



# Leading Inclusive Teams

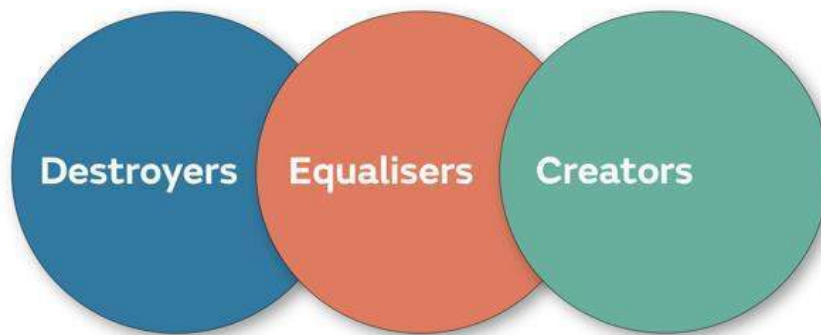
Participant Handbook  
MODULE 2

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# Types of Diverse Teams

Joseph DiStefano and Martha Maznevski conducted a piece of research called 'Creating Value with Diverse Teams in Global Management'. They identified 3 different types of diverse teams:

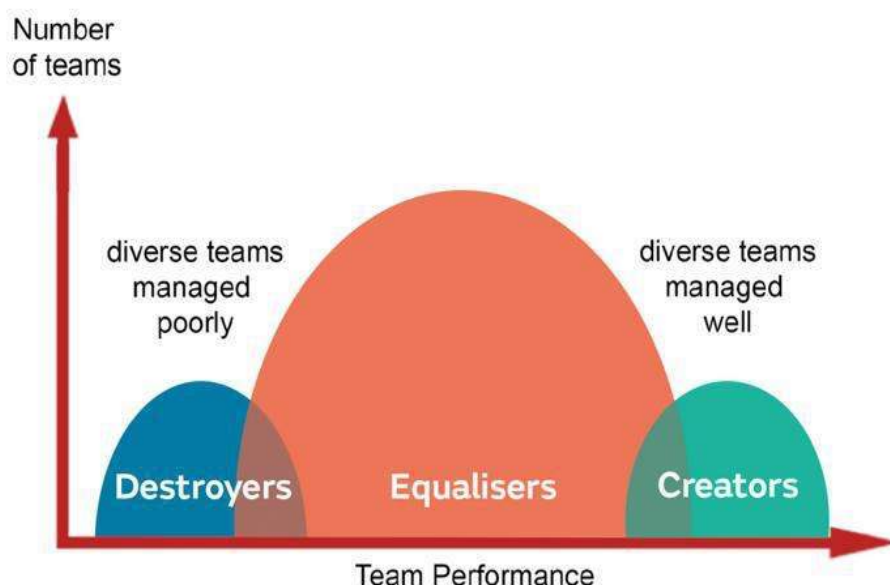


**Destroyers** – where the diversity of team members is not well managed and leads to conflict. Such teams destroy value for the organization.

**Equalisers** - where the diversity of team members is ignored or minimised in order to create 'stability'. Such teams do not necessarily destroy value but neither do they create it – their performance is average.

**Creators** - where the diversity of team members is well managed, allowing different ideas and approaches to flourish. Such teams tend to create new value.

The research shows that badly managed diverse teams often under-perform and that, if well managed, a diverse team can perform at a very high level. It also shows that Equaliser teams are by far the most common type.



# How to develop 'Creator' teams

Joseph DiStefano and Martha Maznevski's research, 'Creating Value with Diverse Teams in Global Management' proposes a 3-step process to releasing value from the diversity of your team:

1. **Mapping**
2. **Bridging**
3. **Integrating**

## Mapping to understand differences

This is a process of understanding and recording the diverse characteristics and preferences of each member of your team:

1. **Define the Territory** – there will be innumerable differences within your team, but which are the differences that most affect the work your team does – *the differences that make a difference*? Open a conversation (in whichever form works best) with your team about which diverse characteristics they think are most important in their work. You could suggest some possibilities such as: skills, experience, personality types, communication preferences, thinking / learning styles, etc. Always allow the option for them to suggest other differences. Ask them to narrow it down to the most important 1 or 2 characteristics.
2. **Draw the Map** – have a conversation about the chosen characteristics, identifying the preferences, barriers and needs of each team member, looking particularly for value they can add to the team's work and capturing them in whatever form the team decides.
3. **Assess the Terrain** – an opportunity for the team to reflect on the differences mapped, consider how they might explain problems that have already arisen and pre-empt future difficulties.

## Bridging to communicate across differences

This means putting into action what the map has taught your team about how to communicate effectively. There are 2 elements to this:

- The forms of communication – individual preferences around using different channels, tools, timescales, etc.
- The content of communication – “sending and receiving meaning as it was intended”, as the researchers put it. This means appreciating the personality, thinking and communication styles of others in the team and adapting how you do it, to avoid misunderstandings and conflict.

## Integrating to leverage differences

This is how you, as a manager, can begin to unlock the value of your team's diversity, in the way you help structure their work by, for example:

- Ensuring that everyone feels safe to participate fully in team discussions
- Ensuring that a group tasked with solving a complex problem has cognitive diversity and a range of experience, specialism, etc.
- Utilising differences that can complement each other to produce good decisions, such as bringing together those who prefer to reflect on an issue and those who like to move to action, and quickly resolving any conflicts that arise.

## Further Reading

Creating Value with Diverse Teams in Global Management. DiStefano & Maznevski, Organizational Dynamics, Vol. 29, No. 1, pp. 45–63, © 2000 Elsevier Science, Inc.

# Essential Skills for Inclusive Managers

We will continue our exploration of the Inclusive Behaviours proposed by Catalyst by returning to 'Curiosity' and considering what we can do to reduce the impact of prejudices and unconscious bias.

## Conscious Prejudice

We all have prejudice (pre-judgement) about some characteristics in other people that can trigger the stereotypes we have stored in our memory. These stereotypes can have their origin in:

- The wider society around us: in the media, culture, education system, etc.
- Our personal experiences: our family as we grew up, friends and colleagues, direct personal encounters

### What we can do about it

- **Identify** what your prejudices are and where they came from – own them, don't hide them!
- **Educate** yourself – swap your assumptions with facts by researching the characteristic that triggers you and, if it is possible and ok with them, by getting to know someone with that characteristic, going beyond your pre-judged image to the real person behind it.

## Unconscious Bias

It is hard to consciously change the way you perceive people and make decisions about them if you are unaware of how your thinking may be distorted by cognitive biases. Fortunately, we can work to become more aware by:

- Doing an **Implicit Association Test**. This is an online test, developed by Harvard University, to identify unconscious biases towards or away from a range of characteristics. Its validity is still the subject of debate, but it can give a useful insight into areas where you need to be particularly careful to reduce potential bias. The book 'Blindspot' in the reading list below, charts the development of the IAT.



You can take the tests by clicking the link below. Please note:

- from the dropdown menu, choose the country most relevant you
- you will need to allow good time as you will be asked to do a series of 'calibration' tests first
- be prepared to be stressed – it is designed to trigger your chimp!

[Click Here](#)

- Looking out for **Golden Nuggets**. These are moments when you realise that you have made an incorrect assumption about someone because of an unconscious bias you have. Remember that this could be a positive or negative assumption that turned out to be wrong. You may be shocked by and even ashamed of the mistake you made but get over that quickly and see it as a valuable golden nugget of insight into your unconscious mind and one that can help remind you of where you need to take extra care.



*Source: GoGraph*

## These can both help you identify your Hot Spots

These are particular characteristics in other people (race, age, religion, accent, hair colour, etc.) that you know are likely to trigger a negative or positive bias in you. If you have identified these, you can pay particular attention to your own responses when you are interacting with someone who has these characteristics



*Source: PosterEnvy*

### What we can do about it

We can't be constantly alert to our biases and taking steps to reduce their impact. That would be utterly exhausting because these unconscious processes never stop. But we can identify key points when we do need to take action to reduce bias:

- When the action or decision could have a significant impact on another person
- When you are in a **Danger Zone** (rushed, tired, emotional, hungry)
- When you are interacting with someone in your **Hot Spot**

## THEN YOU NEED TO SLOW THINGS DOWN!

You need to create some space, to allow your human to catch up and check out your chimp's reaction. Here's an example you may be familiar with:

*You receive an email and something in it really annoys you, you might be furious. You want to reply immediately, telling them exactly what you think. But you don't. You wait, let it sink in for an hour or so, maybe even overnight and then you draft a response.*

Unleashing an angry chimp is very tempting but it can cause a lot of unnecessary damage. We need to check our emotional response with some rational thinking, and this can take a little longer to achieve.

### Using Inclusion Nudges

We need to apply this approach to other areas of our working lives and we can do this using **nudges**. These are small, practical actions you can take that influence your behaviour or others', without them really thinking about it. No one likes being told what to do, but we can shape behaviour with a gentle nudge in the right direction.

### Personal Nudges

- Use a **keyword or action** - a word like 'pause' or an action like taking a deep breath
- Find a **trusted person**, someone who will be objective and ask their opinion – use their human to check your chimp.
- Use **counter stereotype images** - if you know that a certain characteristic triggers bias in you – maybe age, skin colour, gender, find an image of a person that completely contradicts the stereotype and have it around you – on the





office wall, as your laptop or phone wallpaper. There is plenty of research showing that exposure to such positive images can influence our subconscious attitudes. ('Blindspot', Chapter 8 – see reading list below)



Marissa Mayer

Michelle Obama

Albert Einstein

Source: Martin Klimek / ZUMA Press / Monica Schipper/Filmmagic/Getty Images

- Use **intention implementation planning** - if you are aware of an unconscious bias you have, develop a self-talk script for yourself:
    - a **goal intention** – e.g. “I will not be prejudiced”.
    - and**
    - an **implementation plan** – e.g. “If I see a dark-skinned face, then I’ll ignore the skin colour.”
  - Or
    - **goal intention** – “I will not exclude Sian”
    - **implementation plan** – “I will listen carefully to Sian when she talks.”
- Repeating these statements before an interaction will tend to reduce biased responses.
- (‘The Value of Difference’, Chapter 6 – See Reading List Below)
- **Mindfulness** is an excellent way to learn how to be more aware of your own thought processes and slow down your automatic responses to the world.

### Team Nudges - Meetings / Decision Making – Avoiding Groupthink

- **Allow Different Ways To Register Ideas**  
Build in a variety of ways to gather ideas, proposals, evaluations, etc. E.g. people can submit in writing in advance, everybody writes on a post-it at the beginning of a meeting (before discussion) and all ideas are read out, breaking up a meeting into pairs for discussion.





- **Golden Silence**

At the beginning of meetings, all participants are asked to read a carefully drafted document summarising the important issues to be discussed. This is done in silence, giving everyone time to digest and consider their own responses. When the discussion begins, the most senior person speaks last. This approach has been described as one of the most important strategic advantages of one of the world's most successful companies – Amazon.

- **Taking a 5-minute brain break**

Choose key moments in your meetings, e.g. after a long discussion and before you move to make a decision, and allow a 5 minute break. This is not a tea break or a time to check emails, this is 5 minutes for everyone to do whatever relaxes and 'grounds' them – a short walk round the office or outside, a mindfulness exercise, reading a few pages or listening to some music, for example.

- **Re-fuelling**

As your brain uses up its reserves of glucose, your ability to over-ride biases and make rational, evidence-based decisions is impaired. Provide some means of people topping up their energy at key points. Be aware of the diversity of your team (health issues, personal preferences, etc.) and offer a range of refreshments.

- **Bias Busting**

When you reconvene following a 5-minute Brain Break or Re-fuelling break, take a few minutes for everyone to consider if they think any biases or unevidenced assumptions have crept into the meeting discussion.

- **Allocating Someone To Be The Sceptic**

A team member is given the role of Sceptic. They question all decisions and ideas to ensure that proper consideration has been given. Rotate the role so that you don't end up with a permanent sceptic!



- **Engaging An Outside Eye**

Invite someone from outside the team to observe the meeting and give objective feedback on content and process.

- **Argue For The Other**

If clear groups are forming around ideas, ask the groups to swap ideas temporarily and develop arguments to support the opposing idea.



- **Silent Sense Check**

Once a decision has been reached, ask everyone to write down a summary of their understanding. Check the notes to see that everyone has the same understanding.

- **Use Checklists**

To make sure people aren't inadvertently excluded from events or processes, develop checklists of the considerations necessary for inclusion.

## **Organisation Nudges - Selection / Recruitment Processes**

- **Group Interview**

Interview groups of candidates together. This counteracts our tendency to evaluate against the 'norm' (the unconscious image in our head of what we like or feel comfortable with) and nudges us to evaluate against other candidates. It is important to get a good balance of candidates in the group to avoid minorities feeling inhibited.

- **Two-Part Interview**

After the standard interview, the panel retire to make a quick evaluation of strengths and weaknesses and further questions they would like to ask the candidate. They also flag any implicit associations they have noticed and challenge these by asking questions like "if she was a 'he', would we have thought the same?", etc. The panel re-join the candidate to ask further questions and conduct an evaluation of the interview.

- **Interrupter Bell**

Panel members have a hotel reception type bell, which they ring whenever they feel that the discussion is based on assumptions or biases about the candidate, rather than evidence. This can also be used in any talent development / review context.



- **Inclusion / Exclusion Selection Methodology**

Starting with a blank list and selecting people who meet the selection criteria is much less likely to trigger unconscious biases and stereotyping than starting with a full list and excluding those who don't meet them.

- **Advertising Posts**

This is a big issue and you should seek full guidance on the impact of unconscious processes in job postings, but here are two examples:

- Focus on a short list of essential job requirements, rather than a long list of 'desirables' – women are likely to apply only if they feel they meet at least 85% of the requirements, for men the figure is 40 – 60%.
- Try putting your proposed text into the gender decoder:

[click here](#)

## **Whole-Team Nudges**

- **Outgroup Contact**

The best way to reduce prejudice towards another, 'out' group is to enable contact – to 'humanise' them. If there is conflict between different teams, find a way of them getting an insight into each other's worlds. Do they know what each other's issues, difficulties, achievements are? The best conditions for this exchange are ones in which all parties:

- Have equal status
- Share common goals
- Are ready to cooperate
- See it as important
- Have the support of the 'authorities'

('The Value of Difference', Chapter 6 – See Reading List Below)

## **Further Reading:**

The Chimp Paradox. Prof Steve Peters, London: Vermilion, 2012

Thinking, Fast And Slow. Daniel Kahnemann, London: Penguin, 2011

Inclusion Nudges Guidebook. Tinna C. Nielsen, Lisa Kepinski. Amazon, 2016

The End of Bias. Jessica Nordell, London: Granta, 2021

The Value Of Difference – Eliminating Bias In Organisations. Binna Kandola, Oxford: Pearn Kandola, 2009

Blindspot – Hidden Biases Of Good People. Mahzarin R. Banaji, Anthony G. Greenwald, New York: Delacorte Press, 2013

## **Allyship – Actively Support People Who Are Excluded**

Often, allyship is seen as something that white people can do to support people of colour, using their position of privilege to speak out against racism or by refusing to benefit from the advantages their colour can bring in our society. However, we (and Catalyst) think it is something that anyone can do to support any colleague who is experiencing exclusion or discrimination. It could be that they're the subject of office banter, regularly overlooked or made to feel excluded by non-inclusive processes. As a manager, you have an important role here.

Acts of allyship generally fall into one of three categories:

- **Speaking up** – if you witness someone being treated or spoken of unfairly
- **Extending opportunities** – to help overcome the barriers they may face
- **Challenging the status quo** – to ensure that all systems and decision-making processes are equitable

It is best if you talk to them about how you can help. The last thing they may want is someone swooping in like a superhero to save the day – this could really undermine their confidence as well as risking making the situation worse. However, sometimes you might need to take action before you've been able to discuss it with them. Don't put off saying or doing something.

**Have a look at the excellent article, 'A Tale Of Three Allies'**

[click here](#)

## Courage - To Act In Accordance With Your Principles, Even When It Is Uncomfortable

This means **challenging** any non-inclusive behaviour or processes you see around you. Challenging someone else can be very difficult, particularly if you perceive the person as being powerful, but saying nothing is not neutral – your silence only colludes with their unacceptable attitudes and behaviours.

### Two Types Of Challenge:

- **In the moment** - this often means challenging when other people are around. Someone says or does something that you think is disrespectful or discriminatory in the office. This is where you need to say something! It doesn't matter that you've let it go in the past. This is where you now draw a line for everyone. As a manager, it is vital that you role-model for everyone in the team. You don't need to make a big issue of it, you can just state that you don't like it. Here's a good model, called the **WIN** tool. You state:

1. **W**hat you object to, e.g. "You are making jokes about ..... again."
2. The **I**mpact it has on you, e.g. "It makes me very uncomfortable when you do that."
3. What you want **N**ext, e.g. "I'd prefer it if you didn't make jokes about ....."

Of course, it doesn't mean that the behaviour will immediately stop and you may need to calmly and patiently restate your opposition every time the unacceptable behaviour occurs.

It is important to avoid conflict that might make the issue more difficult to address by damaging your relationships with others. If your requests are ignored, then you should seek advice from your line manager or from HR.

- **A deeper conversation** – this often means arranging a time when you can have a private discussion about the issues of concern. Sometimes, to change the behaviour, all you will need to do is make them aware of what is unacceptable and the impact it is having on others. Sometimes, however, it may be that the behaviour is underpinned by discriminatory attitudes and beliefs that will be harder to change. In this case, you need to consider what your aim is for the meeting: you are not going to change their mind with one discussion, the best you can do is to sow some seeds of new thinking.

There is an approach called **motivational interviewing**, that can significantly increase people's readiness to embrace change. Rather than trying to force change on people, motivational interviewing seeks to clarify and resolve their ambivalence by encouraging them to weigh up the pros and cons of change, and by doing so, address their concerns.

Motivational interviewing uses four techniques:

1. **Build rapport** by showing that you want to understand the other person. Begin by showing that you are willing to see the problem from their point of view, e.g. "I understand that you like to have a laugh." Or "I know that you don't have a high opinion of ..."
2. **Roll with resistance.** Arguing will just result in them digging their heels in and becoming even more defensive. Ask questions and keep the conversation focused on the facts. Resistance is a signal that you need to change your approach. If the person point-blank refuses to change, help them to understand and acknowledge the consequences of their behaviour. Ask a question such as, "What do you think will happen if you keep doing things the way you are?"
3. **Amplify any discrepancy.** Point out any discrepancies you notice between what the person says and their actual behaviour. Say something like, "you seem to be telling me that you want to be part of a happy team, but some of the things you do are making people unhappy." Or, "You're saying that you have too much to do, but you seem unwilling to let other team members take on some of your tasks."
4. **Empower the other person.** Find one small thing they can commit to changing. Help them develop a workable plan. But remind them that it is their responsibility to implement it.

Although a single conversation isn't going to transform someone's core beliefs and attitudes, discussing their mixed feelings about change in a supportive way can help kick start the process. Motivational interviewing is a highly skilled approach, but you can take some of the principles above and try them out to improve conversations like these. If you'd like to know more:

## **Further Reading**

Motivational Interviewing: Helping People Change (Applications of Motivational Interviewing). Miller R. William & Stephen Rollnick, London: The Guilford Press, 2013.

## **My change commitments**

**Don't forget to talk to your  
check-in partner!**