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Everyday tips for making the workplace culture welcoming for diverse staff

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The equality and work well-being group at the Institute for Atmospheric and Earth System Research (INAR) has comprised a list of everyday behavior patterns that we should

pay attention to when striving to make the workplace culture welcoming to people with diverse backgrounds. The examples in the list are broadly categorized as 1) Accept and be interested in people as multidimensional beings, restricting manifestation of fear of differences 2) Be aware of the space and time different people are taking in workplace meetings and social situations 3) Support a balance between work and private life and recovery from work equally for different genders as well as for people with different ages and family situations 4) Be aware that discussions focusing in competition, status, hierarchies, and comparing the achievements of people (those present or not present) make many people uncomfortable 5) Be aware that discussing people in terms of being 'smart', 'intelligent', 'brilliant', 'genius' is not gender and culture neutral 6) Avoid boss-centric atmosphere where the role of the boss is to decide alone and be revered by the rest

5) Avoid discussing the physical appearance or capabilities of other people even if they are not present 6) In both work related discussions and when telling jokes, stories and anecdotes in social situations, keep in mind your position with respect to people present when choosing the content or style 7) Don't use gender specific words etc as a compliment: 'real man', 'has got balls', 'strong for a woman' 8) Remember to consider the language barrier(s) when a multinational set of people is present

We recommend that the list is discussed, for example, in a departmental seminar: our approach was to have three members of the equality and work well being group perform some of the examples in the list as a dialogue, after which the audience discussed whether they have encountered something similar and how that has affected them. Afterwards, the complete list was distributed to the staff on the unit. We received encouraging feedback on the session with requests to organize similar events in the meetings of the individual INAR research groups. We want to remind that non-one is perfect, and our vision is not to construct strict foolproof rules to

avoid all situations leading to feelings of discomfort. However, a little change goes a long way in making the working environment better for everyone. Opening the eyes to how other people might experience common encounters can be aided by using an externally constructed list of examples as a starting point.