

**A Whole Brain® Program for Supporting
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging**

**CEO ACTION
FOR DIVERSITY
& INCLUSION**



Inclusion Impacts™

TM

Overview of the *Inclusion Impacts* Program

What? The Inclusion Impacts program is an ongoing series of sessions that creates an open, safe space to share inclusive ideas and create greater understanding.

Who? Anyone can attend. Aim for groups of 10 to 20 people; small enough to maintain a sense of psychological safety, but big enough to have a diversity of perspective. Make sure you are inclusive of a variety of different thinking.

How? These sessions can happen virtually or face to face. But, the key is interaction. This is not a fishbowl activity; there should be space for all voices in this dialogue.

Why? We have a *once in a generation opportunity* to change the kinds of conversations we have at work.



How to use this guide

This guide has three parts:

1	Foundations of the <i>Inclusion Impacts</i> approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Psychological safety• Cognitive diversity• Why Thinking Matters
2	Planning your <i>Inclusion Impacts</i> program	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4 critical steps for success• Key considerations & best practices to maximize inclusion
3	Getting started with <i>Inclusion Impacts</i> sessions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Kicking off with the DOU• Suggested session topics• Additional tools

Creating psychological safety

The shared belief held by members of a team that the team is safe for interpersonal risk-taking.

It is a sense of confidence that the team will not embarrass, reject or punish someone for speaking up.

Psychological safety is a critical foundation for effective discussions about inclusion. If people aren't comfortable sharing their views, **they'll put up a wall and disengage.**

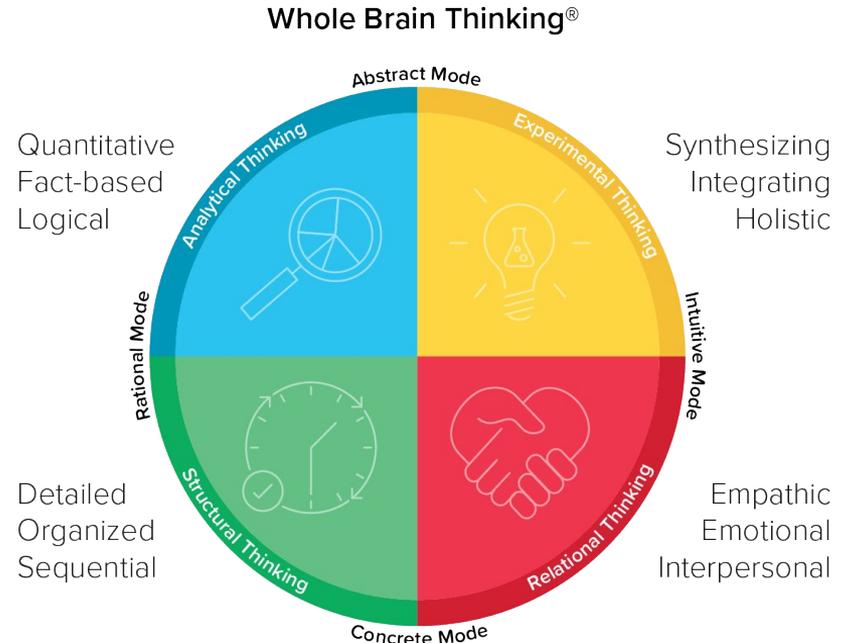
Harvard Business School professor Amy Edmondson

Understanding Cognitive Diversity

Cognitive diversity refers to the fact that each of us has different ways of thinking. Everyone has access to *all* of these ways of thinking, but nature and nurture create biases for some over others.

We describe key differences in the ways we think using the Whole Brain® Thinking framework. It can be used to measure diversity of thought that exists within ourselves, or across a team or organization.

Acknowledging differences in thinking — and using a non-judgmental common language to talk about them — plays an important role in the establishment of psychological safety and how we approach courageous conversations.



Want to learn more about cognitive diversity?

Each team from the CEO Action for Racial Equity Fellowship is using an cognitive diversity to help them achieve their goals.

[Click here](#) to measure your team's cognitive diversity for free!

Psychological safety & cognitive diversity create a virtuous cycle

Cognitive Diversity

Cognitive diversity ensures that we have a variety of perspectives to a situation.

Diversity of thought helps create the conditions for psychological safety, establishing a foundation of openness to different experiences that can reset prior notions of in- and out-groups.

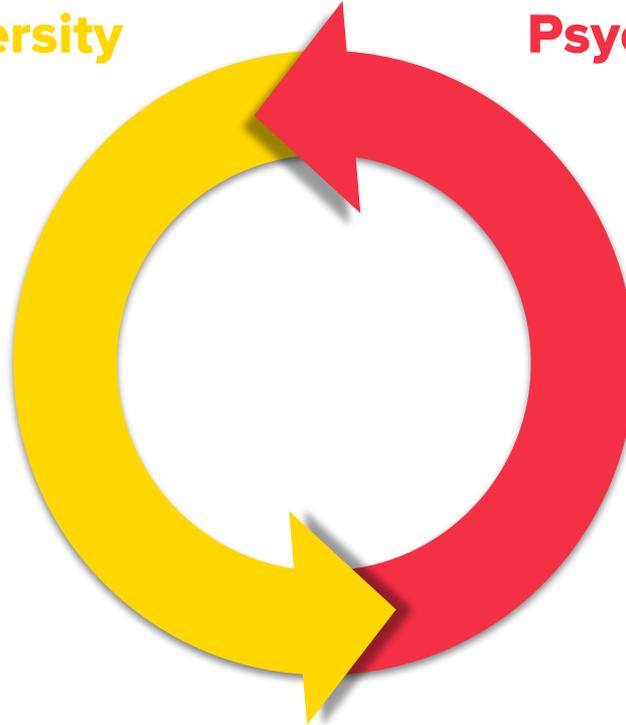
It gives everyone an entryway into the tougher “go there” conversations that should follow.

Psychological Safety

In turn, psychological safety enables organizations to reap the broader benefits of cognitive diversity, supporting better collaboration and productivity

Brought together, psychological safety and cognitive diversity support more nuanced insights and richer, more inclusive discussions.

This combination has proven critical to the success of the Inclusion Impacts program



Why Thinking Matters: A DE&I Practitioner's Perspective



Kevin Clayton

VP of Diversity, Inclusion & Community Engagement

Cleveland Cavaliers

**Want to learn more
from Kevin Clayton?**

[Click here](#) to watch an
Inclusion in Action
webinar with Kevin and
our Chairwoman,
Ann Herrmann

Often in organizational DE&I efforts, the people who most need to engage come into the discussion with defensive walls up.

When I start the conversation on cognitive diversity, it helps tear down those walls.

It allows people to connect in a way that they wouldn't otherwise, to build bridges of trust across the lines that may have divided them before.

4 Critical Steps For Success

Step 1: **Establish psychological safety**

Step 2: **Share (or create) your inclusion vision**

Step 3: **Define the objective of your inclusion sessions**

Step 4: **Create the foundation for continuous impact**



Step 1: Establish psychological safety

- **Open invitation** - create the space where anyone can attend, show up authentically, and participate how they feel comfortable.
- **Build on a foundation of appreciating and celebrating cognitive diversity** - builds trust and creates space for vulnerable and honest dialogue.
- **Create a core planning group** - engage a diverse group of thinkers to help define your program, and encourage research for, and facilitation of, the conversations.
- **Provide the space for sharing** - avoid lecturing, listen more than you talk- encourage and appreciate participation.
- **Be bold** - do not shy away from the more difficult conversations- push past the discomfort.
- **Be empathetic** - understand that there will be a variety of ways people show up - be empathetic to all.
- **Be present** - encourage video up to amplify the non-verbal communication.

Step 2: Share (or create) your inclusion vision

- **Start from the appreciation that all must play an active role in eradicating racism and discrimination of any kind** - create an organizational approach firmly rooted in the belief that understanding, appreciating, exploring and leveraging diversity leads to better outcomes for all.
- **Understand we have conditioning, bias, or learned behavior that can prevent us from “going there” in the workspace** - it is normal to feel uncomfortable, push through that, be brave, be brave!
- **Understand that increased appreciation and understanding leads to increase trust, higher collaboration, and increase engagement** - envision the space of belonging you will create!
- **Foster a culture where uniqueness of ALL beliefs, backgrounds, talents, capabilities and ways of living are welcomed and celebrated** - reflect on how this can be turned to action in hiring practices, product design, marketing, vendor relationships, etc.
- **Recognize the global view of diversity** - include the global perspective and amplify all voices.

Step 3: Define your inclusion objective(s)

- **Identify key areas of focus to drive forward a space of belonging** - the objective of the Inclusion Impacts program should speak boldly and specifically to those key areas.
- **Let employee data be your guide** - ask directly about inclusion, ex. through an employee engagement survey.
- **Analyze the evolving workspace** - stay curious about the continued evolution of the workspace, looking to and learning from expert sources and other organizations.
- **Be direct** - do not shy away from the more difficult conversations.
- **Provide facts and share data** - provide educational information on injustice and discrimination to help clarify the need for creating this space.

Step 4: Create the foundation for continuous impact

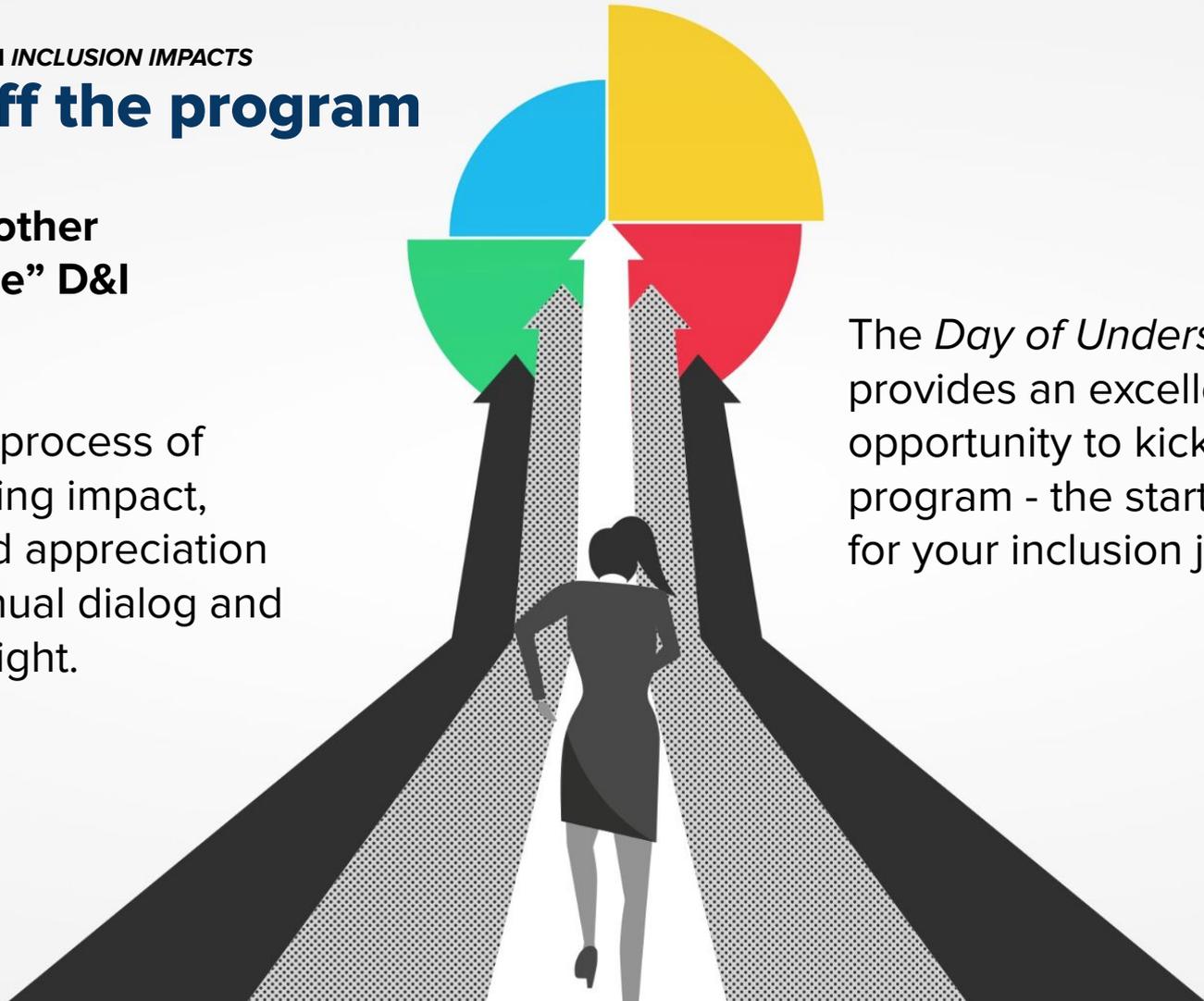
- **Create a calendar for the Inclusion Impacts discussions** - block the space
- **Publish your monthly Inclusion Impacts topics in advance of the session** - provide employees the ability to pre-think prior to the discussion.
- **Create a shared channel for continued dialogue and education outside of the session** - utilize your internal communication tool (ex. Slack) to create a space for additional participation.
- **Ensure multiple ways for participants to communicate and share information** - everyone will not have the same level of comfort speaking, outline the multiple ways to “show up”
- **Be consistent** - start on-time, ending on-time, send prompts be prepared for facilitation and purpose.
- **Keep action top of mind** - focus on continuous improvement - those actions that can be taken to continuously grow your program, organization, and culture of belonging.

GETTING STARTED WITH *INCLUSION IMPACTS*

Kicking off the program

**This is not another
“one-and-done” D&I
experience.**

It is about the process of creating ongoing impact, education, and appreciation through continual dialog and layering of insight.



The *Day of Understanding* provides an excellent opportunity to kick off the program - the starting point for your inclusion journey!

Sample Session Agenda



15
min

Sharing personal stories

- Warming up with personal stories from team members about their personal experiences to help make the session topic feel “real”
- Opportunity for leaders to demonstrate vulnerability and set the stage for psychological safety (esp. if others are unlikely to share)



20
min

Reactions to the discussion prompt

- Summary of key insights of articles, data, or other pre-reading on the topic sent in advance
- Providing team members opportunities to share reactions to the materials and any research they’ve done independently



20
min

What could a different world look like?

- Prompt team members to envision and describe the world they want to live / work in (if needed, use “what if?” statements to solicit input)
- Create “air time” for different perspectives, using insights into the cognitive diversity of the group to engage different participants in a way that doesn’t pigeonhole



5
min

Plant the seeds for the next discussion

- Invite participants to share their takeaways / individual action plans
- Suggest ways to create new inclusion habits related to the topic
- Preview and / or solicit input on upcoming topics
- Give participants a chance to prepare their thinking in advance

Six session topics to get you started

Understanding Cognitive Diversity

The way that we think has a huge influence on the way we interpret our own experiences, and those of others.

How can we decode our thinking to create psychological safety and better conversations about workplace bias?

Words of Inclusion/Exclusion

Inclusive language acknowledges the diversity and practice sensitivity to differences.

How can we become more aware of our language choices and promote inclusion?

Embracing Discomfort

Inclusion conversations can be uncomfortable, but in the discomfort lies growth. The best insights come from outside of our comfort zone.

How can we get comfortable with being uncomfortable?

Actions of Inclusion/Exclusion

Actions matter. The work habits and micro-behaviors practiced daily have a huge impact on inclusion outcomes.

What currently works in our organization? What doesn't?
What more can you add?

Mental Health

Oft compounded by social injustice, marginalized groups may also suffer from poor mental health outcomes.

How do factors like cultural stigmas and service disparities factor into these discussions?

Experiencing Ageism

The negative impacts of ageism affect us all. Young and old, ageism can be a factor at every point in our career path.

How does ageism show up in our organization, or others we've worked with? How do we combat it?

Want more *Inclusion Impacts* session topics and other detailed program content?

[Click here](#) to get more information, including in-depth session descriptions, pre-reading articles, and discussion questions

Don't worry, it's free!

We're just interested in understanding how the community is using *Inclusion Impacts*, so we can keep the discussion going and make it better!



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