Storytelling Toolkit

THINK GLOBAL ACT LOCAL
DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

TGAL

For more information: www.thinkglobalactlocal.eu

It is hard to keep an open mind if you don't have an open heart.

You don't have to agree with what people think to learn from how they think. You don't have to share their identity to be curious about what shaped it.

Treating people with civility is a prerequisite for discovery.

Adam Grant
Psychologist, Professor, Author

Section 1

TGAL

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DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

Introduction

We start this storytelling journey presenting the Think Global, Act Local: Diversity Management in SMEs project, explaining the fundamentals of this toolkit and offering a concise guide on how to use it.

What is the TGAL project?

Diversity and inclusion are key assets that many organisations and companies can call on from within their workforce, but this can only be achieved if appropriate diversity and inclusion management strategies can be put into practice. For workers across Europe, building an understanding of the diversity that exists within their organisations can lead to better, more productive, and creative workplaces.

Think Global, Act Local: Diversity Management in SMEs (TGAL) is an Erasmus+ project implemented between 2022 and 2024 aiming to:

- Support employers to take stock of diversity in their businesses and to develop diversity management strategies.

- Use storytelling techniques and approaches to engage employees about diversity issues and provide them a space to connect with the culture of their workplaces so that they feel included and valued.

- Engage VET professionals in up-skilling so that they can use the full suite of TGAL results produced, and gain confidence in working and teaching using storytelling.

- Contribute to European workplaces becoming more inclusive of diversity.

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Why is this toolkit so special?

As workplaces become increasingly diverse, both opportunities and challenges arise as people constantly interact with peers, managers, and customers with different backgrounds, experiences, and identities. The Think Global, Act Local Storytelling Toolkit aims to build the skills and competences on how to use storytelling techniques to explore diversity management and cultural change within SMEs and companies. It introduces storytelling as an approach to promote diversity management, explores appropriate storytelling techniques, and tools, and explains how it supports diversity management and culture change within companies.

But why should your company or organisation invest time in diversity and inclusion management? Today's workforce is diversified, and organisations and companies must be in tune with that reality. Being inclusive and open to difference enables organisations to widen its recruiting pool. Having a skilled workforce is the cornerstone of innovation for businesses, which together with diversity management has the potential to leads to innovative teamwork; better responsiveness to clients' needs and expectations; access to new markets; better adaptability to change; and positive brand image.

Companies and organisation intend to have a good reputation before its clients and the all society, however there is still a significant implementation gap between what organisations are saying and what they are doing. It is in this "gap" that the TGAL project can have a real impact and leave a sustainable legacy. To understand the intersection point between what this toolkit has to offer and what organisations and companies need at this level, we have brainstormed and consulted interested parties about the formal promotion and implementation of D&I. As a result, we made a confrontation list between what companies and organisations need (or do not know they need) and the responses that the TGAL Toolkit can give to that. Go ahead and check your organisations or company position against these matters sou you can understand until which point the TGAL toolkit can help you!

VALUE PROPOSITION

TGAL TOOLKIT

Benefits

Experience

Features

TGAL PROJECT

COMPANIES & SME'S

Wants

Fears

Needs

Substitutes
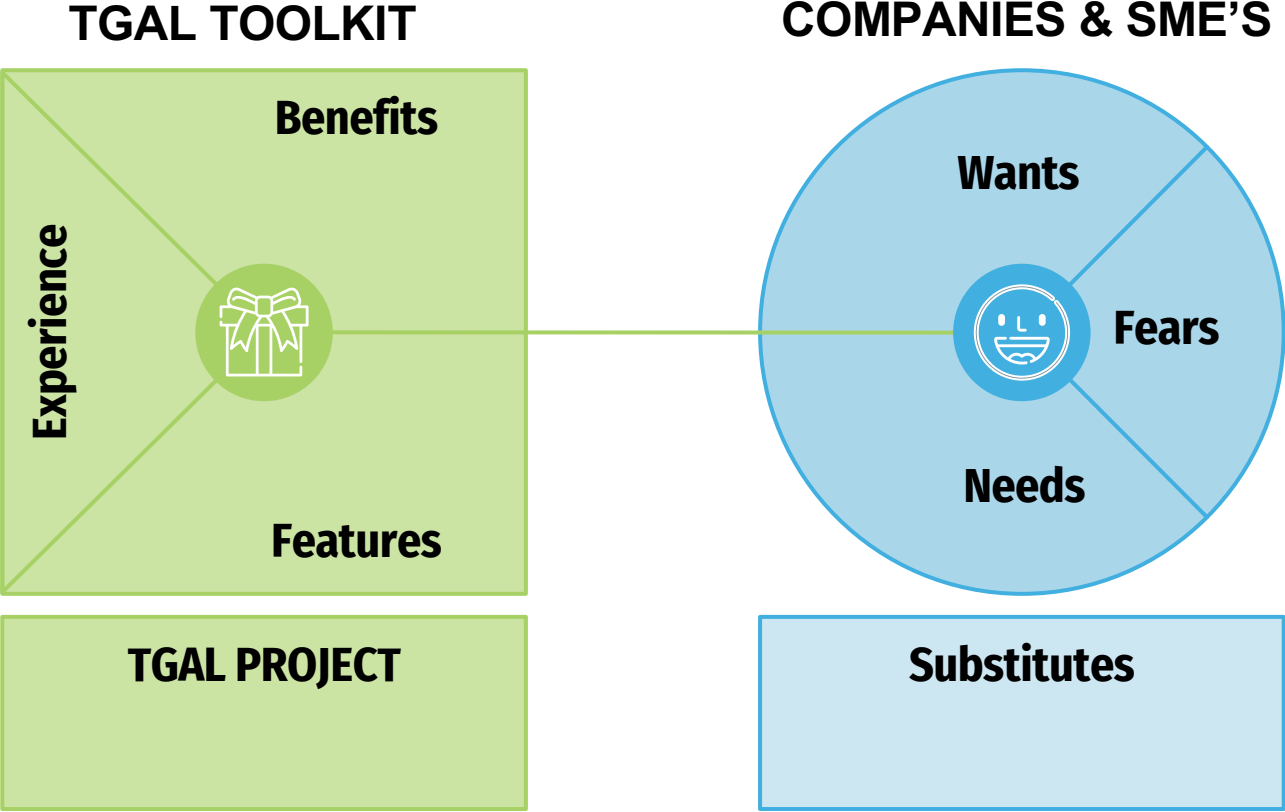
Companies and organisations

Wants (*we want*)

- a good reputation, a multi-faceted strategy, but also 'normalisation' of diversity, not only in appearance, with unbiased hiring, and enhanced and genuine interest in each other

Needs (*we need*)

- to redefine who we are and know how we get there: open culture, solutions that can handle multiple scenarios, fair governance, and a sustainable unanimity in handling D&I

Fears (*we fear*)

- losing self-awareness, compassion, reputation, and belonging

TGAL Toolkit

- ✓ will relieve you from frustration, insecurity, helplessness and anger, and will support you in obtaining the essence: authenticity in connection

- ✓ offers step-by-step (narrative) tools to create depth and understanding in our human relationships, so that participants experience a personal impact, a sense of belonging, and the ability to change the collective experience

- ✓ is a powerful '3 course meal': self-directed learning, where you move from information to quizzes and reflection; face-2-face training, where you are taught to adopt these techniques successfully; and a storytelling toolkit, giving you multiple practical how-to instruction for various situations

.

How to use this toolkit?

This toolkit is divided into five section, each one highlighted by a specific colour. There is no specific order to use this toolkit, but as in a good story we suggest you start by the beginning, reading section one, to get familiar with the context and then decided why, how, and when you intend to use this resource. At any moment you can jump into the glossary to clarify any doubts about the terminologies that we are using.

If you feel confident enough you can jump right to section three, although we suggest you read, revise, and take your notes first in section two. When in section three you can whether use the workshops individually or maybe use some methodologies suggested in one workshop and adapt it to another one. Believe us, the options are numerous and rich with creative approaches.

At the end, we just want you to have the opportunity to start over every time you feel stuck, and when you feel the need to change for better the environment in which you work in. So, our wishes are that you all share good stories and learn from those stories!

Section 1, explaining the context in which this toolkit was developed, why and how you should use it.

Section 2, containing all the theory behind storytelling and brief guides on how to use this methodology in working contexts to promote diversity and inclusion management.

Section 3, presenting nine practical workshops developed under the nine pillars of diversity and inclusion: age, cultural, ethnicity, gender, neurodiversity, physical disability, racism, religion and spirituality, social.

Section 4, introducing the concepts used in the toolkit, with a total of 20 entrances related to diversity and inclusion management.

Section 5,closing with the formalities, indicating who put all the efforts to bring this manual to you.

Figure 1 – TGAL toolkit structured explained

Section three is composed of nine workshops designed to be implemented with teams in companies or any organisation aiming to improve their diversity and inclusion management issues.

All workshops follow a simple format, divided into six specific segments

1. Case study with guiding questions: the case studies vary between examples of companies truly engaged in promoting diversity management and fictional stories providing context to problems that you can use to engage your teams. All these are supported by a set of five initial questions you can use you to brainstorm about the topics, collect opinions, share ideas, etc.

2. Workshop: a practical activity designed in a step-by-step format with the aim to approach all the nine diversity pillars considered.

3. Didactical advices: brief guidelines on how to better implement the practical workshops.

4. Reflection and cards to action: supportive information to use during debriefing and prepared to challenge all to act regarding the matters in stake.

5. Motivational material: suggestions of materials (videos, readings, handouts) that you can use during the implementation of the workshops.

6. References: indicating the references used to develop each workshop.

People will typically be more enthusiastic where they feel a sense of belonging and see themselves as part of a community than they will in a workplace in which each person is left to his own devices.

Alfie Kohn
Philosopher

Section 2

Storytelling and diversity management

Now you have reached to the part where we tell you all about storytelling and how we see it as a valuable and enriching pedagogical approach to promote diversity and inclusion (D&I) management. Here we will specifically explain all the theoretical aspects of applying storytelling/narrative approaches in diversity and inclusion.

What is and what is not storytelling?

Story is the narration of a significant emotional experience that feels meaningful to both teller and listener. Annette Simmons

What is a 'story'?

There are a lot of great claims about stories, but where do they originate?
Stories are a purely human phenomenon. It starts with how we experience the environment around us: nature and its phenomena, the animal world, our relationship with others – and how we interpret and understand it. All of it is data, and the sheer number of data (and their impact) can be confusing. To master that we need structure and organisation – think of how we categorise the sky with its immeasurable number of stars using constellations. Think of how we categorise within the animal and plant world, our direct environment, groups, communities, organisations and society, up to and including 'us and them' thinking in all possible gradations. First, we made drawings and probably employed miming (mimesis) to communicate, and at a certain point we developed words and language and were able to verbalize and express our thoughts.

Stories, fuelled by language, enriched our lives by detailed indirect knowledge of others' lives, and learning from experiences not our own (Boyd, 2017). From our predisposition for play fictional stories developed, a cognitive playground, which combined event comprehension, memory, imagination, and language (Boyd, 2009).
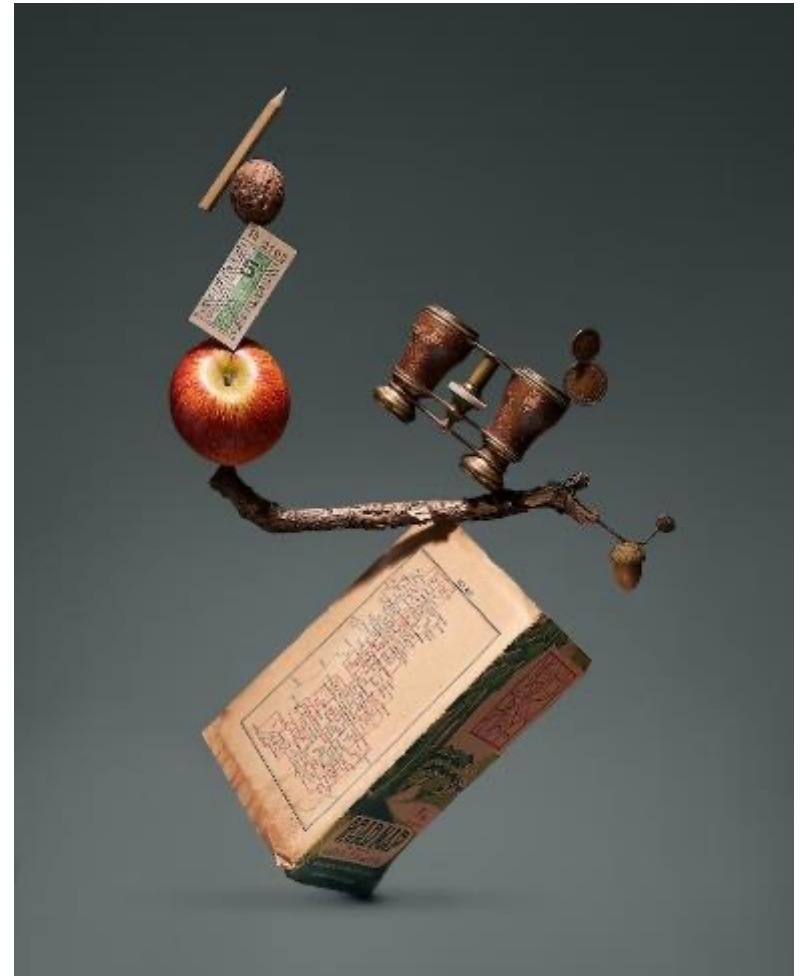
The capacity to invent stories, especially stories that highlight agents as causes of events, led to myth and religion, and other forms of bonding and within-group cooperation. It has also influenced our perception and the ways we react to or try to influence our 'realities', the individual, the mutual, and the collective (Frühmann et al., 2021).

Imagining constructive functions and qualities of stories, what comes to mind? When we ask people, they come up with many, for example: inspiration, imagination, memory retention, knowledge- and information transfer, connecting people, consolation, healing, entertainment, engagement, (creation of) mutual respect, teaching/explaining, taking perception (empathy), (creation of) values (value systems), influencing, action (initiative), planning, strategy, anticipation (of events, actions), but also their 'dark sides', like manipulation, eliciting fear, hatred and hate speech, anger, discrimination, or abuse.

Looking at the above examples, one may realize that many of the functions of stories can also be interpreted as intentions. We should be aware that there is almost always an intention when we tell a story, it can be well-intended and, on the other hand, it can be misleading, even malicious (Frühmann et al., 2021). We should also be aware that although in most cases telling (personal) stories is sincere, generous or vulnerable, we must be aware that sometimes the teller's intentions can be misinterpreted because

(and often with the best intentions) they gave a story that led the listeners' interpretation (and meaning making) in the wrong direction (Simmons, 2019). So, when is a story 'a story'? One of the most striking features of story is its structure. All human languages share some basic structural similarities – a universal grammar. So too, some argue, it is with story (Gottschall, 2013, De Beaugrande, 2006). We do not realize it consciously, but as mentioned before, stories seem to answer to our need for organising data and information into meaningful structures. We are probably already 'wired' for recognizing a story: a story structure is a cultural code we are born into (Reitz & Livo,1986).The most common and universal structure is the traditional story called folk tale. For the folk tale model, we present version story researcher and worker Cynthia Kurtz (2014) offers:

Context – introduction of the setting and characters, explanation of the situation.

Turning point – the dilemma, crisis or problem or initiating event that starts the story rolling.

Action – how the people in the story respond to the dilemma or problem, including complications, further difficulties, challenges, things going wrong.

Reversal / Transformation – finally something happens that induces change and/or transformation.

Resolution – the outcome of the story (sometimes 'the moral' or 'the learning').
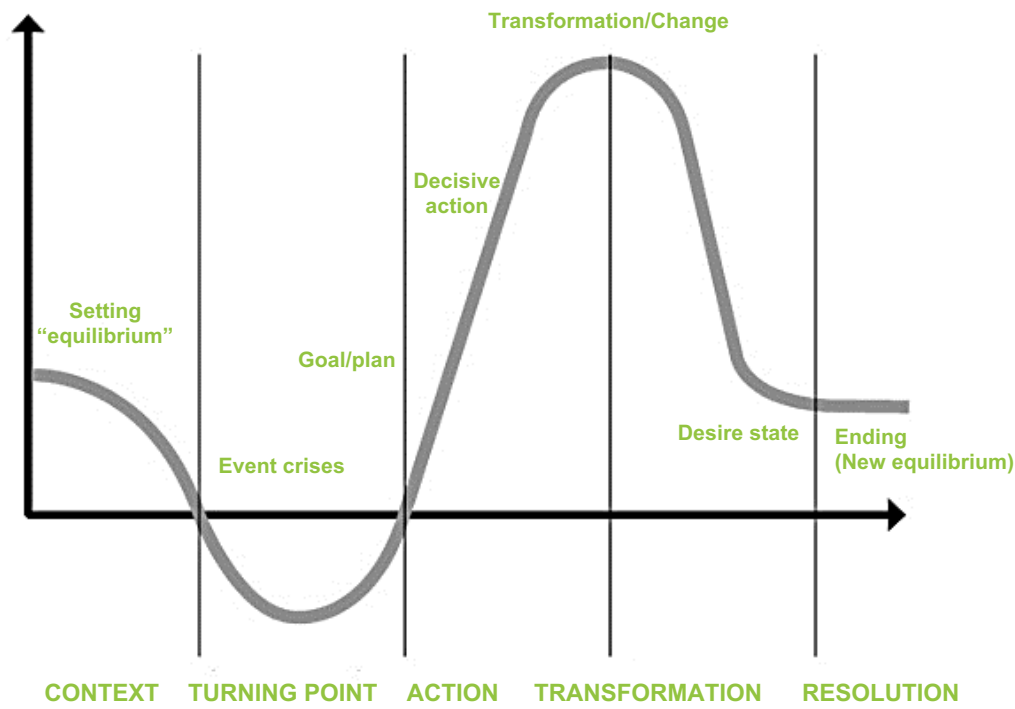
Figure 2 – Folk tale structure.

A short story that follows this structure could be this one:

There's this man walking down the street (**context / setting**)
when suddenly he falls in a hole. (**turning point**)
The walls are so steep he can't get out. (crisis)
A doctor passes by and the man shouts up (**rising action**)*: "Hey you! Can you help me out?"*
The doctor writes a prescription, throws it down in the hole and moves on. (**rising action**)
Then a priest comes along, and the man shouts up: "Father, I'm down in this hole can you help me out?" (**rising action**)
The priest tosses a prayer down in the hole and moves on.(**action**)
Then a friend walks by (**decisive action / turning point**)*: "Hey, Joe, it's me! Can you help me out?"*
And the friend jumps in the hole. (**reversal / transformation**)
Our man says: "Are you stupid? Now we're both down here!"
But the friend says: "Yes, we are. But I've been down here before, and I know the way out!" (**resolution**)

Crisis, conflict, and trouble are indispensable elements. Stories universally focus on the predicaments of the human condition, they cover many things: love, sex, hate, fear of death, challenges of life. They are also about power: desire to influence (fate or others), or to be able to escape. Maybe the most important trait: every story contains a transformation, a decision ("... and then he decided..."), change ("... and that is why) from that day on...") or insight ("Aha!") that helps or makes us realise the path to a desired outcome or state - whatever the purpose or intention of the story we share.

What is not a story?

Without transformation or change it is *not* a story. Stories are not anecdotes. We communicate anecdotes to each other all the time: "I was at this restaurant and guess who I saw? My old flame from high school! And I said… and then she said, and then I said…, etc." That's at its best an anecdote, but often not much more than a report. It's not a story, unless a conflict developed at the restaurant, leading to a crisis, and was resolved in some way, and *someone* - the teller or a protagonist - or *something* changed deeply and profoundly because of it. Slogans, statements of authority, arguments, opinions most advertisements, manifestos, rants, mostly are not stories.

To conclude 'story': some people find it useful to distinguish between a metaphor ('Time is money', 'the world is a stage'), an analogy ('they are as dirty as pigs'), and a story.

In the context of this toolkit, we would like to propose that these can also be made into stories, even narratives, or at least story (or narrative)-supportive.

Narrative

Narrative is often seen as a synonym for 'story', but it is not. Like the data we mentioned in the previous chapter, we also structure (or connect) stories (or mere events) into a narrative that 'makes sense' and gives meaning to us. This can be one of our personal 'life narratives' ("I am clumsy (that's why I always get fired)', supported by stories of clumsiness. Thus, some argue that narrative is a powerful metaphor for 'understanding life' (Hyvärinen (2006).

However, given the number of life narratives we have at hand in different contexts (family, work, friends, etc.) about ourselves, they are interpretations, versions, which may even change during our lifetime. Our memory can be selective... Narratives can also be ideological ('Muslims are…'), supported by terrorist attack stories.

There also may be generalising narratives about groups, like 'Bankers are…' that again and again describe them as greedy vultures.

In connection with social (cultural) discourses (i.e., the gender gap, 'whiteness' is the norm and coloured are 'others'), they can be foundational to our opinions on issues like immigration, security, and taxation; they affect our norms, who we think of as insiders and outsiders, who is deserving and undeserving, They can become drivers for conflict, polarisation, discrimination and exclusion. Not only in society: 'cultures' are present in groups, communities, and organisations.

Another phenomenon you may have heard of is 'the single story': our lives, our cultures, are composed of many overlapping stories. In her famous TED talk novelist Chimamanda Adichie (2009) tells the story of how she found her authentic cultural voice. She argues that inherent in the power of stories, is a danger - the danger of only knowing *one* story about a group. "This single story creates stereotypes, and the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story.".

Narratives (and discourses) can become so dominant that we fail to see the better alternatives, other possible and more promising (life) narratives. We often tend to overlook the fact that we have other talents as well, which could be used in another profession; that most Muslims are peaceful and hospitable; and that there are a more integer bankers than the greedy few (Frühmann et al., 2016).

Concluding: stories and narratives originate from different needs and experiences, but foremost from our need for meaning and sense. Meaning-making is how we construct, understand and make sense of events, relationships and the self. There is also no doubt that narrative and story have played a vital role in building civilizations. They helped to invent social systems, and nowadays even re-invented social systems over distance (globally) through digital communication and (digital) exchanges of ideas (Harari, 2016).

How to start conversations about diversity and inclusion and storytelling in your company?

We may have all come on different ships, but we're in the same boat now. **Martin Luther King, Jr.**

The goals of diversity and inclusion management are to promote fairness and equity and leverage the advantages a diverse organisation can offer. Diversity means recognising, respecting and welcoming everyone's different backgrounds, identities and experiences. Promoting diversity celebrates people's differences and uniqueness.

For this toolkit, we have identified nine pillars of diversity: gender, age, ethnicity, social, culture, race, religion and spirituality, physical disability, and neurodiversity. Inclusion means that everyone is encouraged to retain their uniqueness, they aren't singled out for being different or expected to conform in any way and have a sense of belonging and being valued. And we should not forget equity. Equity means that, in certain circumstances, people need to be treated differently in order to provide meaningful equality of opportunity.

Do you want to find out how diverse and inclusive your organisation really is? How can you achieve a coherent and diverse crew? How can you create a safe, inclusive space for everyone? How can you create more equity, cohesion and better cooperation in a diverse organisation? Continue your reading…

Organisations are people, individuals; thus, an organisation is a living system, it is more than the sum of its parts, like a body (Y. Gabriel, 2004). Organisations have a penetrating effect or influence on our sense of identity and individuality (personality), but it would be going too far to say that they determine that (Y. Gabriel, 1999). But in a sense, organisations have an emotional life, too. One only must scratch the surface to expose a thick layer of emotions and feelings, sometimes held still, sometimes feigned, sometimes timid and sometimes uncontrollable as outbursts of anger. So, it does not fit in with the clinical controlled 'managed' image (Y. Gabriel 1999).

To stress the diversity point-of-view: apart from the (diversity) pillars we mentioned, we should also be aware of people's diversity in character - think of collectivistic, narcissistic, heroic, obsessive personalities – and their character traits like spontaneous, orderly, impulsive, manipulative, cooperative, adventurous (Y. Gabriel, 2004). All elements we encounter in stories, in their heroes and villains...These characters and traits also influence the relation with co-workers. They will also influence the relation and the perception of a leader.

It can be beneficial to show genuine interest in the stories within your organisation, at *all* levels: An organisation is not only diverse but also multi-staged, different plays are acted out by organisational members (protagonists) simultaneously (Boje, 1991).

Listening to stories will reveal something about the 'true' culture, a perceived and experienced 'reality', which can sometimes be separate from formal paper rules and agreements. What do people want, how do they experience their daily work, what do they hope for, who are their heroes and who are their adversaries, and why? What stands in the way of gratifying cooperation: unconscious biases, mistrust, disrespect, discrimination, ignorance? In what way do they feel (emotionally) connected to the organisation, why did they choose to join, are they still present for the same reasons?

However, listening to each other's stories is not enough, we must be aware that we might become seduced by the stories themselves and lose critical faculty (Y. Gabriel, 2000). Which means getting to work with them: questioning them and jointly interpreting their meaning and consequences, eventually finding common ground: seeing diversity and mutual respect as a strength that makes your work more enjoyable and the organisation more resilient and sustainable. If you consider all this, you may be inclined to see that working with stories and narratives are not such a crazy solution. Let us make you familiar with some (working-with-stories) terminologies.

Applied storytelling: use formal storytelling in another social context than a (professional) storytelling performance. In this toolkit, applied storytelling uses elements of formal storytelling, like working with or on a story, working on listening skills, in diverse social contexts like workshops or inviting employees (and management) to story circles. Applied storytelling can use both personal stories and other tales (even folk tales), and both can play a powerful role. It's about the journey of a 'hero' and the way in which it transmits insight and wisdom. The hero can be the storyteller themselves, but it could also be a fictional or distant character, or an existing person whom the teller/narrator considers a hero. In many cases the personal story lends itself better, especially with inexperienced storytellers, who often may say "I'm not a storyteller". A simple invitation like "Tell is about your name. Who gave it to you? What does it mean to you?" will melt the ice and open the path to more (personal) story sharing with others, who are then no longer seen so much as strangers.

Narrative approaches: in societies, communities, and thus also in organisations, narratives (some of them dominant) can influence and steer perceptions of and opinions about 'the others' – think of unconscious bias, stereotyping and prejudices (perhaps by education), ignorance, disinformation, i.e., fed by social media: memes, hate speech, (cyber) bullying and harassment. Narrative approaches can be of assistance and facilitate and encourage restorative processes, reconciliation, mutual understanding and respect and cooperation. Life as it is lived is richer than life than it is told. There are always events not confirming the dominant and self-evident ideas. Life is multi-storied, there are many different narratives (and stories) depending on perspectives, individuals, and groups. We have many potential identities and thus futures. Narrative approaches aim to make dominant narratives visible and to unpack-them, to see them as just ideas... not truths.

In the long run, narrative practices enable individuals, groups/teams and whole communities to construct alternative, preferred and achievable (future) narratives. These can empower people to act and get to grips challenges. Preferred narratives are grounded in life as well, as they draw upon real events / stories not fitting the dominant one and connect these into a new, alternative narrative. In other words, recognizing the impact of dominant narratives and developing the skills to author new ones can catapult people from a place of acceptance (of the system and their role in it) to a place of action. Let us make this more concrete.

How to connect people for a certain purpose?

Imagine an outsider who overhears a conversation of friends in a train compartment. Each time one of the company shouts a number, the rest burst out in laughter. Eventually the outsider asks what the fun is all about and is told that each number corresponds to a previously agreed joke – the number evokes the joke, which generates laughter. The outsider shouts a number but generates no laughter. On enquiring why, he is told "You didn't tell it right . Y. Gabriel

It is not always easy to see through an organisation, what its actual culture is, what the unspoken agreements are that an outsider does not understand. Agreements – and stories that support them – can also exclude others, no matter how much they try to understand and connect. Above all, we should not be too quick to think we understand things, and what makes people tick. This is why we do not propose a 'standalone' method, but a versatile approach.

Participatory narrative inquiry (PNI)

We would like to introduce a versatile tried-and-tested practical narrative approach: Participatory Narrative Inquiry (PNI), coined by Cynthia Kurtz (2014). This is an approach in which groups of people participate in gathering (and working with) raw stories of personal experience in order to make sense of complex situations for better decision making. It works for diverse groups and communities (= organisations), but also for cohorts within communities (e.g., 50+, single mothers, ethnic minority), and it not only can benefit the group (cohesion, mutual understanding, mutual support) but also the individuals and their individual decision making and (new) focus.

PNI focuses on the profound consideration of values, beliefs, feelings and perspectives through the recounting and interpretation of lived experience. Kurtz stresses that factual elements, truth, evidence, opinion, argument and proof may be used as material for meaning – and sensemaking, but they are always used from a perspective and to gain perspective. This focus defines, shapes and limits the approach. One thing is paramount: 'the individual/community (local/tacit knowledge) is the expert'.

PNI is not (only) narrative inquiry; it invites its storytellers to work with their own stories. Participation can vary from simply answering questions about stories to participating in structured group meaning- and sensemaking activities where the storytellers ponder issues. The facilitator in a PNI project does not tell or interpret or change or even select stories. Only the members of the community do all of these things. What the facilitator does is help the stories get to where they need to be to help the community achieve a goal (Kurtz, 2014).

'Inquiry' makes clear that the approach is not just about 'telling stories', nor is it listening for the sake of listening. Asking questions to start or to prompt stories, asking questions about the stories is an important activity in the process. It not only facilitates "finding out something about something" it also amplifies understanding of conflicts, topics, feelings, it helps to explore and find solutions and improvements.

PNI works in three stages: planning, collecting and meaning making.

Planning: what do you want to know?

Often 'planning' is a stage in which elements such as questions, workshops and exercises can already be chosen and/or designed. It can also help to (pre-)assess the organisation's readiness for change and help in not moving too fast from aspiration to action. Inviting the organisation to test your ideas and assessing the community's readiness is one thing (you will find out about their real needs), mapping the community is another. Mapping will help you to find out more about their interest to cooperate, the (power) relationships and the story capacity of the (members of the) community. For example, a small pilot project might be used to test questions and methods before the larger project takes place.

Collecting/harvesting

Collecting stories can possibly start already in the planning and mapping phase. In short, we can distinguish different collecting activities and/or exercises like) interviews, peer-to-peer interviews, group interviews, story circles, and timelines, etc.; each of which serves one or more purposes and can have limitations as to participants and time. Story circles establish trust (bonding, value harvesting), story collections inspire conversations and stimulate vision, (group) interviews facilitate knowledge capacity, and (eventual) story events can stimulate action.

Meaning and sensemaking

Meaning-making can be preceded by a phase where the (facilitated) participants look for patterns and/or trends in the collected stories – it can lead to "Aha!" – experiences. In this phase, the facilitator should be on his guard: not all data are necessarily meaningful at once. Our brains insistence on generating stories from random data can play tricks on our perception and mislead us (Kahneman, 2013). However, these interpretations and implications serve a purpose: they can enhance the meaning – and sensemaking. Asking questions to these interpretations and implications ("Can we trust this?", "What does it say about...?") can lead to further exploration, extract meaning and sense, and provide new perspectives.

Make it work, possible interventions

Recognising the impact of dominant narratives and developing the skills to author new ones can catapult people from a place of acceptance (of the system and their role in it) to a place of action (Saltmarshe, 2018). Examples of interventions are communication, campaigns, meetings, performances, demonstrations, policy changes, messages, constructions, and destructions. Intervention serves to enhance the return of stories to the community, not to control or arrest it. Ideally, interventions grounded in effective narrative sensemaking produce positive change (Kurtz, 2014).

How to invite people to tell their stories?

We are, as a species, addicted to story. Even when body goes to sleep, the mind stays up all night, telling itself stories. **Jonathan Gottschall.**

If you want to know more about the impact diversity has or could have in your organisation and your organisation's culture, if you are curious what inclusiveness can contribute to that, how can you entice employees to think about sharing stories with each other and connect their personal stories to stories of organisation? If you want them to participate in story circles, the following three steps are possible:

Step 1. Planning: designing effective topics
Keep the number of topics to a minimum. Three or less is a good number for a typical 90-minute story circle. The topics you choose determine the design of the story–eliciting questions. (examples: morale, risks and rewards, workplace safety, talent development, leadership, etc.)

> **Activity proposal:**
> **To generate a set of topics, invite the project team to individually brainstorm as many topics as they can think of that are relevant to the planned inquiry. Then assemble around a whiteboard and brainstorm as a group, all the issues of interest. Cluster the issues and name each cluster. These cluster names become the name of the topics.**

About ethics and transparency, you need be aware that due to the characteristics of your employees there is a big chance a power relationship exists, in which you have a certain level of power over the people you want to address.

This can be due to the fact just sketched above (your knowledge about purpose or intention), or because you have the power to take decisions which affect directly their (organisational) lives and well-being. Four categories of information you could potentially give the people you will be asking to tell stories in your project (Kurtz, 2024):

1. You could tell people what the **project is for**.

2. You could tell people **who is involved** in the project: its funders (who is paying for it), beneficiaries (who will gain from its success), collectors (interviewers, compilers, researchers), and storytellers.

3. You could tell people **why** you want to hear stories,

4. You could tell people **what will happen** to the stories. You should always have a privacy policy (i.e., anonymity), so the issue is not what one is prepared to say but what information one volunteers. (Kurtz, 2024).

Step 2. Selecting participants

Diversity is important for selecting participants. Ensure the participants consist of a mix of characteristics such as age, gender, length of service, race, role, seniority, cynics and enthusiasts, and influential and well-networked participants. As a rule of thumb, aim towards engaging about 10% of the total group you want address in your selected group of participants. It is important that the participants share at least a common experience related to the topics.

> **Tip: Generally, it might be important to avoid including people from different levels in an organisation's hierarchy to prevent a 'boss's' outburst like "That's not what happened" (and then the session becomes worthless). Unless leaders are open to learning (and changing course) themselves.**

Step 3. Inviting (open invitation)

Whether you want to invite people for a one-on-interview or story circles to collect stories, it is best to seek volunteers to participate, so an open invitation seems best. Sometimes (when people are reluctant to volunteer) a more directive approach may be needed, but nevertheless in an inviting tone of voice.

Example open invitation (letter/mail):

Dear [name]

We would like to invite you to join us exploring [topic] by participating in [number] story circle(s) scheduled on [date] at [time] and at [venue]. This is an important activity for [company] as it provides an opportunity to explore and share your collective experiences around important issues which will impact the development of [the chosen theme].

A story circle consists of a small group of people gathered to recount experiences around [the chosen theme]. It can look and feel much like a dinner party discussion. During the 90-minute story circle you will be invited to share your anecdotal experiences with colleagues across a range of themes that relate to [the chosen theme]. The experiences you share as a group will remain confidential. The story circle may be recorded and transcribed, and we will remove any names and other references to honour and preserve your confidentiality.

We hope that you will find this opportunity to share your experiences with your peers enjoyable and insightful. Most of all we hope that you will tackle this opportunity to help us work towards better understanding the working experience of [the project theme].

Your open and honest participation is essential to our success.
For further information about [the event or our project], please contact [name and number].

Warm regards,
[name]

How to encourage storytelling?

Story… engenders empathy across difference. It enables the possible to feel probable in ways our rational minds can't comprehend. When it comes to changing the values, mindsets, rules, and goals of a system, story is foundational. **Ella Saltmarshe**

As we invite people to reflect on the systems that shape their lives, we must be aware that this process is powerful in giving people a critical awareness of who they (and others) are, and of the wider systemic forces affecting their own personal story. This must be managed responsibly, whether from within or by an external facilitator. We would like to give you some insights in facilitating, especially in story circles. First, as we are talking diversity, show respect for diverse backgrounds. Respect means stepping back enough to place yourself as an equal towards the other / your participants. The role of the facilitator is that of the fellow-traveller, who responds to emotions, shows interest and radiates pleasure in the narrative process.

Show empathy: empathic listening means disempowering yourself, exercising humility, empowering the other. Determining what could be of help for the other is the foundation of higher developed empathy. Also, respecting the other means being humble. Humility is our defence against fear, prejudice and hasty decisions. Humility enables us to listen openly and thoroughly to others, becoming aware of our limits.

Establishing trust

Trust is a slow-building, layered process that happens over time (Brown, 2012). We generally trust the ones who keep our secrets; the ones who share their secrets; the ones who remember our name or the last conversation; the ones who make us sure we're included in good things; who when we're sad ask us why; the ones who've got our back; the ones who devote time and effort to a relationship. You might be able to think of more examples. Trust can be established on a one-on-one basis but also within a group of people whether with the same (cultural) background. Impediments to building trust are three components that play roles in every culture (Brown, 2012):

Shame: fear of ridicule and belittling; unworthiness; of being 'not good enough'; being blamed or pointed at; being called names, etc.

Comparison: can lead to overt and covert ranking; suffocation of creativity; being measured for your worth, etc.

Disengagement: can be the cause of anxiety to try new things; of keeping quiet instead of sharing experiences; it can be created by a feeling of not being listened to, not to be heard or seen, etc.

This is why we advise trust-building (story) activities first, before going into in-depth experiences around topics.

The power of the question

Questions that can elicit stories are also important. Questions that keep the other's story going (and respecting the other's story) can be not only helpful but can also help revealing important details.

Questions are almost never innocent. As stories, questions are intentional; they serve a purpose, just like the answer and/or stories that you will receive as a response to your question.

Questions can control because there is a strong social pressure for the other person to answer the question. It can degenerate into power play, and on the other hand others can evade questions or bounce them back ("Interesting...") and give you a story that's beside the point.

Questions can be persuasive can be dubious because they can influence others' thinking and answering in different ways. With the right question you can discover all kinds of useful information that can help you and the teller to achieve later goals. }

Open questions are particularly useful. Active listening also helps. It can reveal personal details about the other person and will give you the opportunity to empathize, for example by showing that you had similar experiences.

Effective story listening will always reveal the power of joining, or identifying in with the speaker, and making someone feel that they are not alone, that they are not isolated in their experience of need, and out of that sharing comes a team, a support network, etc." (Costello, 2017). Ask questions whose answers are stories; stories and answers to questions about them reinforce each other and provide a richer base of meaning than either can alone (Kurtz, 2014).

Dealing with opinions

When working with your beneficiaries, you might get opinions rather than stories. It is the stories on how they reached this opinion that are of interest. Thus, when someone expresses an opinion, questioning (using the types of questions above or a combination of them) will allow you to gain interesting insights to reflect upon. Questions that elicit a story in this case can be:

- *Tell us about the time when you first understood about the effects of…*
- Did you have another view at another point in time and when did it change?
- Yes, that is your opinion, but what would be an example?

The following question can elicit a story when an opinion is stated:

- *Yes, that's your opinion, but what would be an example?*

And for more concrete questions, Paul Andrew Costello (2015) offers alternatives like:

- *Tell us about the time when you first understood about how ...... effects .....?*
- *Who has helped to shape your opinion on ...... and how / when / where did this happen?*
- *Have you always felt this way?*
- *Was there a time when you had a different view and when did it change?*

The importance of proper questioning

Eliciting stories from others and story collecting starts with asking questions, they are the basis of every story, told or listened to. Questions serve a purpose, in the same sense as the answer does, and therefore they have the power to direct, manipulate or disempower people´s stories. It is therefore of utmost importance to find the proper way of asking questions, i.e., asking them in such a way that they do not exercise the power over someone´s story. There are different types of questions relevant in your interaction with your participants.

Gather interpretations, not opinions

Direct their attention to the story and away from themselves. Make sure your questions keep people engaged in interpretation and not wander over to opinions. And always remember: Keep the teller in the story! (Kurtz, 2014).

Type of question	Characteristics	Situations in which they are useful
Closed questions	- Can be answered with a single word or short phrase; - Gives facts; - Are easy and quick to answer; - You keep control of the conversation with the questions - Often use words like: do, would, are, will, if.	- Opening a conversation: e.g. Where do you live? - To test understanding: e.g. So, you want to move in with us? - Setting up a desired frame of mind (positive or negative): e.g. Are you happy with your current job? - To achieve closure of a persuasion: If I deliver this tomorrow, will you sign now?
Open questions	- Begins with what, why, how, describe - Deliberately seeks a long answer (and is likely to get one) - Asks the respondent to think and reflect; - Gives opinions and feelings - Hands control of the conversation to the respondent	As a follow-up from closed questions, to find out more about a person, to get people to realize the extent of a problem, to show that you're concerned. **Examples** How do you keep focused on your work? What's keeping you awake these days? What would happen if your customers complained even more? How have you been after your operation?
Directed questions	Directly asks someone about a topic/issue	Opening a conversation, to test understanding, setting up a desired frame of mind (positive or negative), To achieve closure of a persuasion e.g. **Examples** Where do you live? So, you want to move in with us? Are you happy with your current job? If I deliver this tomorrow, will you sign now?

Type of question	Characteristics	Situations in which they are useful
Undirected question	▪ Asks about experiences; ▪ Slight similarity with open questions; ▪ Mostly delivers emotions and honest reflections; ▪ Answers can only be partly about topics relevant to the project/activity. Don´t ask about a particular issue but ask about experiences in general.	▪ If you want to get more raw emotions and honest reflections. You can combine with directed questions "seeking both goals (specificity and authenticity) at once." (Kurtz, 2014) ▪ How was the meeting with your boss today? ▪ Can you remember your best moment as a father/son/mother/daughter? ▪ Can you give me an example?
What happened questions	▪ To obtain more detail from a specific answer; ▪ To help trigger answers.	To trigger hesitant or inexperienced storytellers to start "telling their story". When people do not give sufficient detail, e.g., when they only indicate when an important time in their life without indicating why. **Example** Can you tell me what happened on your first day at work?" (vs. Can you remember your first day at work). "And then what happened?" "What happened next?

Story eliciting box (Kurtz, 2014; Frühmann et al., 2016)

More story eliciting questions that allow refinement in diverse situations.

Asking to recall a point in time

Examples on basis of general memorability:

What was the most memorable hour of your career?

What moment of your visit to the festival was most exciting to you?

Examples on basis of emotions:

Could you describe the moment when you struggled most in your work?

Can you tell me about your proudest hour as a fire fighter?

Was there a day you really felt frustrated?

Examples on basis of issues organisation might care about:

Was there ever a moment when you felt that trust in the community was strengthened or weakened?

Can you describe a time when you discovered why there are problems in this organisation?

Asking to recall an event

Examples on basis of general memorability:

What event stands out in your mind from four years working in this organisation?

Can you describe a situation you remember as important for this organisation?

Examples on basis of emotions:

Can you tell us about moment when you felt really proud about your organisation/work/colleagues?

Can you tell me about a time when you felt too worn out to go to work?

What did you feel when you witnessed the argument?

Examples on basis of issues organisation might care about:

When you think of change, which event of the past year stands out most in your mind?

Can you recall an occasion when you felt a stranger in this organisation?

Could you tell us about a situation where inequality was obvious to you?

Story eliciting box (Kurtz, 2014; Frühmann et al., 2016)

Asking to recall an extreme (feeling)
Examples on basis of general memorability:
Can you tell me about the highlights of your last project?
What was the worst thing that ever happened to you in this organisation?

Examples on basis of emotions:
When did you feel most frustrated during the last two months?
Can you remember the happiest you felt in this organisation?
What was the nicest thing you heard about our organisation/your work activities?

Examples on basis of issues your organisation might care about:
Can you remember being frustrated about the intergenerational gap / gender inequality / bullying in this organisation?
Was there a moment when you felt management cared about the decline of trust and cooperation?
*Can you recall being appreciated with the initiatives you took**?***

Asking to recall surprise and change
Examples:
Can you tell me about a time when you were surprised by something your CEO / manager said?
Was there ever a moment when you felt something had changed and after that nothing was the same again?
What do you think was the turning point in your thinking about this issue?
Can you tell us about a critical moment during the negotiations around [………………]?

Mixing approaches in one question
You might try to mix different approaches in one question. It can be useful because it gives people multiple subtle clues that you are looking for stories.

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Inside each of us is a natural-born storyteller,
waiting to be released.

Robin Moore
Writer

Section 3

TGAL

THINK GLOBAL ACT LOCAL
DIVERSITY MANAGEMENT

It is time to put all that theory into practice! In this section you will find a total of nine workshops linked to the nine pillars of diversity. These are instructional activities you can put in practice in your company to address D&I management. These nine workshops comprise case studies and guiding questions; how to guides in step-by-step format; didactical advices for facilitating and running storytelling workshops; reflections and call to actions in cards format; plus motivation material to further explore the topics proposed.

Workshops and tools

AGE

Apart from chronological age (time since birth), other conceptualizations of age have been developed. Researchers suggest that individuals with the same chronological age may differ, for instance, in terms of their subjective age, their functional health, or their organizational age (i.e., career stage). Age management is a term often used to describe good practices or relevant strategies, especially designed to fight ageism.

Creating accessible workspaces

SONNENTOR Kräuterhandels GmbH is a distributor of organic herbs, spices and teas with a strong international brand, based in Austria. A total of 500 people are employed by SONNENTOR, with the average age of the employees being 39. Age management, health measures and employee participation are part of their philosophy.

The company participated in Age Management Masterclass project between 2019 - 2020 and applied age management measures with three main aims: 1. retain older workers at work, so that their experience, skills and competences are not lost; 2.to attract younger workers and to help younger workers benefit from older workers' experience; 3. to reduce sickness absence.

According to their HR manager this was a very successful process. Some of the measures taken were giving its retired workers the option of working marginally part-time; In the offices, efforts have been made to improve workers' ergonomic situations; intergenerational mentoring; health promotion activities in the workplace and a few others.

Employees participation in the measures were top priority. Employees are always consulted on the initiatives put in place and could give their input. A mixture of formal and informal communication channels were used, as employees' survey, respectful, contact between the human resources department and the employees in a relaxed atmosphere. In addition, workers can raise any problem at any time with management and know that they will be supported.

- *Have you personally experienced any challenges or opportunities related to age management in your career? Could you provide an example?*
- *Have you encountered any misconceptions or stereotypes about age and work? How were they addressed, and what was the impact?*
- *Can you recall a personal story about learning something important from a much older friend/family member?*
- *Can you recall a personal story about learning something important from a much younger friend/family member?*
- *Can you recount a story where the transfer of knowledge and expertise from older to younger employees resulted in significant improvements or breakthroughs within a team or organization?*

Workshop 1
Generational awareness

By engaging in this activity, participants can gain a deeper understanding of generational diversity, challenge stereotypes, and work towards creating a more inclusive and harmonious work environment. This workshop aims to foster understanding, empathy, and effective communication among different generations in the workplace.

Step1 Introduction: begin the workshop by introducing the concept of generational diversity in the workplace. Explain that different generations, such as Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z, have distinct characteristics shaped by their unique experiences, social contexts, and technological advancements.

Step2 Group discussion: divide participants into small groups, ensuring each group has representatives from different generations. Assign each group a specific generation to focus on. Encourage them to share their knowledge and perceptions about that generation, including both positive and negative stereotypes they may have encountered or heard.

Step3 Stereotype brainstorming: provide each group with a large sheet of paper or a whiteboard. Ask them to write down the stereotypes associated with their assigned generation. Encourage them to brainstorm as many stereotypes as they can, without judgment or criticism.

Step4 Stereotype reflection: after the brainstorming session, reconvene the larger group and discuss the stereotypes identified by each group. Analyse how these stereotypes might impact workplace dynamics, communication, and collaboration among generations.

Step5 Personal experiences: invite participants to share personal stories or experiences related to generational stereotypes. Encourage open dialogue and respectful communication to foster understanding and empathy among participants.

Didactical advices

❑ **Create a safe and inclusive environment:** set the tone from the beginning by emphasizing the importance of a safe and inclusive space. Encourage participants to share their thoughts and experiences openly, ensuring that everyone feels respected and valued.

❑ **Facilitate active participation:** act as a facilitator rather than a lecturer. Encourage active participation from all participants by asking open-ended questions, allowing sufficient time for discussion, and ensuring equal opportunities for everyone to contribute.

❑ **Encourage dialogue and reflection:** foster a culture of dialogue and reflection throughout the workshop. Encourage participants to listen actively, ask clarifying questions, and share their perspectives. Provide opportunities for individual reflection on personal biases and preconceived notions.

❑ **Provide balanced information**: when introducing generational characteristics or stereotypes, present a balanced view that acknowledges both positive and negative aspects. Emphasize that individuals within each generation can exhibit a wide range of behaviours and beliefs, and stereotypes should not be applied universally..

❑ **Encourage collaboration:** promote collaboration and interaction among participants from different generations. Encourage them to work in diverse groups, share experiences, and learn from one another. This fosters empathy, breaks down barriers, and promotes cross-generational understanding.

❑ **Follow-up and support:** offer post-workshop support by providing additional resources, reading materials, or online communities where participants can continue their learning journey and seek further guidance

Reflections and cards to action

Facilitate a group discussion aimed at debunking or challenging the stereotypes identified earlier. Encourage participants to question and challenge these assumptions, providing evidence and counterexamples to challenge the stereotypes. Emphasize the importance of finding common ground and building on shared values, regardless of generational differences. Encourage participants to recognize the strengths and unique perspectives that each generation brings to the workplace

Foster open dialogue

Encourage participants to continue engaging in open dialogue and active listening with colleagues from different generations.

Encourage them to seek diverse perspectives, challenge assumptions, and find common ground when working together

Break down stereotypes

Encourage participants to actively challenge and break down generational stereotypes in their workplace

Encourage them to educate others about the realities and individuality of each generation, promoting a more inclusive and understanding work environment

Promote intergenerational mentoring

Encourage leaders and decision-makers to recognise the value of generational diversity in decision-making processes.

Advocate for diverse representation on teams, committees, and project groups to leverage the unique perspectives and insights of different generations

Incorporate generational diversity in decision-making

Encourage leaders and decision-makers to recognize the value of generational diversity in decision-making processes

Advocate for diverse representation on teams, committees, and project groups to leverage the unique perspectives and insights of different generations

Training and HR policies

Advocate for ongoing training and development programs that address generational diversity in the workplace. Encourage organizations to invest in workshops, seminars, or online resources that foster understanding and collaboration across generations

Suggest reviewing HR policies to ensure they are inclusive and considerate of generational differences. Policies related to work-life balance, flexible working arrangements, technological advancements, and career progression should be evaluated to accommodate the needs and expectations of different generations

Share success stories

Encourage participants to share success stories or best practices from their workplace regarding generational diversity and collaboration. Celebrate and highlight these examples to inspire others and showcase the positive impact of bridging generational gaps

We've made so many advances in other areas - civil rights, gay rights - but ageism is still an area that's taboo and not talked about and dealt with Madonna

Imagine a world without ageism:

How generational stereotypes hold us back at work, Leah Georges

2022 Generation names explained

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learngen.eu/

CULTURAL

The practise of sharing tales and narratives that capture a particular culture or community's values, beliefs, and customs is known as cultural storytelling. It can manifest itself in a variety of ways, such as through oral traditions, writing, painting, music, and other kinds of creative expression. Cultural storytelling can enhance brand identity and foster empathy, respect, and trust. It helps companies understand diverse perspectives and adapt their strategies accordingly.

Galp Energy, stories and internal communication

Galp is an integrated company in the energy sector, carrying out procurement & trading activities for oil products, gas and electricity. Its business is about exploitation, distribution of gasoline, oil, natural gas, refineries, filling stations, and electricity. It employs around 17,300 people.

Stories that reveal what is going on in an organisation and stimulate a culture of sharing experiences, involvement and dialogue that can have an impact on changing routines and behaviour. Media Shots worked with Portuguese company Galp Energia's marketing team to produce individual stories, which helped to explore new paths in internal communication, gave them tools for content production and led participants to reflect on their journey and role in the company.

Testimonials:
Many times, in organisations we have an undeveloped creative side, and we are very dependent on agencies. Today it is important to develop internal skills to be able to create content. We worked with Media Shots to help the Marketing Team gain writing skills, learn storytelling and become better able to communicate. Isabel Calado, Marketing Director at GALP Energia

- *How can storytelling contribute to creating a culture of sharing experiences, involvement, and dialogue within an organisation?*
- *How do you think individual stories might help to explore new paths in internal communication?*
- *In what ways can learning about storytelling and content production lead to personal and professional growth for individuals in the workplace?*
- *How can the use of individual stories in internal communication impact the company's culture, routines, and behaviours?*
- *What is your story within the company where you're currently work?*

This workshop aims to provide participants with the skills and knowledge needed to use storytelling as a tool for building and shaping Company Culture. By the end of this workshop, participants will be able to: Create a stronger sense of community and collaboration within the company, leading to increased engagement and productivity; align company values and beliefs with employee behaviour, resulting in a more cohesive and unified team and, inspire action and drive motivation among employees by sharing stories that illustrate the company's purpose and mission.

Step1 **Introduction to storytelling and company culture:** define storytelling and its importance in shaping company culture; discuss the benefits of using storytelling in the workplace and explore different types of stories and their relevance to company culture.

Step2 **Making stories about company culture:** identify key company values, beliefs and behaviours to be conveyed through storytelling; develop and craft origin stories, success stories, and values-based stories that align with the company culture. Share and refine stories in small groups.

Step3 **Delivering and sharing stories effectively:** learn best practices for delivering stories, including the use of humour, emotion, and visual aids; practice delivering stories to the group and receive feedback; explore different mediums for sharing stories, such as video, photographs, podcast, or written formats.

Step4 **Using storytelling to shape company culture:** discuss how storytelling can be used to shape company culture and create a sense of community, collaboration, and trust; explore case studies of companies that have successfully used storytelling to shape their culture; brainstorm ways to incorporate storytelling into the company culture.

Step5 **Action planning and next steps**: develop an action plan for using storytelling to shape and reinforce the company culture; identify key next steps and resources for implementing storytelling in the workplace and share ideas and feedback with the group.

Didactical advices

❑ **Grab participants' attention** with a powerful opening that sets the tone. Share a personal anecdote or thought-provoking question related to company culture. This engages participants and fosters a positive learning environment.

❑ **Create a collaborative and supportive learning environment**: use a mix of training methods: use a mix of lecture, group activities, and hands-on exercises to ensure that participants are actively engaged in the learning process. Ensure that the workshop is dynamic and interactive.

❑ **Incorporate real-world examples**: use case studies to show how other companies have used storytelling to shape their culture and achieve their goals. This will help participants see the practical value of storytelling in the workplace and provide them with concrete examples to follow.

❑ **Encourage active participation**: by asking questions, soliciting feedback, and facilitating group discussions. This will create a collaborative learning environment and encourage participants to share their ideas and experiences. Ensure that all participants contribute and that all voices are heard.

❑ **Provide constructive feedback**: give feedback during exercises, focus on strengths and areas for improvement, and provide examples.

❑ **End with a call to action**: conclude with a call to action to apply new skills and integrate storytelling into company culture. Offer resources for further learning.

Reflections and cards to action

To foster a positive internal culture and improve employee engagement and satisfaction, it is crucial to encourage open and honest communication within the company. As a facilitator, it is important to make sure employees feel comfortable sharing their perspectives and feedback, and to take their input seriously. By prioritising employee feedback and making necessary changes, companies can create a more inclusive and collaborative work, leading to higher authentic environment and overall success.

Identify key values and messages

Determine the key cultural values and messages that align employees with the company and incorporate them into storytelling

Gather stories from employees

Collect stories from employees that highlight the impact of their work and the company as a whole

Create a narrative: use the stories you gathered from employees to create a narrative that conveys the importance of the company's culture to achieve success

Share stories internally & externally

Share the stories externally through social media, press releases, or other channels to increase brand awareness and engagement with stakeholders

Share the stories you gather and the narrative you create with employees throughout the organisation to increase engagement and understanding

Ask for feedback

Encourage feedback from employees and stakeholders on storytelling efforts to ensure that your messages are resonating with your audience

Continuously improve

Incorporate visuals such as photos, infographics, or videos to enhance the impact of your storytelling.

Use feedback and data to continually improve your storytelling efforts and ensure that they are effectively addressing the issues related to the cultural company

Celebrate successes

Celebrate successes along the way to maintain momentum and encourage continued action

Shorten the Story

- Choose a story to share with your group and challenge them to sort the necessary components from the extra components.

- Think about the narrative's true heart. What is the topic of this tale? Examine the narrative's skeleton.

- Procedure: After telling a narrative, the facilitator encourages the group to summarise it as follows:
  — 7 sentences in 10 min
  — 3 sentences in 5 min
  — 1 sentence in 1 min

- This final statement is presented to the group by the participants that were previously divided in smaller groups.

A different perspective

- Exercise your creativity by recounting the tale again, making some minor changes, and including brand-new details.

- Place the group in few pairs.

- Procedure:
Participant A choose a known tale. The storyteller A presents an example of a different point of view from a different character in the story. It might be a person, but it could also be an animal, a thing, or something from the natural world like a river or a tree.

- Together with participant B both write a new narrative. The group has 10 minutes.

- The group hears the participants' stories for ten another minutes.

5:3:3:3

- Provide the group with a story.

- Ask them to list
  — 5 actions
  — 3 arguments
  — 3 objects
  — 3 emotions
from the history they've just heard

Two possibilities:

- A) With that list each pair must re-invent and write a new story.

- B) Each pair collect the actions, arguments objects and emotions to tell a story using photography or video (they need to come up with a story board. They can use some or all elements to draft the story).

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ETHNICITY

Ethnicity describes communities or groups of people with distinctive social, cultural, and behavioural characteristics that distinguish them from others in the same or different country or society. Members share the same language, have similar ways of life and a common history, preserve traditions and customs, identify themselves as members of that ethnic group, and often have a common genetic heritage.

Ethnic discrimination when applying for a job

When job applicants accidentally receive an internal email saying your name, Quassim, does not go along with it, it is a glaring example of job discrimination. And despite all the policies and programmes to combat it, it is only increasing. In a recent study (2022), sociologist Bram Lancee of the University of Amsterdam and his team sent 20,000 fictitious application letters to existing job vacancies, incorporating more than 50 different ethnic backgrounds.

The letters varied in sender, photo and description of personal characteristics, but matched in skills, qualifications and letter quality. Ethnic and religious background the researchers subtly incorporated in the applicant's name and in someone's activities, for example volunteering for a Muslim organisation. Or in the letter itself, with a sentence like "My family is originally from Morocco, but I was born in Tilburg and received all my education in the Netherlands. The researchers sent the letters to job postings for six occupational groups where customer contact was alternately low and high, such as software developers versus receptionists.

This large field experiment produced a disturbing picture. "In the Netherlands, people with a non-Dutch background were on average 20% more likely to get 0 responses to their letter,' Lancee explains. "And if we break it down by ethnic background, we see that applicants from Ethiopian, Ugandan, Pakistani or Moroccan backgrounds in suffer from discrimination. They must write more than twice as many letters before being invited for an interview. Compare that with a German job applicant, who must send out even less than the average

Do you think this is common in all European countries?

Have you ever experienced a rejection based on your ethnic background?

Do you sometimes find yourself distrusting others for their ethnic appearance?

What do you know about your organisation's hiring criteria?

Which is more important: a good qualification or 'a good pedigree'?

The issues we want to address here are stereotyping, and how we make assumptions about people based on sparse information. The objectives of this workshop are to compare how people differ in their initial impressions of others; to explore how our past experiences colour our first impressions; to become more aware of how our impressions affect our behaviour towards others. This workshop will take 30 minutes to complete, plus one hour for sharing and coming to conclusions. It is ideal for a groups of 4-12 people. This workshop will require preparation from the facilitator including selecting pictures from magazines of people who have interesting/different/ striking faces. Cut out the faces and stick them at the top of a piece of paper leaving plenty of space underneath. You will need to prepare one sheet per participant and provide pencils, one per person.

Step1 Ask the participants sit in a circle and hand out one sheet to each person.

Step2 Ask them to look at the picture and write down their first impression of the person at the bottom of the page. Then ask them to turn the bottom of the paper up to hide what they have written and to pass the sheet on to the next person.

Step3 Tell the players to look at a second picture and write down their first impression at the bottom of the page just above the turn-up, then to turn the bottom of the paper up again to hide what they have written and pass it on. Repeat until the papers have been round the circle, and everyone has seen every sheet.

Step4 Now unfold the papers and let everyone compare the different 'first impression'.

Step5 Talk about what happened and what you learnt using the following questions for debriefing the activity:
As a group? What surprises were there? What did you base your first impressions on? Describe and share instances when you have had a completely wrong first impression of someone. What happened as a result? What did this activity reveal about ourselves?

Didactical advices

❑ **Instructions: b**efore you start make sure everyone understands the instructions. It will be useful to demonstrate where players should write and how to turn the bottom of the paper up.

❑ **Materials**: keep the papers moving round quickly, don't let people think for too long. It's their first impressions you want.

❑ **Image selection**: avoid choosing pictures of famous people or celebrities.

❑ **Inclusion principles:**: Try to include a wide variety of people including those of different ages, genders, and ethnic groups.

❑ **Feedback:** be prepared for some fierce arguments about attitudes, depending on the group size comments may not always be anonymous.

❑ **Ensure respect**: do not let players criticise each other for their opinions but focus the discussion on the actual comments.

❑ **Variations**: an alternative method which is good to use if you have a large group is to copy the pictures onto an overhead transparency and project them onto a screen. Ask each participant to write their first impression on a numbered slip of paper, collect the slips up after each round and then read them out at the end.

Reflections and cards to action

In some contexts, ethnicity is a "politically correct" term equivalent to the word "race," which may have disdainful associations. Knowing this, we are challenged to overcome prejudice, intolerance and fear. It is also an invitation as much as a challenge to explore our ethical boundaries. All communities have boundaries; a physical boundary that indicates who is inside and who is outside. Some communities do not attempt to guard their borders - individuals may participate or leave whenever they wish. Others have rites of passage (for newcomers and/or the outbound), a job interview being one. Most organisations guard their borders and have guards (you may fill inn whom that is) to shut out 'drifters'.

Recognising and understanding privilege

Let people recognise and understand their own privilege. Ethnic and racial privilege plays out across social, political, economic, and cultural environments

Examining biases

Let them examine their biases. Where do they originate from? Their early upbringing, talks at the dinner table? At school, from peers? Social media? People they trust (and who are these people)? Storytelling and narrative approaches can be employed in all these stages.

The best way to understand ethnic discrimination (and racial injustice) is by listening to stories of people have experienced it or still experience it. As ethnicity and racism overlap in many ways and sometimes are mixed up with each other, suggestions we made in the racism section also apply here

Challenging narratives and intolerance

Challenge 'tolerance', which often is not much more than indifference.

Challenge jokes or statements or narratives that perpetuate and normalize biases and prejudices. Look for or develop counter- or alternative stories and narratives

Ethnicity should enrich us; it should make us a unique people in our diversity and not used to divide us Ellen Johnson Sirleaf
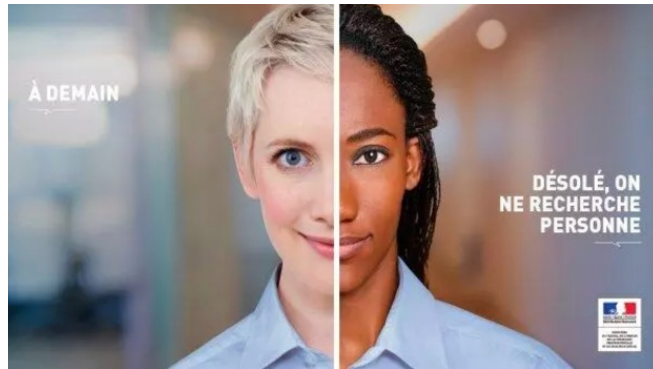
Motivation material

Apple, inclusion and diversity

Centre on dynamics of Ethnicity: The effects of racism at work

"See you tomorrow", is the message for the white, blonde-haired woman on the left, while the black woman in the other half of the picture is told: "Sorry, we aren't looking for anyone."

"Welcome to the team", the white face on the left is told, while the North African face on the right is fobbed off with: "we'll get back to you."

"You can start on Monday," reads the caption on the left, while on the right it says: "You don't have the right profile."

From a campaign against ethnic discrimination in job applications (French Ministry of Labour)

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How to Promote Racial Equity in the Workplace
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GENDER

Gender refers to the characteristics of women, men, girls and boys that are socially constructed. This includes norms, behaviours and roles associated with being a woman, man, girl or boy, as well as relationships with each other. As a social construct, gender varies from society to society and can change over time. Gender interacts with but is different from sex, which refers to the different biological and physiological characteristics of females, males and intersex persons. Gender and sex are related to but different from gender identity. Gender identity refers to a person's deeply felt, internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond to the person's physiology or designated sex at birth (WHO).

Pride Business Forum, Czech Republic

PBF writes on their website: We view diversity as a fundamental principle that allows all people – regardless of individual differences – to fully develop their personal potential. The voluntary application of diversity – as per the European Charter on Diversity – means accepting, supporting, and further developing individuals' talent. As part of the Pride Business Forum, we have joined forces to create an initiative to support both employers in implementing LGBT+ diversity principles and employees in efforts to ensure their employers are delivering a fair approach to all: regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity. PBF writes on their website: We view diversity as a fundamental principle that allows all people – regardless of individual differences – to fully develop their personal potential. The voluntary application of diversity – as per the European Charter on Diversity – means accepting, supporting, and further developing individuals' talent. As part of the Pride Business Forum, we have joined forces to create an initiative to support both employers in implementing LGBT+ diversity principles and employees in efforts to ensure their employers are delivering a fair approach to all: regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity. One of the founding members of PBF Jana Vychroňová, Diversity & Inclusion Manager at Vodafone says: At the Pride Business Forum we found a valuable partner for LGBT+, which is part of our Diversity & Inclusion strategy. This multi-year cooperation has enabled us to better understand the issues and situations that LGBT+ people face in the workplace and has resulted – for example – in a levelling of benefits in areas where LGBT+ people face legislative discrimination. We are also delighted to establish cooperation with other companies and seek opportunities for mutual inspiration.

- *How do you think your gender identity has influenced your professional journey and interactions with colleagues?*
- *Have you encountered any challenges or barriers related to your gender identity in the workplace? How did you handle them?*
- *Can you describe a time when you witnessed someone being supportive and inclusive of different gender identities in the workplace?*
- *Are there any specific workplace policies or practices that you believe should be implemented or revised to better support individuals with diverse gender identities?*
- *Can you share a personal story or anecdote about a time when you had to educate someone about gender identity in the workplace? How did that interaction go, and what was the outcome?*

This interactive workshop aims to create awareness and promote understanding about gender identity diversity in the workplace. Participants will explore the importance of fostering an inclusive environment and learn practical strategies for supporting and respecting individuals with diverse gender identities. Through discussions, case studies, and group activities, attendees will gain insights and tools to contribute to a more equitable and accepting workplace.

Step1 Introduction: welcome participants and establish a safe and inclusive atmosphere. Briefly introduce the workshop objectives and the importance of gender identity diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Encourage participants to share their preferred pronouns (if comfortable) to promote inclusivity.

Step2 Understanding gender identity: define key terms related to gender identity (e.g., gender identity, cisgender, transgender, non-binary, etc.) and provide handouts with definitions (see resource section). Engage in a short group discussion about the concept of a gender spectrum and the importance of recognizing and respecting diverse gender identities.

Step3 Challenging unconscious bias: divide the participants into small groups of 3-4 people. Distribute sticky notes or index cards and markers to each group. Ask each group to brainstorm common biases and stereotypes associated with gender identity. Encourage them to consider both positive and negative stereotypes. Example prompts: What are some stereotypes associated with male and female employees? Are there any assumptions or biases related to non-binary or transgender individuals in the workplace? How do gender biases impact career progression or decision-making processes? Instruct the groups to write down their ideas on separate sticky notes or index cards.

Step4 Sharing and discussion: ask each group to share their ideas, one at a time, and stick their notes on the flipchart or whiteboard. Encourage participants to explain the reasoning behind their choices. Facilitate a discussion by asking open-ended questions to explore the impact of these biases on individuals and the workplace as a whole.

Step5 **Action plan:** ask each participant to write down at least one personal bias they would like to challenge or change on a separate sticky note or index card. In their small groups, ask participants to share their personal biases and discuss strategies for challenging and overcoming them in their daily work interactions. Encourage them to produce actionable steps they can take individually or collectively to create a more inclusive and bias-free workplace.

Step6 **Q&A and closing:** address any remaining questions or concerns from participants. Summarize key takeaways from the workshop. Remind participants that it is an ongoing process to challenge biases and stereotypes and that they play a crucial role in fostering a supportive work environment. Express gratitude and close the workshop on a positive note.

Didactical advices

❑ **Create a safe and inclusive environment: s**et the tone from the beginning by emphasizing the importance of a safe and inclusive space. Encourage participants to share their thoughts and experiences openly, ensuring that everyone feels respected and valued.

❑ **Facilitate active participation:** act as a facilitator rather than a lecturer. Encourage active participation from all participants by asking open-ended questions, allowing sufficient time for discussion, and ensuring equal opportunities for everyone to contribute.

❑ **Encourage dialogue and reflection:** foster a culture of dialogue and reflection throughout the workshop. Encourage participants to listen actively, ask clarifying questions, and share their perspectives. Provide opportunities for individual reflection on personal biases and preconceived notions.

❑ **Adapt content and pace:** assess the level of familiarity and knowledge of participants regarding gender identity diversity to tailor the content accordingly. Ensure the workshop progresses at an appropriate pace, allowing ample time for discussion and reflection.

❑ **Be respectful and culturally sensitive:** recognise and respect the diversity within the workshop participants, including different cultural perspectives on gender identity. Use inclusive language throughout the workshop, demonstrating respect for all gender identities. Avoid making assumptions about participants' gender identities or experiences and prioritize individual self-identification.

❑ **Self-reflection and continuous learning:** regularly reflect on your own biases, assumptions, and knowledge gaps related to gender identity diversity. Seek opportunities for your own professional development and learning in this area.

Reflections and cards to action

Invite the participants to take a few moments to individually reflect on their key takeaways from the workshop on embracing gender identity diversity and inclusion in the workplace. Let them consider the insights, learnings, and ideas that resonated with them the most.

Training, resources and policies

Advocate for training sessions and resources on gender identity diversity and inclusion within your organization. Encourage HR departments or leadership teams to provide workshops, guest speakers, or ongoing learning opportunities to promote awareness and understanding

Advocate for inclusive policies and practices within your organization. Collaborate with relevant stakeholders to review existing policies, such as non-discrimination, dress code, restroom access, and preferred name/pronoun usage, and propose changes or updates to promote inclusivity

Establish support networks

Foster the creation of employee resource groups or affinity networks that specifically address gender identity diversity. Encourage individuals to come together, share experiences, provide support, and collaborate on initiatives that promote inclusivity

Continuous learning

Commit to ongoing self-reflection and learning about your own biases, assumptions, and privileges. Regularly assess your knowledge, challenge preconceived notions, and actively seek opportunities for growth and improvement

Equality means more than passing laws. The struggle is really won in the hearts and minds of the community, where it really counts Barbara Gittings

Pride Business Forum Voice

Being an LGBT ally at work

Additional reflection questions

- *How has your understanding of gender identity diversity evolved or deepened throughout this workshop?*
- *Did any personal stories or experiences share during the workshop impact you? If so, how?*
- *What specific actions or changes do you feel inspired to implement in your own workplace to promote gender identity diversity and inclusion?*
- *How do you plan to be an ally and advocate for individuals with diverse gender identities moving forward?*
- *What challenges or obstacles do you anticipate in implementing the changes or actions discussed today, and how do you plan to overcome them?*
- *What additional support or resources would be helpful for you as you continue your learning journey on gender identity diversity and inclusion?*

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NEURODIVERSITY

All humans vary in terms of their neurocognitive ability. Individuals have both talents and things they struggle with, that can have an impact on their performance. Therefore, the diagnoses of: Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD/ Dyspraxia), Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and Autism spectrum disorders (ASD) as well as others, think differently and have cognitive profiles that include both strengths and challenges for the individuals. These can bring advantage but can also be disabling..

My brain is wired differently than yours

Lisa always struggled with her in-office work environments. What Lisa finds the most challenging is the big office open space she is currently working at, as well as the constant noise and movements that do not interfere well with her ADHD and dyslexia. She enjoys face-to-face interactions but daily, these may become very tiring for her. In addition, the bright lighting of the office is bad for her sensory challenges. Lisa has access to assistive technology tools like text-to-speech, which can help her manage her individual learning preferences. However, she finds it hard to use them freely in the office, without feeling ashamed or overwhelmed. The reason is because she is mainly working with confidential matters and colleagues, who she do not want to disturb, always surround her. Consequently, Lisa occasionally feels forced to use text.

Lisa is a very hard-working employee. She sets goals and persists until achieving them. However, no matter how hard she tries to focus, working in the office is challenging for her. In addition, Lisa feels as if there is a constant pressure to "keep up" with everyone else if she was not to feeling judged. Her colleagues do not seem to struggle, and she gets the impression that the office environment works just fine for them. According to her job requirements Lisa is expected to work with other people and use her creativity. She is fine with this, and she was always contributing innovative ideas to the group. However, she would love to be able to focus more and really buckle down on her tasks. Lisa has considered talking to someone about her current difficulties, but she is lacking the confidence to speak up and discuss her needs.

- *Can you identify what works well for Lisa in her current job role?*
- *Can you identify the main challenges for Lisa in her current in-office work environment?*
- *When it comes to Lisa's struggles, are these on an individual level or an organisational level? Explain your answer.*
- *What can be done to help Lisa become more productive and effective in her daily routine? Think of specific job adjustments.*
- *Are there any challenges in creating a more inclusive environment for Lisa?*

This interactive workshop aims to (1) to encourage individuals to share their own personal stories, or stories of other people relating to neurodiversity; (2) to gain a greater knowledge of colleagues' or other people's stories relating to neurodiversity and increase empathy towards how this may have affected individuals' personal or working lives; (3) to reflect on individuals' current working environment and whether this enables or puts obstacles to neurodivergent individuals.

Step1 **Introduction:** bring individuals together and introduce the session. Share some information about neurodiversity and briefly discuss on how society has been more accessible and suitable for a neurotypical brains, and at the same time how it has been excluding neurodivergent individuals and their talent. You can also highlight that by focusing on the strengths that these individuals have, rather than their weaknesses we can allow individuals to thrive and reach their own potential.

Step2 **Questioning:** now, ask the individuals to think of the experience, and precisely story, of a neurodivergent individual and how their specific neurological characteristics have affected them at work. Individuals can draw upon both positive and negative impact of neurodiversity on work. This individual can be themselves, a family member, a close friend, a colleague or somebody they know. If individuals find it hard to recall from personal experience, encourage them to search online. Some examples can be found here: casscounselling.co.uk/famous-neurodiverse-individuals/

Step3 **Engaging**: Engage all the members of the group in a discussion. Individuals will be asked to share the story they chose to focus on and comment on how easy it was for the neurodivergent individual to navigate work.

Step4 **Discussion:** Get participants to discuss what it like to be a neurodivergent individual in today's workplace. Ask them to identify any specific challenges that these individuals face. But at the same time ask them to think how different the story would be if individuals were able to bring their full talent at work. They can draw specific conclusions from their own previous or current work experience.

Step5 **Solutions:** participants need to come up with solutions to creating more inclusive working environments.

Didactical advices

❑ **Create a safe and inclusive environment:** make sure you create a safe and trusting space so individuals can share without worrying that what they say can be used against them. If individuals do not know each other, you can do some ice-breaking activities such as asking them to share their names and something about themselves.

❑ **Be a good listener:** remember that it is not always easy for individuals to open and share their neurodiversity story. So, encouraging participants to open is important. Asking open questions can further enable the individuals to describe and narrate their experience.

❑ **Be supportive:** some memories that participants may recall, and share may not be as pleasant, but emotionally charging instead. You need to ensure that the person sharing is treated with respect and empathy. You should in this case make it clear that individuals can share as much as they feel comfortable sharing and that they can stop at any time they want.

❑ **Don't judge:** bring to attendees' attention that each story is unique and in order to better understand what the person opposite us is going through, we need to listen carefully, avoid judging what is being said, and ask open questions.

❑ **Do some research:** the field of neurodiversity is very broad, and the human brain does vary a lot. Thus, it is very good and helpful if you have some levels of knowledge, but it is normal to not be informed about each type neurodiversity. Be honest and transparent about this and allow yourself to learn more from individuals' stories and from further independent reading.

❑ **Resources sharing:** provide helpful resources and educational material that individuals can read after the workshop. In addition, provide any useful informational about available communities from where individuals with neurodiversity can seek guidance or support.

Reflections and cards to action

Neurodivergent individuals tend to find the completion of some work tasks very easy and other incredibly hard. This can in many cases explain an inconsistent performance at work. Neurodiversity can be a competitive advantage when the individuals are in the right environment, making use of their strengths, instead of constantly trying to overcome challenges. Therefore, it is of imperative importance to create inclusive spaces to work and learn ways to reduce disabling factors and amplify diverse abilities. Ask individuals to notice people with different learning preferences and styles and start noticing their strengths and talents rather than their weaknesses and struggles.

Fostering a sharing culture

Organisations need to start changing their policies, processes and culture to ensure everyone feels like they are included and belong. Fostering a culture where all voices are welcomed, and individuals can express themselves without fear of discrimination can bring great results. For example, the organisation can keep an open channel of communication, where individuals are encouraged to share their concerns or needs

Promoting neuro-friendly environments

In order to create a neuro-friendly working environment, check if you are incorporating all the tools that individuals need such as speech-to-text software to accommodate different communication styles or adjusting onsite training programmes to fit different learning strategies. Inclusive technology is crucial as individuals can use different ways of working and communicating, based on what they feel more comfortable and be more efficient. Remote working, when possible, can also be used as an option to accommodate individuals' needs and preferences

Raising awareness

HR can play a crucial role in raising awareness within the organisation about neurodiversity and get the conversation going. This can be achieved through sharing relevant articles, podcasts, TedTalks and books on the topic, which can help employees to self-educate. In addition, the company can run or participate to events relating to neurodiversity week, bring in speakers who can share their stories and encourage employees to participate

Lead by example

Information about neurodiversity and raising awareness can be integrated in the leadership programmes. This is essential as individuals who may need support and special adjustments have their leaders and managers as their first call for help

Being proactive in support

Don't expect individuals with neurodiversity to self-advocate but instead be proactive in the way you support the individuals. Some considerations include identifying what sensory barriers may exist in the physical workspace. As well as what modes of communication are available for staff to communicate internally

Practicing inclusive hiring processes

Foster an inclusive hiring process – avoid placing unnecessary focus on social and communication skills and you could focus on asking participants to complete a task or solve a problem, which allow the candidates to show their talents

There are billions of us humans everywhere, with access to our own minds and no one else's, tossing one another songs and sentences to bridge the gap Annie Kotowicz

The genius within extraordinary gifted people

Neurodiversity & intersectionality

Remote4All remote e-working for disabled and neurodivergent workers

Neurodiversity in the workplace

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PHYSICAL DISABILITY

Physical disability is any condition of the body (i.e., impairment) that makes it more difficult for the person with the condition to do certain activities and interact with the world around them. There are many types of disabilities including but not been limited to: arthritis, musculoskeletal disorders, cerebral palsy, spinal cord injuries, vision impairment, movement impairment and hearing impairment. It is worth noting that some physical disabilities are hidden or hard to recognise

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Creating accessible workspaces

John has just been hired in a marketing department. He has mobility impairment and during his onboarding process he asked his organisation to accommodate his wheelchair. He also asked for aisles and pathways to be clear, an adjustable desk, and an accessible meeting room where he would be able to meet with his clients. After some weeks working there, he expressed to his manager Becky his frustration and disappointment. As he told her, his coworkers persistently left their bags and other belongings scattered on the floor making it hard to move around with the wheelchair. He also shared with her that the marketing team tend to meet in rooms with no accessibilities.

And as a result of that he is missing some strategic meetings in the department. He is worrying, that he cannot contribute as much as he would have liked, which will in turn reduce his career prospects. Becky has never dealt with a similar work situation before, and she does not feel confident about dealing with this issue. She acknowledges the need to do something about it though, so she reminded the team that they needed to accommodate John's wheelchair. To her surprise, some of the team members were unsympathetic to his situation and some others suggested that John was overreacting.

After the meeting, Becky overheard some members of the team calling her approach to John's needs as "special treatment." Tensions began to grow between John and some team members, making it harder for him to perform at this best. Even though clients are satisfied with John and the quality of his work, John has recently started struggling in performance reviews.

- *Can you identify what works well for John in his current job role?*
- *Can you identify the main challenges for John in his current in-office work environment?*
- *When it comes to John's struggles, are these on an individual level or an organisational level? Explain your answer.*
- *What can be done to help John become more productive and effective in his daily routine? Think of specific job adjustments.*
- *Are there any challenges in creating a more inclusive environment for John?*

This interactive workshop aims to (1) to promote sharing of personal stories, or stories of other people relating to disability and how it interferes with employment career; (2) gain a greater knowledge of colleagues' or other people's stories relating to disability and increase empathy towards how this may have affected individuals' personal or working lives; (3) to reflect on individuals' current working environment and whether this enables or puts obstacles to people with disability; (4) to encourage the co-creating of a story which promotes a realistic and sustainable inclusive working environment.

Step1 **Sharing:** ask participants in your organisation to share stories relating to physical disability and it how it may have interfered with employment career. These stories can be personal, as individuals may have some form of physical disability themselves. However, if not relevant, participants can share the story of a close relative, friend or any other acquaintance. Searching for stories online can also be another option. You can collect individuals' answers both in hard copies and electronically. In case you collect these stories online you can make use of tools such as Padlet and Google forms. To increase interest in this activity, highlight the importance of learning more about physical disability and how it can lead to greater inclusion at work and making better use of available talent.

Step2 **Engaging:** Organise a circle group where all can come together and share in person the stories they have provided. Encourage them to ask any clarifying open questions, and to always listen with respect. During storytelling encourage them to explain how different forms of disability may have interfered with story's main character (themselves or somebody else) employment careers.

Step3 **Encouraging**: ask the group to identify any potential biases in the stories that have been shared. Define bias (unconscious) so they can think of any examples (please refer to Section 2: Terminology and concepts). It may be worth considering any stigma associated with disability (both at a societal and a working environment) the role it may have played to these biases

Step4 **Reflection:** Get all to reflect on their current working environment and whether it is disability inclusive or not.

Step5 **Co-creating: n**ow, as a group, think of a future story. The focus here is around co-creating a realistic, sustainable future for both individuals and for the community of individuals with disability.

Didactical advices

❑ **Create a safe environment:** creating a comfortable and trusting space is essential before running the workshop. Therefore, ensure that all individuals know each other. You can try any icebreaker activity, such as asking them to share their name and a piece of information about themselves.

❑ **During groups discussions:** when running the discussing in groups clarify that life can be tough for anyone, but for some people may deal with tougher obstacles than others. Therefore, encourage individuals to not compare different experiences, or judge but try to get a deep and true understanding of each story that will be shared.

❑ **Explain concepts:** introduce or reinforce the concept of empathy and explain that it allows individuals to build stronger social bonds between them. For a definition, inform individuals that: "Empathy is about attempting to imagine what it would be like to be in someone else's situation so to share their feelings or experiences." Therefore, encourage individuals to practice their empathetic skills by listening to what the others are describing and asking open questions to better understand the narratives of others.

❑ **Give room for sharing:** keep in mind that sharing personal stories about disability may be emotionally charging for individuals. Give space to the individuals to express themselves and clarify that individuals can share as much as they feel comfortable to share. Breaks should also be included, should they be needed.

❑ **Give room for reflection:** encourage reflection throughout the workshop. Encourage participants to reflect on their believes, thoughts and biases towards physical disabilities.

❑ **Resources sharing:** offer individuals additional resources and reading materials from where they can self-educate and get a greater understanding of physical disability and how it affects people at work. In addition, share any information about existing communities where individuals can become members or seek further guidance.

Accommodating people with disabilities at work and eliminating their barriers to access work, it is not only a matter of inclusion or making better use of existing talent, but it is also a matter of equality, social fairness, freedom, democracy and human rights. By promoting great social integration of people with disabilities at work we can not only achieve economic growth, but also positively affect the EU's overall potential. As such there is an increasing need to tackle any kind of discrimination against, and fostering the active inclusion of, people with disabilities in the labour market. Ask individuals to consider the existing disability employment gap in order to realise the importance of accommodating more individuals to work.

Practice inclusive recruitment processes

Ensure that recruitment and selection processes are disability inclusive. Equality and diversity screenings of recruitment processes can be carried out to identify any potential risk of bias or discrimination. Appropriate remedial actions can be then taken to solve these issues. For instance, if the interview as part of the selection process takes place in a non-accessible space for the individual, then the option of an online interview can be provided too, to accommodate the person with mobility difficulties

Promote accessibility

Check the accessibility to both organisation's built and virtual environments, to information and communication technologies (ICT), goods and services, including transport and infrastructure, as this is an enabler of rights and a prerequisite for the full participation of persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others

Set the pace

Line managers and supervisors should keep open channels of communication so that individuals can openly share and discuss what they are struggling with and ask for help which will allow them to do their jobs more effectively

Promote training and awareness

Raise awareness of different forms of physical disability and how these may interfere with employment careers. You can invest in Disability Awareness Training or organize awareness days (for example to celebrate the International Day of persons with disabilities on the 3rd December) in order to discuss about the topic and share personal stories of individuals

Develop, revise and implement new policies

Update, invest and promote policies about diversity and inclusion highlighting organisation's zero-tolerance attitude towards any kind of discrimination and/or victimization of people with disability

Tackle any bias/unconscious bias

Tackle any bias/unconscious bias by challenging ingrained attitudes. Once acknowledging that we all have unconscious biases, individuals can focus how they react to protected characteristics and whether they make assumptions of people abilities because of those

Abled does not mean enabled. Disabled does not mean less abled
Khang Kijarro Nguyen

When we design for disability, we all benefit
Elise Roy

Disability and work
Hannah Barham-Brown

European accessibility act

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Racism is the inability or refusal to recognize the rights, needs, dignity, or value of people of races or geographical origins. More widely, the devaluation of various traits of character or intelligence as 'typical' of peoples. The unfair treatment of people who belong to a different race; violent behaviour towards them the belief that some races of people are better than others, or a general belief about a whole group of people based only on their race.

Witnessing racism in your organisation

Adam worked at an Observatory. In a WhatsApp group he shares with colleagues and the coordinator in that discriminatory expressions have been made, some colleagues regularly using expressions like 'those niggers' (the 'n-word') and even the nazi salute was made.

The coordinator responded that people should treat each other "somewhat normally". Sometime later, Adam witnessed a volunteer in a dialogue with his colleague, saying: "Sometimes I feel like putting a "n-word" with his teeth on a doorstep and kicking on the back of his head. Do you feel like doing that too?" The colleague responded with: "Yes, every day." Adam addressed both colleagues on this and informed both the coordinator and the board. Following his complaint, neither the coordinator nor the board took action. Adam contacted to the Council of Human Rights for an opinion. The observatory argued in its defence saying that Adam was not being a victim of discrimination. The remarks were not directed at him, but at public and fictitious figures. Moreover, the man himself does not have a black skin colour. Therefore, the n-word cannot be about him.

The Council of Human Rights did not follow the observatory's defence and ruled that the man did have an interest in judgment. The reaction from the observatory remained that people should "just behave normally". They did not investigate the man's complaints further and did not hear both sides of the argument. The Council judges the Observatory's response as severe, given the seriousness of the expressions and conduct at the heart of this complaint. Meanwhile, Adam has quit his job.

- *If you had been the coordinator, how would you have handled Adam's report?*
- *What do you think about the board's defence?*
- *Have you ever witnessed a person like Adam?*
- *Have you ever been a target of racism yourself?*
- *How do you value internal WhatsApp groups as a means of communication?*

The general idea of this exercise is to give listeners a job. When listeners have a job, they have more focus. It helps to add content and meaning to individual stories. And it works in more than one way: it helps the individual to get more insights about his or her story and it helps the group (and the community) to get more insights - based on that story - in their perception (or personal experience) of a given or similar topic. It also works for (peer) groups in organisations (i.e., management, production, etc.). Organisations can invite employees to this kind of story sharing. It is an appreciative approach, meaning that it focuses on what is 'true' and good. Each group member is assigned to a role and roles may be switching. Given the proper instructions and facilitating questions, every participant has a chance to attribute.

Step1 Organise: work in small groups (4-5 members) with assigned roles: teller, interviewer, witness(es), observer. After each round the roles change. Each round lasts about 10 minutes.

Step2 Telling the story: while the teller tells his story, interviewer, witnesses and observer take notes. If the narrator falters, the interviewer can help with questions such as "What happened, who was there? What happened next? What did he/she/they do? Etc." (see Storytelling appendix for more). Note: the witnesses and observer just listen in this phase and take notes, and don't interfere.

Step3 Meaning: after the telling, the role of the interviewer is to draw meaning from the content of the story ("I heard something in what you just said..." / "That story made me think of something..." / "I think this was a story about ____..."). The role of the witness(es) is to comment on the person of the storyteller in an appreciative way ("I noticed something about you when you told the story..." / "You have a way of establishing____..." / I notice how you are attentive to ____..."). These are comments that foster the self-awareness of the teller (personality, presence and voice).The role of the observer is to listen carefully and noticing other dynamics that stand out in this encounter.

Step4 Discussion: finally, the group members can discuss which considerations this witnessing has given them: How can they see themselves applying experiences, insights, identified abilities and values in their life in the organisation? If there is more than one group, groups can share their considerations and insights plenary. A conversation can be facilitated.

Didactical advices

❑ **Engage first:** before questioning the case, start with one nor two 'icebreakers' to establish a safe storytelling environment and trust among the participants. Examples: My name, who gave it to me? My favourite mentor (and why) / a person I trust (and why).

❑ **Ground rules: s**et some ground rules: Everything shared will be treated with respect and is confidential, nothing 'leaves the room' without permission.

❑ **Resources:** hand out post its and let participants write on them what they expect of this meeting. Put the post it's on a wall or whiteboard. After sharing insights, one can check (post its) whether expectations have been met.

❑ **Pay attention:** when participants start sharing stories, keep an eye on staying in their assigned role (listeners are quick to comment, often because they associate from their own experiences).

❑ **Provide support:** when a participant gets emotionally upset, ask if they would rather share one-on-one with you, and find another room to do so. When the participant has calmed down, he can choose to remain in his role or choose another role.

We should be aware that racism is one of the facets of "social exclusion" and one of the practices that fail to respect differences or value diversity. Excluded individuals and communities suffer distinct disadvantages by comparison with the rest of the population. Often, they are deprived of legitimate aspirations to which they are entitled, such as labour force participation, and social inclusion. They are barred from a life that a person expects to enjoy in a democratic society, including the exercise of human rights.

Be prepared

Keep story sharing alive! it's not short-term entertainment Be aware that initiatives to effectively address racism in an organisation are frequently met with resentment and resistance. Beliefs, not reality, are what determine how employees respond to efforts taken to increase equity. If many of your employees do not believe that racism against people of colour exists in the organisation, then diversity initiatives will be perceived as the problem, not the solution. Use perspective-taking approaches (e.g., storytelling); encourage everyone to engage and participate. Ensure that conversations are open by providing ample time to address issues and foster a safe climate

The 5 stages for genuine concern

Livingston (2020) advises these action stages: (1) Problem awareness, (2) Root-cause analysis, (3) Empathy, or level of concern about the problem and the people it afflicts, (4) Strategies for addressing the problem, and (5) Sacrifice, or willingness to invest the time, energy, and resources necessary for strategy implementation. Organisations going through these stages move from understanding the underlying condition, to developing genuine concern, to focusing on change and improvement. Storytelling and narrative approaches can be employed in all these stages

Promote learning

Deliver trainings (to staff, managers, team leaders) and workshops over longer rather than shorter periods. Aim to enhance three central learning outcomes: awareness, attitudes and skills. Combine cognitive and behavioural techniques by exploring critical incidents or alternative response strategies (e.g., use activities like story sharing that promote reflective thinking and active participation).

It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognize, accept, and celebrate those differences Audre Lorde

Motivation material

The school that tried to end racism

How to conquer workplace discrimination when HR doesn't solve the problem, Alvin Hall

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RELIGION

Religion is attributed to traditional values and practices related to a certain group of people or faith and is the service or worship of God or the supernatural. It is defined as a personal set or institutionalised attitudes, beliefs, and practices and it is guided by tradition, rules, and culture. Spirituality is an abstract and subjective experience, referring to an interconnection of something beyond ourselves and connecting something within ourselves. It can be a connection to God, nature, others, and surrounding..

Navigating religious and spiritual beliefs in the workplace

Rachel is working in a chain retail store, has extensive work experience and high levels of performance. She is Christian and her church prohibits working on Sundays. She has informed her manager about her religious belief and asked for Sundays off. The manager back then accepted her request but her new manager is now including her on Sunday's schedule.

Even though Rachel explained to the new manager that her religion prohibited her from working on Sundays, the new store manager refused to change the schedule and advised Rachel that she could either work on Sundays like everyone else or she would lose her job. When Rachel said that this was an unruly behaviour the manager insisted that this decision was not violating religious discrimination laws and that it was much of a hardship to permit Rachel take Sundays off.

She knows that the manager routinely provided employees with Saturdays and Sundays off for non-religious reasons. She is also surprised as her previous manager explicitly mentioned that there was no problem to give her Sundays off as well as her coworkers never complained about scheduling difficulties with this accommodation
.
Rachel find the whole situation very distressing as working on Sundays makes her feel that she is against her religion. In addition, it affects her relationships, as her close people are also not working on Sundays.

- *Which is the main issue for Rachel and how is the situation at work affecting her both personally and professionally?*
- *Would you classify the new manager's behaviour as discriminatory towards Rachel and why?*
- *What could be potential solution to the issues that Rachel is facing?*
- *Can you identify any issues when accommodating Rachel's inquiry and how can we tackle those?*
- *Can you identify more examples of religious or spiritual discrimination that we can find at work?*

This workshop aims to (1) to encourage individuals to share their stories relating to their viewpoint on religion and spirituality; (2) to gain a greater knowledge of colleagues' stories relating to religion and spirituality and increase empathy towards how this may have affected individuals personal or working lives; (3) to reflect on individuals' current working environment and whether this enables or puts obstacles to individuals' religion and spirituality beliefs.

Step1 Share and collect: ask participants in the organisation to share about their relationship with religion and/or spirituality and its relationship with their work. Guiding questions can be: "Tell me about your relationship with religion and/or spirituality. How does this relationship relate to your work?". Participants answers can be collected both in hard copies and electronically. In case you collect these stories online you can make use of tools such as Padlet and Google forms. To increase interest in this activity, highlight the importance of learning more about diversity and how it can lead to greater inclusion at work, improving both relationships and performance.

Step2 Story circles: once you have collected all the stories from individuals create an open invitation for individuals attend story circles. During this activity they can share their stories and listen to their colleagues' stories. Ask all them to respect their colleagues' stories and listen to them with a non-judgmental mindset.

Step3 In someone's shoes: ask each participant to pick up on somebody's story and describe what they imagine it would be like for this person in the circle to have this certain religion or spirituality at work, if there is an impact at all. Encourage individuals to double check with each other to confirm they get a great understanding of their circumstances.

Step4 Analyse and reflect: ask participant's to think and share whether your company takes into consideration and accommodates for religion and spirituality needs.

Step5 Find solutions: building upon what has been discussed so far, encourage individuals to produce some action points and solutions to ensure that their organisation does not discriminate towards individuals with different viewpoints on religion and spirituality, but instead promotes inclusivity for all.

Didactical advices

❑ **Engage:** create a comfortable and trustful environment so individuals are encouraged to share their stories, and precisely their viewpoints and beliefs about spirituality and religion. If individuals do not know each other, you can use some ice-breaking activities such as asking individuals to share their names and something the others do not know about them.

❑ **Ground rules:** you should set the tone and ground rules from the beginning. For example, it is normal that people have different viewpoints about spirituality and religion. This workshop is not about judging the religion or spirituality beliefs, but it is about gaining understanding of the experiences of others with respect.

❑ **Don't exclude:** in the case where individuals are neither religious, nor spiritual highlight that they can still talk about that and get to know more about their colleague's stories. You can also welcome stories of others that can be brought as examples in the conversation.

❑ **Respect boundaries:** considering the sensitive nature of this matter, clarify that individuals can share as much as they feel comfortable to share. Promote dialogue between the individuals and encourage them to ask questions.

❑ **Share resources:** share material and sources so individuals can read more about the protected characteristic of religion and spirituality at work, and the legislation around it. Also, some real stories have also been provided so individuals can get a better understanding of what it looks like in real life.

It is individuals' right to have their own viewpoint on religion or spiritual belief. Individuals can also choose to be atheistic, dogmatic, academic, indifferent or somewhere in between. Organisations and employers are expected to manage these different and personal points of view with respect and equity. This can consequently create a culture where employees are happier and more productive, while also making legal compliance easier for the employer. Ask individuals to reflect on the importance of this issue and if they have ever thought about the importance of tackling discrimination. What would be their next steps to learn more on the topic?

Zero tolerance policy

Ensure company policies (such as dress code policies) do not inadvertently discriminate. Creating an organisational culture that accepts and treats differences with respect and inclusion should be a priority for the organisation

A zero-tolerance policy should be in place for any disrespectful comments or behaviours regarding individuals' spirituality or religion

Advocate for social justice

Employees should be encouraged to speak up for others and take actions such as supporting a co-worker who is subjected to insensitive or harassing conduct.

Make it clear that it is the responsibility of every employee to be aware, knowledgeable and respectful of a wide range of spiritual, religious and nonreligious beliefs C

Consider facilitating voluntary lunch-and-learn-type gatherings during which employees can share about their religious practices with education and activities planned by a diverse group of employees

Accountability and transparency

Include input from employees when planning meetings and events such as holiday parties, especially regarding the type of celebration and scheduling. That way, employers can be mindful of religious practices. For example, scheduling a working lunch during; Ramadan could exclude Muslims who are fasting.

Accommodate individuals' need to pray by providing "quiet rooms" or spaces that individuals can use

Do not discourage religious discussions at work, but instead provide employees with training on how to learn about their co-workers' religious preferences with respectful discussions

After the dust of centuries has passed, we will be remembered not only for victories or defeats in battle or politics but also for our contribution to the human spirit Qamar Rafiq

Motivation material

Muslim woman sues company after facing religious discrimination

Religious discrimination is "un-American"
Kathy Lund Dean

Discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief

Religious accommodations at work
 The $28M Case

L'Oréal masters multiculturalism

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Identify and Prevent Religious Discrimination in the Workplace
www.embroker.com/blog/religious-discrimination-in-the-workplace/

SOCIAL

Social storytelling has a two-fold meaning: it can be used for social good by highlighting important social issues and advocating for change. It also refers to the practice of telling stories and sharing them on social media platforms. It involves using channels such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok to create and share content that engages audiences, builds relationships, and promotes brands...

Climate strike movement

A best practice for social storytelling in advocating for change is to use a clear and compelling message, supported by strong visuals and personal stories. The message should be focused on a specific issue, with a call to action that empowers people to get involved and make a difference.

One good example for social storytelling to advocate for change is the Climate Strike movement. It began in 2018 when a 15-year-old Swedish student, Greta Thunberg, skipped school to protest outside the Swedish Parliament, demanding action on climate change. Thunberg's story quickly gained attention on social media, inspiring students around the world to join her cause.

Students began organising school walkouts and protests in their own communities, using social media to share their stories and amplify their message. The climate strike movement uses social storytelling to raise awareness about the urgent need to address climate change and to demand action from governments and corporations.

The movement has been successful in influencing policy decisions and sparking global conversations about the impact of climate change on our planet. Overall, the climate strike movement shows how social storytelling can be a powerful tool for raising awareness and promoting positive change on important social issues.

- *What is your understanding of the Climate Strike movement, and how has it impacted you and your community?*
- *In what ways have personal stories and visuals used in the Climate Strike movement influenced your perception of the urgency of climate change?*
- *In what ways have personal stories and visuals used in the climate strike movement influenced your perception of the urgency of climate change?*
- *How can social media platforms be used effectively to raise awareness and promote positive change on important social issues like climate change?*
- *What policy changes do you think are necessary for addressing climate change.*
- *How can individuals and communities advocate for these changes with the support of social storytelling and activism?*

Storytelling for change and social justice

The Climate Strike movement showcases social storytelling's ability to effect change. The workshop aims to equip participants with the tools to use this technique effectively in their own advocacy efforts. It will also empower participants to promote positive change on important social justice issues using social storytelling as a tool for advocacy. Participants will learn about the power of social storytelling, create compelling messages and visuals, and explore concrete actions to advocate for policy changes that address social justice issues.

Step1 **Introduction and icebreaker**: the facilitator introduces the workshop's objectives, and participants share their understanding of social justice issues and their interest in social storytelling.

Step2 **Understanding the power of social storytelling**: the facilitator presents the power of social storytelling in promoting positive change on important social justice issues, using examples from various social justice movements. Participants engage in a group discussion on the effectiveness of social storytelling and its potential impact on social justice.

Step3 **Developing compelling messages and visuals:** the facilitator leads a session on creating compelling messages and visuals that inspire action and engage a wider audience, using best practices from various social justice movements. Participants work in small groups to develop their messaging and visuals for social justice issues, with feedback and guidance from the facilitator.

Step4 **Empowering action and advocacy**: the facilitator presents on concrete actions that participants can take to advocate for policy changes that address social justice issues, using social storytelling as a tool for advocacy. Participants engage in a brainstorming session on ways to use social storytelling to advocate for social justice issues, including leveraging social media and organising community events.

Step5 **Reflection and closing:** the Facilitator summarises the key takeaways from the workshop and encourages participants to continue using social storytelling as a tool for advocacy and change on important social justice issues. Participants reflect on what they have learned and share any action steps they plan to take in the future.

Didactical advices

❑ **Start with a hook: b**egin your story with a compelling hook that grabs the audience's attention and draws them in.

❑ **Set the scene:** describe the setting and characters to create a vivid picture in the audience's mind.

❑ **Introduce the problem: c**learly state the problem or issue that your story is addressing, and why it is important.

❑ **Build tension**: create tension by highlighting the obstacles or challenges that must be overcome to resolve the issue.

❑ **Present a solution:** offer a solution or course of action to address the problem and explain why it is effective.

❑ **Use personal stories**: incorporate personal stories or examples to add emotional impact and make the issue more relatable.

❑ **End with a call to action:** end your story with a call to action that motivates the audience to take action and make a difference.

❑ **Practice, practice, practice:** practice your story to make sure it flows smoothly, is engaging, and effectively conveys your message

Reflections and cards to action

It is individuals' right to have their own viewpoint on religion or spiritual belief. Individuals can also choose to be atheistic, dogmatic, academic, indifferent or somewhere in between. Organisations and employers are expected to manage these different and personal points of view with respect and equity. This can consequently create a culture where employees are happier and more productive, while also making legal compliance easier for the employer. Ask individuals to reflect on the importance of this issue and if they have ever thought about the importance of tackling discrimination. What would be their next steps to learn more on the topic?

Storytelling strategies

Develop diverse and inclusive storytelling strategies that feature a range of perspectives and experiences

Ensure that storytelling efforts are not performative or simply for marketing purposes, but rather are part of a larger commitment to promoting social justice and equity

Engage with and listen to your audience to ensure that your storytelling aligns with their values and priorities, and actively seek feedback to improve your storytelling practices

Use storytelling to inspire and empower audiences to act and advocate for policy changes that address social justice issues

Advocate for social justice

Prioritise the voices of marginalised individuals and communities by actively seeking out and supporting their stories through partnerships, collaborations, and platforms

Amplify social justice causes by leveraging your company's resources and influence to advocate for policy changes, support community initiatives, and fund social justice organizations
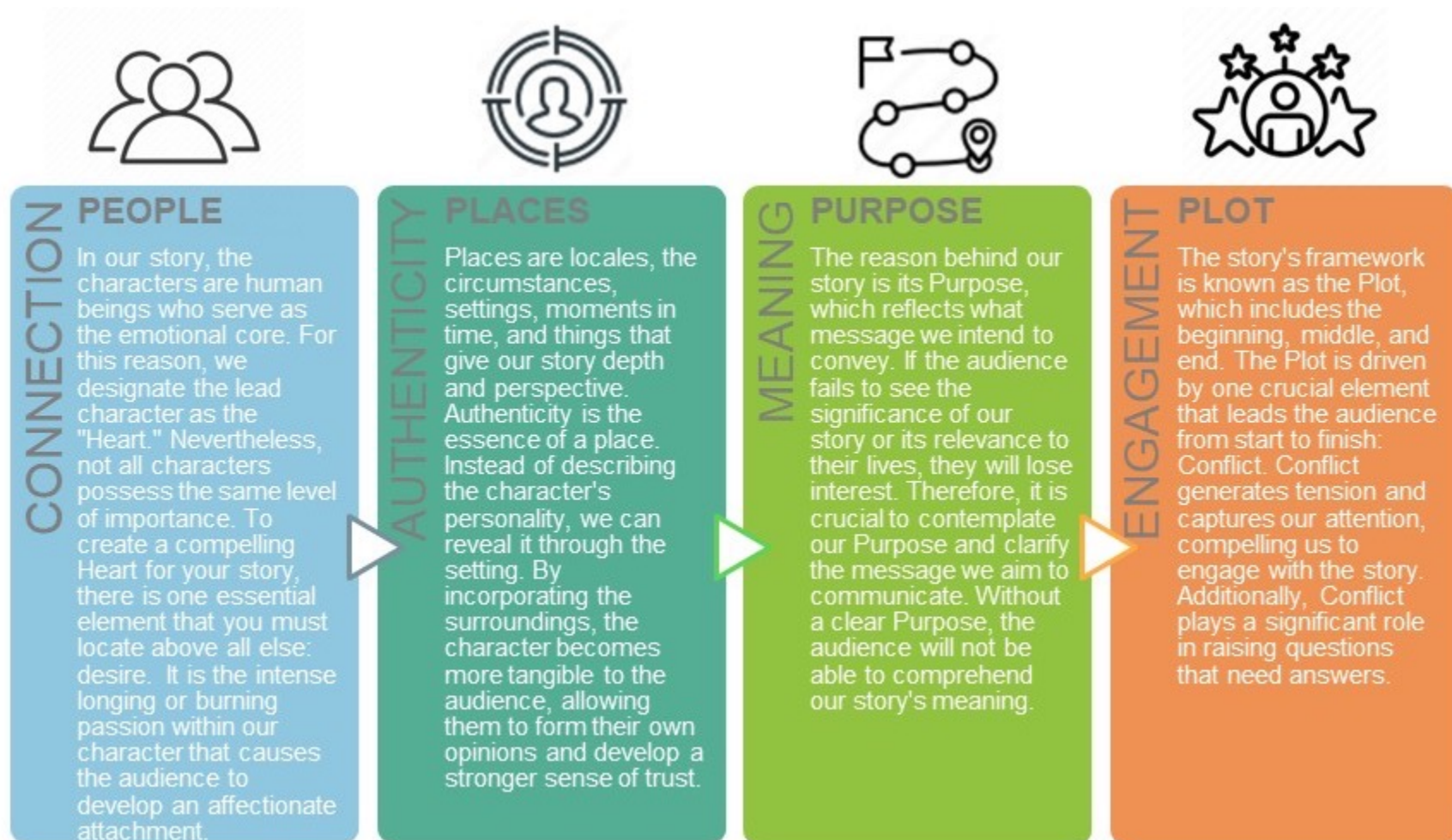
Empower employees to be agents of change by providing them with resources, support, and opportunities to use storytelling for social justice advocacy

Accountability and transparency

Engage in continuous self-reflection and education to identify and address any unconscious biases and systemic barriers within your storytelling processes and practices.

Foster a culture of accountability and transparency by regularly measuring and reporting on your company's progress and impact towards promoting social justice through storytelling

Motivation material

CONNECTION

PEOPLE

In our story, the characters are human beings who serve as the emotional core. For this reason, we designate the lead character as the "Heart." Nevertheless, not all characters possess the same level of importance. To create a compelling Heart for your story, there is one essential element that you must locate above all else: desire. It is the intense longing or burning passion within our character that causes the audience to develop an affectionate attachment.

AUTHENTICITY

PLACES

Places are locales, the circumstances, settings, moments in time, and things that give our story depth and perspective. Authenticity is the essence of a place. Instead of describing the character's personality, we can reveal it through the setting. By incorporating the surroundings, the character becomes more tangible to the audience, allowing them to form their own opinions and develop a stronger sense of trust.

MEANING

PURPOSE

The reason behind our story is its Purpose, which reflects what message we intend to convey. If the audience fails to see the significance of our story or its relevance to their lives, they will lose interest. Therefore, it is crucial to contemplate our Purpose and clarify the message we aim to communicate. Without a clear Purpose, the audience will not be able to comprehend our story's meaning.

ENGAGEMENT

PLOT

The story's framework is known as the Plot, which includes the beginning, middle, and end. The Plot is driven by one crucial element that leads the audience from start to finish: Conflict. Conflict generates tension and captures our attention, compelling us to engage with the story. Additionally, Conflict plays a significant role in raising questions that need answers.

4 Pillars of a story

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dysgenic /dis-jen'ik/ (zool) adj unfavourable to racial [...]
normal social [...] [dys- and the root of Gr gennaein to beget]

■ **dysgen'ics** n sing the study of race degeneration, [...]

dysgraphia /dis-graf'i-ə/ n inability to write, due to brain [...] other cause. [dys- and Gr graphein to write]

■ **dysgraph'ic** adj.

dysharmonic /dis-här-mon'ik/ adj unbalanced, lacking in [...] of proportion. [dys-]

dyskinesia /dis-kin-ē'zi-ə/ (pathol) n lack of control over [...] movements; impaired performance of voluntary movement [...] and Gr kīnēsis movement]

dyslexia /dis-leks'i-ə/ n word blindness, great difficulty in learning [...] read or spell, unrelated to intellectual competence and or [...] cause. [dys- and Gr lexis word]

■ **dyslec'tic** or **dyslex'ic** adj and n.

dyslogistic /dis-lə-jis'tik/ adj conveying censure, oppro[...] and Gr logos discourse]

■ **dyslogis'tically** adv. **dys'logy** n dispraise.

[...]lia /dis-mēl'i-ə, -mel', -yə/ n the conditio[...] [...]shapen or incomplete. [dys- [...]

No, no! The adventures first, explanations take such a dreadful time.

Lewis Carroll
Alice's Adventures in Wonderland
Through the Looking-Glass

Section 4

Glossary

Before moving forward with your exploration of this toolkit, we provide here 20 key concepts used throughout the manual briefly explaining in which contexts they are used.

Ageism

Ability

Accessibility

Ageism

Bias

Disabilities

Discrimination

Diversity

Diversity and inclusion management

Equity

Feminism

Intolerance

Inclusive workplace

Microaggressions

Neurodiversity

Racism

Religion and spirituality

Sexism

Stereotypes

Storytelling

Xenophobia

Ableism refers to discrimination or prejudice against people with disabilities. Beliefs or practices that rest on the assumption that being able-bodied is "normal" while other states of being need to be "fixed" or altered. This can result in devaluing or discriminating against people with physical, intellectual or psychiatric disabilities. Institutionalized ableism may include or take the form of un/intentional organizational barriers that result in disparate treatment of people with disabilities (PwDs).

Ability refers to one who has the "skills to complete a task, or activity," so disability can affect how well a person can do any task related to their job.

Accessibility is the "ability to access", the functionality of a system or entity, and gain the related benefits; the degree to which a product, service, or environment is accessible by as many people as possible. Accessible design ensures both direct (unassisted) access and indirect access through assistive technology (e.g., computer screen readers). Universal design ensures that an environment can be accessed, understood, and used to the greatest extent possible by all people.

Ageism refers to the stereotypes (how we think), prejudice (how we feel) and discrimination (how we act) towards others or oneself based on age.

Bias is prejudice in favour of or against one thing, person, or group compared with another, usually in an unfair or negative way. Implicit or unconscious bias is an unconscious opinion, positive or negative, that you have about a group or person. Implicit biases are the attitudes or stereotypes that are taught and developed early in life, and they strengthened over time, affecting individuals' understanding, actions, and decisions without them realising.

Disbilities is an umbrella term that covers impairments, limitations, and restrictions on participation. It distinguishes an impairment as "a problem in body function or structure," a limitation as a "difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action," and participation restriction as "a problem experienced by an individual in involvement in life situations." .

Discrimination occurs when people are treated less favourably than other people are in a comparable situation because they belong or are perceived to belong to a certain group or category of people. Some characteristics people are discriminated against are their age, disability, ethnicity, origin, political belief, race, religion, sex or gender, sexual orientation, language, culture and on many other grounds. Discrimination is often the result of prejudices people hold. .

Diversity refers to the differences among people with respect to their unique attributes, values, attitudes, cultural perspective, beliefs, ethnic background, sexual orientation, gender identity, skills, knowledge and life experiences of everyone in any group of people. Diversity refers to any dimension that is been used to differentiate between different groups of people.

Diversity and inclusion management whiting the organisational context aims to empower employees and managers to better navigate diverse work settings more effectively and provide them with the tools to deepen their understanding of the differences around them, overcome barriers to creating inclusion, manage and communicate with people from different backgrounds, and identify and implement approaches for managing diversity.

Equity involves fair treatment for all, ensuring that inequities and barriers are identified and eliminated to give everyone the opportunity to be successful; whereas equality is about sameness and treating everyone the same.

Feminism comprises theory and practice that focuses on the advocacy of social, economic and political equality between men, women and all gender identities.

Intolerance is a lack of respect for practices or beliefs other than one's own. It also involves the rejection of people whom we perceive as different, for example members of a social or ethnic group other than ours, or people who are different in political or sexual orientation.

Inclusive workplace does not only have a diversity of people, but it has a diversity of people involved, developed, empowered and trusted by the organisation.

Microaggressions are subtle verbal and nonverbal slights, insults, indignities, and denigrating messages directed toward a person due to their group membership, often automatically and unconsciously. Microaggressions can be seen as innocent, harmless comments, but they reinforce stereotypes and are a form of discrimination. Over time, microaggressions can isolate and alienate those on the receiving end and affect their health and wellbeing.

Neurodiversity acknowledges that all humans vary in terms of their neurocognitive ability. Individuals have both talents and things they struggle with, that can have an impact on their performance. E.g.: Dyslexia, Dyscalculia, Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD/ Dyspraxia), Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and Autism spectrum disorders (ASD) as well as others.

Neurodiversity (cont) Neurodivergent individuals have different strengths and limitations from neurotypical individuals.

Racism lies in the belief that racial differences produce or are associated with inherent superiority or inferiority. Racially-based prejudice, discrimination, hostility or hatred. Institutionalized racism, also known as systemic racism, refers to forms of racism that are ingrained in society or organizations. It's when entire racial groups are discriminated against, or consistently disadvantaged, by larger social systems, practices, choices or policies

Religion is attributed to traditional values and practices related to a certain group of people or faith and is the service or worship of God or the supernatural. Religion is defined as a personal set or institutionalized system of religious attitudes, beliefs, and practices and it is guided by tradition, rules, and culture.

Sexism is linked to beliefs around the fundamental nature of women and men and the roles they should play in society. Sexist assumptions about women and men, which manifest themselves as gender stereotypes, can rank one gender as superior to another. Such hierarchical thinking can be conscious and hostile, or it can be unconscious, manifesting itself as unconscious bias. Sexism can touch everyone, but women are particularly affected.

Stereotypes are generalised beliefs or opinions about a particular group of people. Stereotypes are often called cognitive shortcuts and they simplify reality. Stereotypes are usually based either on some kind of personal experience or on impressions that we have acquired during early childhood socialisation from adults surrounding us at home, in school or through mass media, which then become generalised to take in all the people who could possibly be linked. Negative stereotypes are also called as stigma.

Spirituality is an abstract and subjective experience, and it refers to an interconnection of something beyond ourselves and connecting something within ourselves. It can be a connection to God, nature, others, and surrounding. Spirituality can be experienced in both a certain religion or outside an organized religious system or with a blending of different religious and philosophical traditions.

Storytelling is the interactive art of using words and actions to reveal the elements and images of a story while encouraging the listener's imagination. It can be a powerful tool when it comes to communicating and credibly giving substance to corporate values, by leaders and employees alike. Internally, storytelling is what motivates and engages employees, and helps them to buy in to the values of the company.

Xenofobia are subtle verbal and nonverbal slights, insults, indignities, and denigrating messages directed toward a person due to their group membership, often automatically and unconsciously. Microaggressions can be seen as innocent, harmless comments, but they reinforce stereotypes and are a form of discrimination. Over time, microaggressions can isolate and alienate those on the receiving end and affect their health and wellbeing.

The point isn't to get people to accept that they have biases, but to get them to see [for themselves] that those biases have negative consequences for others.

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Storytelling Toolkit

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