TREC TOGETHER RISING AS AN ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNITY

TREC DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION RESOURCE

Embedding Accountability & Sustaining DEI Initiatives

To create real change and promote equity, DEI initiatives must dig deeper than inclusion and focus on accountability. Effective DEI accountability systems can bring staff and leadership together around a common goal. It fosters transparency, which is crucial for building trust amongst teams. It can also uncover what is working, what is not working, and where to make course corrections, leading to better results in the future.

In practice, this looks like making clear agreements about behavioral expectations, providing adequate resources and skills, defining measures of success related to the desired goals, and implementing consequences for meeting or failing to meet these agreements. It means shifting from a hierarchical approach–where people from privileged identities determine solutions for others–to one of partnership and co-creation.

By dismantling exclusionary systems and building authentic bonds and shared power, tangible and lasting inclusion can emerge. This means empowering the voices of staff, uplifting their experiences, and committing to intentional actions that promote equity. Inclusion and belonging are only possible when there is also genuine accountability.

What is this resource?

This resource includes three sequential exercises to understand and create greater DEI accountability. The exercises can be facilitated by an Executive Director or DEI lead for the full staff or the DEI committee across multiple sessions. Exercises #1 and #2 can also be used as pre-work for Exercise #3.

Who is it for?

- Executive Directors
- DEI leaders, DEI committees

What will you gain from this resource?

- Define accountability
- Understand the difference between accountability and blame
- Examples of accountability systems
- Opportunities to start or improve your organization's DEI accountability processes

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License. | trec.org

Exercise 1: Individual Reflection on Accountability

Activity Time: 30 minutes

Instructions:

1. Individually reflect and respond to the reflection questions below.
    a. How would you define 'accountability'? What is the role of accountability in the workplace?
    b. How would you define 'responsibility'? What is the role of responsibility in the workplace?
    c. Think of a time when you were held accountable, or you held someone else accountable for their actions at work. What happened? What was the approach? What was the immediate impact? What was the long-term outcome?
    d. Think about a time when you were blamed for a misstep at work. What happened? What was the approach? What was the immediate impact? What was the long-term outcome?
2. **Pair + Share**: In groups of two or three, share responses to the reflection questions.
3. As a full group, discuss themes that emerged from the small group discussions.

Exercise 2: Holding Ourselves and Each Other Accountable

Activity Time: 90 minutes

Instructions:

1. **Watch TREC Webinar:** DEI: Holding Ourselves and Each Other Accountable **–** *60 min (0:00-57:22)*
2. Individually reflect on the following prompts:
    a. What key themes or ideas stood out to you?
    b. Was anything surprising or an “a-ha!” moment?
    c. Was there anything you were challenged by or wondered about?
    d. What are key takeaways or learnings from this presentation?
3. **Pair + Share**: In groups of two or three, share responses to the reflection questions.
4. As a full group, discuss themes that emerged from the small group discussions.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License. | trec.org

Exercise 3: Building Accountability in DEI

Activity Time: 60 minutes

Instructions:
The webinar from Exercise #2 outlines three key questions to consider if you're looking to improve or start incorporating accountability into your DEI processes. As a team, consider your organization's DEI strategy and complete the worksheet below.

How can our organization start or improve the integration of accountability processes in our DEI strategy?	
What is the scope? What area do you want to refine and work on first? Individual behaviors, team culture, or organizational systems and practices?	
What is your why? Better mission alignment, increased organizational capacity to serve communities, build a more inclusive team culture, etc.	
What are your indicators for success? The number of community partnerships or engagements, increased skills/knowledge, organizational culture shifts, etc.	

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License. | trec.org

Sources

- DEI: Holding Ourselves and Others Accountable – TREC Webinar

Additional Resources

Article

- Breaking Through Barriers to Racial Equity - Stanford Social Innovation Review
- Creating a Culture of Accountability - Avail Leadership
- Dreaming Accountability - Mia Mingus
- From Inclusion to Accountability - Jody Alyn
- How to Integrate DEI into Everyday Operations - The Bridgespan Group
- How the Best Bosses Interrupt Bias on Their Teams - Harvard Business Review
- Moving from Blame to Accountability - The Systems Thinker
- SMARTIE Goals - Management Center

TREC

- Getting Woke, Staying Woke: What Does it Really Mean? - TREC Webinar

Other

- Accountability in a Time of Justice - Vivette Jeffries-Logan, Michelle Johnson, Tema Okun
- Accountability and White Anti-Racist Organizing: Stories from Our Work - AWARE-LA
- Sample DEI Goals and Activities - Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory
- Ten Characteristics of an Inclusive Organization - mdanderson.org

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License. | trec.org