

DEIBA in an Evolving Environment

Leading with Equity, Inclusion
& Intentionality

WORKING AGREEMENTS | GROUP NORMS



Section I:



Reflection Scenario: Two Moments, One Unsettled Feeling

The Scenario

Moment 1

You overhear a staff member say:

"I don't get the whole DEI thing. We get it — respect people, all that stuff. It's just overdone. And we only talk about it during trainings, so it just feels performative."

Moment 2

Later that day, in a team meeting, a colleague misgenders a non-binary team member.

You catch it. You correct it. But the interaction lingers — and you're left with an unsettled feeling you can't quite shake.

Pause & Reflect:

Two separate encounters — one a comment, one an action. Both "small". Both significant. What do they tell us about the culture we've built, and the culture we still need to build?



Reflection Questions for Discussion



1 What are your primary concerns as a leader after these two moments? Which feels more urgent to address — and/or why might both matter equally?

2 What biases are visible in each scenario? Consider implicit bias, affinity bias, and the bias of dismissal. What do they signal about organizational culture?

3 Would you call out these behaviors in the moment? How? What language would you use — and what would you do if the person became defensive?

4 What systemic opportunities exist to make equity and inclusion more meaningful and less performative — beyond annual trainings?



Naming the Moments in the Room

Moment 1 — The Comment

- **Dismissal** — minimizing DEIB as common sense that doesn't need ongoing attention
- **Training fatigue** — assuming one-time exposure equals internalized change
- **Implicit norm enforcement** — framing equity work as 'extra' rather than integral
- **Privilege oversight** — discomfort with recognizing systemic inequity as real and ongoing

Moment 2 — The Misgendering

- **Misgendering** — a failure to see, respect and value, a colleague's identity
- **Bystander effect** — others in the room who may have stayed silent
- **Correction vs. culture** — fixing the moment vs. addressing the pattern
- **Emotional labor** — non-binary colleague absorbs the discomfort others cause

Section II

DEIB Is Not a Checkbox: How Leaders Weave Equity Into Culture

Weaving Equity Into Every Leadership Practice

Meetings

Supervision

Appraisals

Onboarding

Metrics

Equity is not an add-on agenda item — it is the lens through which leaders design every interaction, evaluate every process, and hold every conversation. The following practices embed equity into the rhythms of organizational life.

See It

Build awareness into routine practice — notice patterns, name disparities, ask equity-focused questions proactively.



Name It

Use direct language: bias, barrier, inequity, exclusion. Naming is not shaming — it is the first step toward change.



Change It

Act with intention. Adjust practices, policies, and behaviors. Track outcomes, not just intentions.



Equity in Meetings

- **Open space intentionally:** Start meetings with a brief equity lens check-in — *Consider group norms or working agreements*
- **Rotate facilitation** to share power and develop diverse voices across the team
- **Name dynamics in real time:** 'I want to make sure we hear from everyone before we move on'
- **Revisit decisions with an equity filter:** 'Who is most affected by this decision who isn't in the room?'
- **Acknowledge and address inequitable patterns** — who speaks, who is interrupted, whose ideas are credited
- **Build in structured reflection at the close:** 'What did we do well? What would equity require us to do differently next time?'



Supervision as an Equity Practice

For staff and direct service workers, supervision is one of the most powerful spaces for equity-centered practice. Here are some weekly check-in prompts that weave in an equity centered mindset:

Noticing bias in the field:

"Did anything in your visit this week make you stop and question your own assumptions about this family or individual?"

Examining long-term cases:

"For service recipients we've known for some time — are we making natural role assumptions? What barriers have emerged that we haven't named yet?"

Addressing new recipients:

"What do we know — and what are we projecting — about this person's situation? What lens are we bringing in?"

Removing barriers:

"What barriers to equitable access are present? What steps have we taken? What still needs to change?"



Appraisals & Onboarding with an Equity Lens

Performance Appraisals

- **Include equity competencies as explicit evaluation criteria** — Ask: 'How have you created an inclusive environment for colleagues and clients this year? How do you know?'
- **Examine performance patterns by identity group** — are certain employees consistently rated lower? or higher? Investigate why
- **Discuss growth in equity practice** as a leadership expectation, not a bonus quality
- **Co-create equity-centered goals** with each staff member annually

Onboarding

- **Introduce DEIB values explicitly** — not as a checklist, but as a living organizational commitment
- **Share stories of equity in action** from real team experiences
- **Set expectations clearly**: we name bias, we correct mistakes, we learn together
- **Create a psychological safety** agreement and workplace agreements. Incorporate them often to ground interactions.

Meaningful Metrics: Measuring What Matters

- Track not just representation, but retention, promotion, and leadership advancement by identity group
- Measure staff experience: belonging surveys, psychological safety assessments, and equity climate checks
- Review client outcome data through an equity lens — are some populations receiving inequitable services?
- Set specific, time-bound equity goals and report on them at all-staff levels — not just to leadership
- Celebrate progress and name gaps with equal transparency. Numbers without narrative miss the point.
- Ask staff: *'What data would help you see whether equity is imbedded here?' — co-create the metrics*



Section III

Equity in Action:

Call It Out in the Moment

Calling In vs. Calling Out: A Model for Leaders

Returning to our scenario — the misgendering — how does the supervisor act as a model in that moment?

1

Name it simply & directly

"I want to pause for a moment — [Name] uses they/them pronouns. Let's make sure we're using them correctly." — (3 C's) –Catch, Correct and continue.

2

Model repair, not shame

"We all make mistakes with pronouns, especially when we're new to using them. What matters is that we correct and keep going. Thank you."

3

Follow up privately

Check in with the non-binary team member: 'I wanted to follow up about what happened in the meeting. How are you doing? What do you need from me?' Honor their experience.

4

Create a learning moment for the team

In a future team meeting: 'I want to revisit how we use gender-affirming language as a team standard — not because someone made a mistake, but because it matters.'



Name the Shifts Openly: Navigating a Changing Landscape

- **Acknowledge the external environment directly:** 'DEIB is under scrutiny nationally. I want to tell you where we stand as an organization.'
- **Anchor to mission, not politics:** 'Our values haven't changed. The way we talk about them may need to evolve, but the commitment is firm.'
- **Be transparent about funding pressures and any required pivots** — silence breeds distrust and speculation. Be open and honest. Change opens doors to innovation.
- **Invite dialogue:** 'How are you feeling about these shifts? What concerns do you have? What do you need from leadership?'
- **Distinguish between language changes and value changes** — staff deserve to know the difference
- **Create a standing 'equity conversation':** Consider monthly 20-minute team reflection- What's working? What are we noticing? What do we need to discuss?



Supervisor Facilitation Prompts: Monthly Equity Conversations

Noticing Practice: "What did you observe this month — in our team, with clients, or in yourself — that felt connected to equity, bias, or inclusion?"

Culture Check: "On a scale of 1–10, how psychologically safe does our team feel right now? What would move us one point higher?"

Barrier Audit: "What barriers to equitable participation or service are you seeing? What's within our power to remove? What requires a larger conversation?"

Growth Edge: "Where did you grow in your equity practice this month? Where did you get stuck — and what do you need to move forward?"



DEIB is not a destination — it is a daily practice.

Key Commitments:

- Name it. See it. Change it.
- Embed equity into every leadership rhythm.
- Call in with curiosity, not condemnation.
- Be transparent. Be accountable. Keep going.

ANY QUESTIONS OR FINAL THOUGHTS

ANY
QUESTIONS?



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