



Learning bite

Inclusive coworker behaviours

10/23/2024

In this edition of Learning bite, our HR Strategy colleagues talk to us about inclusive coworker behaviours. These small and seemingly insignificant acts can have a profound effect on building an inclusive culture.

We may often think of workplace inclusion in broad, strategic terms. Leadership and policies are important, but there are practical steps we can all take every day to foster inclusion. Peer relationships are powerful in creating a workplace where we can truly be ourselves and know our unique perspective is accepted and celebrated. An inclusive culture ensures everyone within the team is valued for their differences, where we each feel a sense of belonging while being respected for our individuality.

You may already practice many inclusive coworker behaviours everyday such as:

- Smiling and greeting your colleagues in the morning.
- Asking a colleague for their input in meetings.
- Holding the door for someone.
- Saving a seat for a colleague.
- Asking a colleague about their weekend.

That said, it is easy to see why we don't always appreciate the big impact some seemingly small action can have on making people feel welcome and included in their workplace.

Creating an inclusive culture

There are many aspects to creating an inclusive culture such as our [Diversity and Inclusion Strategy](#), inclusive leadership practices and Inclusive Coworker Behaviours, as mentioned above. An inclusive culture is created when all of these are combined.

The 3 Inclusive Coworker Behaviours (ICBs)

Dr Juliet Bourke, a Professor of Practice in Diversity at the University of NSW, recently investigated the impact of peer relationships on an individual's experience of inclusion. At a recent conference attended by our HR colleagues, Dr Bourke presented her findings on *Empowering us to take control and be co-creators of an inclusive workplace* which found interpersonal inclusion is manifested by, and developed through, 3 sets of behaviours known as Inclusive Coworker Behaviours (ICBs).

1. Instrumental assistance

Instrumental assistance are acts that help a peer to perform their work tasks. This could be done by providing and sharing information, making introductions to contacts, giving endorsements in meetings or offering advice.

What's significant about these actions is that they are discretionary and may fall outside that person's job description. This is a great way to demonstrate one of our [ACMA values](#) of being collaborative.

2. Emotional bonding

This refers to the care, support and personal interest people demonstrate towards their peers, which helps to develop emotional bonds.

Emotional care includes socialising with peers, joking and banter, as well as providing space for discussing pain points and showing an authentic interest in a peer's personal life (to a level they are comfortable with), such as family, pets, hobbies or sport.

3. Embodied connection

Embodied connection refers to the ways in which team members use their physical presence to create and communicate a closer connection through body language and the sharing of space.

In the office, this could be:

- walking together to meetings

- deliberately sitting next to each other in the office or meeting.

If meeting virtually, this might look like turning your camera on, sharing a background rather than using an impersonal corporate photo and exaggerating positive non-verbal cues such as smiling and nodding.

Each of these thoughtful micro acts of interpersonal inclusion involve little effort but the impact is profound in terms of feeling included, especially when accumulated over time.

Interpersonal inclusion

Interpersonal inclusion is a reciprocal process and is highly beneficial to individual job performance and team effectiveness.

It might be a **direct trade**, as simple as helping someone with a task and later they help you if/when you need it.

Or it could be a **diffuse trade**, I help you to identify a solution to a problem you are stuck on and that contributes to building a more supportive culture. If I give you the space to vent, and help identify possible solutions, I'm building a more supportive culture that will be there for me should I need it.

Importantly, given that interpersonal inclusion is a reciprocal process, it can be kick-started by anyone. We as peers help define what it means to work in an inclusive workplace, in partnership with our leadership and policies.

Key findings about Inclusive Coworker Behaviours

Dr Bourke's research found the following about these micro behaviours:

1. They are universal, everyday and real.
2. They are informed by fleeting but meaningful connections.
3. Our personal focus is often narrow and we miss the bigger picture.
4. By nature, people generally want to include and be included.
5. They are empowering.
6. They lift personal and team performance.
7. They are not evenly distributed.
8. Coworker relationships matter more than we give credit to.

How can you model inclusive coworker behaviours?

Consider how you already practice these small acts of assistance, emotional bonding and connections. Here are suggestions of small things you can do if you don't already:

- Make time to build relationships with your colleagues and ask them about things other than work.
- Show your appreciation and interest in their work. Compliment them on their achievements.
- Give your full attention to your colleagues when speaking to them, turn to face them, make eye contact and turn your camera on for virtual meetings.
- Ask for and offer help. If you notice a colleague is overwhelmed with work or is having difficulties with a certain task, offering to help may strengthen your relationship - and it may be reciprocated!

Our [Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024 – 26](#) reflects [our culture and values](#) of being Purposeful, Curious and Questioning and Collaborative – and encourages us to think broadly about diversity and inclusion. The strategy aims to build on the strong foundation that the ACMA and eSafety have developed to continue our diversity and inclusion journey.

Learning bite book club

This month we have a documentary to highlight with you.

[Your Fat Friend](#) is a 2023 US film about fatness, family, the complexities of change and the deep, messy feeling we hold about our bodies. Watch the rise of writer and activist Aubrey Gordon from anonymous blogger to New York Times bestselling author and beloved podcaster. Her aim? A paradigm shift in the way we see fat people and the fat on our own bodies.

You can also read [Aubrey's blogposts](#) and other resources.

Additional 'inclusive behaviour' resources

- [Diversity and inclusion | Australian Public Service Commission](#)
- [3 Small Ways to Be a More Inclusive Colleague | Harvard Business Review](#)
- [How to Build LGBTQIA+ Inclusion In The Workplace | IDAHOBIT](#)
- [Accessible and inclusive content | Style Manual](#)
- [How to make workplaces inclusive of neurodiversity - Diversity Council Australia](#)
- [The Menopause Senate Inquiry Report and what it means for employees](#)
- [The Imperfects | We can all give micro-cues to those around us, letting them know that they belong. | Instagram](#)

- [Creating workplaces for everyone | Australian Human Rights Commission](#)
- [Insights for Indigenous employment into a case study of unconscious bias in the Australian Public Service - Australian Journal of Social Issues](#)
- [Childlessness – the unspoken workplace inclusion issue - Diversity Council Australia](#)
- [About Mental Health Month | WayAhead Mental Health Month](#)
- [Accessibility best practices with Excel spreadsheets - Microsoft Support](#)
- [Inclusion at Work Week - Diversity Council Australia](#)

Go1 learning

Below are some courses available in [Go1](#), our online learning platform. If you visit Go1 via the link in [Learnhub](#), you can access the full Go1 catalogue.

Courses

- [Diversity and Inclusion](#) (30 minutes)
- [Understanding Implicit Bias](#) (20 minutes)

Interactive courses

- [Everyday Inclusion](#) (15 minutes)
- [Inclusive Mindset: Why Mindset Matter](#) (10 minutes)

Videos

- [Fostering Inclusion](#) (7 minutes)
- [Overcome feeling excluded](#) (7 minutes)

Spotlight on learning

Check out the following learning opportunities available across October and November.

Internal Courses

- [Acknowledge This!](#)

Wed 27 November – 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm

A great way to practice inclusive workplace behaviours is by delivering a meaningful Acknowledgement of Country. Acknowledge This! is a workshop that will provide you with the foundations to create a genuine and authentic Acknowledgement of Country, focusing on the place, people and position you're in. This workshop is corporately funded, and everyone is welcome to attend.

- [Cyber Security Awareness](#)

Wed 13 November - 9:30 am to 10:30 am

Wed 27 November – 9:30 am to 10:30 am

- [Power BI for Analysts - Advanced \(Data Preparation\)](#)

Monday and Tuesday 11-12 November – 9:30 am to 12:30 pm

APS Academy courses

October

- [Conflict Resolution for Managers](#) Tue 29 Oct – Wed 30 Oct: 9:00 am - 5:00 pm

November

- [Effective Communication](#) Mon 4 Nov – Wed 5 Nov: 9:00 am - 5:00 pm
- [Procurement Basics](#) Thu 7 Nov: 10:00 am – 12:00 pm
- [Contract Management Basics](#) Thu 7 Nov: 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm
- [Understanding Government](#) Wed 13 Nov: 9:00 am - 5:00 pm
- [Leading Successful Projects](#) Tue 19 Nov: 9:00 am - 5:00 pm
- [Engaging Stakeholders](#) Thu 21 Nov: 9:00 am - 5:00 pm
- [Strategic Thinking](#) Tue 26 Nov – Wed 27 Nov: 9:30 am – 12:30 pm
- [Editing and Proofreading](#) Wed 27 Nov: 9:00 am - 5:00 pm

Self-paced learning

- [Diversity and Inclusion](#) resources to develop cultural capability, disability awareness, age and gender equality, and guidance on accessible and inclusive workplace practices.
- [Connections: Core capabilities for workplace peer supporters](#) providing you with foundational knowledge and skills for the role. Connections deliberately focuses on the wellbeing aspects of workplace peer support, teaching you interpersonal skills that can be used for any type of peer support interaction.
- [The Cultural Capability Hub](#) is a central repository of practical guidance and suggested resources to support staff to uplift their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural capability.
- [Footprints](#) is a framework that supports APS employees to continually increase and enhance their cross-cultural knowledge and understanding. The aim of the program is to collect as many footprints as you can. Footprints are collected when you

complete an activity and submit a reflection. There are four types of activities: **Attending, Doing, Sharing** or **Immersing**. Each type of activity is assigned a different number of footprints you can collect. The more footprints you collect, the more progress you make on your cross-cultural capability journey.

The [2024/25 APS Academy course calendar](#) also has a variety of other learning opportunities available.

More information

See [Learning options](#) on The Hub for general information on the professional development and learning opportunities available to you at the ACMA.

If you require more information on any of the above courses, contact HRassist@acma.gov.au.