



Workplace Inclusivity and Allyship 101

Presentation Description: We often hear the word, “diversity”; usually it’s used with another word, “inclusion.” Generally, “diversity” is about numbers—how diverse is an organization/workplace based on the number of people identified by race, religion, gender, LGBTQ status, etc.

“Inclusion” generally is the extent to which someone feels that they matter to an organization or a group of people. If someone feels that they matter or are valued, they are more likely to stay or engage. If not, they will leave.

“Ally” is a status one assumes to support a community that society has historically marginalized (e.g. being an ally to LGBTQ people or to people of color).

In contrast, “inclusivity” and “allyship” are about *action*. They both take work to achieve—work that for some requires getting out of personal comfort zones. Inclusivity and allyship also take interacting with others—sometimes with someone who’s diverse or by speaking up on behalf of someone else (such as a diverse team member).

As workplaces and organizations work to become more welcoming to all team members/colleagues and the public (as in the case of public service or legal service entities), the values of inclusivity and allyship become more important.

How do we create a landscape that promotes inclusivity, allyship and good culture-building in general? What are the rules? Given that humans generally shy away from difficult conversations, how can you put in place a system that gives everyone the opportunity to be heard and respected?

This training focuses on best practices relative to fostering and maintaining a workplace culture that respects all team members through inclusivity and allyship. It’s all about mindfully protecting others despite our obvious and not-so-obvious differences and insecurities.

Why this Presentation Works: It can be very difficult for an organizational “insider” to talk about inclusivity and allyship—there are politics and personalities involved and possibly, many organizational tripwires. This can inhibit offering constructive suggestions and examples about how to better communicate between team members.

With this “Inclusivity and Allyship 101” training, Ellie Krug (a veteran of 800+ trainings and former trial lawyer/trained mediator and Talking Circle Leader) is an “outsider” who’s not politically invested in the workplace/organization. As such, she can gently challenge audience members to think differently about how to be inclusive toward others. She can also offer constructive suggestions on how to handle conversations/situations where a team member may speak or act in a way that marginalizes another team member. Depending on time allotment, the training can involve team member role-playing and/or a “Talking Circle” where all team members have an opportunity to be heard.

People want to be seen and heard as valued humans. They also want to know that someone will have their back. Everyone wants to “matter,” regardless of the environment. This training works to achieve these broad goals.

Learning Objectives:

1. Understanding the Three Levels of Human Inclusivity (e.g. Tolerance, Acceptance, and “Party Host”) and what it takes to be a good “Party Host.” The goal is to reinforce the need to get past one’s insecurities relative to interacting with someone who is “different” from “us” and to be more willing to vary personal routines, such as by inviting the new team member out to lunch or to coffee. A further goal is to reinforce that diversity efforts will be undercut (and potentially fail) if diverse team members don’t feel welcomed or included in the workplace/organization. It’s all about investing in others—which will then promote their return investment.
2. Appreciating the difference between “mentor” and “sponsor” and how sponsoring a team member can unleash hidden potential and create organizational loyalty.
3. Understanding that being an “ally” isn’t enough to promote inclusivity—that often, one needs to exercise allyship on behalf of someone who lacks a voice of their own or the opportunity to speak up on their own behalf. This takes addressing one’s fear about speaking up/“rocking the boat.”
4. Understanding the value of being curious and the need to self-educate re: historical contexts of how certain communities have been marginalized and the important events in those communities’ respective journeys toward societal acceptance/integration. (For example, Ellie will ask: “What is the most important event in the last 75 years for the LGBTQ community?”) (*Look below for the answer...)
5. Learning the ground rules for productive, safe Courageous Conversations, including The Three Freedoms (freedom to think and imagine; freedom to speak without risk of retribution; and the freedom to reply without being judged). Understanding also the role of two statements: “I want to understand this” vs. “Help me to understand this.” The first statement puts the burden on you to be an ally; the second statement puts the burden on the marginalized person. The goal: it’s your responsibility to be a good ally and not that of the marginalized person.
6. Learning strategies to address comments (e.g. “mansplaining” or “it’s just a harmless joke”) or actions (asking the only woman in the room to act as the meeting scribe) that marginalize, demean or otherwise make team members feel less valued.
7. Increased appreciation for the challenges that all humans face when interacting with organizations that don’t allow team members to feel ownership and value.

Mechanics: Depending on time allotment, this training can be a combination of lecture and audience participation. Ellie’s style is entertaining but also educational in how she describes the Three Levels of Human Inclusivity (and she invites audience members to play along as she demonstrates those three levels).

The allyship module involves offering concrete examples of allyship in both the workplace and in life generally (with implications for workplace/organizational allyship). Ellie also shows a video that demonstrates allyship styles in real time with real humans.

If time allows (or if the sponsor specifically seeks), the presentation can include two forms of audience participation. One form is role playing on how to be a good workplace/organization ally. This involves identifying various forms of marginalizing behavior and practicing strategies/actions on how to deal with those behaviors. (It also includes training on catch phrases that can shut down a person who marginalizes, as with saying to the person who offers a demeaning joke: "That's not cool dude." One need not say anything more to make the point.)

As second possible alternative (or additional) audience participation tool is use of a Talking Circle to facilitate open and honest communication between team members relative to inclusivity and allyship. Ellie is a trained mediator and Circle Leader who provides verbal prompts (developed with the assistance of the sponsor) and creates a setting for team members to share personal experiences and perceptions relative to organizational inclusivity/allyship. Through this, the sponsor will learn much about what works or doesn't within the organization's inclusivity framework. A Talking Circle also offers a degree of controlled vulnerability which almost always brings team members closer together (thus fostering mutual feelings of worth and ownership within the workplace/organization).

Technical Needs: This presentation requires AV equipment to show the Burger King "Bully a Jr." video. Ellie does not use a podium or a PowerPoint. She prefers a lapel mic over a handheld. A handout will be provided for this training; the sponsor will need to copy/distribute the handout.

Duration: 90 minutes at a minimum; up to 120+ minutes depending on the sponsor's goals. A Talking Circle requires a minimum of 120 minutes. This inclusivity and allyship training can easily be expanded into a half-day or full-day workshop.

For additional information contact:

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*The Stonewall Inn riots in New York City in June 1969; the riots ushered in a new sense of empowerment for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender persons and directly led to political representation, HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention funding, and ultimately, to marriage equality.

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