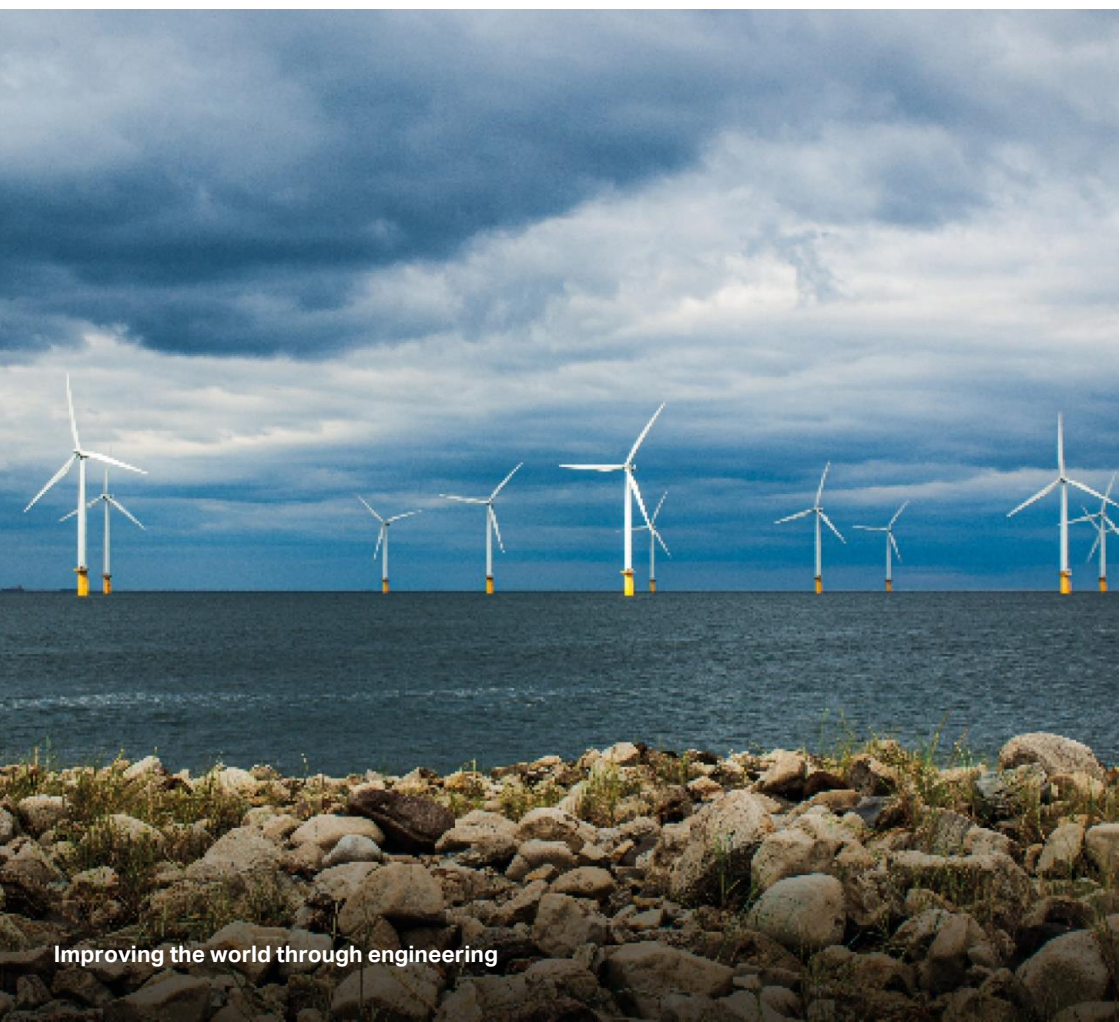


EXPLORE ACTIVITY PACK

Institution of
**MECHANICAL
ENGINEERS**



Improving the world through engineering

EXPLORE ACTIVITY PACK

Introduction

In this pack you will find helpful tasks, suggestions, tips, and activities that you can do to increase your emotional intelligence, self-awareness, growth mindset and find new ways to create belonging for others at the IMechE.

The best way to work through this pack is to choose any activity that sparks your curiosity and to just give it a go, there is no right or wrong way to create inclusion and what may work for one person or team may not work for another.

Once you have completed an activity don't forget to talk about it to other people at the Institution and to share your learning so that other people have the opportunity to learn with you.

ACTIVITY ONE

Story of Your Name

Connecting with people that we work with is an important way to create a greater sense of belonging, so getting to know your people on a slightly more personal level, whilst still ensuring everyone is comfortable is essential. Try this short activity with your team and/or peers to open up dialogue around the topic of identity and get to know people better:

This activity can take just 5 minutes and can be used as an ice breaker in a team meeting, ask your team to explore what their name means by asking:

- What does your name mean?
- Where does it come from?
- How do you relate to that?

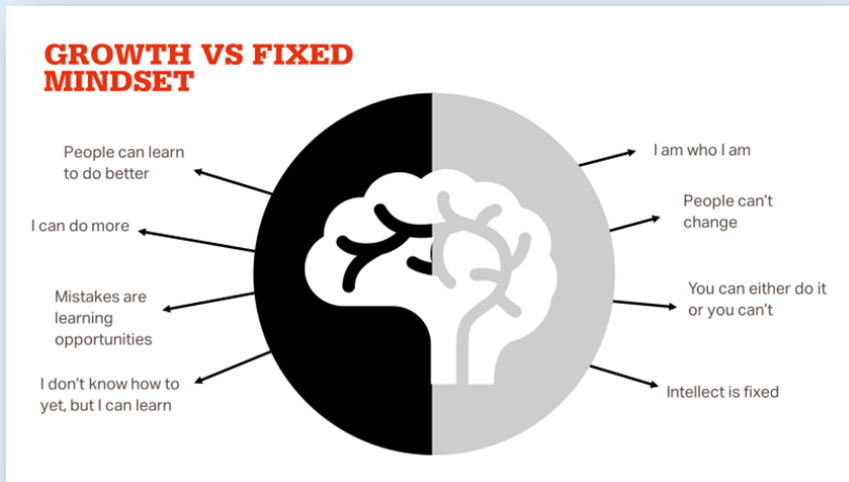
Some people may not know what their name means, so a simple search online will help to rectify that and people may be surprised to learn more about themselves too!

ACTIVITY TWO

Growth Mindset Reflection

Psychology Professor Carol Dweck's research from Stanford University first coined the phrase growth mindset and simply put it means that those who have a growth mindset believe that they are in control of their skills, meaning they can learn, grow and develop in areas that they are not yet knowledgeable or good at yet.

Those with the opposite mindset (fixed) believe that we are born with a certain level of intellect and skills and don't believe they can be improved through training, learning, practice etc.



We all want to believe we have a growth mindset, however, if we were being truly honest with ourselves we would see that there is room for improvement and we approach some of our work/project/member related activities in a fixed mindset and that's ok.

One of the best ways to move over towards a growth mindset in more of our daily activities (enabling us to continuously improve) is to make reflection part of our daily and weekly routine.

Start by scheduling into your work calendar (or personal one) time to do daily or weekly reflections; some people find that 10 minutes at the end of the day works well for them and some people prefer to put in 30 minutes on a Friday morning and reflect on the week instead - it's all about what works best for you.

Once your reflection time is scheduled in and you're in the habit of taking a little time out of your week to reflect on your mindset, you will be amazed at how quickly you are able to move towards a growth mindset in more of your daily and work activities.

Here are some questions that you can put into your reflection calendar invite to remind yourself of what to reflect on:

- When did I have a closed mindset? (Why was that?)
- When did I have an open mindset? (Why was that?)
- What have I learnt about myself as a result?
- What will I do differently next time?

ACTIVITY THREE

Emotional Intelligence

Having a high level of emotional intelligence (EQ) means we are twice as likely to be successful in life as those with high levels of IQ and technical skills, it just takes practice. The good news is those of us that also have high levels of technical skill and/or IQ can also improve our EQ.

Mastering our own emotions and understanding where they are coming from are a key part of increasing our EQ, give the below reflection a try and see how much further you can increase your EQ:

Reflection

Look back at the last week at work and think about where you were each day with your emotions; were you sad, happy, frustrated, bored, excited, disappointed, energised etc.

Then looking at these, try to establish when you were at the top and bottom of the scale (excited and joyful being the top and sad and frustrated at the bottom) and what you were doing during those times.

This will help you to notice them more moving forward and empower you to manage your emotions even better as you will begin to understand the patterns in your thoughts and feelings.

Additional Activity

The next time you feel a negative emotional feeling arising don't do anything, just pause. Take a deep breath and ask yourself two questions:

1. Is this feeling harmful or helpful to me right now?
2. How can I reframe this feeling and look outwardly?

Here is an example of how it could work:

Your team member appears annoyed and unhappy with you on a weekly catch up call and your anxiety heightens and you worry you've done something wrong. Instead think about this:

1. Is feeling anxious and worried helping me or harming me right now?
2. Rather than worrying about what you've done wrong, perhaps your team member is having a bad day and you just happened to be the first person they spoke to

Understanding this will not only enable you to respond compassionately to yourself and others (rather than reacting negatively), it will also mean you can improve your emotional responses and support your team member.

ACTIVITY FOUR

Compassionate Reflection

Having the ability to relate to yourself and others in a way that is accepting, respectful and understanding is called compassion. Showing compassion to yourself and others is a simple way to support your wellbeing and is also essential as an inclusion advocate.

Reflection

Take a few moments to think about what how you have shown compassion to yourself recently;

- Can you remember a moment when you felt disappointed or stressed?
- Were compassionate to yourself?
- If you were, then what worked well for you?

If not, then think about this the next time something uncomfortable happens and treat yourself the way you would a friend - this technique works really well with your team too!

ACTIVITY FIVE

Active Listening Skills

Active listening and deep listening is a skill that needs to be practiced often and is something that coaches, counsellors, facilitators and those in the psychological field do very well. When we actively listen:

- We listen to understand other people
- We listen to get to know them and we listen to learn

Often when we're not actively listening we are only cosmetically listening and we are doing it:

- To respond
- Or waiting for our turn to talk

Practice this exercise with your team members/peers to highlight how our brains like to find patterns and that means that when recognise this we stop listening. This happens all the time when we are talking to people so we must practice our active listening to ensure we are capturing everything people are saying and not just what we want to hear.

Exercise: As I read out these numbers please add them up and then record the final answer on a piece of paper – no calculators and no writing down the numbers as you go – just the final number.

- You start with the figure 1,000
- add 10 – what do you get? - (1010)
- add 1,000 – what do you get? - (2010)
- add 30 – what do you get? - (2040)
- add 1,000 – what do you get? - (3040)
- add 50 – what do you get? - (3090)
- add 1,000 – what do you get? - (4090)
- add 10 – write down the final answer. – (4100)

Don't forget to have a conversation following this activity to discuss how our brains stop us listening when we feel like there is a pattern and therefore we miss important aspects of what people are saying.

ACTIVITY SIX

Five from Five Feedback

Improve your self-awareness by asking 5 people 5 questions and using the feedback as a way to create greater awareness of how others view you. Below is an example of the five questions you could ask:

1. What 3 things do I do well?
2. What would you say my biggest achievement has been at work?
3. What one thing would make me more productive?
4. If you could change one thing about the way we work together what would it be?
5. What would you say is the thing I should work on the most about myself?

The idea is to see what you do well and what you could improve on as a leader and a colleague, so make sure you approach 5 different people who won't give you the same answers and will be honest.

ACTIVITY SEVEN

Identity Activity

Our identity plays an important part in how we fit into different areas of our lives and can help us to feel like we belong or like we aren't welcome somewhere. Our identity is made up of lots of different things and is influenced by many factors, some are external to ourselves.

Exploring our identity is a great way to get to understand the different dimensions of who we are and when we start to explore this, we can start to see more similarities between ourselves and other people at the IMechE. The wheel of diversity below has been adapted from Marilyn Loden's Implementing Diversity framework and helps us to explore our identity and individual layers of diversity in more detail.

Let's use it to explore your identity and then we are going to reflect on the people we work and collaborate with at the IMechE to see how much we know about each other's identities and how we might use that information to build stronger connections with each other to create great belonging for all.



Personality

Our most inner self is our personality, the individual differences we each have in our characteristics, patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving. There is a mixture of nature and nurture at play with our personalities and the other layers of our identity also influence our personality.

Internal Identity

Our internal identity is related to what we are born into/with, things that we had no control over and these are the core of who we are. Whilst these are identities we are born with/into they can change over time (e.g. our physical/mental ability etc.) Our internal identity tends to be where most of our division comes from within wider society.

Internal Identity	How do you identify/what do you see yourself as?	Is there anyone at the IMechE that is the same as you?	Is there anyone at the IMechE who is different to you?	Are there people at the IMechE you don't know this about?
Race/ethnicity				
National origin				
Age (including age range)				
Sexual orientation				
Assigned sex (e.g. were you born a boy or girl biologically)				
Gender identity (including does your gender match your assigned sex?)				
Physical ability (do you have any physical disabilities?)				
Non-visible disabilities (do you see yourself as having non-visible disabilities?)				

External Identity

Our external identity refers to areas of ourselves that are not necessarily something we were born with, but things that are influenced by other people, our surroundings, upbringings, school, media, work places etc. They are ultimately aspects of ourselves that we can change and often do over time.

External Identity	How do you identify/what do you see yourself as?	Is there anyone at the IMechE that is the same as you?	Is there anyone at the IMechE who is different to you?	Are there people at the IMechE you don't know this about?
Geographical location				
Income				
Personal interests				
Education (type of school we went to, did we finish school, level of education)				
Religious/spiritual beliefs (or not)				
Family status (are we in a relationship, single, have a family etc.)				
Socioeconomic status (are we working, middle, upper class etc.)				
Life experiences (have we travelled, worked in different culture, have we experienced hardships etc.)				

Organisational Identity

Our organisational identity distinguishes the differences between us and within organisations this can be a real factor when it comes to creating a sense of belonging.

Reflect

On the differences below and consider how the differences between people at an organisational level impact on their sense of belonging:

- Seniority (senior, middle, junior, entry level etc.)
- Length of service (here a long time or short time)
- Being an employee or member
- Paid/volunteer (paid for our work at the IMechE or volunteering time)
- Being a specialist or a generalist in our role

Worldview Identity

Our view of the world has a huge impact on who we connect with and who we feel is different to us and ultimately it can have an impact on the way we work and collaborate with other people. Our worldview identity covers factors like our political beliefs, moral compass, outlook on life etc.

Reflect

How do you think these things impact belonging and is there a solution to bring people together that are very different in their world views?

ACTIVITY EIGHT

Social Shuffle

When creating belonging in your teams, it's important to ensure everyone has the opportunity to get to know each other at a deeper level to help build trust and enable default inclusive behaviours to occur naturally.

In this virtual world, proximity is just as important as before, so pairing/buddying up others up with teammates unlike themselves has fantastic benefits to inclusion and belonging.

In meetings make sure people sit next to different people each time, when working on projects, make sure people are paired/buddied with those that they don't normally work with.

In the virtual world, hold team meetings where break out rooms can be used and pair people up with those different to themselves during these discussions so they can naturally work closer together.

ACTIVITY NINE

Maximum Homogeneity

One of our favourite tips from the book 'Inclusion Nudges' by Lisa Kepinski and Tinna C. Nielsen looks at creating meetings, committees, projects and teams where there is a maximum of 75% homogeneity.

This means that a composition target is set within teams/projects/meetings etc. where you have a maximum similarity of various demographic aspect e.g.:

- Max 75% of team members with the same ethnicity/national background
- Max 75% team members with the same gender/gender identity / sexuality
- Max 75% of team members from the same generation
- Max 75% of team members with same educational /socio-economic/professional background
- Max 75% of team members with the same abilities, whether that's those without neurodiversity or physical disabilities

This is a great technique to invite more diverse thinking and ways of working to each environment and prevents 'group think' from occurring due to its inclusive nature.

There are more incredible insights in the book which can be bought online.

ACTIVITY TEN

‘I Am’

In your next team meeting, ask your team to find a piece of paper and a pen. Then ask them to write down in large writing the words “I am” followed by something about themselves that they think others in the team may not know about you...once it's written ask them to share on the screen (or in person if the meeting is not virtual).

Here are some prompts for the team to think about their differences:

- Do you have a disability? Visible or non-visible
- Are you from the LGBT+ community?
- Are you from a different nationality/ethnicity to what people think?
- Are you the gender you were assigned at birth?
- How do you identify?
- What religion are you?
- What socio-economical background are you?
- What makes you different?
- If you can't think of anything, what about your partner, child, close family member or friend?

Take a moment to reflect on all these differences and explain that we are now learning to further embrace our differences and also build greater trust between each other – this may spark an interesting conversation – so go with it and get to know people in your team on a deeper level.

Some additional tips for this activity:

- It's important to write clearly and in large font so that it's easy to read
- Blurred backgrounds (if virtual) to be turned off so that everyone can see clearly
- Lead by example and share something about yourself that you think others don't know – share yours first and you will then see others feel more comfortable to share theirs

FURTHER LEARNING

If you're a keen advocate for everything D&I and would like to explore these topics further, then here are some free online courses that will help you to delve deeper into this fascinating world and equip you with even greater skills to lead others inclusively at the Institution.

[Emotional Intelligence eLearning](#)

[Developing a Growth Mindset Video](#)

[Storytelling for Social Change Course](#)

[Intercultural Communication Course](#)

[Rethinking Religion Course](#)

[Exploring Learning Disabilities: Supporting Belonging Course](#)