Capability Maturity Model for Diversity in Organisations

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Walkthrough

The Capability Maturity Model (CMM) in this instance is like an iceberg. It is quite simple but there is a lot of information that underpins this.

- Trigger warning alert for my well being
- This is only for a few of you in the audience
- What is my warrant for doing this?
- The Capability Maturity Model for Diversity in Organisations
- How can you help?

Trigger warning alert for my well being

- I need to acknowledge that writing the original document and preparing for this presentation was difficult emotionally.
- It will be difficult for me to give this presentation. I will be anxious, especially with any questions at the end.
- I will need to ask the audience to be gentle with me.
- If you disagree with the premise of this, that's fine, but please keep it to yourself.

Why so sensitive?

- The sensitive event has to be viewed as part of a cumulative impact
- High pressure situations like this are not in isolation for marginalised groups. They are "the straw that broke the camel's back". ie. they are cumulative.
- "Cumulative exposure to racial discrimination has incremental negative long-term effects on the mental health of ethnic minority people in the United Kingdom."

1. Wallace 2016 Cumulative Effect of Racial Discrimination on the Mental Health of Ethnic Minorities in the United Kingdom. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/27077347

Why so sensitive?

The top half of the figure is explains how I react to a "minor" event that triggers deep emotional reactions based on previous trauma that accumulates over time.

The bottom half of the figure is how a person with privilege might view the same "minor" event and judge my reaction as an "overreaction".
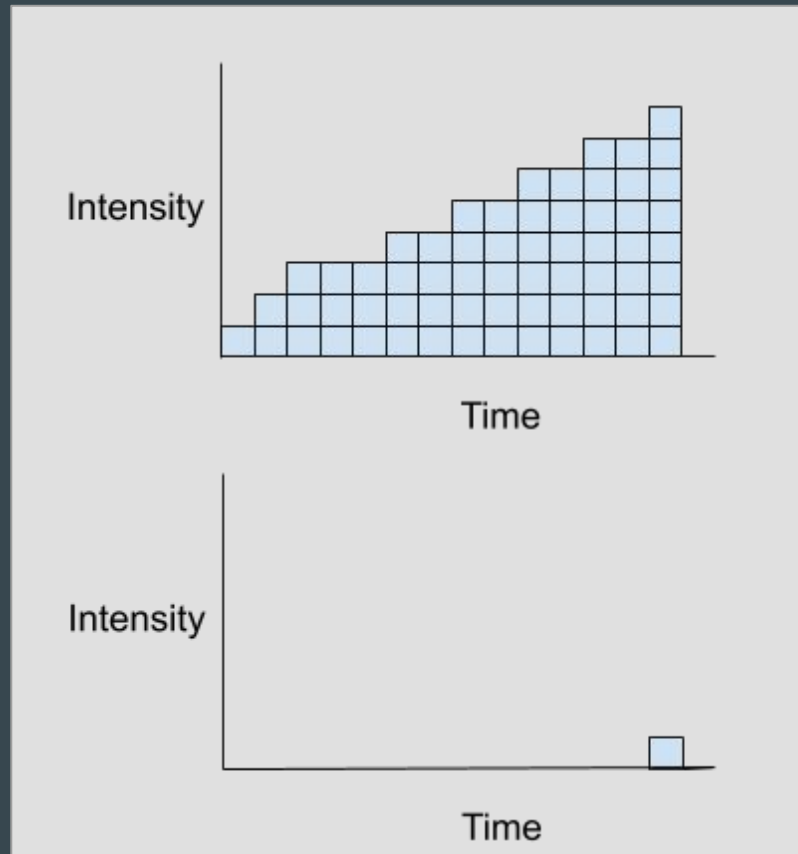
This presentation is not for everyone

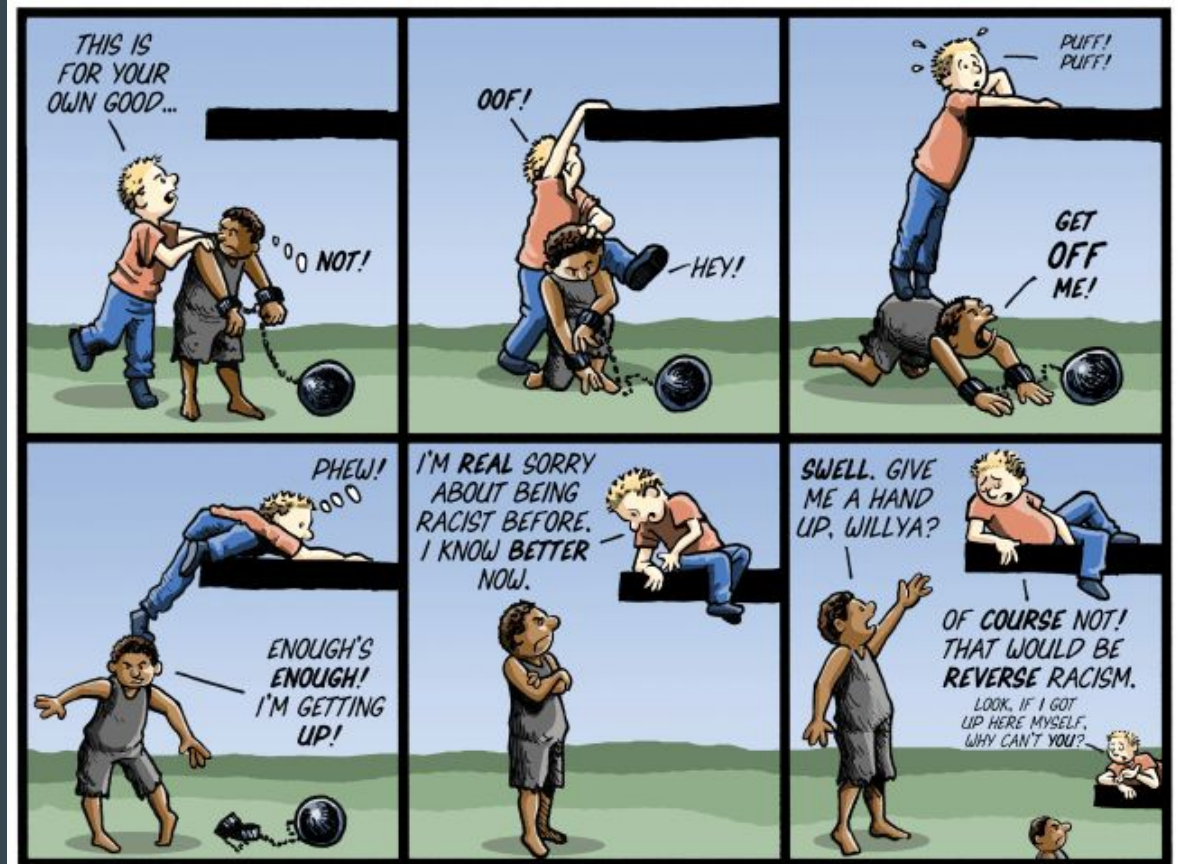|	
Some will disagree completely with what will say and will not be changed	- That's OK, but if you identify with this, please don't ask me any questions
Some will have their minds changed but won't be able to follow through	- That's OK, it is not easy to fight against a system that is biased
Some will use the tips today to help make change	- Please provide me with feedback about how the tips helped/didn't help
Some already agree and already doing this	- Hopefully they will provide me with more tips that I can add to this framework - Hopefully they will be nodding their heads as I go through the presentation!

What is my warrant for doing this?

- There is still systemic imbalance and lack of diversity in the workforce that leads to a lack of opportunity for people from marginalised groups. This needs to be fixed systematically. It is especially true in senior management roles.
- There is a large conceptual gap between diversity researchers/advocates and typical corporate diversity training.
- There was a need for a tool to help aid communication around this topic.

Systemic imbalance

There is an imbalance in the system that is biased against people from marginalised groups.

We cannot fix this imbalance by treating people equally as if they have had the same opportunities, resources and rights.

https://www.clhsocialsolutions.com/blog/2017/10/23/3-illustrations-to-start-your-discussion-on-white-privilege-racism

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Systemic imbalance

"If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has its foot on the tail of a mouse and you say that you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality." – Desmond Tutu

https://archivaldecolonist.com/2019/09/27/your-neutral-is-not-our-neutral-3/

We all know blatant sexism and racism....

Blatant issues are well articulated in Australian society, although it is still commonplace in many organisations.

"Why are Asian women's feet so small? So they can stand closer to the sink!" a male employee joked with his Asian colleague, then got angry when she didn't like it.

https://www.smh.com.au/business/workplace/asian-and-muslim-women-get-discriminated-against-in-australian-workplaces-report-20170906-gybvxx.html

But not subtle/systemic discrimination…

This shows the idea of cumulative problems that increases the lack of opportunities of a person from a marginalised group, that may not be apparent to an outsider.

It should be noted that intersectionality is defined as having more than one attribute that is marginalised and increases the problem exponentially.

"What's the matter? It's the same distance!"

Subtle/systemic discrimination can be worse...

The results of this meta-analysis confirm that experiencing any kind of discrimination has negative consequences. But more importantly, the results show that across every job and individual outcome, the effects of subtle discrimination were at least as bad as, if not worse than, overt discrimination. Subtle discrimination has not-so-subtle effects on employees and their performance at work.

https://hbr.org/2016/07/why-subtle-bias-is-so-often-worse-than-blatant-discrimination

What does that lack of opportunity look like?

Gaslighting

Gaslighting is a form of psychological manipulation in which a person seeks to sow seeds of doubt in a targeted individual or in members of a targeted group, making them question their own memory, perception, and sanity.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaslighting

https://twitter.com/ohhoe/status/1114214917052276737

Being held to a different standard

George Pell lost his appeal against his conviction of sexually abusing two 13-year-old choirboys.

Andrew Bolt said he is "appalled" that convicted paedophile George Pell will stay in prison…

Andrew Bolt: Why I criticised [Adam] Goodes had nothing to do with racism and everything to do with sanctimonious adults picking on a 13-year-old girl.

Women and families

Summer Brennan 🌈 ✓
@summerbrennan

My dudes, women are STILL fired or not hired at all basically just for looking like they might one day soon want to become pregnant.

Someone at the UN once told me TO MY FACE this was why I didn't get a job. I was then single, and ten years later still have no kids.

Traducir Tweet
12:46 p. m. · 8 oct. 2019 · Twitter Web Client

https://twitter.com/summerbrennan/status/118138521948989896?s=03

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Low expectations

"You can't study chemistry." That was what a **well-meaning** teacher told Angela Bijimba, a Malawi refugee, but now she is studying biomedical science and is on her way to becoming a doctor.

https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-10-08/navigating-australia-as-a-woman-of-colour/11576938

PS. Note how the teacher was treated very generously in that statement.

Even looking for housing can affect your work

Hassan, an engineer, applied for a five-bedroom rental property in the same neighbourhood. He was rejected and told the landlord had not liked his application despite earning a good salary.

When he later saw the home still vacant, he asked the property manager to be reconsidered, but received the same answer.

He said while he was disappointed, he wasn't surprised by the decision. "It's very common for people of African background. They always get knocked back."

https://www.domain.com.au/news/african-australians-report-discrimination-in-melbournes-rental-market-882748/

There are also other marginalised populations

"Those with high capability but who come from educationally disadvantaged backgrounds, particularly low SES, Indigenous and regional, rural and remote students, are less likely to achieve high ATARs, not because they are not talented but because the ATAR is not a fair measure of their talent and capacity to success at university," Eileen Baldry, DVC Inclusion, UNSW yesterday.

https://campusmorningmail.com.au/news/two-tales-of-the-atar/

Lack of opportunities over time reduces employability

All of these lack of opportunities accumulate for an individual but is invisible to an outsider.

This needs to be taken into account for the Capability Maturity Model for Diversity in Organisations to make sense.
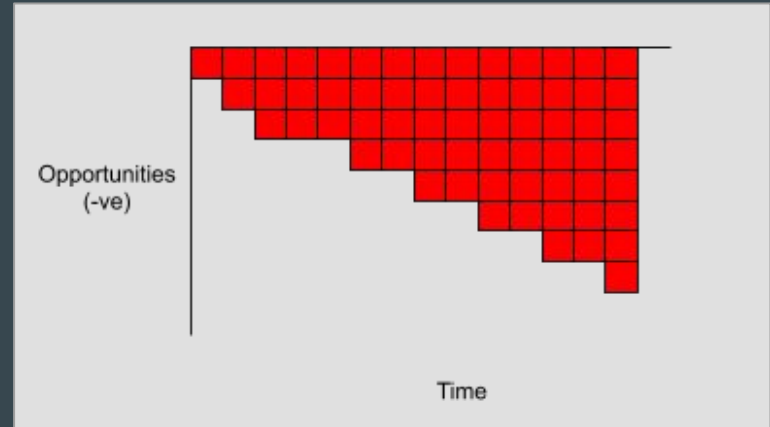
The Capability Maturity Model for Diversity in Organisations

#	CMM Level	Understanding	Central question
1	System that encourages the lack of diversity	There is no understanding.	There are no questions being asked.
2	System that is neutral and keeps the status quo of a lack of diversity	There is understanding of blatant issues in diversity, but not systemic issues.	How do we stop judging people based on stereotypes and unconscious bias, and only judge on skills and experience?
3	Individuals actively fighting the status quo of diversity	There is understanding of blatant and subtle/systemic issues in diversity.	How do we get people with privilege to stand aside to allow people from marginalised groups into more prominent roles and opportunities?
4	System that achieves diversity in a small area	There is understanding of blatant and subtle/systemic issues in diversity.	How do we get a systemic, defined and visible culture of people with privilege across the whole organisation standing aside to allow people from marginalised groups into more prominent roles and opportunities?
5	System that influences diversity in a wider area	There is understanding of blatant and subtle/systemic issues in diversity.	How do we get a culture of people with privilege across organisations standing aside to allow people from marginalised groups into more prominent roles and opportunities?

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The key is to give people from marginalised groups more opportunities to make up for their lost opportunities.

Pushback

To move into CMM level 3, we need people with privilege to sacrifice their power to allow people from marginalised groups into more prominent roles and opportunities but you can expect to get pushback. This is easily seen in the Australian Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, in his infamous words at International Women's day 2019:

"We want to see women rise. But we don't want to see women rise only on the basis of others doing worse."

What was expressed here is mutually exclusive.

You will feel uncomfortable

To work towards a better community, we need to have people sacrificing their privilege and their comfort. This is mentioned in the 2015 article by Clementine Ford:

Equality comes from people either sacrificing their privilege or having it forcibly taken away from them. It does not come from waiting from the oppressed to rise up and meet it. Men with power cannot hold onto it and argue in favour of gender equality at the same time. [...] But if all you can think about when you think about equality is everything you stand to lose, then you're not trying hard enough. And yes, you are part of the problem.

https://www.smh.com.au/lifestyle/equality-means-a-loss-to-those-in-privilege-and-thats-okay-20150527-ghambb.html

How can you help?

- There are official ways you can change the system.
  - Eg. In Victoria, there is a Special Measure under Section 12(1) of the Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic).
- But I want to focus more on the everyday things that you could do to provide more opportunities:
  - Go out of your way to encourage people from marginalised groups
  - Go out of your way to identify talented people from marginalised groups
  - Look at ways you can use your privilege to step aside for people from marginalised groups

Encourage people from marginalised groups

- Interview marginalised candidates by default and provide them with constructive feedback on how they can improve and highlight their strengths.
- Go out of your way to engage with, help with introductions, and mentor people from marginalised groups. eg. Encourage them to ask questions, even "background" questions (which is a form of leadership).
- When you see a marginalised person do something well, take the time to encourage them. This can help with fighting the effects of gaslighting.
- Encourage them to build a support network from their own marginalised group who can support them now and in the future.

Identify talented people from marginalised groups

This is especially useful when working with student interns:

- Focus less on skills and experience and more on potential and talent (see my talk "Framework for future proofing the eResearch workforce" at 1610 at Boulevard B1).
- Go out of your way to engage with, help with introductions and job opportunities, and mentor people from marginalised groups.
- Especially be proactive in job opportunities!
- The more marginalised a candidate, the more the gap between skills and experience should be reduced as a weighting compared to others when hiring.
- Take into account extenuating circumstances eg. returning from long-term maternity leave when comparing skills tests.

Step aside for people from marginalised groups

Instead of applying for a choice position for yourself, encourage, mentor and help people from a marginalised group apply for the position. This is not tokenism if they have the talent and potential and you are willing to share your skills and experience with them to get them up to speed.

Feedback so far has been positive

"It's really useful to have this all so clearly written out, and have a clear pathway for improving diversity, and why that's important." - Nick Golding, member of the Research Software Engineering interim steering committee.

"So much respect to you for undertaking a challenging feat to open up difficult conversations. These conversations are extremely important and it's a shame they are not a part of occupational health and safety procedures." - Priyank Pillai

"As a stupendously privileged white male whose life has essentially gone the easy-route to success, I would like to compliment you on this work. Seriously." - Sven Dowideit

Acknowledgements

I would really like to acknowledge the large number of people who helped me directly and indirectly.

I am uncomfortable for some reason to put your names here so I will try to contact you individually to thank you.

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