




Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

 Written and reviewed by Seasoned Match Mentors

Diversity, equity, and inclusion are three closely linked values held by many that are working to be supportive of different groups of individuals, including people of different races, ethnicities, religions, abilities, genders, and sexual orientations.

Mentee Objective covered

Encourage the mentee to note DE&I situations in their lives past and present. These can be discussed in monthly sessions to evaluate how situations noted impacted the mentee and others around them.

Goals / Objectives of this Module

Encourage and maintain ongoing open discussions between mentor and mentee as appropriate to the topic during monthly conversations. This is an evolving, lifelong process which will result in supporting the best abilities of all concerned. Discuss the importance of this topic in the workforce, academic settings, volunteer commitments and daily life.

LESSON / MODULE TOPIC COVERED

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion are mutually reinforcing principles. A focus on diversity alone is insufficient because a sense of belonging (inclusion) and experience of fairness (equity) is critically important in ensuring an equitable and inclusive space. Knowing the importance of DE&I wherever you are and updating the language you use to describe it is a strong first step. Specific activities that mentor/mentee pairs can engage in to strengthen and build awareness around DE&I will be covered.

Ways to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion

- Be aware of unconscious bias
- Communicate the importance of managing bias
- Promote equity
- Participate in training programs
- Acknowledge celebrations of all cultures
- Mix up the people you interact with

Counteracting Unconscious bias

The human brain processes massive amounts of information every second. To avoid cognitive burnout, our brains take shortcuts to simplify all the information we take in. This is efficient, but unfortunately, it can lead to unconscious bias if left unchecked. Discover unconscious perceptions and behaviors that prevent the full development, utilization, and advancement of all people.

The first step in mitigating our unconscious biases is by understanding them. Learn how to permanently resolve unconscious patterns of exclusion that result from these shortcut perceptions and behaviors. There are a number of things we can do to address our unconscious biases.



With your mentor/mentee discuss these individual strategies to mitigate unconscious biases. Which one seems the easiest for you or most challenging to overcome or notice?

- Having self-awareness around the tendency to revert to biases
- Understanding the nature of bias
- Having discussions around DE&I and unconscious biases with members of your same and dissimilar cultural backgrounds

Here are some strategies to help tackle unconscious bias:

- Accept that we all have unconscious biases
- Slow down
- Monitor your own behavior
- Pay particular attention to bias related to age, disability, sex, maternity, race, religion, etc.
- Monitor your own behavior
- Widen your social circle
- Avoid making assumptions or relying on gut instinct
- Speak out if you notice bias
- Apologize if you get it wrong

Cross-Cultural skills building

Understanding your own tendencies and unconscious biases is the first step to becoming a more diverse, equitable and inclusive individual. As you work on yourself, building bridges with members of different backgrounds is essential to breaking stereotypes and barriers.

By having regular conversations with members of diverse backgrounds with an open mind you will gain new perspectives and begin to:

- Enhance the quality of diverse professional relationships through valuing and respecting differences
- Acquire the skills necessary to communicate effectively where significant personal and cultural differences exist
- Learn to coach others where cross-cultural relationships or communication difficulties exist

Empowering those around you

As individuals, we build up DE&I within our organizations, academic settings, etc. Having conversations around DE&I and the challenges and opportunities it presents gives us new perspectives that can be shared with others. In this way, the conversations you have as mentors and mentees are not in a vacuum, but essential development for you to bring back to those you interact with on a daily basis. Consider the time with your mentor or mentee an opportunity to:

- Develop personal empowerment to make the area around you more equitable and inclusive
- Practice conflict and problem resolution as well as reconciliation
- Learn how to manage stress and prevent burnout when working towards overcoming the systemic challenges of building diverse, equitable and inclusive spaces.

Lesson Notes

Discussions each month should focus as appropriate on DE&I. Sources listed offer talking points that can be broken down to small topics to address monthly.

Post Lesson and Pre-Lesson Assignments

Continue what is working well and evaluate if something better might work and what that might be and how to incorporate it into your life.



SOURCES

1. Callister, L. (2021, July 26). 10 Ways to Reduce Unconscious Bias in the Workplace Skillcast. <https://www.skillcast.com/blog/10-ways-reduce-workplace-unconscious-bias>
2. Einhorn, C.S. (2019, January 12). How a Diverse Workforce Can Help Company Performance Diversity of Thought Assessment <https://www.barrons.com/articles/how-a-diverse-workforce-can-help-company-performance-51546625800>
3. GLLG Assessments. (2023) Diversity of Thought Assessment. <https://www.gllgassessments.com/dot/>
4. McKinsey & Company. (2022, August 17). What is Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/mckinsey-explainers/what-is-diversity-equity-and-inclusion>
5. Hunt, V., Layton D., & Prince, S. (2015, January) Why diversity matters. McKinsey & Company <https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/organization/our-insights/why-diversity-matters>
6. Reiners, B. (2021, February 23). Types of Diversity in The Workplace You Need to Know <https://builtin.com/diversity-inclusion/types-of-diversity-in-the-workplace>
7. Schroders. (2019, May). Diversity & Inclusion: Discovering unconscious biases [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mfAOjIYNZaM>
8. Nakintu, S. (2021, Nov). Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Key Terms and Definitions <https://www.naco.org/resources/featured/key-terms-definitions-diversity-equity-inclusion>
9. Together. (2022). Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Mentoring Program Handbook: <https://www.togetherplatform.com/handbook/custom-mentorship-programs/diversity-equity-and-inclusion-mentoring-program-mql>

