



DEVELOPING TRUSTED RELATIONSHIPS

With Newcomers and Immigrants

Trust is a key part of any relationship, whether it's personal or professional. For newcomers and immigrants, building trust is even more important because they are often navigating a new environment, culture and possibly a new language. When newcomers feel a sense of belonging, they are more likely to integrate and give back, making the community stronger.

APPROACHES FOR BUILDING TRUST

Trust can be established in many ways. However, it isn't always about grand gestures or formal programs. It's mainly about the small, everyday interactions that can make a big difference. Trust is also something you must build intentionally over time. It can take two months or two years!

Remember, each person's level of comfort and cultural values can vary widely. By focusing on consistent actions and showing respect, you can build strong relationships and trust with newcomers and immigrants in your workplace, organization and social groups.

Be approachable and friendly. A friendly greeting or a simple "How are you?" can go a long way. Learn a few basic greetings and phrases in their language to show you are open to learning and are willing to make an effort.

Use plain and simple language. For example, provide clear instructions and avoid using industry-specific terms that may be unfamiliar to newcomers. Slang and figures of speech can also cause confusion as people might interpret them literally.

Respect pronunciation and names. If someone has a name you are unfamiliar with, ask how to pronounce it and make an effort to say it correctly. You could say, "I want to make sure I say your name right. Could you help me with the pronunciation?"

Listen patiently when someone is speaking, especially if they are still learning the language. Avoid interrupting or finishing sentences for them and let them express themselves at their own pace.

Celebrate diverse cultures and backgrounds by hosting a multicultural potluck or sharing traditional art and music, for example. These efforts will help to promote a welcoming environment where everyone's backgrounds are recognized and celebrated.

Show curiosity and respect when learning about different cultures and backgrounds. Ask open-ended questions like, "I'd love to learn more about your background if you're comfortable sharing!"



Tips for avoiding slang! Instead of:

"On the ball" – try "organized" or "efficient". For "piece of cake" – try "easy", "simple", or "no problem".

- **Avoid stereotypes or generalization**, such as assuming that immigrants are not fluent in English, or that someone from Mexico loves spicy food. You could ask something like, "What are your favourite dishes from home?" and allow them to tell their own story. Every person has a unique set of experiences, preferences and interests that shape who they are.
- **Recognize and celebrate achievements and milestones**, no matter how small. For example, you may notice a newcomer's language skills improving or that they are contributing to meetings and group discussions more often. This helps to build their confidence and shows that you appreciate their efforts.
- Social isolation can be a big challenge for immigrants. **Invite them to non-work related events** and casual gatherings where they can have the opportunity to meet new people and form connections. Fun and informal opportunities are more likely to be successful and enjoyable than formal programs or events.
- If you are a supervisor or employer, **communicate clear expectations and processes** for reporting and addressing racism, discrimination and bias. Letting newcomers and immigrants know about these measures shows a commitment to creating a safe and inclusive environment where discrimination will be not tolerated.
- **Connect with local cultural associations, religious groups and service providers.** Building these relationships will promote two-way information sharing. You will be able to help facilitate connections between immigrants and those who have the knowledge, influence and resources needed to support them.
- **Maintaining confidentiality** is one of the cornerstones of trusting relationships, and it holds particular significance for newcomers and immigrants. As their employer, supervisor, or colleague, they may share sensitive information regarding their legal status, immigration processes, family situations, or past experiences with you. In this situation, thank them for their vulnerability and keep this information to yourself to respect their privacy.



Be upfront about the limits of confidentiality.

For example, there may be situations where disclosure is needed to meet certain requirements or ensure safety – such as when there is a risk of harm, threat of violence, or violation of safety protocols. Make sure they are aware of this. Remember, transparency helps manage expectations and build trust.

TRY IT OUT!

Building trust is a continuous journey, one that requires openness, understanding and a commitment to respecting each person as an individual. As you embrace new ideas, cultures and experiences, remember that trust is both essential and fragile. It takes time to grow but can be easily broken. Approach each interaction with care, curiosity and compassion, knowing that when we invest in building trust, we are creating a stronger, more supportive community for everyone.