



THE FIVE TRAITS OF INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP

Developing Inclusive Field Leaders

Date: _____ Jobsite: _____ Discussion Leader: _____

Creating a Culture of CARE where all individuals feel a sense of inclusion and belonging requires strong leadership. Inclusive leaders do more than just manage people or a project site. They prioritize the well-being, growth, and development of all individuals working on their job site, recognizing that employees who feel valued and empowered drive business success by being more productive, safer, more innovative, and more likely to champion a culture of inclusion and belonging.

This toolbox talk examines the five essential traits of an inclusive leader and offers ideas on how these traits can be embodied by construction field leaders to create a Culture of CARE on every project site.

WHAT IS CULTURE OF CARE?

Our company has committed to the AGC Culture of CARE pledge, which states: "Our company believes that every individual has the right to a work environment that is free from harassment, hazing, and bullying. We will take action to ensure every employee at our company has the opportunity to reach their full potential by building a culture that is diverse, safe, welcoming, and inclusive." Through this pledge we have committed to Culture of CARE's four founding principles:

- Commit** to hire and pay based on skill and experience, regardless of age, disability status, ethnicity, gender identity, nationality, race, religion, sex, or sexual orientation.
- Attract** prospective employees, suppliers and subcontractors by creating inclusive workplaces that are free from harassment, hazing and bullying.
- Retain** high-performing employees by identifying and removing barriers to advancement.
- Empower** every individual to promote a culture of diversity and inclusion.

FIVE TRAITS OF INCLUSIVE LEADERS

Inclusive leadership is not a one-size-fits-all approach; it's about adapting to the unique needs of individuals and creating a culture where every voice matters. Inclusive leaders exhibit traits such as self-awareness, curiosity, courage, vulnerability, and empathy to create a work environment where everyone can thrive. They understand the value of diverse perspectives and actively work to create a Culture of CARE on their job sites.

Self-Awareness: Inclusive leaders have a personal narrative on why creating a Culture of CARE matters to them, using their own experiences and beliefs to make conscious choices that promote inclusion and belonging. They also have an understanding of their own biases, strengths, and areas for growth, and how those influence their leadership style and decisions.

Curiosity: Inclusive leaders are inherently curious. They seek to understand the diverse perspectives and experiences of their team members, actively engaging in conversations, asking questions, and

embracing a learning mindset to continuously expand their awareness of different perspectives and viewpoints.

Courage: Courage is a hallmark of inclusive leadership. These leaders have the strength to challenge the status quo and confront biases and discrimination head-on. They are unafraid to speak up for their colleagues, even in the face of resistance, and take calculated risks to build a Culture of CARE. By better understanding their team members, such leaders can build bridges between different personalities and create a more inclusive workplace.

Vulnerability: Inclusive leaders create an environment where vulnerability is not seen as a weakness but as a strength. They encourage their colleagues to support each other's mental health and well-being by being open about their own imperfections and struggles. In doing so, they can build trust among their team members and allow others to be themselves and share their unique perspectives.

Empathy: Inclusive leaders share in the feelings and experiences of others. They actively listen without judgment, validate emotions, and strive to create a workplace where every individual feels valued and heard.

INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP IN PRACTICE

Below are some scenarios highlighting examples of inclusive practices as a field or job site leader. Use the questions to the right to discuss opportunities for inclusive leadership practices on your job site to foster a Culture of CARE.

Scenario 1: Language and Communication Barriers

A construction crew has workers from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Communication barriers and varying cultural practices occasionally lead to misunderstandings, impacting productivity.

Inclusive Leadership Action: The site supervisor arranges language and communication training sessions, providing resources like multilingual signage and interpreters to ensure everyone can effectively communicate and understand safety instructions and project details. The site supervisor also arranges for cultural competency training (i.e. learning that aims to develop someone's knowledge and skills in communicating and working with people from different countries and cultures) so employees can learn about each other and have a better understanding of the cultural practices and traditions that drive others and their own behaviors.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What unique challenges or barriers to inclusion might be encountered here, and how can they be addressed effectively?
2. How can open and respectful communication be encouraged both among our teams and across our teams?
3. What strategies can be used to address conflicts related to cultural differences or other factors?
4. How can job site leaders create a safe and confidential environment for employees to report incidents of harassment, hazing, bullying, or discrimination?
5. What steps can be taken to ensure that safety protocols and practices are inclusive and considerate of all employees?

Scenario 2: Handling Harassment Complaints

An employee reports experiencing harassment and bullying based on their race/ethnicity by another trade partner on the job site. They approach their immediate supervisor seeking a resolution.

Inclusive Leadership Action: The supervisor takes the complaint seriously and initiates a conversation with the general contractor regarding the incident(s). The supervisor maintains contact with the GC until a thorough investigation is conducted while maintaining confidentiality throughout the process. In the meantime, the supervisor ensures a safe and supportive environment for the employee who made the complaint. Examples include removing offensive or inappropriate drawings, images, or items from the job site, ensuring the employee isn't working in the same area of a job site as the offender, or assigning other team members to work alongside the employee.

Scenario 3: Parental Support

A construction worker is a single parent and faces challenges in balancing work and childcare responsibilities.

Inclusive Leadership Action: The site supervisor collaborates with HR and the employee to develop a solution that provides the employee with the flexibility to accommodate their childcare needs, while also ensuring they can perform their job effectively.

Scenario 4: Mentorship and Sponsorship for Career Advancement

A new, young worker with a passion for construction is eager to learn and advance in their career.

Inclusive Leadership Action: The project manager assigns a seasoned construction professional as a mentor to the young worker, providing guidance, opportunities for skill development, and insights into career progression within the construction industry. The project manager sponsors the worker by bringing them along to relevant meetings, promotes the employee's sound ideas and supports implementation of those ideas, and recommends them for professional development opportunities and promotion.

