

TEAM CULTURE PRACTICE

COACHES GUIDE:

INCLUSION



"WE TIP WITH EXCELLENCE AND INTEGRITY"

TEAMWORK. INCLUSION. PASSION.



INCLUSION:

UNITY THROUGH COMPASSION, COURAGE, AND COMMUNICATION

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OVERVIEW

Inclusion is reflected in behaviors that welcome and embrace diversity, and ensues when compassion, courage, and a sense of community are intentionally pursued through communication. In other words, we show the depths of our compassion, care, and ultimately our love for one another by the quality of our communication. This is particularly true when we communicate with those who are different than us or around difficult issues, disagreements, or divergent experiences.

The Culture Practice session that follows engages your team with two activities. First, your team will work to define what inclusion looks like on a continuum, specifically clarifying what the team seeks to achieve and avoid to build an inclusive culture. Second, your team will be introduced to Care-Frontation as the foundational communication strategy needed to create a resilient and substantive culture of inclusion. These strategies will help individuals with various backgrounds, experiences, and levels of understanding engage in inclusivity conversations.

When a culture of Care-Frontation takes root, a culture of inclusion eventually ensues—a culture where team members seek to understand and be understood, provide feedback that is honest and fair, while receiving feedback without shame, blame, or the need to explain. Experienced in its fullness, inclusion ensues when our lived behaviors match our espoused values.



WARMUP

Compact for Excellence

Begin the Culture Practice session by creating or reviewing your team Compact for Excellence (template is included at the end of the Guide). Ask your team, What do we need to do in order to do our best work and treat each other with care and respect during this practice? Agreements may include:



Coaching Point:

You may choose to create your own Compact for the Culture Practice or ask your team to help you create a Compact. If you plan to have your team help you create a team Compact, expect to spend 10-15 minutes creating the agreements. It is critical that each member of the team understands each agreement on the Compact and agrees to put those expectations into action. Once a Compact is created, it can be reviewed and re-used for future team conversations.



Community Builder

Our goal as a team is to continuously go from surface level connections to deep and substantive connections. Ask your team to answer a mix of surface and substance questions (see sample questions below).

Coaching Point:

Coaches and other members of the team are strongly encouraged to participate in the Community Builder by answering the questions and engaging with student-athletes.

Surface-to-Substance Questions:

- How has participation in athletics impacted you (positively and/ or negatively)?
- Have you ever been on a team that felt like a family? What did that team do to build a family-like environment?
- Describe an experience in your life where you felt excluded or unwelcome.
- Award winning author, Bell Hooks is known for saying "Love is an action, never simply a feeling." What do you think she meant by that?
- What specific actions by coaches and team members what we say and do, or do not say and do not do — contribute to or detract from a culture of inclusion on this team?
- What do you think author Bell Hooks meant when she said, "There's no love without justice?"
- What gaps, if any, are there on this team between the love and care we express for one another and the lived actions of coaches and team members?



Coaching Point:

The Community Builder Warmup can be done in a number of ways. If you want student-athletes to have time to consider their responses, ask them to write their ideas down and be ready to share at a future practice. If you want your team to build more personal connections, ask them to share with a partner (assigned or chosen). If you want the entire team to engage with the conversation, engage your team in whole-group sharing.

You may also want to use a Belief Box Format. Here, provide questions in advance, give your team a chance to write or reflect to initiate their thinking, then give each member of the team a chance to "stand on their belief box" to offer their insights, experiences, and opinions.

If you find that a particular question is inspiring conversation, stick with it. You can always come back and use the other questions for additional conversation. Remember, there are ample opportunities to build connections within your team. Bus rides, stretch periods, before and after practice or film sessions, or team meetings — all of these provide opportunities to engage your team in culture-building conversations.



PRACTICE

There are two activities in this Culture Practice session. The activities can be done together, or in separate sessions. The first activity is creating an Inclusion Continuum, where you determine what inclusion looks like and sounds like for your team. The second activity focuses on the Care-Frontation Fundamentals that, when put into practice, help your team practice the kind of communication needed for an inclusive culture to ensue.

Coaching Point:

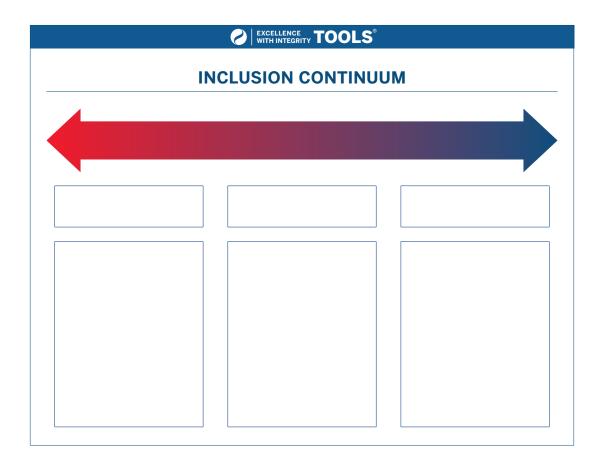
At every step of the Culture Practice, remind participants about the agreements you have reached for your Compact of Excellence to ensure everyone's commitment to doing their best work and treating each other with care and respect.



Step One: Introduction

An inclusive culture can only be created when shared expectations, habits, accountability, and mindsets are put into action. The goal for our first activity is to determine what an inclusive culture looks like on your team.

Step Two: Inclusion Continuum Activity



Start by asking your team to brainstorm words, concepts, and behaviors that describe some aspect of inclusion. Put another way, ask your team what inclusion will look, sound, and feel like on your team. Write down these words, concepts, and behaviors on the inclusion side of your continuum worksheet, refining ideas as needed.



Coaching Point:

The goal is not to put down buzz words. Every word or idea should come down to "What does this look like on this team?" The debate and discussion is a critical part of the activity. As a team, you get to define what inclusion looks, sounds, and feels like for each and all of the team members, and active engagement of the whole team ensures ownership of and commitment to the resulting definition.

Coaching Point:

You may brainstorm as an entire team, or split your team into small groups where they brainstorm and report back to the entire team what they discussed adding to the continuum.

Then, ask your team to brainstorm words, concepts, and behaviors that are the opposite of inclusive. Or, what it looks, sounds, and feels like when our team is not inclusive. Write down these words, concepts, and behaviors on the exclusion side of continuum.

Finally, ask your team what words, concepts, and behaviors describe the middle of the continuum, which could be described as "tolerance," "apathy," or "indifference." Write down these words, concepts and behaviors on the middle of the continuum.



EXAMPLE



INCLUSION CONTINUUM

Exclusion

Hostile, cliques, cruel, suspicious, unsafe, unwelcome, voices and perspectives ignored or disrespected, blaming

Indifference

Get along, avoid hard conversations, passive relationships, let issues go unchallenged, afraid to rock the boat, more concerned with feeling good than getting good

Inclusion

Deep relationships, compassionate, safe to be you, seeking to get better, assume best intentions, more concerned with getting it right than being right, welcoming of new ideas and perspectives



Coaching Point:

The length of this activity can vary greatly depending on a host of factors. If you get the basics down and there isn't much debate, that's okay. You might leave it and go to the next activity, or you may come back and do a second round at a later date. However, if debate and discussion get deep, stay with it. You can do the second activity on a different date. If there is debate, discussion, diversity of opinion or experience, that is a place to keep digging. Remember, inclusion ensues when you engage in these conversations.

Step Three: Inclusion Continuum Wrap-Up

Once your Inclusion Continuum is complete, ask your team to consider what they can do better or differently to be more inclusive. For this reflection, they should focus on their own behavior and what changes they need to make to ensure inclusion will ensue from their actions.

Coaching Point:

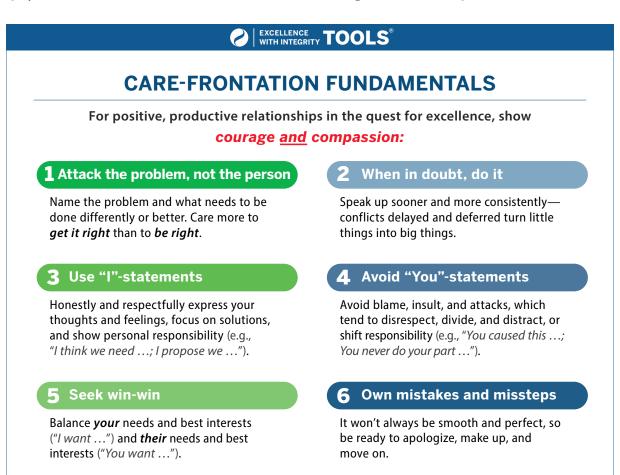
Building and sustaining an inclusive culture is never done. You may ask your team to evaluate their behaviors periodically throughout the year so that inclusion remains a focus. You may also ask your team to evaluate what the team needs to do better or differently as a collective group. The culture drills at the end of this module will help you keep your team focused on putting inclusive practices into action.

Finally, it is critical that coaches engage in the creation of the Inclusion Continuum together with the student-athletes. It is even more important that coaches **lead** the culture of inclusion with their words and actions each day.



Step Four: Introduce Care-Frontation

Defining the Inclusion Continuum may be difficult, but the real challenge is putting your expectations into action. The second activity in this Culture Practice explores the critical role of communication in building an inclusive culture, and how engaging in Care-Frontation Fundamentals can help your team communicate with courage and compassion.



No team full of diverse individuals is going to fully understand, commit, and act according to your deepest goals for an inclusive culture without making mistakes. In fact, the culture of inclusion will most likely develop when we fall short or fail altogether—as long as we take the effort need-

Adapted from David Augsburger, Caring Enough to Confront



ed to overcome our failures. It is in these moments when we'll be most tested to show courage and compassion, to have hard conversations, to own our mistakes, to attack the problem and not the person.

Care-Frontation isn't rooted in hate, anger, or a desire to shame or blame others, like confrontation often is. Care-Frontation is rooted in the authentic desire to pursue the best *for* and *from* you, which requires that I must speak my truth. Positive, productive, inclusive relationships are built on Care-Frontation.

Coaching Point:

When introducing your team to the Care-Frontation Fundamentals tool, you may wish to share an example of what each fundamental looks like in action. Share a story of when you or someone else did a great (or poor) job of attacking the problem and not the person, or owning their mistake, for example.

Step Five: Care-Frontation Activity

Ask your team to look at your Inclusion Continuum. Then, present your team with one of the following sets of questions:

- A) Think of a time when you've been part of a team or group that was demonstrating one of the behaviors or actions we listed under exclusion. What would Care-Frontation look like if that situation happened on our team? How would you attack the problem, not the person? How would you summon the courage to speak up? What might win-win look like in this situation?
- B) Is there something that needs to be done better or differently to make our team culture more inclusive? Are we (the team) demonstrating any behaviors on the exclusion side of our continuum?



As you discuss any issues raised, continually remind your team to put the Care-Frontation Fundamentals into practice.

Coaching Point:

Option B may be challenging in the early stages of building an inclusive culture. Some members of the team may be hesitant to challenge the behavior(s) of the team in front of the entire group. Of course, the ultimate goal is to sustain a culture where individuals feel safe and empowered to do exactly that. However, if you've not yet reached that point with your team, consider giving your team an opportunity to write down (anonymously) a behavior they would like to challenge, or practice using Care-Frontation Fundamentals on option A.



COOLDOWN

- Affirm: Affirm courageous sharing, enthusiastic participation, challenging one another and/or the process in a way that helped move us forward, etc. Positive reinforcement of team engagement will encourage positive participation in future practices.
- Clarify: As you move forward, specifically recapture what your team intends to *Do Better / Differently* to advance the team culture with regard to Inclusion. This may be a review of your Compact or Inclusion Continuum definitions, when you'll revisit them, and/or how you will monitor them.
- **Challenge:** Seek praise-and-polish feedback regarding the process and participation of the group (What did we do well in our Culture Practice session? What could we do better or differently next time?).



MASTERING CULTURE FUNDAMENTALS

A single practice EXPERIENCE becomes a durable part of TEAM CULTURE when we practice it like we do our offense and defense—with intentionality, consistency, and focused attention. Below are four Culture Drills that you can incorporate into ongoing learning to further develop your culture of inclusion.

Drill 1: Fears and Feelings by Brené Brown and Small Group/ Partner Discussions

In her video on fears and feelings (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aT00grGbkQk), Dr. Brené Brown states that as leaders we have to address fears and feelings, or we spend all of our time trying to fix behaviors. When we work to understand each other's fears and feelings, we start down the path towards inclusion. The Care-Frontation Fundamentals are designed to help your team acknowledge and understand fears and feelings so that the right behaviors and actions can be put into place.

Ask your student-athletes to identify a behavior that they need to change. What fear or feeling is causing their current behavior? How can they address that fear or feeling in order to change their behavior? What support can the team provide as they try and address that fear or feeling?

You may also ask your team what behaviors need to change on the team, and what fear or feeling is causing that behavior. Ask your student-athletes to focus on team behaviors, not individual behaviors, that need to change. Encourage your team to keep focused on the problem, not attack the person, and try to understand and appreciate the fear or feelings of others (and themselves) that are causing the behavior.



Drill 2: Privilege Walk Activity

Each individual brings to the team their own unique perspective, informed by their experiences. The most successful teams acknowledge these differences, consider how those differences could impact how the team works together, and engage in compassionate and courageous conversations to understand and appreciate those differences, while also focusing on common goals.

One way to help student-athletes begin to recognize the different experiences of each teammate and coach is to participate in a Privilege Walk activity. The following link will take you to a Privilege Walk activity:

https://www.eiu.edu/eiu1111/Privilege%20Walk%20Exercise-%20Transfer%20Leadership%20Institute-%20Week%204.pdf.

Please note that some of these questions are personal in nature. Use discretion and your best judgment on which questions work for your student-athletes. You may determine that the activity would be best facilitated by someone else from your campus community (student affairs, or someone else in the athletic department). You may also want to add basketball questions like, "Were you on a sponsored travel team?" Or, "Did you have easy access to a court or hoop when you were growing up?"

Drill 3: Community Activity

As your team works to develop, sustain, and enhance an inclusive culture among student-athletes, coaches, and staff, you may also want to spread that inclusivity to extended members of your team – parents, fans, the campus community, etc. Ask a member of your staff to work with your student-athletes and other stakeholders on your extended team so that they can get to know and understand each other better. Think about:





- 1. How can you help your student-athletes learn about their campus or greater community?
- 2. How can you help your fans learn about your student-athletes as more than basketball players?
- 3. What unique experiences, perspectives, and personalities in your community would be good to share with your student-athletes?
- 4. What experiences and perspectives do your student-athletes have that would be good to share with the community?
- 5. What is the right environment for these interactions to take place in a positive, productive way?



PLANNING AND REFLECTION

Use this space for notes on the content or process related to your implementation plan.		

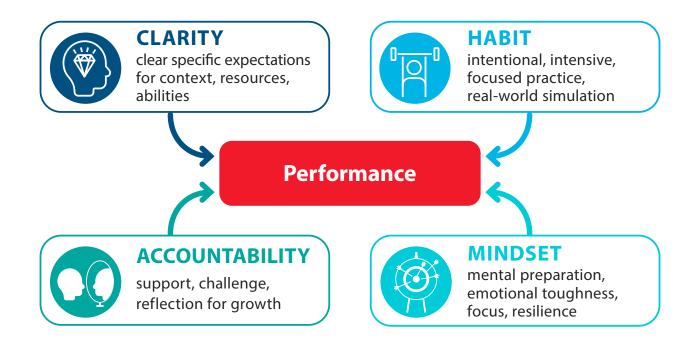


CHAMP APPROACH

Every team or organization strives for optimal performance – the best we can possibly do under the circumstances we are in. As a leader, it is your responsibility to shape the climate and culture of your team so that optimal performance can be realized each day. Drawn from 25 years of applied research, the "CHAMP" approach describes the four essential instructional processes needed to guide people to optimal performance: Clarity, Habit, Accountability, and Mindset.

Clarity, Habit, Accountability, Mindset → Performance

LEADERSHIP PRACTICES FOR SHAPING CULTURE





CLARITY of Expectations and Communication

No person, team, or organization can achieve optimal performance if it is unclear what optimal performance looks like. To achieve optimal performance you must set, communicate, and reinforce clear expectations. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Have I identified the essential value, skill, or competency that needs to be addressed?
- Have I set clear expectations about what this performance (what's in the center) looks, sounds, and feels like?
- Do my expectations make sense for our current or upcoming circumstances and have I clearly explained the connection to others?
- Did I clarify the expectations for each role on my team?
- Am I readjusting expectations and communicating changes when needed?

HABIT Development Through Targeted Practice

As a leader, you must teach others what the skill looks like and provide opportunities to engage in deliberate practice of that skill. Ask yourself:

- Am I providing opportunities to put new knowledge and skills into practice?
- Are these opportunities meaningful and relevant?
- Am I providing feedback and tracking progress?



ACCOUNTABILITY Through Support and Challenge

Expectations have been set. Opportunities for deliberate practice have been created. Now, you must hold yourself and others accountable to the performance you expect. While self-accountability is ideal, as a leader you will have to support and challenge those you coach. Ask yourself these questions to ensure you are holding self and others accountable:

- Am I providing constructive criticism that specifically addresses what to do better or differently?
- Am I pointing out and encouraging behavior that meets or exceeds expectations?
- Have I established what data I can gather to measure performance? Am I using that data?

Mental Preparation and MINDSET Formation

No matter how clear your expectations, how well you practice your habits, how much you hold yourself and others accountable, those you coach will eventually face obstacles and challenges. You must help them build a mindset that allows them to learn from mistakes to overcome adversity. Ask yourself:

- Have I taught those I coach how to forget perfect and find optimal by focusing on what they can control?
- Am I teaching how to reframe challenges as opportunities?
- What am I doing to influence the mindset of those I coach?



Clarity, Habit, Accountability, Mindset → Performance

Example



CLARITY

- 1) Know what you want to achieve and avoid.
- 2) Be honest but fair and caring.



HABIT

- 1) Attack the problem, not the person,
- 2) listen actively,
- 3) ask questions to clarify understanding.



Inclusion:
Care-Frontation with Teammates



ACCOUNTABILITY

- 1) Ask for feedback following the exchange.
- 2) Be ready to own missteps if/when you've made some.

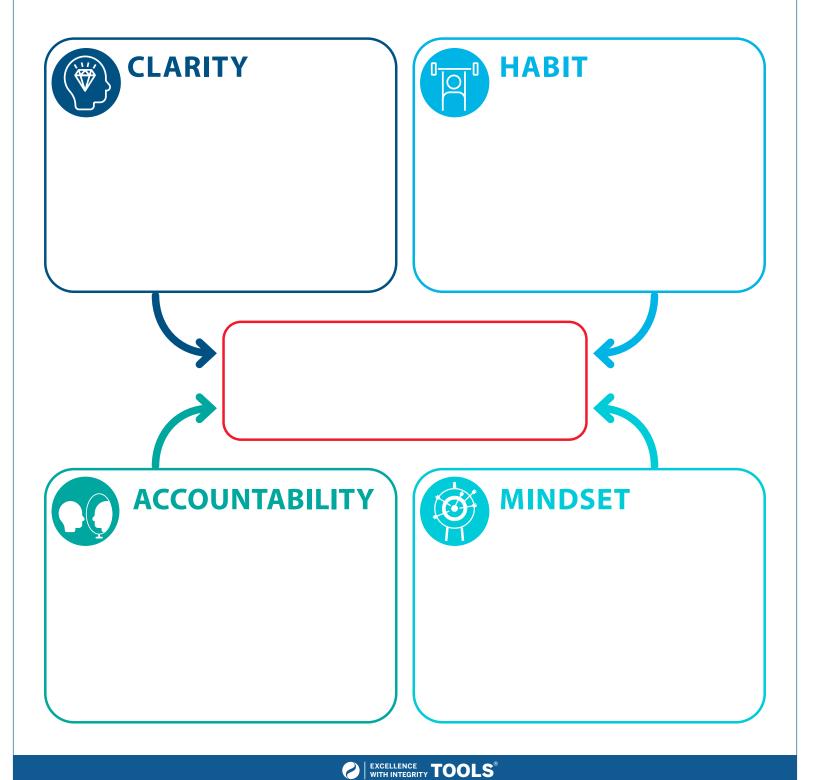


MINDSET

Working through conflicts is normal and can help strengthen and improve relationships.



Clarity, Habit, Accountability, Mindset → Performance





BACKGROUND BRIEF: INSIGHTS TO ENHANCE PRACTICE

Dialogue is the antidote to denial—the capacity to discuss the undiscussable.

~ Rosabeth Moss Kanter

Inclusion is a core value and a core objective of the NCAA Women's Basketball Strategic Plan. **Dialogue** may be the simplest answer to the question, How do we intend to create cultures of inclusion within our teams?

In her book *Confidence: How Winning Streaks & Losing Streaks Begin and End*, Rosabeth Moss Kanter explores the habits and mindsets of teams that coalesce into winning streaks (or in their absence contribute to losing streaks). From her research she identifies dialogue as an extraordinary cultural asset of teams who win consistently over time. She argues that *dialogue is the antidote to denial—the capacity to discuss the undiscussable*. This insight is salient for any team, organization, or nation that desires to be great.

The need for difficult, even fierce, conversations, for challenging feed-back, and radical candor will also be necessary for teams with diverse individuals with diverse experiences and perspectives, competing interests, and limited human and material resources. Those who don't aspire for greatness, who are soft and selfish, those content with preserving the status quo will always seek to avoid hard conversations and truths. They will prefer to blame, shame, complain, or explain. But for those willing to discuss the undiscussable, there is the very real hope of great winning streaks—in athletics, in families and relationships, and in life.

What follows are insights to enhance our strategies for developing Inclusion:



1. Diversity and inclusion are connected but distinct. Diversity is **necessary but not sufficient**. A culture of Inclusion must be **intentional**. Creating a culture of inclusion is not as simple as gathering a collection of diverse individuals to share common space or even common goals. Diversity is the *who* and the *what*: who is being recruited, who is on our team, and what personal and social characteristics are being sought. Culture of Inclusion is the *intentional behaviors* that welcome and embrace diversity so that diversity of backgrounds and opinions melds into a synergy and unity of behavior.

Diversity can and should be **pursued**—intentionally seeking full representation of backgrounds and experiences. But a leader cannot stop there. They must also intentionally **shape** a culture of Inclusion where courage, compassion, and a sense of community are intentionally pursued through dialogue and communication, and through shared experiences. When we show the *depths* of our compassion, care, and ultimately our love for one another by the breadth and integrity of our interactions—this is when a sense of inclusion ensues.

2. Echo chambers create a monologue not a dialogue. One of the great barriers to high performing teams and a culture of inclusion are echo chambers, those structures we create when we surround ourselves by people who echo back to us what we want or need to hear. This occurs on big topics like race, religion, and politics. It also often occurs on more personal topics that interfere with personal development. White people telling other white people that they are not racist is an echo chamber similar to disgruntled players at the end of the bench telling each other, or looking to hear from their families, that the coaches are to blame.

We may recruit diverse individuals to our team, but still have echo chambers where small groups echo their truth to each other, without the benefit of hearing other important truths held by others. To be great individually and collectively we need to have the courage to hear hard truths. Echo chambers are often created because of fear, and



a lack of courage to hear a different story. Inclusion **ensues** in a culture where we shape the collective habit of naming our echo chambers, breaking them down, and developing the courage and compassion to listen deeply to understand without shame, blame, or the need to explain or complain.

3. The problem named (and defined) is the problem solved. A quick search will yield numerous current references on the unavoidable art of managing inter-personal conflict and difficult dialogue (e.g., Fierce Conversations, Radical Candor, Thanks for the Feedback, The Hard Thing about Hard Things—to name a few). Nearly all focus on clarity regarding what all parties would like to achieve and avoid. In her best-selling book, Fierce Conversations, Susan Scott argues that the problem named is the problem solved.² Her point? Far too often the big, scary problems and conflicts can be defused quite simply by trying to name what is going on. Once it is named, it can be defined, which should include both what we want to achieve and avoid.

The Excellence with Integrity™ Inclusion Continuum is a culture-shaping strategy that seeks to have each team define what inclusion looks like, as well as what it is not (or should not be) on each team. While it is true that many teams may share descriptors in common, every team must engage in its own process and will likely produce its own unique Inclusion Continuum. Teams that have the capacity to name and define the issues, will often find that *the process is the intervention*. In other words, the best way to start on the pathway to a more inclusive culture is to be able to name it and describe it, with each individual speaking the truth of their experience and their deepest desires for the team space we are creating together.

4. Conflict is natural, neutral, and sometimes even delightful. Inter-personal conflict is inevitable. Period. The sooner we understand and accept this as a reality in relationships, and certainly in high performing teams, the better. Conflict is usually associated with something bad,



something to be avoided, and something that is guaranteed to produce a net loss for the individual and the team.

In his book *Caring Enough to Confront*, David Augsburger argues that when we see confrontation as rooted in caring, when we understand it as "care-frontation", then we can begin to experience conflict as "natural, normal, neutral, and sometimes even delightful." How could conflict ever be delightful? This is possible when it removes from the confronter the acute pain, the recurring aggravations, the deep wounds, and the heavy burdens that fester and grow when suppressed; or, when it removes for the confronted the tangible tension and persistent awkwardness, and provides them with new insights into how to coexist and work with one another.

Augsburger argues that "care-fronting unites...concern for relation-ships with concern for goals." In high performing inclusive teams it might sound something like this: I'm your coach, and I want you to be successful here; you're my teammate, and I want to be successful and to be healthy. Inclusion ensues when compassion, courage, and communication are deep and authentic—this invariably means conversations about love and power. When confrontation is reframed as Care-Frontation, it goes from something to be avoided — a win-lose, angry and argumentative, attack-the-person-not-the-problem reality — to something healthy and productive, and worthy of the energy required. Confrontation becomes Care-Frontation when we speak the truth in love, expressing our deepest beliefs and needs while still respecting the deepest beliefs and needs of others.

In her powerful book *All About Love*, Bell Hooks argues *without justice* there can be no love.⁴ We cannot profess to care about, let alone love our teammates, as we act in ways that are perceived as fundamentally unfair or unjust. Put differently, Hooks argues love is an action; never simply a feeling. In other words, defined on a continuum a culture of inclusion logically culminates in a culture of love, which ensues from our actions and ultimately results in a shared feeling in the group. But ultimately there is no such thing as justice, there is just-us. We must



ensure that we engage in vigilant Care-Frontation to unite love and power within our team, and to ensure that how we actually are together aligns with how we aspire to be together.

ENDNOTES

- 1. Rosabeth Moss Kanter, Confidence: How Winning Streaks & Losing Streaks Begin & End (New York: Crown Business, 2004).
- 2. Susan Scott, Fierce Conversations: Achieving Success at Work & in Life, One Conversation at a Time (New York: New American Library, 2017).
- 3. David Augsburger, Caring Enough to Confront: How to Understand and Express Your Deepest Feelings Toward Others (Grand Rapids, MI: Revell, 2014).
- 4. Bell Hooks, All About Love (New York: William Morrow, 2001).



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

1. NCAA Inclusion Statement supported by the NCAA Board of Governors:

http://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/inclusion/ncaa-inclusion-statement

2. NCAA Inclusion Resources: http://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/inclusion

3. NCAA Strategies: Addressing Racial Injustice: https://ncaaorg.s3.amazonaws.com/inclusion/ethnic/INC_AddressingRacialInjustice. pdf

4. Brené Brown on Echo Chambers: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=INRbrCRbxk8

5. Books for team reading and discussion:

Bell Hooks, All about love.

Robin Diangelo, White fragility: Why it's so hard for white people to talk about Racism.

Ibram X. Kendi, How to be an antiracist.

6. Excellence with Integrity™ Sport Team Culture Assessment and Development Resources: https://ewii.org/sport-team-culture/





TEAM COMPACT

In order for our team to achieve excellence with integrity, reaching our performance goals in a respectful, safe, and trusting team culture, we each agree to.../not to...:

List the specific actions we will need to do—and avoid doing—for this team, at this time, and for our circumstances.



Adapted from Lickona & Davidson (2005).



ABOUT OUR PARTNERSHIP

The TIP Team Culture Practices have been designed for the Women's Basketball Coaches Association by the consortium partnership of the Excellence with Integrity Institute and The Robert D. and Billie Ray Center at Drake University.

The Excellence with Integrity Institute's main focus is on research and development of instructional resources, assessment solutions, and tools and strategies for leadership and organizational culture development.

The Ray Center at Drake University's main focus is on coaching, training and expanding our collaborative implementation projects to improve civility through character development and ethical leadership.

Together, we pursue strategic opportunities in youth leadership, athletics, education, employment readiness, and organizational development in community and workplace environments.

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The TIP Team Culture Practices are designed and delivered in partnership by:





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For more information, contact The Robert D. and Billie Ray Center at 515-271-1910 or raycenter@drake.edu.

The TIP with Excellence and Integrity culture shaping resources were initially developed as part of the strategic plan of the NCAA Women's Basketball.



The Women's Basketball Coaches Association (WBCA) is pleased to provide implementation and support strategies for the TIP Team Culture resources.

Please visit the WBCA website to learn more.



FEATURING

