



 Concern

Healthy &  
Resilient **You**

## Embracing Diversity

It might be uncomfortable,  
but it's worth it.

**“Variety’s the very spice  
of life. That gives it all  
its flavour.”**

(William Cowper 1731-1800)

We live in an increasingly diverse culture and a more global society. On the one hand, this is a great thing, as diversity in thought, perspective, culture, food, and experience can enrich our personal and work lives.

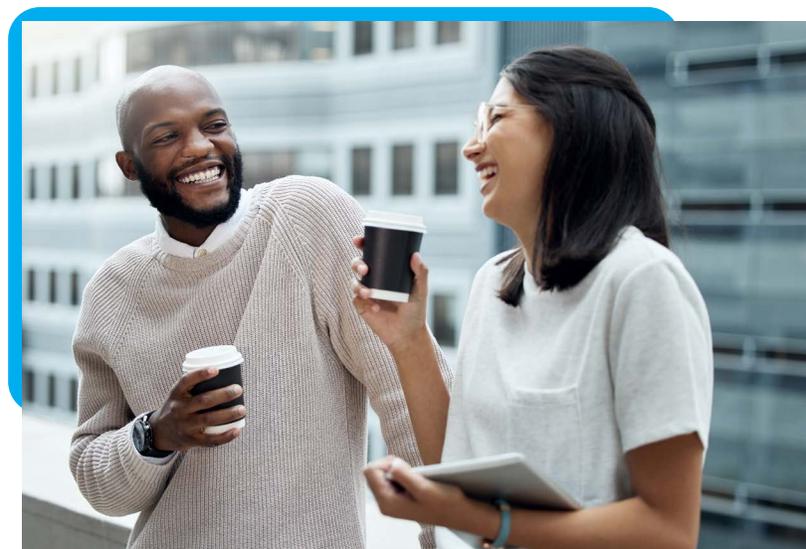
On the other hand, diversity can be challenging, because things that are new and unfamiliar can feel scary or make us uncomfortable. We may not know how to be around unfamiliar people or new situations. What if we say or do something wrong or insensitive? What if we look foolish or give offense?

### Feel the Discomfort and Do It Anyway

Studies show that this kind of discomfort and worry is such an influencing force in society that

it can cause us to close off and avoid building diverse relationships. That’s not a good thing.

- **At Work** – Being shut off or keeping up walls weakens team morale and productivity, lowers product and service quality, and creates an unpleasant or dysfunctional work environment.
- **At Home** – Fear of diversity can cause individuals and families to hunker down at home, effectively shutting themselves away from those around them. This isolation weakens social support networks, civic strength, and individual and community wellbeing.



But if we change our perspective and see our broadening world as exciting instead of frightening, we can take a mindful and brave approach toward embracing diversity to reap powerful benefits.

- **At Work** – Engaged, diverse teams are proven to be stronger and more creative, building better products and services, a more engaging and inviting work environment, and greater job satisfaction.
- **At Home** – Reaching out to our neighbors with curiosity and empathy builds lasting connections that improve social safety nets and community wellbeing. It's also proven to supercharge civic engagement, which is essential for strong, safe, and flourishing neighborhoods.

**Here's some tasty food for thought:**  
[Embracing diversity might even make us smarter.](#)

## Where to Start

Now that we've considered the why of stepping out of our comfort zone to embrace diversity, here are some tips for the how.

**Get into a Growth Mindset** – Openly welcome change and look at navigating diversity as the amazing opportunity it is. [Click here](#) for growth mindset science and strategies.

**Get Comfortable with Discomfort** – You just have to do it. Talk to new people and [listen actively](#).

Enter these conversations with humility and don't take yourself too seriously.

**Take Small Steps** – Try a new food, TV show, music, play, or religious service outside your norm. Do some research first for background, perspective, and insights into social expectations.

**Challenge Beliefs** – Learn from compassion. Go slow and be thoughtful. If discomfort, fear, or automatic thoughts come up, take a moment to consider where they come from and if they are informed by fact or assumption.

**Read More** – Find authors who write engaging, enjoyable stories from different perspectives and cultures. Introduce your kids to a variety of age-appropriate, diverse literature and learn along with them.

**Burst Your Bubble** – Be mindful with web surfing, social media and media streaming, remembering that most of what's served up to us online is specifically designed to keep us in our bubble. Look for sources that include multiple perspectives, avoid generalizations and stereotypes, and focus on facts over fear.

**Be a Positive Force** – Smile and be friendly. [Learn empathy](#). Start a new conversation with a neighbor or co-worker who doesn't look like you. Volunteer for a diverse organization or one focused on helping marginalized communities.

Yes, it's challenging to work through discomfort and embrace the unfamiliar, but like other worthwhile life skills and positive habits, it'll get easier with practice. Remember, the biggest challenges often lead to the best rewards.

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If you find your level of stress is impacting your well-being, you can contact us for additional help and support.

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