

**8 Tips for White Men Working/ Partnering Across Difference**

1. **Adopt a journey (rather than destination) mindset.** **Listen deeply. Practice more inquiry than advocacy.** Learn to ask questions of others rather than assume you understand. Allow yourself to first notice and then be confused. And then better learn to use any confusion to feed your curiosity to ask questions and listen more deeply.
2. **Seek out and validate other’s perspectives, especially when they differ from your own.** Remember that validating another’s perspective doesn’t invalidate/negate your own. Don’t operate in a zero sum mindset. Work hard to make sure another feels that you have heard them. Don’t just assume they heard you

Learn to get more comfortable being uncomfortable and even confused. Learn to use any of your discomfort or confusion in support of your learning journey.

1. **Don’t confuse observation with attribution.** When listening, recognize when you are just observing behavior and when you are attributing to another your own interpretation of their behavior. Notice when you use your assumptions to misinterpret another’s behavior and derive meaning from their words and/or interactions. Notice how your assumptions are often more about your life experiences, personal values, and beliefs rather than about the other person.
2. **Learn to find and better understand your mutual self-interest** in creating a more inclusive and equitable workplace (rather than just focusing on how you can help “those people with their issues”). Remember a “rising tide must float all boats.” Operating from a place of mutual self-interest helps you endure in partnerships over time.
3. **Don’t outsource your learning about inclusion & equity to those most adversely affected- women and BIPOC, LGBTQ+, etc.** Learn to not expect or look to others to support or confirm your support of DEI in the moment. Believe others always but particularly when their view and perspective differ from your own. Don’t confuse agreement with validation.
4. **Assume the impact of your words and actions on others is always different than what you intended**. Learn to ask others what they heard and how they were impacted. Give them space to not have to respond or even know what to say in response. Ask from a place of humility and genuine authenticity.

Don’t assume your intention is clear to anyone else other than yourself. Intervene with yourself when you start to defend or explain your positive intent. Let your colleague know that you hear and understand them especially when you don’t understand/share/agree with their perspective or point.

1. **Notice and interrupt inequitable patterns in systems and groups**. Observe how unconscious discriminatory patterns/practices/mindsets impact other’s engagement, communication and partnerships.
2. **Remember none of this inequity is *not your fault* *and* *you are responsible***. You did not create inequity and inequality. You are however responsible for better understanding how what has happened in the past impacts both your mindset and how you lead and partner with others today in achieving greater Inclusion and equity.