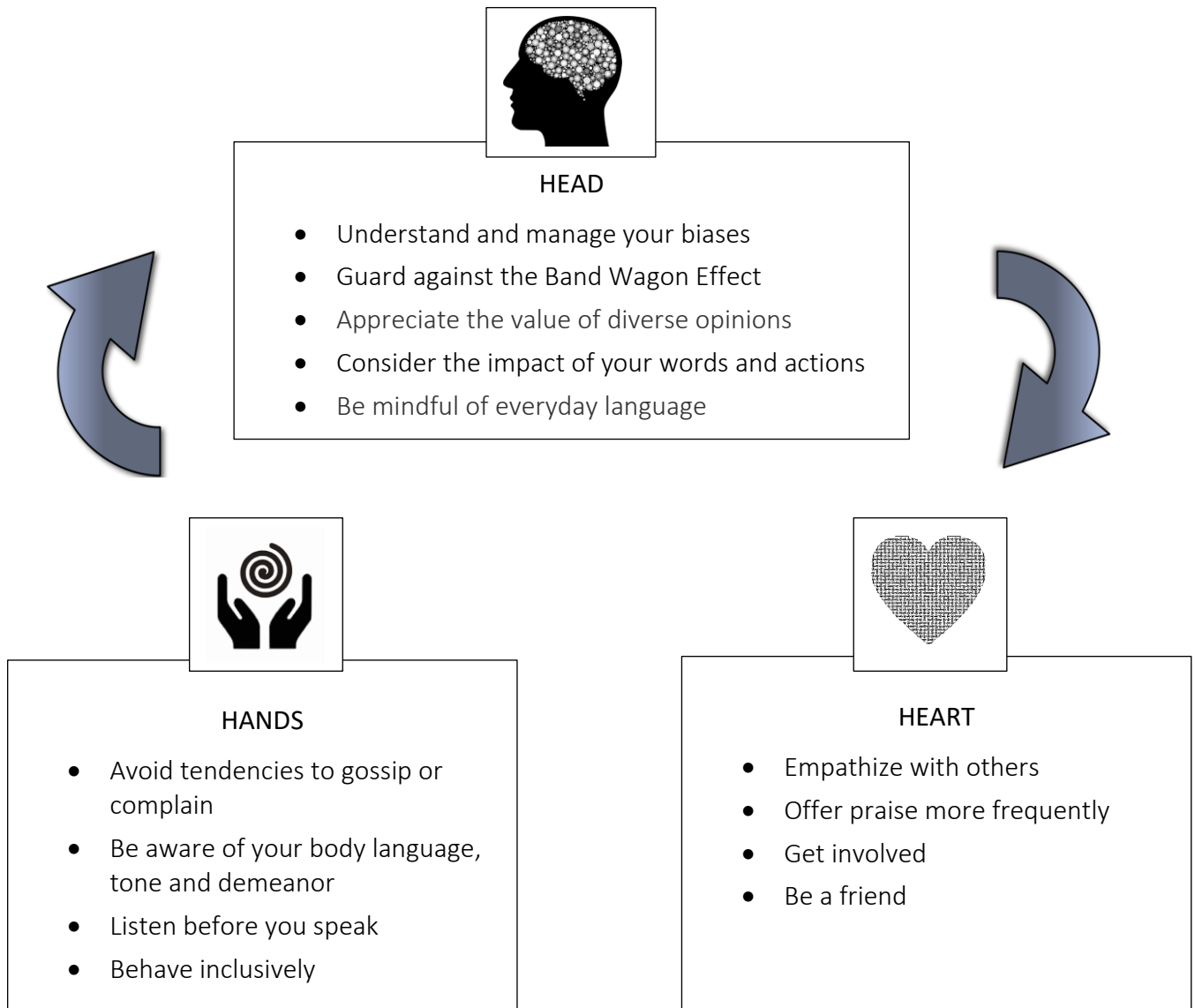


Creating a Culture of Respect
Tip Sheet

VisionSpring
Inclusion Learning Loop

Tips for Creating a Culture of Respect

Respect is a prerequisite for a healthy, inclusive and professional workplace where all employees feel appreciated, valued and safe. We can help create a culture of respect by thinking inclusively with our heads, supporting respect and inclusion with our hearts, and acting respectfully with our hands.



Head

- **Understand and manage your biases** - As individuals, we have the opportunity and the responsibility to be more self-aware, to acknowledge our biases and to manage our biases before they impact our decisions and behavior.
- **Guard against the Band Wagon Effect** - The band wagon effect is the tendency to go with the flow and allow the opinion of the crowd to dictate our own opinions and impact our decisions. Our individual quest for connection can actually detract from an overall culture of respect and inclusion – it’s human nature to choose to exclude someone else rather than risk being alienated or excluded ourselves. We need to make a conscious effort to change these patterns so we can create workplaces where everyone feels accepted, connected and happy.
- **Appreciate the value of diverse opinions** - People feel valued and heard when their ideas are considered, and they’re treated with respect. Be open to ideas that are different than your own, ask questions and engage in respectful debate, and leave room for growth and compromise.
- **Consider the impact of your words and actions** - An important part of building an inclusive and respectful culture is understanding how our words and actions may be interpreted. Often the things we communicate or the way we communicate can have unintentional impact. Take the time to think about your actions and how they may impact all your coworkers and make adjustments if necessary.
- **Be mindful of everyday language** – Make an effort to understand and be aware of how common, seemingly harmless word and phrases can unintentionally offend or hurt others. For example, referring to a female coworker as honey or dear may seem like a term of endearment but can be interpreted as demeaning or misogynistic. Other examples may include phrases like “that’s so gay”, “don’t be retarded” or “I’m such a basket case.” Just because you “didn’t mean anything by it” doesn’t make it any less offensive.

Heart

- **Empathize with others** - Empathy is the ability to understand and support others with compassion and kindness. Being able to relate to the thoughts, emotions, or experiences of others enables us to better understand their frame of mind, relate to them in a meaningful way.
- **Offer praise more frequently** - People feel valued and tend to respond positively when they are recognized as individuals and praised for their work. Simple things like complimenting someone on a job well-done or thanking them for their help and support can go a long way in cultivating a culture of respect.
- **Get involved** – When you witness disrespectful behavior step up and get involved in a way that feels safe and respectful. See our RIB Model in the next section for more concrete tips.
- **Be a friend** - Feeling like we belong is linked to our ability to form genuine, trusting relationships at work. Be aware if anyone is in need of a friend and take the time to connect with people in a genuine, present manner.

Hands

- **Avoid tendencies to become caught up in gossip**, complaining, or other forms of negativity in day-to-day interactions.
- **Be aware of your body language, tone and demeanor** – It is not only what you say but how you say it. Body language and social cues like eye rolling, huffing or appearing disinterested can have a huge impact on whether or not a person feels included and respected.
- **Listen before you speak** - Listen to what others have to say before expressing your own viewpoint. Avoid speaking over or interrupting another person. And resist the urge to focus on what you are going to say next when others are talking. Truly listen to what they are saying.
- **Behave inclusively** – The number one way to support a culture of respect and inclusion is to role model respectful behavior.