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

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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