

BEYOND BOUNDARIES: TRANSFORMING GROWTH  
THROUGH LEARNING  
ATD Kansas City 2025 Fall Conference



An LED Imperative: Normalizing Radical Inclusion & Belonging  
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## VIDEO REFLECTIONS

- What are the implications of the question, “where are you from?”
  - Did you see any normalization in this video?
  - Was his take on Americanism inclusive?
  - The Fixation on his truth versus her lived experience
  - Thoughts on “regular” American... How does this perspective show up in our L & D experiences?
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## LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

As a result of this session, you will be able to:

- Formulate a personal problem statement you must solve to become a radically inclusive learning and development professional.
- Apply the Inclusive ADDIE Model to create learning experiences that foster belonging.
- Evaluate tools, approaches, and personal biases to promote psychological safety for all learners.



## INTROSPECTION

A handout will be provided for our first activity, the Top Six. The instructions are simple.

1. Write the names of six people you trust, not family. Three of them you know from work and three from your personal life.
2. Using the six categories, place an “x” by the individuals who are “like” you.
3. Assess your results and write your thoughts down in the space provided.
4. Once we view your results, you will get with a partner and discuss the following questions:
  - Any surprises or aha moments from your results?
  - Rate your results by the following scale:
    - 1 – Inclined to be inclusive
    - 2 – Challenged to be inclusive
    - 3 – Need more time to reflect

**Affinity Bias**

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Share your thoughts:

How might this bias affect the normalization of inclusion and belonging in the L & D space?



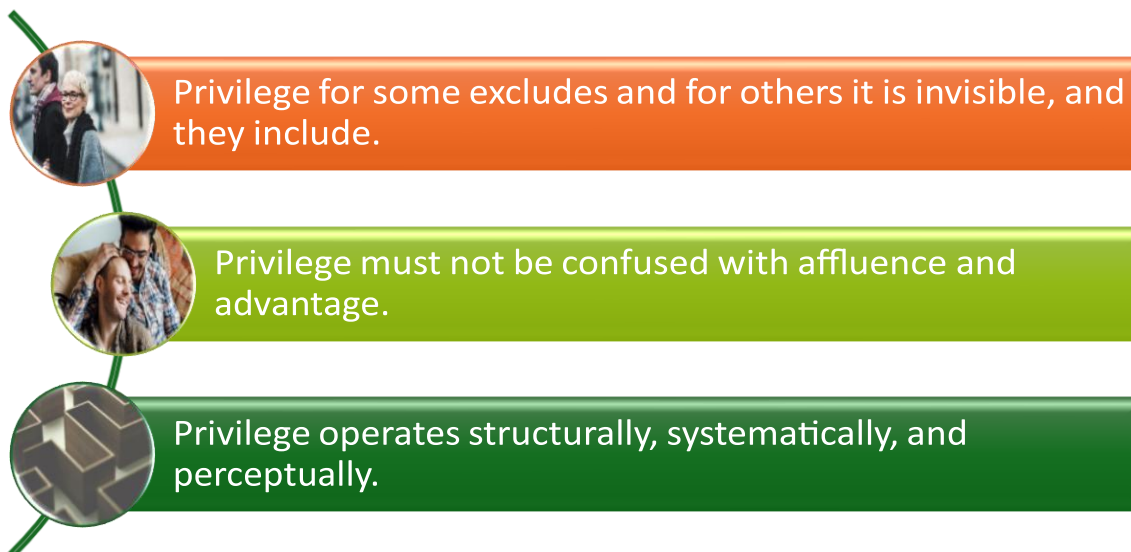
**INSPECTION**

Let’s do some personal and professional inspection as we consider our work as L & D professionals in spaces, communities, and among dynamics where the following concepts are real.

<b>Arbitrary Hierarchy Status</b>	This is an arbitrarily assigned status, without connections to merit or scientific evidence to substantiate or justify the status. It’s history stems from the work of men like Carl Linnaeus and Johann Frederick Blumenbach from the 16 <sup>th</sup> and 17 <sup>th</sup> centuries. <sup>i</sup> (Privilege) <sup>ii</sup>
<b>Assimilation</b>	This is the sacrifice of minorities who seek access to the spaces and experiences of the privileged; those so inclined are rewarded for their proximity to the privileged (i.e., whiteness, code-switching, tokenism, cultural taxation). <sup>iii</sup>

<b>Virtue Signaling</b>	DEIB efforts that are symbolic, not systemic, performative, not principled, and presents legitimately, not authentically (i.e., solidarity statements, without workplace change)
<b>Intersectionality</b>	Coined by Kimberle Crenshaw, addresses the overlapping <i>social identities</i> at work, in class, or on the team, which creates unique experiences of “in and outs”, “included or excluded”, “right look-wrong look”, etc. <sup>iv</sup>

In addition... a few words about privilege.



Where you and I land—personally, professionally, and intentionally—directly influences whether we focus on **intent** or **impact** in this work. Our time together is not about persuasion; rather, it is about exploring objective content that invites analysis, discussion, and reflection.

The goal is to make informed instructional and design decisions about our commitments to this journey of inclusion and belonging.

Let’s begin by identifying our current capacity for radical inclusion as we review the results of our Radical Fitness Survey to see where we land within the diagram.

Here are the findings:

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For this next section, go the appendix of this guide to complete a short assessment. You will find the instructions and scoring guide there.



**Place your highest score below:**

- Radically Inclusive Zone (1-3) \_\_\_\_\_
- Tentative Zone (4-6) \_\_\_\_\_
- Performative Zone (7-9) \_\_\_\_\_
- Toxic Zone (10 – 12) \_\_\_\_\_

**Questions for Reflection:**

- I am normalizing inclusion within my spheres of influence?
- I am normalizing inclusion and belonging as an L & D influencer?
- I am not normalizing inclusion and belonging, but I have an idea about what I can do to start normalizing inclusion and belonging?

This exercise is about identifying where we naturally land on the Radical Inclusion diagram. Are we hopeful and transparent? Tentative but guarded? Bold but disconnected? Or fearful and mistrustful? Knowing where we stand is the first step toward transformation.

## THE INCLUSIVE ADDIE MODEL

Given the normalcy and wide adoption of the ADDIE Model, what better framework to use as a starting point to pivot into inclusion? When we reimagine ADDIE as more than a tool for curating content—transforming it into a guide for creating truly inclusive learning experiences—we arrive at the Inclusive ADDIE Model, which gives us:

<b>Analyze → Acknowledge &amp; Access</b>  <i>Ask: Who's missing from the analysis table?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledge positionality and power dynamics in the learning environment</li> <li>• Conduct culturally responsive needs assessments (interviews, listening sessions, identity mapping)</li> <li>• Examine barriers to access (language, neurodiversity, digital divide, lived experience)</li> </ul>
<b>Design → Design for Difference</b>  <i>Ask: How can learners see themselves—and their community—reflected here?</i>	Reframe to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-design with diverse voices (learners, stakeholders, marginalized team members)</li> <li>• Use Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and traumainformed practices</li> <li>• Embed multiple modalities, cultural expressions, and ways of knowing</li> </ul>
<b>Develop → Decenter &amp; Diversify</b>  <i>Ask: What knowledge systems are being centered—and which are being left out?</i>	Reframe to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Source content from diverse lived experiences, not just traditional academic voices</li> <li>• Review materials for bias, stereotypes, and cultural erasure</li> <li>• Include diverse languages, images, examples, facilitators, and case studies</li> </ul>
<b>Implement → Invite &amp; Include</b>  <i>Ask: How does your delivery create space for learners to show up fully and safely?</i>	Reframe to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create brave spaces, not just safe spaces</li> <li>• Invite storytelling, community agreements, co-facilitation</li> <li>• Use reflective dialogue, peer-to-peer learning, and identity conscious facilitation</li> </ul>



THE INCLUSIVE ADDIE MODEL TEMPLATE

<p><b>Analyze → Acknowledge &amp; Access</b></p> <p><i>Ask: Who's missing from the analysis table?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acknowledge positionality and power dynamics in the learning environment</li> <li>• Conduct culturally responsive needs assessments (interviews, listening sessions, identity mapping)</li> <li>• Examine barriers to access (language, neurodiversity, digital divide, lived experience)</li> </ul> <p>(Type your thoughts here)</p>
<p><b>Design → Design for Difference</b></p> <p><i>Ask: How can learners see themselves—and their community—reflected here?</i></p>	<p>Reframe to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-design with diverse voices (learners, stakeholders, marginalized team members)</li> <li>• Use Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and trauma-informed practices</li> <li>• Embed multiple modalities, cultural expressions, and ways of knowing (Type your thoughts here)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Develop → Decenter &amp; Diversify</b></p> <p><i>Ask: What knowledge systems are being centered—and which are being left out?</i></p>	<p>Reframe to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Source content from diverse lived experiences, not just traditional academic voices</li> <li>• Review materials for bias, stereotypes, and cultural erasure</li> <li>• Include diverse languages, images, examples, facilitators, and case studies</li> </ul> <p>(Type your thoughts here)</p>



<p><b>Implement → Invite &amp; Include</b></p> <p><i>Ask: How does your delivery create space for learners to show up fully and safely?</i></p>	<p>Reframe to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create brave spaces, not just safe spaces</li> <li>• Invite storytelling, community agreements, co-facilitation</li> <li>• Use reflective dialogue, peer-to-peer learning, and identity-conscious facilitation</li> </ul> <p>(Type your thoughts here)</p>
<p><b>Equity in Evidence</b></p> <p><i>Ask: Are we evaluating what really matters in a culture of belonging?</i></p>	<p>Reframe to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use participatory evaluation—learners co-define what outcomes matter</li> <li>• Assess for shifts in awareness, empathy, and allyship, not just skills</li> <li>• Measure: <i>Did people feel seen? Did it spark reflection? Did it build connection?</i></li> </ul> <p>(Type your thoughts here)</p>

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# APPENDIX

## Finding Your Zone

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**Respond to each question authentically and courageously.**

1. I am willing to share my challenges or mistakes so others can learn and grow.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

2. I believe that creating inclusive spaces is possible, even when it feels difficult.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

3. Speaking the truth with transparency is more important than protecting my image.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

4. I believe inclusion is possible, but I often hold back from speaking openly about it.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

5. I want to be more vulnerable in my leadership, but fear or uncertainty keeps me cautious.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

6. I trust the idea of belonging, but I worry about the personal risk of being authentic.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

7. I am willing to speak about equity and inclusion, but deep down I doubt things will really change.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

8. I often “say the right things” about belonging even though I feel disconnected from the outcome.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

9. I am confident and outspoken about inclusion publicly, but privately I feel guarded and mistrustful.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

10. I avoid talking about equity or inclusion because I don’t believe it makes a difference.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

11. I feel it’s safer to stay silent than to risk speaking up about belonging.

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

12. I no longer believe authentic inclusion is possible in my environment.

1

2

3

4

5

### Scoring

- Group questions as follows: 1 – 3 \_\_\_\_\_ 4 - 6 \_\_\_\_\_ 7 – 9 \_\_\_\_\_ 10 – 12
- Average scores per section (total divided 3) and enter that number in blank field.
- The highest average identifies which zone is home for you.

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### My Personal Problem Statement:

Take a moment to draft a problem statement that you will focus on to direct your growth as a radically inclusive learning and development professional. It could sound something like:

*"I am more effective with learners who are similar to me. My problem to solve is that this comfort limits my inclusivity. I will become more radically inclusive by intentionally applying the Inclusive ADDIE Model to my design and facilitation over the next six months, focusing on learners from cultural and social backgrounds different than my own."*

### Worksheet Prompt for Students

#### Step 1 – Awareness (Current Reality):

"I notice that I am \_\_\_\_\_ (describe the limitation or bias)."

#### Step 2 – Problem Statement (Growth Edge):

"The problem I must solve to grow is \_\_\_\_\_."

#### Step 3 – Action Plan (Application of Inclusive ADDIE):

"I will apply \_\_\_\_\_ (specific component of Inclusive ADDIE) to my practice over the next \_\_\_\_\_ (timeframe)."

## **A Guide for Radically Inclusive Growth**

A structured list of seven actionable tips that guide participants toward the Radically Inclusive Zone.

**1. Do not allow arbitrarily assigned statuses to define you.**

- Social hierarchies often elevate or diminish people based on race, gender, class, or role. Refuse to let those labels dictate your worth or limit your vision for contribution.

**2. Commit to regular and natural other-centered cultural experiences.**

- Step into spaces, events, or practices that center people and traditions different from your own—not as a “tourist,” but as a genuine learner and guest.

**3. Check your affinity biases every 12–18 months.**

- Be intentional about asking: *“Am I still gravitating toward only those who look, think, or act like me?”* Growth means widening your circle of influence and comfort zone.

**4. Identify two mentors—one like you and one unlike you.**

- Choose mentors who are different in background or perspective but whom you deeply trust. Work with them to set measurable personal growth goals to not only hold you accountable to help you flourish.

**5. Practice micro-bravery.**

- Growth doesn’t always require grand gestures. Speak up in a meeting, challenge a biased comment, or invite a new voice into the conversation. Small acts of courage compound over time.

**6. Build a rhythm of reflective practice.**

- Journal, meditate, or engage in guided self-reflection at least monthly to examine where fear, fatigue, or fragility may be holding you back. Self-awareness fuels transformation.

**7. Anchor to a moral imperative, not just an organizational initiative.**

- Programs and policies may change, but a conviction rooted in moral imperative sustains courage when structures shift. Ask yourself: *“Why does this work matter to me personally?”*

## End Notes

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<sup>i</sup> Joy DeGruy, *Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome* (Portland, OR: Joy DeGruy Publications, 2005), 42–47.

<sup>ii</sup> Robin DiAngelo, *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2018), 51–69. <sup>iii</sup> <https://helpfulprofessor.com/cultural-assimilation-examples/>

<sup>iv</sup> [https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle\\_crenshaw\\_the\\_urgency\\_of\\_intersectionality](https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality)