Tips for Facilitating Inclusive Meetings

BEFORE YOUR MEETING

- **Participants**: Invite only people who really need to be there; keep it to 8 or fewer if the goal is to make a decision or solve a problem, or up to 18 if your goal is to brainstorm. Ensure diversity.
- **Agenda**: Seek input for the agenda from participants and share it before the meeting. Plan the meeting to include as many voices as possible.
- **Accessibility**: Ask people if they have any accessibility needs, provide a private channel for them to express them, and address those needs.
- **Roles**: Assign key roles as needed and rotate them for different meetings: facilitator, note taker, time keeper, technology manager, accessibility manager, and support person.

DURING YOUR MEETING

- **Rules of Engagement**: Ask participants what they need to feel safe and fully contribute to the meeting; establish rules and means to hold everyone accountable to them.
- **Introductions**: Ask everyone to introduce themselves, giving people the option to state their gender pronouns if they are comfortable with it.
- **Check-In**: Consider beginning the meeting with a check-in for participants to briefly convey how they are feeling and why they are here (can be combined with introductions).
- **Set Expectations**: Review meeting goals and agenda and ask if adjustments are needed.
- **Equal Participation**: Include participant-generated content and have people bounce to each other rather than ping-pong to the facilitator and back – or have someone “take stack.”
- **Be Curious**: Ask questions, demonstrate active listening, allow participants to guide to the flow of conversation where possible.
- **Respect Differences**: Be open to a range of perspectives; establish multiple methods for people to contribute (written, spoken, individual conversations, etc.).
- **Take a Pause**: Take a moment to pause for reflection – silent thought, individual writing, or commenting on a shared document – and to give space for quieter voices to speak up.
- **Language**: Create a culture of appreciation with words like “acknowledge,” “thanks,” etc.
- **Small Groups**: Consider breaking into small groups to discuss and then report back.
- **Evaluation**: Use exit notes or other feedback mechanisms to continue to gain insight from participants about how you’re doing.

AFTER YOUR MEETING

- **Notes**: Follow up with notes for attendees and those who couldn’t make it, including agreements that were reached and any action items.

RESOURCES

- **Business World Model**: Neural Shifts: How to Run Inclusive Meetings? | Franklin Hu: How to Run Inclusive Meetings | Meeteo.com: 10 Facilitation Techniques That Will Make Your Meetings Sing
- **Restorative/Transformative Justice Model**: The Little Book of Circle Processes | Transformative Justice: A Brief Description | Restorative Justice in Communities
- **Discourse/Media**: Sara Ahmed, On Being Included, Chap 5 | Caroline Taiwo, White Supremacy in the Workplace