norms for inclusion
full-spectrum diversity: norms for inclusion

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20+ years in software development, executive leadership, and organizational transformation

Passionate about agile, lean, and making software delivery humane; not afraid to look silly doing it

Fourth-generation Seattleite

College recruiter & mentor; traveler; bolonka lover; genealogist; feminist

🚫 Not a human resources professional!
🚫 Not a lawyer!

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Agenda

Diversities
... are like DevOps

Techniques
“Yes, and...”
Strengths
User manuals
Nonviolent Communication (NVC)
Clean Language questions
Diversities

- Race
- Color
- Ethnicity
- National origin
- Religion
- Sex
- Age
- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Marital status
- Veteran status
- Citizenship status
- Language proficiency
- Regional origin
- Cultural practices
- Gender
- Gender expression
- Relationship status
- Family structure
- Size
- Handedness
- Body type
- Pregnancy
- Injury
- Chronic illness
- Neurodiversity
- Learning differences
- Sensory differences
- ADHD
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Trauma
- Medication
Inclusion is like DevOps

Diversities are a complex adaptive system
Inclusion is like DevOps!
One principle to rule them all...?!
Inclusion is like DevOps

It’s not about you.
It’s not about you

Get comfortable being uncomfortable.
You don’t have to understand it to respect it.
Educate yourself - don’t demand it of others.
Inclusion is like DevOps

If you’ve met one... you’ve met one.
A tale of three deafnesses

Meet my mom!

*How did growing up with my mom prepare me to work closely with a deaf colleague?*

It mostly didn’t.

*How did working closely with my deaf colleague prepare me to advise someone whose team had just hired a deaf developer?*

It mostly didn’t.

Except now, I know (better) that I don’t know.
Inclusion is like DevOps

Let people speak for themselves.
Let people speak for themselves

Call people what they want to be called.

Keep confidences; don’t “out” people.

Hold space for others, but don’t put them on the spot.
Inclusion is like DevOps

It’s a mindset.
Psychological safety is a **prerequisite**.

Create safety before you think you need it!
Full-spectrum diversity

Techniques
“Yes, and...”
“Yes, and...”

**the practice**
Accept what the other person is saying (“yes”)
Develop along that line of thinking together (“and”)

**the mindset**
Challenge yourself to accept others’ perspectives - how might they be right?

**take care**
Accept what is offered; don’t pry
Techniques for inclusivity

User manuals
User manuals

the practice
Teamsource the questions you want to ask each other, or use a starter set
Keep user manuals in a shared folder, accessible to all
Have new teammates create their user manuals during onboarding
Periodically review and update the team’s questions and your own answers

the mindset
Create space for all individuals to communicate their own needs in their own words

take care
Don’t ask invasive questions; stay high-level and work-focused
power dynamics matter
What frustrates you?

How do you best learn?

How you prefer to give and receive feedback?

What makes you happy?
Techniques for inclusivity

Strengths
Strengths

the practice
Gallup StrengthsFinder* provides a vocabulary of 34 strengths/themes to explore
Pair with others whose strengths are complementary; build balanced teams
Even an asset can become a liability at its extreme

the mindset
Identify and cultivate what people naturally do well
Reject “culture fit” - seek out “culture add”
power dynamics matter
Strengths basics

Take the assessment

Collect the team’s strengths

Talk about the most-represented

Talk about the outliers

Talk about pairs in harmony and in tension
Nonviolent Communication (NVC)
Nonviolent Communication (NVC)

**the practice**
Separate, clearly identify, and ask questions to elucidate observations, feelings, and needs
Formulate and accept requests as authentic expressions of an unmet need

**the mindset**
In conflict or misalignment, look compassionately for the other person’s unmet need
Own your feelings, and practice differentiating them from observations and needs
NVC basics

Empathically listening
Honestly expressing

Observations
“When I see/hear...”

Feelings
“I am feeling...”

Needs
“... because I am needing...”

Requests
“Would you be willing...?”
Clean Language questions
Clean Language questions

the practice
A constrained set of questions for exploring someone’s mental model without injecting bias

the mindset
Mental models are infinitely varied!
I learn more by seeking to understand the other person’s thinking than imposing my own
Clean questions basics

**Acknowledge**
“And __[repeat what they said]__,”

**Focus**
“And when __[repeat it again]__,”

**Seek understanding**
“__[use a clean question]__?”

What kind of __ is that?

Is there anything else about __?

Where/whereabouts is __?

What happens next?

What happens just before __?

Where does/could __ come from?

__ is like what?
Techniques for inclusivity

Your next steps
Starters

Jane Lynch on “yes, and...” at Smith

StrengthsFinder Top 5

User manuals
https://atlassian.com/team-playbook/plays/my-user-manual

Nonviolent Communication

Caitlin Walker on Clean at TEDx
https://youtu.be/aVvcU5qG4KU and 2pm here today!
Start with your peers.

Modeling > fanfare

Treat techniques as experiments

Inspect & adapt
Opportunities

pivotal.io/labs
This is what we do

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Agile Practice Lead - Software Development
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full-spectrum diversity: rethinking our norms

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