

Tool: Strategies for Facilitating Inclusion and Trust in Groups

The following is a list of strategies that Professor Nishii has recommended as being very helpful for fostering inclusion and greater trust at the immediate work-group level. Save this list and use it as a springboard for discussion within your own work group.

- Create task and goal interdependence among group members, and emphasize the necessity of all roles. Consider breaking the group into smaller groups (two or three people) to work on tasks, and rotate membership in these smaller groups so that subgroups don't form. People tend to be more willing to take risks and express opinions in smaller groups.
- Allow the group to develop a shared history together by minimizing membership changes, and remember to recognize team accomplishments.
- Facilitate contact and communication among group members. Focus time on team building so that individuals can discover similarities and create interpersonal bridges.
- Establish strong norms about protecting psychological safety and then hold people accountable. Emphasize the importance of adopting a learning mindset, and give people real-time permission to voice disagreement respectfully.
- Teach people to give and receive feedback in a caring way, without taking it personally.
- Consider designating someone as the group's official advocate of candor; this person's role would be to speak up when something has been left unsaid, and also to help people recognize when their communication style may be hindering candor.
- Consider allowing non-experts to talk first. When experts talk first, the rest are more likely to conform to their views. If you create the space for non-experts to speak first, it's more likely that new ideas will be unearthed.
- During meetings, be sure to set aside time to stop and ask what might be missing from the conversation. Doing so provides opportunities for people to voice discrepant views without worrying about appearing disagreeable.