

NEA's Eleven Behaviors for Inclusion

- 1. Greet others authentically.** Employees should feel they are part of the organizational community from the moment they arrive.
- 2. Create a sense of safety for yourself and team members.** Creating safety does not mean creating a risk-averse environment. The goal is to create an environment in which people feel safe from harm and emotionally and professionally safe to share their perspectives, thoughts, and ideas—even if they differ from others.
- 3. Address misunderstandings and resolve disagreements.** When people with different backgrounds and perspectives fully contribute to an organization, the potential for conflicts and disagreements increases. The challenge is to not suppress those disagreements and differences but to engage and leverage them to provide breakthroughs in thinking and ideas.
- 4. Listen carefully to the person speaking until she or he feels understood.** Being understood does not mean being in agreement, but it is required for being included.
- 5. Communicate clearly, directly, honestly and respectfully.** Clear communication is essential for a team or organization to be successful. This includes giving honest and unambiguous feedback to people and assuring that information flows in all directions.
- 6. Mutually create and solidify the team's vision of its task and its relationship to the organization's mission.** Inclusive organizations create an environment in which all people add value. To do this, each individual and team must understand their role in contributing to the organization's success.
- 7. Hear all voices and allow for all options.** Part of creating a more inclusive environment is enabling all people in the organization to contribute. When making decisions or forming work teams, it is vital to ensure that a diverse group of voices is heard.
- 8. Ask others to share their thoughts and experiences and accept their frame of reference as true for them.** Communication styles vary among individuals. Realize that differences in communicating do not reflect on the value of the other person's information or ideas.
- 9. Speak up when people are being excluded.** When people are excluded, ideas are excluded, and the entire team suffers. The assumption that people will speak up if they have something to say is not always correct.
- 10. Make careful choices about group actions and schedules.** Be respectful of everyone's time, and make sure scheduling of meetings and tasks recognizes that each person's participation is critical to the success of the project.
- 11. Be Brave.** To create an inclusive work culture, each person must deal with the discomfort of change and take the risk of challenging norms. Be prepared to make mistakes and value them as learning opportunities for the team and the whole organization.