



Now Is Not The Time To Put Diversity & Inclusion On The Back Burner

by Dr. Janice Gassam

5 April 2020



As a first-generation Cameroonian American with intersecting identities, Dr. Gassam developed a global perspective at an early age. At age 11, her father accepted a job and moved the family to the Middle East. Only after returning to the U.S. did her perspective on culture and race shift. Through her extensive research, workshops, teaching/writing, she hopes to...

Spark meaningful discussion on diversity and inclusion topics

Make people more aware of their biases

Provide strategies for changing behaviors to make organizations more welcoming

Key Points:

- ❖ During a global pandemic, the last thing on a leader's mind is to ensure that employees and customers feel a sense of inclusion and belonging.
- ❖ Communities of color are most impacted by the virus—studies show Black people are infected with the virus at disproportionate rates and minority groups may not have the same access to tests and treatment as their white counterparts. Understanding systemic inequities and how they impact your employees, particularly from marginalized groups, is critical to fostering a sense of inclusion and belonging during these unique times.
- ❖ Provide employees with the means to work remotely, and be flexible with sick leave policies--some employees may be living with or taking care of someone who is infected, or could be infected themselves.
- ❖ Diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) is like a muscle that should be exercised frequently and consistently in order to grow stronger.
- ❖ Be creative in bringing employees together so collaboration and communication can thrive during and after the virus subsides.
- ❖ Offer workshops, training sessions and bridge building discussions in a virtual format to maintain positive momentum.
- ❖ Everyone is craving social connection now—lead a virtual happy hour or a Diversity Dinner Dialogue to keep the conversation about DEI going.

Visit Dr. Gassam's website: <https://www.drjanicegassam.com/>

Read her Forbes article here: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/janicegassam/2020/04/05/companies-now-is-not-the-time-to-put-diversity-and-inclusion-on-the-back-burner/#53a113fdbce6>