



Things We All Can Do to Foster an Inclusive Culture in CQN

If you think you have to be an expert in DEI to contribute to an inclusive culture in CQN, think again. There are things ALL of us can do, regardless of our roles, to make this community one in which we all thrive. People have the hardest time feeling like they belong when they are

- New to the Team/Lab/Office
- Undergoing personal/professional challenges
- Underrepresented—by gender, race, ethnicity, culture, sexuality, age, body type, educational background, religion, ability, etc.

Here is a simple list of things we all can do to create a more inclusive culture:

- When people first join the team, **introduce yourself**, even if you won't be working together directly. Let them know that you're a support if they need anything.
- Don't presume that someone just joining the lab or office will automatically know all the technical jargon or acronyms you use on your team. Try to remember when you were a novice to CQN, a workspace, or an American lab. **Use language that is understandable to a layperson and define terms.**
- Take the time to **learn the pronunciation of people's names**. If you don't know, ask—but then also try to remember for next time.
- If someone on your team seems more reclusive, closed off, or shut down than normal, **check in** with them and **ask how you can support** them.
- Respect your colleagues' observance of religious and cultural holidays, even if they are not observed on the American/university calendar.
- When scheduling virtual meetings with CQN colleagues at other institutions, be mindful of possible time differences and suggest times that work for everyone. Respect the needs of caretakers and those with commitments early or late in the day.
- **Avoid ableist language**. This is hard, because we use it so colloquially when we say/write terms like "blind spot" or "all-hands meeting," or phrases like "walk into a room/situation," when not everyone moves that way. Think "awareness gaps," "All-CQN meeting," and "enter a room/situation" instead.
- Avoid using terms like "crazy" and "OCD" casually. **Notice if you talk about mental health in stigmatizing ways.**
- Do you have equipment in the lab that is not easy for people of different body types or physical abilities to use? Make note and **ask colleagues how you can make that equipment accessible to them.**
- Avoid casually referring to the team as "you guys." **Practice using the more gender-inclusive "folks" or just "team."**
- Also avoid metaphoric use of terms like "powwow," "senior moment," and any number of others that have become part of the common vernacular yet have sexist, ageist, culturally chauvinist connotations.
- When building on people's ideas in meetings, **call out the originators of those ideas by name**: "Building on what Brianna just said,..."

- When in meetings, **notice if you find yourself listening to *respond* rather than listening to *understand***. Take the time to understand people, and even repeat what you think they are saying, to make sure you understand.
- Notice if you're dominating meetings and **ask others if they have things to add or contribute**.
- Make it a regular practice to **recognize the good work of colleagues** at all levels and in all capacities, especially if they contribute to projects of yours in any way.
- Make an effort to **use people's pronouns**. Share yours, and ask for others'.
- **Ask what people need to work and collaborate better and comfortably**—dietary considerations, captioning for virtual presentations, different seating, slide visuals that color blind colleagues can see, headphones or quieter spaces for sensory sensitivities, limited screen time, equipment at different heights, wheelchair accessibility, gender neutral bathrooms, nursing rooms, etc.
- Take the time to **ask colleagues how they best like to communicate**. Over email? When solicited? Casually in the moment? After some time to process?
- Don't assume that quieter colleagues don't have ideas to share. **Ask them**.
- **Allow students and more junior colleagues to lead meetings or give presentations**.
- It's great to have social events, in-person and virtual, that help people connect outside of work. Just make sure not to **schedule the same kind of activity always at the same time** (the same Happy Hour always on Tuesday at 6 pm, for example). Create a range of opportunities for people to opt into, if they want.
- It is not unusual to feel closer bonds with some colleagues over others. But notice who you gravitate towards and make an effort to **connect, even briefly, with those on the team who you don't talk to regularly**. Even just a check in to see how they're doing tells a person, "You see me. I am valued. I belong here."
- If you're a lead, **schedule regular check-ins with your people**. They don't need to be long, or always about work either.
- When people are newly joining the team, onboard them by **showing them where resources live and explaining team communication practices**. ("We keep x kind of documents in this database...gender neutral bathrooms are here...we don't email after 6 pm.")
- On virtual calls, **share your pronouns next to your signature** to tell people, "This virtual space is safe to be who you are."
- Being productive does not require *always* talking business in meetings. **Take a few minutes at the start of a meeting to break the ice**. Finding out what people do in their personal time and honoring who they are *as people* gives them permission to show up at work as their whole selves, which is when they will do their best work.
- In virtual meetings, **use icons and chat functions so that less extroverted people can communicate in ways they are most comfortable**.
- In virtual meetings, **create guidelines around interruptions, discussions in the chat, and whether the camera is on or off**. Consider that "Zoom fatigue" is real, and that there are legitimate reasons why people might not want their cameras on. If they opt to turn

them off, honor that choice, but establish back channels with those people to ensure that you're not missing their valuable feedback and ideas.

- Do not fear long silences in virtual or in-person meetings. People have different communication and processing styles, so when you solicit questions or comments, **count to 10 before moving on**, even if you're just sitting in silence.
- To create psychological safety on the team, leads should **frequently solicit dissenting opinions** and thank people for giving them. Over time, this practice creates trust that will empower people to share things they might otherwise not—like when they make mistakes.
- When giving a teammate instructive feedback, **use growth mindset language that focuses on how they can improve**. If the feedback is vague and not actionable, it isn't that helpful.
- If you see someone on the team being treated unfairly, **say something**. Whether someone is the brunt of sexist jokes, or ignored in meetings, or victim to biased presumptions about their abilities, this is when you can call out the bias and make this a learning opportunity. Power dynamics on a team can make speaking out hard, but it's important that we say something, preferably in the moment. If you don't feel comfortable approaching someone about their behavior, seek out another person of authority who can help, and check in with the target of the treatment to see how you can support them.