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Building Tolerance Into Team Culture

Why Tolerance?

Tolerance is often treated like a prescription—something leaders instruct their teams to “do” in the face of difference. But true connection requires more than compliance. It asks for a shift from prescription to disposition, where openness, curiosity, and respect are woven into how a team functions every day. This handout outlines eight traits that help cultivate tolerance as a natural disposition within teams. Each trait includes sample Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to give leaders and supervisees a way to notice, encourage, and measure growth. These aren’t rigid metrics, but practical markers that show when a team is softening judgment and strengthening connection.

By developing these traits, leaders create an environment where differences are not only tolerated but become opportunities for deeper understanding, stronger collaboration, and healthier workplace culture.

Use this resource as:

- A reflection guide in supervision sessions
- A framework for leadership coaching and professional development
- A shared language for building accountability within teams

8 Traits to Support Tolerance

Humility

Naming gaps and staying teachable

- Acknowledges mistakes or areas of growth in team meetings
- Seeks feedback from peers at least quarterly

Self-Awareness

Noticing one’s own emotional reactions without projecting

- Demonstrates ability to pause before responding in conflict
- Uses 'I' statements in feedback conversations

Flexibility

Shifting perspective when new insights emerge

- Adapts approach to a project or task based on team input
- Demonstrates openness in post-mortem reflections

Courage

Asking honest questions even when vulnerable

- Brings forward at least one challenging question in team discussions
- Voices concerns respectfully when norms are violated

Curiosity

Practicing inquiry instead of assumption

- Uses clarifying questions in supervisory check-ins
- Demonstrates active listening in peer feedback sessions

Presence

Being attentive in the moment instead of rehearsing rebuttals

- Maintains engaged body language and eye contact in meetings
- Contributes to reflection rounds without distractions

Patience

Allowing discomfort without rushing to resolution

- Participates in facilitated dialogues without pushing for closure
- Allows silence to be part of group process

Affirmation

Recognizing and naming the humanity in others

- Gives at least one piece of positive recognition per team member monthly
- Highlights individual contributions in group settings

More Connected Humans™ works with leaders and teams to develop the traits and practices that transform workplaces into inclusive environments where everyone can thrive and belong. Through coaching, professional development, and facilitated experiences, we help leadership teams strengthen their connections, build resilience, and navigate differences with integrity.