Intercultural Competence

Inclusive and equitable workplaces rely on people being guided by unbiased, culturally aware thoughts and actions.

WHY IT MATTERS
The ability to navigate differences constructively helps reduce bias against people with nondominant identities—those who are women, immigrants, disabled, unmarried, LGBTQ+, young and old, less educated, or of certain races, ethnicities, religions, nationalities, or socioeconomic classes—and therefore helps them enter, stay, and advance in the profession.

WORKPLACES INCREASE INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE WHEN...

· everyone identifies and takes responsibility for their attitudes and biases
· individuals actively listen to each other and acknowledge differences in perspective and communication styles
· firms support open, inclusive, and balanced dialogue
· diverse teams and their leaders receive support for holding challenging conversations
· firms offer intercultural learning opportunities

ACT

*Value difference*

→ Become an attuned listener and consider multiple perspectives, especially if you are a member of a dominant group.
→ Recognize the greater responsibility held by members of dominant groups to bridge gaps.
→ Get to know people who are different from you, and deepen your understanding of other cultures.
→ Communicate effectively—intent does not equal impact. Remember to use the Platinum Rule: treat others as they want to be treated.
→ Learn from people with non-majority identities; ask what barriers they face at work, gather suggestions, and follow through.

*Build capacity for noticing and interrupting bias*

→ Be aware of cultural patterns that reinforce a hierarchy of human worth.
→ Investigate your instincts and practice being cognizant of and adjusting your assumptions.
→ Take assessments, such as the Implicit Association Test and the Intercultural Development Inventory, to gain more insight into where you may hold biases and stereotypes.
→ Practice navigating conflicts by embracing discomfort and focusing on shared meaning and goals.
→ Learn how to interrupt bias when it is directed toward you and others.