

Inclusive Leadership in Governance

Catherine Winter
Program Manager, onBoard Canada
June 12, 2019

Ryerson
University

The Chang School
of Continuing
Education



onBoard
Canada

What is Good Governance?

- Responsibility for the oversight of the present and future needs of the organizations
- Exercises prudence in policy-setting and decision-making

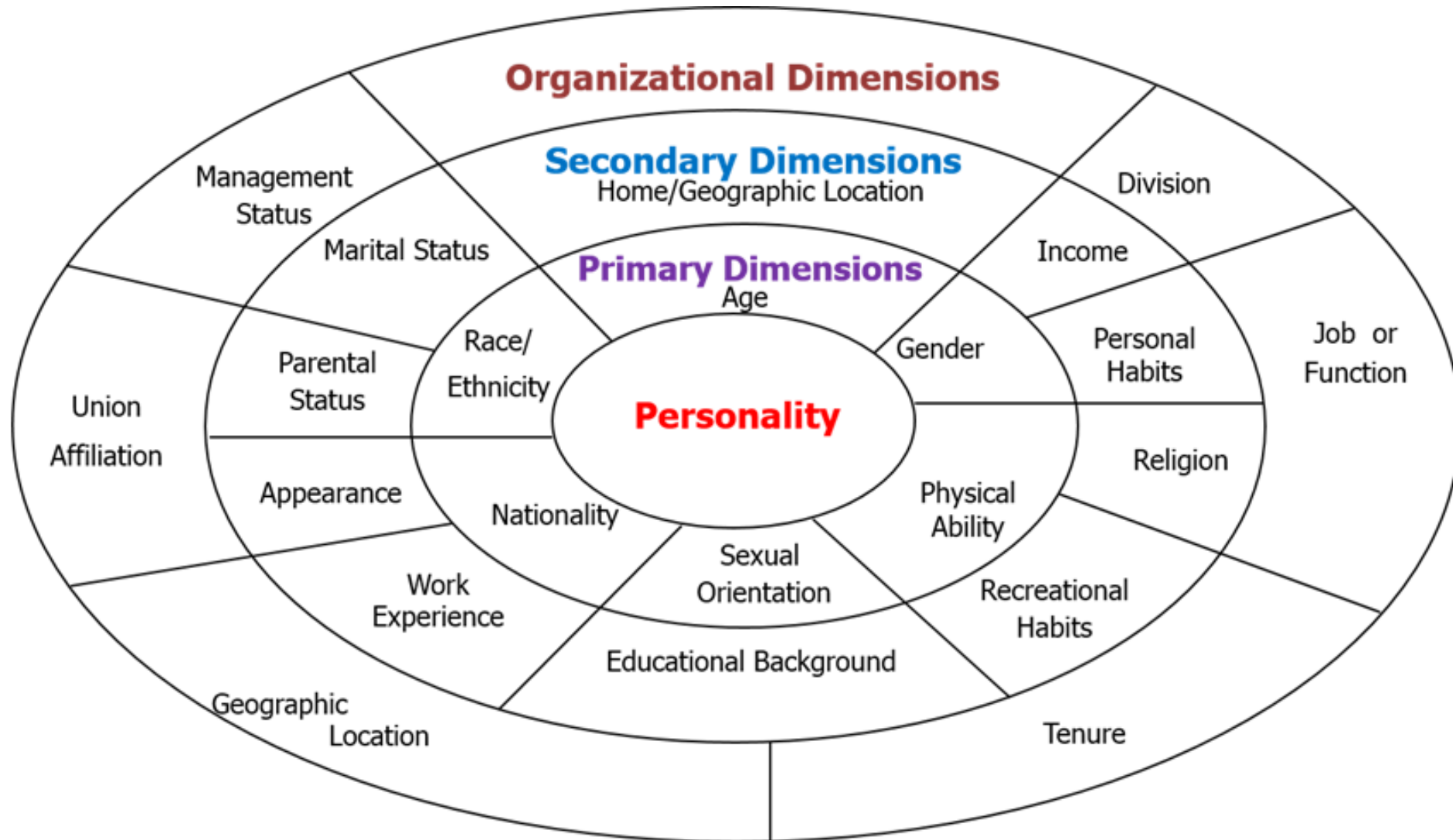


- Strategic and intentional
- Ensures that the best interests of all stakeholders are taken into account

What is Diversity?



What is Diversity?



What is Inclusion?



**"DIVERSITY IS BEING INVITED TO THE PARTY;
INCLUSION IS BEING ASKED TO DANCE."**

VERNA MYERS, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION EXPERT

A photograph of a group of people in a meeting or workshop setting. In the foreground, a woman with glasses and a name tag that says 'Jerr' is looking towards the right. To her right, another woman with glasses is looking towards the left. In the background, other people are visible, some standing and some sitting at tables. A teal horizontal band is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the text 'Start the Conversation' in white. A water bottle is visible on a table in the lower right corner.

Start the Conversation



Changing Demographics

Why do we need Diversity in Leadership?

STRATEGICALLY

- How does it advance our mission?
- How does it improve our demographics both in terms of audience, board and staff?
- How can we tap into it to grow our business?
Fundraising? Expand our reach and market?

Why do we need Diversity in Leadership?

ETHICALLY



- What kind of organization do you want to be with respect to diversity and inclusion?
 - One that is exclusionary and doesn't tap into the rich cultural mosaic of the city?
- How do we foster an environment where any individual group feels welcomed, respected supported and valued to participate?

Research Findings



- Diverse perspectives in decision-making lead to better decisions
- Diverse organizations can be more responsive to the community and clients
- Diverse boards can lead to increased governance board sustainability
- Diverse boards can support fundraising and marketing/outreach more effectively
- Diverse boards can help build social capital and cohesion among diverse populations



Why Inclusive Governance?

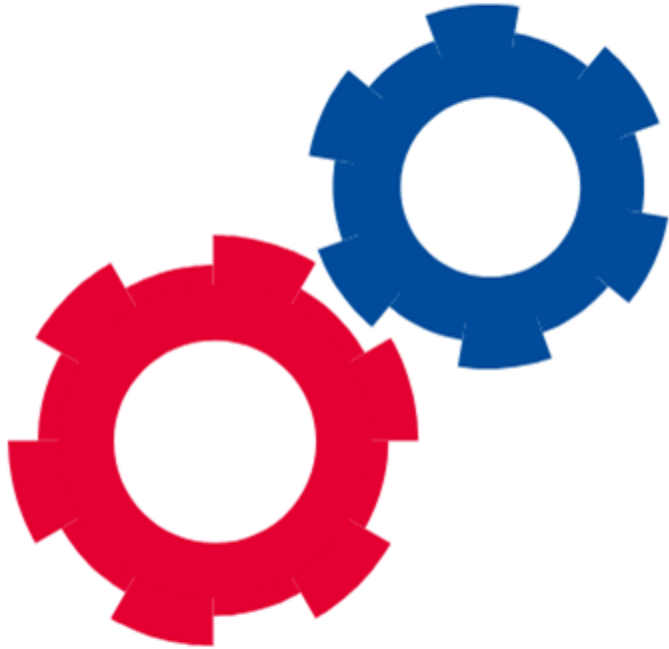
A photograph of three people sitting at a table in a bright, modern office setting. On the left, a young man with dark hair, wearing a light blue button-down shirt, looks towards the center. In the middle, a woman with dark curly hair and glasses, wearing a white shirt, is smiling and looking towards the right. On the right, the back of an older man's head and shoulder is visible, wearing a white shirt. A semi-transparent teal banner is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the text 'Assessing Inclusivity' in white.

Assessing Inclusivity

Levels of Inclusion



Developing an Inclusion Strategy



- Equity and inclusion are valued
- Is it reflected in the way that decisions are made?
- Will not happen on it's own, it will take a deliberate effort

Allocation and Commitment of Resources

- 
- An overhead photograph of five business professionals (three women and two men) seated around a light-colored wooden conference table. They are engaged in a meeting, looking at documents and laptops. The scene is brightly lit, and the background shows a light-colored tiled floor.
- Who is on your Governance Committee, your Finance Committee, your Human Resources Committee, and your Fundraising Committee?
 - Who are the decision makers on those committees?
 - How are discussions about allocation and commitment of resources held?

Putting it into Practice



- Acknowledge that welcoming diverse identities to the table is just the beginning, and is an important first step
- They also need to tangibly impact both formal and informal policies and practices, and inform the core values of the board

Recruitment and Selection Practices

- Talk to newer board members and ask them about the process
- If there were potential board members who didn't end up joining your board, you could also reach out to them to see if the process played a role in their decision to disengage from the process



What's His Story?

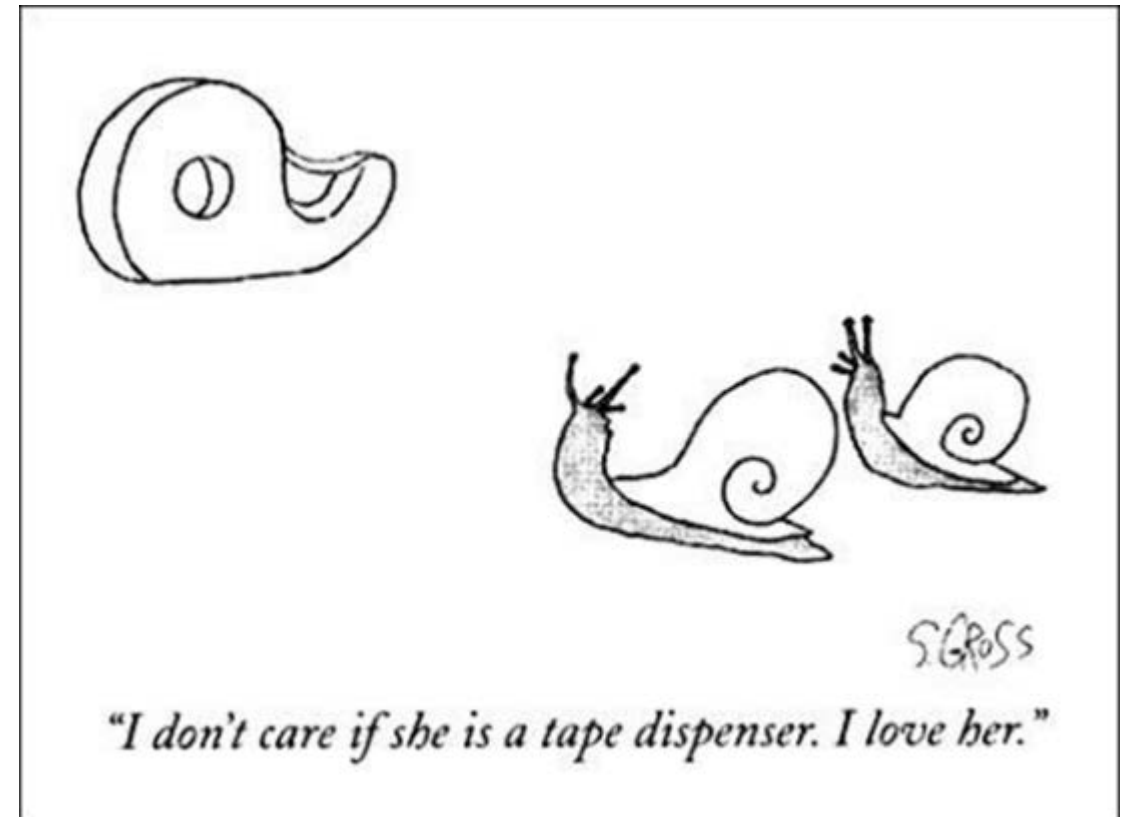
If you met this person for the first time, answer the following questions:

- What narrative or "story" would you create about him?
- What "picture" would you paint?
- How "safe" would you feel around him?
- How educated – level of education?
- What do you think are his "likes" with the world around him?

Strategies for Building a Culture of Learning

Establishing a Community of Learning

- **Unconscious Bias** refers to the information, attitudes, and stereotypes that influences our subconscious
- Hosting a training and providing professional development for your board on the area of unconscious bias would be an excellent way to *start the conversation*



Going Beyond Representation

Practices to Build Stronger and More Inclusive Community



- Get to know your board members beyond the board meetings
- Assign new board members a “board buddy”
- Host a special gathering that is purely social
- Ensure that all board members are given the information, the access and the encouragement that they need to be actively involved in critical

Going Beyond Representation

Practices that Impact Planning and Decision-Making



- Use accessible, inclusive language
- Don't assume a unilateral knowledge base from board members
- Plan meeting times with religious and cultural holidays in mind
- Recognize that there are different cultural and religious seasons when planning meetings
- If food is served at meetings, respect dietary restrictions
- Respect board members' family responsibilities as they may relate to the scheduling of board meetings

Persons with (Dis)abilities

Universal Design

Examples of ways universal design practices may apply to your governance board include:

- Routinely providing manuals, materials, and forms to all members in a variety of digital formats
- Ensuring that the spaces where you are meeting are accessible
- Providing board members with a range of ways in which they can contribute



Responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission

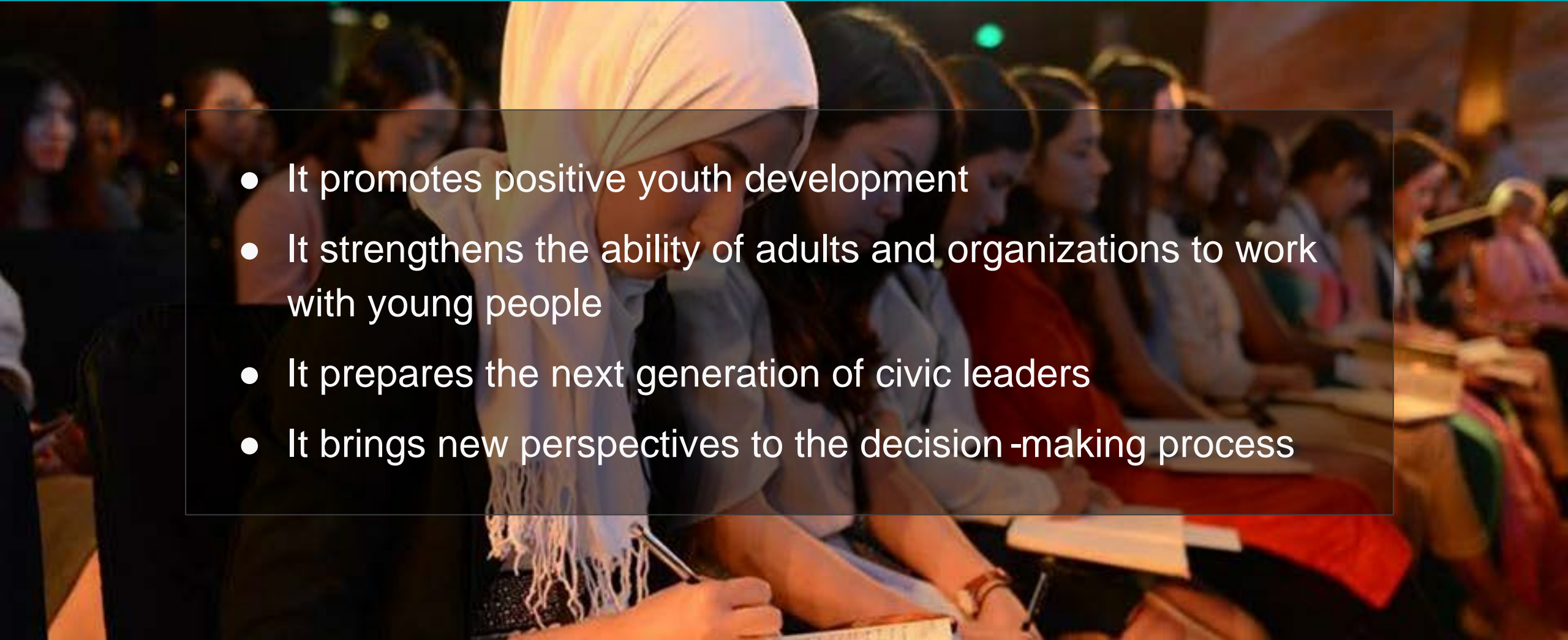


1. Learn what the traditional Indigenous territory is where your organization is located. Start board meetings by making a statement of acknowledgement of the people of the territory. Agency/Organizational events should also begin with this verbal acknowledgement.
1. Look for an event hosted by an Indigenous group in the community that your organization is situated in. Watch and learn and make a connection. Remember to approach them as someone who wants to learn and engage.

Learning to Use Inclusive Language: The LGBTQ2+ Community and Inclusion

- Incorporate gender-neutral pronouns into your practice , including policy and procedure documents, raising awareness of gender diversity among board and organization members (i.e. the singular they/them)
- Invite everyone to identify their pronouns at meetings or events so that it becomes a common practice
 - This practice can also be adapted for email signatures (i.e. Hello, my name is _____, and my pronouns are they/them; my pronouns are he/him; my pronouns are she/her)

Building Future Leaders: Engaging Youth in the Civic Process

- It promotes positive youth development
 - It strengthens the ability of adults and organizations to work with young people
 - It prepares the next generation of civic leaders
 - It brings new perspectives to the decision-making process
- 

Acknowledging Value from Different Spaces and Places

Strategies to Cultivate a Culture of Inclusion

- Highlight both skills and lived experience when recruiting for board positions
- Ensure that you are always talking about the populations that your governance is serving with respect
- Don't make expectations that board members make financial contributions
- Don't assume that board members can contribute to meals, food that is ordered in
- Be aware of different work schedules and that not all workplaces may be flexible
- When you are conducting activities that invite participation from all board members, ensure that questions and content is inclusive and doesn't make assumptions about income



Embedding a Culture of Inclusion



Common Challenges

- Resistance
- Particular people feeling attacked in conversations about power, privilege, equity and inclusion
- Change takes time and energy
- Complacency



Best Practices in Building a Culture of Inclusion

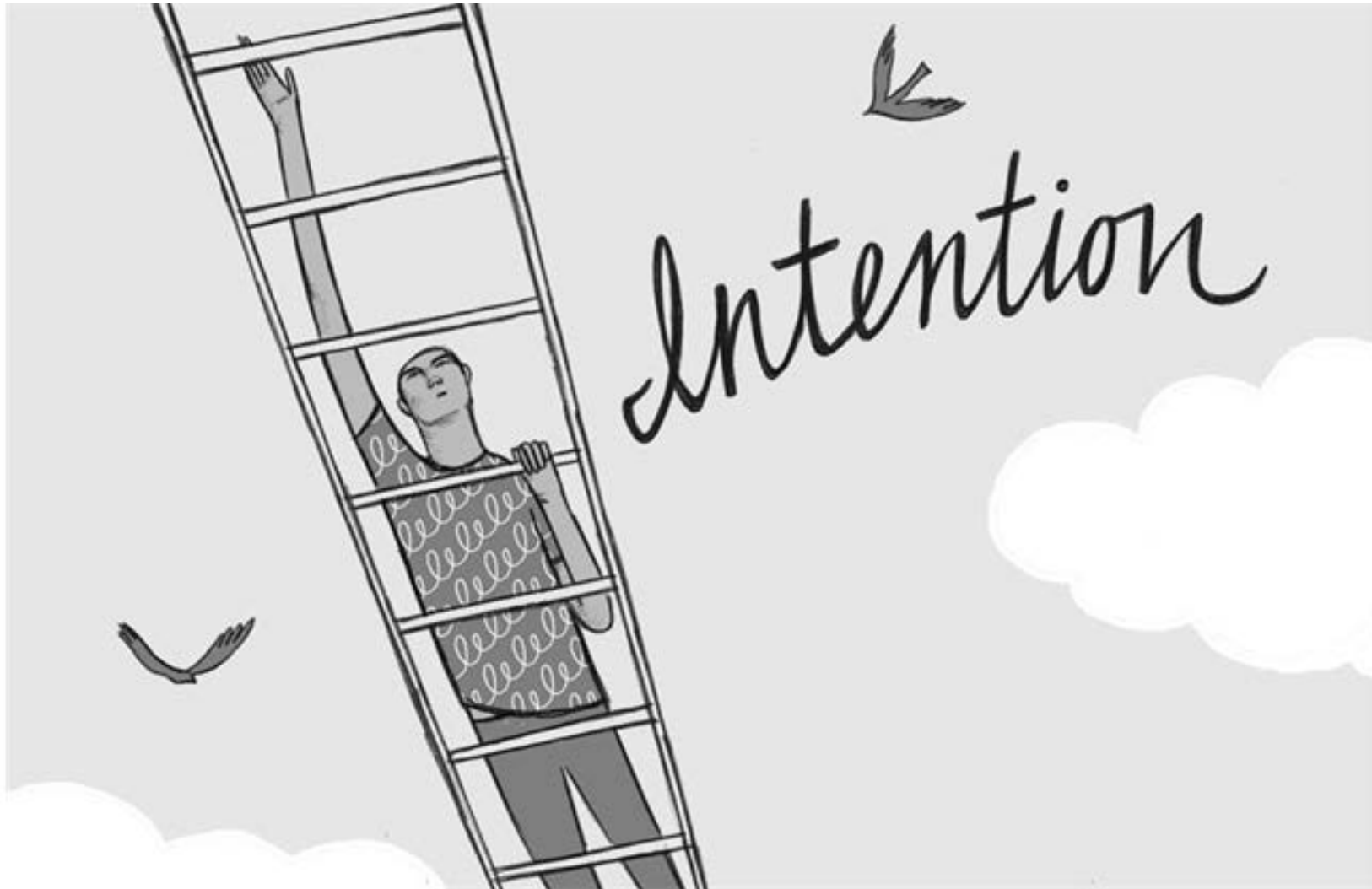
- Develop a Clear Purpose Statement
- Cultivate a Community of Learning
- Create an Intentional Dialogue
- Acknowledge the Biases
- Embrace the Differences





Reflection

Be Intentional



Identify Champions



Incrementalism



Choose Your Instrument



Measure





Thank you!