

## DEI in action: Ideas for updated cultural norms

These equity-based suggestions came about at the beginning of the COVID19 pandemic when I was thinking about how to increase equity for workers with caregiving responsibilities within my workplace. These are some suggestions I presented to reset our organization's cultural norms to help staff who are juggling multiple family care responsibilities, and you may find some of these to be helpful within your context. These are supportive not just of parents, but of everyone in the organization who may be struggling with additional responsibilities, or with adapting to an entirely new work environment:

- Consider re-evaluating true prioritization of tasks and meetings
  - We must acknowledge that while we hope to keep the organizational mission and work moving forward, it will be next to impossible to have the level of productivity that we do when our offices are open, and we are working at full speed.
  - If someone is struggling to keep up with a regular workload due to additional pressures, it is critical to help prioritize the most important tasks, and to be clear about what tasks can be put off, not done, or reassigned to another member of staff who may have capacity.
- Ratcheting down the pressure of meetings
  - Does everyone have to be at all of them?
  - Do we need so many? Can we have fewer meetings by dropping meetings that are lower in priority? Can meetings occur with less frequency?
    - Note that we should also avoid replacing meetings with additional emails, which also create additional work.
  - Can we schedule shorter meetings?
  - Can we have a meeting free day?
  - Can we record more meetings to allow for someone who is a parent who can't attend or pay full attention?
    - Would need to note that if the person not attending is a critical decision maker, we will need to give time for them to listen to the recording, consider their position, and decide. [Note: this is also an inclusive meeting best practice to accommodate someone who may not feel comfortable deciding on the spot.]
- Set the expectation that everyone, particularly supervisors, have empathy, grace, and kindness with each other.
  - Acknowledge that things may be going on behind someone in a meeting.
  - It's ok not to have video on if you are worried about what's going on behind you.
  - Consider using platforms for meetings that have "blur my background" features that can help allay some of these concerns.

- How we can support staff members who are parents (or who may be stretched thin with other family care responsibilities)?
  - If someone has extra capacity and could help a staff member who is juggling additional responsibilities (e.g., childcare, elder care, other family care), how can we allow for staff to raise their hand to either ask for help or to volunteer to help?
  - Find new ways of working this throughout the organization, such as rewarding staff performance that is reflective of healthy work- rest cycles.
- Can we give top-down direction on how teams should be thinking about big time chunks in terms of how to operate and prioritize goals through the pandemic? (e.g., next 2 to 3 weeks, next 2 to 3 months, summer)