

THE ACTIVE INCLUSIVITY DEVELOPMENT MODEL

The active inclusivity development model is a framework that identifies the skills a person needs to improve their ability to lead with inclusivity. No one has perfectly mastered the practice of inclusivity, so these skills are useful for anyone seeking to grow their ability to act inclusively. The skills also can help us overcome obstacles or challenges we face in promoting inclusivity. These obstacles are often hard to overcome because they were embedded into our society’s implicit structures before we were born, because we are unaware of how these structures are influencing our behavior, and because change often involves losses as well as gains. Addressing these obstacles requires relatively sophisticated skills. Each of us possesses different pre-existing levels of each skill, which can guide us in selecting certain skills we want to prioritize in developing further. However, in general, we can all improve in each skill, and the skills all work together to mutually reinforce each other. Figure 1 defines what each skill is.

Table 1. The Active Inclusivity Development Model

Critical Consciousness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The ability to recognize stereotypes, biases, and discrimination and to analyze their causes in structures and institutions.
Handling Ambivalence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The ability to resolve one's own internal conflict between the desire to maintain a certain level of comfort and influence and the desire to help reduce inequities.
Ongoing Reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The ability to pause and reflect on a regular basis to examine how you are or are not contributing to inclusivity.
Interacting Bravely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The ability to engage authentically with people from different backgrounds about when you have been unintentionally insensitive or how to be more inclusive.
Confronting Oppression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The ability to gracefully-but-explicitly disrupt potential insensitivity and harm when you notice it.
Emotion Regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The ability to monitor, evaluate, modulate, and manage emotions.

Often, it is easier to recognize obstacles—and thus know when to practice the skills—when we have examples. Therefore, for each skill in the Active Inclusivity Development Model, we also give examples of obstacles and examples of solutions that people may achieve when we apply the appropriate skills.

SKILL	SIGNS THIS SKILL MIGHT BE USEFUL	EXAMPLES OF THIS SKILL
Critical Consciousness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty naming more than 1 or 2 forms of structural oppression. • Difficulty describing how power relates to cultural identities in society or organizations. 	Asking how to reduce barriers that <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clients from under-represented backgrounds may face in accessing your organization, • candidates from under-represented backgrounds may face in getting hired, or • employees from under-represented backgrounds may face in getting promoted.
Handling Ambiguity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You notice a harmful pattern but worry about calling attention to it. • You feel hurt or angry if someone says you have unintentionally done or said something culturally harmful. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calling attention to harmful patterns even when they are uncomfortable. • Talking to powerful people who may seem displeased when people point out harmful or exclusionary practices.
Ongoing Reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It has been weeks since you actively thought about inclusivity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pausing to identify times when you may have unintentionally been exclusionary or insensitive and genuinely apologizing. • Planning ways to disrupt an exclusionary practice.
Interacting Bravely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You have not received any direct feedback from colleagues about ways that you have been insensitive or could be more inclusive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soliciting ideas about ways to act more inclusively. • Expressing gratitude for constructive feedback. • Using suggestions for being more inclusive.
Confronting Oppression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You recognize potential harm and insensitivities but never raise them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlighting a colleague’s contributions who has been under-acknowledged. • Attending, participating, or helping an under-represented colleague’s initiatives. • Encouraging the inclusion of other perspectives in meetings where one perspective has been dominant.
Emotional Regulation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You yell, cry, shut down, stonewall, or dissociate in discussions of equity and inclusion, especially if they are about you. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking deep breaths and staying present difficult conversations about diversity. • Reminding yourself to keep an open mind when being challenged on issues related to diversity.

References
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