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Racism

Racism is the notion that a particular race of people is superior or inferior to another race of people. Racial vilification refers to behaviour that insults individuals and groups on the grounds of their colour, race, ethnicity or national origins. This includes racist jokes and racially offensive terms, stereotyping, provocative media reporting, historical revisionism and racist hate propaganda. Many countries have legislation prohibiting racism.

In the workplace, racism causes conflict and problems, preventing employees from contributing as effectively as possible. The reputation of an organisation can suffer if it is known to have racist attitudes.

Disability

In your workplace, you and your work colleagues will all have different physical characteristics and abilities. Some people will be better suited to some tasks than others. In some cases, physical characteristics may impair or compromise the abilities of the person, which may be referred to as a disability.

According to Australian law, disability includes physical, intellectual, psychiatric, sensory, neurological and learning disabilities such as dyslexia. It also includes physical disfigurement and disease. About 20 per cent of the Australian population is disabled in some way. There are many different types of disability, with varying degrees of severity. A disability can result from an accident, a genetic disorder, infection, birth or a psychiatric condition.

Worries and preconceived notions about persons with a disability may lead to discriminatory practices for the reasons described below.



Stigma

There can be a lot of stigma surrounding disabilities, and employers sometimes avoid hiring people with disabilities because they feel uncomfortable talking about the person's needs and feel embarrassed and awkward.



Misconception

People can also equate disability with lack of ability, or worry about how people with disabilities would fit into the existing team and the expense of accommodating employees who are disabled.



Dealing with change

Existing employees may also be nervous around, and resistant to, making changes to accommodate people with disabilities.

Sexism

Sexism is a behaviour that demeans or discriminates against people based on their gender. Sexism involves a lack of respect for the qualities of individual human beings. It reduces humans to sexual and gender stereotypes that usually focus on traditional gender roles, or the person's sexuality. People who behave in a sexist manner are usually trying to assert their superiority or dominance over others, and prefer people to conform to traditional roles.

Sexism is also noticeable when issues such as pregnancy and family duties arise and affect an employee, for example, breastfeeding a baby in public.

Regardless of the culture of your workplace, or the way you were raised, you will work more effectively with colleagues and external customers if you do not display or condone sexist behaviour.

Sexism can be perpetuated in the terms we use to describe people and things, and sexist comments are considered demeaning. Some examples for both men and women follow.



Women

- ▶ Women are degraded by terms such as 'chick' and 'bimbo'.
- ▶ Referring to women as 'girls' suggests they can't look after themselves or be responsible for their own behaviour.



Men

- ▶ Men are degraded by terms such as 'macho' and 'muscles'.
- ▶ Referring to men as 'boys' suggests they can't look after themselves or be responsible for their own behaviour.

Generational

Organisations are usually made up of people of varying ages. If you work specifically with people in a particular age group, for example with the aged, you will need to be aware of the particular needs of that group. However, even in specific roles such as these, you will still need to liaise with your colleagues and the families of your clients.

Within your organisation, you will work with people older, younger and the same age as you. Their work experience and skills will vary, as well as their values and lifestyles.

Everyone needs to learn new skills regardless of their age. Most workers need to continually update their information technology skills by learning about new program operations, software packages and communication technologies. It can be difficult to keep up with every new development. Younger people generally find it easier to adapt to new developments because they have been born into a period of great technological advancement, while some older people may find it more challenging.

There are now four typical names or labels for the different generations over the past 70 years. Each generation have had different advantages and disadvantages that has shaped and moulded the way they think and behave – it is another aspect of how people deal with each other.

Collect quantitative diversity data

When you are dealing with quantitative data, the results can be collated from information already collected or information specifically requested. For instance, a company could obtain data from their payroll department in regard to gender, age, or location of their employees. When it comes to ethnicity, culture, religious beliefs or sexual orientation the business would have to ask their employees to complete a survey. For privacy reasons, you would expect the survey to be anonymous, as well as optional, considering the personal nature of the survey.

The collection of this type of data can be an effective tool in analysing whether the organisation is complying with performance criteria set out in their workplace diversity and inclusion plan. One of the criteria set out in the plan may be that all employees must complete diversity training at least once a year to learn about cultural differences. Collecting data on whether this has been complied with would easily be accessed from employee records. Some ways to collect quantitative data follow.

Ways to collect quantitative data

- ▶ Surveys with closed questions
- ▶ Data downloaded from information systems
- ▶ Interviews with closed questions

Collect qualitative diversity data

When collecting information about diversity, qualitative data refers to information on attitudes, opinions and thoughts. This data will allow you to look at the behaviour of people and get a better understanding of their behaviours. Through this understanding organisations can create a workplace that has a more inclusive culture with targeted diversity plans and programs.

Disadvantages of qualitative data collection

- ▶ It can be expensive to ensure a good sample size
- ▶ It tends to be a smaller sample size therefore may be less representative of the complete population
- ▶ It can be highly subjective because of differences of opinions
- ▶ Generalisations are not able to be made due to the size of the sample and answers that vary - specific numbers would be sighted no percentages
- ▶ Results can vary widely depending on the skills of the observer/interviewer

Breeding a culture of inclusion

- ▶ Ensuring a diverse workplace is making the most of their talent and differences will take, creativity, innovation and a top down approach. The attitudes must be seen and practiced at all management levels to ensure the culture succeeds.

Celebrating differences

- ▶ Celebrating and acknowledging our differences fosters a more understanding and respectful workplace.

Encouraging learning

- ▶ Sometimes the best way to learn and understand the differences we have is by attending formal training and education. Workplaces that offer this training are opening a door to inclusion and acceptance

Instigating knowledge transference

- ▶ In some instances the workplace is the only place where a person is exposed to other cultures. An organisation that encourages learning off each other and understanding our differences, the more open minded the workforce will become

Work effectively in a diverse work environment

Here are some strategies that you can use when working with a diverse group of people in a workplace.

- ▶ Provide opportunities for individuals to discuss workplace objectives as they are allocated, implemented or formulated. This will help everyone understand how and why the objectives are set, what is expected of people, and give people a chance to contribute and to express their opinions.
- ▶ Encourage people to outline what needs to be done to meet the workplace objectives.
- ▶ Identify the individuals that could best carry out each task.
- ▶ Encourage each individual to make an effort to negotiate differences and recognise and respect others' expertise, working and interpersonal style and work practices. This will help people to work effectively together and avoid disruption within the workplace.
- ▶ Encourage people to plan and work around the qualities exhibited by individuals. Think of the characteristics that are the basis for differences between people. What challenges have people had to overcome to accept their own differences from other people, or have their differences accepted by others? What skills or qualities have been gained from overcoming these challenges and experiences that can contribute to a more effective workplace?



2A Provide a role model for others that demonstrates respect for diversity

Our differences as people are displayed in many ways. To be effective within a diverse workplace, we need to be able to recognise and understand the characteristics that make people different from each other, know how these differences can affect the individual and know how these differences can affect others in the workplace.

At work you will deal with managers and supervisors, internal customers, stakeholders and people from other organisations. Everyone you deal with will be different from you in some way. Some of these differences may not concern you at all, while for others you may need to make adjustments in your work practices or your usual way of thinking. Other people may need to make adjustments to accommodate you. Everyone needs to cooperate, respond positively to differences and respect the rights of all individuals to ensure that your organisation performs successfully.

Being able to respond effectively and sensitively to these issues in your day-to-day work means:

- ▶ acknowledging that differences exist between people, but that no person deserves less courtesy or respect because of those differences
- ▶ not ignoring or dismissing differences, but giving them appropriate attention where it is warranted
- ▶ recognising that people have a right to be different and all individuals should be treated fairly, regardless of any perceived differences.

Culture

It is not necessary to learn all there is to know about another person's culture before you can interact effectively with them. Acknowledging differences and acting on issues as they arise will show that you respect their culture and their individuality.

Assuming that people will conform to cultural stereotypes undermines their individuality and can ignore individual attributes that may be beneficial to the workplace. For instance, not all Australians refer to each other as 'mate' or always greet each other with 'g'day'. Not all Australians play football, surf and live near the beach, contrary to the cultural stereotype of Australians. Likewise, not all Japanese people are interested in sumo wrestling and drinking sake. Here are some ideas for approaching and communicating effectively with others who have a culture different to your own.

Tips for working with people from different cultures

Respect another person's culture on a one-to-one basis.

Take your lead from the way the person approaches you or interacts with you, and be aware if they appear to feel uncomfortable or upset.

Avoid stereotyping people based on what you suppose is their cultural practice.

Cultural safety

Cultural safety is the result of cultural competence. It describes an environment that accepts all people and is free of discrimination. It is a vital part of every organisation, at every level and in every work role.

A culturally safe workplace has the following characteristics.

A culturally safe workplace:

- ▶ treats everyone with dignity
- ▶ respects people's culture, language, knowledge, experience and obligations to each other
- ▶ allows no assault on a person's identity
- ▶ provides pathways to empowerment and self-determination
- ▶ allows people to promote, develop and maintain their distinctive customs, traditions, procedures and practices
- ▶ acknowledges individual differences
- ▶ works with people where they are, not where someone thinks they should be.

Example

Become culturally aware

Rohini has just started working in a diverse care environment. Although she is aware of her own cultural background, she has little understanding of the other cultures represented in the facility and how they might impact on the behaviour of her new clients. To improve her cultural awareness, she asks her manager if there are any resources with ethno-specific information available for her to read. She is pleased to find out that, not only were there resources, she was about to complete some cultural competence training as part of her induction.



Generational

Workplace structure has changed and many people now experience workplaces where all employees are involved in decision-making and planning. Conflict can occur when people of any generation stereotype others and refuse to acknowledge different values and opinions.

Australia's population is ageing. This means that older people are increasingly making up a larger proportion of the whole population, of consumer and client markets and the workforce. Below are some tips for communicating effectively with older people in the workplace.

- ▶ Limit the amount of information you present at one time. Repeat instructions if required.
- ▶ Ask people to summarise information or advice you have told them; however, simply asking, 'Do you understand?' is not useful.

Gender

Gender issues in a workplace may include sexism, sexual harassment and sexual orientation or preference. Sexist behaviour that demeans or discriminates against people largely relies on assumptions and stereotypes.

The key to non-sexist behaviour is to treat both genders with equal respect and be alert to sexist behaviour, both in yourself and others.

To avoid sexism, do not assume that:

- ▶ men can't do things that women can do or vice versa
- ▶ women will look and behave 'like women', and that men will look and behave 'like men'
- ▶ men and women should be treated differently according to their genders
- ▶ all your workmates or clients are heterosexual.

Physical characteristics and abilities

People come in all shapes and sizes and choose to present themselves in all sorts of different ways. Pointing out someone's physical or mental characteristics or appearance in a negative light, as if this characteristic represents some fault or failing on the person's part, is a form of discrimination. You should never treat internal or external customers unfairly because you have personal issues about the way they look or think.

Here are some things you should consider when working with different people.

Considerations when working with other people

- ▶ Do not assume people lack ability.
- ▶ Avoid feeling awkward or embarrassed.
- ▶ Be conscious of people's physical needs.
- ▶ Be aware of people's physical and mental limitations and make allowances.
- ▶ Be aware of the learning styles of others.
- ▶ Be patient.

2B Assist colleagues to accept diversity of colleagues and clients

One of the most valuable tools you can use to develop people is coaching and mentoring.

In the modern workplace, mentoring and coaching are offered to individuals to ensure that they perform to their full potential in the organisation, which benefits both the team and the individual. Another positive effect is the recognition and validation of the skills and attitude of the person to be used as the mentor or coach.

Most of all, coaching and/or mentoring can fast track the development process. When you provide feedback to an employee on a continuous basis, it allows them to correct assumptions quicker and keeps them motivated and focused on learning more. It also allows the coach or mentor to pick up on attitudes, feelings and ignorance as the relationship deepens, allowing for immediate corrections and education. Here are some definitions of coaching and mentoring.

Coaching

In an educational sense coaching generally refers to a one-to-one relationship but can be considered as a team role; for example, a coach for a sales team. The coaching can be facilitated by you, a designated staff member or contracted to an external person. The focus of the coach is to engage with the learner, provide planned sequential training, observe performance and provide feedback to achieve desired outcomes.

Mentoring

Mentoring is where an employee is paired with a colleague with significant experience, skills, knowledge and desired attributes. This person takes on the role of an advisor or role model who works closely with the learner often over an extended period of time.

Partnerships can fail if the participants have different views or disagree with the goals of the organisation. It is better to appoint an experienced colleague rather than take on the role yourself.

Legal and ethical considerations

There is a range of legislation at both national and state level that impacts on the way workplaces operate. Laws define the way that employers must carry out their activities – many of these laws are directly beneficial to the organisation, its employees, clients and customers.

Working in a safe, healthy environment benefits both management and employees as absenteeism is less and quality of working and home life for everyone is improved. Equal employment legislation and anti-discrimination laws ensure that everyone gets a fair chance to be employed and to work free of harassment and intimidation.

Tasmania	Office of the Anti-discrimination Commissioner <i>Anti-Discrimination Act 1998 (TAS)</i>
Victoria	Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission <i>Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (VIC)</i>
Western Australia	Equal Opportunity Commission <i>Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (WA)</i>

Equal employment opportunity

In Australia, national, state and territory laws cover equal employment in the workplace. Everyone is entitled to have equal opportunity when it comes to getting access to jobs, benefits and associated services within the workplace. Equal employment opportunity is aimed at ensuring that the job recruitment and selection process is fair, and that workplace outcomes with respect to supervision and management are not biased.

Equal employment opportunity legislation is designed to ensure that:

- ▶ fair practices are in place in every workplace
- ▶ the best person is recruited and/or promoted when there is a position vacant, and skilled staff are retained
- ▶ workplace management decisions are fair to all employees
- ▶ training and development needs address customer and employee requirements
- ▶ the workplace is free of harassment and discrimination
- ▶ social and cultural differences between staff are recognised and respected.

Codes of conduct in the workplace

A code of conduct is a collection of policies, rules or guidelines that define the specific actions or procedures applicable to a particular organisation or workplace. It offers guidance and/or direction on a range of ethical issues that people may confront in day-to-day work. A code of conduct applies to all employees, visitors and others who may conduct business with the workplace. It will be informed by a variety of federal Acts, national standards and state or territory legislation.

A code of conduct is a reminder of our responsibilities to other people at all levels of an organisation. All staff should be involved in developing a code of conduct which should be consistent with the diversity goals of the workplace. It may include all or some of the items listed below.

A code of conduct deals with standards of behaviour relating to:

- ▶ personal behaviour
- ▶ public comment
- ▶ lawful orders
- ▶ use of facilities and equipment and intellectual property or copyright
- ▶ honesty, integrity, fairness and equity
- ▶ use of computer, intranet, internet and email services
- ▶ performance of duty
- ▶ bullying, harassment and discrimination

2E Generate a supportive workplace by valuing and promoting the benefits of a diverse workforce

Working effectively with difference is a strength that can improve a workplace's services and client relations. A workplace that encourages diversity often receives public recognition and respect, as well as business success, customer satisfaction and staff retention. Respect for difference in human qualities is more than a nice thing to do, it is a smart way to do business, and utilises assets that may not currently be capitalised on.

In order to be strong in this area, staff need to understand diversity, which they may come to do through their own lived experience or through more formal interventions. Aim to foster understanding of the benefits of diversity with each staff member.

Here are some tips that can help you to assist staff in seeing the benefits of workplace diversity.

Morale <p>Having a range of cultures, backgrounds, ages and abilities contributes to an interesting and lively workplace, with high staff morale and a variety of opinions and points of view.</p>	Productivity and conditions <p>Working harmoniously with others lessens tensions and increases productivity. Understanding different cultures, points of view and opinions leads to a workplace that is free from harassment, discrimination and bullying. Employees feel safer and more flexibility can be introduced to accommodate religious holidays.</p>
Ideas and access <p>A workplace can use ideas and information from the diversity of its workforce to contribute to its competitive advantage. For example, having staff who speak other languages and understand other cultures, provides a pool of people to help solve problems when working with clients from diverse backgrounds.</p>	Trust and connection <p>Understanding clients' situations and backgrounds helps you develop a rapport and improves client service. Demonstrating a commitment to diversity raises the workplace's profile and builds trust within the community.</p>



Topic 3

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 3A Use communication strategies to meet the diverse needs of individuals within the workplace**
- 3B Implement tailored communication strategies for individual and group needs**
- 3C Identify and/or develop and use resources that facilitate effective communication**
- 3D Reflect on use of communication strategies with regard to workplace potential improvements**

Adapt communication strategies

Having good communication skills makes it easier for you to work with culturally diverse people. If people do not speak or understand English well, you may need to communicate with pictures or signs. Learning some words in the client's language can also make them feel more comfortable.

There are many methods of communication. You must understand each method so you can use the most appropriate one to provide the best care for your clients, and so you can communicate effectively with everyone you work with.

Visual images

Visual imagery can be inclusive, exclusive and also discriminatory. Visual material such as posters, pictures, cartoons, material displayed on computer screens or transmitted to others, video, television and signs displayed in the workplace should be inclusive of all the organisation's employees, as well as any external customers. This means that they should not represent only one type of employee, but include employees of different ages, physical characteristics and abilities.



Pornographic, obscene or demeaning material is discriminatory and can be means for complaint to relevant government agencies.

Example

Removal of inappropriate posters

During the formation of equal opportunity and anti-discrimination laws, many male-dominated workplaces were asked or compelled to remove posters from workplace walls that were demeaning to women. Both internal and external customers were offended and/or intimidated by visual imagery displaying women in sexual poses. This sort of material is now frowned upon in most organisations, and can be grounds for sexual harassment.



Cross-cultural communication strategies

Community service organisations succeed in satisfying their clients when they provide the required service in a culturally appropriate person-centred manner.

To communicate successfully with clients who have different needs, such as people with diverse backgrounds, or people with a disability, you need to develop new skills and communication techniques.

Communication differences may include how people address each other, levels of formality, as well as nonverbal behaviour.

In the workplace or while visiting clients, you may be faced with a situation where you are trying to communicate with a person that does not speak the same language as you or may have hearing difficulties. In this instance there are methods you can use to help the communication process, some of which are detailed below.

Communication strategies

- ▶ Sign language, miming, pointing, using aids – many workplaces will have pictures instead of words to explain a procedure or task.
- ▶ Consulting or incorporating people that may understand the other language better than you – colleagues may speak the same language or come from the same culture and may be able to help

3C Identify and/or develop and use resources that facilitate effective communication

Communicating effectively in a diverse environment will include using all kinds of different resources. Local communities may have cultural education for specific cultures in their area. Local, state and federal governments may have funding for programs to help increase cultural awareness. Each community will have specific resources available to them to increase the independence and abilities of a diverse population. With the advent of the internet there are limitless websites that can provide information. The important thing about sourcing information from a website is to ensure it comes from a trusted site – sites which are recommended or somehow linked to the government are a good example of this.

Resources may also include basic brochures and signs, to more complex communication aids that are targeted to specific groups of people. Leaders that are managing a diverse workplace may create a communication book that identifies diversity issues and encourages staff to come up with solutions to the issue.

Some other communication aids are listed below.

Communication aids for people with a disability can include:

- ▶ chat books
- ▶ communication diaries
- ▶ objects, symbolic objects, photos or pictures
- ▶ devices (electronic or manual)
- ▶ electronic translators.

Example

Improve website accessibility

Some technology companies use a service called Web Adaptation Technology, which lets people with a disability make standard web pages more accessible. Users access standard websites through a host computer and a downloaded program on their computer that adjusts pages to make them easier to read.

Users can set and store personal settings, adjusting colours, background, font size, text style and line spacing. They can also eliminate banner ads and other images and modify keystroke timing. The service is free to not-for-profit organisations to distribute to computer users who are older or have a disability.



Summary

1. Having good communication skills makes it easier for you to work with culturally diverse people.
2. Inclusive language is when what you say includes everyone regardless of their age, race, status, gender and abilities.
3. As language and society changes over time, terms that are deemed acceptable at one time may no longer be acceptable at another.
4. Nonverbal communication includes body language and eye contact as well as touching. Body language is different the world over and many cultures have different ways of interpreting nonverbal communication.
5. To communicate successfully with clients who have different needs, such as people with diverse backgrounds, or people with a disability, you need to develop new skills and communication techniques.
6. It is not just language barriers that can lead to a breakdown in communication when dealing with a diverse group of people. Many cultures have different ways of communicating through body language.
7. Communicating effectively in a diverse environment will include using all kinds of different resources.
8. Reflection is an important aspect of communication. No matter who you are communicating with it is always a good idea to reflect on the communication and consider what went right and if anything was misunderstood.



Topic 4

In this topic you will learn how to:

- 4A** Develop and document diversity strategies in consultation with stakeholders
- 4B** Advocate for diversity strategies to be implemented in accordance with workplace policies and procedures
- 4C** Develop measures for evaluating the outcomes of workplace strategies, policies and procedures for diversity
- 4D** Report on workplace diversity strategies within appropriate context

Contribute to workplace diversity policies and procedures

As a leader in your organisation, it is imperative that you are aware of all policy and procedure. Most policy and procedure documents are a work in progress and should be updated as needed. New policies may be instigated through updated legislation, an emerging need in the business or a risk identified. A procedure may need to be created or updated through the formation of a new policy, to assist staff members to implement a policy or to ensure consistency.

Stakeholders in the business are considered anyone who has an interest in what is happening in the business. Your role as a leader is to ensure you understand the needs of your diverse workforce. This will require consultation and open communication with everyone from all levels of the organisation.

Once any new or updated policies and procedures have been implemented you need to measure their effectiveness. From there you can report on whether they have been successful or need to be looked at further.

Example

A manager contributes to an organisation's diversity policy

Sue, a manager working in a community-based organisation providing services in housing support, attends a meeting of local support groups where she receives an information pack published by their state's EEO commission on working with refugees.

Returning to work after the meeting, she studies the information and arranges a meeting with the HR manager and a member of the HR team who manages the diversity policy.

At the meeting, they decide that the information will assist staff at the organisation to work more effectively with refugees. They arrange for Sue and the HR team member to plan an information session and deliver this as part of the fortnightly staff meeting.

Feedback from staff is received saying that the information is useful in working with refugees, and that they would like some information to give to clients who are refugees.

The HR team develops a flyer relating to the rights of refugees and this is translated into relevant community languages.

The CEO of the organisation makes a point of congratulating Sue on her contribution, and acknowledges this in the staff newsletter that month.



Practice task 15

1. Comment on how your organisation, or an organisation that has a diversity policy you are familiar with, manages diversity in the areas of gender and disability. The following questions could guide your answer. Make sure you have permission to undertake this research.
 - ▶ Are there staff with physical or other disabilities employed in this workplace? Is there full access to resources and facilities? Could someone who uses a wheelchair work there?
 - ▶ Is gender evenly spread across this workplace? Why or why not?
 - ▶ Are there managers of both genders in this workplace? If not, what barriers exist for the gender not represented equally in the management team?

Culture

Celebrating important cultural events in the workplace is an example of promoting diversity, as is allowing people to dress according to their traditions as long as this does not breach safety laws or dress codes. Refusing leave requests, made in a timely fashion, to attend cultural or religious festivals and ceremonies can be discriminatory.

Language

Important notices should be translated into community languages for display on noticeboards. It is discrimination to hire a person who speaks a language other than English and not offer them safety information in their community language.

Ethnicity and race

Staff must be hired, promoted, trained and rewarded based on merit, regardless of ethnicity. Offering better conditions to members of a specific ethnic group is illegal. A person's race must not be made an issue in hiring, promotion or workplace behaviour. It is against the law to allow racist behaviour, such as jokes being circulated in the workplace that insult people of a specific race.

Equal opportunity requirements

Here are some examples of equal opportunity issues that may arise in the workplace.

Gender

- ▶ Hiring and promotion must be based on the best person for the job, not whether they are male or female. Treating a person differently to others because of their gender is discriminatory.

Nationality

- ▶ Organisations can be proactive to ensure the spread of staff nationalities reflects local population diversity. Refusing to hire people of specific nationalities is a form of discrimination.

Religion

- ▶ Providing flexibility for employees to meet required religious observances is an example of embracing diversity. Refusing a request, for example, to attend Friday afternoon devotion at a local mosque in lieu of taking a lunch break at the middle of the day can be discriminatory, particularly where lunch hours are not mandated.

Sexuality

- ▶ Organisations must not make an issue of a person's sexual preference. Dismissing a person because of their sexuality is illegal.

Marital status/family arrangements

- ▶ Addressing women by generic titles such as Ms is one way to be compliant.
Embracing diversity may involve offering staff with children later starting hours to accommodate taking children to school and flexible hours during school holidays. Refusing reasonable and timely requests for leave from parents of school-age children during school holidays can be a form of discrimination.

Training opportunities

Induction programs are a key opportunity for disseminating information about the organisation's diversity policy, and for communicating the importance that the organisation attaches to having a diverse workplace. Staff meetings can also be used for short training sessions.

Here is more information about training opportunities.

Induction programs

The diversity policy must be explained to all new staff as soon as they commence work, so they are aware of the organisation's aims and practices and their own responsibilities for diversity. A copy of the policy should be included in the organisation's policies and procedures manual as part of the induction kit.

Retain records of attendance and completed training for compliance purposes and to show that the organisation has taken a proactive stance in promoting the policy and eliminating discrimination, harassment and bullying.

Role-plays

Role-plays can be used to further staff understanding during training and information sessions. For example, you may ask staff to role-play what they might do if they are uncomfortable working with a specific team member because they don't have the same religious and cultural beliefs.

Take care to ensure that the participants are volunteers and are advised beforehand of what they are expected to do.

Staff meetings

Staff meetings can be used to explain aspects of the policy, explain how it is to be implemented, raise issues and discuss hypothetical incidents with the aim of educating staff about their responsibilities in relation to diversity. For example, you may explain what sexual harassment means, define bullying, instigate a discussion with a team member about how a policy may be implemented in their team, and describe what to do if they have a complaint about an aspect of diversity.

You can invite a guest speaker to talk about specific issues related to diversity and human qualities; for example, other nationalities, people with disabilities, older workers, and communicating and working with specific cultural groups.

Maintain currency

A diversity policy must relate to current Commonwealth and state/territory legislation, so make sure any legislative changes are noted and interpreted in your organisation's policy.

Here are some strategies for monitoring changes in legislation and trends relating to diversity and codes of conduct.

Strategies for monitoring changes

- ▶ Maintain membership of professional networks of HR practitioners, equal employment opportunity officers and other relevant groups.
- ▶ Monitor relevant websites such as state/territory agencies that focus on anti-discrimination.
- ▶ Attend information sessions provided by relevant agencies, including law firms, government agencies and training providers.
- ▶ Subscribe to journals whose target audience includes managers of organisations, HR professionals and related employees.

Seek and analyse feedback

You need to know whether the policy is working and whether it is effective.

Here are some practices that can assist you in seeking and analysing feedback.

Monitor incidents

- ▶ There may be incidents that tell you the policy is ineffective. For example, if a staff member complains to a team-mate that they are being harassed, the manager might identify two points that demonstrate the policy is not being complied with: the staff member did not complete a written complaint form as instructed in the policy, and another staff member may have breached legislation in relation to harassment.

Observe interactions

- ▶ Observing staff interactions and listening to discussions at staff meetings can let you know whether staff understand the diversity policy. If not, find out the cause, such as the policy using complex language or providing unclear instructions, or people forgetting the information after their initial training.

Check procedures

- ▶ Checking that procedures are being followed confirms that the policy is effective; for example, that recruitment notices use inclusive language and hiring is based on ability.