

Operationalizing Equity Toolkit

create a culture of inclusion

identifying barriers and finding solutions



What it's about

Operationalizing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives in long term care settings requires an approach that involves aligning organizational culture, policies, and practices with DEI principles. A defined framework helps to build momentum and supports efforts at all levels of leadership and across departments in an organization. DEI is an evolving journey with each person and organization at a different point in the road. It's often typical to be anywhere along the DEI road.

This toolkit provides an example of a framework to consider when working to operationalize equity, but remember, starting somewhere is always better than not starting at all.



1. Leadership Commitment

Leadership commitment is crucial for setting the tone and prioritizing DEI initiatives. Ideally, executives should publicly endorse DEI goals, allocate resources, and recognize when managers and staff are executing objectives and behaviors that support DEI initiatives and progress.

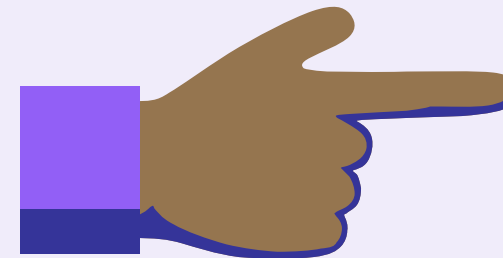


Leaders can role model inclusive behavior and drive leadership commitment by:

- Taking a collaborative approach as opposed to command and control
- Being transparent rather than operating behind closed doors
- Fully embracing the diversity of today's workforce
- Ensuring a safe workplace for people to give their best
- Being aware of their own biases and preferences
- Sharing the appropriate strategies and progress toward goals with employees and other stakeholders
- Using ad-hoc focus groups to gather feedback on key Diversity and Inclusion issues



**Check out Ian Brown's
Presentation on Inclusive
Leadership!**



**PowerPoint Presentation
(leadingagency.org)**

2. Assessment and Benchmarking

With the link below, assess the current state of diversity, equity, and inclusion within the organization. This includes looking at employee demographic data, employee surveys, and feedback mechanisms.

[Assess your organization now!](#)

Actionable Steps:

- **Annual employee feedback survey benchmarking**
- **Review compensation and determine if pay inequities exist and create plan to remedy**
- **Track recruitment statistics including leadership positions and evaluate if percentage of diverse candidates has increased**



3. Developing a DEI Strategy

Based on the assessment, develop a strategic plan outlining DEI goals. Start small but start somewhere. The strategy should encompass recruitment, retention, promotion, training, and inclusive workplace practices.

Actionable Steps:

- Have DEI statements both internally and externally that reflect the organization's commitment and intent
- Create shared meaning around equity, systemic racism, and other terms related to this work
- Consider DEI work as a strategic imperative for your organization
- Define and communicate how DEI connects to your mission, values, and organizational goals

[Click here for a sample strategic approach](#)

[Click here to review some terms with shared meaning](#)



4. Recruitment & Hiring Practices

Implement bias-free recruitment and hiring processes to attract diverse talent. This includes using diverse hiring panels, blind resume reviews, and structured interviews. Partner with diverse recruitment agencies and networks to broaden the candidate pool.



[LeadingAge New York Recruitment Toolkit](#)

Actionable Steps for recognizing affinity bias in hiring:

- Decide in advance what factors are important for the job and only judge what is critical to these factors
- Be intentional with the process
- Give each candidate a separate rating for each factor and average the ratings to identify the highest ranked candidates
- Monitor the prevalence of referral sources to ensure diverse networks and sources are represented
- Make sure to give everyone – or no one – the benefit of the doubt
- If waiving requirements, do so consistently and with explanation for each candidate
- Consider someone who can “enhance” your culture as opposed to “fit” your culture

5. Training and Education

Provide ongoing training and education on unconscious bias, cultural competence, and inclusive leadership for all employees. Incorporate DEI topics and onboarding programs and regular professional development initiatives.

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[Dialogue Toolkit - LeadingAge New York](#)

[Cultural Competency Exercises - YWCA Spokane](#)

[Addressing Unconscious Bias in the Workplace - diversityresources.com](#)

[Cultural Competency DAL Highlights](#)



6. Inclusive Policies and Practices

Review and update organizational policies and practices to ensure they promote diversity, equity, and inclusion. This may involve revising HR policies, establishing flexible work arrangements, and creating inclusive benefits packages.

Building Equity Into Your Employee Health Plan Design

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7. Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)

Support the formation and activities of Employee Resource Groups representing various demographic groups. ERGs provide a platform for networking, mentorship, advocacy, and fostering a sense of belonging and inclusion. Where to start:

How to Start an Employee Resource Group at Your Company.



8. Recognition

Recognize managers for advancing DEI goals within their teams. Recognize and reward behaviors that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion and address managers who display intolerance to inclusion efforts.

Recognition: the one thing missing from your DEI program

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9. Feedback and Continuous Improvement

Establish mechanisms for collecting feedback from employees on DEI initiatives and use this feedback to revise and improve DEI strategies over time. Encourage open dialogue and transparency around DEI efforts. No blame, shame, or guilt!

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10. External Partnerships and Community Engagement

Engage with external partners, stakeholders, and communities to advance DEI goals beyond the workplace. Collaborate with industry associations, non-profits, and advocacy groups to amplify impact and contribute to broader societal change. Things to consider:

Black Long Term Care Executives
SkillSpring - The New Jewish Home



By operationalizing DEI initiatives through these steps, organizations can create a more inclusive and equitable workplace where all employees feel valued, respected, and empowered to contribute their best.