

MHFA England: Equality, Diversity, Inclusivity (EDI) and Zero Tolerance Policy

How we create an inclusive culture of belonging and respect

WHY: As a social enterprise dedicated to improving the mental health of the nation, our commitment to promoting social justice, inclusivity and belonging goes hand in hand with our social purpose.

WHAT: Our EDI and Zero Tolerance Policy sets out our collective responsibility to create an inclusive environment in which everyone feels valued, respected and appreciated with a common understanding of the behaviours that are encouraged and those that will not be tolerated.

HOW: Achieving true inclusivity needs more than rhetoric. It needs positive, sustained action. This document (and related policies) set out the actions we can all take to become recognised as an organisation that champions inclusivity and challenges social injustice in everything we do.

Our belief and how we put it into action

We believe that our diversity and commitment to equality makes us stronger, more innovative and more creative. It helps us better serve our people, our customers and our communities and is integral to achieving our vision of improving the mental health of the nation. At MHFA England, we embrace equity, diversity and inclusion through:

- *Our people:* valuing unique talents, backgrounds and experiences
- *Our culture:* creating a workplace culture with wellbeing, belonging and respect at its core
- *Our platform:* using our position as a leading mental health social enterprise to campaign on the importance of creating workplaces where everyone feels valued and able to be themselves
- *Our work:* developing training dedicated to helping organisations create equitable cultures

We believe in creating a culture with equity and kindness at its core.

A third of our adult life is spent at work, so it is essential that we all feel respected and valued in our roles. The bottom line is that everyone must feel able to bring their whole self into work each day.

Ensuring that everyone feels valued and psychologically and physically safe at work is our collective responsibility. That is why this policy applies to anyone employed by or associated with MHFA England. It also applies to all settings including our

offices, our clients' offices, online meetings, events and social outings. **The role we each play in creating our inclusive culture**

Leading by example

We believe in leading by example and expect our leaders to commit to:

- Self-reflection and awareness
- Being open-minded and recognising the need to continually learn more
- Demonstrating an open mindset
- Acknowledging their own mistakes and expressing humility
- Seeking to understand those around them

Our leaders create a culture of belonging not only by role modelling inclusive behaviour, but by being consistent advocates of it:

- Empowering their teams to bring their whole selves to work
- Encouraging people to support their own and each other's wellbeing
- Calling out and calling in non-inclusive behaviour
- Seeking to change harmful behaviour (either their own or others) from a standpoint of acknowledgement, openness and learning

The role of our People team

Our People team also play an important role in ensuring that our policies and practices drive employee engagement and create an inclusive culture.

By promoting good corporate governance, the benefits of having diverse voices as champions, devising ways of addressing workplace bias, adopting inclusive programmes and instilling a culture of learning and openness, they hold our leadership team and employees to account and support them in creating the inclusive and respectful working environment we all benefit from.

Zero Tolerance

We have included Zero Tolerance in this policy because we believe it is everyone's right to work in an inclusive environment in which they feel comfortable, safe and happy.

Taking positive action: 'Calling it out' and 'Calling it in'

Our inclusive culture is important to us. We believe it creates the happiest, healthiest and fairest environment for us all to work in.

To maintain it, we have adopted a zero-tolerance approach to non-inclusive behaviour. We will not tolerate any form of prejudice in our organisation and expect everyone to address any form of discrimination, bullying or bias they witness, experience or encounter.

We never walk on by. We 'call it out'. We address things early and take prompt action to prevent situations from escalating or happening again.

We understand that some situations are unintentional, but this doesn't mean they should go unaddressed. We can all continually grow and learn. 'Calling it in' enables individuals to understand why their behaviour is harmful and to learn how to change it.

Our collective commitment

We are the sum of our parts. It is not just our leaders that have a role to play. Everyone at MHFA has a personal responsibility to nurture the inclusive environment and workplace culture we all value. We all treat ourselves and each other with kindness, compassion, equity, and respect.

We also expect each of our colleagues to make a personal commitment to contribute to our EDI and race equity commitments. We should all be considering if there is equity in every decision we make, and whether we are inclusive in the way we behave, connect, and interact with those around us. We commit to the principles of restorative justice.

The impact of our commitment to inclusivity

Our collective commitment pays off. Employees often use words like caring, friendly, supportive, innovative and inclusive to describe our company culture. And we are proud that we have been included in the coveted Great Place to Work® lists, where we've been recognised in Best Workplace for Wellbeing and UK's Best Workplace lists (medium sized company).

Our My Whole Self campaign: why it is so important

Being able to be yourself is fundamental to positive mental health. That's why we believe that in today's society no-one should feel that they must leave parts of their identity (their cultural or ethnic background, gender identity, sexuality, beliefs, disability or health) behind when they work.

Our My Whole Self campaign calls on organisations to empower their employees to bring their whole self to work without fear of judgement.

Creating an environment in which people have the safety and freedom to choose which parts of their identity they share at work is better for wellbeing and better for business. It enables people to be true to themselves, increases our understanding of each other's needs, helps us work better together and enriches our working environment and practices.

As well as campaigning for positive workplace change, we live that change and the values central to our My Whole Self campaign are embedded in our culture.

Our stance on anti-racism: leading and learning

Our stance on anti-racism is clear. Racial injustice and racial inequity should not exist and cannot be tolerated.

As a social health enterprise, we have an important role to play in challenging and dismantling systemic and institutional racism and in promoting equality in our own community and wider society.

In July 2020, we published our commitment to become a truly anti-racist organisation. We are proud of the work we are doing in this space. It is confronting and sometimes uncomfortable. But it is vital and we hope will ultimately help create true racial justice in the workplace, in society and in mental health outcomes.

At MHFA England, being an anti-racist social enterprise means actively challenging racism in everything we do and everything we touch by ensuring our values, beliefs, policies, content and courses are all underpinned by a clear commitment to race equity.

Achieving equity in our community and reducing racial disparities in mental health outcomes means developing the empathy, courage, understanding and skills we have as a community to talk about race, racism and privilege. It also means working collaboratively with others and holding ourselves and each other accountable for the progress we make, learning together, and being honest about our successes and failures.

Our first [Race Equity Impact Report](#) sets out the progress we have made against our commitment, reports on the key actions we have taken, reflects on the lessons we have learned along the way and sets out our commitments for the future.

Using our platform to promote racial equity

Our new Race Equity and Mental Health course helps organisations join us in reflecting learning and acting to enhance inclusivity in working environments and improve mental health outcomes for all employees.

Through working with our Instructor Member community and other organisations in the mental health sector, we continue to highlight the experiences People of Colour and Black people have when accessing mental health services and seek to raise awareness of and challenge, racial disparities in mental health outcomes.

Creating an equitable employee experience

We are an equal opportunities employer

That means we ensure no employee, sub-contractor, or applicant is discriminated against either directly or indirectly because of sex, race (including colour, nationality, and ethnic or national origin), disability, age, sexual orientation, social class, gender identity/or expression, gender reassignment, religion or belief, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity, or any other protected characteristic as defined by the Equality Act 2010.

Our inclusive, constantly evolving recruitment and retention programmes

Throughout our employee lifecycle, we adopt a proactive, and at times radical approach to our recruitment, retention, pay and benefits, and race equity commitments.

We take proactive steps to lessen disadvantages or remove barriers throughout our employee pipeline, assisting groups that are potentially at a disadvantage or under-represented within our workforce.

Ensuring we have diverse candidates to choose from when recruiting for pivotal and senior roles in our organisation is crucial to this drive, which is why we work with diversity recruiters (as well as exploring other avenues) when sourcing external candidates for roles.

We also continually monitor our internal people analytics to better understand our workforce diversity and areas that need focus and/or improvement. Finally, our recruitment and onboarding processes are reviewed in real time, rather than annually, enabling us to learn and adapt to continually ensure a more inclusive candidate experience.

A culture created through co-design and collaboration

Equality and fairness run through our DNA. We want to provide fair, rewarding opportunities for all employees that reflect their individual needs and requirements. And we want everyone, whether part-time, full time or temporary to be able to reach their potential.

We do this through holding open, honest conversations with colleagues and by continually collaborating and constantly reviewing our people policies. Our Project Sapphire work, staff engagement surveys and support for employee-led and wellbeing initiatives are all indicative of our ethos of co-design and collaboration.

This approach enables us to continually evolve our ways of working to create forward looking, flexible working experiences that bring together the best of working from the office and home and work for individuals, teams and the business.

The behaviours we won't tolerate in our inclusive culture

Outlined below are examples of behaviours we have a zero-tolerance policy towards. This list is indicative rather than exhaustive, as there will be other, unlisted behaviours that also fall within the scope of this policy.

Discrimination

Discrimination is defined as the unjust or prejudicial treatment of a person because of who they are, what they believe, or because they possess certain characteristics.

People may be discriminated against because of race, gender, age, religion or belief, disability, class or sexual orientation as well as other reasons. These are called 'protected characteristics' under the 2010 Equality Act. Discrimination based on any protected characteristics is usually against the law (www.acas.org.uk/discrimination-and-the-law).

Discrimination can take many forms, from violating a person's dignity to limiting their opportunities or deliberately excluding them. We do not tolerate discrimination in any form.

Harassment

Harassment is unwanted behaviour that is designed to be offensive, or to humiliate or intimidate. It can happen on its own, or alongside other forms of discrimination.

Harassment can include demeaning remarks, slurs, obscene or abusive language, outing individuals against their will or producing degrading material portraying stereotypes of an individual or marginalised group.

Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is harassment of a sexual nature or related to gender. It can take many forms and does not have to be motivated by sexual desire.

Sexual harassment may include misogynistic comments or behaviour, deliberate or persistent misgendering, sexual jokes, advances, gestures or touching, written or verbal abuse of a sexual nature or degrading ways to describe an individual.

Microaggressions

Microaggressions are verbal or behavioural slights that communicate (intentionally or unintentionally) negative or harmful attitudes towards marginalised groups. Over time, microaggressions can have a lasting, detrimental emotional and mental impact on those targeted and can contribute to a toxic and non-inclusive working environment.

Examples of microaggressions in the workplace can include, but are not limited to:

- Calling a woman “bossy”
- Asking a Black Person or Person of Colour where they are “really from”
- Commenting on a person’s appearance in reference to racial characteristics
- Scheduling meetings or important deadlines on religious or cultural holidays

Bullying

Bullying behaviour is designed to make a person feel vulnerable, excluded, humiliated, undermined, fearful or threatened. It can be verbal or non-verbal with examples including, but not limited to:

- Physical and psychological threats
- Overbearing or intimidating levels of supervision
- Shouting at colleagues in public or private
- Spreading malicious rumours

Victimisation

Victimisation happens when a person treats another individual unfairly or in a derogatory way because they have complained about discrimination, stood up for someone else who has been impacted by discrimination, or are suspected of having reported discrimination.

Other unacceptable behaviour

The list above is not exhaustive. Other behaviours that will not be tolerated include inciting others to commit hate crimes, cyber bullying, minimising, excusing and

defending unacceptable behaviour, as well as other behaviours that could undermine our inclusive working environment.

Ultimately, we want everyone to feel confident bringing their whole self to work. We encourage any behaviour that empowers people to be able to do this and will not tolerate any behaviour, whether direct or indirect, that threatens this right.

Being accountable: speaking up and reporting

A truly inclusive environment can only be created if people feel able and safe to report instances in which they have experienced or witnessed non-inclusive behaviour.

Any member of staff who feels that their treatment is not in keeping with this policy has a right to register a complaint under our Grievance and Disciplinary policy. Built into our policy is an assurance that there will be no risk to the person raising such concerns if their actions are made in good faith.

If you encounter behaviour that shouldn't be tolerated you can address it by:

1. Talking directly to the individual/s involved yourself if you feel comfortable
2. Turning to a trusted colleague or your manager to help you address the situation
3. Speaking to HR if you don't feel able to do either of the above, and/or if the behaviour continues. They will identify the best way to resolve the situation, which may include:
 - a) Speaking to all the parties involved
 - b) Mediation (internal or external)
 - c) Using disciplinary or grievance procedures
4. You can also make an anonymous report if you wish. However, if the case becomes part of a formal process, your identity may have to be disclosed. Once a report is made, a full investigation starts which may or may not result in a formal disciplinary process

Once reported, one or a combination of the options below will be used to resolve the situation:

- a. An apology
- b. Training/education
- c. Sanctions (either specified by disciplinary or self-directed personal learning via mediation/discussion)
- d. In the case of gross misconduct - dismissal

Appendix

Definitions

The terms equality, inclusion and diversity are at the heart of this policy:

- ‘Equality’ means ensuring everyone has the same opportunities to fulfil their potential, free from discrimination.
- ‘Equity’ means using differentiated and targeted strategies to address different needs to get to fair outcomes.
- ‘Inclusivity’ means ensuring everyone feels comfortable to be themselves and feels the worth of their contribution.
- ‘Diversity’ means the celebration of individual differences amongst the workforce.
- ‘Restorative Justice’ means a form of restorative practice that enables communication between everyone affected by a particular incident to work towards repairing the harm and finding a positive way forward.

Associated policies

This policy is not a standalone policy and should be read in conjunction with the following policies:

- **Grievance and Disciplinary policy**
- **Whistleblowing policy**
- **Social media policy**

**Together let's create a truly inclusive culture we all feel we belong to,
can be ourselves in, and be proud of.**