

## THE VALUE OF A DIVERSE WORK PLACE

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Recently in a meeting, one of the newest members of our team commented that New Passages was one of the most accepting and diverse places he had ever worked. This is not by chance. From the beginning, we've set out to create a workplace that is as diverse as possible. One in which employees are confident that they will never be discriminated against because of the color of their skin, their gender, sexual orientation or disability.

I'll never forget the day we met as an organization to discuss and debate our values. As a result of that meeting, we created the following Value Statement: "New Passages cannot succeed without people. It is people who give this agency meaning and it is people who will make it work. We cherish humane means resulting in humanizing ends. New Passages was founded on the idea that treating people well - with dignity, respect, and with expectations of growth and development - is fundamental to the achievement of satisfying, self directed life. New Passages is committed to the Department of Community Health's goal of affirming "the full rights and dignity of citizenship" for persons with mental illness and addictive disorders." From that time forward, New Passages has been very conscious in its effort to hire a diverse workforce. We mean this in the broadest sense. It's part of our organizational culture to accept people who are different from one another. Whether you have a physical disability, a psychiatric disability, the color of your skin is different, or you have a different sexual orientation, you will still be a valued member of the organization.

We believe that diversity strengthens our organization and promotes our mission. The more difference we can bring to the organization, the more innovative and successful it will be. People who come from different backgrounds bring different viewpoints and life experiences, which I believe makes New Passages a better organization.