



5. REACH OUT: Expand your network and seek out opportunities to engage with people outside of your typical social/professional circles.

Explanation of Issue: A key step towards acceptance and inclusion is relating to people who are different from ourselves. If we remain within our own bubble and small social/professional networks, it is difficult to develop an appreciation for diverse groups of people. Branching out socially and professionally is a key step towards growing understanding and awareness.

Practical Tools

- Partner with other local organizations/businesses to bring in DEI experts who can offer relevant training.
- Volunteer for a local organization that serves a cause that you care about. If you are a business or government entity, organize paid work volunteer days and invite local nonprofits to present to your employees about the work they are doing. Getting engaged with local causes provides an opportunity to both help, as well as learn.
- Seek out opportunities for diverse social engagement such as fundraisers, classes, or community events.
- If you don't understand how to use "they/them" gender pronouns, start by conducting your own research; there are abundant online resources. Then, ask within your networks if they have experience or good resources about inclusive pronoun language. If you want more information still, or context from a person who uses these pronouns, ask their consent before expecting them to share their experience and insight with you.
- Read books by authors from different backgrounds than your own. Stories provide a great means for better understanding and relating to people with different backgrounds.
- If you see something, say something. Microaggressions and bias exist everywhere and learn how to navigate these situations by having intentional conversations; try talking with friends, trusted coworkers, maybe even your HR department. Maybe you can't mediate an inequitable situation or stop toxic culture right away, but you can learn more about systemic inequities and build your confidence to change and improve these environments.

What Is Already Being Done in Our Community

- World Fiesta is an event about celebrating diverse groups of people and cultures. Integrated Communities hosts this annually.
- Connect with Northwest Colorado Center for Independence to learn about life as a differently abled community member.
- Steamboat Christian Center has a [Connect Group](#) which provides a forum for meeting new people.
- Butcherknife Brewery celebrates LGBTQIA+ diversities with an annual Pride event.
- Bud Werner Library hosts a wide array of literary and cultural events featuring authors, films, and scholars from diverse backgrounds, e.g. Literary Sojourn.