

Illinois Venture Capital Association (IVCA)

Inclusion in Action

Presentation Handout



DEI Challenges - Lack of Alignment on:

- Definitions (*vulnerability for politicization and arguments about differences*)
- Assumptions for Change (*vulnerability for false win-lose frameworks*)
- Focus of Change (*vulnerability for “window dressing” or “box checking”*)
- Behaviors Necessary for Change (*vulnerability for overburdening underrepresented groups & prioritizing activity over outcomes*)

Key Takeaways for Change:

- Push to get support for changing structures where inclusion is lacking. Focus your energy on changing the structures rather than changing people.
- Identify 1-2 people in power who have your back; work with those partners on convincing others to also support you.
- Equity and inclusion are the inputs; diversity is the output.
- Inclusion is the day-to-day behavior that leads people to feeling like they belong or don't.
- Equity affects recruiting/hiring; inclusion affects attrition.
- Check-in on your colleagues, especially those who are underrepresented. Ask “how are you?”, “how's your week going?”, “do you need support?”. Connections are what satisfy the need to belong.
- The #1 trigger in unconscious bias is visual.
- Share surprising things about yourself with your coworkers!
- Commit yourself to getting to know your coworkers.

Inclusion in Action:

- Openness: Take time to do “I don't know...” reflections daily to wake up your brain.
- Curiosity: Take time to do “I wonder what...” statements daily, especially when reflecting on a change or preparing for a conversation.
- Awareness: Take time to notice who isn't in the room and whose voice isn't part of the conversation.
- Communication: Focus on maintaining a 2:1 ratio of questions to statements in conversations, especially when you are connecting with people you don't know or are different from you.
- Cognitive Reflection: Be curious about other people's thought processes (how) not just their opinions/perspectives.
- Connection: Create deliberate moments for “small talk” and really listen to what people are saying.
- Collective Identity: Speak up and stand up for what you want in your workplace, not to help other people.