

Your Employee Assistance Program is a support service that can help you take the first step toward change.

Supporting Diversity as a Manager: Ongoing learning and mentoring

Today's workforce is more diverse than ever, and colleagues may be a mix of ages, races, religions, and sexual orientations. Your team may also have different lifestyles, work styles, physical and cognative abilities, levels of education, and ways of seeing the world. Your success as a manager depends on your ability to promote a work environment that is inclusive of every person you manage; discourages racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination; and that allows every employee the opportunity to reach their full potential.

➤ This is the third in a three-part series on supporting diversity as a manager which starts with "Your attitude toward diversity." Read the previous article, "The culture of your team."

Ongoing learning and mentoring

The best way to build and maintain a diverse workforce is to support people in working to their potential. That means providing ongoing opportunities for learning and development. Here are some tips:

Train and educate. Initiate a dialogue with each employee you manage to better identify their learning and support needs. Then follow up with your HR or training departments to ensure that people are developing the skills they need. Or follow up with management if an employee needs better equipment or more resources.

Create situations in which employees can meet others who share their interests and goals. Provide opportunities for them to learn from one another.

Encourage mentorship opportunities. Introduce people who you think might work together effectively to promote an employee's development. Identify employees who show a genuine kindness for others and talk about ways they can help mentor fellow teammates.

Be sure employees are aware of all learning opportunities available through your organization. Make sure that developmental opportunities are widely publicized and available to those who might be interested in them. These might include tuition reimbursement programs, online training, and the opportunity to attend workshops, seminars, and conferences.

Encourage and support networking programs and opportunities. These might be training networks, professional networks, or informal networks where people exchange ideas and information and make contacts. They might be networks for women, people of colour, or younger—or older—employees in your group.

Seek out learning opportunities for yourself. Attend diversity training and workshops for managers to help you gain greater understanding of how you can facilitate an accepting environment.

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