



HPT: Diversity in Teams



This module will focus on the importance of understanding, valuing, and supporting dimensions of diversity and inclusivity in high-performance teams, including the importance of empathy, common goals, and communication. Learners will explore strategies to recognize and leverage the diversity within high-performance teams, in addition to strategies to foster inclusivity; throughout, the importance of empathy and belongingness will be emphasized.

- ≡ **Module Objectives**

- ≡ **What are Diversity and Inclusion?**

- ≡ **Empathy as the Foundation of Inclusivity**

- ≡ **Diversity in Teams**

- ≡ **The Importance of Belonging**

- ≡ **Anchoring Diversity**

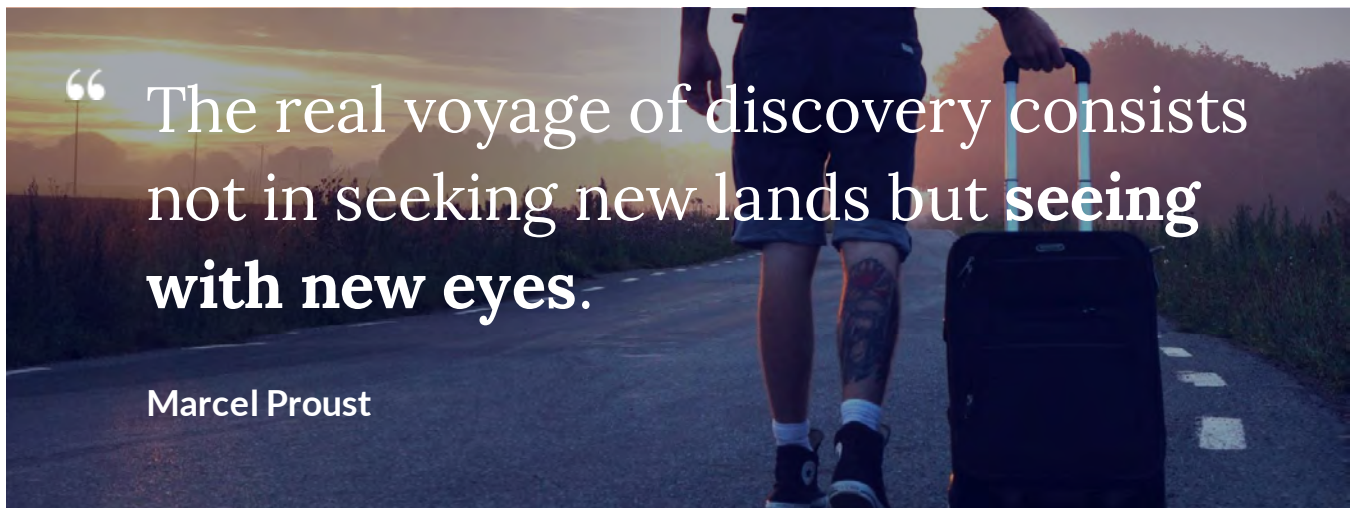
- ≡ **Diversity and Lifelong Learning**

☰ Scenario

☰ Resources


QUESTION BANKS

Module Objectives



By the end of this module, you will be equipped with the knowledge to:

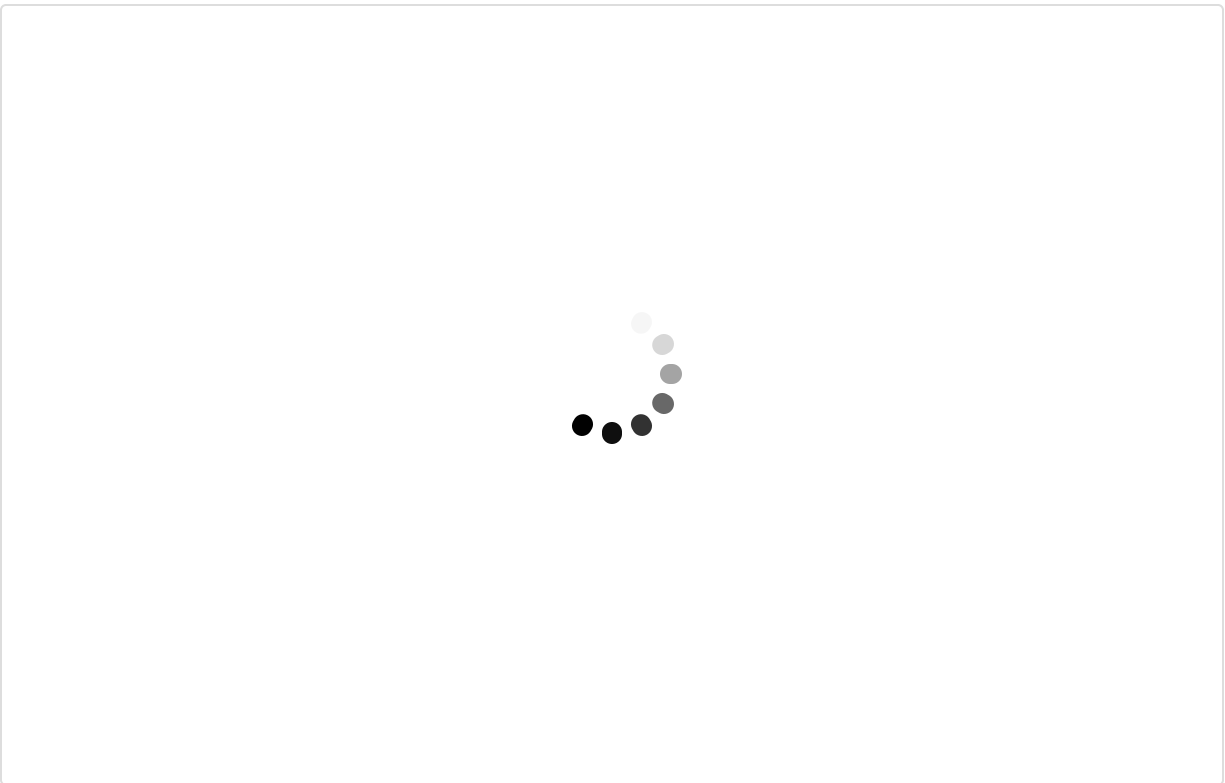
- 1 Identify and describe various dimensions of diversity
 - 2 Discuss the framework of diversity as it relates to your contribution to a team (individual level) and the overall team's performance (collective level)
 - 3 Identify and describe foundational factors for fostering inclusivity in HPT
 - 4 Evaluate and apply strategies to recognize and leverage diversity, and foster inclusivity, in HPT
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 Please note that this module is equipped with a number of narrated slides that will guide your learning, so be sure to listen to these clips (or read the associated closed captions) for an optimal learning experience.

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What are Diversity and Inclusion?

Introduction



Having trouble accessing the video or interactive transcript? Watch online at this link:
<https://stream.queensu.ca/Watch/Jy78RbWx>

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: *The Danger of a Single Story*



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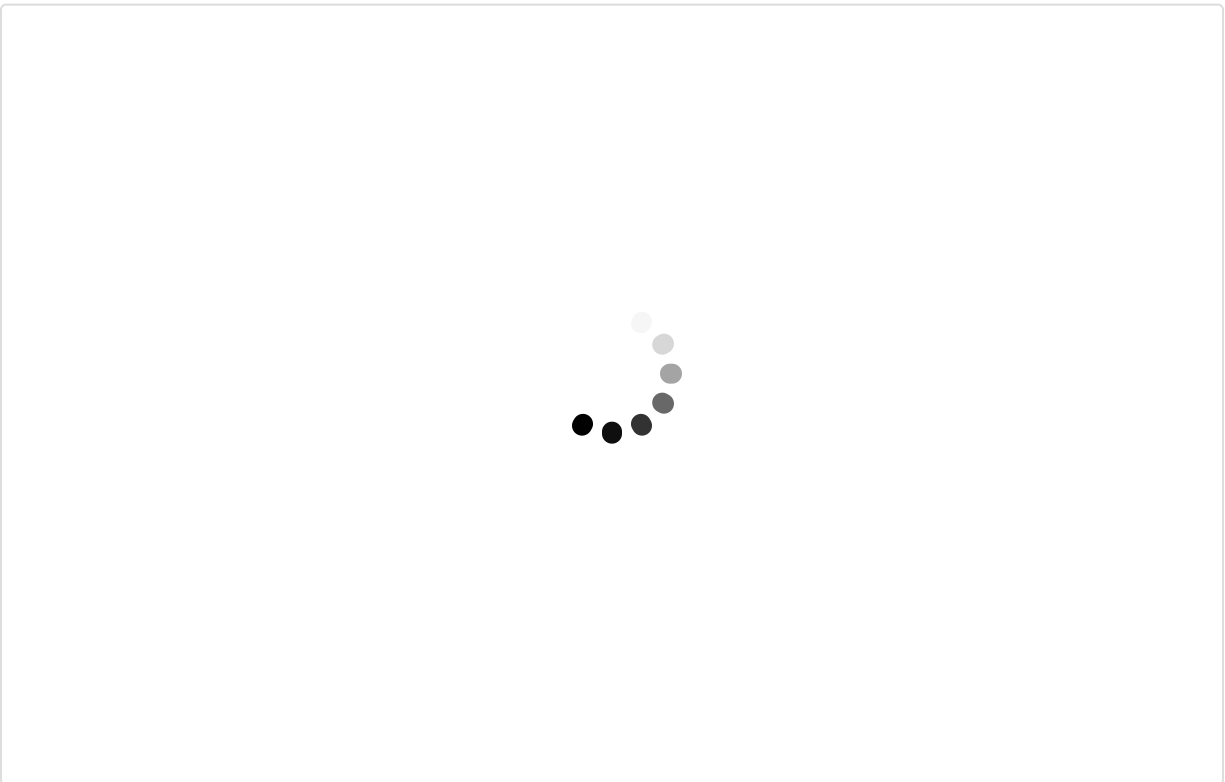
One of the key lessons from Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's talk is the danger of relying on a single story or narrative, which can manifest itself in how you perceive and relate to others more broadly in your life, and in your team in particular. Sometimes the context for a "single story" will be one of dominant culture versus minority culture, keeping in mind that diverse characteristics can be both seen and unseen, and can shape perspectives and understanding. In the case of Nigeria, where Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie was born, however, there are by some accounts several hundred languages and ethnic groups (over 400 in some estimates), with three major groups: Hausa Fulani (29.5%), Yoruba (20.3%), and Igbo (16.6%) (Simpson, 2008; percentages post-colonial after Badru, 1998).

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's talk is rich in such perspectives, spanning differences in ethnicity and language, socio-economic status and educational attainment, and more, in the country of her birth (Nigeria) and as a student in America, and travels beyond. Reading the stories, and voices, of a diverse range of authors can be a very effective way of developing understanding, empathy, and perspective. For example, Ngozi Adichie's novel "Americanah" provides a rich narrative of the stories - journeys - of fictional characters emigrating from Nigeria to the US and Britain to study and to work, and the intersections with many facets in the societies and cultures of these countries that the main characters encounter. Through immersing yourself in stories - fictional or lived experiences - and by observing and developing empathy in the daily journeys of your lives as you encounter others, you can avoid reliance on a single story:

“ to possess other eyes, to see the universe through the eyes of another, of a hundred others...

Proust, *La Prisonnière*

What is Diversity?



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Diversity is "the richness of human difference; encompasses socioeconomic

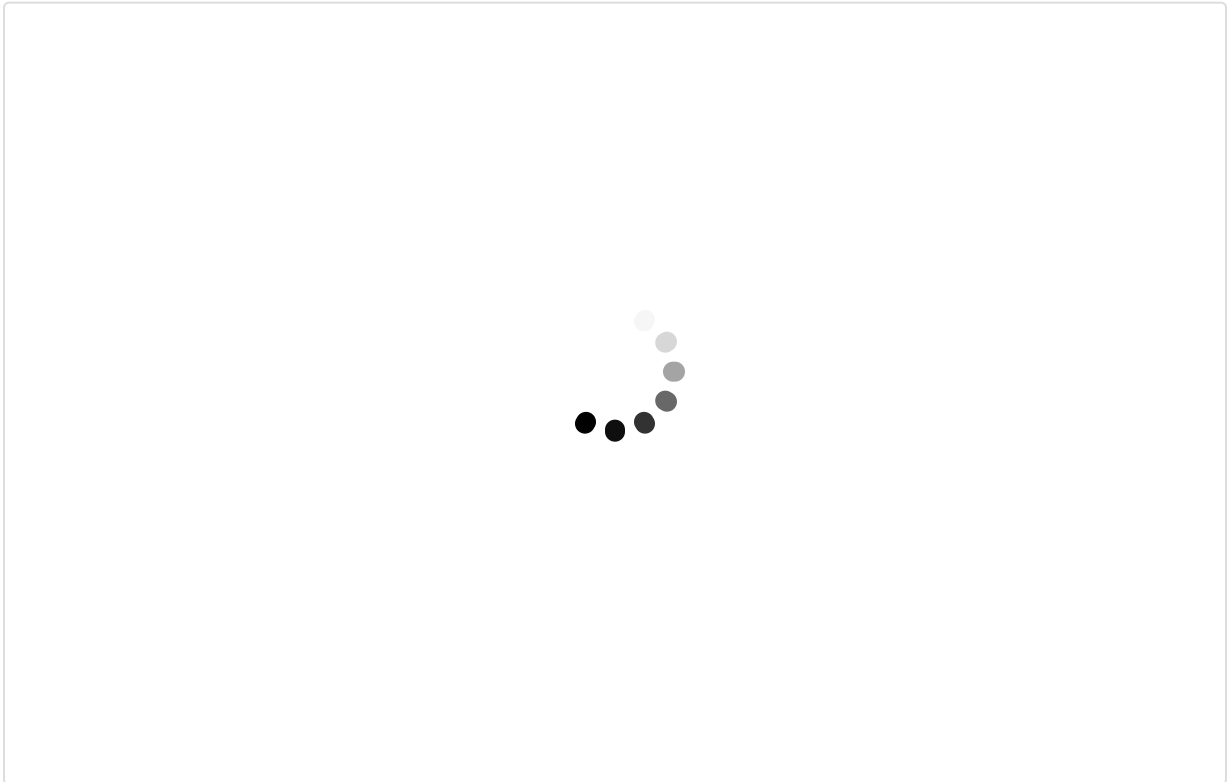
status, race, ethnicity, language, nationality, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, geography, disability, age and individual aspects such as personality, learning styles and life experiences."

- Association of American Medical Colleges, 2011



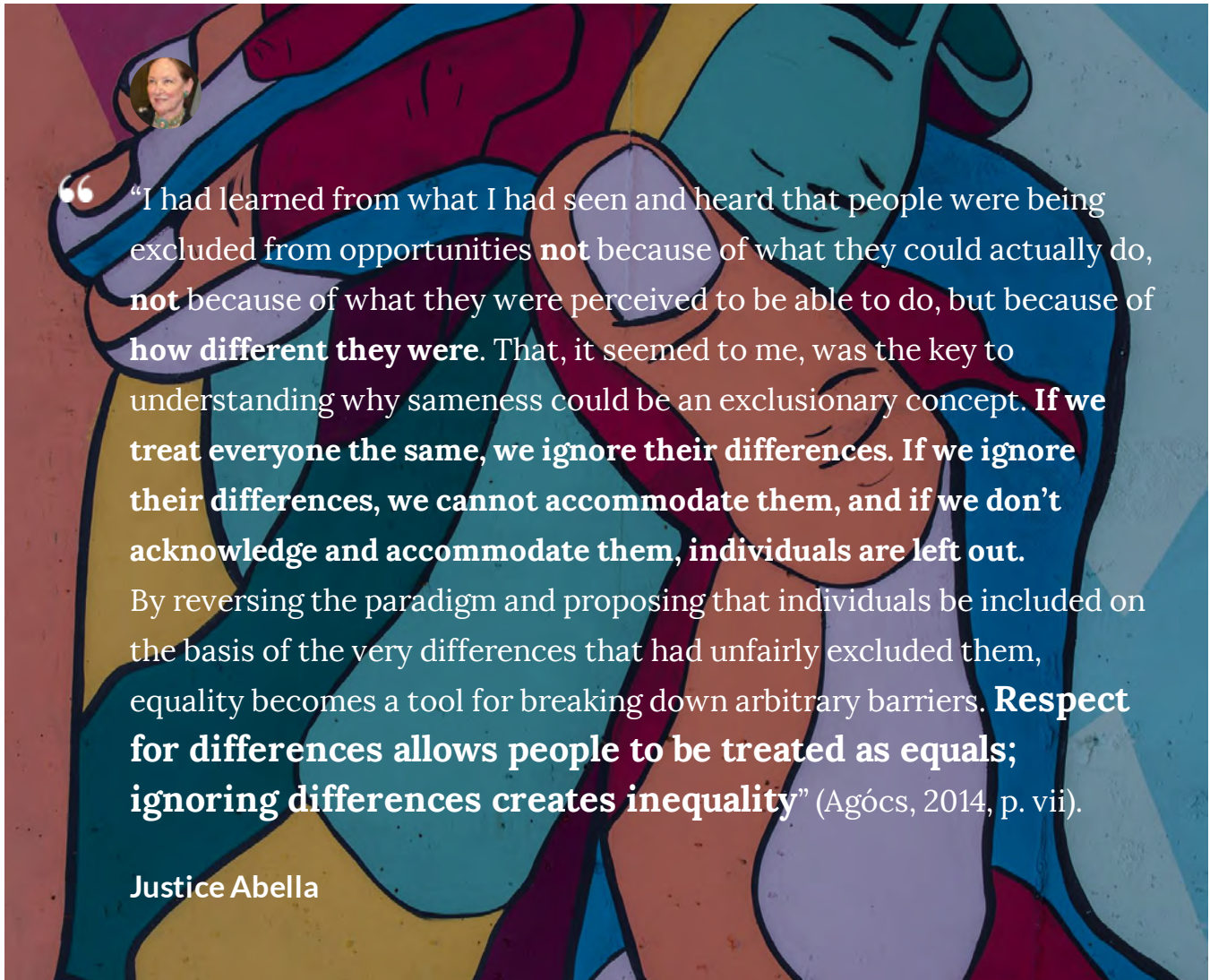
A busy city scene; Cities are some of the most diverse places on Earth.

The Dimensions of Diversity



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So now that we understand the many dimensions in which we can be distinctive, and the differences that we can all bring to the functioning of high-performance teams, how does diversity relate to inclusivity?




Justice Abella is speaking, then, about the direct link between **diversity** and **inclusivity**...

What is inclusivity?



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Inclusion is “a core element for successfully achieving and sustaining diversity. It refers to active, intentional and ongoing engagement with diversity and is achieved through creating an institutional culture that fosters belonging, respect and value for all.”

- Association of American Medical Colleges, 2011

Reflection Question: As highlighted in this section, every person's journey in life is unique, and we each have a story to tell. What strengths do you bring to the team, given your life story? What can you do to ensure that your teammates stories are each heard and valued?

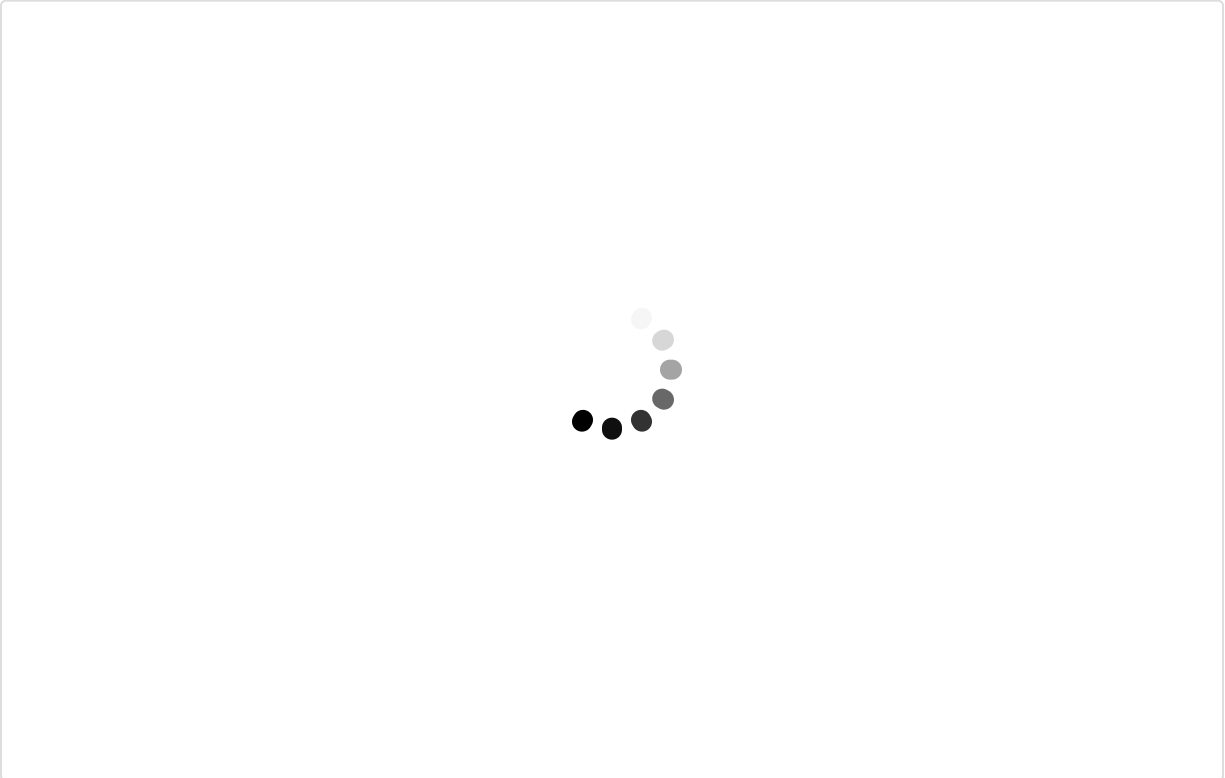


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Empathy as the Foundation of Inclusivity

The Importance of Empathy and Curiosity

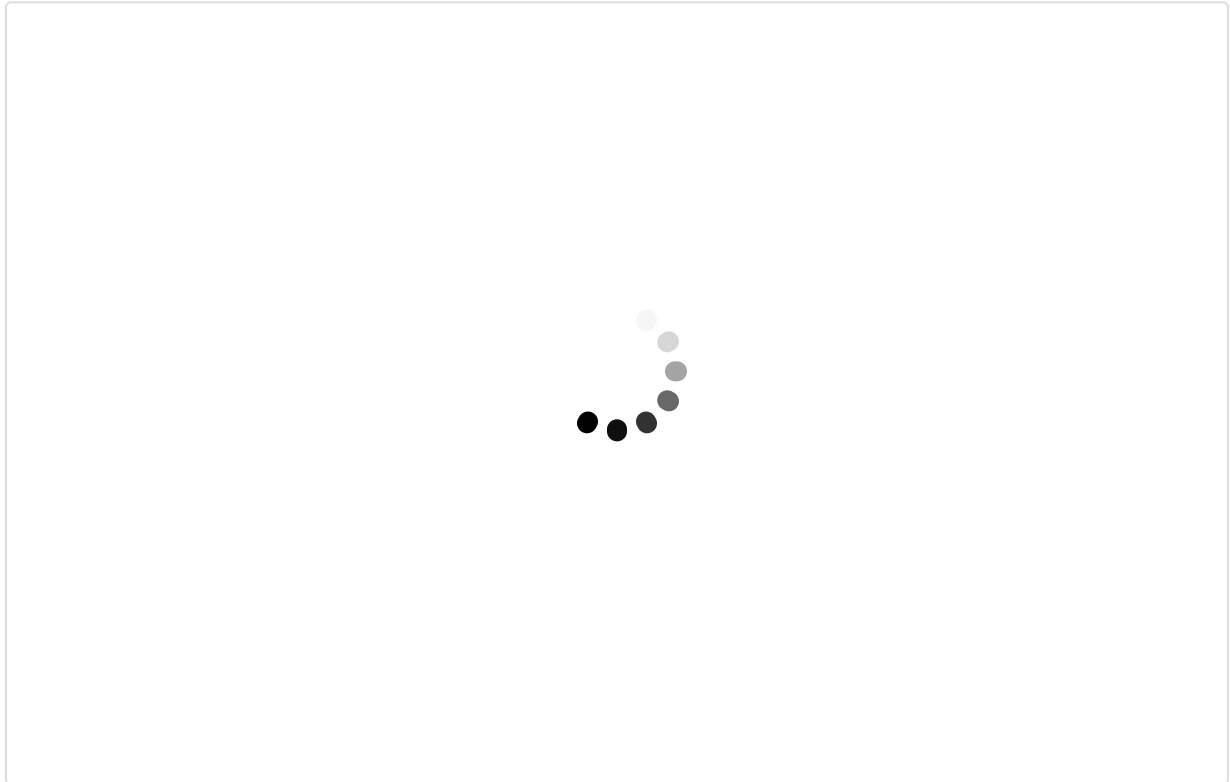


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Flip The Script

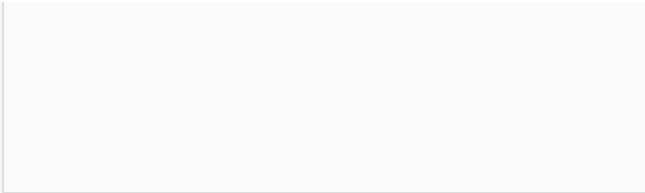


Source: [Catalyst.org](https://catalyst.org)

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Cognitive Empathy

Being able to see and understand another person's thoughts, emotions, and perspectives.



Emotional Empathy

Sharing or showing similarity to another person's emotional state.

Behavioural Empathy

Actions that demonstrate a sense of empathy for others, such as





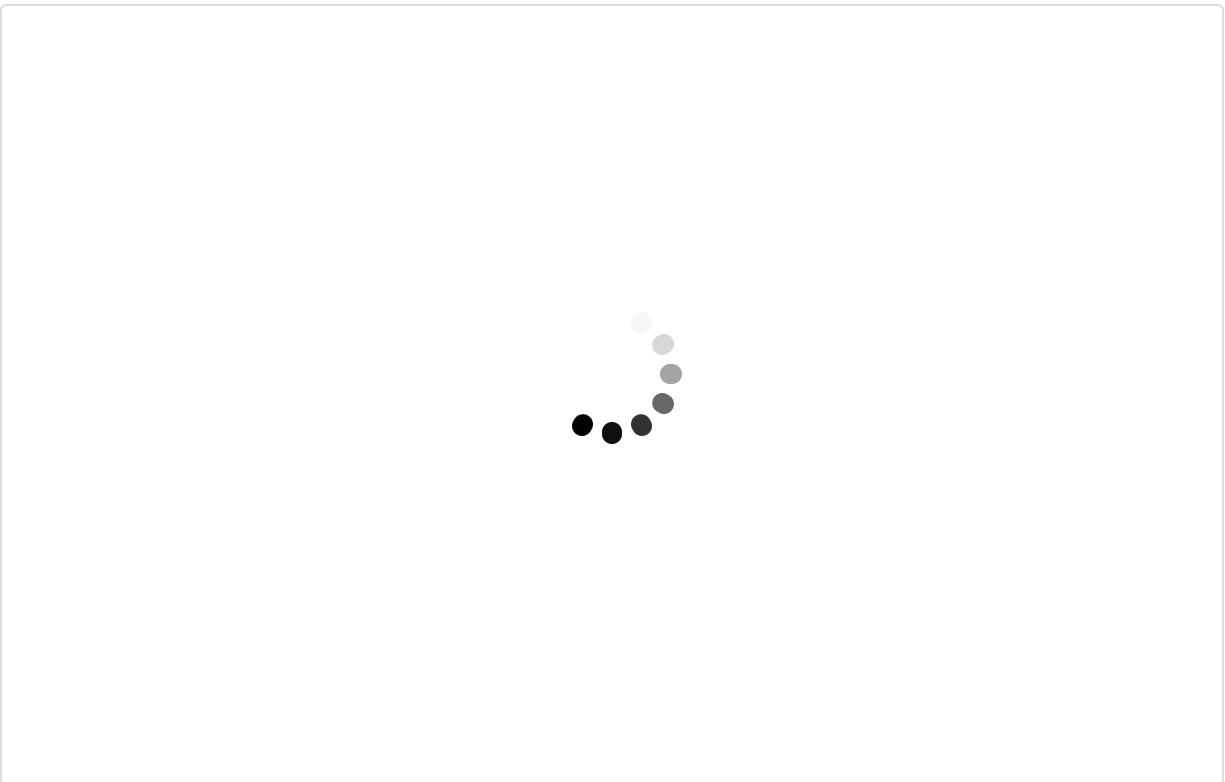
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Diversity in Teams

Teams Bring a *Co-Mingling* of Individual Journeys



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The "Systems" of Teams



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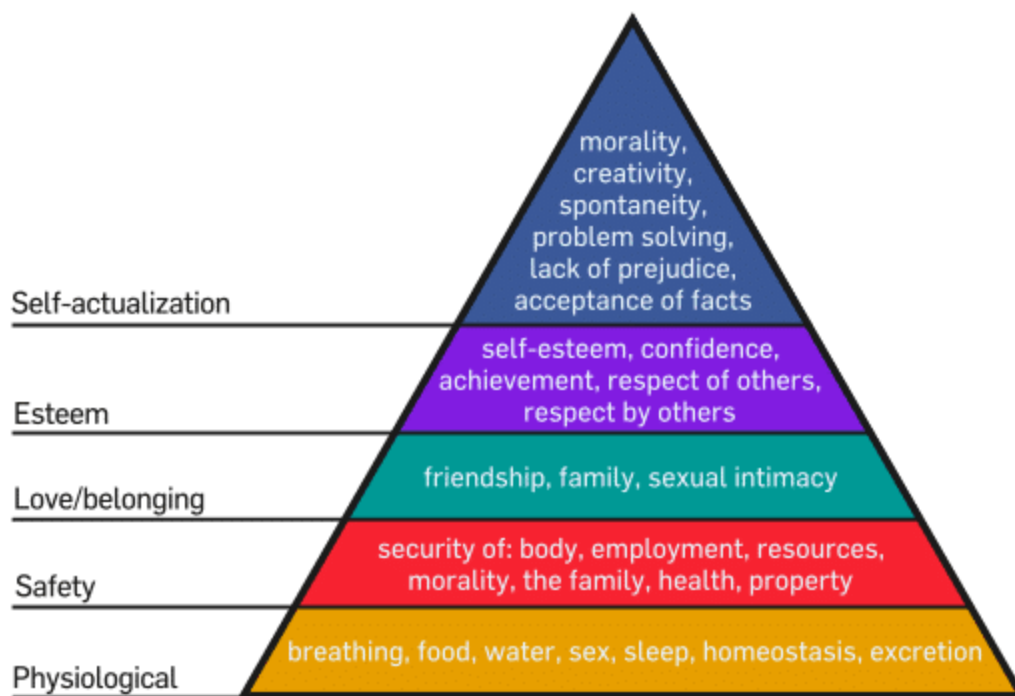
Reflection Question: More diverse teams tend to be more innovative. Reflecting on your own team(s), how might you better leverage the diversity within your team to be more innovative within your sector?

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The Importance of Belonging

Belongingness as a Fundamental Need

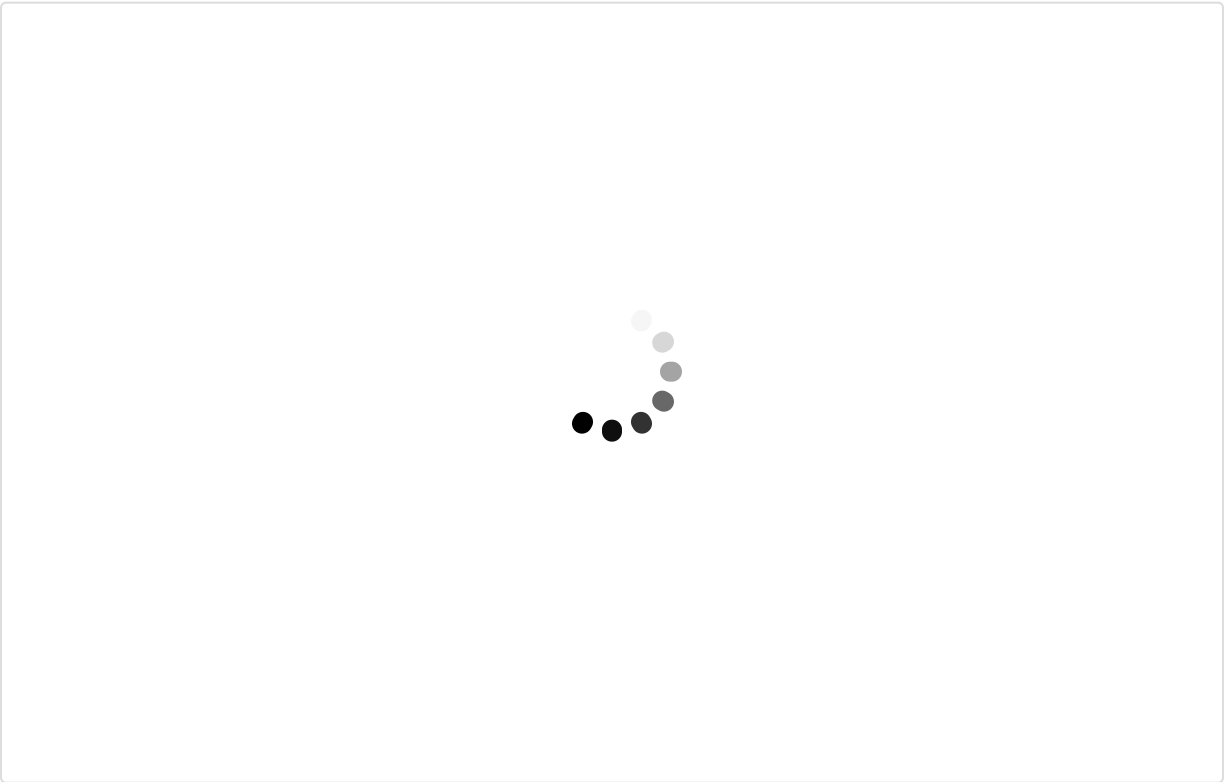
According to Maslow (1943), and then further (and more strongly) reiterated by Baumeister and Leary (1995), belongingness is fundamental to our survival and well-being. There is abundant evidence that people quickly and easily form social attachments, and resist breaking close social bonds. Belongingness strongly impacts how we feel, and how we think. In fact, a lack of supportive and responsive social relationships is associated with a number of negative consequences to our health, adjustment, and well-being.




Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.



Image credit: Wikimedia Commons

Belongingness + Uniqueness = Inclusion



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 Check out the Infographic below created by [Catalyst.org](https://catalyst.org) to learn more about how inclusivity impacts team performance.

 **Catalyst_Inclusion_Matters.pdf** 1.6 MB 



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Anchoring Diversity



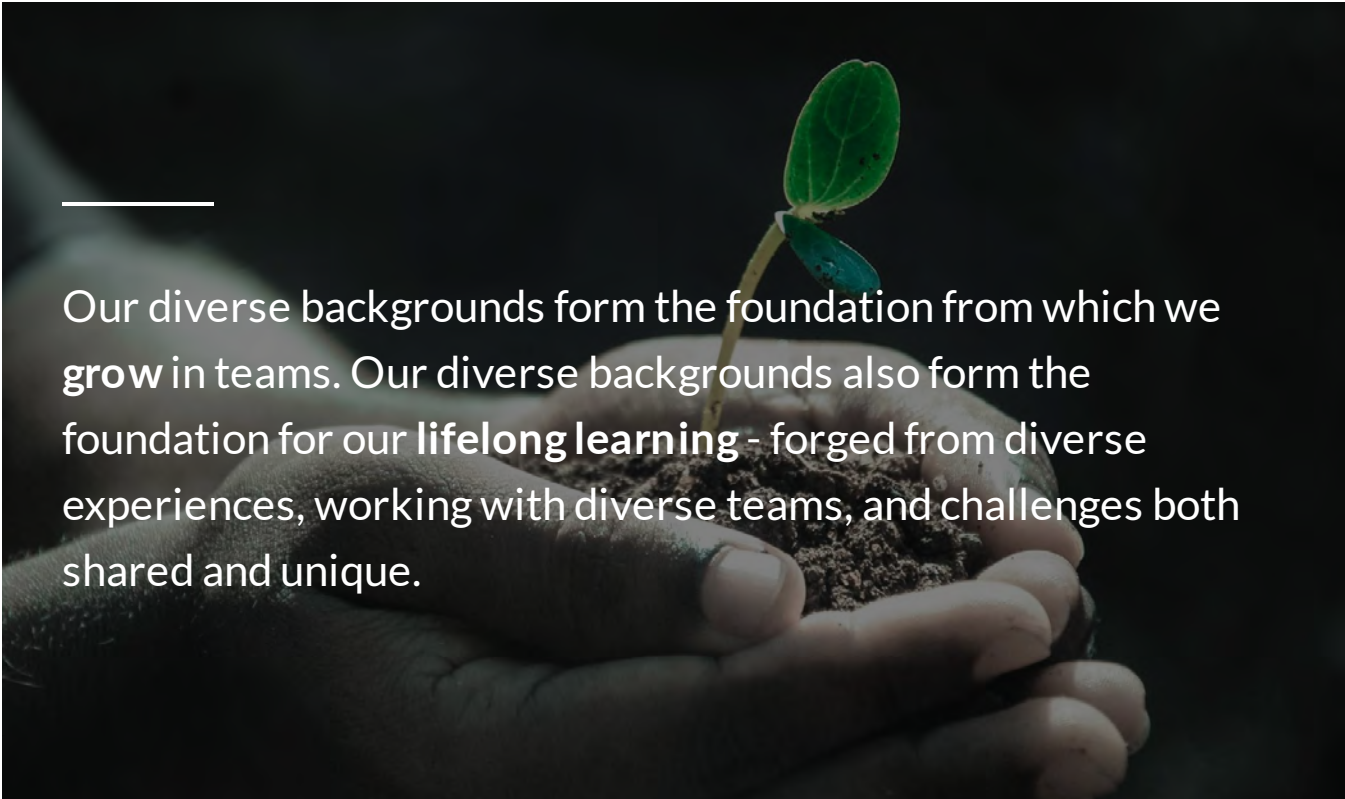


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Reflection Question: Can you identify your team(s)' shared superordinate goals? How might you improve ways to ensure that everyone's unique traits and strengths can help the team achieve those goals?

CONTINUE

Diversity and Lifelong Learning



Our diverse backgrounds form the foundation from which we grow in teams. Our diverse backgrounds also form the foundation for our **lifelong learning** - forged from diverse experiences, working with diverse teams, and challenges both shared and unique.

Some of the lessons from this module contribute to a larger, lifelong journey. Sometimes this learning will involve missteps, both because that is simply how human beings learn, and because of the difficult nature of the content of the course. Sometimes we might be sensitive to one aspect of an issue without being fully cognizant of all its implications, nuances, and layers. That's where this module sheds some light. This module provides you with some of the knowledge and ideas to understand topics that can be challenging and sensitive - essential tools when working in a high-performance team setting where the stakes may be much higher.



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Creating Safe Brave Spaces

Within dominant society in Canada, there has been a tendency to avoid difficult conversations about certain subjects. However, we cannot engage in successful EDI work without “surfacing undiscussables” or the things that contribute to exclusions, marginalization, and violence—including topics such as racism, sexism, ableism, etc (Ramsey & Latting, 2005).

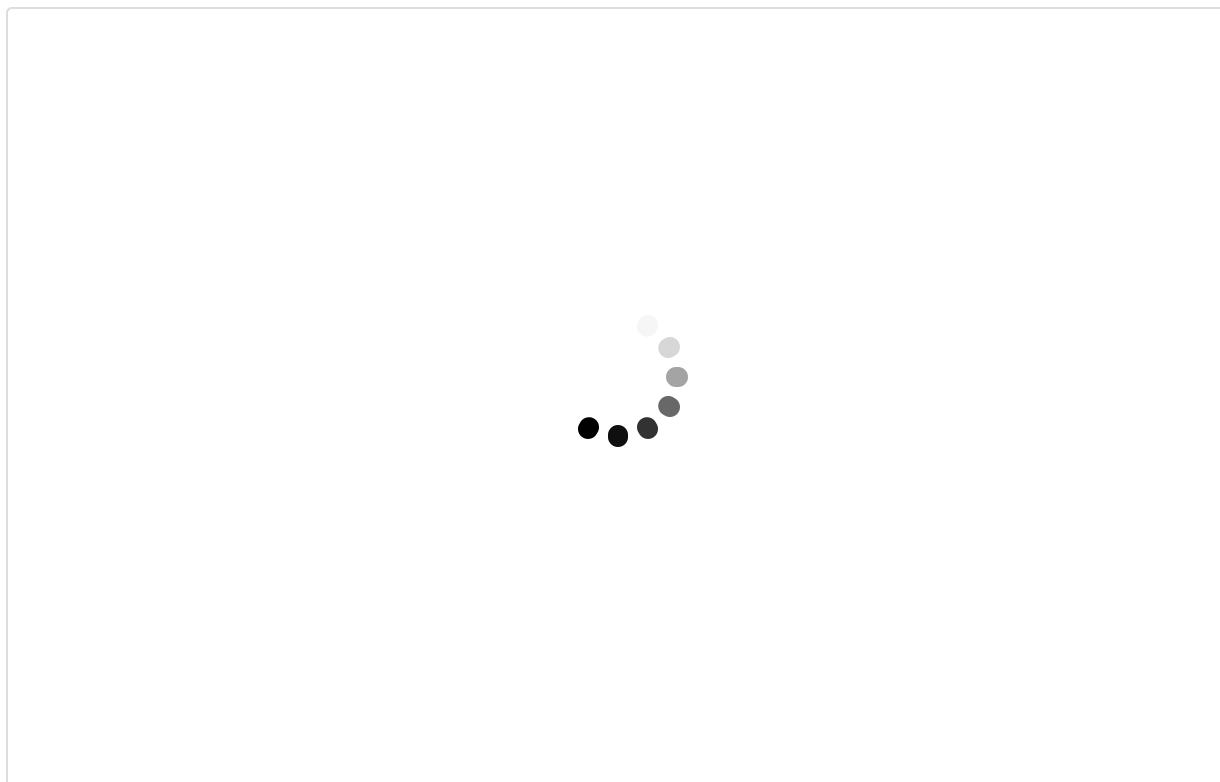
“Safe spaces” have been conceptualized as places where people can share their thoughts about these issues in an honest way without fear of being judged or causing offence. On our journey to openly and productively discuss the “undiscussables” in our society, we may make mistakes, as we lack the skill and practice to do so. These mistakes can reveal gaps in our knowledge and biases that we unknowingly hold, and can be a source of embarrassment or shame. Addressing these is important work, and it will be important to remember that spaces that are “safe” for sharing thoughts can expose those at greatest risk to real harm in conversations about equity, diversity and

inclusion, namely those who have historically experienced exclusions and marginalization (see, for example, Leonardo & Porter, 2010, p. 139).

Recently, the term “brave spaces” is surfacing to reflect spaces that recognizing the necessary vulnerability about discussing social issues. A brave space encourages dialogue and holds each person accountable to do the work of sharing experiences and coming to new understandings – an often uncomfortable and difficult feat.

As you establish your teams and define team norms, it will be important to be mindful of the diversity of your team, anchored in shared goals and common purpose, ensuring that voices are centred and ideas are welcomed, and embracing the diversity of your team and all that it can contribute to performance and outcome.

Concluding Thoughts



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“A pair of wings, a different respiratory system, which enabled us to travel through space, would in no way help us, for if we visited Mars or Venus while keeping the same senses, they would clothe everything we could see in the **same aspect** as the things of the Earth. The only true voyage, the only bath in the Fountain of Youth, would be not to visit strange lands but to **possess other eyes**, to see the universe through the eyes of another, of a hundred others, to see the hundred universes that **each of them sees**, that each of them is; and this we do, with great artists; with artists like these we do really *fly from star to star.*”

- - Marcel Proust, *La Prisonnière*

Reflection Question: What will you do today to help foster inclusivity within, and better understand the diversity of, your team?

CONTINUE

Scenario

You will now be presented with this module's version of the shared HPT scenario. This scenario is longer than the others, with various options and paths to explore, so please read through the following scenario slowly, allowing each sentence to "sink in".

After the scenario, you will be asked a number of questions connecting your observations of various leadership approaches demonstrated in the scenario, and the module content.

CONTINUE

**High-Performance
Teams Scenario**



Scenario Questions

1

Using empathy as your guiding principle, how would you navigate this scenario? Do you think that this small group discussion is worth addressing to either those involved, or to the larger team? Why?

2

What are some connections that you can make between the Ted Talk given by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie called *The Danger of a Single Story* and the statements made by some group members after the meeting?

3

What are the implications of this conversation to the team in terms of belongingness and inclusion? Have you considered the perspective of all team members in this analysis?

4

What are some strategies that you could use to help restore or maintain inclusivity within the team?

CONTINUE

Resources

Bibliography

- Badru, P. (1998). *Imperialism and ethnic politics in Nigeria, 1960-1996*. Africa World Press.
- Leonardo, Z., & Porter, R. K. (2010). Pedagogy of fear: Toward a Fanonian theory of 'safety' in race dialogue. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 13(2), 139-157.
- Simpson, A. (Ed.). (2008). *Language and national identity in Africa*. Oxford University Press.

HPT: Diversity of Teams Scenario

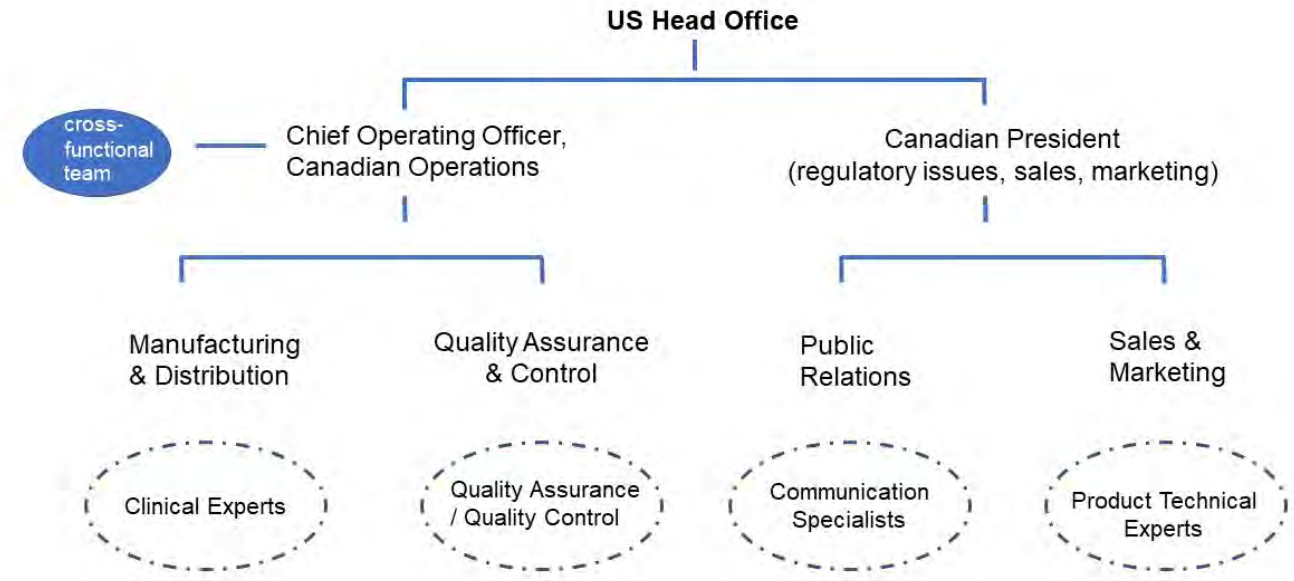
You are a Communications Specialist at a large medical equipment manufacturing company. The company is headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia, and you work at one of its large manufacturing, sales and distribution facilities in Toronto, Canada. You graduated from a top-tiered Canadian university three years ago, with a degree in English and Psychology, and your primary responsibility is preparing external communications for your supervisor's review—she is the Manager of Public Relations for Canada.

You generally enjoy your role and the challenges it comes with, but feel as though you are progressing through the ranks more slowly than you would like. It seems to you that the company promotes more on the basis of seniority than performance and education, who are not as skilled and up-to-date on modern communications as you are.

Recently, there have been reported incidents of harm to patients who were using one of your company's devices—an innovative, non-invasive glucose monitoring system, coupled with a mobile app for diabetes self-care. You were involved in writing some of the promotional and approval documents for the system when it was first launched in the Canadian market last year.

Preliminary reports allege that the device and associated app are not performing adequately, resulting in some patients developing diabetic hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) and requiring medical intervention.

In response, your company has decided to implement a cross-functional team to lead all aspects of managing this issue (see graphic below for the hierarchy). The team will be reporting to the COO, Canadian Operations. He reports directly into the US Head Office. There is also a Canadian President based in Toronto who is responsible for Canadian regulatory issues, and sales and marketing in Canada. Your boss reports to the Canadian President.



The COO has asked for the team to include the following members:

- An internal Clinical Expert
- An internal Product Technical Expert
- A Government Relations employee
- The Head of Sales and Marketing, Canada
- An external Clinical Expert Consultant
- An internal Quality Control and Assurance Expert
- A Communications Specialist

Problem to be solved: Everyone on the team is very aware of the seriousness of the device not working properly. Both the internal and external Clinical Experts believe that the initial test results clearly indicated the limitations of the product, and that the real issue is the responsibility of the Public Relations team who, quite simply, overpromised what the product could deliver.

Your Supervisor approached you to be the **Team Lead** for this project, and you agreed, because you feel it will be a great opportunity to show off your capabilities to the COO and to your supervisor.

Next steps:

As the Team Lead, you have called a meeting to discuss potential reasons for the device not performing as it should. You have discussed the issue with a friend who works for Health Canada (who oversees the safety and efficacy of medical devices) and you feel fairly confident about your understanding of the issues and the actions that the company needs to be taking.

As people arrive for the meeting, you can see that everyone appears to be quite concerned. You ask people to take a seat and then have team members introduce themselves and to describe their current position and experience. You take notes during this introductory discussion (see the 'Notes' section in the table of roles that you will now be shown).

Role	Key Duties	Experience	Notes
Internal Clinical Expert	Responsible for all planning, coordination, and implementation of clinical evaluations to ensure clinical acceptance of all technological devices. Works closely with the Quality Assurance & Control team.	Industry – 15 years Company – 5 years Education: Masters	Very experienced with clinical evaluations and the level of detail required. Would like to see more time devoted to the design & development phases.
Internal Product Technical Expert	Responsible for providing all technical support for the sales process of the organization. Plays a key role in generating new business from potential customers.	Industry – 10 years Company – 3 years Education: Community College	Quite skeptical of the work that the Manufacturing & Quality Assurance teams have been doing. Is quite worried about not earning as much as he should be.
External Government Relations Advisor	Ensures manufacturers are complying with rules & regulations, issues compliance orders, ensures medical devices work and meet safety standards.	Industry – 25 years Education: BA	Has worked for the government and/or public sector for entire career. Incentivized by case resolution rate and safety standard adoption rate.
Internal Head of Sales and Marketing, Canada	Responsible for all product marketing, sales lead/generation programs, sales team commission plans, and customer retention.	Industry – 25 years Company – 15 years Education: Masters	Recently launched a new incentive program that coincided with the launch of this device.
External Clinical Expert Consultant	Works with manufacturers to advise on product development, regulatory updates, training & development.	Industry – 20 years Education: PhD	Very experienced with advising manufacturers about time-to-market, product 'value' propositions, and current regulations. Semi-retired and usually spends winters in the Bahamas.
Internal Quality Control and Assurance Expert	Responsible for final product testing, compliance with both internal quality standards & external government regulations, and recommendations for final product release dates.	Industry – 15 years Company – 5 years Education: Masters	Very experienced with ISO standards and government regulations. Acknowledges the need to not take short cuts, and that more time needs to be allocated to the QA process.

Internal Communications Specialist	Responsible for designing, writing and planning information tools, conducting and/or reviewing research, ensuring information is accurate and up-to-date.	Industry – 3 years Company – 3 years Education: BA	Although a recent graduate, finds the job quite easy and not very challenging. Would prefer a communications role that was more dynamic and analytics driven.
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After the meeting ends, you overhear individuals engaging in small casual discussions as they gather their belongings and leave. There is one group of 4 individuals that catches your attention in particular, as they start to discuss the role of the users in the app’s performance. One individual states, “well Diabetes is more common among older individuals, I wonder whether they just simply have difficulties using the app? I wonder if we would not be in this situation with younger users?”. Another replies, “You make a good point, and isn’t Diabetes associated with poor diet? I wonder whether the problematic cases are in those that are of a lower socioeconomic status and therefore might have more difficulties understanding the user instructions?”. Finally, a third replies “Thinking about users with difficulties understanding the device’s proper use, I have to wonder about the role of culture or English as a first language? I agree, I wonder whether the company is not ruling out issues on the user end. I hope that the team lead has thought about this.” You then notice others glancing at this group, who appear to be noticeably uncomfortable.