

Workplace culture, intercultural practice, and trust

Everyday practices that let people speak, disagree, learn across difference, and repair harm, without shame, scoring, or hidden judgment.

Goals: Learning and development; Hiring and retention

Why it matters

DSD staff described dominant-culture defaults, limited psychological safety, and doubt that input changes decisions. Culture changes through observable practices with owners, not slogans.

Questions to begin with

- What would a team member see happening differently in a normal week?
- Who holds positional power here, and how does that shape who speaks?
- How do we distinguish unfamiliarity from intentional harm, and respond to each?
- When harm happens, who carries the repair, and how do we make sure it is not the person harmed?

Work you can take forward

Strengthen team climate and participation

Three to five observable practices with owners and a follow-up date, kept separate from any complaint or personnel matter.

Supervisors and managers

- **Team climate basics: participation, honest conversation, and fair opportunities** — program page [/library/lm-workplace-climate](#)
- **Team climate action plan template** — program page [/library/ja-climate-action-plan](#)
- **Psychological safety and repair: practices, not personality** — program page [/library/lm-psychological-safety-and-repair](#)

Ask: People on my team do not speak up in meetings. What practices could change that?

Work well across cultural difference

Cultural humility in practice: asking rather than assuming, noticing positional power, and using tools like the IDI as inputs rather than labels.

Service delivery and support planning · Supervisors and managers · Program and policy staff

- **Using community context without profiling** — program page /library/pn-intercultural-method
- **The IDI and other tools: inputs to practice, not the practice itself** — program page /library/pn-idi-and-tool-registry
- **Positional power: seeing it, naming it, and using it well** — program page /library/lm-power-and-positional-authority

Ask: What does cultural humility look like in a supervision conversation?

Understand race, power, identity, and structural barriers

Working knowledge of intersectionality, structural racism, and institutional power that connects to decisions rather than staying abstract.

Division and administration leadership · Supervisors and managers · Equity Directors and Specialists

- **Intersectionality: why one category at a time misses people** — program page /library/lm-intersectionality-foundations
- **Structural racism and institutional power: how neutral rules produce unequal results** — program page /library/lm-structural-racism-and-institutions

Ask: How does structural racism show up in a program rule that looks neutral on paper?

Tools and frameworks

- **Tool card: Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)** — A proprietary, licensed intercultural assessment administered by qualified administrators. Purpose: individual and group intercultural development. Permitted program use: describe, route to qualified administration, discuss developmental orientations in general terms. Not permitted: reproducing protected content, using results for selection, performance, access, or profiling.
- **Tool card: implicit-association resources** — Public research tools that demonstrate automatic associations. Useful for individual reflection about how bias can operate without awareness. Not a measure of a person's bias, not predictive of behavior on their own, and never a workplace assessment.

In DSD work

One DSD adds approved aggregate listening themes about culture and trust, DSD scenarios, and consultation for a real team situation.

- DSD supervisors and team leads
- Division learning and communication
- One DSD Team

Connected programs

- Support planning and case management
- Training, communication, and strategic communications

Situations to explore

- The same three people speak in every team meeting
- A comment in a meeting landed badly and nobody addressed it