

Respect, diversity, and inclusion have always been a topic of discussion around HR tables, specifically, diversity and inclusion in the workplace. However, the social uprising of the 2020 has brought racism incidents across North America to the forefront of conversation. It has highlighted the lack of thought and attention businesses have given this injustice. People of the world - as a collective - are finally looking at each other and asking the questions: What are you doing about racism? How do you ensure you include people of all backgrounds in your business? How do business make people of all backgrounds feel safe and supported?

While policies and training alone are not enough to heal the deep festering wounds that exist, they are a necessary first step. They also need to go beyond just achieving legal requirements. They also need to avoid just reacting out of fear with empty blanket statements signaling virtue.

When asked the question: "What are you doing about diversity and inclusion?" The answer is, this is not a fast fix or a document that is passed around. Difficult conversations need to be cultivated and encouraged.

What are the simple behaviours that we each can take ourselves? What actions can we encourage our colleagues to take when working together, to make everyone feel welcome in our workplaces.

### **Here's a starting point for you:**

Listen with an open mind when someone with a different background or opinion speaks to you.

Ask questions. Don't interrupt.

Seek to understand and empathize.

Educate yourself. Watch movies and read books on discrimination, racism and injustice.

Express Support. Show others that you are there for them. Don't assume you know the best way to show up for someone instead ask: Let me know how I can help.

Speak Up. When you see or hear something that is disrespectful or discriminatory to another person (or just plain rude) say: Please don't say that around me or anywhere in this workplace. It's disrespectful and it's not tolerated here.

## **THIS IS JUST A STARTING POINT!**

The creation of greater conversation and a genuine desire to create a just and harmonious culture, not only in our workplaces but also in society is critical. We all must make an effort to begin to bridge the divide that social constructs have created. This work is not simple or fast and must be carried out with aligned beliefs, attitudes and actions.

For more support building a diverse and inclusive company, connect directly with BLANSLATE partners. Our [team](#) of experts are here to help

