Dropbox Design
Diversity and Inclusion Toolkit

**A set of exercises to guide individuals and teams in
nurturing a more diverse and inclusive design community**

About Culture Kits

Open Culture

The Diversity and Inclusion Toolkit, along with all of our Culture Kits, is free, adaptable, and made for anyone who wants to make work better and more human. We're sharing our tools to empower and equip you to shape your own work culture. What will you explore with this toolkit?

Visit Dropbox.Design for more.

Contributors

Content
Roxanna Aliaga, Deepa Iyer, Nicole Lavelle, Rita Troyer

Design
Shivani Soni, Nicole Lavelle

Illustration
Sarah Chon

Production
Bijan Rafie-Tari

Essays
Roxanna Aliaga, Danny Guillory, Michelle Morrison, Wes O'Haire, Alastair Simpson

Quotes
Eric Alves, Chelsi Cocking, Jen DiZio, Paolo Ertreo, Deepa Iyer, Angela Ju, Nicole Lavelle, Angelique Little, Berenice Méndez, Bonnie Xiao, Anna Sternoff, Mel Sweet, Etienne Ma, Abraham Velazquez, Jeremy Barrett, Rita Troyer

Editing
Alice Katter, John Mikulenka, Flannery McDermott

Original workshop
Jennifer Brook, Wes O'Haire, Roxanna Aliaga

Dropbox

Welcome

Welcome to the Toolkit

Nobody questions that there is a need for more diversity within the technology and design community. The real question is, how do we get there?

Excellent resources exist—books, essays, workshops, toolkits—created by organizations and individuals working toward a better future. At Dropbox, we've made the investment in DEI inititives, programs, and projects run by a team of DEI experts.

What makes this toolkit, brought to you by Dropbox Design, different? We're using the processes and practices of design to integrate diversity and inclusion with our ways of working.

The design process involves phases of inspiration, ideation, and implementation. When designing, one must ask questions, define a problem, and work in a nonlinear process toward a solution that will continue to evolve through iteration and testing.

We were inspired by these processes as we created this toolkit. We trust that you'll engage in discovery and iteration as you work through it.

In the spirit of including many voices, you'll find a range of thoughts and personal experiences from Dropboxers throughout the kit. There are quotes as well as essays from people who play a key role in making diversity and inclusion keystone practices at Dropbox.

We hope this toolkit helps you better understand yourself and your community. We also hope it helps illuminate the challenges you face and the solutions you might implement in building a more diverse and inclusive culture in your work world.

Who is this Toolkit for?

This toolkit is intended for individuals and teams interested in fostering a more diverse and inclusive culture in the design field.

Whether you're a freelancer, part of a small studio, or member of a team within a large organization, this kit inspires reflection and action for bringing more diversity and inclusion to your ways of working.

Toolkit Contents

Accompanying this PDF are two additional resources for organizing the Team Workshop in Part Two: Guide for Organizers (PDF) and Presentation Slides Template (PDF and Keynote).

Toolkit Glossary

Clarity of language is crucial when engaging with complex topics. Here's what we mean when we use words like "diversity" and "inclusion."

Diversity	When we talk about **diversity** in the context of work, we're talking about a group of people that is representative of this vibrant, complex world and its various dimensions. "Diverse" describes a group, not an individual.
Inclusion	We see **inclusion** as an action. At Dropbox, inclusion means integrating our collective differences into the company culture, solutions for customers, and business strategy. Inclusion is a practice, not an achievement; it must be ongoing.
Ways of working	The world of work is constantly changing, and phrases like "at work" or "the workplace" don't do the job anymore. We use the phrase **ways of working** instead, to refer to the set of contexts that surrounds our labor. **Ways of working** encompasses physical and virtual environments, solo and collaborative scenarios, and personal and professional contexts. Sometimes we use the word **work-world.**

Equality

Equality and **equity** both emphasize fairness, but they are different things. **Equality** means every individual or group is given the same access to opportunities and resources, regardless of need or circumstance.

Equity

Equity offers access to opportunities and resources depending on need. Equity requires a consideration of the diverse circumstances of individuals and groups.

Community

When we say **community**, we mean a group of people who share something: for example, a set of values or beliefs, a physical location, or a common interest.

Culture

We think of **culture** as the way a community engages with their shared "something." Culture includes collective knowledge, customs, social forms, histories, and habits.

How to Use this Toolkit

1: Solo Exercises

is intended to spark introspection and personal reflection. Get started here, and complete this section on your own.

2: Team Workshop

is designed as an interactive, participatory experience for groups. This workshop requires several organizers and can take place in person or online. If you don't have a team to work with, see our suggestions on page 20 for adapting this section to solo exploration.

Workshop organizers include a Facilitator, a Producer, and one or more Moderators. Learn more about these roles in the Guide for Organizers included with this kit.

3: Onward

is for planning your next steps. Complete this section on your own, once you've taken time for the personal reflection and dynamic generation in Parts 1 and 2.

The Personal Path

Roxanna Aliaga, Head of Content Design

Tech was not my first career. By the time I was hired for my first UX writing role, I'd worked in publishing and theater. I was edging out of my 30s. And as a parent, a woman, and a Latina, I didn't see many people around me at work who were going through the same things I was going through.

It seemed clear that I did not belong. And yet I did, in large part because I was edging out of my 30s. Because I'd had careers outside of tech. Because I was a parent, a woman, and a Latina who'd spent a long time exploring these facets of my identity—and recognized that they made me a better designer and partner to my colleagues. I claimed that space of belonging because I saw the value my unique perspective brought to design work.

But that confidence didn't come overnight, and I didn't feel it every day. It developed over many years and after a long stretch of time deeply assimilating, as my parents had as Cuban immigrants. Though my first language was Spanish and I was always proud of where my family came from, it wasn't until I arrived at the vast campus of the University of Michigan that I unpacked what that history meant to me—and why it was important to celebrate it, particularly around others who did not understand why it mattered.

By the time I joined Dropbox Design nearly two decades later, plenty of things marked me as different. But it was the awareness of those differences that also sparked Diverse Dropbox Design (3D), the diversity initiative I co-founded in 2018 after an experience at a leadership retreat.

I was one of about twenty Black and Latinx Dropboxers invited to spend three days at a beautiful campus to do deep thinking about what we brought to the table as leaders. As I looked around the room that first day, I noticed only two of us were representing the Design team—myself and Tere Hernandez, a design researcher.

We're both Latinx—there were no Black designers in attendance and no one from the product design discipline, which at the time was about 90 people in a total design org of 140. Of course, industry-wide those numbers weren't unusual, but in part because Dropbox felt like a place where change was possible, Tere and I started talking about what we could do as individuals to help our design team do better.

At the same time, Dropbox product designer Wes O'Haire was exploring personal outreach— his tweet offering a week of mentorship lunches with Black designers got a huge response and eventually led him to design and launch the online directory Blacks Who Design. And so Wes, Tere, and I got together to share our ideas of what 3D could be. When we linked up with community and design operations maven Michelle Morrison, our programming hit a new level.

We didn't really know what we were doing— but we knew it mattered. Not because diverse teams are statistically more innovative (which they are) or outperform less diverse teams (which they do), but because this issue was incredibly personal to each of us. We each had a story to tell about why we'd been drawn to create change. Those personal stories were the foundation of 3D and in fact became one of its first programs. At every Design All Hands, we encouraged a designer to share their story along with a tip of the month—a small action that could be taken in a few minutes to cultivate inclusion within our team.

Those small and mighty actions continued to grow, and so did 3D—from the awareness of not seeing enough diversity on the Design team, to an idea taking root and being championed by four people, to a bona fide initiative with fourteen team members and Dropbox VP of Design Alastair Simpson as our executive sponsor.

The programming evolved, too. In the fall of 2019 we took on one of our most ambitious endeavors to date: Wes and I, along with researcher Jennifer Brook, created a diversity-and-inclusion workshop aimed at designers. In 2020 we adapted the workshop for Zoom audiences, and now with the dedicated efforts of many talented people—in particular program manager Deepa Iyer and designer Nicole Lavelle—we've adapted it again for this kit.

I'd like to say that after 3D's efforts of the past two-plus years, we now have a robustly diverse design team at Dropbox. But I can't. Like most things, change requires consistent effort—seeds take time to sprout. Taking a step in that direction is something I personally commit to each day, because it's personal.

So whether this kit is a step toward self-exploration or a spark for change within your workplace, know that it matters. Change starts with the individual. There's a quote by Spanish poet and playwright Antonio Machado that captures it well: "Caminante, no hay camino / Se hace camino al andar." Translation: "Traveler, there is no path / The path is made by walking."

That's the beauty and wonder of design, too—sometimes you have to move forward before you know where you're headed. So walk on and plant those seeds along the way. Let's see what we can all grow together.

Part 1: Solo

1 Solo Exercises

Exercise 1
Intersectionality
Self-Map

Exercise 2
Imagine
the Garden

Exercise 3
Diversity
Commitments

We recommend that you complete this first section on your own.

These exercises will lay the groundwork for some of the sharing and conversation in Part Two: Teams, so if you're working with a team, have everyone start from the beginning.

This section is a series of exercises designed for solo introspection and deep, slow thought.

Allow at least 15 minutes, and as many as 60 minutes, for each exercise.

We recommend working on one exercise per day, and completing all three within one week, to keep your inspiration and ideas fresh.

Connect and Create

Wes O'Haire, Product Design Manager

Diversity-and-inclusion is a big issue. So big, in fact, that you've probably asked yourself: "Where do I even start?" And what does this mean when you're trying to make a difference on your own?

That's exactly how I felt a few years ago. So I sent a tweet telling people that I'd devote a week of my lunch breaks to meeting with Black designers. After about 1,000 retweets and scores of DMs, I was able to get acquainted with five incredible designers. We found that we collectively felt a sense of being disconnected. As it turns out, the first thing we had to do was simply stay connected with one another. So we started a small Slack channel.

Through connecting and maintaining an open dialogue, we eventually started to ask ourselves: "Where are all of the other designers who look like us?" That grew into, "We should have a site that highlights all of the great Black designers in the industry," which meant it was time to roll up our sleeves and create such a site. After a couple months of hard work and preparation, we launched BlacksWho.Design.

The moral of this story is to connect and create. Connect because that's how you'll build a community centered on a common purpose. Create because it's what you do best. ;)

Solo Agreements

Before you get started on the first exercise, we suggest you prepare for an introspective deep dive. Say each of these agreements out loud:

I agree to be honest with myself.

I agree to be kind to myself.

I agree to take care of myself and take a break if I need it.

Are there any other agreements that you'd like to add? Write them down, and then repeat them out loud to yourself.

Intersectionality Self-Map

There's no better place to begin than with our selves.

🕐

15–60 minutes

⚛️

In this exercise, we'll connect the different dimensions of our selves.

Purpose

Identify and reflect upon the essential components of your personal identity. Consider the intersecting and overlapping complexities of disadvantage and privilege to understand your position in the world.
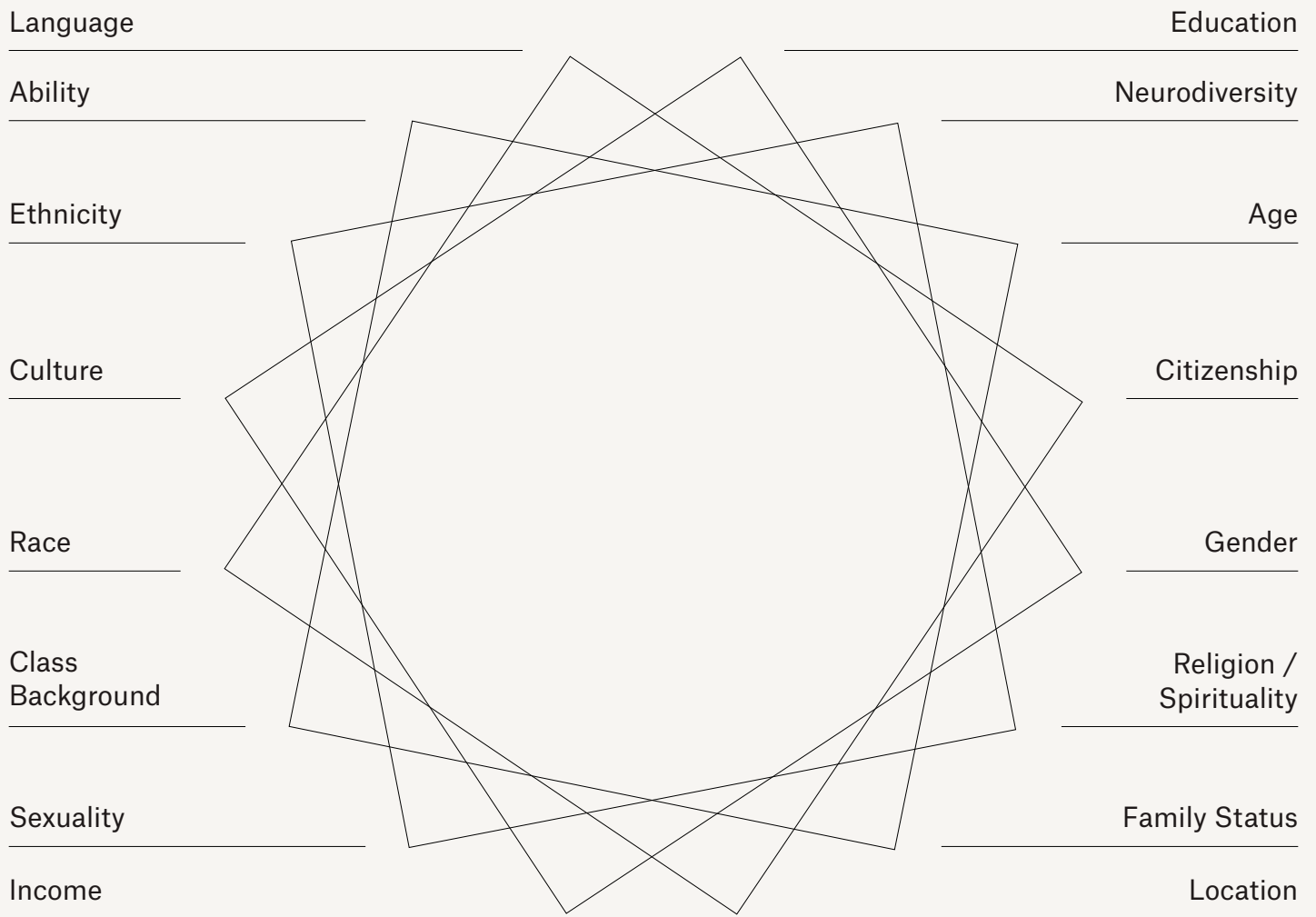
Instructions

Map your intersectional identity. What makes you? How do those things intersect? Write details about each of these dimensions of identity. You can write directly on this diagram, or recreate it. Feel free to add additional dimensions. You can make lists, write longer paragraphs, or even add drawings. This exercise can take whatever form you want it to.

Be honest and be brave: complete this exercise by yourself, without fear of what others might think.

Examples

For "language" you might write "bilingual" or "native English speaker." For "family status" you might write about being adopted or being a parent.

Language _____

Education _____

Ability _____

Ethnicity _____

Age _____

Neurodiversity _____

Citizenship _____

Culture _____

Race _____

Gender _____

Class Background _____

Religion / Spirituality _____

Sexuality _____

Family Status _____

Location _____

Income _____

Language

Ability

Ethnicity

Culture

Race

Class
Background

Sexuality

Income

Education

Neurodiversity

Age

Citizenship

Gender

Religion /
Spirituality

Family Status

Location

Intersectionality addresses the multiple dimensions of identity and social systems as they intersect with one another.

To work toward diversity and inclusion, we must identify and value our differences.

Reflection

Now that you've mapped the details about your multidimensional, intersectional identity, spend a moment with these questions and make some notes. Keep your notes; you'll revisit them later in the toolkit.

Were you surprised by anything you wrote down?

Choose two dimensions (examples: education and race, or language and location). Consider how the intersection of those two dimensions manifests in your own life.

Reflect on an experience when you felt "othered" or apart in some way, in any sort of group (work, school, sports team, etc.). What conditions created this feeling?

Reflection

Now that you've mapped the details about your multidimensional, intersectional identity, spend a moment with these questions and make some notes. Keep your notes; you'll revisit them later in the toolkit.

Reflect on an experience when you felt advantaged or privileged. Which dimensions intersected to form that advantage?

Reflect on your experiences being part of, or building, a diverse community. Describe a challenge you've faced.

"

There were times when I felt I didn't belong in the creative world because I don't have a degree in design. Becoming a parent has taught me otherwise. Good design is a result of uncovering human needs. My six-year-old has taught me to unpack wicked problems by simply asking 'Why?'

Deepa Iyer
Design Program Manager, Learning and Development

"

As a first-generation college graduate and a daughter of immigrants who worked long restaurant hours in order to raise me, I always battled with imposter syndrome. However, I learned there's never just one path to product management, and all journeys have different sceneries and perspectives.

Bonnie Xiao
Product Manager, Growth

Imagine the Garden

Visualize the lush, living ecosystem you want to cultivate.

🕐

20–40 minutes

✦

In this exercise, we will **imagine** what is possible.

Purpose

Identify where diversity and inclusion appear, or do not appear, within the landscape of your ways of working. Imagine your ideal diverse-and-inclusive scenario. Strategize for the tools you need to achieve that scenario.

Metaphors can be helpful tools for unpacking complex concepts like diversity and inclusion. Using figurative language can make the seemingly intangible easier to grasp.

A garden can be a place that flourishes with diversity. It is cared for by a person or a group of people who feel a sense of responsibility for it. These gardeners take care of plants and value their growth. Like our workplaces, gardens can be where we gather, spend time, exchange ideas, grow collectively, and learn from one another. A garden can inspire a sense of belonging and connection.

Instructions

Write or draw your notes for this exercise. There are three parts.

Consider making a map, a list, a diagram, or a comic—whatever captures your thoughts!

Step 1

What is the current state of diversity within your work world? Think about your workplace, team, or organization.

Consider the metaphor of a garden.
What do you see that is healthy? What is struggling to thrive? Where is there imbalance? Where are the barriers to a thriving, diverse ecosystem?

Consider your specific context.
Does your work world feel like a container garden on an apartment balcony, or more like a community garden with lots of neighboring plots? Does it feel like a single potted plant on a windowsill, an overgrown backyard, a tabletop terrarium, or a manicured botanical garden?

Consider resources and conditions.
In a metaphoric sense, what is the water, what is the sun? What is the current state of the soil? Which resources are present, and what needs to be added?

Consider the community.
What types of plants are growing in the garden? What types of insects and birds live there? What needs more room to grow?

Example

"I'm a freelancer, so I'm self-contained. But I am part of a larger design community, so I imagine my garden as a plot in a community garden. The soil is exhausted, because it hasn't been fertilized in a long time. I'm growing some flowers, but I'm not growing any food. Beauty is important, but I can't survive on flowers! I look at the garden a lot, wondering where to begin."

Step 2

Now envision your ideal garden, the one you aspire to have.

What are your goals for that garden? What would you like to see more of? What thrives there? What does biodiversity look like in your vision?

Remember, you can describe your aspirational garden in writing or with a drawing. Make a list of its plants or develop a maintenance schedule. Take the metaphor as far as you'd like.

Example

"I want all kinds of vegetables and flowers, a diverse group of plants with diverse uses. I want this gardening experience to be reciprocal; I want to care for the plants, and I want them to teach me, too. I want worms and compost to nurture the soil. I want to collect the seeds at the end of each season. I want pollinators—bees and butterflies—to feel invited to spend time in this garden."

Step 3

With your ideal garden in mind, now imagine your toolshed.

Which tools do you need in order to nurture this garden? What is your toolshed stocked with?

Make a list of the tools you'll need. These can be linked metaphorically to gardening (new seeds = new collaborators; watering calendar = personal commitment; more-accessible planter beds = more accessible workspace), or they can be literal (inclusive recruiting strategies, flexible deadlines for folks' different scheduling needs).

Example

"I need to research the seeds for this region, since I don't know much about this patch of earth. I only know what I've grown before. I need to make a watering calendar and commit to showing up. I need proper tools—sun hat and snack—so I don't get exhausted. I need to invite a friend to garden with me, sharing the labor and enjoyment of cultivating new growth."

"

Creating a diverse culture in the winds of supremacist assimilation is challenging. In ways both subtle and overt, these forces are relentless in drowning out the voices of minorities and the differently abled. Together, I know we can sow the seeds of anti-racism and anti-ableism to take root against those who would exclude us.

Eric Alves
Content Designer

"

I wish to create a culture that values interdependence. Through my practices of web and garden design, that looks like creating an accessibility-first color system that feels lively and musical for all people. It also looks like earth care that works with the existing harmony and diversity of the natural world.

Rita Troyer
Visual Design Lead

Diversity Commitments

Speak to yourself in your own words.

🕐

15–30 minutes

✏️

In this exercise, we will **define** language for ourselves and **commit** to action.

Purpose

Define terms in your own words. Declare what is important to you. Establish your intentions for creating a more diverse and inclusive culture.

Step 1

Start by defining the following terms in your own words: **diversity, inclusion, equity, community, culture.**

If you're not sure of which words to use, check out other resources. Revisit the beginning of the toolkit where we define these words. Read articles, essays, and other online resources. Keep an open mind; which definitions resonate with you, and which need elaboration?

Try to make your definitions reflect your perspective.

Example

You might write something like: "I define 'community' as a group of people I feel close to. This means we share something: interests (like my art friends) or physical proximity (like my neighbors)."

Diversity _____

Inclusion _____

Equity _____

Community _____

Culture _____

Step 2

Now that you've defined these terms for yourself, write statements that show your commitment to fostering diversity and inclusion in your ways of working. Create one commitment for each word.

Example

You might begin your commitment like this:

I challenge myself to...
I will...
I intend to...

Diversity

Inclusion

Equity

Community

Culture

"

Diversity goals aren't just a one-and-done checklist. Working towards a more equitable community involves constantly questioning and reimagining what we think is acceptable, and doing something about it. Be willing to act, to learn, and to show up from there forward.

Berenice Méndez
Brand Designer

"

To me inclusion means that everyone feels comfortable being themselves. It means people don't have to put on a veil or force themselves into a specific box in order to be accepted, recognized, appreciated, cared for, or advanced in the workplace.

Chelsi Cocking
Visual Design Lead

What's Next?

If you're working through this toolkit as a member of a team, your next step is to engage in **Part Two: Team Workshop**.

If you're working as an individual, we've included a suggestion on the next page for how to adapt the exercises.

Then you can continue to the final section, **Part Three: Onward**, where you'll have a chance to reflect and plan your next steps.

Part 2: Team

2 Team Workshop

Activity 1
Share

Activity 2
Dialogue

Activity 3
Generate

This section is a workshop intended for teams. One or more organizers, depending on the size of the group, should lead the workshop. A guide for organizers and a presentation template are included in this kit.

The workshop is best with a group of at least six and no more than 40 participants. Each activity includes breakouts for groups of 3–5 people.

This is an energetic, participatory workshop. It moves quickly and is grounded in experience and action.

If you complete the entire workshop in one day, it'll take about 90 minutes.

Or you can do one activity per day (30–45 minutes for each). We recommend you complete these three activities on consecutive days to maintain the team's energy.

Working through the toolkit by yourself? You can adapt these exercises! Start by following the instructions and prompts on your own. Consider reaching out to a friend or colleague via email to spark conversation based on the prompts. Conduct research of first-person essays, articles, and books to learn about different experiences and perspectives and to identify common themes.

Lessons from the Kitchen

Alastair Simpson, VP of Design

Work is all about people and teams—and people and teams are messy! Even within a single team, diversity of people and, importantly, diversity of thought will create varied preferences and dynamic relationships. This is a good thing—research shows that diverse teams reach better outcomes. It also means one size won't fit all, and flexibility will win out over rigid processes.

If you think about it, a team is just an intention to accomplish certain work in a certain period of time. What matters in leadership is making sure the right type of interactions are happening between teams. If people can connect effectively, they can usually figure out what to do. This means focusing on diversity, inclusivity, outcomes, and the quality of interaction among teams, instead of on output or the amount of time a team spends together.

It's the job of leadership to align the intentions of its teams and to create the right environment to nurture inclusivity and diversity in all aspects. And it's the job of each team to learn to interact with other teams in mutually beneficial ways so that all can satisfy or exceed their stated intentions. Ultimately, it's up to each of us to find our own balance and become a role model for how to make a team truly work. This involves being aware of your impact on others, supporting your co-workers in all their diversity, and most importantly, finding the small but meaningful things that make work human. Say "thank you," often. Make time to connect with team members. Ask them how they are. Take a genuine interest—whether it's through exercises like the ones in this kit or through your everyday interactions. This goes some way to creating trust, safety, and a sense of belonging—which is the foundation of the best teams I've had the privilege to build or be a part of.

I can trace this back to my very first job, washing dishes at a local restaurant/hotel. The head chef cared deeply about us all and knew what each of us did before and after work. He would ask questions, laugh, share jokes, and let us into his personal life. He didn't treat me any differently because I was young and just washing pans and cleaning equipment; to him, each of us was integral to the team. And when it was time to work, he was always incredibly focused and demanded the same of us. I learned a lot in my two years as a part-time kitchen hand about how to deal with people, how to work hard, and how to care about those around you, no matter what their background or role is.

Work is all about people, and people are messy. To lead during these times, it's not enough to use your head—you need your heart as well. Only by building trust and seeing people for who they are can you forge all that messy energy into resilient and purpose-driven teams.

Shared Agreements

Before we get started on the team workshop, let's agree on some parameters for our time together.

Please take a moment to review these agreements. The workshop organizers will give you an opportunity to suggest additions.

I agree to remain open to the ideas of others.

I agree to keep the personal stories I hear today private.

I agree to share my honest thoughts and experiences.

I agree to take care of myself and to take a break if I need it.

Are there any other agreements that you'd like to add? Share them with the group.

Share

Identify shared challenges
and opportunities, practice
active listening, and create
consciousness in community.

🕐

30–35 minutes

◖◗

In this activity, we will **converge,** bringing
different ideas together.

👥

Revisit the Shared Agreements before
beginning this exercise!

Purpose

We'll hear about each other's experiences, and
identify shared challenges and opportunities.

Flow

The workshop organizers will guide us through
the three stages of this activity: **Introduction**,
Breakout, and **Come Together**.

Introduction — 5 minutes

We'll start by reflecting on our own experiences, then jump into a breakout group where we'll share and align on common themes before coming together again. Facilitators can break the ice by sharing their own experiences first.

Breakout — 20 minutes

Solo: Revisit two of the reflection questions from Part One, Exercise 1. Spend a couple of minutes thinking about the following:

1. Reflect on an experience when you felt "othered" or apart in some way, in any sort of group (work, school, sports team, etc.). What conditions created this feeling?

2. Reflect on an experience when you felt advantaged or privileged. Which dimensions intersected to form that advantage?

3. Reflect on your experiences being part of, or building, a diverse community. Describe a challenge you've faced.

Small groups: Share your reflections on the third question. Each person takes two minutes to share a story about building a diverse community at work. Facilitators can break the ice.

In the last minute or two, the group identifies common themes among themselves. Elect one person to share one or two common themes in the Come Together phase.

Come Together — 10 minutes

All together: Each breakout group shares its common themes with the larger group. The Facilitator or Co-facilitator takes notes in a shared document visible to all.

In conclusion, spend a few minutes considering which theme(s) resonate with you. Do you feel that your experiences have been fully captured? Be ready to discuss the themes in the next activity.

Example (Story)
"I wanted to start an LGBTQA2s+ group at my last job, as a way to connect with my co-workers. Management gave me permission, but not very much support. I felt discouraged and never followed through."

Example (Theme)
"In our group, we're hearing a lot about hiring challenges. It seems many of us don't know how to find candidates from diverse backgrounds in our professional networks."

"

I've worked with incredible people who are underrepresented minorities. As a white woman, I am privileged but have also experienced discrimination in the workplace. I want to know how I can better support under-represented minorities in the workplace and promote a diversity of thought and experiences.

Angelique Little
Content Designer

"

Black in corporate America makes you feel that normal is working twice as hard to get your just due. Ten-plus years in my field and for the first time the culture at Dropbox eliminates that feeling. True equality is felt within the teams I collaborate and work with.

Jeremy Barrett
Senior Technical Engineering Sourcer

Dialogue

Dive deeper into the ecosystem of collective experience to make connections of commonality.

🕐

30–35 minutes

◯◯

In this activity, we will **converge,** bringing different ideas together.

👥

Revisit the Shared Agreements before beginning this exercise!

Purpose

In this activity, we'll talk about our experiences and identify common themes.

Flow

The workshop organizers will guide us through the three stages of this activity: **Introduction**, **Breakout**, and **Come Together**.

Introduction — 5 minutes

Now we'll divide into different small groups and share some of the common themes we found in the previous activity. The purpose of this next activity is to identify common experiences and align on themes to guide our conversation. The Facilitator will kick off by sharing a theme that has recurred for them personally.

Breakout — 15 minutes

Each breakout group needs a timekeeper and a notetaker. The Moderator will ask for volunteers.

Each person takes a turn sharing a common theme from their breakout group from Activity 1. A common theme is one that was heard in more than one personal story. As each new person shares, take care to notice commonalities and build upon each others' themes.

Timekeeper: Establish how long each person can speak and give them a 1-minute or 30-second warning when their time limit is approaching.

Notetaker, write down the commonalities that are revealed during the small-group discussion. At the end, choose one or two themes to bring to the larger group for solution-building.

Come Together — 10 minutes

The notetaker from each small group shares the common themes identified in the breakout session.

The Facilitator or Co-facilitator will compile a shared document in real time, with a list of frequently mentioned common themes.

We'll take these themes to Activity 3 and generate solutions.

Example

"I relate to there being a disconnect between people in different divisions at work. I am the only person over 50 on the design team, and I don't know how to connect with folks my age in engineering. It seems that feeling siloed in a department or division is shared among a few of us."

"

I'm frustrated by intention over action. Teams get paralyzed devising the right process, mired in the hunt for total objectivity, or just arguing over language. Nuance is an important tool. And it's not a replacement for concrete action—holding ourselves to hiring outcomes, removing promotion barriers, or giving your seat to someone else.

Anna Sternoff
Brand Strategy Director

"

Oftentimes when it comes to improving DEI, teams try to do too much, or they don't know where to start. It's critical that teams use data to identify or validate where their biggest opportunities are, then overlay their organizational context to drive the most change possible with the available resources.

Angela Ju
DEI Business Partner

Generate

Roll up your sleeves and get your hands in the soil: it's time to cultivate.

🕐

30–35 minutes

⊙⊙

In this activity, we will **diverge,** or break big ideas into smaller parts.

👥

Revisit the Shared Agreements before beginning this activity!

Purpose

In this activity, we'll generate solid, actionable ideas and solutions for moving forward in our commitment to creating diverse and inclusive ways of working.

Flow

The workshop organizers will guide us through the three stages of this activity: **Introduction**, **Breakout**, and **Come Together**.

Introduction — 5 minutes

In this activity, we'll dive deep into the common themes identified in Activity 2. We'll ask questions and generate actions and ideas for moving toward diverse and equitable ways of working. The Facilitator will begin by suggesting an action that might address a particular theme.

Breakout — 20 minutes

The Producer and the Facilitator will assign a common theme to each new break-out group. Each group should elect a timekeeper and a notetaker.

First, the group members spend five minutes in silent, solo reflection, thinking about potential actions to address diversity and inclusion in relation to the theme. Remember, no idea is too small—or too big! Think about actions that individuals, as well as leadership, can take.

The remaining 10 minutes are spent sharing those actions and building on each other's ideas. The notetaker should capture as much as possible.

Come Together — 10 minutes

Once the full group is back together, the notetaker or Moderator from each small group presents the actions they discussed. Their complete notes should be visible to everyone in a shared document. The Facilitator will later organize all the actions presented and make the document available for future reference.

Examples

"Our theme is mentorship. One idea I have, as a senior creative director, is to reach out to the junior designers on our team to offer a portfolio review."

"Our team's theme is education. One action is to enroll the entire team in an online course about the history of BIPOC in graphic design. I just saw a post about a course like this."

"

I joined a recent webinar series all about the Indigenous groups that originally lived in the Bay Area. Learning more about their history has brought new meaning to the areas I live and work in.

Mel Sweet
Product Designer

"

I've been rewatching Henry Louis Gates Jr's series on PBS, 'The African Americans.' Sometimes it feels as though we have made no progress at all in America, but I find looking back through a historical lens gives me hope that we are moving forward. And this hope gives me motivation to work harder to achieve our goals— at home, at work, and in the larger community.

Jen DiZio
Research and Insights

Part 3: Onward

3 Onward

Exercise 1: Reflect
Consider
takeaways

Exercise 2: Act
Create an
action list

Exercise 3: Plan
Create an
accountability plan

This section is intended to be completed on your own.

This section will take you between 30 – 60 minutes to complete.
You can work on it at your own pace.

The practice of nurturing diversity and inclusion will unfold over the
course of your entire life.

Pay it Forward

Michelle Morrison, Head of Design Operations

Our culture is how we act on our beliefs. I've said this many times throughout my career and have used this thinking to evaluate the companies and cultures that I contribute to.

When we say we value trust, that means that we have a responsibility to both earn and preserve it. When we say that we are human-centered, we have to take the steps to put people at the center of our work, even when they're different from ourselves. When we say we value diversity, it's not about reaching the right ratio; it's about ensuring the success of a diverse workforce within our company.

As a leader, it's my responsibility to do what I say I'm going to do. That is what leadership is. I have a responsibility to empower my teams, peers, and partners to turn their words into actions, too. So when I say I value diversity and inclusion, it means that I must show up in a way that makes those beliefs real for the people around me. It takes the inner work of understanding my own privilege and role in society, then approaching my work with compassion, empathy, and a willingness to learn.

At times, I have to challenge my peers to do better and think bigger. I also have to defend and support people who don't have the same privilege as I do. The real work can be uncomfortable, but it's the comfort of privilege that has created disadvantage for members of our society.

It's no small act to be an inclusive leader. It's an active choice I have to make every day. I have to act, plan, and reflect on how I'll turn abstract ideas and values into culture that supports our diverse community. And in the end, this is the work that is most worthy of my time.

Reflect

What are your key takeaways from this toolkit experience?

List them out. Below are some suggestions to get you started.

You can use this reflection worksheet to evaluate your experience doing any of the toolkit exercises.

I think…

I feel…

I am…

My ways of working are…

Diversity is…

Inclusion is…

Equity is…

"

I feel incredibly privileged to be in the position that I'm in, and I'm determined to elevate a wider range of talent so that we can have a more diverse, representative workplace.

Etienne Ma
Senior Creative Strategist

"

I've been an engineering manager, tech lead developer, designer, teacher, mentor, and student. I became a US resident at the age of 16; before that I was a Dreamer. Not sure where I'd be without that privilege, but we all need to strive to help other Dreamers find their career paths.

Abraham Velazquez

Engineering Manager

Act

On your own

Create a list with at least five actions you can take to enable more diversity and inclusion in your ways of working. There's room to think big, but start small!

Consider simple yet mighty actions that you can complete easily on your own. Below are some suggestions to get you started.

Reach out to...

_____

Review and adjust
my process of...

_____

Learn more about...

_____

Extend an invitation to...

_____

Commit to...

_____

With a team

Come together with other people you work with to create a collaborative action list. Maybe you attended the Team Workshop with these folks, or maybe they're collaborators from your larger creative community.

Reach out to...

Review and adjust
my process of...

Learn more about...

Extend an invitation to...

Commit to...

"

I want to connect with students of color—inspire and bring them into the world of design through creative workshops and by sharing my own experiences.

Paolo Ertreo
Product Designer

Plan

Create accountability for yourself by plotting your actions on a calendar. Self-imposed deadlines can be a helpful motivator. Consider looping in a friend to collaborate on an action, or encouraging them to complete it on their own; having the support of another person is motivating and can help you build a network for accountability.

In addition to setting specific dates for actions, plan a check-in date when you'll revisit your action list. This is a time for rescheduling unfinished actions, or reassessing the feasibility of your original plan and adapting as necessary.

Below are suggestions for the different types of goals you might set.

Today

This week

This month

Within three months

Within six months

Within nine months

Within one year

Check in and revisit this plan:

Choose an accountability plan that works best for you. Consider the options below, or plan a custom timeline for checking in with yourself.

Next week _____

Next month _____

Three months from now _____

Six months from now _____

I'll check in with myself each month on the _____

I'll check in with myself each week on the _____

"

For me, the hardest part about committing to anti-racist and inclusivity work is keeping myself accountable. I try to remember this work is a forever-ongoing practice, not a destination I'll someday arrive at. I think that committing to a lifetime of asking questions and adjusting to new understandings is the most important thing any of us can do.

Nicole Lavelle
Contract Visual Designer

The Power of Experience

Danny Guillory, Head of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Often when we try to help others, our first instinct is to give advice: "Let me tell you what I think," "Here's what you should do," or some other well-intended, directional statement. We believe we can see the situation much clearer, or they wouldn't have asked us, right?

About 10 years ago I joined a group of entrepreneurs, all from different industries. We met on a regular basis to share our different challenges, personal and professional, with the goal of learning from one another. But there was a catch—a strict rule that we could not give each other advice, but could only share actual experiences that might relate to the problem or challenge presented. The theory behind this approach is that one, I do not know more than someone else about their situation, and two, I can learn a great deal by taking what I find relevant from other people's experiences. For the first meeting or two, the approach felt a little awkward. But soon we realized the power of experience sharing.

Not only did I learn as the focus of the group, but I raced with ideas even when someone else had the floor. Through reflecting on my own experiences and sharing them, I see how my failures and triumphs shape who I am.

These meetings dramatically impacted my life in a range of ways—the way I work, the way I think, and the way I live my personal life. And we have each influenced one another and evolved personally and professionally.

In addition to being a powerful tool for learning, experience sharing is essential for advancing principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Sharing our weaknesses creates space for others to share theirs—and is a prerequisite for experiencing transformation. I hope that you'll take advantage of the opportunity for growth through the exercises in this kit.