

UCP Team:

It is part of UCP of Greater Cleveland's core values to promote diversity and a sense of belonging among our stakeholders and our community. And while we tend to focus on disability throughout the year, *inclusivity* does not stop there. Human dignity does not stop there.

June is Pride Month, where we celebrate the LGBTQ+ community. We strive to be a place where everyone belongs, are welcomed, and who may live among us openly and freely. What many do not know is that this month started by commemorating a series of violent acts between police and gay rights activists, notably in the Stonewall riots in the late 1960's. It is a time to remember and reflect on the journey the LGBTQ+ community has fought for decades; to be reminded of past struggles, current victories, and opportunities that once seemed impossible (yet there are still barriers to this day).

This is a monumental time of year that goes unnoticed for many; the LGBTQ+ community may easily be overlooked. It is only when people surround and support one another and demonstrate to the LGBTQ+ community that their unique self can be shown, while at the same time recognizing this is only **ONE** part of a person's identity.

Diversity should not be a buzz word, rather an essential component to foster creativity, innovation, and success. I want UCP to be a place where team members feel safe to make the personal choice to reveal their true being. At UCP we have an unwavering commitment to equity, inclusion, and community and should actively support the LGBTQ+ community. We have not done a good job doing that before. And I know one simple message does not change that.

Team members at UCP of Greater Cleveland have always depended upon each other. Let's find a way to make this an on-going priority. Let's not allow these words to be empty. Let's listen and learn from each other ways to advocate. This may start as simply speaking out when you hear or witness a comment, or it may be something else like volunteering.

Please join me in celebrating Pride Month. Consider this one more call to action as we move towards a more inclusive workplace.

Until next time,

Beth