

# WP2: CPD Programme

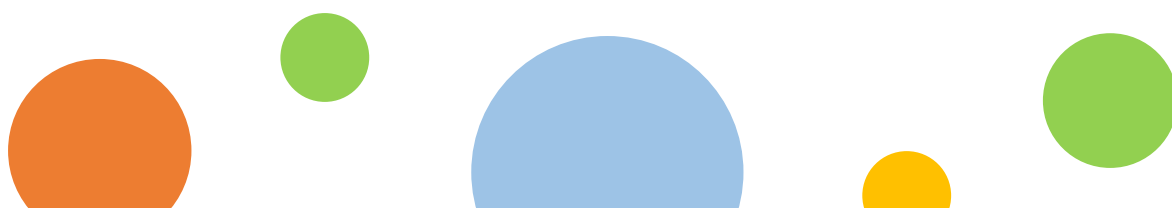


Self-Directed Learning  
Inclusive Communication

# Module 3: Inclusive Communication

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## Introduction

In this module we will discuss the importance of inclusive communication at the workplace and will learn about its benefits. We will also discuss the key principles of inclusive communication and advantages of adopting it at our workplace. The module explores the impact of tone and language, as well as microaggressions and how to avoid them, micro-affirmations, feedback, and inclusive meetings.

After the theoretical part, you can test your understanding of the module topic with a self-assessment quiz. For an even deeper understanding of the topic, there is a case study with reflective questions and two activities you can do. If you want to further expand your knowledge on the topic, we offer a link to additional learning resources.

## Learning Outcomes of the Module

- Define key terms related to inclusive communication such as cultural competence, active listening, and empathy.
- Understand the impact of language and tone in the workplace and how this can influence workplace relationships and culture.
- Recognise micro-aggressions and how to avoid them in a workplace environment.
- Understanding of micro-affirmations and how to manage them.
- Identify means of intra-personal communication that can help to build an inclusive workplace culture.
- Understand the importance of non-verbal communication including body language, facial expressions, to promote inclusive communication.
- Build awareness of the importance of inclusive communication in the workplace and how to adapt communication to meet the needs of others.





## Theoretical Chapter

### 3.1 Introduction to inclusive communication

**Inclusive Communication** is an approach that seeks to “create a supportive and effective communication environment, using all available means of communication to understand and be understood”. Inclusive communication relates to all modes of communication: written information; online information; telephone and face to face. Inclusive communication is two-way communication.

Inclusion means more than just having a diverse mix of people in an organisation. It is about creating an environment where everyone feels welcome, respected, and appreciated. It also involves ensuring that no group has a preferential or unfair advantage over another and encourages equal opportunities for all individuals to make meaningful contributions within the company.

Approaches on how to manage the workplace have evolved over the last years and, along with this, the way employees are expected to interact with each other has also changed. With this evolution, it is now more important than ever for communication within the organisation to be inclusive and respectful for all individuals.

The “art of inclusive communication” relies on realizing how workers communicate daily. Communication style and words can have a significant positive or negative impact on the employees feeling welcomed and appreciated.

Inclusive communication involves listening to others with an open mind and being able to put yourself in their shoes. This means understanding other people’s experiences, thoughts, and feelings. It also involves being inclusive in both the decision-making processes and in rewarding employee contributions to organisational initiatives.

### 3.2 Key principles of inclusive communication

Effective communication is central to the success of most teams and businesses. As a leader or manager, you need to make sure that all your colleagues are empowered to communicate effectively. In addition, there are legal requirements for workplaces to avoid discrimination and promote inclusion. For instance, the Equality Act 2010 (in the United Kingdom) makes it unlawful to discriminate against people on the basis of nine





protected characteristics (age, disability, gender, marriage, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation).

Some of the key principles that can promote inclusive communication in your workplace context:

- Awareness - the first step to promoting inclusion through communication is to be aware of where there might be barriers in the first place. You could start by considering unconscious bias.
- Consider Your Audience - we all adapt our communication style and methods depending on who we are communicating with, and our relationship to them. It is important to adapt to any specific needs of the people you are seeking to communicate with.
- Inclusive Language - striving to use inclusive language means avoiding any terms that could reinforce stereotypes, or unintentionally discriminate. This should apply to both written and spoken communication.
- Inclusive Leadership – if you are manager, you have responsibility for promoting inclusive communication styles, for making workplace expectations clear and for creating a welcoming and open culture in your organisation. It is important that you engage with your team and get regular feedback relating to inclusion.

### 3.3 Inclusive Communication Skills & Strategies

**Developing empathy** for others is helpful for establishing more effective relationships. By trying to see things from others' perspectives, you are more likely to recognise when communication might not be inclusive, and therefore be able to respond. When we understand somebody better, we can communicate with them more effectively.

**Active listening** can help you to develop empathy and is a key communication skill. It involves really concentrating on what the other person is trying to communicate – without interruption or focussing on what you want to say next or bringing any judgement.





**Adopting a growth mindset** will allow you to grow through mistakes and strive to improve by recognising that there is always something to learn about. This is essential as the language and communication does not stand still but develops.

### 3.4 Impact of the language and tone in the workplace

**Language** can consciously or unconsciously offend, intimidate, belittle, exclude, reinforce harmful stereotypes and contribute to the unequal status of individuals. Language can also have very positive effects on people. When inclusive language is used it can make people feel included, valued and empowered.

Inclusive language is important in the workplace because it promotes engagement and productivity. Creating a space for workers to feel appreciated, heard and respected leads to a better work culture overall.

The principles of inclusive language help you enter new conversations with a mindful attitude toward other people's preferences.

Specific principles to remember for inclusive language are:

- Focus on the person, not their characteristics, first.
- Use phrases that anyone would recognize.
- Consider gender-inclusive language and phrases when addressing a group.
- Ask questions if you are unsure.

When writing, speaking or communicating, inclusive language is important to consider. For example:

- Avoid jargon that people may not understand.
- Do not bring up topics like religion, sexual orientation or race unless it is relevant.
- Avoid derogatory mental health terms (e.g., “psycho,” “crazy” or “paranoid”).

There are many factors in effective communication - from content and **tone** to empathy, mode and platform, but tone seems to be especially critical. Tone has a significant bearing on how well people work together. If communication has a positive





tone, people respond more quickly; address the concern or do the work at a higher quality and perceive the sender more positively.

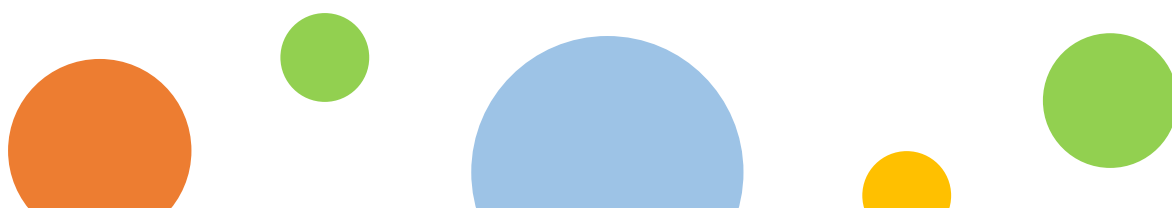
Finding the right tone is a delicate process and a fine mix of various elements of communication. One of the first ways to find the right tone is to be business-like, but also friendly. In your communication, you will be most effective when you balance confidence with humility. Be clear and have a point of view, but also ask for input when it is appropriate. Provide context and do not assume people know the background of your communication - unless you are sure they do. Also be clear about what you are asking for. When you feel passionately about a subject or if you are angry or frustrated, be especially careful about the tone of your response. Last, but not least, consider how your communication will be received and how the recipient most likes to hear and best understands information.

### 3.5 Micro-aggressions and Micro-affirmations

There are two types of small actions - micro-affirmations and micro-aggressions - that can either enhance or destroy a team's resilience in the organisation.

The term “micro-aggression” is a concept that describes small yet offensive behaviours or remarks against a marginalized group. For example, when working in large corporations, many people of colour are discriminated against not only systematically but through how the company communicates with them. Another example is never seeking input from minority colleagues, commenting on a co-worker’s clothing or hair because it is outside the norm, and saying “you people”. Microaggressions can negatively impact careers as they are related to increased burnout and less job satisfaction and require significant cognitive and emotional resources to recover from them.

Micro-affirmations (also referred to as micro-moves, micro-gestures, and micro-advantages) include nods, facial expressions, choices of words, and tones of voice that convey inclusion, caring, and listening. Micro-affirmations are small positive actions and comments that demonstrate that we care about our colleagues. Examples include opening a door for another person, friendly facial expressions or gestures, showing genuine interest in a colleague’s personal life, and asking someone’s opinion.





While small and often unconscious, these acts move the organisation toward inclusion and away from discrimination. They re-frame the conversation and encourage workplace respect. Micro-affirmations also convey fair, timely, and clear feedback that helps a person build on strength and correct weakness.

It is particularly helpful for managers and leaders to model affirming behaviour. People are especially sensitive to the behaviour of their immediate supervisors. When supervisors adopt the practice of micro-affirmation, they become important role models for colleagues and employees.

### 3.6 Non-verbal Communication

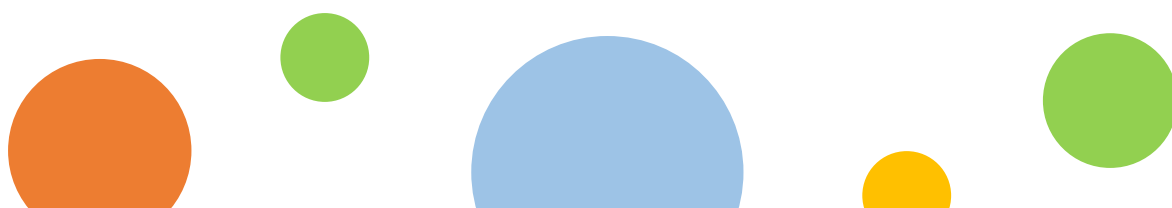
Approximately 93 percent of communication is nonverbal, while words account for only 7 percent. Tone of voice makes up 38 percent of communication, and body language and facial expressions constitute 55 percent, according to Albert Mehrabian, a psychologist at University of California, Los Angeles.

The facial expressions, gestures, posture, and tone of voice are powerful communication tools. Nonverbal communication can be one of the strongest forms of communication between coworkers. Successful interactions at work depend on both managers and their team's ability to use and read body language.

The key to establishing a sense of familiarity with someone is finding that connection between your nonverbal communication styles. Over time, you will see that nonverbal communication has immense power to help you build more authentic relationships with everyone at your company. As a result, that greater connection will help you and your team feel more fulfilled at work.

### Self-assessment Quiz:

<https://forms.gle/epdGybL6RF6rm8V19>








## References

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- Sett, B. J. (2022), Breaking the prejudice habit, Non-verbal communication activity
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## Case Study

<b>Case Study Title</b>	Addressing Microaggressions in the Workplace
<b>Image</b>	 <p>Photo by Getty Images on <a href="#">Unsplash</a></p>
<b>Learning Outcome</b>	Recognise micro-aggressions and how to avoid them in a workplace environment.
<b>Aim of activity</b>	Participants will read the case study of an example of micro-aggressions in the workplace and are asked to recognise actions and comments that could constitute microaggressions.
<b>Introduction</b>	By reading and reflecting on the story in this case study, you will have a deeper view of what micro-aggressions look like in the work environment. With the help of the story, you will find examples of micro-aggressions and recognise situations where you or someone in your team has been treated unequally.
<b>Challenge</b>	<p>In its most recent recruitment campaign, shortly before the COVID-19 pandemic, an employer actively focused on improving team diversity, and hired a number of racialised employees. The company has approximately 80 employees working at its head office, many of whom worked remotely because of the pandemic.</p> <p>Tina, the company’s new Marketing Manager, is a Black woman. When she started at the company, the only other Black employee was Sasha, who worked in the Finance Department, and had started only</p>





one week before Tina. Throughout the first few months at the company, Tina's colleagues and the Director often called her Sasha.

During the last team meeting prior to the pandemic lockdown, one of Tina's colleagues commented on how nice Tina's hair was and asked to touch it. Recently, Tina was in charge of presenting a revised marketing strategy to the senior leadership team. After the presentation, the Director congratulated Tina on her presentation, saying "Fantastic job! I was really impressed. You are so articulate!"

Two months later, Tina had a mid-term performance review meeting with her director. Tina received very positive feedback about her performance. At the end of the meeting, her director said that he had spoken to Tina's team, and that he would recommend that she smile more so that she seems "less intimidating and more approachable".

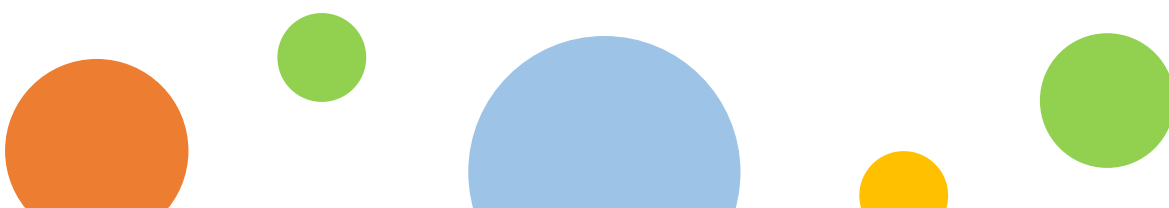
After the meeting, Tina made a complaint to HR that she is facing discrimination at work. The HR manager asked Tina to write down her complaint, pursuant to the company's policy, and let Tina know that the company would follow up with her regarding next steps.

The HR manager noted that the kinds of behaviours Tina was complaining of were not included as examples of discrimination in the company's policies. The employer began investigating, following the internal policy of the company. The company had not provided any recent training on discrimination.

### Assignment

After reading the story, take time to think about the following questions. It might help you to write down your answers.

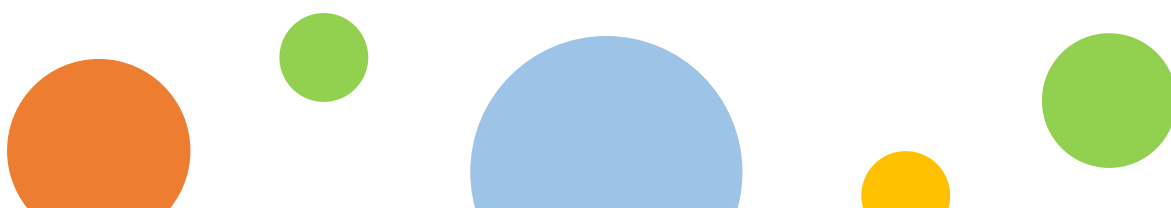
1. Do you see any examples of micro-aggression against Tina?
2. Define 2 or 3 microaggressions you have recognised.
3. Think of a personal experience you have had at work as a team member related to micro-aggression and how it was overcome.
4. Do you have at your company internal policy for discrimination, and would you like to participate in training on discrimination focused on mitigation of micro-aggression?





## Activity Sheet 1

<b>Activity Title</b>	Activity 1: Become an effective inclusive communicator
<b>Duration of activity in minutes</b>	50 min
<b>Learning Outcome</b>	In this activity you will learn about the basics of effective communication at the workplace and how to use appropriate language when discussing or referring to diverse groups.
<b>Aim of activity</b>	The aim of this activity is to learn about the benefits and importance of using inclusive language in our day-to-day communication at work.
<b>Materials Required for Activity</b>	Laptop, internet (paper and pen)
<b>Step-by-step instructions</b>	<p>Imagine that you have been nominated and elected as a leader of a team, which includes five different nationalities. You have been informed that your predecessor had very poor communication skills. This lack of communication skills from the previous leader had an impact on different communities represented in the team. They do not communicate well with one another, and this has created some tension between them. As the new team leader, you will need to communicate effectively and inclusively with your colleagues.</p> <p>To succeed, you will need to practice and develop your inclusive communication skills to overcome the previous obstacles experienced by the team and deal effectively with the issue by taking the following steps:</p> <p><b>Step 1:</b> Conduct online research to identify the different types of communication, including inclusive communication</p> <p>In this step, you will focus on discovering or refreshing your knowledge about the basics of communication in general. To prepare yourself for this new responsibility and to improve your capacity to communicate inclusively with different types of people you will first conduct some online research on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- concepts for inclusive communication you need to follow</li> <li>- phrases that you need to avoid</li> <li>- examples of gender-neutral language to address a group</li> </ul> <p>Useful information: <a href="https://www.personio.com/hr-lexicon/types-of-communication/#what-are-the-main-types-of-communication">https://www.personio.com/hr-lexicon/types-of-communication/#what-are-the-main-types-of-communication</a></p>





**Step 2:** Make a “mind map” or a list to help you to identify the barriers that lead to poor inclusive communication. You have gathered a lot of information and you need to organise it all and keep record of the most relevant to you.

Mind mapping tool: <https://miro.com/mind-map/>  
<https://www.wrike.com/blog/what-is-a-mind-map-how-to-create/>

**Step 3:** Design your own “inclusive vocabulary” with alternative terms and phrases for you and your colleagues. You can follow this example:

Problematic term	Inclusive term	Guidelines
Chairman	Chairperson	Use non-gendered language when referring to a person’s position, professional title, or occupation to avoid implicit bias that one sex is default for those roles
Hi guys; Hello ladies	Hi everyone, or team	Addressing only men and women is exclusionary and enforces a gender binary.
Blacklist and whitelist	Blocklist or denylist and allowlist	These terms equate “black” with “bad” and “white” with “good,” which is a problematic and racist association.





## Activity Sheet 2

<b>Activity Title</b>	Activity 2: Practice non-verbal communication
<b>Duration of activity in minutes</b>	20 min
<b>Learning Outcome</b>	In this activity you will learn about the information that people express through the body language, eye contact, personal space, gestures, and facial expressions.
<b>Aim of activity</b>	The aim of this activity is to practice the language of non-verbal communication, to recognise nonverbal cues and the messages they send.
<b>Materials Required for Activity</b>	Another person or group of people to practice non-verbal communication. Phone with camera.
<b>Step-by-step instructions</b>	<p>It is essential to remember that non-verbal cues can be as important, or in some cases even more important, than what we say. Non-verbal communication can have a great impact on the listener and the outcome of the communication.</p> <p><b>Step 1:</b> Present as many ways of nonverbal communication examples as you can in 1 minute</p> <p><b>Step 2:</b> Look over the photos provided and answer the questions that follow.</p> <p><a href="http://breakingprejudice.org/assets/AHAA/Activities/Nonverbal%20Communication%20Folder/Body%20Language%20Worksheet.pdf">http://breakingprejudice.org/assets/AHAA/Activities/Nonverbal%20Communication%20Folder/Body%20Language%20Worksheet.pdf</a></p> <p>Reflecting on these questions will help you identify areas where you can improve your non-verbal skills and body language.</p>





## Additional Learning Resource Template

<b>Title of Resource:</b>	Video #inclusionstartswith
<b>Introduction to the resource:</b>	<p>Using inclusive language is hugely important to navigating each of our day-to-day interactions with others, but our language may not be as inclusive as we want or need it to be. This is due to our implicit biases.</p> <p>This video discusses the importance of a positive, inclusive work environment. It demonstrates how biases can appear in both expected and unexpected ways and reflects that each of us has the power to make a difference. (Accenture, 2017)</p>
<b>What will you get from using this resource?</b>	<p>“Language is a powerful tool, and it can have a huge impact on people.” (“Inclusive Language Guide: Definition &amp; Examples   Rider University”, 2021)</p> <p>Many recent research studies show that a large number of people are affected by language, which makes using inclusive language more crucial than ever. Researchers have found that using gender-exclusive language can make individuals feel ostracized from a larger group (especially women) and on the other hand, using gender inclusive language helps reduce gender-based discrimination against women and other minorities.</p>
<b>Link to resource:</b>	<a href="https://youtu.be/2g88Ju6nkcg">https://youtu.be/2g88Ju6nkcg</a>







# TGAL

## THINK GLOBAL ACT LOCAL DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT



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