



Construction Inclusion Week

Building the Foundation for Inclusion

DAY FOUR: Jobsite Culture

TOOLBOX TALK

Talking about Diversity at Work

Course Goal: This reflection activity will help you explore your own perspectives and experience with Diversity. It is designed to help you develop more self-awareness and better engage in conversations about differences at work.

Estimated Course Length: 20-25 minutes.



Talking about Diversity at Work

☰ Talking about Diversity @ Work

WHAT DOES "DIVERSITY" MEAN?

☰ Look Around

☰ Defining Diversity

☰ Diversity in the Workplace

☰ Reflection Exercise 1

DIVERSITY AT WORK

☰ Why Diversity Matters at Work

☰ Starting a Conversation

☰ Reflection Exercise 2

☰ My Diversity Timeline

☰ Reflection Exercise 3

SCIENCE SUPPORTS HOW YOU MAY BE FEELING!

☰ The Science of Diversity

☰ The Science of Diversity Continued

☰ Reflection Exercise 4

☰ Final Reflection

BEST PRACTICES FOR TALKING ABOUT DIVERSITY

☰ Best Practices for Talking About Diversity

☰ Resources



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Talking about Diversity at Work

The topic of **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)** and racial justice continue to emerge as a critical focus of our society and many organizations.

We are committed to ensuring our workplace is one where we embrace diversity and our culture fosters inclusion so team members can experience belonging and be the best version of themselves at work.

Before Beginning:

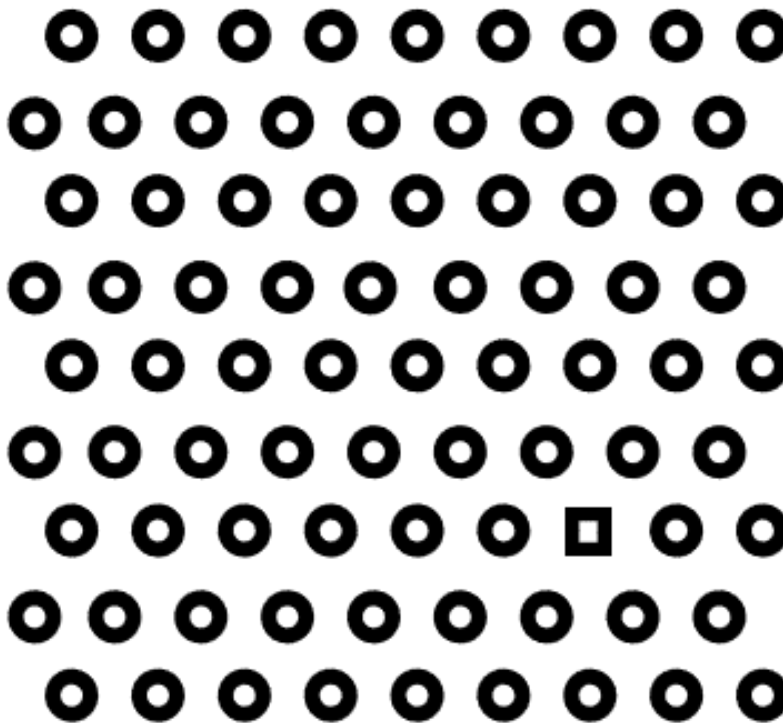
Print the accompanying worksheet. You'll use it to complete the course Reflection Activities.

This document is for your own reflection. You will not be asked to turn it in or share it with anyone.



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Take a moment to look around you right now.

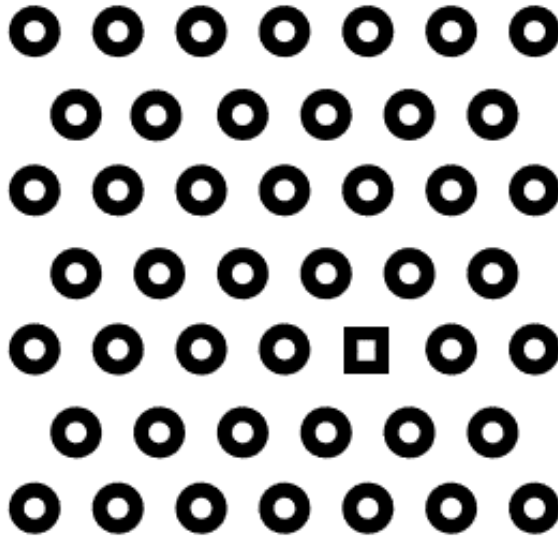


Really notice the objects and items in your environment.



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Step 1



Do you see something?

Take notice of something that has been there for a long time, but you no longer notice.



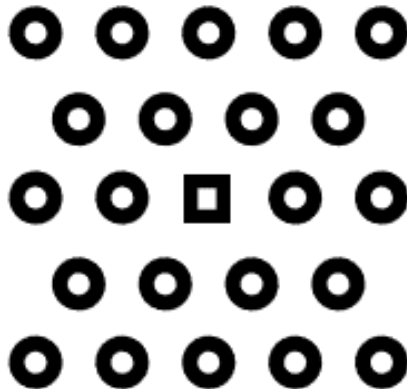
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Step 2



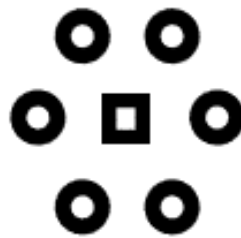
Or something that is unusual?

Is there anything that stands out to you as unusual?



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Our brains are trained to look for patterns and uniqueness.



When we see the same things over and over, we tend to overlook them or we tend to not 'see' them anymore. Of course, the same goes with the people around us.

This process plays into how we perceive and react to **Diversity**.



Defining Diversity

Diversity is the rich difference between people in all the ways they are unique, both seen and unseen.

Diversity is not related to an individual, rather Diversity is about a collective or a group and can only exist in relationship to others. In our organization, we believe that difference should be recognized and celebrated.

When we leverage our _____, we can drive towards better outcomes.

- Similarities?

- Differences?

We believe **differences** should be recognized and celebrated.



Diversity at Work

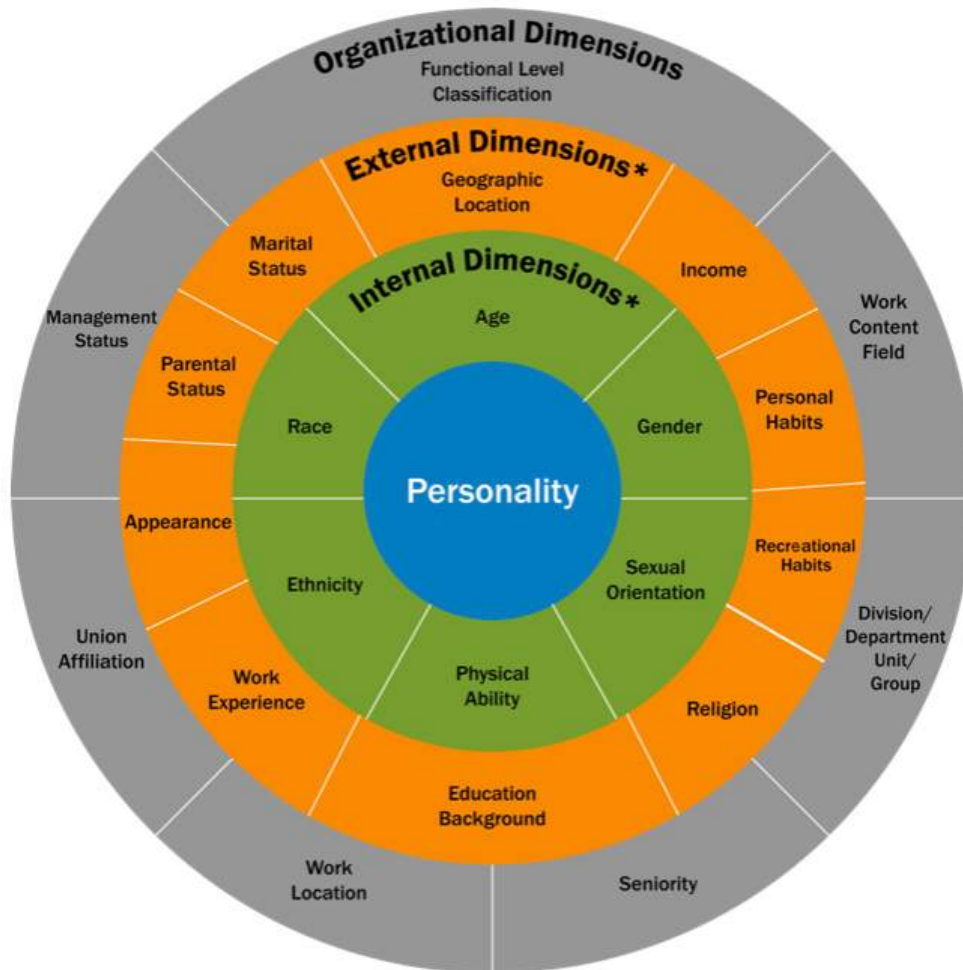
By bringing in diverse perspectives and experiences, companies realize more innovation and better results.

In addition, when people feel they are included and belong, team member engagement and retention increases.

Despite many companies' good intentions, team members frequently report that their past experience with corporate Diversity efforts have missed the mark. **We want to change that.**



Talking about Diversity at Work



Gardenswartz and Rowe, 2003

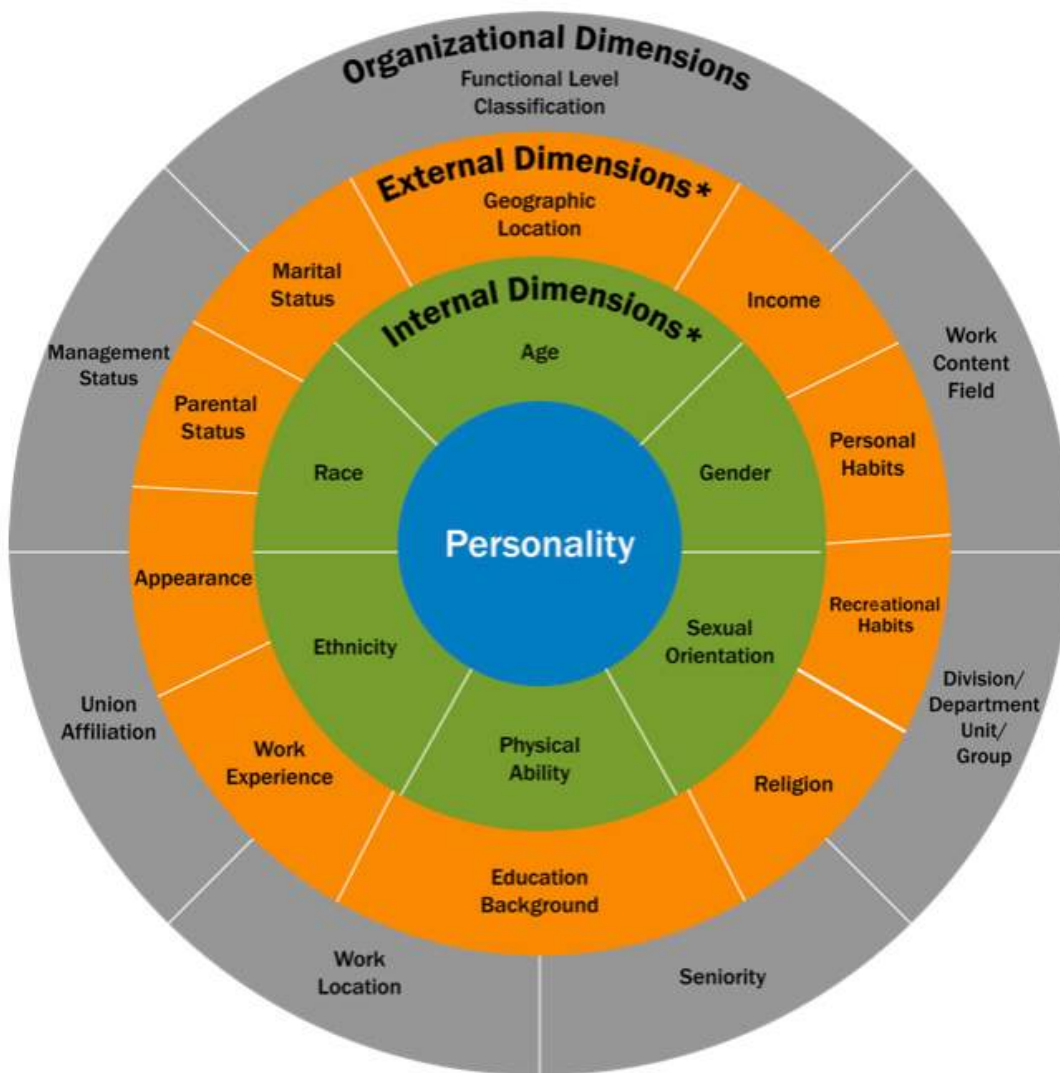
Our differences are measured in many ways; some are less obvious than others.

The Wheel of Diversity represents several ways in which we can measure our differences. It's important to note, there are many dimensions of difference not reflected in this graphic.



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Reflection Exercise 1



Gardenswartz and Rowe, 2003



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Reflection

Complete EXERCISE 1 of the *Talking About Diversity @ Work* printout. Use the PDF you downloaded to record your response(s).

Look at the Wheel of Diversity and notice where you might feel ease and where you might feel tension when considering various aspects of diversity. What do you notice?

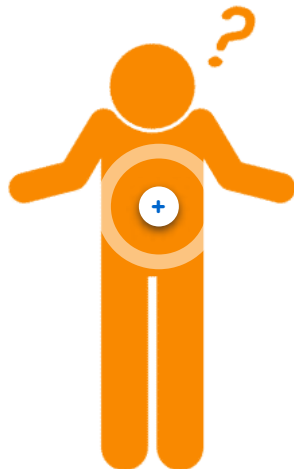


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We want to make it safe to discuss what's really on your mind, and the unspoken realities of race, identity, disability, and the other multitude of ways we might be different from each other. We want to address the real issues and be respectful, but not reinforce what might cause worry or keep us from engaging in these conversations in the first place.

Starting a Conversation

This can be a difficult topic to discuss.





Talking about Diversity at Work



You might notice some people may shy away, feeling unsure of their role in the conversation.



While others feel empowered to launch into the discussion.



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Reflection Exercise 2

Reflection

Complete EXERCISE 2 of the *Talking About Diversity @ Work* printout. Use the PDF you downloaded to record your response(s).

Part 1

Currently, I would rate the level of importance of learning and talking about diversity as:

Not Important

Very Important

-----|

Currently, I would rate my personal level of comfort in talking about diversity as:

Not comfortable

Very comfortable

-----|

Part 2

What feelings or hesitations do you have talking about diversity?



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My Diversity Timeline

Our experience with diversity can influence our level of comfort.

MY DIVERSITY TIMELINE

BIRTH

PRESENT



In the next exercise, you will reflect on your life experiences and how they shaped your perspective around **Diversity**.



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Reflection Exercise 3

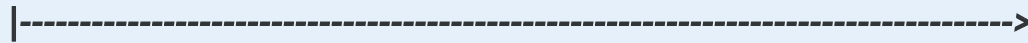
Reflection

Complete EXERCISE 3 of the Talking About Diversity @ Work printout. Use the PDF you downloaded to record your response(s).

Take a few moments to think about your life experiences, from birth through today. **Indicate on the arrow the first time that you:**

Birth

Present



- A Traveled **outside** of home country
- B Noticed a person **who avoided you**
- C Met someone of a **different ethnicity** (looked different than you/your people)
- D Met someone of a **different sexual orientation**
- E Met someone **with a disability**
- F Had **someone suggest** you got your job because of **how you appear** and not your talent/skills
- G Worked with someone from a **different region of the world**
- H Met someone with a **gender identity** that surprised you
- I Learned a **second language**
- J Observed an **incident** you believed could have been related to **bias or prejudice**
- K Experienced **racial profiling** or **personal discrimination**



The Science of Diversity

Years of research show that our brains and bodies function together to ensure our safety and well-being.

This research reinforces that we are wired for connection.

Ways we seek to interact and engage in relationships with others:

- 1 Shared smiles amongst strangers
- 2 A desire for eye contact
- 3 A child reaching out to hold a parent's hand
- 4 A hug between loved ones



The Science of Diversity Continued

THE SAFER WE FEEL, the more open we are to connecting and being vulnerable with others.



When we feel this way ...

Our brains will release oxytocin, serotonin, and dopamine, which increase a feeling of well-being and safety, and support our brain to function in a creative, innovative and intentional manner.



At the same time ...

If there is any sense of threat or danger, adrenaline begins to pump, and a human will to begin go through feelings of fight or flight and will pull in and hold back, potentially shutting down.



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The balance of mental and physical safety ...
Has been referred to as the level of psychological safety and biological safety.



When team members feel safe ...
In their work environment they are able to share perspectives that differ from others, make mistakes, and try new things without the fear of personal threats such as retribution or loss of support or status.



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KEY TAKEAWAY

The safer we feel in our environments and with others, the more we are able to engage in challenging work and important discussions because we are less afraid of being excluded for saying the “wrong thing” or making a mistake.

Feeling uncomfortable when we talk about diversity and race is not a personal failing but a human reaction. **Our opportunity is to increase the level of safety on our teams and expand our abilities through courageous conversation.**



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Reflection Exercise 4

Reflection

Complete EXERCISE 4 of the Talking About Diversity @ Work printout. Use the PDF you downloaded to record your response(s).

Why do I feel safe or unsafe talking about diversity at work?



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Whether we want to admit it or not, we all have beliefs and mental models from our own experiences that shape the way we see the world. **Give yourself the space and permission to explore yours.**

That starts with your own self-awareness of where your attention and energy goes in the conversation.

Ask yourself honestly:

- What will help you stay engaged and present?
- If you find yourself triggered by a topic or a comment, how will you stay curious and tune in with the intent to listen and learn?



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KEY TAKEAWAY

Talking about topics like Diversity can bring up a range of feelings for us. Just like any other skill, with a desire to learn and grow, we can build our confidence and competency around this important topic.



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Final Reflection

Now that you have explored your personal feelings about learning and talking about diversity, and gained additional perspective on why these conversations can be difficult, it is time to put it all together.

Take a couple of minutes to reflect on the activities and material you've just read.

What are my biggest takeaways from this warm-up exercise? Think of three things that came out of today's exercises that you can share during our Team Talk.



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Here are a few things you can do in the meantime:

1

Prepare to talk about this reflection exercise and your takeaways during your Team Talk!
We are eager to explore the similarities and differences of insights.

****Remember, you'll be invited to this conversation by your group leader or another member of your team.****

2

Review "Best Practices for Talking About Diversity." Which tip(s) are most helpful for you as you go into this discussion with your team?

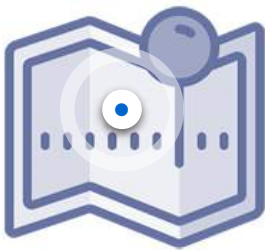
3

Hang on to your reflection guide to use as a reference in your Team Talk discussion!



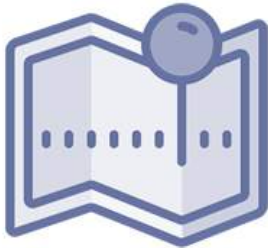
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Best Practices for Talking About Diversity





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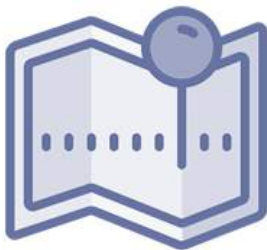


Acknowledge and Embrace Imperfection with Humility--No One Is Perfect

Feeling like you have to know all the answers is a setup for stress and disappointment. Adopting a humble approach can be a release valve for perfection-driven anxiety! If you make a mistake when talking about diversity, authentically say, "I'm sorry." If you are offended or put off by someone's comments, assume the best and avoid rushing to judgment.



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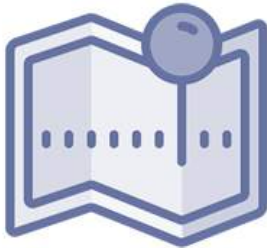
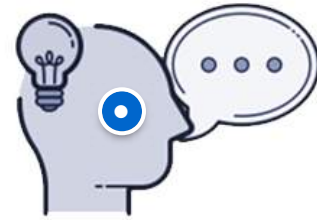


Face Challenges with Sincerity

Reframe challenges (like talking about tough topics) as opportunities that can be met head on. Remember that you do not need to be perfect, but sincerity helps.



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Pay Attention to Self-Talk

Most people would never say to someone else the harsh things they say to themselves. Notice if you are ruminating on what worries you about talking about diversity or a mistake you made. What could you say to yourself that reminds you that you CAN learn, grow, and get better?



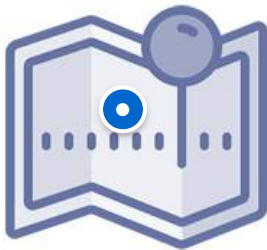
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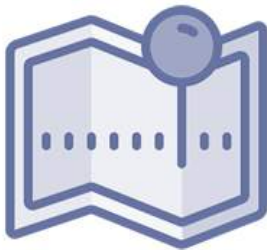


Focus on the Journey

Having the confidence and ability to talk about diversity does not happen overnight. Everyone is at a different place with their learning, experiences, and abilities. Respect where you are and aim to grow over time. This is a journey, not a one and done.



Talking about Diversity at Work

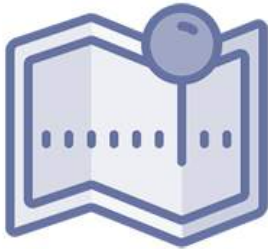


Own Your Attitude

Your mood and overall mindset are strong forces that impact how you see yourself, others, and the world. Be determined to take charge of your attitude if you notice it is hindering you instead of supporting you.



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Recognize Discomfort, but Don't Let it Stop You

It can be said that Growth and Comfort do not “hold hands.” If you are too comfortable, it is unlikely you will make much progress. Think about any challenge you have taken on, such as learning to play an instrument or training for a sport. There was likely a fair amount of discomfort experienced in the process of achieving your goal. Notice how you are feeling and identify ways to increase feelings of safety. This will help you deal with discomfort instead of stalling progress to increase comfort.



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Resources

Looking for more on this topic?

RESOURCES

How to Have Diversity Conversations with Confidence, Forbes, Feb 2020

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescoachescouncil/2020/02/12/how-to-have-diversity-conversations-with-confidence/?sh=34da646e27a6>

Getting Over Your Fear of Talking about Diversity, Harvard Business Review, Nov 2019

<https://hbr.org/2019/11/getting-over-your-fear-of-talking-about-diversity>

15 Tips for Building a Growth Mindset, Psychology Today, Apr 2019

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/click-here-happiness/201904/15-ways-build-growth-mindset>

4 Stages of Psychological Safety, Book Summary, Timothy R. Clark, 2020

<https://www.accel-5.com/learn/article/the-4-stages-of-psychological-safety>