



INCLUSIVE
LEADERS GROUP



5 THINGS YOU CAN DO TO INTERRUPT RACIAL BIAS IN THE WAKE OF COVID-19

Practicing Cultural Competence

1

Offer Understanding:

To those who need kindness and support because they're experiencing racism — and in particular, Chinese people and those from other Asian communities. Ask, "How can I help you during these times?" and practice [mindfulness for inclusion and belonging](#).

2

Recognize Your Own Biases:

You can address these discrimination issues by increasing your awareness of your [unconscious biases](#), and by developing plans that make the most of the talents and abilities of others.

3

Assess and Gain Understanding:

By executing an organizational [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion or Inclusive Leadership Assessment](#) — to discover hidden cognitive biases which may unknowingly distort your objective evaluation and treatment of others based upon race, gender, religion, culture, etc.

4

Cultivate Cross-Group Friendships:

Why does having cross-race friendships have such a strong impact on bias? Research indicates that when you develop a cross-race friendship, you incorporate your friend's struggles, motivations, and thoughts into your own self-concept—not in a way that's confusing, but more expansive. For example, you start to feel what they feel and empathize with them, and that experience of "inclusion of the other in the self" [disrupts bias](#) against that person's social group.

5

Develop Inclusive Leadership Competencies:

These are the skills, knowledge and behaviors that distinguish [inclusive leaders](#) from others. These people make a visible commitment and articulate authentic commitment to diversity, challenge the status quo, hold others accountable and make diversity and inclusion a personal priority.



Feeling Stressed During the Covid-19 Pandemic?

By Susan H. May, PhD, Strategic Advisor and Licensed Clinical Psychologist, Inclusive Leaders Group

We do important work here at Inclusive Leaders Group, often under the pressure of time constraints or urgent client situations. Whether in the field or working from home, we are all the kind of people who are conscientious, dedicated, and responsible, or we wouldn't have chosen careers in this particular organization. Because we care so much, we often feel stressed, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Here are some tips for reducing your stress in 5 minutes or less, and they actually work!

1

Deep Breathing:

Sit up straight and close your eyes. Slowly inhale through your nose and envision the air you are breathing in as crystal clear and cool. As you slowly exhale, imagine the air going out as dark and hot. Slowly repeat the process until all of the dark air has left your body and you are filled with only cool, crystal clear air. Open your eyes and make a fresh start on the task at hand.

2

Be Present:

Focus only on the single task before you at that very moment. Remove the constant background thoughts from your mind: the 50 other tasks you have to do at work that day, what you are going to fix for dinner, whether you remembered to let the dog out before you left for work, the oil change light that's been on in your car for weeks, and so on. Focus your full attention on the task at hand and put everything else out of your mind. You can only tackle one thing at a time, so there is no sense in focusing on more than that one thing at a time. You will instantly feel less overwhelmed.





3

Tune in to Your Body:

Close your eyes and imagine all the pores on your body as tightly closed, holding the pressure of stress inside with no means of escape. Now imagine that your pores are slowly opening up, releasing the interior stress, slowly at first but then faster as your pores fully open until, finally, all your stress is released, and you are perfectly balanced inside and outside. Take a few moments to experience this balance before opening your eyes and returning to your work.

4

Listen to Your Thoughts:

Pay attention to what you're saying to yourself. Self-talk like "I'll never get all this done," "Nobody appreciates how hard I work," or "This day will never end" only serves to increase stress and anxiety, and most importantly, they are rarely true and serve no useful purpose. Change your self-talk to "I don't know how I'll get all this done, but I always do," "My hard work pays off and my contributions matter," or "I'm looking forward to getting home and relaxing tonight." Often, many of our thoughts are invisible to us, but have a tremendous effect on our stress level, for good or bad. Make your thoughts work for you, not against you.

Get in the habit of being aware of your stress level and make efforts to reduce it whenever you can. It takes practice, but the benefits are worth the effort!

Empower your leaders by learning how to define, normalize and navigate mental health within a diversity, equity, and inclusion strategy with our new virtual workshop; [Mental Health: The Next Diversity and Inclusion Initiative](#).