



EAP Newsletter

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The inclusivity edition

In this month's newsletter we'll be talking all about inclusivity, how you can act as an ally within your communities, how to talk about race, how to deal with feelings of loneliness and looking into some inspirational activities to promote disability awareness.

What is inclusivity?

Inclusion is essential to communities and we must all work together to make equal and diverse spaces everywhere we go. That doesn't mean you have to know it all, but understanding what inclusivity means is a good place to start.

The Cambridge Dictionary's official definition for inclusion is:

"The act of including someone or something as part of a group, list, etc., or a person or thing that is included."

Inclusion within society is important for a person's security and gives them (and you) an opportunity to lead a better and more fulfilled life and allows everyone better access to opportunities and life chances.

It is essential to support people to feel better connected and valued in communities in order to achieve inclusion.

Did you know there are various ways to make your community more inclusive?

There are a variety of community groups who work to bring people together and help create inclusive environments.

Local councils ensure there are a variety of events that cater to different cultures such as St Patrick's Day, Chinese New Year, Ramadan and Pride month, to name just a few.

Community groups offer support to victims of racism, stereotyping, sexism or prejudice. They often help the local media with community relations to increase awareness of issues.

Why not get in touch with your local council or community group this month and offer to volunteer or share any new ideas you may have to help make the community more inclusive?



How to be more inclusive

When you include people from different backgrounds in your community conversations you get to hear from a range of diverse voices and illuminate blind spots in your own beliefs and thought patterns.



1. Get to know your neighbours

Talk to your neighbours and get to know them better, you never know what challenges they could be facing or what potential barriers to inclusion there might be for them. These simple actions can make a world of difference. Remember it takes people coming together to create a strong and inclusive community spirit.



2. Create accessible spaces

The next time you're in your local coffee shop or favourite restaurant, why not look around and see if you can notice any potential barriers to inclusion. Are there accessibility issues for people in wheelchairs for example? Or perhaps the music is quite loud which someone living with autism could be sensitive to. If there's anything you notice, you might speak to a member of staff to see how they could make the venue a more inclusive space. Remember not all disabilities are visible – some can be hidden.



3. Provide an environment where positive relationships can grow

Create a sense of belonging by welcoming new people into your community. This can go a long way towards helping someone feel included. Making a point of engaging with your neighbours, co-workers or peers enables you to stay connected with the people around you – and contributes to a world that values kindness, understanding and celebrating diversity and difference.



4. Take some time to volunteer

Volunteerism, by its very nature, is a powerful way to build bridges between people and can be a tool that can help to bring equality and justice to all. Removing barriers for potential volunteers provides increased participation and confidence, as well as a sense of purpose and a connection to the community. Why not add consider volunteering for a cause you don't know as much about. Working in collaboration with these groups can help us all to learn and grow



5. Start the conversation

There are 14 million people with disabilities in the UK and these can take many different forms, both visible and non-visible. A disability is any condition of the body or mind (impairment) that makes it more difficult for the person with the condition to do certain activities (activity limitation) and interact with the world around them (participation restrictions).

Unfortunately, there are still some big misconceptions around disability. Mindsets like this can cause loneliness, but by taking small actions you can help. Have a conversation with your friends and family, ask about their preconceptions and see what barriers might be in place to help raise awareness about inclusion in your community.

Whilst it is, of course, beneficial to engage with your community and get to know others around you, it is also essential to put in place safe boundaries. Never do anything you feel uncomfortable doing.

Did you know June marks Pride month?

Every year, during the month of June, the LGBTQIA+ community celebrates in several ways. Across the globe, various events are held during this special month as a way of recognising the influence LGBTQIA+ people have had around the world. Pride is a celebration of people coming together in love and friendship to show how far LGBTQIA+ rights have come. It is about acceptance, equality and celebrating the work of LGBTQIA+ people the world over – but there is so much more to be done. Sadly, homophobia, transphobia, and biphobia (as well as a general prejudice towards all members of the LGBTQIA+ community) are still very much present and impacts so many people. You only have to look at the data below to see the extent of the issue.



Three LGBTQIA+ changemakers you need to know about



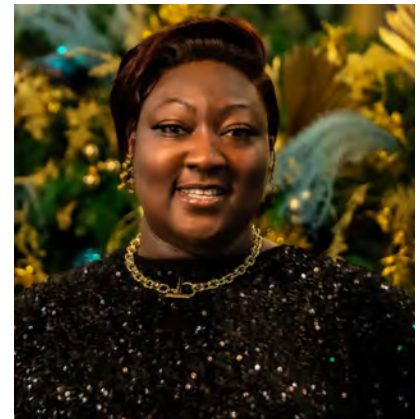
Maureen Colquhoun

The first Member of Parliament (MP) to be openly gay was a woman. Although Maureen was married to a man when initially elected, she ended up moving to London with her female partner in 1976. At present, 60 MP's are said to openly identify as LGBTQ+.



Justin Fashanu

The first Black footballer in Britain to achieve a £1 million transfer fee when he signed for Nottingham Forest in 1981. Nine years later came an even more seminal milestone, when Fashanu became the first professional footballer to come out as gay.



Lady Phyll

Phyllis Opoku-Gyimah, aka 'Lady Phyll', is a key figure when it comes to the intersectionality of LGBTQ+ and Black Lives Matter activism. She is the co-founder of UK Black Pride, a movement dedicated to LGBTQ+ people of African, Asian, Caribbean, Latin American and Middle Eastern descent.

Know your terminology: LGBTQIA+

Lesbian

Gay

Bisexual

Transgender

Queer or questioning

Intersex

Asexual or allied

+ Pansexual, asexual and omnisexual

LGBTQIA+ is an inclusive term that includes people of all genders and sexualities, such as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning, queer, intersex, asexual, pansexual, and allies. While each letter in LGBTQIA+ stands for a specific group of people, the term encompasses the entire spectrum of gender fluidity and sexual identities.

LGBTQIA+ in the workplace; how to foster a culture of inclusion at work

Inclusion is the practice or policy of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalised, such as those who have physical or intellectual disabilities and members of other minority groups.

With inclusion as an objective, you are much more likely to see greater diversity in the workforce, fair treatment and greater equality of opportunities.

Over a third of LGBTQ+ people still feel they must hide who they are at work, that is according to Stonewall, 2018.

Here are five simple ways to become an ally to the LGBTQIA+ community in the workplace...



1. Be honest and accountable

No one is expecting you to be an expert here, so be honest with your colleagues and admit when you've previously made mistakes or when you don't understand something. Others will almost certainly be in the same boat and appreciate your honesty. Wanting to learn, educate and grow through open communication is appreciated and shows that you are truly looking to be an ally.



2. Be open to learning, and relearning

Remain open to continually learning what it means to be an ally to LGBTQIA+ people in the workplace. This includes listening, being honest and speaking out. Take time to familiarise yourself with LGBTQIA+ inclusive language, learn and understand the different terminologies and use gender-neutral language.



3. Be an advocate in the workplace

Advocate for an inclusive environment by encouraging others to do the same. Likewise, try to pick up on potentially derogatory language. Reach out and encourage colleagues including senior leaders to be vocal champions for inclusion and celebrate this within your workplace.



4. Listen to others

Take a step back and ensure you're centring the voices of LGBTQIA+ people. It's important for allies to use their voice to stand in solidarity, but it's equally important to know when not to take up space. The more we listen, the more we'll understand.



5. Practice ally-ship all year round

While June is Pride Month, LGBTQIA+ people face stigma, discrimination and oppression 365 days per year. Ensure your allyship extends throughout the entire year. You can continue to support your colleagues and educate yourself no matter what. Everyone deserves to, and needs to be at the table.

Try this today: Dig a little deeper

Learn about the history: The LGBTQIA+ community has a rich history. Familiarise yourself with key LGBTQIA+ events such as the 1969 Stonewall Riots, the first Pride march and the World Health Organisation's recent declassification of same-sex attraction as a mental illness.

Diversify your social media: Follow and engage with the plethora of LGBTQIA+ thought leaders, educators and content creators who share how to be a better ally.



How to talk about race

Every person, regardless of their ethnicity or background, should be able to fulfil their potential at work. Diverse organisations that attract and develop individuals from the widest pool of talent consistently perform better.

Racism is no doubt a difficult subject, but it is time to get comfortable with the uncomfortable to achieve equality to all. Being an anti-racist is about continually questioning our potentially racist thought patterns, questioning racist systems and structures and campaigning for and raising awareness around the need for anti-racist policies.

- 1** **EDUCATE:** yourself and others on racism and privilege. We are all learning all the time; and that's ok.
- 2** **CREATE:** a safe space for your colleagues to talk about race. It's essential to have these conversations even if they feel uncomfortable.
- 3** **LEAD:** with empathy and listen to others
- 4** **PRIORITISE:** anti-racism at work. Reach out to your global majority community teammates and ask how they're really feeling.
- 5** **ENCOURAGE :** your colleagues to be themselves and to bring their whole self to work.

Give this a go: Media corner

Recommended podcast: 'About Race'

From bestselling author, Reni Eddo-Lodge, comes a podcast that takes the conversation a step further. This podcast looks at our recent history and talks to key voices in anti-racist activism. It's definitely worth a listen.

Recommended book: 'How to be an Antiracist' by Ibram X.Kendi

Kendi takes readers through a widening circle of antiracist ideas – from the most basic concepts to visionary possibilities – that will help readers see all forms of racism clearly. Why not pick it up at your local book store or read it on your kindle.



How to deal with feeling alone

Did you know Loneliness Awareness Week runs from 12th – 18th June?

Created and hosted by Marmalade Trust – the UK’s leading loneliness charity – this special week offers support for all ages and raises awareness of loneliness across the UK to get people talking.

Why is raising awareness of loneliness so important?

If you picture a lonely person, chances are you will imagine an older person living on their own. As such, you might rebuke and dismiss feelings of loneliness because you think it doesn’t apply to you. This is a common misconception that Loneliness Awareness Week tries to challenge.

By identifying and acknowledging all the times you have personally experienced loneliness, you can begin to change your viewpoint, accept it and understand how to manage the feeling – and your social connections – in the future.



The bigger picture

45%

45% of adults feel 'occasionally, sometimes or often' lonely in England. This equates to 25 million people. To put this into perspective that's the population of Shanghai.

49%

The number of over-50s experiencing loneliness is set to reach two million by 2025/6. **This is a 49% increase from 10 years ago.**

21%

21% of LGBTQ+ people said they experienced loneliness very often or every day.

50%

Research found that **50% of disabled people will be lonely on any given day.**

43%

43% of 17-25-year olds have experienced loneliness.

24%

24% of parents said they were always or often lonely.

Try this at home today: Establish daily community

Why not join a new class or group based on your favourite interests or hobbies such as a book group or exercise class to connect with others? Alternatively try walking regularly in your local park or outside space. Even the smallest things like seeing the same faces on a dog walk will help you feel more connected to your community. Volunteering is a good way of meeting people and helping others can also really help improve your mental health.

Remember that your personal safety is key. You should never meet up with new people without knowing their background or telling others where you are going. Always aim to meet new people in a public space and never do anything that makes you feel uncomfortable.



Promoting disability awareness

Did you know Learning Disability Week is celebrated from 19th-25th June?

Hosted by Mencap, the aim of Learning Disability Week is to 'smash stigmas and end discrimination, educate and raise awareness about learning disabilities.

“There are 1.5 million people in the UK living with a learning disability”

Three inspirational activities you can do today to promote disability awareness



1. Sensory stimulation

When people discuss autism and sensory needs, they often bring up children. But adults living with autism and other neurodiversity, such as sensory processing disorder and ADHD can also benefit from sensory items. Items such as fidget spinners, rubix cubes and stress balls can all be beneficial for people living with autism. They're easy to purchase online and most supermarkets, so why not try one to get a better understanding of how they might help someone to process information or regain a sense of calm if they're feeling overwhelmed.



2. Study a Public Disability Figure

There are lots of public figures who live with learning disabilities. Steven Spielberg lives with dyslexia whilst both Trevor Noah and Michael Phelps have ADHD. Researching how the nature of a person's disability has impacted their life, and the contributions they made to society can help you to understand and empathise. Not only this but these public figures can be very inspiring.



3. Host a disability workshop

One of the best ways to learn about disabilities is to learn directly from people living with them. You could partner with a disability organisation to set up a workshop with colleagues to understand the misconceptions of disabilities, disability etiquette, and more.

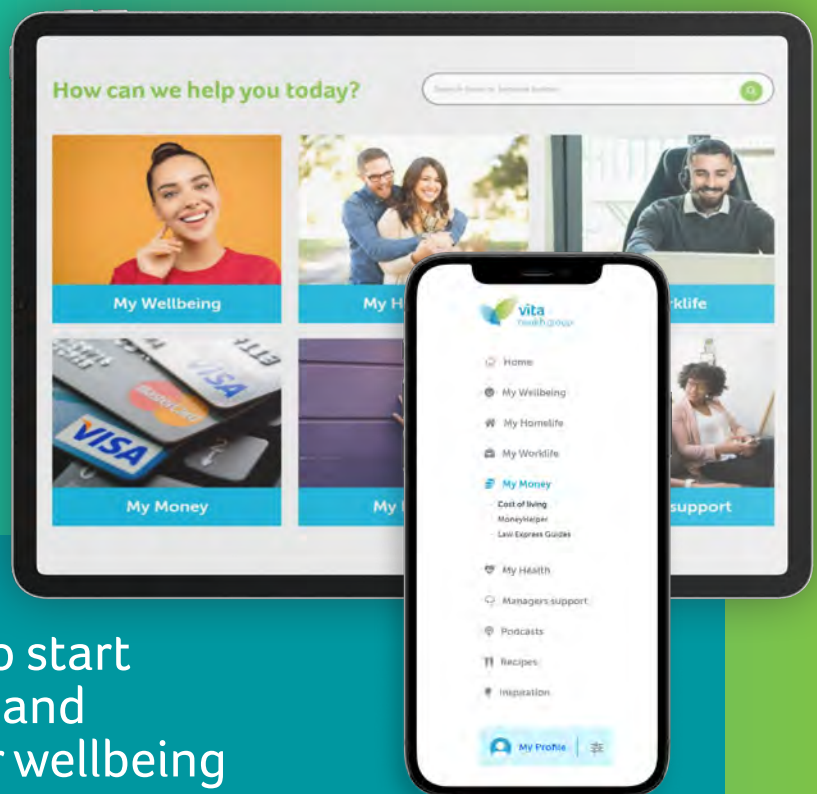
And finally, our tip of the month; the one thing we ask you to do today if you do nothing else...

Include personal pronouns in your email signature: Sharing your personal pronouns in your email is a simple yet impactful step you can take as an ally to the LGBTQIA+ community. Common examples of personal pronouns include he/him/his, she/her/hers, and they/them/theirs. Make a habit of sharing your pronouns at work and reinforce your commitment to diversity and inclusion by including your personal pronouns any time you write or share your name.

Wellbeing Hub

Helping you to manage the daily challenges of life and work

Simply visit www.my-EAP.com and use the organisational code provided to access the site.



Scan the QR code today to start your journey and improve your wellbeing