



Lutherwood
Diversity & Inclusion
Leadership Council

Diversity & Inclusion
Communication Plan

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Introduction

It is no surprise that our world is changing and that our community has become much more diverse over the past decade. In order to respond to these changes and to continue serving our community with excellence Lutherwood is committed to being an inclusive environment to better serve the needs of an increasingly diverse community.

Diversity and inclusion are integral to the success of Lutherwood's mission and a vital key to our growth. Our goal is to build a culturally competent organization where all clients, employees and stakeholders are respected, valued and supported.

To guide us in this process, the organization has formed a Diversity and Inclusion Council with representation from the Board, the Senior Leadership Team and the front-line staff. The Council is currently working on developing and implementing an action plan, that directs Lutherwood in building an inclusive organization that can be more responsive to all the individuals it serves.

The diversity and inclusiveness planning process will assist the Organization in understanding the values, perspectives and aptitudes that will be required to enhance intercultural competence in order to create a more inclusive environment at Lutherwood.

Recognizing that one of the key asset for the success of this process is clear communication, a communication plan is required to reflect the work from the Council and to lead to a well-articulated statement of diversity and a clear framework to implement inclusion programs at Lutherwood.

Taking advantage of the great opportunity to bring my fellowship project into my workplace and help my organization enhance inclusion I have created this draft communication plan which will evolve as the diversity and inclusion plan is developed.

***If a plan is not properly communicated to all parties involved,
the plan will not be effective.***

Purpose of the Project



The goal of the communication plan is to provide communications that support the Diversity & Inclusion Leadership Council's three year diversity action plan as it creates a work force that reflects community diversity, and lead the creation of an inclusive organizational culture where staff, board members and volunteers feel respected, valued and supported as they work together to meet diverse community needs.

Objectives

1. Raise awareness of the value of Diversity and Inclusion among the Leadership Team, Staff Members and Board of Directors to increase their understanding of the need to implement diversity and inclusive programs.
2. Engage stakeholders in Lutherwood's diversity and inclusion initiatives and communicate how they can support them.
3. Help internal stakeholders understand how strengthening Lutherwood's cultural competency should look and feel, what steps to take, time-frame, etc in order to create a workforce that reflects community diversity, and leads to the creation of an inclusive organizational culture.
4. Help the staff use a common language that creates better understanding of Diversity and Inclusion and that demonstrates Lutherwood as a diverse and inclusive employer.
5. Help recruit and retain staff from different groups (race, gender, age, sexual orientation, ethnicity, ability etc) who are great ambassadors of diversity and inclusion and will help the Organization to enhance its services and programs.
6. Cultivate a culture that encourages collaboration, flexibility, and fairness to enable individuals to contribute to their full potential.
7. Maintain and build upon positive perception about Lutherwood's commitment to diversity and inclusion.
8. Help Lutherwood attract clients from different groups who experience services that meet their diverse needs.
9. Gather information that will help the Diversity & Inclusion Leadership Council find gaps in existing processes and services so it can identify opportunities for change.
10. Support the Diversity & Inclusion Leadership Council efforts to train staff and implement changes.



Goals

Leadership Team, Staff Members, Board of Directors

- **Know:** That to continue serving our community with excellence we need to embrace inclusiveness and diversity programs at Lutherwood.
That through the organization's diversity and inclusion efforts we are building a supportive environment that exposes each one of us to different ways of thinking and helps us to come up with innovative and creative ways to support our community.
That Lutherwood recognizes differences in its staff members and works to build a tolerant culture that respects the unique talents and skills of others.
- **Feel:** Welcomed and a part of Lutherwood.
Recognized and valued for their skills, abilities and contribution to Lutherwood.
That the benefits of Lutherwood's inclusive environment will have a positive impact on the clients we serve.
- **Do:** Make inclusiveness a habit practiced every day. Create a safe environment where people feel valued, respected and supported.

Clients, Community Partners, Volunteers, Services Providers, Donors, Potential Clients, LVP Residents and Funders

- **Know:** That Lutherwood is committed to build an organizational culture and work environment at all levels of the Agency where we work together to build a workforce that broadly reflects the community it serves and that is able to better serve their varied needs and priorities and respond safely.
- **Feel:** That Lutherwood's diverse and inclusive culture is supporting the community by working with people to build on their strengths and develop strategies that help them overcome challenges and achieve their goals.
- **Do:** All stakeholders trust and support us, potential clients want to access our services and funders and community partners want to work with us.



Target Audience

Internal Stakeholders:

- Leadership Team
- Staff Members
- Board of Directors

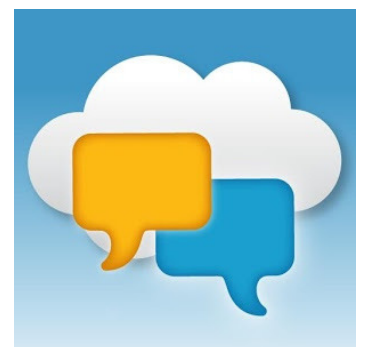
External Stakeholders:

- Clients
- Community Partners
- Volunteers
- Service Providers
- Donors
- Potential Clients
- LVP Residents
- Funders
- Anyone we come into contact with.



Key Messages

1. Through our diversity and inclusion efforts, we are building an inclusive environment where all stakeholders feel respected, valued and supported.
2. Having a diverse and inclusive culture exposes each one of us to different ways of thinking and helps us come up with innovative and creative ways to support our community.
3. We are committed to building an organizational culture by having a workforce whose diversity is reflective of the community we serve, helping us to better understand our diverse population and better serve their varied needs and priorities.
4. We encourage an atmosphere of belonging and enable stakeholders to embrace their own identity for the development of an inclusive organizational culture.
5. Diversity and inclusion are essential to attract, retain and engage skilled staff, who will help the organization better serve the community.
6. Lutherwood has always been an innovative leader in the community and in response to the changing demographics we now need to open our arms even wider than we have before. Let us work together in times of change.
7. The social landscape is always changing and to stay relevant and meet the different needs of a diverse community, we must embrace it and change with it.
8. Lutherwood is a learning organization where we learn from our clients just as they learn from us.
9. We need to use a common language at Lutherwood including defining terms such as: diversity, inclusion, equity, equality and cultural competence at Lutherwood.



Message Delivery

Communication Vehicles:

Internal Stakeholders:

E-Connect
Bulletin Board at Lutherwood sites
Team Meetings

Message Description:

- Message from CEO announcing D&IL Council and vision.
- 3 part series of stories reflecting diversity at Lutherwood.
- Internal articles on Lutherwood D&I progress.
- Articles on examples of how staff members demonstrate D&I at work.
- Staff Survey.
- Articles celebrating diverse occasions.



External Stakeholders:

Media Release
Social Media
Website
Community Report
Community Meetings and events

- Implementation of D&I practices at Lutherwood.
- Lutherwood D&I commitment and involvement in the community.
- Lutherwood D&I progress report.



Notes

While working on this project I have learned that a communication plan should be in place throughout the entire process of a diversity and inclusion plan, to engage and build awareness and buy-in from all stakeholders at every stage of the planning.

Engaging stakeholders in the process will help to build trust, manage expectations, and encourage important discussion. It is important to use different communication methods to reach different groups and to get the message out. Also, it is very important to be as specific as possible.

In order for stakeholders to buy in to the strategy, to support it and to be advocates of it, they need to know what it is and what it means for them; they need to hear about it and see it on a regular basis. Communicating a diversity and inclusion plan needs to be continuous, innovative and engaging. It is important to provide updates on key decisions and ensure that there are communication updates throughout the entire process.

The communications should be open and clear and lead to answer some important questions such as:

- Rationale for diversity and inclusion planning
- Why is diversity and inclusion planning important? What impact can this plan have? What's its purpose?
- Strategic alignment with organization's mission.
- How the organization aligns its diversity and inclusion plans into its equity efforts?

Drafting a communication plan while a strategy is not still defined can be difficult, but at the same it is very important to start the conversation about what needs to be communicated and who it needs to be communicated to. It is my hope that this draft will provide some guidance into building a complete communication plan as Lutherwood sets its diversity and inclusion plan.