

The Need for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

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By: Chanel Bowen and Valeria Curiel Campos

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Supervising Professor: Paul Shaffer

Trent Community Research Centre Project Coordinator: Carolyn Mount

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Suite 3.10, Trent University Student Centre

1600 West Bank Drive

Peterborough, ON K9L 0G2

Phone: [\(705\) 748-1093](tel:(705)748-1093)

Email: tcrc@trentu.ca

Website: trentu.ca/tcrc

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The Need for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

Abstract

The Township of Brock adopted its Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Commitment on May 8, 2023, and established an internal DEI committee in February 2024. The Township of Brock would like to create and implement a DEI training module for internal staff to undertake as part of their DEI commitment. This research project aims to assist the Township of Brock by suggesting what content and implementation strategies to include in its DEI training module. The project entailed a literature review of best content and implementation strategies for DEI training modules and five semi-structured interviews with DEI coordinators from other municipalities and organizations with experience facilitating DEI training.

Key Words

- DEI – Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Brock – Township of Brock
- IDEA – Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility
- ED&I – Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

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Brock. In addition, this research project was greatly supported by the five interviewees, who will remain anonymous.

Executive Summary

This research project aims to assist the Township of Brock by providing guidance on content and implementation strategies for a DEI training module intended for their internal staff, in line with their DEI commitment and committee. The project entailed a literature review on the most effective strategies for implementing a DEI training module and five semi-structured interviews conducted with DEI coordinators from other municipalities and organizations with experience facilitating DEI training. The findings of this project suggest that the most effective content and implementation strategies for a DEI training module tailored to the Township of Brock fall into three categories: preceding design, designing the training module, and following the training or evaluating the training. The interviews conducted in this project, along with the literature review, supported the findings and recommendations section. The findings section is categorized into six sections: DEI portfolio, delivery and outcomes of the training, content strategies, facilitating the training, and evaluation. This project concludes with a recommendation and a limitations and strengths section to assist the Township of Brock by providing the best content and implementation strategies for a training module.

Introduction

The Township of Brock (Brock) is one of eight municipalities comprising Durham Region; three are Brock, Scugog, and Uxbridge. Brock has a population of just over 12,500, consisting of three urban centres – Beaverton, Cannington, Sunderland, and a vast rural area. The

Township of Brock recently published a DEI Commitment and established an internal DEI Committee; Brock would like to create and facilitate DEI training for internal staff.

Research Questions

The core research questions guiding this project are:

1. What is the best and worst practice regarding content and implementation strategies of DEI training?
2. What content and implementation strategies should be included in DEI training for the Township of Brock?

Methodology

The project's methodology included conducting a literature review of best practices regarding content and implementation strategies of DEI training, and facilitating, transcribing, and coding five semi-structured interviews with DEI coordinators from other municipalities with experience in DEI training.

Literature Review

This literature review is structured as a proposed chronological process of establishing DEI training. This structure can serve as an organizational framework to organize best practices regarding content and implementation strategies of DEI training.

Preceding Design

Several authors state that the context of the organization undertaking DEI training, such as the work environment and role requirements, should be established via a needs assessment (Bezrukova et al., 2012, 208-209; Cocchiara et al., 2010, 1095-1096; 1099; Anziano, 2023; King et al., 2010, 893; Gutierrez et al., 2000, 65; McCarter et al., 2023, 10). First, the needs assessment should establish the organization's motivation for undertaking DEI training (Gutierrez et al., 2000, 64). Organizations should neither use DEI training as a punishment nor frame DEI training as a measure of compliance with external rules (Anziano, 2023; Dobbin & Kalev, 2018, 50; Robinson et al., 2020, 238). Organizations should present an authentic, internal motivation that appeals to employees' motivations (Dobbin & Kalev, 2018, 50; Robinson et al., 2020, 238; McCarter et al., 2023, 10). The commitment to DEI should stem from the organization and the participants. Second, the needs assessment should establish the change needed in the organization and identify issues that can be addressed through DEI training (Gutierrez et al., 2000, 64; Jackson, 2023). Employees' perspectives and understandings of DEI should be measured (Jackson, 2023; Anziano, 2023). Third, the needs assessment should recognize what additional DEI initiatives are taking place in the organization. DEI training should be accompanied by additional DEI initiatives that address the system, structure, and culture of the organization (McCarter et al., 2023, 10; Bezrukova et al., 2012, 214-215; Cocchiara et al., 2010, 1103; King et al., 2010, 893; Dobbin & Kalev, 2018, 52). While someone should be specifically responsible for DEI training and initiatives, they should be visibly supported by the organization's highest level of leadership (King et al., 2010, 893; Bezrukova et al., 2012, 215; Cocchiara et al., 2010, 1097, 1101). Fourth, the needs assessment should set the intended outcomes of DEI training (Robinson et al., 2020, 236). DEI training should aim to achieve outcomes that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) (Bezrukova et al., 2012, 213; 217). The intended

outcomes of DEI training should be explicit and clear and communicated with the entire organization so that participants can understand what they will gain from undertaking the training (Bezrukova et al., 2012, 213; Anziano, 2023; McCarter et al., 2023, 10; Miles, 2021; Jackson, 2023; King et al., 2010, 898). The metrics measuring the intended outcomes of DEI training should be established and measured before training (Cocchiara et al., 2010, 1095; Gutierrez et al., 2000, 67). The intended outcomes of DEI training should be realistic for the organization and not demand what training cannot achieve (Miles, 2021; Bezrukova et al., 2012, 217-218). DEI training should be relevant to the organization's values, mission, vision, and strategic planning as well as the needs and work of the employees undertaking the training (McCarter et al., 2023, 10-11; King et al., 2010, 893; Cocchiara et al., 2010, 1096). The outcomes of DEI training should be regularly evaluated, and a time frame should be set to achieve the intended outcomes (McCarter et al., 2023, 10).

The intended outcomes of DEI training should be set for trainers, participants, organizations, and the community of which the participants and organization are a part (Gutierrez et al., 2000, 58). Trainers should intend to create a supportive and safe training environment where participants are comfortable having hard, open conversations (Gutierrez et al., 2000, 58; McCarter et al., 2023, 10; Miles, 2021). Trainers should intend to establish a common language of definitions and concepts so participants can properly engage with the training and one another on a shared foundational understanding of DEI (McCarter et al., 2023, 10; Jackson, 2023). Participants should change their behaviour and improve their relationships, especially in the workplace, following DEI training (King et al., 2010, 894; Gutierrez et al., 2000, 55; 59-60; McCarter et al., 2023, 2; 11; Cocchiara et al., 2010, 1096; Jackson, 2023; Miles, 2021). Participants' knowledge and awareness, including their recognition of connections

between themselves and social issues, should increase (Gutierrez et al., 2000, 59-60; Miles, 2021; McCarter et al., 2023, 2; Jackson, 2023). Participants' values and beliefs should change, and their appreciation for others should increase (McCarter et al., 2023, 2; Gutierrez et al., 2000, 59). Participants' problem-solving, decision-making, and communication should improve, and their collaboration should increase (Gutierrez et al., 2000, 59; Anziano, 2023; Miles, 2021). Participants' job satisfaction, sense of accomplishment, and belonging should increase (Gutierrez et al., 2000, 62; Miles, 2021). Organizational change is needed to address and resolve issues that require attention (Gutierrez et al., 2000, 60). The organizational workplace should be supportive, collaborative, inclusive, fair, and equitable, especially for marginalized groups (Gutierrez et al., 2000, 60; Anziano, 2023; Miles, 2021). Organizations should provide equitable programs and services that cater to community needs (Gutierrez et al., 2000, 54; 68). Communities should reduce inequality and celebrate diversity (Gutierrez et al., 2000, 61; Miles, 2021).

Designing the Training

The first step in designing DEI training is establishing the human inputs, which are the participants and the trainers (Bezrukova et al., 2012, 209). DEI training should be mandatory for all employees undertaking the training (Cocchiara et al., 2010, 1102; King et al., 2010, 894; Miles, 2021). The composition of the training group should be considered, as training may be different for members of marginalized groups, managers of marginalized groups, and the larger workforce, and participants in the majority, dominant social groups may perceive DEI training as an attack on their values and beliefs or as a method to exclude them (Gutierrez et al., 2000, 66; Miles, 2021; McCarter et al., 2023, 2; Dobbin & Kalev, 2018; 50). DEI training should be facilitated by someone from outside of the organization undertaking the training who has

knowledge, skills, and expertise in DEI and DEI training (McCarter et al., 2023, 10; King et al., 2010; Anziano, 2023).

The second step in designing DEI training is establishing the length and frequency of training sessions. DEI training should be maintained over time as a process of continuous education accompanied by additional DEI initiatives, as a single training session will not change participants' attitudes and behaviour or organizations' culture by much for long (Anziano, 2023; Robinson et al., 2020, 237; McCarter et al., 2023, 2; 10; Dobbin & Kalev, 2018, 49; Miles, 2021). DEI training could consist of a large annual training session reinforced by multiple small training sessions throughout the year (Anziano, 2023). DEI training could include pre- and post-training components (McCarter et al., 2023, 1). The length of training sessions will depend on the delivery and teaching methods used (Gutierrez et al., 2000, 66).

The third step in designing DEI training is establishing the tone. DEI training should be inclusive and should not promote stereotypes or emphasize the differences between people but should focus on similarities between people and include content about multiple cultures (Cocchiara et al., 2010, 1096; Bezrukova et al., 2012, 217; 220; 222-223; McCarter et al., 2023, 2; Dobbin & Kalev, 2018, 50-51; Anziano, 2023). DEI training should be positive and should focus on behavioural changes participants can make rather than prohibitive rules by which participants should abide and how inequalities can be addressed rather than why they still exist (Anziano, 2023; Bezrukova et al., 2012, 217; 222-223; Cocchiara et al., 2010, 1099). DEI training should be realistic, including real-life examples about which participants will care and to which they can relate and provide practical information applicable in real-world settings so that participants can learn and practice appropriate behaviour (Anziano, 2023; King et al., 2010, 896). DEI training

should be non-judgmental and promote self-evaluation rather than the evaluation of others (Gutierrez et al., 2000, 63).

The fourth step of designing DEI training is establishing the sequence of topics. DEI training should be cumulative, beginning with foundational concepts and increasing their complexity as participants become more competent, building from awareness through understanding into action (McCarter et al., 2023, 10; Cocchiara et al., 2010, 1096-1097). DEI training should first address the cognitive and affective processes that underlie prejudice and discrimination before building skills and changing behaviour (King et al., 2010, 902). First, DEI training should incorporate cognitive, feeling and thinking learning wherein participants acquire knowledge as attitude change requires awareness and understanding of biases and beliefs (Bezrukova et al., 2012, 218; 220; McCarter et al., 2023, 10; King et al., 2010, 894; 896; 899). Next, DEI training should incorporate affective, feeling and reflecting learning wherein participants can reflect on their values and beliefs, as addressing participants' attitudes is necessary to achieve changes in perspectives and self-awareness, which increases empathy, understanding, sensitivity, and respect (McCarter et al., 2023, 2; 10; Gutierrez et al., 2000, 55; 62; Anziano, 2023; Robinson et al., 2020, 237; Bezrukova et al., 2012, 218; 220). Finally, DEI training should incorporate active, acting learning wherein participants practise skills and move from awareness to proficiency, as this will lead to behavioural changes beyond the training session (King et al., 2010, 894-895; 902; Bezrukova et al., 2012, 217-218; 221; Miles, 2021; McCarter et al., 2023, 10). DEI training should offer multiple and diverse practice opportunities so that participants do not generalize behavioural responses (King et al., 2010, 901).

The fifth step of designing DEI training is establishing the delivery methods and instructional techniques, of which a variety should be used (Bezrukova et al., 2012, 218;

Anziano, 2023; Robinson et al., 2020, 238). The delivery method, which can be in-person, online, or hybrid, will inform which instructional techniques can be used (McCarter et al., 2023, 1; Anziano, 2023). Potential instructional techniques, for online training, include webinars, videos, games, and e-learning courses (Anziano, 2023; Robinson et al., 2020, 238). Instructional techniques can be one-way, interactive, or experiential. One-way techniques can be either trainer-led, which includes lectures and presentations or self-led, which includes self-evaluations, monitoring personal behaviour, and reading (Bezrukova et al., 2012, 217-218; Anziano, 2023; Gutierrez et al., 2000, 66; King et al., 2010, 895; Robinson et al., 2020, 238). Interactive techniques can include discussions, sharing experiences, observing and rehearsing behaviour, role-playing, and simulations (Bezrukova et al., 2012, 217-218; Anziano, 2023; Gutierrez et al., 2000, 66; Robinson et al., 2020, 238). DEI training should be interactive and prioritize peer support and discussion over one-way instruction, as interactive activities help participants better understand the potential application of concepts (Anziano, 2023; Miles, 2021). Experiential techniques can include the following three activities: caucusing, which is a process wherein participants meet in affinity groups to regularly reflect, practice skills, and apply what was learnt between meetings; action learning, which is a process wherein participants identify an issue, brainstorm potential solutions, create and implement an action plan and monitor the outcomes; and service learning, which is a process wherein participants engage in projects in real-world settings and apply skills learnt in training (McCarter et al., 2023, 1; 8; King et al., 2010, 899; 901; Bezrukova et al., 2012, 217). DEI training can include experiential techniques, such as opportunities to encourage participants to apply their knowledge beyond training (King et al., 2010, 895; 899; McCarter et al., 2023, 10). DEI training could include regular and structured feedback as they encourage positive behavioural changes and reduce negative outcomes

(Robinson et al., 2020, 237; King et al., 2010, 895; 903). DEI training could include performance metrics that require participants to achieve a certain level of performance, indicating competency (Robinson et al., 2020, 237; King et al., 2010, 902). DEI training could include diverse, intergroup contact as this reduces biases (Robinson et al., 2020, 51; King et al., 2010, 895). DEI training could include accountability measures during and after training as done wrong; training can create a false sense of confidence and complacency in participants, and accountability measures ensure participants do not regress but are rather encouraged to improve (Robinson et al., 2020, 238-239; Cocchiara et al., 2010, 1097; McCarter et al., 2023, 2; Dobbin & Kalev, 2018, 50).

The sixth step of designing DEI training is establishing the content. DEI training content should be accurate and theory-based to make DEI training more reliable (McCarter et al., 2023, 10; Bezrukova et al., 2012, 212). DEI training content should be relevant to the organizations and edited regularly (Robinson et al., 2020, 238). DEI training content includes DEI basics, awareness training, affective training, and skills training (Jackson, 2023; Miles, 2021; Bezrukova et al., 2012, 217). DEI basics include defining diversity, equity, and inclusion. Awareness training includes personal awareness, organizational awareness, and societal awareness. Personal awareness includes unconscious and implicit bias, and cultural competency and sensitivity (Jackson, 2023; McCarter et al., 2023, 6; Miles, 2021; Tutu et al., 2022, 21). Organizational awareness includes organization demographics, workplace equity, inclusive workplace culture, and company values (Miles, 2021). Societal awareness includes anti-homophobia, anti-sexism, anti-racism, anti-ableism, anti-Islamophobia, and issues minority groups face (Miles, 2021; Tutu et al., 2022, 21). Anti-homophobia includes addressing homophobia, sexual orientation, and gender identities (Miles, 2021; McCarter et al., 2023, 5-6; 8; Jackson, 2023; Tutu et al., 2022,

21). Anti-sexism content addresses sexism, cissexism, gender, and gender gaps (Miles, 2021; McCarter et al., 2023, 5-6; 8; Jackson, 2023; Tutu et al., 2022, 21). Anti-racism includes race and ethnicity, racial minorities, racism, white privilege, and racialization (Miles, 2021; McCarter et al., 2023, 5-6; 8; Jackson, 2023). Issues minority groups face include microaggressions, discrimination, exclusion, tokenism, and disproportionality and disparities (Miles, 2021; McCarter et al., 2023, 5-6; 8; Jackson, 2023; Tutu et al., 2022, 21; 25-26). Affective training includes belonging, motivation, moral licensing, and multiculturalism (Jackson, 2023; Miles, 2021; Dobbin & Kalev, 2018, 51). Skills training includes personal, interpersonal, advocacy, and work-specific skills (Jackson, 2023; Miles, 2021). Personal skills, include recognizing and addressing biases, understanding internalized superiority and inferiority, identifying and reducing the effects of oppression-based trauma, and tolerance (McCarter et al., 2023, 9; Banack & Pohler, 2023, xvii-xxi). Interpersonal skills include teaching participants how to work with others, inclusive communication, honesty and building trust, collaboration, cultural competency, and empathy (Bezrukova et al., 2012, 208; Miles, 2021; McCarter et al., 2023, 9). Advocacy skills include teaching participants about their roles and responsibilities to DEI and how to fulfill them, using bystander skills to stand up to and address microaggressions, facilitating affinity groups, and applying accountability techniques for justice (Cocchiara et al., 2010, 1092; McCarter et al., 2023, 9; Miles, 2021). Work-specific skills include implementing equitable practices and policies, inclusive hiring, and management, complying with human resources, and diversity management competency (McCarter et al., 2023, 9; Jackson, 2023; Miles, 2021; King et al., 2010, 895).

Following the Training

Regular evaluations should follow DEI training to ensure training has material outcomes (King et al., 2010, 893; Bezrukova et al., 2012, 208). DEI training evaluations should be based on more than participants' opinions of the training, but this should still be measured (Cocchiara et al., 2010, 1096; Anziano, 2023; Gutierrez et al., 2000, 67). Potential evaluations may record participants' initial planned behaviour change immediately after training and then routinely afterwards and evaluate the consistency between the intentions and actual behaviour (McCarter et al., 2023, 3). A maintained commitment to DEI should support DEI training, and organizations should encourage positive new behaviour and allow it to reflect in their work processes and practices (King et al., 2010, 899; Cocchiara et al., 2010, 1090; Bezrukova et al., 2012, 218).

Findings

These findings are the results of five semi-structured interviews with DEI coordinators from other municipalities and organizations with experience facilitating DEI training. The questions guiding the interviews are listed in the appendix section (p.34).

Interviewees mentioned multiple reasons for which municipalities may embark on facilitating DEI training. They claimed that DEI training addresses how people see, treat, and acknowledge others, and that the purpose of DEI training is to improve people's interactions with the municipality and services and ensure all people are included in the workplace and community. DEI training was described as a recently hot topic, especially since 2020 when people's consciousness levels were raised; some municipalities may be following the trend or may feel the need to do something. Undertaking DEI training is necessary to be eligible for

certain grants; thus, some municipalities facilitate DEI training simply to be compliant. Some interviewees noted reasons for pursuing DEI training that stemmed from social justice, dignity, and a desire to function from feminist, anti-racist, and anti-oppressive perspectives. DEI training was also seen as a tool to elevate competency and competitiveness. Municipalities may be responding to push from outside to facilitate DEI training, others may be modelling values that higher-level leadership individuals expect to see in the language and behaviour of staff.

DEI Portfolio

Interviewees discussed the management of DEI in their municipalities. While some had dedicated roles, others integrated this component into existing roles or delegated tasks. DEI could fall under Human Resources or accessibility, each of which could fall under other offices, such as Chief Administrative Officer or Deputy Clerk. Alternatively, DEI may be managed by committees or staff working groups. Some interviewees mentioned that the amount of DEI work that can be pursued by a municipality can be overwhelming even when one person is dedicated to doing the work and when it is only a fraction of someone's time, DEI work can fall to the wayside. Other equity-related positions not explicitly DEI can be included in DEI work. DEI affects every single municipal service, policy, and procedure. Training is required to advance understanding of its relevance and meaning. Resources, such as salaries and budgets, are necessary to carry out such DEI work. Collaborating with other municipalities can enable the pooling of resources.

Delivery of the training module

Interviewees suggested incorporating DEI training into existing training processes, such as annual all-staff training and onboarding orientation for new staff and new members of

committees and working groups. DEI training could also be built into everyday conversations, such as performance reviews. DEI training could be piloted in staff working groups dedicated to DEI work.

Interviewees had various opinions on custom-made training. Some interviewees stated that “One size does not fit all” (Interviewee number five, 2024) implying that training modules must be customized accordingly and that the level of DEI training required depends on the work municipalities may have already done around DEI and what needs to be taught. Others contracted all of their training out or facilitated pre-made training themselves. A mixed approach can be pursued where some training is internally developed, and some is externally contracted. To determine what training is needed, staff could be surveyed on their background knowledge of DEI, and gaps for training to fill could be identified.

Interviewees agreed on how long a DEI training session should be. The length depends on the delivery method, budget, and how much work needs to be done. In-person workshops range from two and a half to three, or potentially four, hours, while online training sessions range from half an hour to ninety minutes. Critical information should be designed to be delivered in the time available. Some interviewees indicated a desire for longer training courses but noted limits on how much time staff had available as a constraint. An interviewee who had developed a three-hour foundational training suggested not splitting that session up into multiple smaller sessions as the information in each hour builds upon the previous hour, and it hinders reflection if the sessions are separated from each other.

Interviewees varied on how frequently training should be held. Some interviewees maintained that formal, continuous learning should be facilitated throughout the year over a series of months. In contrast, others suggested smaller top-ups on specific topics should follow a

one-time longer foundational training. Interviewees whose municipalities had only facilitated training once and not repeated it regularly mentioned they would like to see training continue as staff who joined the municipality after the training sessions occurred, missed that information. A wide variety of training opportunities should be balanced with reflective time and space, so staff have opportunities to apply what they have learnt in practice.

Outcomes of DEI training

Interviewees discussed the intended outcomes of DEI training. DEI training should materially affect work processes and high-level decision-making. While following training, staff should have a shared base understanding of DEI concepts; DEI training should function as a facilitated engagement session, not a test, where participants interact and learn and then apply a DEI lens to their work. Services should be delivered more equitably, and the workplace and community culture should change as people follow the examples given and take up opportunities to learn more. Investments around DEI should be made even if it requires greater resources upfront.

Facilitating the Training

Interviewees noted challenges in getting training to reach all staff. Running multiple sessions of the same training could allow maximum attendance when all staff cannot get together simultaneously. DEI training does not have to be mandatory; there are advantages and disadvantages to both mandating training and making it optional. One notable reason for mandating training was it is a way to make sure resistant staff are exposed to DEI. Interviewees suggested that mandatory training is often necessary to ensure a DEI lens in the workplace. Integrating staff across various departments proved one way to expose participants to people

with diverse backgrounds and outlooks, which provides proper retention of participants during the implementation of a DEI training module.

Interviewees had different experiences facilitating training. While some municipalities' training was led by internal staff, the others were led by external guest speakers and subject matter experts. The person who manages DEI in the municipality does not have to facilitate the training and should enlist help when their knowledge is limited. For trainers who are from marginalized communities, training can be a triggering experience as they draw upon their own experiences to illustrate lessons. This can be mitigated by having multiple trainers from diverse backgrounds who can support each other. Interviewees highlighted the crucial role of community partners. Some topics and content could be covered by relevant community partners. The interviews suggest that connections and partnerships with community partners should be built and maintained to ensure the proper implementation and facilitation of a DEI training module.

Interviewees considered the sequence in which content should be taught. Basics should be introduced first so participants can keep them in mind throughout further training. Concepts should scaffold on top of each other, and content should first build knowledge before changing attitudes and finally developing skills.

Delivery of the Training

Interviewees preferred in-person training, as engagement is easier to gauge and encourage, but also acknowledged some of the advantages of online training, such as the ease of getting lots of staff together. Onboarding training, which is usually pursued by an individual participant rather than a group of staff, is most often online.

Interviewees recognized that people learn differently and as such, multiple learning styles should be implemented, and various instructional techniques should be used. When a slide deck is used, it should not be shared beforehand, so people do not make assumptions about the content before training, and it should not contain everything that the training will include. Media that could be used include videos, other tools such as virtual tours, visual and written material. If training is online, the chat can be used as a space where participants can share. Post-training assignments, workbooks, or activities could be distributed for participants to work on afterwards.

Interviewees emphasized the importance of interactive techniques, rather than training a presenter to speak to the participants who solely sit and listen. Such techniques could include workshops or hands-on breakout sessions where participants discuss and debrief what they have learnt, converse with others, and share ideas and lived experiences. Participants could be given exercises to work on individually or in small groups where they are given scenarios to address or resolve. Comparison exercises could be run where participants raise their hands to indicate they agree or resonate with certain statements. Examples given in case studies should be selected to be as intriguing as possible for participants. Overall, exercises should force participants to engage with one another. For online training pursued by individuals, questionnaires could be embedded to add an interactive component. Participants should be reminded to remove any distractions and be present and encouraged to be open, receptive, and participatory. Participants should be urged to ask questions at any time during training and themselves. Interviewees proposed that participants be able to follow up with the trainers, whether internal or external, following training if they have further questions. Trainers should be patient and not afraid to sit in silence to encourage participants to speak up. Interactive techniques are important because participants need to be engaged in practical training as it will make training more memorable.

Sharing and asking about lived experiences is one way to facilitate lightbulb moments wherein participants realize DEI impacts them. Examples and case studies presented in training should encourage participants to reflect throughout and beyond the session.

Interviewees stressed the need to create a ‘safe space’ where everyone feels comfortable sharing their own opinions as they are and acknowledging that everyone has assumptions and judgments about certain topics. This suggests that a ‘safe space’ is created by allowing everyone to speak their truth and challenge participants to think about their own stereotypes and unconscious biases, this implies that participants are challenged to be comfortable being uncomfortable. To create a space where everyone feels encouraged to speak is crucial to emphasize that these spaces are growing opportunities rather than a judgemental space. Participants should be able to take breaks when they need them and be encouraged to share how the training is impacting them. Trainers should be approachable and non-judgmental and remind participants they are there to facilitate learning.

Content Strategies

Interviewees listed the content they have included or would like to see included in their DEI training. First comes introductory, foundational training that familiarizes people with concepts and terms and sets a level of understanding by defining diversity, equity, and inclusion; as well as related topics such as equality, belonging, respect, and opportunities; routes to DEI work, social justice, human rights, accessibility, and intention; intersectionality and invisible issues; power, privilege, oppression, and discrimination; bias and unconscious and implicit bias; and challenges marginalized peoples face, microaggressions, common harmful assumptions, and stereotypes.

Second comes specific topics such as gender categories and diversity, pronouns and structural issues for transgender people, and LGBTQ+; race, ethnicity, racism, and anti-racism; religion and Islamophobia; Indigenous issues and cultural awareness, which includes the histories of specific Indigenous communities, and truth and reconciliation; disability; income; language; intergenerational trauma; different cultures and diversity within cultures; mental health; and overlooked factors that affect DEI, such as methods of communication and access to internet.

Third comes applied learning that explains what DEI looks like in a day-to-day work environment, inclusive workplace culture, customer service, methods of recourse when participants have experienced discrimination, best practices for signage, organizations that serve the community, how our backgrounds influence our outlooks, benefits of diversity, and how to avoid misconceptions, make the environment safe for marginalized communities, minimize discrimination, learn about different cultures respectfully, ask questions to make equity issues visible, and help people in ways that are supportive to them.

Training Evaluation

Interviewees differed regarding post-training evaluation. Some interviewees promoted post-training evaluation to gauge participants' experiences to inform how training should be altered for the next session and ask what participants did not know before participating and with what they walked away. Seeing which participants do not complete such evaluations yields useful data, as those are the staff who are most in need of engagement efforts. As training is repeated, asking if participants still walk away having learnt something is useful to ensure training is still engaging and relevant. Post-training evaluations should be simple and should not put words in people's mouths or be too open-ended that it dissuades participants from responding. When external trainers are used, they should share the feedback they collect. Some

interviewees argued that the effectiveness of training cannot be measured immediately after but requires seeing what people implement in their day-to-day work three to six months later.

Storytelling about what people did differently, questions that came up, and scenarios that reminded them of training could prove a more effective way of evaluating training. These stories that show change is happening should be collected and shared.

Interviewees expressed a few measures they considered indicative of success.

Participants should leave the training with more questions than they had going in, as this shows they are engaged with the content and are reflecting. More staff reaching out to the person who manages DEI in the municipality and asking for help on projects or reflecting on prior conversations shows they are becoming allies who consider DEI as part of their work. More people attending flag-raising events and days of remembrance show more acceptance and celebration of DEI.

Interviewees reflected on how DEI training has been received. Some interviewees spoke about the misconceptions around DEI, especially noting that people misunderstand DEI as just gender-focused or related DEI topics as repetitive. Some municipalities may be resistant to DEI training because they believe they are already sensitive to such issues. Some participants may make comments that indicate resistance while others may keep it to themselves. Trainers have faced bullying from participants and in response, trainers remind participants of their role, correct participants when they say something inappropriate or insensitive, and teach participants how to be held accountable and how to hold others accountable. While some participants have been resistant to training because it was mandatory, interviewees believed while takeaways from training vary whether it is mandatory or not, education breaks down barriers and resistance, but

forcing behavioural change creates a negative environment. Overall, DEI training is a journey for people, and the calls to grow should be amplified.

Interviewees observed similar outcomes from DEI training but agreed that change is slow and DEI work cannot be rushed as it takes a long time to embed equitable practices that are only visible potentially decades later. This slow internal work complements the faster-paced external pushes. Noticeable outcomes included members of staff working groups relaying shared lived experiences of others with their colleagues to break down resistance to DEI, engaging others in conversations about what they have learnt from optional training and how it affects their day-to-day decision-making and actions, and even creating spontaneous book clubs to continue learning and discussing DEI topics. Ultimately, the small wins and lightbulb moments should be collected to supplement the narrative around DEI.

Recommendations

We recommend that the Township of Brock begin by conducting a needs assessment. First, the needs assessment should contextualize the work environment, note additional DEI initiatives taking place, evaluate how the highest level of leadership supports and could further support DEI, establish someone responsible for DEI, which includes potentially dedicating a role to DEI and directing adequate resources to DEI, determine the organizational motivation for facilitating DEI training, presenting this motivation as positive, authentic, and internally-driven, and identify existing training processes in which DEI could be included. Second, the needs assessment should contextualize staff's role requirements, and recognize the change needed and issues training can address. Third, the needs assessment should establish the intended outcomes of DEI training, identify the metrics that will evaluate the outcomes of DEI training, and measure those metrics before training and determine the evaluation timeline and outcomes. Finally, the

needs assessment should identify opportunities to collaborate with other municipalities and community organizations.

As part of the needs assessment phase, the Township of Brock should survey their staff to ask for their motivations for undertaking DEI training and the intended outcomes of the training and measure their prior understanding and perspectives of DEI before training. This survey provides an opportunity to introduce training to staff, present the organizational motivation for facilitating DEI training and share the intended organizational outcomes.

When the Township of Brock is designing training, we recommend that they begin by first determining who the participants will be, specifically mandating foundational training for all staff and otherwise inviting all staff to optional follow-up pieces of training. Second, the Township of Brock should choose who the trainer will be and support an internal trainer, if they elect to use one, with an external expert. Third, the Township of Brock should establish how long and frequent the training sessions will be; we recommend running a large, three-hour in-person foundational training session at the beginning of the year, offering this session at multiple different times to allow maximum attendance, and following it up monthly, with smaller, one-hour, in-person sessions on specific topics.

During training, the trainer should foster a supportive and safe environment by teaching participants how to be held and hold others accountable, reminding participants that trainers are there to teach, not to judge, and encouraging participants to ask questions by regularly inviting participants to share and holding silence to stimulate participants to speak up. Trainers should offer a way for participants to follow up with them after training. Scheduled breaks should be frequently available.

Interaction should be promoted during training. Time should be included for discussions and debriefs among participants, for participants to share lived experiences, and for scenario-based exercises for participants to work on individually or in groups.

Trainers should scaffold concepts and content by first building awareness and clearly defining foundational concepts; then changing attitudes, using realistic stories and case studies; and finally developing skills, providing examples of behavioural changes participants can make and practical information applicable to participants’ work.

A list of content that could potentially be included in training is tabulated below.

Category	Sub-Category	Content
Foundational training	DEI basics	Diversity
		Equity
		Inclusion
	Related introductory topics	Equality
		Belonging
		Respect
		Opportunities
		Routes to DEI work
		Social justice
		Human rights
		Accessibility
		Intention
		Intersectionality

		Power		
		Privilege		
Awareness training	Personal awareness	Unconscious and implicit bias		
	Organizational awareness	Organization demographics		
		Workplace equity		
		Inclusive workplace culture		
		Company values		
	Community awareness	Organizations that serve the community		
	Societal awareness	Issues minority groups face	Oppression	
			Microaggressions	
			Discrimination	
			Exclusion	
			Tokenism	
			Disproportionality	
			Disparities	
Invisible issues				
Harmful assumptions and stereotypes				
Intergenerational trauma				
Gender		Pronouns		

			Sexism
			Cissexism
		Sexuality	Homophobia
		Race	Ethnicity
			Racialization
			Racism
			White privilege
			Anti-racism
		Ability	Disability
			Ableism
		Religion	Islamophobia
		Indigeneity	Issues Indigenous peoples face
			Indigenous cultural awareness
			Truth and reconciliation
			History of specific Indigenous communities
		Culture	
		Mental health	

		Language
Affective training		Motivation
		Moral licensing
		Multiculturalism
		Benefits of Diversity
Skills training	Personal skills	Recognizing and addressing biases
		Addressing internalized superiority and inferiority
		Identifying and reducing the effects of oppression-based trauma
		Tolerance
	Interpersonal skills	Cultural humility
		Working with others
		Inclusive communication
		Honesty
		Building trust
		Collaboration
	Advocacy skills	Fulfilling roles and responsibilities around DEI
		Using bystander skills to stand up to and address microaggressions

		Facilitating affinity groups
		Applying accountability techniques
	Work-specific skills	Implementing equitable practices and policies
		Inclusive hiring and management
		Complying with human resources
		Diversity management competency
		Customer service
		Methods of recourse following discrimination

The Township of Brock should evaluate participants’ training experiences, asking their opinions, and their intended behavioural changes. More importantly, we recommend evaluating outcomes six months after training, including an evaluation of the supportive environment towards behavioural changes following training.

Strengths and Limitations

The sections of this report provide a comprehensive analysis of the collected data and incorporate the literature review and five semi-structured interviews combining different perspectives and implementation approaches regarding the best content and implementation strategies of DEI training. The methodological approach ensures that the report presents clear and achievable recommendations to assist the Township of Brock in developing a DEI training module. However, this research report presents potential limitations due to the limited access and existence of written texts, such as journals, articles, and books, and the number of interviewees in this project. The number of available DEI coordinators was severely reduced to five

participants from the initial number because of the project's time frame. This reduction and the literature review may be limited due to variations in written texts from diverse contexts, backgrounds, industries, and the emerging growing field. This research initiative endeavours to gather diverse perspectives and customize the project to provide tailored assistance to the Township of Brock. Therefore, it is crucial to interpret the findings and recommendations section within the scope of best content and implementation strategies for a DEI training module and consider the strengths and limitations of this project. In addition, further research may be required for future implementation of the DEI training module and to validate its effectiveness.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this research report intends to assist the Township of Brock in developing their own DEI training module. This research project confidently presents a comprehensive four-phase DEI training module, incorporating the best content and implementation strategies, preceding training, designing training, delivering training, and evaluation. This project comprised a literature review emphasizing effective content and implementation strategies of a DEI training module and five semi-structured interviews with DEI coordinators from other municipalities and external organizations. The findings section of this project suggests that while developing a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) training module for the Township of Brock, the implementation strategy should consider the DEI portfolio, frequency and duration of the training module, content, and implementation strategies based on instructiveness and workshops. It is also crucial to evaluate the effectiveness of the training module after implementation. Additionally, a potential future research project could develop and implement a training program through the DEI Committee in the Township of Brock.

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Appendix

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

1. What is your role in your municipality as it relates to DEI in general?
2. Did you create specific training for your municipality, or did you facilitate pre-made training?
3. Was the training delivered as a one-time event or as a series of events?
4. How long was the training session?
5. In hindsight, would you deliver training in the same way?
6. Could you briefly list the content you included in the training?
7. In hindsight, was there any other content you would include in the training?
8. What teaching methods were used in training?
9. In hindsight, were there any methods you preferred?
10. In hindsight, were there any other methods you would like to include in the training?
11. How did participants respond to the introduction of training?
12. Was there any resistance to the training?
 - a. If so, did you attempt to encourage a more receptive environment?
 - i. If so, how did you attempt to encourage a more receptive environment?
 - ii. What were the outcomes of these attempts?
13. Did you measure engagement with the training?
 - b. If so, how did you measure engagement with the training?
14. Were participants engaged in the training?
15. Did you attempt to encourage engagement with the training?

- c. If so, how did you attempt to encourage engagement with the training?
- d. What were the outcomes of these attempts?

16. Did you evaluate the effectiveness of the training?

- e. If so, how did you evaluate the effectiveness of the training?