexual orientation, thought, and many others. Each of us brings to the table a lifetime of experiences and knowledge. Each of us is different and adds value to the organization because of these differences.

**i Commit to continuous improvement.** Be willing to learn, accept feedback, and listen to the concerns of those around you. Even the most enlightened individual can find opportunities for growth.

**i Communicate and educate.** Diversity work is a journey, not a destination. It takes time, patience, and perseverance. Be tolerant of coworkers who do not yet appreciate the value of diversity or who may not always behave respectfully. Often, negative behavior comes from ignorance rather than malice. A willingness to educate can go a long way.



Identify one action that you will commit to take that will help make your organization more inclusive. Share your commitment with ODDC on one of its social media platforms.



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