

*The following are two other questions and responses from the Jan. 11, 2023, lecture by Dr. Ana Núñez:*

Q: Can you give recommendations on how to get out of our own mono-culture bubble and getting more exposure?

A. Check out University wide events. Every week there are talks, speakers and activities. Google events around the Twin Cities and select entertainment, events, restaurants shows, concerts that are different than you usually do. Look on line for Ted talks about population health and DEI and improving health disparities. Join us monthly at the Dean's Special Seminar series and checkout our newsletter. Check out reading lists and find a buddy to have an informal book club (to debrief on it). Invite a coworker to lunch and chat about different life experiences. Learn about holidays and traditions that 'are not yours' - read about them and expand your understanding. If able, travel to different places, cultures and languages - try to learn some words and do some homework about the place so you can expand your horizons. Get formal training (from our ODEI L&D folks) and other places (e.g. local groups offer theatrical presentations and workshops on diversity and inclusion). Read about DEI in your area (whether a specific medical area and/or a focus - medical research, education/training, healthcare and outcomes).

Q: I am curious about how to handle when one person's perspective conflicts with another person's identity or values. For example, if a person has religious viewpoints that decentralize someone else's gender identity - how do we handle that?

A. Inclusion starts with relationship building and learning about others. We can each hold differing viewpoints, but still come together on common purpose and work. Where it might become challenging is if one person imposes their values, attitudes or expectations on another. Acceptance of the other, as they are, is an essential prerequisite to both relationship building and inclusion making. Specific to the reference in your question, we don't work in a religious organization - we work in a diverse healthcare and science space. We live in a country that literally has written into it - division of church and state, not a theocracy. What we might want for ourselves or our family is not relevant to being a good team member. Sometimes I think the good intended folks say 'I treat my work team like my family'. I think the intention is that caring and good intentions are foundational. In truth, though, we aren't a family, we are lots of different people with different values, traditions and beliefs who come together for a common purpose. One size doesn't fit all. We aren't carbon copies of each other and doing to other as we want, might not work. It might not be what they want. We have to ask what is wanted and then follow up in the doing if we can. Being able to create a welcoming environment for all is the task of all members. Often people confuse understanding difference with adopting it. Their lives are theirs. Our group needs room to fit all of us.