Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Intercultural Competence in Leadership

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INTRODUCTION

In our increasingly diverse, international, and interconnected world, diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), and intercultural competence are essential leadership mindsets, skills, and practices. There is a clear and compelling case for diverse leaders who represent their stakeholders and can understand and deliver on consumer interests and needs. There is an increasingly strong call for inclusive leaders who cherish differences, embrace disruption, adapt with agility, drive innovation, foster a speak-up culture, and can effectively manage a diverse workforce. Public demand for racial, gender, and other forms of justice make an equity mindset and action critical in leaders. DEI and intercultural competence in leadership are vital in public health, given the effects of systemic racism and other forms of oppression on people's health and healthcare systems. This chapter outlines the definitions, evolution, intersections, skills, mindsets, and practices of diversity, equity, inclusion, and intercultural competence in leadership.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this chapter, the reader will be able to:

- Describe the definitions, evolution, and intersections of DEI and intercultural competence.
- Describe why DEI and intercultural competence in leadership are essential in today's increasingly diverse and dynamic public health and healthcare landscape.
- Describe inclusive leadership traits and practices and their importance.
- Discuss an equity mindset and equity leadership practices and their impact.
- Describe cultural humility and culturally competent leadership.

BACKGROUND ON DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION AND INTERCULTURAL AND GLOBAL COMPETENCE

DEFINITIONS

Diversity, equity, and inclusion, often referred to by their acronym DEI or EDI, are distinct but interrelated concepts. Leaders must understand their unique meanings and interrelatedness to create strategies, act with clarity and intentionality, and make tangible advances in each.

Accessibility and justice are related concepts that are often included with DEI initiatives. DEI consulting firm Global Citizen, LLC developed and uses the following definitions.[1]

- **Diversity:** The characteristics that make individuals and groups unique and different from each other, including identity markers, personality types, ways of thinking, ideas, and perspectives.
- **Inclusion:** Actions to create an environment in which everyone is and feels welcomed, respected, valued, and supported to fully participate.
- **Equality:** The state of being considered inherently the same worth and accorded the same status, rights, resources, and opportunities, regardless of unique identities and characteristics.
- **Equity:** Fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all people, while identifying and shifting power structures, eliminating systemic barriers, and providing needed resources to ensure the full agency, participation, and benefit of people who have experienced discrimination and oppression.
- **Accessibility:** Giving equitable access to everyone along the continuum of human ability and experience. Accessibility encompasses the broader meanings of compliance and refers to how organizations make space for the unique characteristics that each person brings.
- **Justice:** Dismantling barriers to resources and opportunities in society so that all individuals and communities can live with dignity and well-being. These barriers include racism, sexism, classism, and other forms of systemic oppression.

EVOLUTION

There has been an evolution in leaders' understanding of and commitment to DEI over recent decades. The field of DEI has its roots in corporate America in the 1960s, sparked by anti-discrimination legislation including the Equal Pay Act of 1963, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967. Throughout that decade, efforts were focused on nondiscrimination and affirmative action. Initially, there was a focus on diversity and representation in the workplace, particularly in large, U.S.-based companies.[2] From the 1970s to the 1990s, many Fortune 500 companies made concerted efforts in diversity hiring, casting a wider net to attract a broader talent pool, with their focus mainly on compliance. Also, as the more diverse Generation X population began entering the workforce, they brought more of a focus on diversity, which influenced organizational cultures.[2]

From the 1990s to the 2000s, organizations began realizing the benefits of a diverse workforce that mirrored their consumer base and that could provide valuable input into their products and services. At the same time, employees were calling for more of a voice in company decisions, which pointed to a need for greater inclusion. More workplace interventions focused on inclusion, and academic research was being conducted on inclusion as well as emotional intelligence, a foundational element of an inclusive culture.[2] When inclusion efforts stalled, and employees felt dissatisfied for these and myriad other reasons, including lack of opportunities for advancement, organizations experienced high turnover, particularly among Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC); women; and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning (LGBTQ+) employees.[2]

From 2000 to 2015, organizational efforts continued to center on creating a more diverse workforce, particularly on increasing diversity in C-Suites and boards of directors, and they made inclusion more of a focus; however, gains in leadership diversity have been slow.[2] According to McKinsey and Company's data set, among companies that were based in the United States and the United Kingdom, female representation on executive teams rose from 15% in 2014 to 20% in 2019.[3] Across the global data set, for which the data started in 2017, this number moved up just one percentage point, from 14% to 15%, in 2019—and more than a third of companies still had no women on their executive teams. This lack of material progress was evident across all industries and in most countries. Similarly, representation of

ethnic minorities on U.S. and U.K executive teams stood at only 13% in 2019, up from just 7% in 2014. For the global data set in 2019, this number was 14%, up from 12% in 2017.[3]

From approximately 2015 onward, more organizations issued commitments to equity in addition to diversity and inclusion; this mainly originated from gender-based equal pay and racial equity initiatives.[2] Some organizations have included accessibility (DEAI or IDEA) and/or justice (DEAIJ or JEDI) as their areas of focus.

In the wake of the murder of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, and the killings of Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and too many other innocent Black people in the United States around the same time—and countless more before then—there was a global surge in the Black Lives Matter and broader antiracism movements. Employees began speaking out more vocally and publicly against workplace microaggressions and discrimination, and leaders made public commitments to advance racial equity and broader DEI in their organizations and beyond. The widespread call for organizational change and social transformation was palpable, urgent, and long overdue and caused a notable increase in organizational DEI activities.[4]

INTERSECTIONS

Intercultural competence (also known as cultural competence), global competence, cultural humility, and DEI are interrelated concepts and practices. Intercultural competence is the process of developing greater appreciation for cultural differences and knowledge, attitudes, and skills that promote effective interaction and communication in diverse cultural contexts. Global competence is the constellation of (a) awareness, (b) understanding, (c) sensitivity, and (d) ethical practice within an individual or a system. This constellation enables effective intercultural and cross-country interactions and partnerships that effect organizational and social transformation and result in mutually beneficial and empowering outcomes for the good of all.[5] Intercultural competence and global competence are important leadership mindsets, skill sets, and processes that enable leaders to advance DEI in service to their organization's mission.[6] They can be practiced and measured at both the individual and organizational levels, while DEI efforts are often more focused on the organizational level.[6] To be effective in international organizations, leaders need to adopt a global mindset and avoid ethnocentrism. There are numerous intercultural and global competence models that comprise interrelated core competencies, including self-awareness, understanding, attitudes, skills, and practices, each with their own components; more recent models have incorporated equity. There are also numerous cultural competence scales and metrics to assess and measure progress in cultural competence in individuals and organizations.[7,8]

Cultural humility is a related concept and an important leadership trait. Cultural humility is expressed through a lifelong commitment to self-evaluation and self-critique, redressing power imbalances, and developing mutually beneficial and nonmaterialistic partnerships with communities on behalf of individual and defined populations.[9] Leaders demonstrate humility by encouraging others to share their constructive feedback; for example, that a leader is showing favoritism, tends to interrupt, or is overlooking important information or perspectives. When leaders demonstrate empathy and consider different perspectives, they offer people hope that the leader cares about them and takes their views into account, rather than barreling on with preconceptions based only on their perspectives. Cultural humility creates a personal connection between leaders and a diverse set of stakeholders, making it easier to develop and implement shared decisions.[10]

WHY DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND CULTURAL COMPETENCE IN LEADERSHIP ARE ESSENTIAL

There is both a moral and business imperative for DEI in leadership, and it would be inadequate and shortsighted to focus on the business case alone.[11] There have been criticisms of

approaches that focus exclusively on the business case, and many authors argue persuasive-ly for the benefits from a business *and* values perspective.[12]

The workplace is an important site for DEI assessment and interventions because orga-nizational systems and the leaders who operate them are, usually unintentionally, perpet-uating inequities against employees and other stakeholders. Leaders also have the ability to revise policies and shift cultural norms more readily than in society at large. "The study of change efforts and the oppositions they engender are often opportunities to observe fre-quently invisible aspects of the reproduction of inequalities. The concept of inequality re-gimes may be useful in analyzing organizational change projects to better understand why these projects so often fail and why they succeed when this occurs."[13(p441)]

While much of the research and examples cited in this chapter are from private companies and nonprofit organizations that are not necessarily public health and healthcare related, they are relevant. DEI and intercultural competence are particularly important in public health and healthcare leadership, given the effects of systemic racism and other forms of oppression on peo-ple's health and healthcare systems. Social determinants of health are the conditions in the en-vironments where humans live and work that affect our health, functioning, and quality-of-life outcomes and risks. These include the systems and institutions in which people live and work as well as people's relationships and interactions with family, friends, work colleagues, and community members, all of which have an important impact on their health and well-being.[14] These systems and human interactions and their impact can be positive or damaging. Systemic oppression, such as racism, while not easily diagnosable, has a deep, lasting, and intergenera-tional effect on individual and population health and is therefore a major public health issue.

Building on decades of research on the social determinants of health and the ever-expanding consensus within public health that racism is a public health crisis, the American Public Health Association (APHA), the National Collaborative for Health Equity, and the de Beaumont Foundation created the *Healing Through Policy: Creating Pathways to Racial Justice* initiative. Through this initiative, they are offering a suite of policies and practices that can be implemented at the local level to promote racial healing, advance racial equity, and dramati-cally improve the conditions in which people live, grow, work, and play.[15]

MORAL IMPERATIVE

There is a strong moral imperative to advance DEI in leadership. Systemic racism, sexism, homophobia, and other forms of oppression are institutionalized and therefore constantly operating. They create structural barriers that serve to advantage people who are part of socially dominant groups and disadvantage those who are not, particularly when it comes to being identified for and pursuing leadership opportunities. BIPOC, women, and LGBTQ+ people may be penalized, often unconsciously, for having certain traits or acting in ways that are not viewed as normative or desirable for leaders from a White, heterosexual, cisgender, Western, male point of view. These male leaders' perceptions and actions are usually uncon-scious and grounded in implicit biases.[16] People who are not part of the socially dominant groups may engage in "code switching," in which they adjust their speech, and "covering," in which they adjust their behaviors, which can include spotlighting or suppressing aspects of their identities, to gain access to and survive or thrive in leadership. DM, a gay man who worked at a Fortune 500 company with a nondiscrimination policy, said, "I couldn't be fired for being gay, but when partners at the firm invite straight men to squash or drinks, they don't invite the women or gay men. I'm being passed over for opportunities that could lead to being promoted."[17] Unless leaders intentionally work to identify and dismantle these structural inequities, there will be unfair advantages and disadvantages in the allocation of resources, opportunities, and rewards in the workplace that create disparate outcomes.[18]

INCREASINGLY DIVERSE WORKFORCES AND CONSUMERS

In addition to the moral imperative, there is a strong business case for DEI in leadership. Due to rising global migration, populations—and therefore workforces—are becoming

increasingly diverse, international, and interconnected.[19] By 2025, the world's middle-class population is expected to reach 3.2 billion, up from 1.8 billion in 2009, with the majority of this increase coming from Africa, Asia, and Latin America. As income levels increase, so does consumer demand.[20] Additionally, consumers are able to use their digital devices to exercise greater choice and therefore expect to exert more of a voice in shaping the products and services they consume.[20] Organizations are increasingly cultivating more consumer-centric mindsets and capabilities by using design thinking, with concepts such as "empathy" and "connectedness," to better understand clients' lives and future needs. Organizations are also increasingly taking a leader-led approach to talent development programs, which puts the responsibility on leaders to teach their teams using practical approaches, reality-based stories and case studies, and teachable moments.[20] Leaders need to be able to relate to their employees to successfully develop their talent. Given the increasingly diverse workforce and consumer base, organizations need leaders who represent diverse constituents, can understand and address their teams' and consumers' unique interests and needs, and are able to inclusively lead diverse teams. All of these dynamics are absolutely playing out in public health and healthcare, in which leaders need to be able to relate to and meets the needs of their diverse communities, employees, and patients.

ATTRACTING TOP TALENT AND CULTIVATING INNOVATION

Organizations that demonstrate a strong commitment to DEI are able to attract top talent, because prospective employees are increasingly prioritizing DEI in their selection criteria. In one study, 80% of respondents indicated that inclusion was important when choosing an employer, 39% reported that they would leave their current organization for a more inclusive one, and 23% (30% of Millennial respondents) indicated that they had already left an organization for a more inclusive one.[21] A more diverse workforce also means diversity of thought, which breeds innovation, a critical leadership and organizational success factor.

There are significant cultural, political, and economic differences in markets, with stiff competition for top talent between local and global companies. The expansion of higher education is creating more highly educated and mobile workers, with a large percentage of the global graduates coming from China and India.[20] However, many companies struggle with successfully attracting, including, and retaining diverse leaders and employees. For example, while their numbers in the workforce are increasing, women hold only 12% of corporate board seats worldwide.[20] In a 2015 survey of 362 executives, only 10% believed that they had the talent needed to win new customers.[20]

In a 2014 survey of 1,500 executives, 75% responded that innovation was among their company's top three priorities; however, 83% rated their companies' innovation capabilities as average (70%) or weak (13%).[20] While many leaders agree that collective intelligence enhances group performance, few understand how to consistently achieve it. A leader's understanding of diversity and inclusion will be critical to their organization's success.[20]

ANTICIPATING AND OVERCOMING RESISTANCE TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

Despite numerous moral and business reasons to advance DEI, some leaders and employees remain inactive or even resistant. When researchers asked White, heterosexual, cisgender men with white-collar jobs in the United States about their views on DEI in the workplace, only 10% of respondents thought DEI were *not* important at all, but many were not involved in such efforts. The most common reasons they gave was that they were "too busy" or did not feel that advancing DEI would benefit them,[22] which indicates a deeper issue about how company leaders frame the case for and stress the importance of DEI for their employees and organizations. If DEI efforts have not been positioned as mission critical, leadership imperatives, and important for all staff, they may seem to some, particularly those in socially

dominant groups, as optional and even extracurricular. Given that White, heterosexual, cis-gender men continue to hold a disproportionate percentage of executive positions, if they see themselves as too busy or not personally implicated in DEI in the workplace, it can be challenging to make significant progress.

Another common reason that people resist embracing and advancing DEI is biases, which, whether implicit or overt, impact the way we see ourselves and others, assess situations, and make decisions. For example, implicit stereotypes cause people to judge others according to unconscious ideas they hold. With similarity-attraction bias, people tend to more easily and deeply connect with people who look and act like them. With in-group favoritism, people favor members of their in-groups, and with attribution error, people use the wrong reason to explain someone's behavior. Coupled with in-group favoritism, this results in a positive attribution for in-group members and a negative attribution for out-group members.[20] These and other biases can cause leaders to recruit and select employees and their replacements who are similar to them, which thwarts diversity efforts, perpetuates existing power structures, and can create a culture of exclusion for those in the out-group.

In the following sections, evidence, traits and characteristics, and strategies for diversity, inclusion, equity, and intercultural competence will be presented.

DIVERSITY AND REPRESENTATION IN LEADERSHIP

Organizations' success depends on their leaders' ability to optimize an increasingly diverse and dispersed talent pool.[23] Additionally, organizations benefit when leaders bring their diverse identities and unique lived experiences to their leadership roles, styles, and approaches, despite overt or subtle pressure to conform to dominant cultural notions of leadership. One research report, based on interviews with leaders in different roles and observation of leadership groups, sought to understand how people identify themselves and their leadership in relation to others, and how individuals assess their inclusive leadership and its impact on their effectiveness.[18] The authors defined diverse leadership as "that which integrates leaders with a wide range of characteristics in a way which cherishes rather than deletes difference and fully utilises the potential benefits of a more heterogeneous leadership."[24(p2)]

CURRENT LACK OF REPRESENTATION

Diversity and representation matter, given that organizations with more diverse leadership teams have better long-term performance.[3] Currently, however, BIPOC, women, and LGBTQ+ people are underrepresented in C-Suites and boards of directors in for-profit companies as well as nonprofit organizations. Around 10% of S&P 500 companies explicitly disclosed their directors' race/ethnicity, and 8 out of 10 of their board members were White.[25] Women comprise half the world's workforce and the majority of college graduates yet hold only about a quarter of leadership roles.[26] Only 4.7% of companies in each of the Russell 3000 and S&P 500 indexes had a female board chair and less than one out of five board committees in the Russell 3000 were led by women.[25] Only 6% of CEOs of S&P 500 companies were women, which equated to merely 30 of 322 companies.[27] Nonprofit organizations in the United States are faring no better. According to BoardSource's 2017 report of nonprofit board practices, 90% of chief executives and 84% of board members reported as White, and 27% of boards identified as entirely White.[28] Since BoardSource began studying diversity data, board diversity has remained largely unchanged, with BIPOC representation never exceeding 18%.[28] Sixty-five percent (65%) of chief executives stated that they were somewhat or extremely dissatisfied with racial and ethnic diversity levels.[28]

According to the Building Movement Project's 2017 *Nonprofits, Leadership, and Race* survey results, respondents, in particular BIPOC respondents, agreed or strongly agreed that

executive recruiters do not do enough to identify a diverse pool of qualified candidates for executive nonprofit positions, predominately white boards often do not support the leadership potential of BIPOC staff, and organizations often rule out BIPOC candidates based on the perceived lack of "fit" with the current organizational culture. Additionally, BIPOC respondents reported that it was harder for them to advance because of their smaller professional networks.[29]

The gender leadership gap is also evident at the national and global leadership levels. Women held only 25.2% of parliamentary seats and 21.2% of ministerial positions around the world in 2019, according to the World Economic Forum.[30] Only 68 of the 153 countries covered by the report had a female head of state in the past 50 years.[26]

These patterns are also seen in public health and healthcare leadership. Based on data from the American Hospital Association and American College of Healthcare Executives, 89% of all hospital CEOs in 2019 were White.[33] At local health departments in 2019, 92% of experienced and 90% of new (with less than 3 years of experience) top executives were White.[31] Women, who comprised 66% of top executives, fared better.[31] According to the U.S. Census Bureau, in 2019, 60% of the U.S. population was White.[32] This disparity persists despite two decades of increasing racial and ethnic diversity among graduate students in health administration. Racial or ethnic minority students made up 43.7% of the Association of University Programs in Health Administration graduate programs in the 2018 to 2019 academic year.[33]

There are numerous reasons for the lack of proportionate diversity and representation in leadership. Current organizational leaders must try to understand how their organizational norms might implicitly discourage certain leadership styles or silence certain voices. For example, in companies where most leaders are White men who gain respect by speaking assertively, women of all races and Black men may be perceived negatively for being assertive and subsequently labeled as "aggressive" or "angry." This places leaders of color and women in a double bind. They can conform to the organization's norms, which sometimes means deviating from cultural prescriptions for their group, or they can do the opposite. Either way, they will violate one set of expectations and risk marginalization and diminished opportunities for advancement.[33]

DIVERSITY AS A SUCCESS FACTOR

Increased diversity in C-Suites, boards of directors, and employees overall has been associated with organizational success. Companies that have a disconnect between what they say they are doing and the actual progress they are making in diversity can seriously erode internal and external credibility and further contribute to a lack of inclusion.[3]

In companies that promote two-dimensional (2D) diversity in leadership, in which leaders exhibit at least three inherent and three acquired diversity traits, these leaders are more likely to have their ideas win endorsement from decision-makers, get developed or prototyped, and get deployed in the marketplace.[34] Companies with more than 30% of women on their executive teams are significantly more likely to outperform those with between 10% and 30%, and these companies are more likely to outperform those with fewer or no women executives.[3]

DIVERSITY FOSTERS INNOVATION

Boston Consulting Group found that companies with more diverse management teams had 19% higher revenues due to innovation. An inherently diverse workforce can be a vital source of innovation because individuals with different identities will be more attuned to the unmet needs of consumers who are like them. Organizations with multicultural leaders and workforces in which leaders prize differences, value each employee's voice, and manage rather than suppress disruption have greater means to promote and support innovation.[34] CTI's 2013 report found that when teams had one or more members who represented the gender, ethnicity, culture, generation, or sexual orientation of the end user, the entire

team was as much as 158% more likely to understand and innovate effectively for that end user. On the other hand, homogeneity stifles innovation. When leadership lacked innate or acquired diversity, or failed to foster a speak-up culture, fewer ideas with market potential made it to market.[34] STI found that ideas from BIPOC, women, LGBTQ+ people, and Gen-Ys were less likely to win the endorsement they needed to move forward because the predominantly White, male, heterosexual, cisgender leaders who came from similar educational and socioeconomic backgrounds didn't value ideas for which they didn't personally see a need.[34]

LEADERS SPEAK ON DIVERSITY

"There are massive biases and incredible assumptions made about your abilities based on the way you look or on past experiences with others of the same racial and ethnic background,"[50(para1)] states Folasade May, the director of the Melvin and Bren Simon Gastroenterology Quality Improvement Program at University of California Los Angeles Health. She continues, "If the perception is that we are challenging to work with, leadership teams are less likely to take a chance and invite us to the table. This is unlikely to be the case when a white person does not perform well; that person does not reflect poorly on the entire race. It's a heavy burden that we are often responsible for challenging the future perception of our entire race."[50(para1)] Anu Kumar, president and CEO of Ipas, offered, "My advice to women of color who have been overlooked, overworked, or passed over is to recognize that we are part of a system that is rigged against us and to try to make peace with it while continuing the struggle to change it by seizing opportunities when they arrive or creating them."[35(para15)] Her remarks are echoed by Jen Wong, COO of Reddit and the daughter of Chinese immigrants, who stated that although companies are realizing the importance of diversity in the workplace, she has noticed the presence of a "bamboo ceiling" in the United States. She advises women and BIPOC to be "vulnerable and authentic," as there is "nothing more important than being human."[36] Glen Senk, the former CEO of Urban Outfitters, advised other LGBTQ+ leaders and employees to authentically be themselves when leading an organization. He stated, "When you are running an organization and have thousands of people you are trying to align around an objective, there's not time for hidden layers. You need trust, and in order to have trust, you need to be honest. Who wants to live a double life?"[37(para20)] Paul Block, of the U.S. company Merisant, noted, "People with different lifestyles and different backgrounds challenge each other more. Diversity creates dissent, and you need that. Without it, you're not going to get any deep inquiry or breakthroughs."[38(para3)]

STRATEGIES TO INCREASE DIVERSITY AND REPRESENTATION IN LEADERSHIP

There are numerous strategies leaders can employ to increase diversity and representation in senior leadership, which include:

- Create and socialize a strong and customized case for DEI and promote it company wide.
- Strengthen leaders' capability and accountability for DEI.
- Set data-driven goals in workforce plans, taking into account which forms of multivariate diversity to prioritize in addition to race, ethnicity, and gender.
- Ensure equitable promotion opportunities through fair, de-biased, transparent, and monitored processes.
- Promote diverse talent into executive, senior management, and technical roles.
- Enforce a zero-tolerance policy for discriminatory behavior and strengthen managers' capacity to identify and address microaggressions.
- Establish norms for inclusive behaviors and assess leaders and employees against them.

- Build a culture of belonging in which managers tangibly embrace their commitment to multivariate forms of diversity.
- Assess belonging in internal surveys.[3]

To increase diversity in boards of directors, McKinsey and Company recommend:

- Begin planning early, long before a vacancy arises.
- Groom and develop relationships with prospective board members.
- Disrupt the usual search processes that tend to rely on existing board members' networks, which are often composed of people similar to them.
- Conduct a formal search and nomination process with an explicit focus on diversity.
- Widen the search by seeking candidates from different sectors than usual.
- Review and revise board policies, procedures, and practices, especially term limits, to create vacancies that offer opportunities for greater diversity.[39]

Iris Bohnet, a behavioral economist, professor, and director of the Women and Public Policy Program at the Harvard Kennedy School, advocates smart, data-driven, systemic solutions like de-biasing organizations more so than working to change individual leaders' mindsets. Debiasing is a process through which organizational leaders assess and take steps to reduce cognitive biases in organizational policies, procedures, and processes. "I don't think the solution is to fix women or people of color or other underrepresented groups, but eventually we have to move to fixing the system."[40]

INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP TRAITS AND PRACTICES

The goal of inclusion should be to ensure that everyone in an organization feels welcome, valued, and supported. This is how leaders strengthen employee engagement and retention, and how they create a stage for teams that perform at a high level. On the flip side, organizational cultures that are not inclusive are more likely to experience negative outcomes in terms of employee satisfaction and retention, resulting in higher turnover rates and lower organizational performance.

What makes people feel included in organizations, that they are being treated fairly and respectfully, and that they are valued and belong? There are many components to this. An organization's mission, vision, values, policies, procedures, and practices are all vitally important. Coworker behaviors have a large impact; however, leaders play a pivotal role. What leaders say and do make up to a 70% difference as to whether an individual reports feeling included. This matters because the more people feel included, the more they participate, make an extra effort, and collaborate well, all of which improve organizational performance.[10]

Inclusive leadership is a key differentiating factor to create organizational success.[23] Jim Turley of Ernst & Young drew an important distinction: "Diversity itself is about the mix of people you have, and creating an inclusive culture is about making that mix work."[38(para13)] Inclusive leader behaviors unleash the full potential of a diverse workforce. Leaders who create a speak-up culture position companies to realize greater efficiencies and cut costs.[34] By committing to diversity and inclusion, organizations reap many benefits, including higher employee morale, loyalty, retention, and productivity.[41]

Diversity and inclusion are strongly interrelated, and both are needed to realize organizational success. According to Dr. Stephanie Creary, assistant professor and organizational scholar at the Wharton School, "You think the issue is you need more underrepresented people, but your culture may not be designed to nurture that talent, and that's the problem."[42(p42)]

Inclusion directly enhances performance. Research demonstrated that teams helmed by inclusive leaders were 17% more likely to report that they were high performing, 20% more likely to say they made high-quality decisions, and 29% more likely to report behaving collaboratively. A 10% improvement in perceptions of inclusion increased work attendance by

almost one day per year per employee, thereby reducing the cost of absenteeism. However, inclusion in leaders can be challenging to assess. Most leaders in this study were unsure about whether others experienced them as inclusive or not. Only a third (36%) saw their inclusive leadership capabilities as others did, another third (32%) overrated their capabilities, and the final third (33%) underrated their capabilities. Most importantly, leaders were rarely certain about the specific behaviors that impacted their rating as more or less inclusive.[43]

DELOITTE'S SIX SIGNATURE TRAITS OF INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP

Deloitte surveyed employees about inclusion, interviewed leaders identified as inclusive, and reviewed the academic literature to develop six traits that distinguished inclusive leaders from others and then developed a tool to assess those traits. They outlined the six signature traits of inclusive leadership, asserting that inclusive leadership is about (a) treating people and groups fairly, based on their unique characteristics, rather than on stereotypes; (b) personalizing individuals by seeking to understand and valuing the uniqueness of diverse others while also accepting them as members of the group; and (c) leveraging the thinking of diverse groups for smarter ideation and decision-making that reduces the risk of being blindsided.[20] The six signature traits are:

■ **Commitment**: Highly inclusive leaders are committed to diversity and inclusion because they align with their personal values, and they understand the business case for them. Staying the course is hard, but leaders back up their verbal commitments by prioritizing time, energy, and resources to fully address inclusion. Inclusive leaders possess a strong sense of personal responsibility for change and understand that change begins with them.

■ **Courage**: Openly acknowledging improvements that are needed means incurring personal risk. Highly inclusive leaders challenge the status quo—beginning with themselves, and then others, and the system. They are courageous to be humble about their strengths and vulnerable about their weaknesses.

■ **Cognizance of bias**: Highly inclusive leaders are aware of their own and their organizations' blind spots. They engage in corrective strategies to advance equity. They acknowledge that, despite best intentions, their leaders and organizations have biases, and they institute policies, processes, and structures to mitigate them. They are highly aware of implicit biases, stereotypes, negative attitudes, and process biases, such as confirmation bias and groupthink.[44] They are aware of circumstances, such as fatigue, time pressures, and other stressors, that may cause them to be more susceptible to biases. They understand that humans' natural state, without intervention, leans toward self-interest and replication and that success in a diverse world requires a different approach.

■ **Curiosity**: Diverse experiences, ideas, and teams facilitate growth. Highly inclusive leaders have an open mindset, empathy, acceptance of their own limitations, a strong desire to understand how others view and experience the world, and a tolerance for ambiguity. Their followers feel valued, demonstrate loyalty, and therefore provide access to more in-depth information, which enables leaders to engage in more effective decision-making.

■ **Cultural intelligence**: Highly inclusive leaders embrace unfamiliar environments and have a desire for learning from diverse others. They understand that people see the world through different cultural frames. They value cultural differences, defy ethnocentric and superior tendencies, build strong connections with people from different backgrounds, and are confident and effective in intercultural communications and interactions.

■ **Collaboration**: A diverse-thinking team is greater than the sum of its parts. Highly inclusive leaders create an empowering environment for individuals and teams and effectively leverage the thinking of diverse employees, customers, and other stakeholders.[20]

Commitment is the most critical of these traits; without it, the other five attributes cannot be fully developed.

IDENTIFYING AND DISRUPTING LEADERSHIP BIASES

For those working around a leader, the single most important trait that generates a sense of inclusiveness is a leader's visible awareness of bias. According to comments on a 360-degree Inclusive Leadership Assessment (ILA), participants particularly noticed when a leader "constantly challenged their own biases and encouraged others to be aware of their preconceived leanings." An inclusive leader seeks insight into their biases by, for example, "Asking others to give feedback on whether their thought process is biased."[10]

In addition to awareness and acknowledgment of biases, participants cared about humility, empathy, and perspective-taking.[10] Leadership biases can cause people to overlook great ideas, undermine individual potential, and create a less-than-ideal work experience for colleagues.[45]

Leaders can take the following steps to begin the process of addressing and mitigating biases[45]:

- Accept that biases are operating and commit to learning more about them and how to interrupt them.
- Build a culture where people talk openly about recognizing and mitigating biases and hold each other accountable.
- Assess the current state of biases, work to make improvements, track improvements, and use the data to further hone strategies.

LEADING DIVERSE TALENT AND TEAMS

Future success depends on organizations' and leaders' ability to optimize an increasingly diverse and dispersed talent pool.[23] Inclusive leaders create intentional opportunities for innovation and collaboration. They rely on data, such as diversity of thinking preferences, to design teams that are optimized for creative and innovative thinking, and then they set them up for success. This includes articulating the "why" and giving people frameworks, guidelines, and a toolkit to work together effectively, consider different ideas, and push each other to think in new ways.[46]

In an inclusive culture, employees know that, irrespective of their race, gender, creed, sexual orientation, and physical ability, they can fulfill their personal objectives by aligning them with those of the organization, have a meaningful career, and be valued as an individual. They are valued for how they contribute to the organization's mission.[38]

STRATEGIES AND PRACTICES TO INCREASE INCLUSION

Deloitte determined that inclusive leadership is not about the occasional grand gesture, but rather routine and smaller-scale but genuine comments and actions that leaders practice. Leaders that were determined to be the least inclusive would try to overpower others, display favoritism, and discount alternate views. Verbatim responses from their assessments identified some of the following inclusive leadership behaviors:

- **Shares personal weaknesses**: "[This leader] will openly ask about information that she is not aware of. She demonstrates a humble unpretentious work manner. This puts others at ease, enabling them to speak out and voice their opinions, which she values."
- **Learns about cultural differences:** "[This leader] has taken the time to learn the ropes (common words, idioms, customs, likes/dislikes) and the cultural pillars."
- **Acknowledges team members as individuals**: "[This leader] leads a team of over 100 people and yet addresses every team member by name, knows the work stream that they support and the work that they do."[43(para16–18)]

There are numerous strategies leaders can employ to increase inclusion. These include personal strategies, such as: (a) get to know your blind spots, (b) remain visible and vocal, (c) deliberately seek out differences in thought and approach, and (d) check your impact.[43]

Organizational strategies include[41]:

■ Promote your organization's commitment to inclusion.
■ Facilitate collaboration across the organization.
■ Assess and de-bias your job descriptions:
  ● Choose words carefully; select words that do not connote a certain gender, and so on.
  ● Use inclusive, gender-neutral pronouns, such as "they."
  ● Highlight the organization's investment in employee development and celebrate employees' capacity to grow.

LEADERSHIP TO ADVANCE EQUITY

Public demand for racial, gender, and other forms of justice and equity is clear and urgent. Sixty-one percent of Americans believe the United States needs new civil rights laws to fight discrimination against Black Americans, according to a September 2020 Gallup poll.[47] As much as people in the United States expect their government to increase equity for Black Americans and other vulnerable populations, customers and other stakeholders expect organizational leaders to take even greater action on DEI. In a concurrent Edelman poll,[48] 77% of respondents said companies must respond to injustice in order to earn or keep their trust.[49]

To be able to advance equity, leaders need to develop an equity mindset. United Way Worldwide's Equity Activation Model is a systems-based view for how businesses can activate equity within and outside of their organizations. It is structured around three main spheres of influence: workforce, marketplace, and society. Each sphere, in turn, includes multiple activators—key areas of activity and everyday choices such as talent advancement; products and services; and standards and policies—through which organizations can exert their influence to activate equity. Within each activator, organizations take specific actions in pursuit of equity.[42]

Equity demands systems-level changes, beginning with challenging current policies, procedures, practice, patterns, and cultures and ensuring accountability.[42] Promoting systems-level changes to advance equity needs to occur at different levels and involves many components.

■ **Workforce:** access, enablement, and advancement
■ **Marketplace:** products and services, marketing and sales, ecosystems and alliances, and supply chain
■ **Society:** community impact and partnership, standards, and policy

STRATEGIES TO ADVANCE LEADERSHIP DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

Bringing together all three areas, there are numerous key strategies to advance leadership DEI.[20,43,49]

■ **Every leader owns and role models DEI:** Every board member and C-suite leader in the organization should own a set of responsibilities for driving DEI in the workplace, marketplace, and society. Every leader needs to see it as their responsibility to role-model inclusive leadership.
■ **Strategic alignment:** Executive leaders need to view and promote DEI as core pillars within the organization's strategic plan and workplans. They need to articulate a compelling

narrative as to why inclusive leadership is mission critical and a leadership imperative. They must make meaningful workplace changes to signify the importance of DEI.

■ **Recruitment:** HR leaders can ensure that job advertisements emphasize inclusive leadership capabilities and the organization's commitment to DEI. They can incorporate inclusion into their behavioral interview questions.

■ **Performance management:** HR leaders can integrate inclusive leadership capabilities into the organization's competency expectations, link key performance indicators (KPIs) to inclusive behaviors and DEI outcomes, ensure that those promoted to senior positions embody inclusive leadership and demonstrate a genuine commitment to DEI, and hold leaders and managers truly accountable for non-inclusive behaviors.

■ **Rewards and recognition:** Executive leaders can reward leaders who role-model inclusive behaviors and showcase inclusive leaders and the organizational benefits from their inclusive behaviors.

■ **Leadership development:** HR leaders can formally assess inclusive leadership capabilities across senior leaders and managers, identify individual and organizational developmental gaps, and create development plans based on the six signature traits of inclusive leadership. They can require leaders to seek 360-degree feedback on their inclusive leadership practices and incorporate the feedback into their personalized development plans. They can provide inclusive leadership education, coaching, and mentoring to strengthen leaders' capacity. They can integrate inclusive leadership into the organization's talent identification and development strategy to assess readiness and develop current and future leaders.

■ **System integration:** Executive leaders can integrate inclusive leadership as well as the broader principles of DEI into the organization's innovation strategy and processes.

SUMMARY

This chapter provides the definitions, evolution, intersections, skills, mindsets, and practices of diversity, equity, inclusion, and intercultural and global competence in leadership. The increasingly diverse, international, and interconnected world calls for inclusive leaders who will commit to advance DEI. Intercultural and global competence are related, essential leadership mindsets, skills, and practices. There is a moral imperative and compelling business case for increased diverse leadership who can represent their stakeholders and deliver services they want and need. The public outcry for justice makes leaders' cultural humility, equity mindset, and action critical. DEI and intercultural and global competence in leadership are vital in public health and health systems, given the effects of systemic racism and other forms of oppression on people's health and healthcare systems.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Who are inclusive leadership role models for you, what have you learned from them, and how will you apply what you learned to your leadership practice?
2. Explain and give examples of why DEI and intercultural competence are particularly important in public health and healthcare leadership.
3. What barriers to DEI in leadership have you experienced, and how might you apply some of the strategies outlined in the chapter to address them?
4. Given what you learned about DEI and intercultural competence in leadership in this chapter, what steps will you take to increase your intercultural competence, inclusive leadership, and equity mindset?

CASE STUDY: LEADERSHIP DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION MISTAKES

INSTRUCTIONS

Read the following case and then respond to the questions that follow. Content warning: This case discusses workplace biases and microaggressions.

CASE

We were only a few minutes into the all-staff meeting, and I, a woman of color who prides herself on her commitment to DEI in the workplace, had just made a terrible mistake. In an effort to start the meeting in an inclusive and welcoming manner, I introduced a new team member to the rest of the employees. I expected the new employee to be impressed and pleased by my efforts to warmly welcome them to our organization; however, I was wrong.

After my warm introduction, I looked at the person, expecting to see their positive reaction. Instead, their face revealed an expression of confusion and hurt, a tense jaw, and eyes that sparkled with tears. I wondered what I had done to cause such a reaction. A few moments later, it clicked. I had not asked for the person's pronouns, and even worse, I had misgendered them by assuming that they used "he/him" pronouns based on my impressions of their physical appearance.

Thoughts rushed into my mind about what I should say to "fix" the situation in the moment, or if I should postpone the rest of the meeting, or if I should address the situation later since I had already caused enough harm. As terrible as I felt, the last thing I wanted to do was exacerbate the situation. I knew that the way I handled this situation in word and deed would be critical. I referred to my new colleague by their name only throughout the rest of the meeting. When the meeting was finished, I asked to speak with the new team member privately, and they agreed.

Once we were alone, I quickly apologized and accepted responsibility for my mistake, but then I stumbled over my words. I fell silent. After a few moments, my colleague generously stated, "I understand that you made an honest mistake, but it's triggering to have to go through this experience over and over again. For most people, starting a new position brings feelings of hope, happiness, and excitement. For me, I always have this sense of anxiety that situations like this will happen, and I'll have to make quick decisions about how to respond, whether to correct the person, or let it go. Simple behaviors that most people do not have to think twice about, such as going to the restroom, cause me extreme anxiety, because at any given moment, I may be subject to the question 'What are you doing here' or 'This isn't the right restroom for you.'"

As I actively listened to their explanation, I was struck by how getting a seemingly small detail wrong could have such a drastic impact on someone's feelings. This "small" detail is actually not small at all. What I learned from these DEI mistakes were that making an assumption and failing to demonstrate gender sensitivity in this situation led to a new employee feeling uncomfortable in their new place of work. This was the complete opposite of my positive intentions. No matter my good intentions, I had still caused harm. In hindsight, I realize the importance of offering my own pronouns and clarifying someone else's pronouns *before* speaking and showing them respect by using their stated pronouns.

CASE STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What critical DEI leadership mistakes did the author make?

2. How did the author take responsibility for her mistakes in the moment?

3. What did the author do to rectify her mistake, and how effective were her actions?

4. Think of a leadership DEI mistake that you have made recently and respond to the following questions:
   - What critical DEI mistake did you make?
   - How did you become aware of your mistake? Was it on your own, or did someone bring it to your attention?
   - How did you take responsibility for your mistake in the moment?
   - What actions have you taken since then to handle similar situations more effectively?
   - What were your most important lessons learned from your mistake?
   - How are you applying your lessons learned to your leadership practice?
   - What are your key lessons learned from this case study activity overall?

CASE STUDY: ORGANIZATIONAL DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION MISTAKES

INSTRUCTIONS

Read the following case and then answer the questions that follow. Content warning: This case discusses workplace biases, microaggressions, and discrimination complaints. Note the company named is fictitious.

CASE

Santé Corp is a well-known home health agency with over 6,000 employees in 12 regional offices. On trend with many other corporations, Santé Corp's senior leadership team made a public announcement of their company's commitment to DEI; however, they made a series of serious and costly mistakes. In their DEI marketing campaign, they unwittingly portrayed Asian employees as highly professional, logical, and technologically savvy, and the way they depicted Black employees caused them to feel even more alienated. They quickly rolled out a number of DEI activities such as town hall meetings with high-profile BIPOC speakers. They did not conduct an assessment or integrate DEI into their company vision, mission, values, strategic plan, and workplace culture. Several BIPOC, female-identified, and LGBTQ+ employees lodged discrimination complaints. A few former employees publicly shared their complaints on a popular social media business site, with immediate responses from other former employees sharing similar stories about DEI abuses. Santé Corp saw a dramatic spike in resignations, particularly by BIPOC, female-identified people, and LGBTQ+ employees.

Former employee testimonials on social media included:

"My former white, heterosexual, cisgender male boss once told our interview team that he didn't think that a candidate, who was a person of color, was fit for our open position because he was not 'professional' enough. When I asked him to elaborate, he noted the candidate's cultural dress, feminine mannerisms, and speech."

"As a woman of color, I noticed a significant pay gap between me and my male colleagues who were at the same level and career track. When I asked for an explanation from my manager and HR, I was told that it was not an issue of race or gender but assertiveness in the role."

"Although I publicly shared that I was a gay woman, I was frequently asked, 'Is your husband here?' at work social events. Having to constantly correct the assumption that I was heterosexual was draining, demoralizing, and made me feel like I could not be my authentic self in the workplace."

CASE STUDY QUESTIONS

1. What common organizational DEI mistakes did Santé Corp leaders make?

2. How have you made or witnessed similar organizational DEI mistakes, and how would you rectify those mistakes in the future?

3. What lessons have you learned from this case study, and how will you apply them in your leadership practices?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

LEADERSHIP MEASUREMENT TOOLS AND EXERCISES

◼ **Harvard Implicit Association Test (IAT) for Gender-Career and Race** (https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/user/agg/blindspot/indexgc.htm).

  ● The Gender-Career IAT often reveals a relative link between family and females and between career and males. The Race IAT requires the ability to distinguish faces of European and African origin. It indicates that most people in the United States have an automatic preference for White over Black. Note that the statements can be United States-centric and may or may not be applicable to people from different countries. Once you have completed both IATs, respond to the following reflection questions:

    ◼ How did your results confirm or challenge your understanding of your biases?

    ◼ As a leader, what are the benefits to having a better understanding of your biases?

    ◼ Reflecting back on your life, which of your biases have changed or stayed the same? For those that have changed, what contributed to the changes?

◼ **The APHA DEI Toolkit** (www.apha.org/-/media/files/pdf/affiliates/equity_toolkit.ashx)

  ● Governance Assessment and Tools was created by the APHA and includes five assessments on governance, mission-driven programs, partnerships, communication, and advocacy.

◼ **The Center for Global Inclusion–DEI Approaches, Insight, and Impact Worksheet** (https://centreforglobalinclusion.org/The-Centre/di-approaches-insight-impact-activity)

● This 20- to 30-minute activity is designed to (a) educate participants on the Five Approaches to DEI that are part of the Global Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Benchmarks (GDEIB) and (b) help participants gain insight into the impact of the similarities and differences between their personal approach to DEI and their organization's approach to DEI and to determine how those differences or similarities might guide their actions. The one-page worksheet contains activity instructions, a summary of the five approaches, and sections for self-assessment, reflection, and discussion.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A robust set of instructor resources designed to supplement this text is available. Qualifying instructors may request access by emailing **textbook@springerpub.com.**

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