

Mental Awareness Respect and Safety (MARS) Capability Maturity Model (CMM) Toolkit User Guide

Advancing Organisational Capability.
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This resource is based on the ECU Diversity & Inclusion Capability Maturity Model (ECU D&I CMM) first introduced in Lundy, J., Keast, R., Farr-Wharton, B., Omari, M., Teo, S., & Bentley, T. (2021). Utilising a capability maturity model to leverage inclusion and diversity in public sector organisations. Australian Journal of Public Administration, 80(4), 1032–1045 doi.org/10.1111/1467-8500.12521. © 2021 Institute of Public Administration Australia.

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Quick Guides

These Quick Guides are designed to support organisations to use the suite of MARS Capability Maturity Model Tools, which support organisations to build their capability on aspects of the workplace that are essential for mental awareness, safety and respect.

The following resources are available in this User Guide:

- Introducing the MARS CMM Toolkit quick guides
- Quick Guide 1: Preparing - What to consider before conducting an assessment
- Quick Guide 2: Assessing - Using the MARS CMM assessment tools
- Quick Guide 3: Interpreting Results
- Quick Guide 4: Action Planning to Advance Capability
- Quick Guide 5: Workshop Planning
- Case Studies

Introducing the MARS CMM Toolkit

QUICK GUIDE

About the MARS CMM Toolkit

The MARS Capability Maturity Model (CMM) Toolkit is a comprehensive, evidence-based resource designed to help organisations assess and enhance their ability to create safe, respectful, and inclusive workplaces.

At the heart of the Toolkit is a suite of structured Capability Maturity Models (CMMs) that enable organisations to:

- **Assess** current capabilities in key areas of mental awareness, respect, and safety.
- **Identify** gaps in policies, practices, and behaviours.
- **Develop** targeted plans to support continuous improvement.

A Capability Maturity Model (CMM) is a structured framework used to assess and improve an organisation's processes. CMMs use a matrix format to map key focus areas against defined maturity levels that represent stages of organisational capability. Typically, the maturity levels evolve, with each progressive level offering greater potential for better outcomes. The number of levels and dimensions will depend on the individual CMM and area of focus.

The Toolkit provides a clear methodology for driving positive cultural change, guiding organisations through maturity stages that range from foundational awareness to system-wide integration of best practices.

Who is it for?

This Toolkit and accompanying User Guide are designed for:

- Organisational leaders and executives
- HR and People & Culture professionals
- Anyone working to build psychologically safe, inclusive, and respectful workplaces

To support implementation, the Toolkit includes a series of Quick Guides, which offer practical insights and actions. The guides can be read in succession or accessed as standalone documents as needed.

There are five Quick Guides:

1. Preparing - What to consider before conducting an assessment
2. Assessing - Using the MARS CMM assessment tools
3. Interpreting Results
4. Action Planning to Advance Capability
5. Workshop Planning



The CMM Toolkit contains several CMMs to assess and enhance fundamental areas of safe and respectful work.

The CMM tools in this suite have different maturity levels and different dimensions. However, the same structure and process should be followed regardless of the CMM you are using.

For each CMM tool, there are generally 3-5 dimensions that reflect key aspects of the area being assessed. There will also be 4 to 5 evolving maturity levels, from passive/compliance through to continuously improving/transformational. Organisations can exist at different maturity levels across different dimensions.

It is important to note that the CMM toolkit is not designed to be prescriptive; rather, it provides organisations with a systematic process to evaluate their current level of maturity and guide sustainable maturity development.

Using the Toolkit effectively involves four key stages:

- 1 Preparing**
Decide on the scope and format of the assessment and identify who needs to be involved.
- 2 Assessing**
Gather evidence, use the tool to assess your organisation's current maturity rating, and set target ratings. This should be a participative process, capturing the different perspectives from throughout the team or organisation being assessed.
- 3 Interpreting Results**
Use the results of the assessment to identify any gaps. Report the findings to necessary stakeholders.
- 4 Action Planning to Advance Capability**
Use the results of the assessment to plan for movement between levels, and where best to direct strategies and resources. Set the next assessment date.

All Capability Maturity Models in the Toolkit recommend following the same four stage process (above). Continuous reporting to relevant stakeholders throughout all the stages is important for engagement and buy-in. However, it is important that the process suits the organisation using the Toolkit and therefore the process should be followed flexibly and adapted as required.

Maturity development is a continuous process, and assessment should ideally be carried out at regular intervals (say yearly) to measure and track progress and identify new gaps considering environmental changes and allow for time to successfully implement strategies associated with each review.

Look for these throughout the guides:



Key points

This icon signals a key point or useful tip.



Talking point

This icon signals a discussion point that may need to be discussed to decide on the best approach for the organisation.



Questions to ask

This icon signals key questions that are worth asking during the process.

The following definitions are for key terms used throughout the MARS CMMs:

Dimension: An organisational component that is critical to ensuring that the capability in question is successfully embedded into the workplace. Most of the MARS CMMs have four dimensions.

Indicator: Indicators are provided for each of the dimensions as examples of what is expected at each level of maturity in relation to that dimension. These indicators are designed to assist organisations during the assessment process.

Evidence: In the Assessment Tool, evidence questions for each indicator are provided to assist with making an assessment. Evidence can consist of data or documentation that support or verify the indicator. Sometimes this evidence takes the form of rich discussion between workshop participants.

Level of maturity: This is the extent of maturity that an organisation or department has regarding the topic being examined. The levels increase in maturity from largely non-existent practices through to a highly mature state which is typically demonstrated through embedded and continuously improving practices.

MARS CMM Toolkit

QUICK GUIDE 1

Preparing - What to consider before conducting an assesment

This Quick Guide provides information on what to consider prior to conducting your maturity assessment.

The MARS CMM Toolkit encourages discussion and collaboration of workers with diverse perspectives, and its value is in the rich insights that come out of this process. To get the most out of the Toolkit, it is important to carefully consider the scope of the assessment and how it will be carried out. The Toolkit is flexible and should be used in a way that best suits the organisation or team using it.

Defining the Scope: The Assessment

Defining the scope and format of your organisation's assessment should be one of the first steps taken in planning the assessment. In terms of scope, the assessment can focus on:

- Individual work units (e.g., business units, departments)
- A specific mine site
- The entire organisation

If multiple assessments are undertaken by different units within the organisation, these can then be collated to achieve an overall organisational maturity level. This may be appropriate if teams within your organisation operate autonomously or have diverse cultures and work systems.

Delivery Format

The assessment can be carried out in a workshop setting (e.g., where individuals from different parts of the organisation come together to discuss and complete the assessment as a group) or as individuals, with the results collated by an overall coordinator or workshoped in more detail after representatives have completed the assessment to achieve an overall result.

The scope and format will impact who needs to be involved in the assessment. For an example, please see the Case Studies in the Appendices.

Who to Involve?

Safe and respectful work impacts and involves all levels of the organisation. As such, it will be important to include a range of people in the assessment process who represent the various perspectives in the organisation or work unit being assessed. This needs to include people outside of the senior management team.

There will likely be key individuals within your organisation who have special knowledge or are particularly important in ensuring an accurate picture of the organisation's current maturity level.

Some possible personnel and key stakeholders are suggested below. A balance should be struck between how many people are involved and providing an accurate result. Most importantly, the people involved in the assessment should have knowledge and experience of the organisation's practices related to the CMM you are using.

It is important to include front line worker input and representation of different perspectives of stakeholders who are likely to be affected.

Possible key personnel and stakeholders

- Senior managers and leader representatives of different business divisions/units.
- Subject matter experts (e.g., relevant committees and internal stakeholders)
- Frontline workers

Quick Guide 5 (Workshop Planning) provides more details on how to design a safe and effective assessment workshop.



There is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach

Organisations should decide on the scope and format that works best for what they want to achieve.



Key Questions

When planning the format of your assessment and who to include in the workshops, consider:

- Have we included those employees who are the most marginalised in our organisation in the process?
- Have we included those with diverse perspectives and those with systems knowledge related to the CMM's topic?
- Will staff anonymity be important when requesting input and experiences and, if so, how will we ensure this? (If anonymity is an issue, you could create a short, anonymous online survey requesting feedback; if it is not an issue, a workshop/focus group format might be better).



The Role of Senior Leaders

Research tells us that senior leaders have quite a different perception of their organisation's level of maturity compared to employees.

It is essential to involve senior leaders in the CMM assessment because:

1. Their support and involvement demonstrate organisational commitment to the topic, and
2. Their approval is often required for initiatives resulting from the process.

However, workers may not feel comfortable discussing sensitive issues with leaders present. Senior leader involvement should be carefully considered so that they are involved in a constructive and meaningful way that suits the context of your organisation.

A suggested approach may be to run the workshop first with the employees and present the findings to leaders for their input.



MARS CMM Toolkit

QUICK GUIDE 2

Assessing - Using the MARS CMM assessment tools

This Quick Guide provides guidance on how to use the CMM assessment tool. All CMM tools will have different maturity labels and dimensions. However, the same structure and process for using the Tools should be followed regardless of the CMM you are using.

The Assessment Tool

The Assessments Tool is an Excel workbook consisting of a series of worksheets. The following steps outline how to complete your assessment using the Tool.

Step 1

Click the **forward arrow** at the bottom or top of the page to start your assessment. This will take you to the first dimension.

Step 2

Each dimension table lists indicators for each maturity level. Using evidence available within your organisation, use this table to identify what indicators your organisation meets.

Please see the screenshots in Figure 1 below for an example of the D&I CMM tool.

Evidence examples are provided for each dimension, indicator and maturity level. These examples will help you determine whether you meet the CMM indicators. You can access these by clicking the **'Click here to check the evidence!'** link at the bottom of each dimension table. Using evidence is particularly important when discussing or agreeing on a maturity rating in cases where multiple people in your organisation are completing the assessment.

There is a box for note-taking while discussing the evidence questions. These notes can be used to help interpret the results and for action planning later on. Using the evidence you have collected, work through the indicators provided for the dimension you are assessing. **Tick the indicators** that are present in your organisation for each level.

Step 3

Based on the numbers of ticks in each dimension, decide on an overall rating for that dimension. You can choose a rating from 1 to 4 or 5 (depending on which CMM you are using) with 0.5 intervals. For example, you can choose 1.5 if you are between levels 1 and 2.

In selecting a maturity rating, consider whether any indicators are more important to your organisation and weight these accordingly when making your decision. **Select your chosen rating from the drop-down list** provided in the 'Maturity Score' column (see the previous screenshot example). Using the forward arrow, progress to the next dimension. Repeat steps 2 and 3 until all dimensions have a current rating. Once all dimensions are completed, click the forward arrow to take you to the Summary Report.

Step 4

On the Summary Report page, you will need to decide on and **select a 'target' rating for each dimension** (this is the rating where your organisation wants to be). Once you have selected a target rating for each of the dimensions in the summary table, an overall target rating will be automatically calculated for you. Both the current ratings (populated for you based on your rating selected on the previous dimension pages) and target ratings for each dimension will then be displayed visually on the spider (radar) chart (see below). This chart will illustrate any gaps or alignments that exist between your current and target ratings.

MARS D&I CMM: Drivers & Focus Dimension

Individual/Unit/Organisation Name: [Insert as applicable (this should align with the level of analysis, e.g. if it is for a particular work unit, insert the unit name)]

Contact: [Insert primary contact's name (project leader, person completing the self-assessment)]

Date of assessment: [Insert date self-assessment is conducted for future reference]

Glossary link

Navigation

Level 1 Compliance Indicators	Level 2 Managerial Indicators	Level 3 Integrative Indicators	Level 4 Transformative Indicators	Maturity Score (1-4)
<input type="checkbox"/> Diversity as required	<input type="checkbox"/> Diversity for gain	<input type="checkbox"/> Inclusion matters	<input type="checkbox"/> Inclusion embedded in corporate DNA	1
<input type="checkbox"/> Legal framework guides policies and procedures	<input type="checkbox"/> Mission, strategy and policies	<input type="checkbox"/> Diversity embedded	<input type="checkbox"/> Diversity is a given	
<input type="checkbox"/> Compliance with legislation	<input type="checkbox"/> Organisation's and workers' needs/goals align	<input type="checkbox"/> Strategy, mission and policies	<input type="checkbox"/> Organisational adoption of continuous 'next practice' future focus	
<input type="checkbox"/> Compliance with anti-discrimination requirements	<input type="checkbox"/> Competitive advantage (productivity)	<input type="checkbox"/> Diversity and inclusion ingrained in business strategy and integrated into systems and all organisational components	<input type="checkbox"/> Holistic and inclusive value creation	
			<input type="checkbox"/> Multi-generational socially minded workforce	

Click here to check the evidence!

Indicators with check boxes

Links to evidence

Current maturity rating (self-select)

Using the tool

Click on the check boxes that you have gathered evidence for. How many ticks appear in the current rating from the table will take you to a list of evidence questions that will help you determine whether you meet each indicator.

The importance of evidence

Using and collecting evidence (click on the evidence) is important when discussing or agreeing on a maturity rating in cases where multiple people in your organisation are completing the self-assessment.

Deciding on a current and target maturity rating

- Be honest!
- Remember that deciding on a rating is a value judgement based on the evidence collected.

Hints

Figure 1: Screenshot of a dimension worksheet from the MARS D&I CMM Excel Assessment Tool



Key Tips

If you are conducting the assessment in a workshop format, you should allow around 3-4 hours to complete it. However, this may vary depending on the perspectives in the room, how much agreement there is, and how tightly the discussion is managed. Tips for efficiency include:

- Use the dimension indicators to identify roughly where you think your team/organisation sits and then check the evidence questions for that maturity level, rather than starting with the lowest level and working up. Depending on how you answer the evidence questions, you can then move on to the evidence questions either down or up a level to check whether your maturity is more likely to sit elsewhere.
- Consider your workshop participants and how you are likely to get the most insights from them. You may choose not to show participants the Tool but rather use it to frame the workshop discussion.
- Check out the case studies and Quick Guide 5 for more ideas!

MARS CMM Toolkit

QUICK GUIDE 3

Interpreting Results

This Quick Guide provides information on what to consider after you have conducted your maturity assessment, specifically interpreting and reporting on the results and planning for continuous improvement.

Interpreting and Reporting the Results

It may be useful (or required) for you to report back to senior management and your people across the organisation on the findings of the Capability Maturity Model (CMM) assessment. It may be particularly important to report back to any sponsors in the Executive Team (if applicable). Reporting can be important in helping to build commitment to systemic, cultural and behavioural changes required to achieve the target maturity levels.

Prior to reporting, you are encouraged to dig deeper into and interpret the results so you can confidently use the spider graph from the summary tool to present the current and desired states. This interpretation activity will help inform priority areas to focus on in your action planning and will also assist in getting senior leadership support for resourcing the next steps.

When reporting back on the results, the following may be useful:

- Identify the organisation's strengths and report on its successes using both the spider graph and specific examples from the evidence tables
- Use the spider chart (see on next page) to show the gap between where the organisation is currently and where it wants to be (you can copy and paste this from Excel into a presentation or report)
- Use the evidence examples to illustrate any gaps more clearly (i.e. examples of things we are not doing) and consider the significance of these gaps in terms of the organisation's strategic priorities
- Highlight the benefits of making advancements in the CMM area (e.g., diversity and inclusion, workplace bullying and incivility)
- Communicate the overall current maturity rating and the targeted rating
- Provide a brief explanation of the assessment process and the use of evidence to guide the ratings.

Using the Excel tool to Report Back on Results

The Excel tool provided as part of the suite of MARS CMM resources provides a visual for you to use in your presentations/reporting back to senior leadership and your people. The spider chart shows any alignment or gaps that exist between the organisation's/work unit's current maturity level and where you want to be. You can copy and paste your spider chart from the tool into another program.

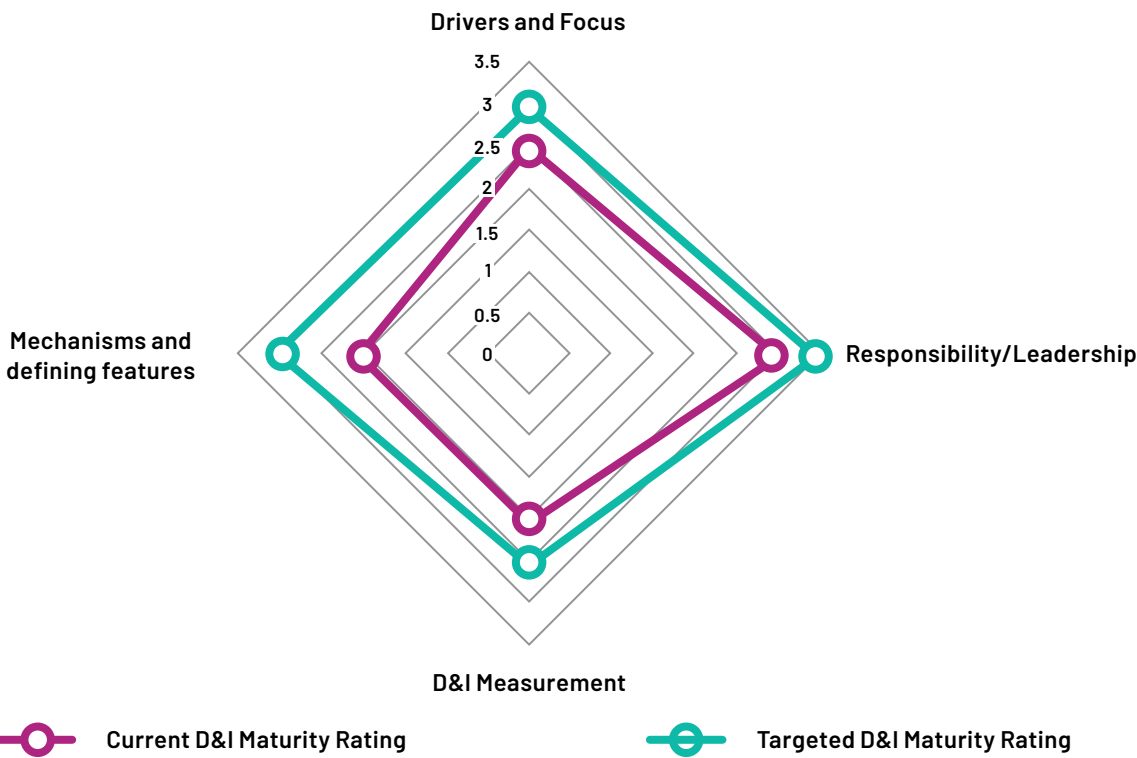


Cross-unit maturity ratings

Maturity levels may vary across different work units or mine sites. These differences can be a good discussion point, but caution should be taken if deciding to report on ratings across the organisation – comparisons are not the primary purpose of the CMM. There may be valid and historical reasons for these differences (e.g., trialing initiatives, workforce differences etc.).

A useful part of this interpretation activity might be asking the question: "If there are differences, why might this be?" A follow up question might be: "Do we need to seek more staff feedback to better understand the results?"

Summary Tool



There is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach – a possible alternative approach

A reminder that organisations should follow the process flexibly and adapt as required. An option to consider would be to combine this interpretation step with the action planning step based on which approach is considered more likely to contribute to what you want to achieve.

Action Planning to Advance Capability

This Quick Guide provides information on making a plan for how you aim to achieve your target ratings.

Action Planning

The purpose of action planning is to be able to move forward to facilitate organisational change. It will be carried out differently depending on the organisation and your internal processes. However, this quick guide will provide some general guidelines that you may follow.

The CMM Excel Tool contains an Action Plan worksheet that you can use. Your current and target maturity ratings, and your target achievement dates set previously will auto-populate. If you want to change any of these details at any point during the action planning, you can do so in the Summary Report worksheet.

See an example in Figure 2.

Brainstorm Ideas

For each dimension that you want to target (i.e., where your targets rating differs from your assessed ratings), review the gaps you identified through your assessment (i.e. where you answered ‘no’ to an evidence question or and/or had discussions relating to areas for improvement). Discuss what actions could be taken to enable a positive response at your next assessment for those you’ve identified as a priority areas during the interpretation step.

Make a Plan

Decide on which actions identified during brainstorming to prioritise to include in your plan. Alongside each action, specify:

- Who will be responsible for implementing each action
- The time frame for each action completion
- How you will measure the completion and success of the action

Before finalising your plan, review the actions included and discuss whether they are achievable and likely to allow you to reach your target ratings. Revise the actions, target ratings, or target achievement date accordingly.

Set up for Sustainable Change

Building organisational capability requires sustained effort, particularly if you have set an ambitious target. To ensure that working towards your target culture remains a priority, don’t forget to plan how you intend to continue these efforts moving forward:

- How will you communicate and monitor progress during the implementation of your plan?
- How and when will your future assessments be carried out?
- Who will coordinate your future assessments and subsequent iterations of your action plan?



Key Tips

- A rough guide of how long action planning will take is approximately 1-2 hours, however this may vary depending on the circumstances.
- A lot of the discussion had through the assessment process will be useful for action planning. Note taking throughout will support efficient action planning.



Questions to ask

During action planning, it may be helpful to ask the following questions:

- When considering the gaps identified during the self-assessment, are they gaps that need to be addressed? Although some gaps may exist, these may not be as relevant to your organisation as others
- Are there critical areas that need to be actioned immediately (e.g. are any business units failing to meet any mandatory or legislative obligations)?
- When comparing the results across areas (if applicable) are there learnings from some areas that can be shared across the organisation? Are there practices that can be implemented organisation- wide

MARS D&I Capability Action Plan

Your current maturity ratings and the targeted maturity ratings will show below based on your answers to the previous worksheets. Use the tables below to plan the actions you will take to move towards your target rating for each dimension.

Team/Department/Organisation: [Insert as applicable (this should align with the level of analysis, e.g. if it is for a particular work unit, insert the unit name)]

Date of plan: [Insert date of plan dd mm yyyy]

To be reviewed: [Insert date of review dd mm yyyy]

Drivers and Focus	Current D&I Maturity Rating	Targeted D&I Maturity Rating	Target Achievement Date
	1	1	dd/mm/yy
Action	Person responsible	Time frame for completion	Evidence of success/completion
[add action]	[add]	[add]	[add notes about the evidence]

Responsibility & Leadership Dimension	Current D&I Maturity Rating	Targeted D&I Maturity Rating	Target Achievement Date
	1	1	dd/mm/yy
Action	Person responsible	Time frame for completion	Evidence of success/completion
[add action]	[add]	[add]	[add notes about the evidence]

Current and target ratings

The default for the current and overall target ratings is '1'. If one of your ratings is 1 and this is not the rating that you decided upon, go back to the relevant dimension and check that you have selected the correct rating from the drop-down list.

Remember that a Maturity Score is between 1 and 4:

Maturity level 1 = compliance
Maturity level 2 = managerial
Maturity level 3 = integrative
Maturity level 4 = transformative

A rating of 0.5 (e.g. 1.5, 2.5) indicates that you are between maturity levels.

It might be helpful to refer to the Model graphic and the matrix.

Return to introduction

Figure 2: Screenshot of the Action Plan worksheet from the MARS WBI CMM Assessment Tool

MARS CMM Toolkit

QUICK GUIDE 5

Workshop Planning

This Quick Guide provides information on what to consider as a facilitator when conducting an assessment workshop.

An integral feature of the CMM Toolkits is the value that comes with bringing together a group from throughout the organisation to share their perspectives and co-design solutions.

As previously discussed, this can be done in different ways, however we strongly recommend that workshoping features somewhere in your assessment and action planning.

These CMMs, being related to safe and respectful work, can potentially spark sensitive conversations, strong and often opposing views, and heightened emotions. There's a lot of ground to cover and often limited time, and for all of these reasons, the facilitator plays an integral role in the success of the process and overall effectiveness of the Tool. Here are some recommendations to help facilitators run a workshop.



Set the Objectives of the Workshop

1. What are the objectives of the workshop?
2. Which objectives take priority?
3. Ensure objectives are realistic given the time allowed, the likely size of the group and other constraints.
4. Understand why a facilitated workshop is the preferred method for achieving the objectives.
5. How will success be measured?

Recommendations

- It is recommended to run workshops face-to-face where feasible.
- Where possible select a Project Champion/facilitator who is experienced in managing sensitive conversations and in creating a psychologically safe environment which encourages contribution.
- Consider having a dedicated scribe during workshops.

Establish Psychological Safety

Participants may be sharing sensitive information and feel vulnerable. Therefore, it is imperative to consider who you bring together in a workshop and how likely they are to feel safe sharing in front of one another. At the beginning of a workshop, it is also important to set up a safe space for workshop participants to share openly.

Consider the following:

- Begin the session by clearly stating that all shared experiences and opinions are valued and will be treated confidentially.
- Emphasise that the session is a safe space where vulnerability is encouraged and respected.
- As a facilitator, perhaps share your own experiences or acknowledge the sensitivity of the topics. This can help normalise openness and encourage others to contribute.
- Communicate how the information from the session will be used and reported on.

Establish Ground Rules

- Collaboratively develop a set of ground rules with participants. These might include:
- Active listening without judgment. Respecting diverse viewpoints.
 - Maintaining confidentiality of shared stories. Setting expectations that everyone will be kind and constructive.

Interactive Ice Breakers

Build rapport and set a collaborative tone.

Example

Start with a brief round of introductions where each participant shares their expectations or a personal experience related to the topic being discussed. For example, ask, “What’s one challenge you think our organisation faces in promoting a healthy workplace culture?”. Remind participants that sharing is voluntary and that every insight is valuable, regardless of the depth of personal detail.

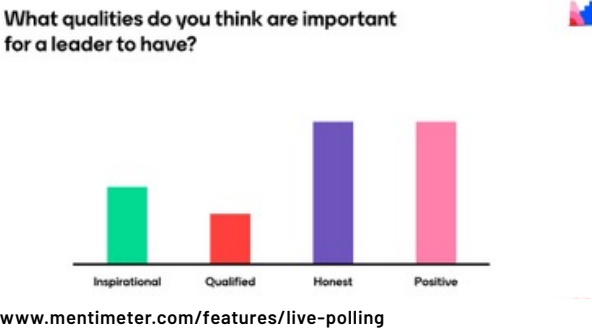
You will need to think about how you are going to get the best data in your available time. Consider the group you will be working with when you design your workshop. Working through each evidence question in turn is likely to be very time consuming.



Open Q&A and Reflection Periods

- Provide space for clarifications and deeper insights.
- Example**
- Schedule regular intervals where participants can ask questions or share reflections on the assessment outcomes. Use open-ended questions like:
- “What surprised you most about your organisation’s assessment results?”
 - “How do you think these insights can drive meaningful change?”

Reinforce that every question is welcomed and that the discussion will remain respectful and supportive.



Key Tips

- Showing the Excel Tool and sequentially running through each evidence question to consensus is likely to be time consuming.
- The facilitator needs to consider the experience, preferences, and dynamics of the workshop group and decide an approach that is most likely to generate rich, honest and insightful discussion and complete the assessment in the most accurate way possible within the time available.
- Note that reaching consensus on every evidence question and maturity rating may be very difficult for some groups, and it is the rich conversation that comes from this process that is most valuable, so keep rich conversation the focus rather than consensus.

Real Time Polls and Surveys

Gauge participant opinions and generate immediate discussion.

- Example**
- Use a live polling tool (Example Mentimeter or Slido) to ask questions like:
- “How would you rate your organisation’s current DEI practices on a scale from 1 to 5?”
 - “Which area do you feel needs the most improvement when addressing workplace bullying?”

Display the results live to spark conversation, ensuring that participants understand their responses are anonymous, which can help alleviate concerns about sharing sensitive opinions.

Small Group Breakout Sessions – Collaboration Tools

Consider collaboration tools to facilitate deeper discussions and learning.

- Example**
- Divide participants into small groups, assigning each group a specific dimension of the maturity model.
- Have them discuss:
- **Current Strengths:** What is working well in their organisation?
 - **Areas for Improvement:** What gaps do they see?
 - **Actionable Steps:** What immediate changes could be implemented?
 - Encourage each group to designate a facilitator to ensure that all voices are heard, and remind them to respect confidentiality and the diverse experiences shared.

The **World Café Technique** (<https://theworldcafe.com/key-concepts-resources/world-cafe-method/>) is a great tool to use for this for larger groups.

Appendix A

CASE STUDY 1

Case Study: Advancing Workplace Bullying Capability at TerraWorks Resources Pty Ltd A Fictional Case Inspired by Real-World Mining & Civil Contracting Operations.

Company Overview

TerraWorks Resources Pty Ltd is a leading Australian provider of civil construction, mining services, and urban infrastructure development. Headquartered in Perth, the company employs over 1,800 people across major mining and infrastructure projects in Western Australia and the Northern Territory. Operating in high-pressure FIFO environments and deadline-driven contracts, TerraWorks prides itself on safety, efficiency, and delivery excellence.

However, rapid growth and evolving project complexity brought new cultural challenges, including workforce stress and communication breakdowns on site. The leadership team began to explore the deeper cultural risks that could undermine long-term sustainability—including workplace bullying.

Context & Challenge

In early 2023, TerraWorks' Executive Director of People and Capability received concerning data from the company's annual Safety & Culture pulse survey. While traditional safety metrics remained strong, qualitative feedback suggested issues of psychological strain, disrespectful interactions, and a "just push through it" mindset, particularly among site supervisors and subcontractors.

Recognising the reputational, legal, and human risks, the Executive Team recommended to run a Workplace Bullying Capability Maturity Self-Assessment Workshop to:

- Explore current practices and maturity in addressing workplace bullying.
- Identify strengths, blind spots, and systemic gaps.
- Foster a shared commitment to safer, more respectful work cultures.



Stakeholders Involved

To reflect the breadth of the organisation, the workshop included 20 participants drawn from:

- Operational Leaders (e.g. Project Managers, Site Supervisors)
- HR and Safety Advisors
- Indigenous Liaison Officer
- Apprenticeship Program Coordinator
- Union Site Delegates
- Subcontractor Representative
- Senior Executives (including the Chief Operating Officer and Director of People & Capability)

Participants were briefed beforehand and selected for their influence, diversity of perspectives, and frontline experience.

Building Psychological Safety

Given the sensitive subject matter, the planning team took several steps to ensure a psychologically safe and productive experience:

- Personalised Invitations: Participants received direct invitations that framed the workshop as a safe space for shared learning, not compliance review.
- Pre-Session Coaching: Brief one-on-one calls helped participants understand the workshop intent and gave space to voice any concerns in advance.
- Safe Environment: The workshop was hosted off-site at a cultural centre in Kings Park, Perth, to symbolise neutrality and disarm hierarchical dynamics.
- Facilitator Profile: The workshop was led by an experienced facilitator with a background in psychological safety, Indigenous inclusion, and organisational transformation. Known for their calm, culturally aware approach, the facilitator established immediate trust with participants.
- Workshop Principles: Ground rules co-developed on arrival included:
 - Speak from personal experience.
 - Confidentiality is non-negotiable.
 - All voices matter – rank is left at the door.
 - We are here to learn, not to blame.
- Warm-Up Activities: Participants began with a storytelling circle focused on "a time I felt respected at work," easing them into the topic through a strengths-based lens.

The Assessment Process

The assessment used the ECU WBI CMM tool. It measured maturity across the four key dimensions:

Each dimension was assessed across five maturity levels: Passive, Reactive, Calculative, Proactive, and Continuously Improving using the evidence questions.

Participants were grouped into mixed-function teams and rotated through each dimension, discussing the evidence questions using:

- Scenario-based discussion prompts.
- Facilitator-led reflective inquiry.

The whole group came together to discuss the findings. The emerging themes were:

- Need to distinguish assertive management from bullying.
- Male-dominated teams discouraged vulnerability or "speaking up."
- Bystanders unsure how or when to intervene.

Immediate Outcomes

Post-workshop, the leadership team committed to several priority actions:

- Create a Respect Champions Network on high-risk sites to model inclusive behaviours and act as safe contacts.
- Revise Site Inductions to include respect, micro-behaviours, and real-life scenarios of subtle bullying.
- Launch "Speak Strong" Toolbox Talks focusing on everyday respect, peer accountability, and communication under pressure.
- Partner with an external EAP to train a small cohort of peer listeners for early intervention and trauma-informed referral.
- Clarify job descriptions and strengthen cross team communication channels – as these were identified as key causes of tensions which contributed to the bullying.
- Report back the outcomes of the assessment to the organisation, and made a plan to re-assess using the Tool in 12 months to see how they were tracking and if they had met their targets.

Participant Reflections

Feedback showed the session was transformative:

"It's the first time I felt we were talking about what really matters on site, not just KPIs." – Supervisor

"That story-sharing circle? I didn't know the guy next to me felt that way. It made me think about how I lead." – Site Manager

Key Learnings

- Psychological safety must be designed, not assumed – especially in high-performance cultures.
- Facilitators with lived experience and relational intelligence make a critical difference.
- Capability maturity models, when combined with storytelling and anonymity, can unlock honest dialogue and commitment.

Appendix B

CASE STUDY 2

Case Study: Embedding Inclusion at CoreMine Resources Ltd A Fictional Case Study Inspired by a Real Australian Mining Company.

Company Overview

CoreMine Resources Ltd is a fictional name used to represent a real mid-tier Australian mining and civil contracting company operating across Western Australia and Queensland. With a workforce of 2,500 including FIFO crews, subcontractors, Indigenous team members, and women in trades. CoreMine is known for operational performance and safety leadership.

Despite solid progress on workforce diversity targets, the company faced challenges in embedding inclusive leadership and everyday belonging. Leaders recognised that representation alone wasn't shifting deep-seated cultural patterns, prompting a more holistic approach.

Context & Challenge

In 2024, the newly formed Inclusion and Belonging Council identified inconsistencies in how inclusion was experienced across the organisation. Surveys and listening sessions indicated:

- Under reporting of microaggressions and cultural insensitivity.
- Gender and cultural representation not translating into decision-making power.
- Perceptions of a "blokey culture" that created exclusion for minority groups.

The Executive Team sponsored a D&I Capability Maturity Self-Assessment Workshop to:

- Benchmark current state of D&I practices.
- Build a shared language and awareness.
- Engage leaders in co-owning the path forward.



Stakeholders Involved

A total of 24 participants were carefully selected to reflect the organisation's diversity in geography, role, identity, and leadership level:

- Frontline supervisors and tradespeople
- Women in non-traditional roles
- Indigenous liaison officers and Traditional Owner partners
- LGBTQIA+ employee network representative
- Cultural and linguistic diversity representatives
- HR, safety, and learning professionals
- Senior executive responsible and accountable for DEI.

An advisory group co-designed the workshop structure to ensure cultural sensitivity and relevance.

Creating Psychological Safety

Recognising the emotional labour and vulnerability often required in D&I conversations, the facilitation team prioritised psychological safety:

- Pre-Workshop Welcome Video: CEO and Indigenous Elder welcomed participants, affirming that truth-telling and brave conversations were encouraged.
- Circle Culture: A yarning circle format was used to open the session, facilitated by an Aboriginal consultant, to honour First Nations ways of dialogue and connection.
- Facilitator Attributes:
 - Lead facilitator: A seasoned D&I strategist and social psychologist with lived experience
 - Known for trauma-informed practice, humour, and empathy.
 - Used story prompts, grounding exercises, and cultural pause points.

- Rules of Engagement: Agreed upon by the group, including:
 - "Ouch and Educate" protocol for moments of discomfort.
 - "Step Up, Step Back" to ensure equitable airtime.
 - "Impact over Intent" framework to navigate conflict.

The Assessment Process

The assessment used the ECU D&I CMM tool. It measured maturity across the four key dimensions:

Each dimension was assessed across four maturity levels: Compliance, Managerial, Integrative, and Transformative using the evidence questions.

Participants were grouped into mixed-function teams and rotated through each dimension. To ensure inclusive

participation and rich dialogue, the self-assessment was delivered using a World Café approach. This method created an informal, café-style environment where participants rotated through small group discussions focused on each domain.

Key features of the process included:

- Themed stations hosted by table facilitators with guiding questions discussing the evidence questions.
- Participant rotation every 30 minutes to ensure cross-pollination of ideas and perspectives.
- Anonymous polling at each station to collectively score the current level of maturity.
- "Harvesting" session at the end where insights and patterns were gathered in plenary.

This format enabled diverse voices to be heard, allowed participants to build on one another's ideas, and cultivated a sense of shared ownership of the outcomes.

Key Insights & Findings – Summary

Leadership & Accountability

- Leaders voiced support for D&I, but inclusive behaviours were not consistently demonstrated, and leaders were not active in their championing of cultural change
- Inclusion was not yet seen as a core leadership competency or shared responsibility.

Workplace Culture & Behaviours

- Some progress made in creating safer environments for open dialogue.
- Cliques, exclusionary language, and a lingering “blokey” culture remained barriers to full inclusion.
- Microaggressions often went unaddressed, especially in high-pressure site environments.

Inclusive Systems & Policies

- Diversity policies were in place, but not well understood or integrated into daily operations.
- Onboarding, procurement, and site practices lacked consistent inclusive design.

Voice, Representation & Decision-Making

- While diversity at entry levels was improving, decision-making remained concentrated among homogenous groups and largely enacted in a directive manner by managers.
- Employees from underrepresented groups felt they had to work harder to be heard or taken seriously.

Learning & Allyship Practice

- Awareness of unconscious bias and allyship was limited and poorly integrated with other D&I initiatives.
- Few opportunities existed for practical, skill-based D&I learning.
- D&I was often viewed as the responsibility of HR rather than a shared cultural commitment.

Immediate Actions & Strategic Next Steps

Quick Wins:

- Embed inclusive language and upstander scripts into toolbox talks.
- Launch an internal campaign called “Every Voice Matters” featuring real stories from diverse employees.
- Initiate targeted leadership coaching on unconscious bias and inclusive decision-making.

Medium-Term Actions:

- Set up Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) with direct access to senior leaders.
- Review procurement to include Indigenous and women-led subcontractors.
- Integrate D&I metrics into site manager KPIs.

Long-Term Vision:

- Move from compliance to culture by embedding inclusion into all performance, safety, and team rituals.
- Expand the D&I Council to include project-based ambassadors.

Participant Feedback & Reflections

Participants described the workshop as transformative:

- “I didn’t expect to cry at work. But I did. And I felt seen.”
- “This didn’t feel like a tick-box exercise. It felt real, and like something’s going to change.”
- “We need more spaces like this - not just in the city, but on site.”

Lessons Learned

- Inclusion requires intentional disruption of default behaviours and legacy systems - not just awareness.
- Co-facilitation with lived experience and cultural credibility enhances engagement and safety.
- Visual, participatory tools like maturity models help ground complex conversations in shared language.

Congratulations on taking this step in your Organisation Culture Improvement journey.

We wish you all the best in achieving organisational growth in your chosen capabilities. If you have any questions about this resource or the MARS CMM Toolkit please contact us at mars@ecu.edu.au and we will connect you with our project team.

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