

A Guide for Being

WIRED for Success

Welcoming | Inclusive | Respectful | Engaging | Diverse



DREXEL UNIVERSITY

Intercultural Engagement &
Diversity Collaborative

[DREXEL.EDU/INTERCULTURAL](https://drexel.edu/intercultural)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	1
-------------------	---

UNDERSTANDING AND RESPECTING OUR DIFFERENCES

Age/Multigenerational	1
Disabilities	2
Ethnicity/Race	4
Gender	4
Gender Identity	5
Communication/Language	5
Working with Transgender Individuals.....	6
Restrooms.....	7
International	7
LGBT.....	8
Lifestyle Choices.....	10
Physical Appearance	10
Religious Practices	10
Socioeconomic	11
Union.....	12
Veteran Status.....	12

CREATING A WIRED COMMUNITY

Accessible Documents & Materials.....	13
Bystander Intervention.....	14
Career Development	15
Cross-Cultural Communication	15
Assumptions/Approach.....	15
Cultural Conflict Resolution.....	16
Event Planning.....	17
Housing (Students)	17
Legal and Safety Issues.....	18
Safety	18
Legal	19
Meetings and Project Teams	19
Office Spaces	19
Universal Design.....	20
Work-Life Balance	20

INTRODUCTION

The *WIRED for Success Guide* is intended as a resource for supporting our welcoming, inclusive, respectful, engaging, and diverse (“WIRED”) community and for preparing our students to be leaders in workforces of the future. The *WIRED for Success Guide* is organized both by identity (i.e. disability, international, LGBT) and application (i.e. cross cultural-communication, housing, meetings). The *WIRED for Success Guide* includes links to University resources and tips for best practices for understanding and respecting our differences and creating a WIRED community to support all members of our diverse and global community.

This guide is the product of the University-wide effort of the Intercultural Forum (“I-Forum”) in collaboration with the Office of Equality & Diversity and other individuals and departments within the University with topical expertise. The [I-Forum](#), made up of students, faculty, professional staff, alumni, and community members, was created in 2008 to advance the mission of the Intercultural Engagement & Diversity Collaborative (formerly “Initiative”) to weave diversity into the fabric of the University and foster a community that is grounded in respect for differences and engages with openness and humility.

For more information about the Intercultural Engagement & Diversity Collaborative, please visit drexel.edu/intercultural.

This is a living document and will be updated periodically. If you have a comment or suggestion concerning this guide, please send an email to OED@drexel.edu.

UNDERSTANDING AND RESPECTING OUR DIFFERENCES

AGE/MULTIGENERATIONAL

TIPS FOR BEST PRACTICES

- Understand that there are multiple generations in our University community and each generation has different needs.
- Communicate respectfully with people of all ages by being mindful of your tone, body language, and assumptions.
- Don’t assume that skills or lack of certain skills are connected to age; learning is lifelong and occurs throughout the generations.
- Any comment about age in the workplace, even if about younger ages, sets up a negative tone.

DISABILITIES

TIPS FOR BEST PRACTICES

- GENERAL
 - Put the person before the disability (i.e. the student with a disability, the customer with a disability).
 - If you offer assistance, wait until the offer is accepted. Then listen to or ask for instructions.
- HEARING LOSS AND DEAFNESS
 - When talking with a person with a disability, speak directly to that person rather than to a companion or sign language interpreter who may be present.
 - To get the attention of a person who is deaf or hard of hearing, tap the person on the shoulder or wave your hand. Look directly at the person and speak clearly. Not all people who are deaf or hard of hearing can speech read. For those who speech read, be sensitive to their needs by placing yourself facing the light source and keeping hands and food away from your mouth when speaking.
 - Keep in mind that for those who know American Sign Language (ASL), English can be very difficult – it is literally a second language.
- VISION LOSS AND BLINDNESS
 - Introduce or identify yourself before making physical contact with the person who is blind.
 - Describe any hazards while walking with an individual who is blind.
 - Do not touch a guide dog, cane or other device without permission.
 - Stay aware of times when the individual needs you to help with reading and/or counting money.
 - Be aware that the person most likely uses technologies to read electronic materials but the technology is only helpful when Materials are presented in an accessible format. (See Section [on Accessibility, Documents and Materials, page 13](#)).
- PHYSICAL DISABILITIES
 - Do not touch a wheelchair or other personal device without permission.
 - Stay aware of individual needs in the following respects:
 - Amount of physical space.
 - Distance between him/her and necessary items.
 - Accessible mobility conditions.
 - Accessible transportation options.
- SPEECH IMPAIRMENTS
 - Give the person your full attention.

- o Don't interrupt or finish their sentences.
 - o Repeat what you think you have heard (if necessary) so that the person can confirm.
 - o You can ask the person to write down the message.
 - o Suppress reactions of nervousness or impatience.
- PSYCHIATRIC IMPAIRMENTS
 - o People who have impairments in this category may present the following characteristics:
 - High energy or anxious.
 - Lethargic or indifferent.
 - Difficulty with or opposed to social interactions.
 - Hypersensitive.
 - o Ask the person what would make him/her feel comfortable.
 - o Listen and be supportive.
- SERVICE ANIMAL USERS
 - o If someone brings an animal to an event, know that the only authorized service animals are dogs and miniature horses.
 - o If you are curious if an animal is a service animal, the only questions you can ask are, "Is this a service animal?" and "What task(s) does it perform for you?"
 - o Please do not touch or distract the animal. Service animals are working, and it breaks their training to interact with others when they are on duty. When the animal is not working, some owners may allow interaction.
- LEARNING OR OTHER COGNITIVE DISABILITIES
 - o Keep in mind that these individuals typically have above average intelligence, but simply process their information differently.
 - o They may need information presented in different ways and/or they may need more time to complete tasks.
 - o Be direct with communication.

IMPORTANT LINKS WITHIN DU

[Office of Disability Resources](#)

[University's Counseling Center for Students](#)

[Resources for Faculty with Disabilities](#)

[Family Medical Leave](#)

[Short-Term Disability Leave](#)

[Environmental Health and Safety](#)

ETHNICITY/RACE

TIPS FOR BEST PRACTICES

- Don't assume someone's racial or ethnic identity (i.e. not all people who identify as Black identify as African American).
- Understand that there is diversity within races and cultures.
- Don't single out anyone as a representative/spokesperson of their race or culture (tokenism).
- Learn from generalizations about other cultures, but don't use those generalizations to stereotype or oversimplify your ideas about another person.
- Attend events that aren't organized by members of your identity group.
- Be respectful when using language to refer to a person's ethnic or racial identity.

IMPORTANT LINKS WITHIN DU

[Office of Equality & Diversity](#)

[Office of Multicultural Programs](#)

[Drexel University Africana Studies](#)

[Black Faculty & Professional Staff Association Email](#)

[The Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation at Drexel University](#)

[Academic Advising, Retention and Diversity](#)

[Drexel's Student Cultural Organizations](#)

[Drexel International Area Studies](#)

GENDER

TIPS FOR BEST PRACTICES

- Don't use stereotypes with work roles or academic majors.
- Don't ask people to do gender assumed tasks, i.e. females taking meeting notes or males lifting heavy things.
- Know how to communicate with gender variant individuals. See also Section on [LGBT, page 8](#).
- Use gender-neutral language when possible (i.e. the student, they).
- Drexel provides resources to members of our University community regarding gender-based discrimination (including sexual harassment and sexual assault). See [Drexel's Title IX Resource Page](#).

IMPORTANT LINKS WITHIN DU

[Women's Studies – Drexel University](#)

[Faculty Development & Equity](#)
[Faculty Affairs and Professional Development \(DUCOM\)](#)
[Executive Leadership in Academic Technology and Engineering \(ELATE\)](#)
[Society of Women Engineers \(SWE\)](#)
[Office of Equality & Diversity](#)
[Drexel University College of Medicine Institute for Women's Health and Leadership](#)
[Vision 2020 Equality in Sight](#)
[Nursing Mother Lactation Stations](#)
[Sexual Misconduct Policy](#)

GENDER IDENTITY

The Philadelphia Fair Practices Ordinance defines gender identity as: "Self-perception, or perception by others, as male or female, and shall include a person's appearance, behavior or physical characteristics that may be in accord with, or opposed to, one's physical anatomy, chromosomal sex, or sex assigned at birth; and shall include, but is not limited to, persons who are undergoing or have completed sex reassignment." Philadelphia Pa Ord. § 9-1102 (h.1).

Transgender is an umbrella term, which refers to a variety of individuals whose gender identity or expression diverges from societal expectations regarding how a person of that individual's birth assigned sex should identify or express their gender.

COMMUNICATION/LANGUAGE

TIPS FOR BEST PRACTICES

- Use the correct name and pronoun.
 - The correct name is whatever the person has given you.
 - If you are unsure of which pronoun to use, just ask – most transgender individuals won't be offended and will see this as a sign of respect.
 - If you make a mistake with a pronoun or name, move on.
 - If you are alone with the person, apologize and drop it. If you are in a crowd, just move on. Let it go and use the correct name and pronoun the next chance you get.
- Use gender-neutral language.
 - Use the word "partner" instead of "husband/wife."
- Treat transgender individuals as you would treat anyone else.
- Don't do things to call attention to a transgender individual, even if your goal is to let that person know that you accept him or her – no winking, smiling, little innuendos.
- Don't "out" a transgender individual.
- When possible, on forms offer an option to include "preferred name" as well as "legal name" and "sex/gender" options.

- Don't assume that all transgender individuals are the same.
- Don't assume that a transgender individual would like to discuss gender identity with you. If the person wants to talk about transgender issues, he or she will bring them up.

WORKING WITH TRANSGENDER INDIVIDUALS

TIPS FOR BEST PRACTICES

- Individuals experiencing gender issues can feel confused, isolated, and afraid.
- How others in his or her life respond will have a huge impact on how a transgender individual feels about him- or herself, and how well that person can accept and manage his or her feelings.
- Don't assume that a transgender individual or an individual experiencing gender issues will always be able to identify his or her struggle. Individuals often don't know what the word transgender means or may not see themselves as transgender. Be aware of statements or questions that seem unusual, and don't always take them at face value or dismiss them.
- Sexual orientation can be fluid. So don't be surprised if sexual attractions change as an individual begins to express his or her true gender identity.
- Be non-judgmental:
 - Allow people to express themselves in their own words, which might not be the words you would use. Then ask them to define those words or statements that you don't understand. For example, if an individual says, "I'm queer," ask what he or she means by that statement.
 - Regardless of how you feel about a particular word or phrase, be non-judgmental and allow the individual to express his or her feelings and open up to you. Words that carry derogatory meanings in peer settings might be words an individual will use with you in a private conversation.
 - Watch your facial expressions and reactions when an individual opens up to you. Expressions of shock, horror, revulsion, or disbelief can cause an individual to shut down and go without help.
- Prevent bullying:
 - Do not allow derogatory words or comments to be used to demean others.
 - Do not side with individuals who are verbally attacking another for gender diverse behavior.
 - Do not use gender as a means of discipline or correction. For example, phrases such as, "Act like a man, John," "Boys don't cry," "Girls don't talk that way," or "Ladies don't sit like that," can cause anguish in individuals with gender concerns.

- Provide support:
 - Acceptance is the most important factor in making any individual feel normal and whole.

RESTROOMS

TIPS FOR BEST PRACTICES

- Under Philadelphia Fair Practice Ordinance and Drexel policy, individuals are permitted access to bathrooms in accordance with their gender identity, rather than their chromosomal sex.
- It is illegal to require a transgender individual to use a gender-neutral restroom or to require a transgender individual to use a gender-identity appropriate restroom only when others are not present.

IMPORTANT LINKS WITHIN DU

[Drexel University Intercultural Engagement & Diversity University Community Groups](#)
[Drexel University LGBTQA+ Faculty & Professional Staff Network Email](#)
[Drexel University OUT Grads Organization](#)
[Drexel University FUSE Organization](#)
[Drexel University LGBT Health Alliance](#)
[Office of Faculty Development & Equity Resources for LGBT Faculty Sexuality and Gender Equality – SAGE](#)
[Drexel University Student Counseling Center - University City Campus](#)
[Drexel University Student Counseling Center - Center City Campus](#)

INTERNATIONAL

TIPS FOR BEST PRACTICES

Tips for communicating with individuals who speak English as a second language:

- Consider saying hello first.
- Learn the person's name — how is it spelled? What does it mean? Most names have wonderful meanings and stories.
- Allow wait time when asking questions — don't just ask more questions (it takes time to process information).
- Be a conversational partner — extend your sense-making ability to try to understand what is being said.
- Ask interested questions about the person's country — but at the same time don't expect the person to always represent their country or explain its actions.
- Be aware of your use of idioms, slang, and "insider" references; rephrase and give examples on the spot; explain jokes later.

- Be attentive to the person's nonverbal behaviors—do they look puzzled or confused? Lost? Take a moment to bring them back into the conversation.
- Expand your comfort with world varieties of English and other accents; volunteer to tutor; learn another language; listen to foreign language movies; ask others to teach you new words; expand your world language horizons.
- Ask genuine questions beyond, “Do you like it here?” Ask how their studies are going and if they have had time to get off campus, etc. -- and provide time to really listen to the response.
- In the case of communication breakdown, writing down or spelling a word out can help clarify the meaning.
- Assume that the first question you are asked does not include all the information that the person needs to know.
- Ask some questions yourself in different ways until you are clearer about what the person wants.
- Ask the person to repeat the information back to you so you are sure it is understood.

See also [Cross-Cultural Communication, page 15](#)

IMPORTANT LINKS WITHIN DU

[Resources for prospective international undergraduate students](#)

[Resources for prospective international graduate students](#)

[International Faculty Handbook](#)

[Drexel Fellowships Office](#)

[International Area Studies](#)

[International Programs within the College of Engineering](#)

[English Language Center](#)

[International Law and Human Rights Society](#)

[International Students and Scholars Services](#)

[Office of International Programs](#)

[Study Abroad Office](#)

LGBT

TIPS FOR BEST PRACTICES

Know the difference between sexual orientation and gender identity:

- Sexual orientation— Describes to whom a person feels attraction: people of the opposite gender, the same gender, or two (or more) genders.
- Gender identity— A person's inner sense of gender: male, female, some of each, neither. Transgender people have a gender identity that is different from the gender to which they were assigned at birth.
- Transgender individuals can have any sexual orientation.

Develop sensitive language:

- Remember that many people you meet are lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT). Use words like "partner" or "significant other" rather than husband/wife or boyfriend/girlfriend.
- Do not use dehumanizing slang like “queers,” “dykes,” etc. Be careful not to use the phrase “that’s gay” to describe things that are weird or bad.

Confidentiality is key:

- Respect the privacy of those persons you know to be LGBT. If someone asks you whether or not "Jane Doe is lesbian," a good response might be, "You should ask her."

Challenge your own assumptions and behaviors:

- Do you look at an LGBT person and automatically think of his or her sexuality rather than seeing the individual as a whole, complex person?
- Are you as supportive of your LGBT contacts (colleagues, students, and friends) when they are sad about a fight or breakup as you would be of someone who is heterosexual?
- Do you avoid asking about a person's same sex partner when you would regularly ask a friend about their opposite sex partner?
- Do you avoid confronting homophobic remarks out of fear of being labeled as LGBT?

Action:

- Consider attending an educational program offered by the SAGE Committee (Sexuality and Gender Equality) or by the Office of Equality & Diversity.
- Post an “Ally” sign in your classroom and/or office. It signals to LGBT colleagues and students that you are supportive and want them to be comfortable being who they are around you.
- Attend events on campus that offer new information on the LGBT population.

Tips for professionals who work with LGBT youth:

- Don't be surprised when an individual "comes out" to you. Based on your previous responses they may have decided you can be trusted and are helpful.
- Know when and where to seek help. Know the referral agencies and counselors in your area. LGBT helplines can provide you with professional persons and organizations that are qualified to help.
- Deal with feelings first. Most LGBT youth feel alone, afraid, and guilty. You can assist them by listening and allowing them to release feelings and thoughts that may be in conflict.
- Keep the door open for more conversations and assistance.

IMPORTANT LINKS WITHIN DU

[Drexel University Intercultural Engagement & Diversity University Community Groups](#)

[Drexel University LGBTQA+ Faculty & Professional Staff Network Email](#)

[Drexel University OUT Grads Organization](#)

[Drexel University FUSE Organization](#)

[Drexel University LGBT Health Alliance](#)

LIFESTYLE CHOICES

In our interactions with others, we should not assume that everyone is the same.

TIPS FOR BEST PRACTICES

- Don't assume everyone is family centric.
- Your normal may not be someone else's normal.
- Don't assume you know someone's preferences.
- Don't assume that everyone celebrates holidays or birthdays. See also [Religious Practices, page 10](#)

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

TIPS FOR BEST PRACTICES

- Don't make unsolicited comments about an individual's appearance.
- Don't discriminate or assume a certain personality "type" because of body art, piercings, or alternative hair color.
- Don't assume large women are pregnant.
- Don't assume a large person is lazy or a skinny person is ill.
- Be mindful when meeting at a restaurant that some people do not feel physically comfortable sitting in a booth.
- When purchasing furniture, be mindful of diverse sizes. You can ask, "Is that chair comfortable for you?"
- Be mindful of size options when distributing clothing.
- Consider that some people have difficulty engaging in team sports (climbing walls, rope course) and walking long distances or upstairs.

IMPORTANT LINKS WITHIN DU

[Drexel University Employee Assistance Program](#)
[Drexel University Student Counseling Center - University City Campus](#)
[Drexel University Student Counseling Center - Center City Campus](#)

RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

Drexel's Interfaith Council supports students, faculty and staff in the expression, understanding and practice of faith and cultivates mutual respect for the variety of faith traditions represented by the members of the Drexel University community. The Interfaith Council is currently comprised of

professional religious life staff from Asbury Ministry, Baptist Campus Ministries, Hillel of Greater Philadelphia, Newman Catholic Campus, and the Muslim community.

TIPS FOR BEST PRACTICES

- Support Drexel’s environment of respect for the religious observances of others and make every reasonable effort to accommodate the religious observances of instructors, students, professional staff, and campus guests.
- Be mindful of dietary and work restrictions associated with religious observances.
- Interfaith Council members hold office hours and work collaboratively on interfaith and justice oriented initiatives. They provide on-campus pastoral care and participate in University community events, ceremonies, memorials etc.

IMPORTANT LINKS WITHIN DU

[Spiritual & Religious Life](#)

[University’s Statement on Religious Observances](#)

[Religious Calendars](#)

[Spiritual and Religious Student Organizations](#)

SOCIOECONOMIC

The Drexel Community is made up of people from diverse backgrounds and of various socioeconomic means.

TIPS FOR BEST PRACTICES

- Treat all people with respect.
- Don’t assume a person’s socio-economic status by their appearance.
- Be honest with yourself – what are your personal biases? Could they be affecting your behavior?
- Don’t assume that others have the same access to resources as you do. This can include healthy foods, laundry services, transportation, and healthcare.
- Do your research – read about others who are different from you.
- Consider learning about others through Civic Engagement opportunities.

IMPORTANT LINKS WITHIN DU

[Lindy Center for Civic Engagement](#)

[The Office of Government & Community Relations](#)

[Drexel Liberty Scholars Program](#)

[Academic Advising, Retention and Diversity](#)

[Drexel Home Purchase Assistance Program](#)

UNION

At Drexel, each person's contribution to the mission of the University is valued.

TIPS FOR BEST PRACTICES

- When planning an event for the University community, remember to consider our union members.
- Consider sending event invitations, flyers, etc. as a hard copy to union staff as many do not have a Drexel e-mail account or access to e-mail during the day.
- Respect the unions' responsibilities on campus and remember that everyone plays a role in Drexel's success - at all levels of the institution.
- Speak to Facilities staff in a respectful manner.
- Consider saying "Thank You" to union members for the support that they provide.
- Get to know the facilities staff, particularly those that support your areas.

IMPORTANT LINKS WITHIN DU

[Drexel Facilities](#)

VETERAN STATUS

The Veteran's Task Force is a cross-campus committee designed to ensure a comprehensive infrastructure to support veterans and their family members. "DU Remembers...Will You?" is an ongoing effort to build a culture that makes Drexel University a welcoming, inclusive, respectful, and engaging place for veterans and their family members.

TIPS FOR BEST PRACTICES

- Thank a veteran for their service to our country.
- There are ways you can establish your credibility with veterans early on (i.e. by sharing connections: being ex-military, having family members who are veterans, or having similar experiences of any kind).
- Direct veterans to online resources and the information tables or sessions provided by the Office of Veteran Student Services.
- Contact Drexel ROTC for information about military related initiatives and protocols.
- Drexel University Online offers the flexibility necessary to support active duty military and other veterans.
- Student veterans are encouraged to join the Drexel Veterans Association (DVA) for continued comradeship and support. For more information, visit [Drexel Veterans Association \(DVA\)](#).

- “Higher Education Opportunity Act” enables veterans to manage their deployment and educational obligations; veterans should be referred to Academic, Advising, Retention and Diversity (AARD).
- Veterans can clarify their benefits by contacting the Veterans Administration (VA).
- The Drexel Learning Center provides academic support for veterans and family members.
- If a veteran has a disability and needs accommodations, please refer them to the Office of Disability Resources.

THINGS YOU SHOULDN'T SAY TO A VETERAN:

- “Thank you for your service, but I don’t think we should have been there in the first place.”
- “Do you have post-traumatic stress disorder?”
- “What’s the worst thing that happened to you over there?”
- “Have you ever killed anyone?”
- “Were you scared?”
- “Did you lose any buddies over there?”

IMPORTANT LINKS WITHIN DU

[Admissions](#)

[Academic Advising, Retention and Diversity](#)

[Online Military Degrees](#)

[Orientation](#)

[Veteran Student Resources](#)

[Army ROTC – Drexel University](#)

[Alumni Affairs](#)

[Financing and Certification Resources for Veterans](#)

[Drexel Veteran’s Association \(DVA\)](#)

[Drexel Learning Center](#)

[Office of Disability Resources](#)

[FMLA – Veteran](#)

CREATING A WIRED COMMUNITY

ACCESSIBLE DOCUMENTS & MATERIALS

A screen reader is a software application that enables people with severe visual impairments to use a computer. Screen readers provide information to the user in two formats: text to speech and Braille. Documents that are not in an accessible format may not be recognized by the screen reader.

TIPS FOR BEST PRACTICES

- Microsoft Office has detailed Instructions on creating accessible Word documents: <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/word-help/creating-accessible-word-documents-HA101999993.aspx>
- Use an accessibility checker when creating documents. It alerts you to certain accessibility issues in your file so that you can fix potential problems that might keep someone with a disability from accessing your content. It also lets you know about application features that you can use to make your content more accessible. However, an accessibility checker may not detect all accessibility issues.
- Avoid using repeated blank characters. Extra spaces, tabs, and empty paragraphs may be perceived as blanks by people using screen readers. After hearing “blank” several times, those users may think that they have reached the end of the information. Instead, use formatting, indenting, and styles to create whitespace.
- Consider using closed captioning when possible. Closed captioning allows persons with hearing disabilities to have access to television programming by displaying the audio portion of a television program as text on the television screen.

IMPORTANT LINKS WITHIN DU

[Drexel University IRT; Accessibility Best Practices](#)

[Information from Drexel University IRT on Making Webpages and Documents Accessible](#)

BYSTANDER INTERVENTION

TIPS FOR BEST PRACTICES

- Trust your inner voice when it tells you that something is wrong and overcome the barriers that prevent you from taking action.
- Three powerful life skills to use whenever you see unhealthy or negative behavior among your colleagues, in your classes, on campus and in your life:
 - IDENTIFY those moments when there is a problem.
 - GO BEYOND the powerful thought—the barrier—that will immediately be there in the way of intervention.
 - TAKE ACTION—any kind of action—to make a difference in the situation.
- The Response Ability™ Project can be found at <http://raproject.org/resources>.

IMPORTANT LINKS WITHIN DU

[Equality and Non-Discrimination Policy OED-1](#)

[Know the Code \(Student Conduct and Community Standards\)](#)

[Employee Code of Conduct \(OGC-5\)](#)

[Victim Support & Intervention Services](#)

[Dragons Against Hazing Initiative](#)

CAREER DEVELOPMENT

TIPS FOR BEST PRACTICES

- You can find professional development opportunities online at <http://www.drexel.edu/hr/career/>.
- To advance your career, consider applying for the Supervisory Training Program offered by Human Resources.
- Participate in the educational programs provided by the Office of Equality & Diversity and other offices. See <http://drexel.edu/intercultural/> for more information.
- Drexel and Drexel College of Medicine provide tuition remission for employees, which allow them to take undergraduate and graduate classes at the University tuition-free.

IMPORTANT LINKS WITHIN DU

[Drexel Human Resources](#)

[Faculty Development & Equity](#)

[Faculty Affairs & Professional Development - DUCOM](#)

[Colleague Resource Groups](#)

CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

ASSUMPTIONS/APPROACH

TIPS FOR BEST PRACTICES

- Practice, practice, practice. That's the first rule, because it's in the doing that we actually get better at cross-cultural communication.
- Don't assume that there is one right way (yours!) to communicate. Keep questioning your assumptions. For example, think about your body language; postures that indicate receptivity in one culture might indicate aggressiveness in another.
- Respect others' choices about whether to engage in communication with you. Honor their opinions about what is going on.
- Remember that cultural norms may not apply to the behavior of any particular individual. We are all shaped by many, many factors — our ethnic background, our family, our education, and our personalities — and are more complicated than any cultural norm could suggest. Check your interpretations if you are uncertain what is meant.
- The variation among cultures in attitudes toward disclosure is also something to consider before you conclude that you have an accurate reading of the views, experiences, and goals of the people with whom you are working.
- The way people communicate varies widely between, and even within, cultures. One aspect of communication style is language usage. Across cultures, some words and phrases are used in different ways. For example, even in countries that share the English language, the

meaning of "yes" varies from "maybe, I'll consider it" to "definitely so," with many shades in between.

- Another major aspect of communication style is the degree of importance given to non-verbal communication. Non-verbal communication includes not only facial expressions and gestures; it also involves seating arrangements, personal distance, and sense of time. In addition, different norms regarding the appropriate degree of assertiveness in communicating can add to cultural misunderstandings.
- Be aware that individuals' expectations about their own roles in shaping a decision may be influenced by their cultural frame of reference.
- Try to understand your own culture and communication variables such as social role, symbolism, thought patterns, worldview, silence, and particularly the various nonverbal aspects of communication.
- Learn the communication rules for the other culture by reflecting on its approach to nonverbal and other aspects of communication. Be sensitive to verbal and nonverbal language codes, and use language appropriate for the culture or co-culture with which you are trying to communicate.
- Approach intercultural communication with a positive attitude and with the goal of understanding the other side rather than preaching about or defending your own.
- Avoid ethnocentrism that interprets everything on the basis of your own social and cultural values. Instead, try to understand how a concept, product or practice fits into the other culture.
- Understand that you will never fully understand the experiences of another race or culture if you are not a part of that race or culture.

CULTURAL CONFLICT RESOLUTION

TIPS FOR BEST PRACTICES

- Don't assume that breakdowns in communication occur because other people are on the wrong track. Search for ways to make the communication work, rather than searching for who should receive the blame for the breakdown.
- Listen actively and empathetically. Try to put yourself in the other person's shoes. Especially when another person's perceptions or ideas are very different from your own. You might need to operate at the edge of your own comfort zone.
- Stop, suspend judgment, and try to look at the situation as an outsider.
- Awareness of current power imbalances, and openness to hearing each other's perceptions of those imbalances, are also necessary for understanding each other and working together.
- When you are dealing with a conflict, be mindful that people may differ in what they feel comfortable revealing. Questions that may seem natural to you — What was the conflict about? What was your role in the conflict? What was the sequence of events? — may seem intrusive to others.
- Some cultures view conflict as a positive thing, while others view it as something to be avoided.

See also, [International, page 7](#)

EVENT PLANNING

Consider your audience and their concerns, including accessibility, timing, and food restrictions.

TIPS FOR BEST PRACTICES

- Familiarize yourself with the accessible entrance to the event location and publicize it to all invitees.
- Inform invitees that if they have a disability and need an accommodation for the event, they should contact the Office of Disability Resources.
- Consider the event location and set up from the perspective of individuals with disabilities. See section on *Disability* in this Guide.
- Ask invitees if they have any dietary restrictions and work with the caterer to accommodate those individuals.
- Always include a vegetarian and vegan option to the menu.
- When selecting a date for your event, consider whether the date falls on a religious holiday or observance and if it does, if possible, select another date without a conflict.
- When selecting a time for your event, consider whether the time will allow invitees to maintain a work/life balance.

IMPORTANT LINKS WITHIN DU

[Event Services](#)

[Office of Disability Resources](#)

[Calendar of Religious Holidays](#)

HOUSING (STUDENTS)

TIPS FOR BEST PRACTICES

- If your roommate comes from a different cultural background, learn about their background and be open to it. Remember that college is a learning experience.
- Be willing to have conversations about cultural norms & differences.
- Seek out or provide educational opportunities to learn about other cultures.
- Accept that learning/experiencing a different culture or one that you have less experience with can be challenging and can require more effort – and consider that the rewards of learning about a new culture can be lifelong.
- Attend the trips and events that are organized by the residence hall to feel more connected to the community.
- Deal with small problems when they occur so they don't escalate. See the RA if you feel that things are getting out of control.

- Respect your roommate's belongings and personal space and make sure invited guests respect them as well.
- Consider working with your roommate(s) to create House Rules and post them in a central location.
- Focus on understanding the need behind a request.

IMPORTANT LINKS WITHIN DU

[University Housing \(Drexel Business Services\)](#)

[Residential Living \(Student Life\)](#)

[Campus Housing Networks](#)

[Office of Campus Activities](#)

[Fraternity and Sorority Life](#)

[Undergraduate Student Life - Housing](#)

[Housing Accommodations](#)

[See also Gender Identity](#)

[See also Disabilities](#)

LEGAL AND SAFETY ISSUES

SAFETY

TIPS FOR BEST PRACTICES

- Emergency Numbers:
 - o University City Campus Security: 215-895-2222 or 911
 - o Center City Campus Security: 215-762-7111 or 911
 - o Queen Lane Campus Security: 215-991-8102 or 911
- Upon request, Drexel Public Safety security officers provide walking escorts for Drexel students, faculty, and staff within the patrol boundaries of 30th to 36th Streets and Chestnut to Spring Garden Streets.
- To receive text messages in an emergency update your DrexelAlert Contact Information under the Drexel Tab in Drexel One.

IMPORTANT LINKS WITHIN DU

[Department of Public Safety](#)

[Environmental Health & Safety](#)

[Victim Support & Intervention Services](#)

[Public Safety Crime Prevention Safety Tips](#)

LEGAL

TIPS FOR BEST PRACTICES

- Know and follow the University's policies.
- If you believe you are the victim of discrimination or harassment, contact the Office of Equality & Diversity at 215-895-1405.
- If you want to make an anonymous complaint, contact the hotline at DU Ethics Point: 866-358-1010 or DUCOM Ethics Point: 866-936-1010.

IMPORTANT LINKS WITHIN DU

[Preventing Workplace Harassment Online Program](#)

[Office of Equality & Diversity Policies](#)

[Drexel Hotline](#)

[Human Resources – University Policies Page](#)

[Human Resources - FMLA](#)

[Human Resources – FMLA \(College of Medicine\)](#)

[Drexel Office of General Counsel](#)

[Drexel Ombuds Office](#)

MEETINGS AND PROJECT TEAMS

Research has shown that “diverse groups of problem solvers outperform[] groups of the best individuals at solving problems.” Dreifus, Claudia. 2008. “Professor's Model, Diversity = Productivity.” *New York Times*, January 8; accessed, December 1, 2008, at:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/08/science/08conv.html> (Interview with Dr. Scott Page).

TIPS FOR BEST PRACTICES

- Choose people with different backgrounds and perspectives to work on projects together.
- Consider the meeting logistics (seating, order of speakers) and how they will encourage participation and signal that all members are valued.
- Be mindful of the impact of your response to others' input and ideas.
- Recognize when you look to the same people for input on a particular topic and consider expanding your perspective.
- Respond to input and ideas in a way that will send a message to the initiator that their input and ideas will be considered, even when they are not implemented.

OFFICE SPACES

TIPS FOR BEST PRACTICES

- Improperly placed or laid area rugs or mats could make it difficult for people with mobility limitations to get around safely.
- Be mindful of the artwork you have in your office and the message that it sends to your coworkers.
- Hiring Managers who have a new employee with special needs should consult with the Office of Disability Resources if special equipment or accommodations are necessary.
- Furniture should be purchased using University preferred vendors, which include diverse vendors.

See also [Disabilities, page 2](#)

IMPORTANT LINKS WITHIN DU

[Preferred Vendors including Diversity Vendors](#)

UNIVERSAL DESIGN

Universal Design is a concept, originally developed by Ron Mace, which encourages the creation of aesthetic products and builds environments that are usable to the greatest extent possible by everyone, regardless of their age, ability, or status in life.

TIPS FOR BEST PRACTICES

- In our everyday environment, we see examples of Universal Design all around us. For example, an automatic door opener at a grocery store not only allows a person in a wheelchair to access the building but also makes it easier for someone pushing a shopping cart, a parent pushing a child's stroller, the delivery person bringing in goods, and the person leaving with many bags, to gain access.
- People of all abilities and disabilities use accessibility features like curb cuts at intersections, elevators in tall buildings, and moving walkways at the airport.
- In this age of technology, many (with and without disabilities) are also finding that dictation software, autocorrecting, or text enlarging tools can enhance the way in which we access and send information, making it easier for us to work and learn.

WORK-LIFE BALANCE

Each culture, gender and generation presents different work-life issues. Supporting work-life balance supports our diverse University community.

TIPS FOR BEST PRACTICES

- Be mindful of scheduling meetings after regular business hours or before 8 a.m.

- Set priorities — you can do anything you want, but you can't do everything.
- Learn how to say no — take on only what you can handle.
- Use your commute to unwind – read a book or talk to a friend instead of continuing to focus on work.
- Bolster your support system — at work, join forces with co-workers who can support you.
- Nurture yourself — eat healthy foods, include physical activity in your daily routine and get enough sleep.
- Know when to ask for help — whether it be a professional counselor, therapist, or a family member, knowing when you're maxed out is important for your mental and physical health.

IMPORTANT LINKS WITHIN DU

[Nursing Mother Lactation Stations](#)

[Office of Faculty Development & Equity](#)

[University Wellness](#)

[Health Advocate Employee Assistance Program \(EAP\)](#)

[Drexel University Student Counseling Center - University City Campus](#)

[Drexel University Student Counseling Center - Center City Campus](#)

[Drexel Recreation Center](#)



© 2012 Drexel University - All Rights Reserved

*Permission is granted to make use of A Guide for Being WIRED for
Success with proper attribution to Drexel University.*