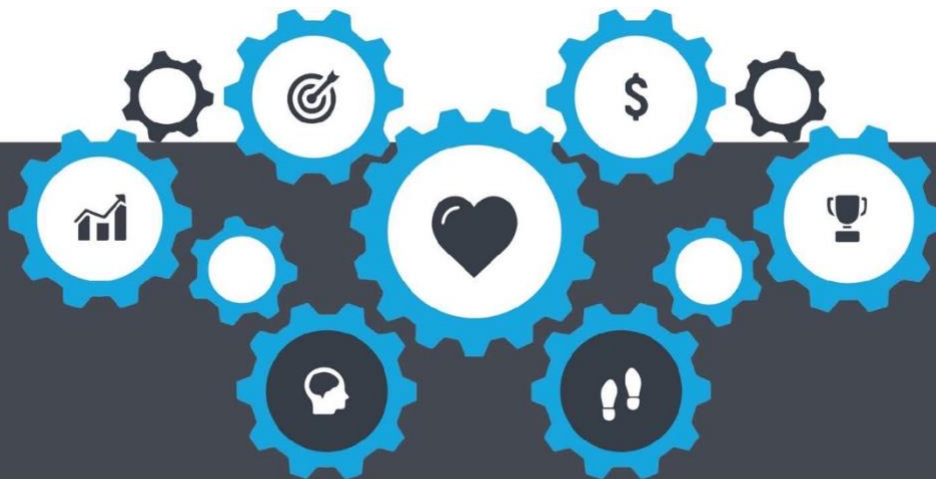


BELONGING AT WORK

Leading Inclusively
During Uncertain Times
Survival Guide





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Tips to Serve as an Inclusive Leader During a Crisis

Originally written on May 15, 2020

Before COVID-19, leading brands worldwide invested significant resources to cultivate inclusive leaders. These Leaders have the capacity and confidence to build a sense of psychological safety, trust, and belonging for all of their stakeholders at work.

Today, in response to the large-scale racial justice uprisings & the global pandemic, a greater number of businesses are recognizing the demand for cultivating inclusive leaders at the highest levels. When empowered to do so, inclusive leaders have the ability to guide a workplace through these dramatic changes with empathy and grace.

What's clear is that inclusive leadership matters now more than ever before.

Why?

In uncertain times, we may feel a lack of control, confusion on where to find accurate information, and heightened fear – all of which increases the risk of bias.

Follow the news cycle and you'll see plenty of stark examples:

- Increased [anti-Asian racism](#) and xenophobia.
- Increased [racial profiling](#) disproportionately targeting Black & Latinx people.
- Increased [homophobia & transphobia](#) impacting access to medical services.
- Increased [ableism](#) limiting access for people with disabilities to engage in remote work.

In Chapter 7 of my best-selling book, *Belonging at Work*, I write about the ways we can serve as inclusive leaders to address these feelings, that left unchecked can increase bias at work.

The book features research from [Deloitte University Press](#), which highlights six signature traits all inclusive leaders share. You may reference these traits in the graphic featured below:



On a recent [Belonging Membership Call](#), participants from a variety of professions and roles identified how they have demonstrated these traits over the course of their careers.

Many offered their ideas on how these leadership traits can be applied to respond to the fears, worries, and concerns they are witnessing among their colleagues.

A summary of this discussion as it relates to these six leadership traits is included below:

1. **Make the Commitment.** Participants shared a few ideas as to how they are keeping their DEI commitments alive during these challenging times. Ideas offered by Belonging Members include:
 - Advocate for company resources to provide hazard pay for essential workers keeping the daily functions of an organization operational.
 - Facilitate virtual town halls to connect with staff working remotely and for BIPOC employees, making [technology accessible](#) for people with disabilities & access needs.
 - Continue to self-educate about how privilege and disparities impact fellow colleagues in different roles throughout the organization.

2. **Be Courageous.** In the spirit “making the commitment,” some participants pledged to courageously hold themselves accountable and challenge the status quo. Participants offered the following ideas:
 - Share your personal story about how the racial justice uprisings & the pandemic are impacting your life, and creating unnecessary barriers to build meaningful relationships

with others in different circumstances.

- Acknowledge harm you (or your organization) may have caused related to past responses to white supremacy culture and COVID-19, take responsibility, and share the changes you will make to reduce future harm.
 - Name problematic language at work when others talk about where COVID-19 originated from, and who is more likely to have it, then redirect by sharing known facts that dispel myths and stigma.
3. **Recognize Your Biases.** Understand that you, just like me, and all of us, have conscious & unconscious biases. Own them and work to mitigate them by taking the following actions offered by participants:
- Invest in resources to better understand your personal biases by taking the [Implicit Association Test](#), and consider how the results may challenge your assumptions.
 - Consider investing in [inclusion coaching](#) to be held accountable to these biases and get the support you need to manage them appropriately.
 - Take ownership in doing the work to learn what may be unknown to you and take the time and effort to work around them in the long-run.
4. **Build Cultural Responsiveness.** Self-educate about social identities and communities that are different from your own. Participants offered the following ideas that have accelerated their own personal learning journeys:
- Build cross-cultural relationships to get to know actual people from different cultures & communities. By doing so, you get to know an individual, one-on-one.
 - Embrace the concept of ally as a verb and something that must be demonstrated time-and-time again through *meaningful actions*. Consider your allyship as a contract that must be renewed on a daily basis.
 - Join an employee resource group as an ally, and work to build personal relationships with colleagues in the group to learn more about social identifies, cultures, and customs different from your own.
5. **Embrace Your Curiosity.** Continue to ask questions and remain curious throughout this crisis. [Belonging Community Members](#) shared the following ideas:
- The foundational work to build an anti-racist organization and respond to COVID-19 are ever-evolving, which forces organizations to test and change. Be sure to question conventional thinking and be curious to ask, “can we try something new?”
 - Ask how your organization can prioritize workforce safety and fairness over the bottom line. Take a “yes, and” approach to get business results while looking out for your workers


and saving lives.

- Rethink the virtual workforce and find ways to make it more accessible. Consider ways workers with different abilities and needs can access remote work.

6. **Collaborate in Coalition.** We understand that work will forever change during and after this moment we find ourselves. As such, [Belonging Community Members](#) shared the following ways we can collaborate:

- Give workers what they need by continuing to adapt what’s working now. The future of work can and should include flexible and alternative work schedules.
- Take note of other promising work practices that may help make it easier for workers to show up as authentically as they wish, so they can do their best work.
- At times, many of us display these leadership traits on the job, but how do we strengthen them?

As you consider on how to lead inclusively during uncertain times, review [these five questions](#) featured in the image below:

 RHODES PERRY CONSULTING

Leading Inclusively During Uncertain Times

Directions: Regardless of your current role, answer the following questions as if you were serving in a leadership position. Then be prepared to discuss your responses at our workshop.

1. How would you create opportunities to listen to workplace stakeholders impacted by the large-scale racial justice uprisings and COVID-19? How would you use this information?

2. How would you communicate to your team about the large-scale racial justice uprisings and COVID-19? What would you say, how often would you say it, and who would you ask to help you come up with your message?

3. What actions would you take to demonstrate empathy for those impacted by the large-scale racial justice uprisings and COVID-19? How would you connect, human-to-human?

4. What would you say & what would you do to demonstrate cultural responsiveness as a leader in developing a plan that centers those most impacted?

5. What is now possible for your workplace that wasn't possible before the large-scale racial justice uprisings and COVID-19 when it comes to leading inclusively?

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After reflecting on these questions, please consider enrolling in the [Belonging Membership Community](#).

There you will have the chance to connect with fellow inclusive leaders, access a supportive community to help you lead inclusively during uncertain time, and learn about ways you can expand your knowledge about workplace diversity, equity, and inclusion matters.

Together, our Community is commitment to building belonging at work.

In a Crisis Give People What They Need & They Will Value You Forever

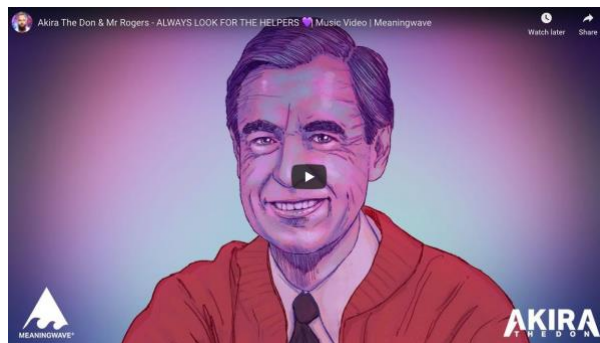
Originally written on April 23, 2020



What will your leadership legacy be? How will your staff remember how you led during the global pandemic and the racial justice uprisings of 2020 and 2021? Simon Sinek offers a glimpse of what might be possible. By giving people what they need, they feel empowered to rise above existing challenges, and they will value you forever.

On a recent [Belonging Membership Call](#), our Community discussed this idea of giving people what they need by centering those most vulnerable. Why? When we center vulnerable people & communities, we can ensure that no one is left behind.

For a better understanding of the champions that embrace this concept, please watch this short video of the original #BelongingChampion, Mr. Rogers, who makes a strong case to look for the helpers.



When we find the helpers, we see hope in action. The helpers are often found in communities enduring the harsh realities of institutional racism, racial violence, and COVID-19 – places like hospitals, retirement communities, homeless shelters, food pantries, child welfare agencies, prisons, etc.

In other words, the helpers flock to those most vulnerable. Some of us refer to them as the “heroes that don’t always wear capes.” We celebrate their sacrifices, and we wonder what more we could do to move up and serve alongside others in our own organizations.

Leaders, Be the Helpers

So how can we as leaders, visionaries, and change agents show up and serve alongside other heroes taking action during these challenging times? Similar to the heroes on the frontlines, we must give our most vulnerable stakeholders what they need...first.

To answer this question, [Belonging Community Members](#) first worked to understand and assess our organization’s stakeholders – those we employ, those we serve, and those communities we impact. From there, we identified people who might be the most vulnerable at work.

If your organization is lucky to have in-house DEI leaders, now is the time to elevate and amplify their expertise. Chances are they will quickly have the information you need to assess the most vulnerable stakeholders in your organization and offer many actions to meet your employees’ needs.

Organizations without such expertise may be sweating a bit at this point. Fear not. The information provided below may help you better assess who within your organization may be particularly vulnerable and what responsibility you can take to give them what’s needed.

Assessing Vulnerable Populations

The global pandemic has made crystal clear the very real gaps in our social safety net. These gaps complicate key social determinants of health, or the social factors that make it hard for people to be healthy. These gaps also shine a light on just how deep health disparities run.

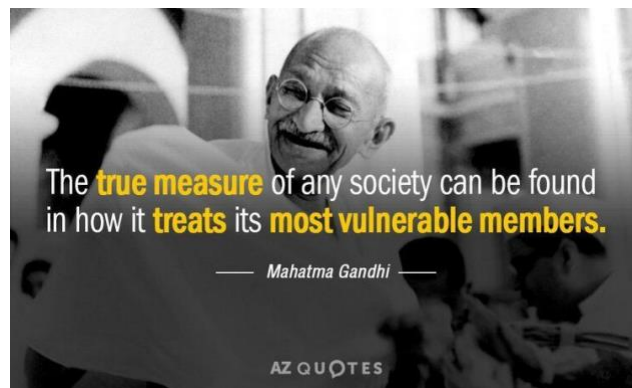
Research has shown that differences in access to high quality jobs and economic stability, quality education, healthcare, and safe neighborhoods influence our health. Fifty percent of your own social determinants of health can be traced back to your zip code (if you have one).

On our call, we identified five major factors that make it hard for those of us who are most vulnerable to stay healthy. These include:

- **Structural Racism**, or the policies, programs and institutional practices that prioritize the well-being of white people while creating barriers to the well-being of people of color. Accessing healthcare is already a challenge. In a pandemic, here’s what it looks like:
 - The [CDC found](#) 33% of COVID-19 hospitalizations were of Black people, while only 13% of the US population is Black.
 - [Latinx people](#) are dying from COVID-19 at 3X the rate white people in the US.

- [Navajo Nation](#), were it a state, would fall at #3 for the number of confirmed COVID-19 infections.
- An alarming rise of [anti-Asian hate crimes](#) is stoking xenophobic violence in the US.
- **Housing Insecurity**, presents a challenge for individuals who are houseless. Practicing social distancing for over [500,000 people](#) who live on the streets makes it impossible to shelter-in-place.
- **Food Insecurity**. Approximately [14.3 million US households](#) experience food insecurity and cannot “stockpile” nonperishable goods. Aging populations may have apprehension in going to the grocery store amid the panic of COVID-19 spread.
- **Rural Communities**. Long distances from dense urban epicenters serve as a protective factor. Yet if one were to experience COVID-19 symptoms, it would be difficult to access a provider, and telehealth is unreliable given weak broadband connections.
- **Culturally Responsive Care**. People who are not white, straight, able-bodied, cisgender men may endure challenges in receiving culturally responsive healthcare capable of respecting and meeting their specific needs.

Additionally, the systems meant to help us like hospitals, shelters, immigration centers, etc. are likely to fail those of us with multiple-marginalized identities based on race, gender, sexual orientation, immigration status, ability, etc. This reality makes it even harder to stay healthy.



Strategies to Center the Most Vulnerable

The following questions below, will help customize your own organizational strategies to center and give your most vulnerable stakeholder what they need. Many [Belonging Community Members](#) were able to use their answers to influence their organization's responses.

By answering these questions, your organization will be better positioned to give all of your stakeholders what they need:

- What is one community you work with that is disproportionately impacted by COVID-19? Consider the five factors above that make it hard to stay healthy to help you identify at least one specific population.
- What is your greatest challenge to centering the needs of this community in your organization's work? Consider all of the fears, worries or concerns you have, or are likely to hear from colleagues on your leadership team.
- Considering this challenge, what is one strategy or action another organization in your industry has taken to attempt to center this particular group. If none exist, what community-based organizations can you outreach to help you inform your own actions?

Now that you have the framework, take action and adapt it to meet your organization's needs. Remember when you do, you will be better positioned to give all of your stakeholders what they need, and for that they will value you forever.

If you found this content helpful, consider enrolling in the [Belonging Membership Community](#). Together, our Community is commitment to building belonging at work.

Learn How to *Virtually* Build Belonging

Originally written on April 9, 2020 shortly after many people in the United States were instructed to stay at home and quarantine to minimize harm caused from COVID-19.



Image by Pexels from Pixabay

"It is Better to Light a Candle than to Curse the Darkness" - Eleanor Roosevelt

In an effort to support those of us committed to building a sense of safety, trust and belonging at work, [Rhodes Perry Consulting](#) launched the [Belonging Membership Community](#) to build social solidarity and a DEI community-care movement to share ways we can all lead inclusively during these uncertain times.

The [Belonging Membership Community](#) meets 24 times a year, 2 times each month, to unpack the thorny issues challenging our field. Many diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) leaders gather during these times to connect and take some time to celebrate our victories and successes.

Our Community also offers support in the areas where we feel stuck, uncertain, and concerned about how we can continue advancing our DEI commitments in this moment. Several key questions continue to arise on our calls, including:

- How do we keep our DEI goals on track during the pandemic?
- How can we lead inclusively, using a DEI lens in response to this global crisis?
- How do we appropriately resource and staff this work to make meaningful impacts?
- What role, if any, can employee resource groups (ERGs) play to provide support?

In addition to these questions, many members gather together to gain strategies on how to build

a sense of safety, trust and belonging in virtual meeting spaces like Zoom. As more workplaces move to the virtual office, many DEI champions are seeking promising practices.

After our first call, we conducted [this poll](#) to help us focus on these common concerns. Based on the responses, it was clear that our initial focus was to explore ways we can build belonging in our virtual work.

The following strategies featured below were developed from the collective wisdom of the [Belonging Membership Community](#). We strongly encourage you to consider these strategies as you look for ways to build belonging in your virtual work.

1. **Feeling Included Starts with Technology.** To cultivate a sense of safety, trust, and belonging in virtual communities, we must first ensure that our team members have access to the technology that makes room for clear communication between all stakeholders. To ensure equitable access to technology, here are a few considerations the Community offered:

- Create a technology cheat sheet [like this one](#) if you use Zoom.
- Host tech check-ins with your team in advance to troubleshoot participation barriers.
- Ask your colleagues to inform team leaders of accessibility needs prior to a virtual meeting.
- Share wireless connection with colleagues by lending loaner tablets to [create hotspots](#).
- Set-up closed captioning with video conferencing technology [such as Zoom Rooms](#).
- Check-in on technology needs at the top of the agenda for every meeting.
- Ask your team for promising practices to continually improve technology experiences,
- Use breakout rooms for groups larger than 5 people to include more voices & ideas.

2. **Allow Your Team to Succeed with Established Meeting Values.** Establishing virtual meeting norms that center diversity, equity and inclusion commitments to build a sense of safety, trust, and belonging. Offer a few of these norms and invite the group to share their own. Here are a few meeting norms the [Belonging Membership Community](#) embrace:

- Share your name/pronouns (if you want to) when introducing yourself.
- Assume good will when learning from others with different perspectives and ideas.
- Use “I” Statements when sharing to avoid generalizing about other people & groups.
- W.A.I.T, if you are prone to sharing often, ask “why am I talking,” and if you don’t share often ask “why aren’t I talking.”
- When using video, give people permission to take care of what they need. Some people will need video for connection or to read lips, while others may need a higher level of privacy for a variety of reasons. Here’s what one of our Community members shared:

“I’ve suggested and modeled that it’s ok to NOT activate the camera during videoconferencing. Some leaders may want to see their people, however, not everyone has a cute home office with nice decor. And, all of our salons and barbershops closed, which means not everyone is comfortable with having their picture with a disheveled look for

colleagues to see and potentially judge.”

- Virtual backgrounds may help offset concerns of what your home working space looks like, and they may add some personality and variety to your meetings (check out my own here).



3. **Conduct an Emotion Temperature Check.** Remember the reason why we are flocking to virtual meeting spaces – a global pandemic. Naturally, many of our colleagues have either direct or indirect experiences with COVID-19.

Given this reality, doing an emotional temperature check before each meeting offers a pathway to practice flexing your empathy muscles. The suggestions offered below may help navigate how you could facilitate this part of your meeting:

- Open up each meeting with a message of hope, an inspirational quote, or a story.
- Ask your colleagues to share how they are feeling in one word or a phrase.
- Encourage your colleagues that real feelings and emotions are welcome.
- Give meeting time to process and validate these feelings, which may foster safety and trust.
- Do a closing emotional temperature check at the end of the call. If colleagues are still unsettled, be sure to personally check-in after the meeting offering support.

4. **Share the Speaking Time with Your Team.** To serve as an inclusive leader, one must practice the art of deep listening. Leading virtual meetings offers an ideal space to refine this skill.

Our Community had many ideas on how to practice this skill by sharing the airtime. These ideas may increase engagement and facilitate greater discussion among all of your colleagues:

- Increase group engagement by facilitating a round robin after asking a team question.
- If you're concerned about time, ask your colleagues to write their ideas using the chat.
- Delegate facilitation responsibilities by rotating hosts and building the leadership skills of your colleagues.
- Mix your agenda up from emotional temperature checks to small group discussions to make sure everyone has the opportunity to contribute.

5. **The Role of the Meeting Host.** Even when you're sharing the speaking time with others, you play an important role as a meeting host in virtual workspaces. Much like a music DJ, you have to sense the energy on the call and respond appropriately.

Our Community generated the following tips that they want virtual meeting facilitators to be aware of. These tips may help foster a greater sense of safety, trust, and belonging:

- Be online at least 10 or 15 minutes in advance of the meeting to support your colleagues with any tech support.
- Acknowledge and remind your colleagues that we all learn and communicate in different ways.
- Encourage your team to use the chat feature if they have noise in the background or feel more comfortable participating by writing out their thoughts.
- Count to 10 seconds after asking a question as your colleagues may need a moment to feel safe, compose their thoughts, and then respond.
- Remember that some folks find it hard to participate in larger groups – experiment with different ways to increase meeting engagement.
- Check-in daily with your team to make sure they have what they need to be successful.

If you found this content helpful, consider enrolling in the [Belonging Membership Community](#). Together, our Community is commitment to building belonging at work.

Gain Insights on How to Disrupt Digital Microaggressions

Originally written on May 8, 2020

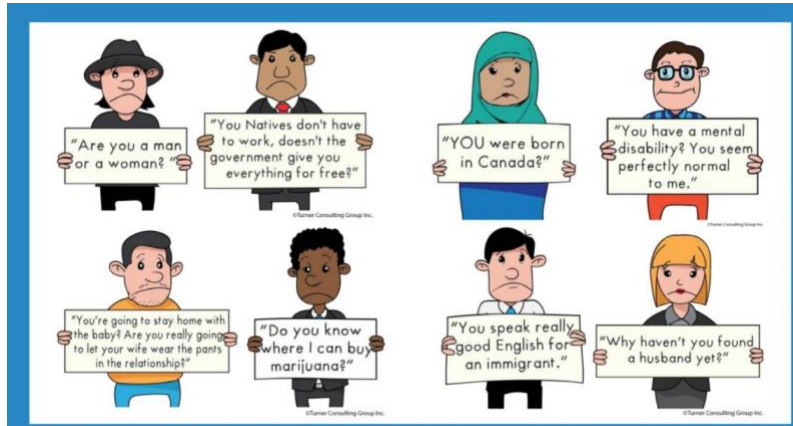


Image by Turner Consulting Group, Inc.

Have you ever had a situation at work signaling you didn't belong because of an aspect of your social identity? If so, you may have experienced a microaggression.

Microaggressions are verbal & nonverbal behavioral or environmental acts of disrespect targeting people with marginalized identities or others perceived to have less power.

As a transgender guy, I have experienced **my fair share** of them. Afterwards, I often ask myself, "did that really happen," or "am I overreacting?" It's natural to second guess their severity.

Yet, some people doubt the significant harm they cause. They don't see how microaggressions get in the way to building strong and meaningful relationships. This video may help increase understanding.



What is a Virtual Microaggression?

What happens when microaggressions go virtual? How do we recognize them in this context, what can we do to effectively disrupt them, and whose job is it anyway to be the disrupter?

Last year, the [Belonging Membership Community](#) worked together in small groups to explore how microaggressions impact their lives – both online and in real life.

Recognizing that more of our work is going virtual, participants offered examples of what online microaggressions look and feel like.

The group identified three digital microaggression examples including:

- **Invading Space.** In real time, invading space occurs when a colleague touches another without their consent, leaves their belongings on another person's desk, or refuses to make room for people when passing each other in the hallway.
 - Ex: The digital version of this microaggression includes more enfranchised team members spending A LOT of time talking, others sharing their screen and having inappropriate notifications appear, or sending distracting private chat messages.
- **Getting Interrupted.** A riff on "[mansplaining](#)," or powersplaining, occurs when someone with real or perceived power talks condescendingly, or interrupts another about a topic they know nothing about, assuming they know more about the topic than the other.
 - Ex: On a webinar training, one participant shared that their supervisor interrupted them with inaccurate information. They faced this dilemma - publicly correct their boss in front of 200 people, or let the comment go.
- **Being Underestimated.** This microaggression occurs when a person with a marginalized social identity (a woman, a person of color, a LGBTQ person, a person with a disability, etc.) is assumed to have less power, work in a supportive role, or be outright ignored in workplace settings.
 - Ex: On a recent Zoom call, one participant shared that she was the only woman on the call. Despite being the Chief HR Officer for her company, she was asked to take notes by her CEO. Doing so made it difficult to fully participate.

What's Your Role?

If you experience a microaggression, know that it is not your responsibility to disrupt it. Priority number one involves finding a safer space and healing from the harm caused.

For those of us who *witness* microaggressions, and have some degree of safety and privilege, it's important that we intervene when possible. Here are a few things to consider before doing so:

- **Job Security.** Do you feel safe in your job? Do you have confidence that if you were to address problematic behavior by a peer or supervisor that you wouldn't be dismissed for doing so? If you answered yes, keep going.
- **Relationship.** What is your relationship to the person who caused harm? Do you respect them, and do you feel respected by them? Do you believe that if they gained awareness of their behavior that they would change? If yes, keep going.
- **Location.** Consider the best space to have a conversation with the microaggressor. In our socially distancing world, you may want to draft or talk out some key points you'd like to share, and call by phone, or schedule a 1:1 video call to discuss.

How to Disrupt?

If you want to disrupt the microaggression(s) you witness on a virtual meeting, here are a few strategies you may wish to consider. They are adapted from this [resource](#) developed by the University of Santa Cruz's Office of Academic Affairs.

1. **Appreciative Inquiry.** If a colleague asks, "why do gays have to flaunt their sexuality," you can ask, "say more about that..." Their response will give you more information about their worldview and may help them gain awareness of their statement's negative impact.
2. **Paraphrase & Reflect.** If a colleague says, "I don't see color," you can respond in your own words, "so you feel everyone can succeed, regardless of race? Share examples?" Communicating content & feeling in your own words will reduce defensiveness.
3. **Reframe.** Your colleague, Claire, is repeatedly interrupted by your supervisor in a meeting. You can say, "Claire brings up a great point. I didn't hear all of it. Claire, can you please repeat? This skillfully redirects & reframes the conversation.
4. **Use "I" Statements.** When a colleague says, "that's so gay," you can say, "I felt hurt when you said, 'that's so gay.' My son has taught me the damage those words cause." This response focuses attention on you, avoiding blame and reducing defensiveness.
5. **Use Preference Statements.** If an ableist joke is made about a person with a disability say, "I didn't think that was funny. I would like you to stop." Sharing your preferences, rather than demanding changes may help move this person towards better behavior.

If you found this content helpful, consider enrolling in the [Belonging Membership Community](#). Together, our Community is commitment to building belonging at work.

Keep Your DEI & Belonging Goals on Track Through the Pandemic

Originally written on April 16, 2020

“How do we keep our diversity, equity, and inclusion goals on track during COVID-19?” – Belonging Community Member



Image by Pexels from Pixabay

The World Health Organization categorized Coronavirus COVID-19 as a global pandemic in April, 2020. As a result, many felt, and continue to feel, uncertain, anxious and fearful for our personal and collective health and well-being.

When it comes to the workplace, employees are looking to their leaders and noting how they manage this crisis. Many will remember how their leadership team responded to the fears, worries and concerns they have with respect to their job security.

For diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) professionals, we understand how essential an organization’s DEI commitments are to help manage a crisis in a fair way. In other words, responding to workers by giving them what they need so that they can do their best work.

On a recent [Belonging Member Call](#), we workshopped a variety of ways we - and other leaders - can move forward inclusively by honoring our DEI commitments. Keeping them on track is key to our collective successes.

The following strategies were developed by the collective wisdom of our talented Community Members. We strongly encourage you to consider them as you commit to leading inclusively during COVID-19.

- **Consider Vulnerable Stakeholders.** Everyone from Amazon Indigenous Communities to the Saudi Royal Family have been impacted by COVID-19. Yet, some have access to more power, resources and support than others.

In order to give people what they need, here are a few strategies the [Belonging Community](#) workshopped.

- Identify your stakeholders and ask, “who is engaged when making decisions? Which voices are and *aren't* included, and why?”
- Then make efforts to center communities most vulnerable to disparate impacts caused by the virus in your team’s decision-making process.
- Include members of these communities at the decision-making table. If that’s not possible, hire subject matter experts who can help inform your decisions.
- Ensure all stakeholders are aware of available employee assistance programs and support services, prioritizing those most vulnerable to the pandemic.
- **Apply a DEI Lens.** When leaders apply a DEI lens to decision-making, they must consider four things: 1) the people making the decisions, 2) who decision-makers are accountable to, 3) the place where the decisions are made, and 4) the process in making the decisions.

In addition to these aspects of applying a DEI lens, the Belonging Community offered a few important considerations.

- Remember your organization’s DEI core values and infuse them into all decisions being made in response to the virus.
- Engage your stakeholders, get curious about their concerns, actively listen without being defensive, and take proactive steps that allay their concerns whenever possible.
- Ensure decisions impacting all stakeholders filter throughout the entire workforce. Be sure that [access to technology](#) and accommodations for language translations are made.
- As your leadership team responds to COVID-19, don’t lose sight of your organization’s long-term DEI commitments - make concerted efforts to adapt and advance them.
- **Lean on ERG Networks.** Some of your organization’s strongest and most passionate DEI champions live within your organization – including your employee resource group (ERG) network. Collaborate with this network when identifying the needs of vulnerable stakeholders.

The Belonging Community offered the following thoughts to utilize the collective wisdom and experience of their organizations’ ERG networks.

- Schedule weekly video calls between your leadership team and your ERG network to help infuse a DEI lens with decisions and responses related to COVID-19.
- Commit resources to ensure that your ERG Network can continue meeting virtually to offer a safer space for support and social connection.
- Consider focusing these meetings to identify “new opportunities” like forming an ERG focused on mental health and well-being or remote working.

- Some ERG networks may wish to review their priorities for the year, adapting them and continue doing the work to advance them.
- **Host Learning & Development Opportunities.** Given that more of your workforce is engaged remotely, consider new ways of offering learning and development opportunities. E-learning is a great way to keep your DEI goals on track, and firms like [RPC](#) can help deliver them to your team.

The Belonging Community workshopped a few of the ideas below. They may help leaders with understanding what a DEI lens is, and how it can help them step up as inclusive leaders.

- Upgrade your DEI learning and development catalogue by moving in-person keynotes, workshops and break-out sessions into [virtual learning experiences](#).
- Continue informal lunch-and-learns through virtual watch parties. Consider viewing films like [Crip Camp](#) and follow the screening with a facilitated discussion.
- Organize [virtual panel discussions](#) similar to Diversity Best Practices' celebration of Trans Day of Visibility. This event featured prominent transgender leaders in the U.S.
- Get creative and develop a [virtual DEI care package](#) letting your staff know you care. The package can include tips on how managers can lead inclusively during COVID-19.
- **Lead By Learning.** They say that leaders are readers, or as we at RPC say, leaders are learners. While this tip is included last, it certainly is not least. In fact, it's where some may feel most comfortable starting.

The Belonging Community offered a number of ways you can continue to self-educate on the topic. Take note of what resonates the most with you and start there.

- Start by grabbing a copy of the Amazon Best-Seller, [Belonging at Work](#). Flip to page 34 for a few examples of how to use a DEI lens when making decisions.
- Then, check out [Sonali S. Balajee's report](#) on how to create your own Equity & Empowerment lens.
- If you're seeking more, consider reading through Lillian Tsai and Thomas Bruner's blog post about [Applying Equity in a Crisis](#).
- Finally, after you have done the inhale of reading and learning, consider doing the exhale of reflecting, writing and sharing what you've learned with your colleagues.

If you found this content helpful, consider enrolling in the [Belonging Membership Community](#). Together, our Community is commitment to building belonging at work.