



empathy

The Secret Sauce in
Effective Diversity, Equity
and Inclusion

Facilitator:

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land acknowledgement



agenda

- What is empathy?
- Why is empathy important in effective DEI?
- How can modelling empathy support collaboration, connection, and understanding?
- Why is exercising self-compassion important?
- BONUS: My recipe for empathetic DEI

the facilitator

Christina is the Principal Consultant and Owner of Boldly Inclusive, a consulting, training, and coaching firm specializing in diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). Boldly Inclusive works with its clients to embed inclusion into strategic and operational planning, the design and development of programs and services, and capacity-building training in organizations. Prior to her work at Boldly Inclusive, Christina developed a strong skillset as a facilitator, delivering train-the-trainer workshops, facilitation training and coaching. To date, she has facilitated workshops for nearly 100 organizations in urban, rural and remote nationwide. In addition, Christina is a writer, and speaker, a regular contributor to The Leadership Leap Radio Show.

Before Boldly Inclusive, Christina held the role of Diversity & Community Engagement Lead at Peel Children's Aid Society. She also held capacity building roles at Peel Leadership Centre, where she supported skills development for leaders in Peel Region's non-profit sector, and at Prosper Canada (formerly SEDI's Canadian Centre for Financial Literacy) where in addition to training, she managed the development of innovative learning solutions designed for people living on low incomes -- in particular newcomers, Indigenous community members, youth and families receiving shelter services.

Christina earned her MBA from the Schulich School of Business at York University, with specializations in Organizational Behaviour and Marketing. She also has a Master of Arts in Education from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto, with a focus on Critical Integrated Anti-Racism Education. Christina is a Canadian Certified Inclusion Professional.



what is
empathy?

empathy ([Wiseman, 1996](#))



PERSPECTIVE-
TAKING



STAYING OUT OF
JUDGMENT



RECOGNIZING THE
EMOTION



COMMUNICATION



COGNITIVE EMPATHY



EMOTIONAL EMPATHY



COMPASSIONATE EMPATHY

empathy

([Goleman ref. Ekman, 2007](#))

Takeaway #1

It is not enough to be a cognitive or emotional empath; you need to be moved to action if we're going to move the dial on inclusion. This requires us to embrace Goleman and Ekman's compassionate empathy, and Wiseman's four attributes as starting points to do this well.

why is empathy
important?



how can empathy drive dei?

1. Client and/or member experiences
 - Relevant and meaningful supports and services
 - Recognizing multiple and intersecting barriers
 - Our clients may be receiving supports due to systemic bias and oppression
2. DEI-related change management
3. DEI capacity building
4. Partnership development and collaboration

Takeaway #2

To unlock the full power of empathy when doing DEI work, we must not only consider how empathy shapes one-to-one interactions, but also how it helps move organizations forward by securing buy-in, supporting capacity building, and fostering collaboration.

can modelling
empathy drive dei
implementation?



case scenario #1

- Issue: An organization is facing resistance from staff to DEI efforts
- Context: DEI is being introduced to the organization, and despite first steps, the staff is not implementing the tools they had been given
- Through one-to-one dialogues, we heard their stories, and our team gained insight into the root cause of their perceived resistance:
 - a. Not feeling sufficiently prepared to implement change -- Fear
 - b. Feeling left behind with new changes -- Feeling Excluded
- An approach rooted in empathy showed us that what we thought was resistance, were challenges re: readiness and engagement
- Solution: This led to an exercise of co-creation of the DEI strategy incl. staff inputs



case scenario #2

- Issue: An organization wants to grow its DEI
- Context: DEI had historically been embedded in the organization's work. With the potential for greater impact and with growing diversity in the organization, internal stakeholders had struggled to agree on priorities and direction.
- During focus groups, our team learned:
 - a. There were differences in understanding of DEI by location (urban/rural/remote)
 - b. There were generational differences re: accountability
 - c. There was a feeling of invisibility among some staff -- Intersectionality
- Solution: Through facilitated dialogues we were able to build empathy, which resulted in greater understanding, connection and consensus on the way forward

Takeaway #3

Modelling empathy not only fosters emotional and psychological safety when having courageous conversations, but it demonstrates the many ways in which an empathetic approach can bring people in and ensure they feel a sense of value and belonging.

why is self-
compassion
important?

exercising self-compassion



MINDFULNESS



CRITICAL SELF-REFLECTION



DECENTRING

Takeaway #4

**You have to be compassionate to yourself in order to show
compassionate empathy for others.**



Source: The Great British Bake-Off

my recipe for empathetic dei



step 1: set your intention

- Empathy means committing to doing the hard work of change and accountability. It is not enough to be a cognitive or emotional empath; you need to be moved to action to exercise true compassion.
- Recognize that we are all starting from different places in our journey and be willing to bring others along.
- Create safety!



step 2: embed in practice

- Recognize that not all dimensions of diversity are visible. It is kind not to make assumptions; instead, see people as whole and complex and deserving of dignity.
- Practice non-judgment. Do not place your values on others; instead, respect people's lived experiences, preferences and ways of relating to the world.
- Promote dialogue instead of silence. Curiosity is the intersection between empathy and inclusion.
- Do not practice inclusion on others. It is not the responsibility of the powerless to teach those in power.
- Consider who is not in the room. You cannot dialogue with people who are not being included or engaged.



step 3: bring your best self

- You are a person too, so know that on this journey you will make mistakes. Commit to acknowledging them and growing from them.
- Show yourself kindness.

when you get your
recipe right...



Thoughts,
reflections,
questions?



Thank you!

For more information,
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