

# IMPLEMENTING A DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION PROGRAM IN YOUR CLUB

This resource guide was developed to assist club owners in creating, developing, and implementing a DEIS program that fosters an inclusive and diverse culture within their studio or gym.



# IMPLEMENT YOUR OWN DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION PROGRAM

## DIVERSITY MATTERS

Create a culture whereby diversity and inclusion are a fundamental part of the values taught through sport.

Bringing together varied life experiences and perspective adds significant value to your community and reinforces the concept of inclusivity.



**DIVERSITY**



**EQUITY**



**INCLUSION**



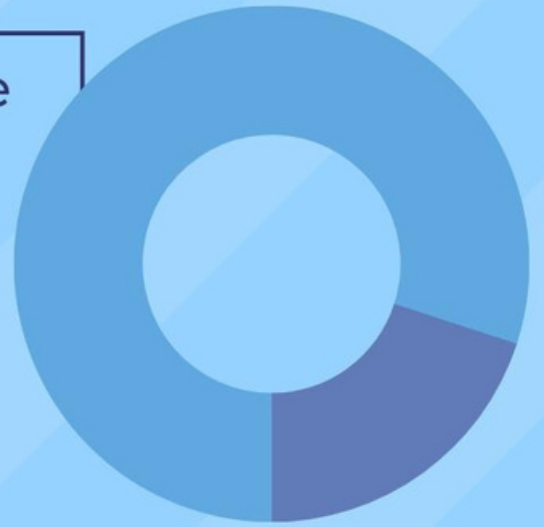
**SENSITIVITY**

- Utilize the acrostic D.E.I.S. as the pathway for the development of your implementation plan.
- Engage your staff, your athletes, and their parents in the development of your DEIS plans. Engage your staff, your athletes, and their parents in the development of your DEIS plans.
- Craft your own policy for inclusion based on the best practices provided. Your customized best practice policy will serve as your code of conduct for all interactions within your program.
- Mentorship is available to USASF program owners through the Peer2Peer Mentoring Program facilitated through the Connection Leaders.

**Discuss the infographic provided on the next page with your coaches, parents and athletes and use the following to help develop “your why”.**

**83%**

83% of millennials are more engaged at work when they believe their company fosters an inclusive culture.



**BUSINESSES ARE MORE LIKELY TO HIT FINANCIAL GOALS WHEN THE BUSINESS IS INCLUSIVE AT ALL LEVELS.**

**120%**

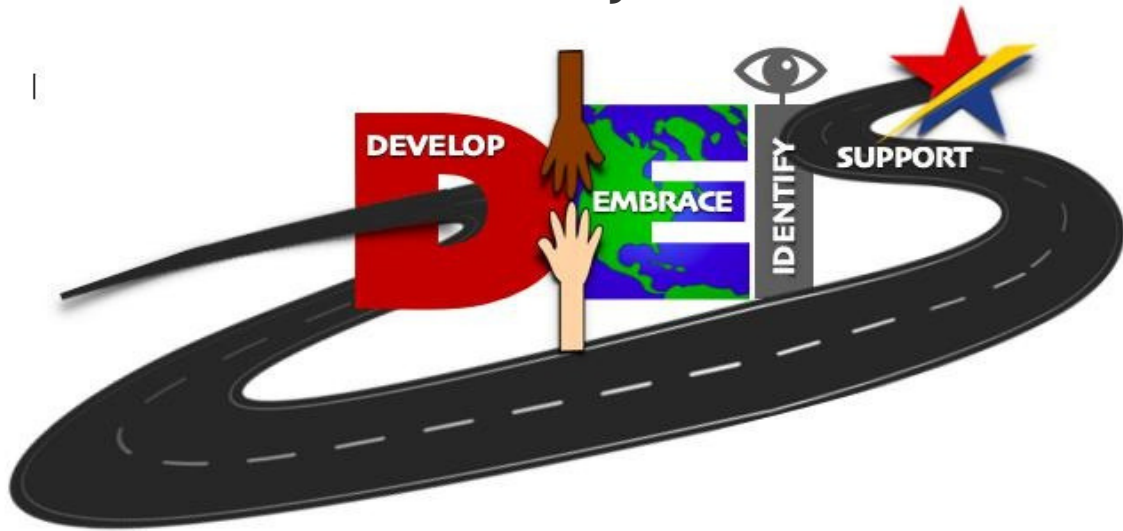
By 2044, groups formerly seen as "minorities" will reach majority status.



In the U.S. there are **15** major religious traditions.

# IMPLEMENT YOUR OWN DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION PROGRAM

Create your own pathway for a DEIS program at your gym or studio by creating and supporting "The Road to Diversity and Inclusion".



THE ROAD TO DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

- D** **Develop** a safe space to talk about issues with coaches, parents and athletes.
- E** **Embrace** the community and seek out diverse or underserved populations with pathways to participate and create partnerships.
- I** **Identify** areas of improvement both individually and collectively to create an inclusive action plan.
- S** **Support** your diverse athletes, families and community through sensitivity and social media. Review your social media and marketing platforms to ensure your messaging is diverse, inclusive and sensitive to ALL in our cheer and dance community.

# IMPLEMENT YOUR OWN DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION PROGRAM

## DEIS BEST PRACTICES

- Explore the unconscious biases you might have. While it may be uncomfortable to admit, getting to know yourself better will help you improve on both a personal and professional level.
- Establish a sense of belonging for everyone. Greater engagement and creativity can be achieved with individuals who have a connection to an organization.
- Seek opportunities for outreach. Create strategic partnerships with organizations that feature diverse populations.
- Create programs and services that alleviate barriers to participation in your program.
- Provide educational opportunities for staff and athletes.
- Consider your gym and/or studio's location. Stay up-to-date with current events in your community and globally.
- Demonstrate an inclusive environment by addressing the impact that certain events can have on members of the gym and/or studio.
- Engaging in tough conversations and providing support can help others know that it is all right to bring their authentic selves into your facility.

# IMPLEMENT YOUR OWN DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION PROGRAM

## Foundational Concepts: Supporting DEIS Best Practices

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### **DEVELOP - Your Plan to Foster a Culture of Inclusion**

People are reluctant or fearful to trust when their beliefs are challenged. While fear can be a powerful motivator, it also encourages people to narrow their perspectives, the opposite desired effect for creating a more inclusive environment. Finding ways to frame challenges through a lens of possibility while elevating the power of shared experiences and storytelling to do so, creates greater potential for positive change.

- Identify areas of improvement and spotlight moments of success.
- Consider asking everyone to write down their individual commitment to diversity and inclusion and place them in a public place for accountability and to see the progress and celebrate the moments along the way.
- Demonstrating zero tolerance for exclusionary behaviors is essential but it is equally important to include your commitment to zero tolerance by including it in your employee and customer contracts and code of conduct.

## Foundational Concepts: Supporting DEIS Best Practices

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### EMBRACE AND ENGAGE - Your Community

With a little research, you can find valuable resources that can provide tremendous value to your organization.

- Expand athlete and employee recruitment in underserved communities by engaging community resources and organizations.
- Relying on one or two recruiting methods may limit the quality and diversity of your employee/athlete pool and increase the time it takes to fill the open role.
- Consider using multiple avenues to target communities that are underrepresented amongst your workforce or athletes.
- Build relationships with professional organizations, schools, and community organizations and attend conferences and job fairs that support individuals from diverse backgrounds.

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## Foundational Concepts: Supporting DEIS Best Practices

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### IDENTIFY - And Understand Different Perspectives

Be introspective and examine your own assumptions and biases. It is very common for coaches to incorrectly assume that each athlete on the team shares their own background. Therefore, an introspective examination of your own assumptions and biases allows a better understanding of your diverse community and who they are.

Address potential microaggressions in language. A microaggression is a statement, question, or action that subtly demonstrates hostility or discrimination against members of a marginalized group. Studies have shown that microaggressions can have a significant impact on the recipient's health, especially as they add up over the course of time. You can help address microaggressions by raising awareness through training, clearly indicating that they're prohibited in your gym or studio and investigating and responding appropriately to any complaints of microaggressions.

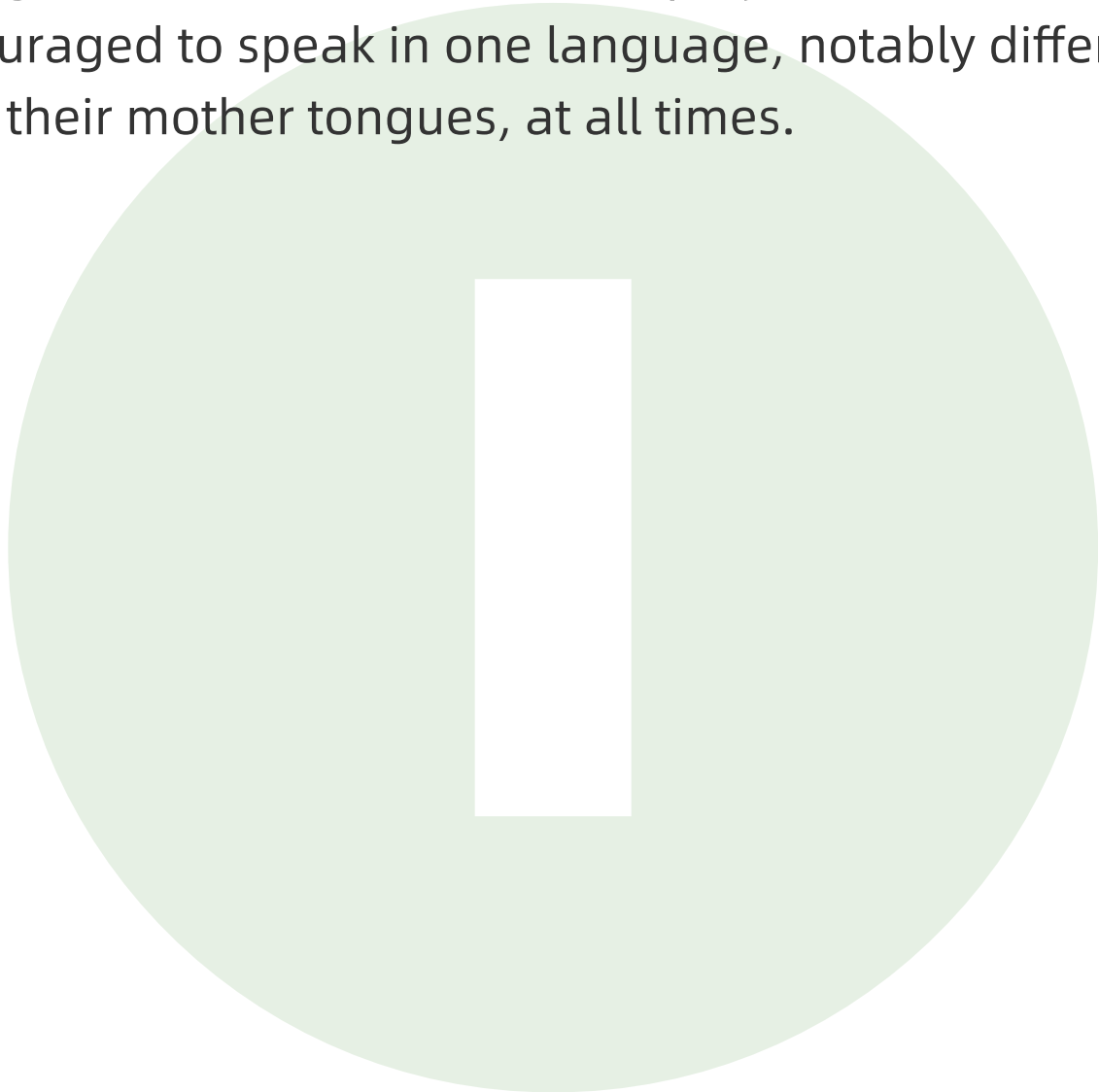


## Foundational Concepts: Supporting DEIS Best Practices

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### IDENTIFY - And Understand Different Perspectives

Incorporate the philosophy of "culture add" instead of "culture fit". "Culture fit" refers to leaning on employees/athletes to conform or adapt to the norms of an organization. For instance, employees/athletes are encouraged to speak in one language, notably different from their mother tongues, at all times.



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## Foundational Concepts: Supporting DEIS Best Practices

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### SUPPORT - Spoken and Demonstrated

Actions speak louder than words. Publicly supporting a diverse community within your gym is not enough. Ensure that the customer and work-related experience demonstrates a welcoming and inclusive environment.

### **Mentor and Create a pipeline of support that fosters opportunities for leadership.**

A mentorship program can create a pipeline for diverse individuals to serve in athletic leadership roles within your organizations and create an ongoing support structure for your mentees.

### **Develop Cultural Self-Awareness**

What influenced your own cultural identity? What values and beliefs do you hold and why? Learn to appreciate diverse views and do not judge differing views as wrong. Instead, accept and understand other points of view. Some cultural norms of other groups may make you uncomfortable. Resist the urge to judge and work toward understanding. Learn what you can.

## Foundational Concepts: Supporting DEIS Best Practices

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### SUPPORT - Spoken and Demonstrated

#### **Create and Implement a Culture of Frequent Check-Ins**

One-on-ones aren't just for providing in-the-moment feedback. They're also opportunities to build trust. Trust is key for an open dialogue that allows employees to honestly express their needs, or discuss challenges they may experience in your workplace, particularly those of a sensitive nature. If your organization doesn't already have a continuous feedback culture, read up! It can work wonders for the overall experience of those in your purview.

#### **Expand Your Calendar to be More Inclusive**

Little things mean a lot and for underrepresented populations, even small instances of representation can mean a world of difference. Look at your company's calendar. Be sure to include holidays that represent the religious or cultural beliefs of your employees, athletes and parents. If it isn't possible to observe these company-wide holidays, acknowledge them on the calendar to raise awareness and increase a sense of inclusion and belonging for practitioners.

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## Foundational Concepts: Supporting DEIS Best Practices

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### SUPPORT - Spoken and Demonstrated

#### **Create Events and Initiatives Focused on Inclusivity**

Host diversity-based mixers, screen documentaries during a staff meeting, or invite guest speakers who cover a diverse range of topics that reflect the diversity within your organization and your community.

#### **Assess your Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion**

Ask yourself the following questions:

- Who are you inviting to public-facing events?
- Which charitable causes does your company support when participating in volunteer days and fundraisers?
- Do the vendors you choose to embrace and support diversity?
- Do the vendors you choose offer products and services that consider a diverse population and represent the values of diversity and inclusion?
- Who are the champions of diversity and inclusion in All Star and do you support their efforts with your business?

