



**SHARING YOUR  
DIVERSITY STORY**

# SHARING YOUR DIVERSITY STORY

We all play a role in building belonging at work. One of the best ways to make the case for why belonging matters is through the art of diversity storytelling. By sharing our personal stories, we can more effectively talk about our shared commitment to building healthier organizational cultures that celebrate our diversity, work to include the perspectives of our colleagues, and equitably give our employees what they need so they can do their best work.

When it comes to championing our workplace's diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) commitments, our voice is our diversity story. Getting clear on our story and sharing it with others will inspire our colleagues to realize their own connection to this work, and when they share their own stories, it helps in establishing safety and trust, the foundation for building belonging at work.

## OUR VOICE IS OUR DIVERSITY STORY.

But how do we go about sharing our stories? This resource is a tool to help you get started. It offers prompts to begin developing, refining, and gaining the necessary confidence you will need to share your story with the world.





# PERSONAL REFLECTION QUESTIONS

## **Where Are You From?**

Answering this question will help you get started in developing your diversity story. Begin by reflecting on your family. Write down a few things you learned about your own culture and traditions. Then write down a few things you learned from your family about people and communities that were different from your own. When you think about where you grew up, what additional social cues did you learn from your family about how to interact with people and communities that differed from your own?



# PERSONAL REFLECTION QUESTIONS

## **When Did You Feel Different?**

Now, reflect on a time when you felt different from other people or communities. What social signals did you pick up that communicated you were different from the others? What was helpful in overcoming this feeling? Were there people in your life who helped you overcome the feeling of being excluded and disconnected? How have you helped other people who have felt similar feelings?




# PERSONAL REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

## **Why Does Belonging Matter to You?**

Name a time when you knew that you belonged. What environmental factors contributed to this feeling? Were there people around? If so, who was there? What did they say that helped you feel a greater sense of belonging?

If you were to describe this feeling in one word, what word would you choose? When you think about your job, do you consistently experience this feeling on a daily basis? If not, how might your work be impacted if you did? What's at stake if you lack this feeling at work? What's the cost to you? To your colleagues? To your organization?



# ORGANIZATIONAL REFLECTION QUESTIONS

## **What is Your Organization's Origin Story?**


How did you begin learning about your organization's diversity, equity, and inclusion workplace commitments, and what was the impact? For example, you can state, "I began my learning about our organization's DEI commitments by showing up and listening - first and foremost – at a monthly disability employee resource group meeting. It really opened my eyes to some of our company's unseen accessibility barriers."



# ORGANIZATIONAL REFLECTION QUESTIONS

## **Why Does Belonging Matter to Your Organization?**

Be prepared to respond to staff who ask, “Why does this matter?” You can say something like, “Okay, let’s take the opportunity to review the DEI business case one more time…” and then share data related to increased productivity, innovation, team morale, and performance. You can state something like, “hiring a person with a visible or invisible disability is a great addition to our team – a person with a disability will have a valuable perspective in identifying services and program gaps that fail to meet the specific needs of people with disabilities. If we can bridge these gaps, our organization earns the loyalty of people with disabilities – a group that has an annual purchasing power of \$490 billion.”



# ORGANIZATIONAL REFLECTION QUESTIONS

## **How Can I Share My Story with Confidence?**

In order to gain confidence with sharing our diversity stories, we must practice, practice, practice. You can start by practicing with a family member or a close friend outside of work. Once you feel that you have refined your story, consider identifying a fellow DEI champion at work, and then share your story. Ask them for their honest feedback so that you can make further improvements. When sharing your own diversity story, be sure to share your feelings, offer some research, and connect with the person or people you are speaking by offering one simple action they can take to advance your organization's DEI commitments.





# SHARING YOUR DIVERSITY STORY

Now that you have refined your diversity story, you are encouraged to share it with a trusted friend or colleague. If you're feeling shy or challenged with where to begin, think about a time at work when you or a trusted colleague was struggling with feeling a sense of belonging on the job. Draw upon this experience to get started with developing your diversity story. Would you feel comfortable taking a risk and sharing this story with a colleague you just met? Why or why not? What would it take to get you to a point where you can share your story with confidence? What else do you need to help you get started?