

Leadership DEI reflection prompts



A reflection prompt tool to help leaders consider how their everyday decisions, responses and signals influence inclusion, psychological safety and workforce well-being

Part of the AUSMASA Trainer and Assessor VET Career Framework

Consultation identified that leadership behaviours and responses have a significant influence on workplace inclusion, safety and wellbeing. This reflection tool helps leaders consider the signals they send through everyday decisions and interactions, and how these may affect who feels able to speak up, participate and thrive. It is intended to support reflection and continuous improvement, not to evaluate leadership style or intent.

Who the tool is for

Leaders, managers, coordinators and others with supervisory or decision-making responsibility.

When to use the tool

Use this tool when reflecting on leadership practice, responding to concerns, or reviewing how inclusion and well-being are experienced across teams.

How to use the tool

Use the prompts individually or in leadership discussions. Focus on patterns, decisions and systems rather than personal traits. Not all prompts will be relevant in every context. Use what is helpful and leave the rest.

Leadership DEI Reflection prompts
Signals leaders send • What do my everyday responses signal about what it is safe to raise? • When someone brings a concern, do I tend to listen first, move quickly to fixing, minimise the issue, or defer action? • What behaviours are quietly rewarded through attention, approval or tolerance?
Consistency and fairness • Are expectations applied consistently across people, teams and locations? • Where do I rely on discretion rather than clear guidance, and who benefits most from that? • Who has access to flexibility, and who absorbs the cost elsewhere?
Gender, power and credibility • Whose behaviour tends to be described as "confident" versus "difficult" or "emotional"? • How do I respond when women raise concerns about workload, behaviour or culture? • Do I expect some people to adapt to the environment, rather than adjusting the environment itself?

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First Nations safety and accountability

- What responsibility do I carry for ensuring First Nations staff feel safe, respected and heard in my area?
- How do I tend to respond when First Nations staff raise concerns or different perspectives?
- Where might I be relying on individuals to explain or carry cultural knowledge on behalf of the organisation?

Neurodiversity, difference and disclosure

- Which work practices rely on unspoken rules, speed or constant switching?
- What support is available without requiring disclosure or justification?
- How safe does it feel to ask for adjustments without risk to credibility or opportunity? Which processes rely on unspoken rules, speed or constant switching of attention?

Workload, well-being and shared responsibility

- Where does well-being rely on individual resilience rather than work design?
- Who absorbs extra work because they are capable, reliable or "good with people"?
- How do I notice and respond to early signs of overload before performance is affected?

When things go wrong

- How do I respond when something fails, a mistake is made, or harm is raised?
- Do people see learning, defensiveness, or silence in my response?
- What do my responses teach people about whether it is worth speaking up next time?

If you are unsure or identify a gap

If a prompt is hard to answer, that can be useful information. Leaders may choose to:

- pause and learn, rather than answer quickly
- check understanding by asking staff what helps them feel safe and supported
- use existing supports (for example, people and culture, well-being, Aboriginal support teams, or external training)
- focus on one small change to improve clarity, consistency, or safety in everyday practice,

This tool is designed to support reflection and learning over time, not to produce perfect answers.

Learn more about the Trainer and Assessor VET Career Framework

Explore more practical tools, guides and resources supporting VET capability, wellbeing, industry engagement and career development