

Mentoring Program Checklist Series

Inclusive leadership - Mentor Insights

Leadership Strengths to build strong diverse teams

- **Good interpersonal skills** – listen to the person - understand practical implications of their vision impairment for the role.
- **Good human resource management skills** – understand an individual's abilities and how a person with vision impairment can, with workplace adjustments and adaptive technology, achieve a high level of performance and contribute to achieve the team objectives.
- **Set the right example to the team** – relate to the individual in a manner that is professional, respectful, empathetic, flexible and maintains confidentiality.
- **Be willing to make workplace adjustments** – ensure all team members, including members with a vision impairment, can use their strengths to reduce barriers, with assistance (technology or team member) to complete work productively.
- **Be aware of and respond to IT system issues for all your team** – acknowledge when IT systems are updated and if there are additional requirements needed. Understand the processes from the start and act to ensure equity and accessibility for everyone.
- **Successful leaders are approachable and like people** – encourage the importance of investing in both on-the-job training and professional development for everyone. This includes training specific to the needs of a person with vision impairment.

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Leadership Challenges – areas where managers/supervisors/team leaders could do better

- **Learn more, change/adapt individual perceptions and limit assumptions** – educate yourself and your team about what people with vision impairment can do. Eliminate perceptions that coordinating workplace adjustments is lots of extra work and costly. Change perceptions and build understanding that workplace adjustments are an investment that supports employees to be more efficient and productive. This ultimately benefits the organisation.
- **Pay more attention to job design** – innovate and strengthen your understanding on how duties/responsibilities can be designed and/or shared to enable a person who is vision impaired to be effective and efficient in the role.
- **Deal directly with the person who is vision impaired** – ensure if difficulties arise in the relationship involve your employee with a vision impairment in the process of finding the best solutions for all.
- **Don't be risk adverse** – take time to think about or even attempt new approaches proposed before immediately deciding that a suggestion would not work. Each individual is different and therefore something that did not work in the past does not necessarily mean it will fail again.
- **Model Diversity and Inclusion daily and not just a few days a year** – encourage good ideas to flow upwards to senior management to ensure the whole organisation benefits.
- **Attract people to your organisation that understand disability** – acknowledge their lived experience and be open to what they observe and suggest.

In 2023 Canberra Blind Society has produced an interactive Inclusive Leadership education session that can be adapted to your organisation's needs.