

5-Day Belonging Challenge

When leaders foster belonging at work, everyone feels included, and people are more comfortable taking risks and asking for help. This (better) leadership practice paves the way for greater innovation in the organization. Use our 5-day action plan to transform your team by building a sense of belonging.

Monday: Make connection consistent.

Create ongoing opportunities for people to connect with one another. Set aside time in every team or department meeting to acknowledge achievements, share wins, give kudos, honor milestones like project launches and work anniversaries, and recognize and celebrate customs or holidays.

Tuesday: Try to lift the load.

Be aware that your workplace isn't a level playing field. Some team members are carrying the weight of stereotypes and subtle messages about who can (and can't) be successful, while others are free from those burdens. As leaders, it's our responsibility to notice inequity and address it wherever we can.

Wednesday: Write your wrongs.

Make a resume of your failures, which might include bullets like jobs you didn't get, milestones you missed, or grants that weren't funded. Share it with your team, and acknowledge that you learned more from those setbacks than your successes. This normalizes failure as common and temporary.

Thursday: Think before you speak.

When others are talking, listen from a place of respect and don't make assumptions. Rather than presuming you understand their experiences or rushing in to finish their sentences, allow "wait time" before responding. Practice speaking less to hear more and to signal you value other perspectives.

Friday: Focus on individuals.

Your team may work well together overall, but challenge yourself to dig a little deeper. Are some people holding back? If you notice some members aren't speaking up in meetings, consider whether all individuals are consistently getting the message that they belong on the team and in the organization.