

# Importance of diversity

What is diversity?

Why is diversity important?

What can diversity do  
for institutions?



# What is diversity?

## **Definition:**

Merriam-Webster describes diversity as „the inclusion of people of different races, cultures, religion, physical ability etc. in a group or organization“.

# Why is it important?

## Background

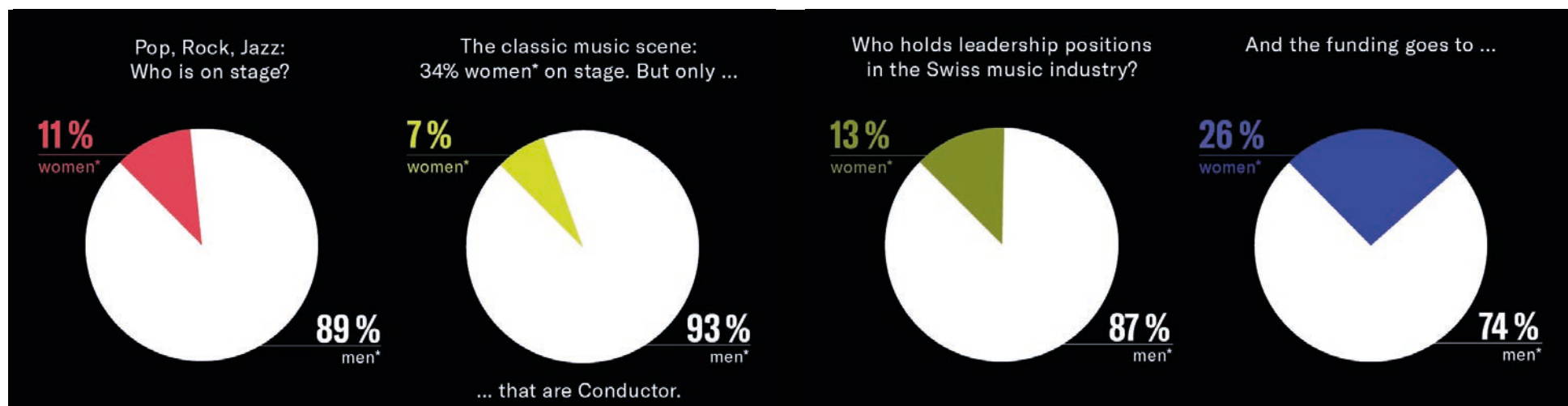
Switzerland may seem like a progressive country but if we look into the history we can see that a lot of equality laws aren't that old:

- 1981: The Federal Constitution of the Swiss Confederation was expanded to state “every person is equal before the law” and “no person may be discriminated against, in particular on grounds of origin, race, gender & age”.
- 1988: The new marriage law was implemented giving the wife the right to decide where to live, what to do with her money and if she wanted to go to work.
- 1991: The women's right to vote was implemented in all of Switzerland.

# Why is it important?

## Background

In 2021 the University of Basel, Pro Helvetia and Helvetiarockt created a pre-study to look at the situation in the cultural landscape. This research showed amongst other things following numbers in music:



# Why is it important?

## Harm

Excluding, conscious or subconscious, leads to harm and disadvantages of marginalized group members. Especially FINTA\* people are prone to the following problems, but can also be a problem for other marginalized groups.

- No/less money leads to dependency of partners (especially in harmful relationships).
- No/less money leads to social exclusion.
- (Social) Exclusion can lead to mental health problems.
- Stereotypical roles (man/women) can lead to stress and anxiety, if it is not a personal choice but a systematic oppression.
- No job/less percentages directly impact the retirement pay and risk of poverty in old age.

\* FINTA: female, intersex, non-binary, trans & agender

# Why is it important?

## Harm

Cis\* man can also be harmed by the systematic oppression of the patriarchy.

- Being the sole bread winner in the family can be extremely stressful.
- Not being able to stay at home as a new father and create a connection to the child leads to reinforcement of the stereotypical mother/father-dynamic.
- Being unable to work part-time leads to less connection to their loved ones and work-live-balance.
- Having to pause a year for military service or civil duties is forced on them.

\* cis: being content with the gender they were assigned at birth

# Why is it important?

## Gain

Diversity is not only associated with effort, but also with return.

- A study by McKinsey & Co. shows that companies with more than 30% female\* employees generate up to 30% higher revenues.
- The same study shows that companies with higher diversity are more agile in crisis situations and thus are therefore more stable and long-lasting.
- Thinking about diversity not only opens up new opportunities, but also a wider larger target audience
- Thinking more diversely in hiring opens up a wider range of professionals.
- Diverse teams with different backgrounds foster more creative and more innovative ideas.
- Foundations are more willing to fund diverse, inclusive and innovative projects.

\*This study only distinguished between men and women, leaving the gender spectrum in between out. We can assume that the same things apply for INTA (intersex, nonbinary, trans & agender) people.

# Nonviolent communication

What is nonviolent communication?

Why do we need it?

How do you do it?





# What is NVC?

## Term

Nonviolent communication is a way of communicating which was coined as a term by Marshall Rosenberg presumably in the 1960s.

**It is a way of communicating in a productive and empathic way.**

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonviolent\\_Communication#cite\\_note-1](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nonviolent_Communication#cite_note-1)

# Why do we need NVC?

There are three things that create conflict in communication and these three things are targeted by NVC.

- Static language: Meaning the attempt trying to describe or even capture the ever-changing world with a static language and not formulating the observations in regards of the changing times and specific instances.
- Connecting objective and subjective: Meaning to merge what you observe and how you assess it instead of separating these two things.
- Critic over wishes: Meaning that you give out critique instead of formulating a wish.

Having a open and welcoming feedback culture in your institution is a vital part of being a productive and diverse space (see the info bit “Safer Space”).

# How does it work?

There are four elements of NVC:

1. Observation without evaluating
2. Recognizing the feeling this produces
3. Describing a need that arises
4. Formulating a wish

## **For example:**

I see that you decided on a picture of five white guys for the ad. I feel left out as I am not a white man but would like to use the course described, because I want to learn the thing that is taught. I wish for some other genders visible in the ad picture.

This is obviously hard to maintain in a conversation but it gives a basic framework to help get more empathic conversations going.

# Knowledge in groups

What information?

What groups?

Some ideas.



# What information?

If the core team has found a set of shared values and wants to adhere to them it is important to let the people that work less hours know what these values are and how to act on them.

Remember:

- These people work sometimes for money but most of the time voluntarily. There is not a lot of time they can invest in this topic, therefore it is important to decide what information is given.
- Try and formulate what you want to say to them in as little and simple words as possible.
- Use examples for your values to show them what you do and give them ideas what they can do.

# What groups?

There are different groups that need different levels of information regarding your values.

## **For example:**

Somebody at a bar is less likely to be confronted with an artist that doesn't feel safe to use a specific bathroom. But the backstage workers or even the security team is more likely to be asked about options in this case. Therefore the second groups need more information on how to handle such a situation.

Think about which groups are most likely to come in touch with people with disabilities, with different genders, with different religions, with different language abilities etc.

If you need help with what could cause somebody to feel unsafe/uncertain you can always check out the privilege flower (see worksheet "Privilege Flower").

# Some ideas:

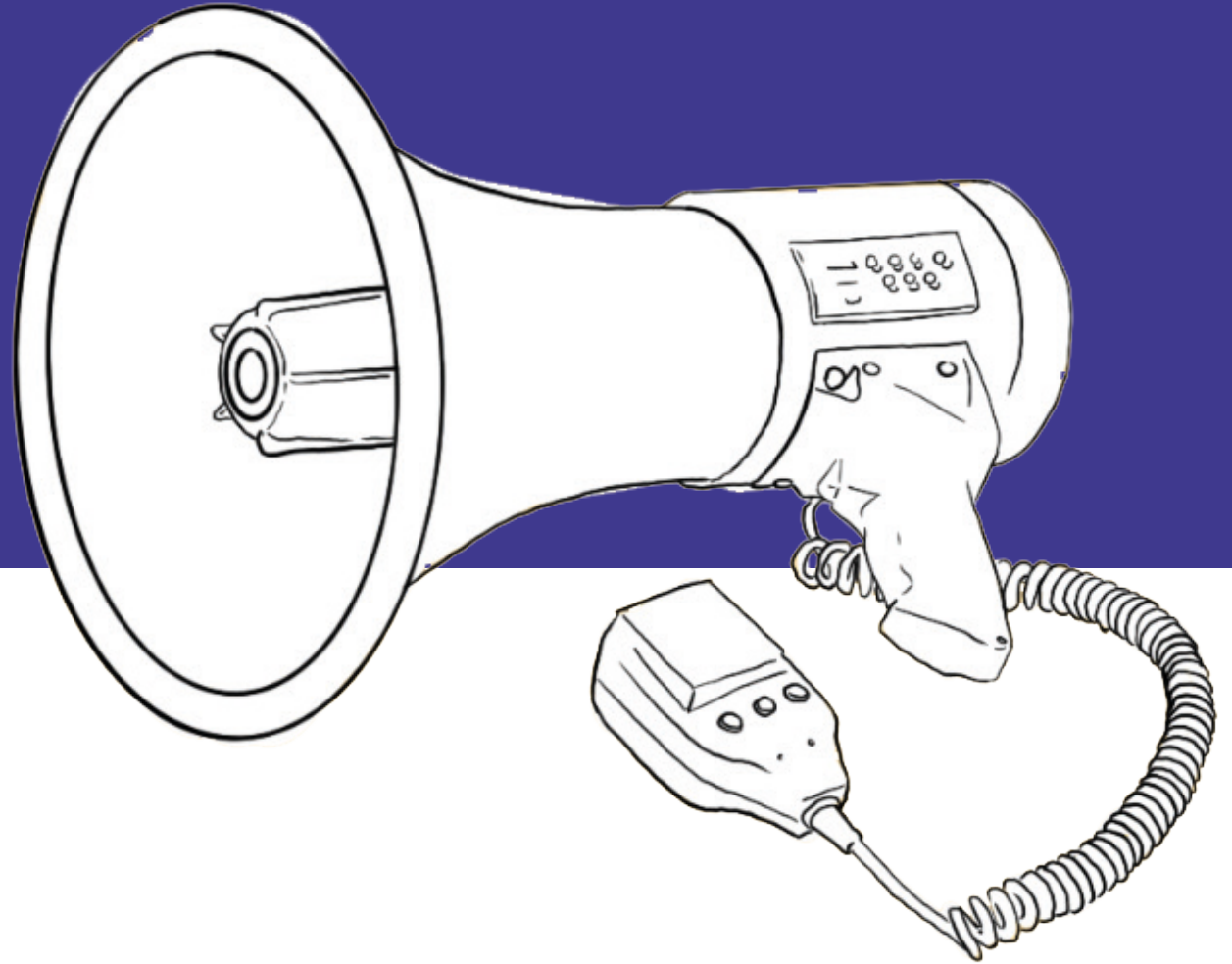
- Write down your values and include them in your volunteers information sheet.
- Write down your values in your booking reader you send out to your artists.
- Write down a short step by step guide for a specific group and a specific instance and hang it where they can read it.
- Make stickers with your values on them and share them around.
- Create posters and hang them on visible walls.
- Put your values on your website.
  
- **Find your own individual way that works best for you!**

# Ways of communication

Written

Verbal

Visual





# Written

Writing down your own values and your stance on diversity can help the volunteers and workers understand how important this topic is to you. Remember: Not everybody needs to know everything in the same depth. If you are unsure look at the “Knowledge in Groups” info bit.

## **Content:**

- It is important that you write down your points as short and precise as possible.
- Try to word the things you want to say in a positive way rather than a negative one.
- Think about how the people could feel when reading your text and try to write in a ways they feel ensured.
- Not everybody can understand complex sentences. Try to word everything simple and easy understandable.
- Use gender inclusive language. This is easy English by using “they”.
- Don't use clichés like “exotic” for PoC or “motherly” for women without the context of children or describe people with advisabilities as “so strong” or suffering etc.

# Written

## Distribution:

- You could send this information with the general volunteer information.
- You could print it out and hang it at the most important points.
- You could put it in a booklet or your website and let everybody who's new read it.

Maybe you find other ways that fit your specific situation even better.

# Verbal

It is very important that you think about what you want to say. It is equally important to do it in a positive way and integrate NVC (see info bit “Nonviolent Communication”).

- Be empathic towards all the questions of the other person.
- Find a calm moment to talk about this topic.
- Be prepared on what you want to say.
- You can always say that you don't know something and that you could find an answer together.
- Use gender inclusive language. This is easy English by using “they”.
- Don't use clichés like “exotic” for PoC or “motherly” for women without the context of children or describe people with advisabilities as “so strong” or suffering etc.

# Visual

Pictures and Infographics can really help to understand what you want to explain. An infographic describes information in a graphical way most of the time as an illustration. Pictures can give an idea or a mood to a topic you want to. Representation in pictures is also very important to show interested people where you stand.

- Use diverse pictures. This means to try and show diversity in the people that are on the pictures.
- Use illustrations and infographics if they are available and useful to the point you want to make.
- Use positive imagery.
- Try and use Alt-Text (text information which describe pictures to reading programs) to include blind / sight-impaired people.
- Don't put people in stereotypical positions while photographed, like Person in a wheelchair struggling or only women caring for people who need help etc.

# Living Values

What does this mean?

Why is it important?

How to stick to it?



# What does this mean?

## **Living Values:**

Being a role model for your employees and your volunteers as well as the artists present in your institution can help to see that it is possible to be more inclusive and diverse without sacrificing any quality of work to it. Even better: It shows how this can improve the work by improving the well-being of all the involved.

# Why is it important?

## **Importance:**

It is understandable that the values you want your employees, volunteers and artists to follow are less likely to be taken seriously if you don't stick to them yourself.

By showing them a positive way of working, inclusion and diversity they will start to follow your way.

Positive reinforcement works better than negative. Therefore try to point out the things they do well in regards of diversity.

# How to stick to it?

## **Remembering:**

You could print out the three “Step into the future”-posters and hang them in your office.

You could print stickers with important words and reminders.

You could set fixed meetings to discuss the topic.

To create your own way of remembering the values and stick to them you can do the worksheet “Ways of Remembering”.



# Wording, not scaring

Are you scary?

What to do?



# Are you scary?

**New things can be scary.**

**Change can be scary.**

Therefore it is important to understand what kind of fears people could have in regards of a more diverse future and how to word what you want to say in a not-frightening way.

Try to imagine what a really young person who isn't so sure of themselves or a really old person who is used to how things are and isn't used to change so much anymore could think and feel being presented the information you want to share.

# What to do?

## Let's look at an example:

If you write *“There are no genders and everybody can use every toilet in this institution”* it could give people who are not familiar with the gender spectrum an uneasy feeling. They probably are not used to being in a toilet with other genders and don't feel safe as it is new.

But if you write *“To make everybody feel comfortable we decided to create well lit and open toilet spaces with designated toilets and pissoire-booths. This also increases the waiting time as there are more toilets for everyone to use”*.

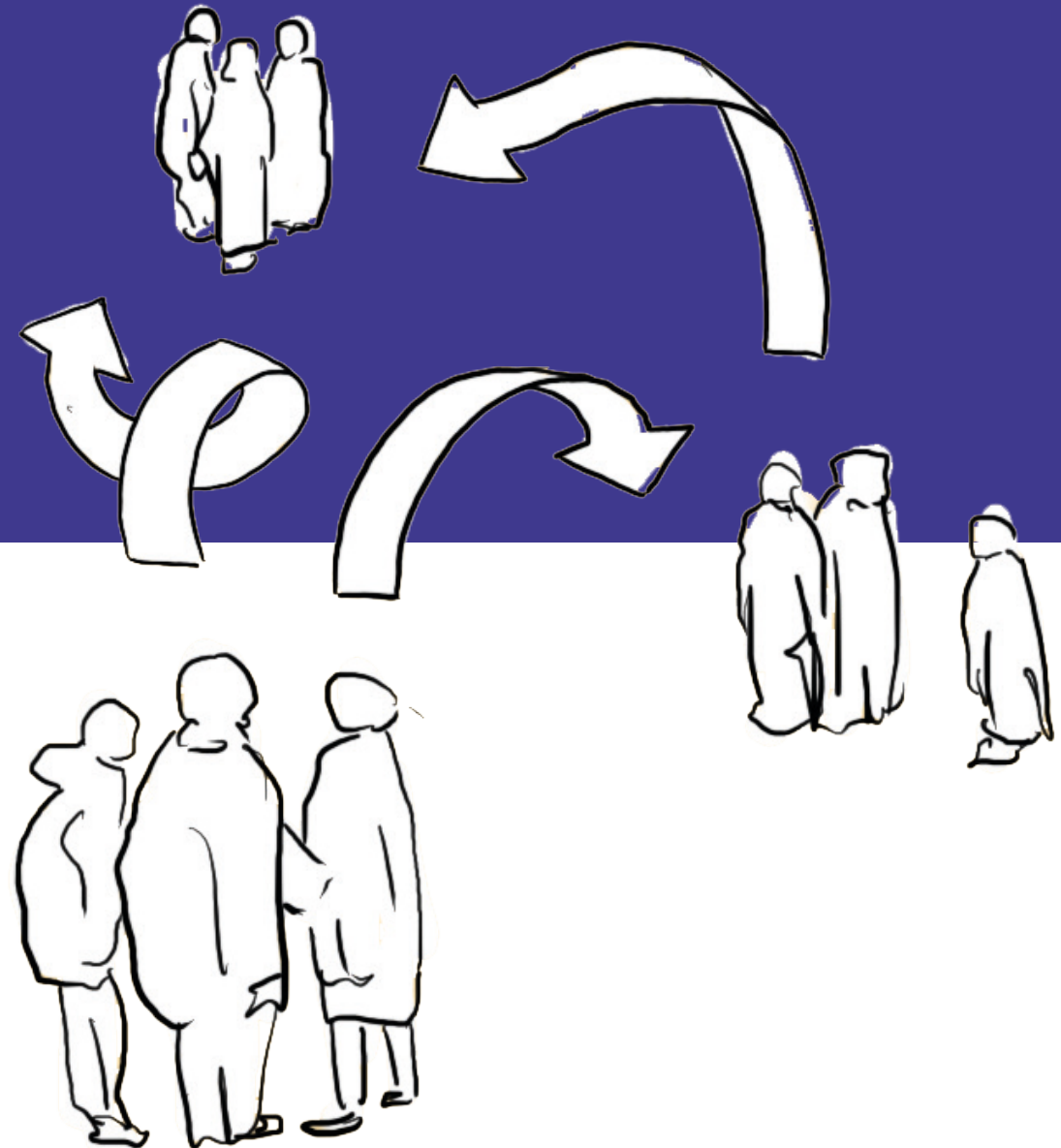
Here we can see the well intention, not mentioning the gender as a divider, but highlight the positive effects of a more open toilet concept.

# Finding groups

Who?

Why?

How?



# Who and Why?

If you want more diversity in your institution, be it as workers, artists or audience members, you have to decide which group you want to actually target. There are things that you can do to make everybody feel welcome, which are to be found in the info bit “Environment”.

## **Who?**

But you have to decided which group you want to focus on and how to target the group. Just because they are welcome in your institution doesn't mean they know it or feel like they are.

Therefore it is important to reach out to these groups and invite them in.

# How?

## **There are two options:**

Groups or individuals.

You can reach out to groups in your area and give them all the information they need and ask them to share or even collaborate with them on your projects to include these groups in the process level as well.

You can also try and find an advocate of a certain group and give this information to them and ask if they could share it with their network. These people know very well how their group work and can spread the information better than you ever could.

But always think to give them the information as a finished product and don't assume they have to give their own time to sort through your information and package it for their group by themselves. We don't want to put unpaid labor on already marginalized people.

# Inclusion

What and how?



# Why and how?

## **Definition:**

Inclusion means to include all the people possible without excluding certain groups due to characteristics they can't choose (see info bit "Safer Space").

## **How:**

You can be more inclusive with how you communicate (see "Ways to Communicate" and how you work (see "Living Values").

You can also include offerings you may not have thought about before to target new groups. Think about things like a possible disability taxi service if need be. Or having your website translated to more languages, including a simplified language for people that have difficulties with the language or have cognitive inabilities.

Depending on the group you want to include these offers and ideas will vary. Best you reach out to these people and try to work with them on what they need to be able to participate in your institution, regardless of their role (audience, members, employees). Always think about compensating these participants for their insights.



# Why and how?

## **Everything all at once?**

You obviously don't need to do everything at once and all the time. But, for example, giving people who need a wheelchair-able taxi service the benefit of contacting you and you having resources ready to accommodate them and even proactively offering this increases the possibility that these people will join your institution.

# Safer Space

Definition

Only-ing



# What's that?

## **Definition:**

Safer Space, or more often called Safe Space, is a space that “intended to be free of bias, conflict, criticism, or potentially threatening actions, ideas, or conversations”.

As there is no way to guarantee a completely *safe* space we should prefer to say *safer* space.

A safer space should feel good to everybody and should never exclude anybody regarding their abilities, identities, background or similar characteristics.

# What's that?

## **Only-ing:**

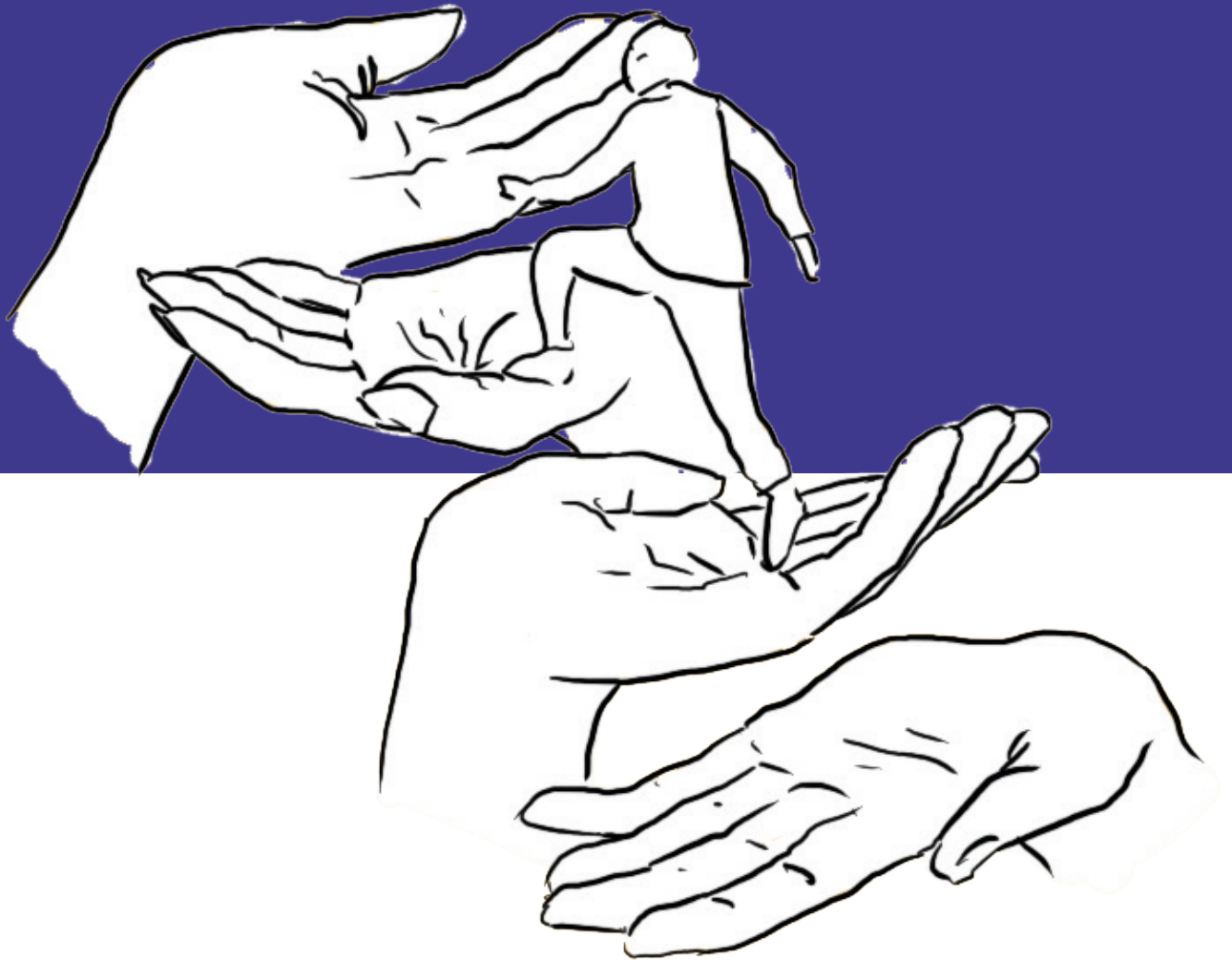
There is something called “the only” which refers to somebody being the only one of a marginalized group in a bigger group context. That could be being the only woman or the only PoC in a work environment.

Being the only can lead to stress and health issues, especially if the person doesn't feel like the safe they're in is a safer space.

This might be hard to understand as a privileged person. But just try to imagine going to a concert and only aliens with three eyes and four arms are there. You are the only human being. How would you feel?

# Creating Equality

How to create equality?



# How to create equality?

## **Creating equality and a safer space (see “Safer Space”):**

- There should be consent about what values your institution stands for.
- There should always be a possibilities to address feelings of unsafeness.
- There should be a respectful feedback culture (see “Nonviolent Communication”).
- There should be regular reflection in the team upon the topic of diversity.
- There should be empathy and an open ear to peoples personal experiences and identities without any prejudices or mockery.
- There should be as much accessible things in the environment as possible (think gender-free toilets, wheelchair accessible rooms, good lighting etc.)

Depending on the people you want to include or are interested in joining these things can change to accommodate specific needs. Everyones needs are important and valid.

# How to create equality?

## **Shared Values**

If you want to get shared values for your institution you can do the “Shared Value” worksheet.

## **Living Values**

If you want to understand the importance of living the values you can check out the info bit “Living Values”.

## **Remembering**

To remember how to work more diverse you can try the worksheet “Ways of Remembering”.

# Responsibility Management

What?





# What?

Even though the whole team has to be included in the journey towards more diversity it is important to give the task of looking after the progress to a specific person. Otherwise it can halt the progress as nobody feels responsible for doing something.

## **Diversity Manager**

Therefore it makes sense to decide on one person to be a diversity manager (or other possible title). This person can be approached with questions, looks at the works of the others with diversity in their mind, gives positive and constructive criticism to the others.

## **Timeline and goals**

The team should also define goals they want to target and create a timeline which they can refer to in their journey. Start with something small that doesn't take too long to achieve. After the first win tackle the next thing and then the next.

It is not about changing everything overnight but gradually trying to become better and more diverse in every aspect of working.