



## **The Think Inclusive Podcast**

### **Season 10, Episode 24**

#### **Julie Kratz and Simone Morris | Inclusion School Podcast**

##### **Audio Transcript**

###### **Tim Villegas 0:00**

From MCIE.

The connection between inclusive schools and diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives.

My name is Tim Villegas from the Maryland Coalition for Inclusive Education and you are listening to Think Inclusive, a show where with every conversation we tried to build bridges between families, educators, and disability rights advocates to create a shared understanding of inclusive education, and what inclusion looks like in the real world. You can learn more about who we are and what we do at [mcie.org](http://mcie.org) On this episode of Think Inclusive I speak with Simone Morris and Julie Kratz the hosts of the inclusion school podcast, Simone and Julie connected over social media in 2015, and decided to collaborate on a podcast to talk about the connection between inclusive schools in the DEI space. Here's what I cover with Simone and Julie in this episode, why diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives are important in schools, some ways to show up and be allies with people who have been historically marginalized, and why it is important to talk about issues of racism, sexism, homophobia, and ableism. With children. Before we get into today's interview, I want to tell you about our sponsor together letters, argue losing touch with people in your life, but you don't want to be on social media all the time. Together letters is a tool that can help. It's a group email newsletter that asked its members for updates, and then combines them into a single newsletter for everyone. All you need is email. We are using together letters. So think inclusive, patrons can keep in touch with each other groups of 10 or less, are free. And you can sign up today at [together letters.com](http://togetherletters.com). Thank you so much for listening. And now, my interview with Simone and Julie. Welcome to the podcast.

###### **Simone Morris 2:10**

Thank you, Tim. Thanks for having me.

###### **Julie Kratz 2:12**

Yeah, same excited to be here.

###### **Tim Villegas 2:13**

I had the privilege of being on the inclusion school podcast. And we had a fantastic discussion about inclusion schools, diversity, and we wanted to have Simone and Julianne to talk about the connection between inclusive schools and the DEI space. And so to get us started, will you and whoever wants to go first Simona. Julie, would you please introduce yourself to our audience of inclusiveness?

**Simone Morris 2:41**

Sure, happy to kick the ball off. My name is Simone E. Morris. And first and foremost, I'm a mom of a seven year old daughter, and I'm a DI Diversity Equity and Inclusion practitioner. I've been doing this work since about 2009 in the corporate space, and then on my own since 2015. So happy to be here happy to engage in this rich conversation.

**Julie Kratz 3:05**

So I'm so funny. I didn't know it's so funny how much we talk and how much I learned because we started our businesses the same year 2015. So and I have an eight year old and we've traded notes a lot about the adventures of Jane and Millie. But that's why Dylan can't forget about my almost two year old is such a joy to challenge. But yeah, I mean, we both did this work for corporate for a long time. And when we connected through social media and saw that we're doing similar but different things, we thought, hey, we need to have this conversation earlier. We need to talk to our kids about it. But both of us were struggling. And we thought if we're dei people struggling with this conversation, there's probably a lot more people struggling with this conversation. So we're 60 episodes in and counting and so excited that Tim and others have shared their expertise with us.

**Tim Villegas 3:53**

So you connected over social media, and then decided, hey, let's do a podcast. Yeah,

**Julie Kratz 3:59**

you're not gonna have a story goes?

**Simone Morris 4:01**

Well, well, first of all, we liked each other a lot. And we still do. So that happens first. Like, we have got to work together. And what are we going to do? And so a podcast and a book later, and I'm sure there'll be more to come. So you know, we just liked each other a lot. Yeah,

**Julie Kratz 4:18**

we had multiple conversations. I think it was that first conversation where there was some weird stuff happened in both of our kiddos schools. And we're like, Hmm, this is a thing. This is a thing still. And I think both of us kind of thought like, Oh, these kids have it figured out like we're just focused on you know, people in the corporate space that really don't have it figured out. And so I think both of us were like surprised, uneducated ourselves, like I you know, I remember when someone when I first talked, this was 2019. So this is, you know, before the summer of 2020, the infamous summer where everyone, you know, really tried to think to get involved. But even then, there just weren't a lot of tools. There was a lot of information. We

found these amazing people and just pockets of I mean all over we've interviewed people from all over the world and I've been like astonished to see like, there's an amazing amount of children's book authors that talk about diversity, but they're not mainstream. You know, it's not something that's like always at the bookstore or Amazon cart, and people that study this work and go into schools and have these conversations and educators are coming up with their DEI plan. So it's been super cool to be surprised, and, you know, scared, I think affirm that there are good people out there doing this work, we need more of them. Now,

**Tim Villegas 5:25**

would you mind? Could you share with us the, like you said things happened at your schools with your children? Are those on top of mine? Would? Could you tell our listeners about that?

**Julie Kratz 5:36**

Yeah, I think for me, it was, we had James entering elementary school and had a DEI counselor committee, or whatever they called on this again, was 2019. Yeah. And I joined, you know, and I joined. And then I've looked around as like all women, mostly women of color, and me and one other white lady, I'm like, Well, this seems to be a proper representation. And then the representation of the school is quite the opposite. You know, like, not a lot of kids color, very white dominated community. So well, it's really hard, I think that year to be like, where's my place, and this, I don't want to show up and be the DEI police, you know, because there were things ideas are being thrown around that I they weren't the most inclusive. And Simone and I compared notes, I think on just the absence of conversation at my school, anyway, Simone didn't take charge at her school, but Black History Month, and even Women's History Month, there was like, no conversation about it. And then once COVID happened, you know, we just got completely distracted as a committee, which I think we could have done a better job of staying intact, but there was just a lot going on then. So I think for me, it was wrestling with how to show up in the conversation intentionally and not as a savior. But as somebody that really wanted to help in a place that didn't have a lot of diversity, but can at least work on the inclusion piece and signaling that we wanted more diversity. And I

**Simone Morris 6:51**

think for me, Tim, I was commiserating with Julie, my daughter was about to turn four. And she was in preschool. And we had had this playground incident where this little kid told her that she didn't belong. And I was just gutted and wondering, wow, I knew I had to have a conversation. But that it this is too early, and I wasn't ready for it. And so talking to Julie about that experience and knowing that I wanted to move her to a school a to a place with more diversity, because it was a predominantly white preschool. And you know, I had conversations with the directors, teachers, etc. But felt like I wanted her to not be the only one in class. It's a big burden to be the only one but to be three and the only one, it's pretty significant. So I ended up moving schools for her. And just on the journey, Julie and I have compared many conversations have this happened, or they're not doing anything for Black History Month, you know, you know, how do I show up? And so I think over time, we learned and grew on the podcast as well, because we're always having the conversation with our guests. And we learned something and you can never stop learning in this space. Pretty much

**Tim Villegas 8:00**

do you think because of the I guess attention that the AI has gotten over the last couple of years I get I hear on social media. Sometimes people are like, now there's too much attention on inclusion. And why are we having to have all these dei meetings and conferences and workshops? I guess. So here are my questions. Number one, do you really feel like that there has been an influx of of all of this content for people in your space? So that's the first question. And number two, is there a point? Where will we get to a point where we won't need as much?

**Simone Morris 8:40**

Well, I'd say the first question first. Right? We that's that's the ultimate goal, right? It's just seamlessly integrated. And it's not such a big deal, as you're saying. But the reason it's a big deal is because we all don't get it. So I mean, there's so much to learn. There's a big boulder uphill. And just as soon as you think you get it, you fumble and stumble, I put my foot in my mouth. I didn't get that right. So there's a lot of people who are overwhelmed by what it takes to be truly inclusive. And so you know, the world is changing. So we have to change his parents, caregivers, educators, as well as in the workplace as human beings. And we don't want to we don't have it figured out look around the world and what's still happening

**Julie Kratz 9:22**

now. And I think for people newer to the conversation, I think they thought like, oh, well we'll tackle this this summer this year.

**Tim Villegas 9:31**

Wrap this up

**Julie Kratz 9:32**

centuries of inequality not solved in the short term and you know, it will be solved in our lifetimes. But Simone and I have commiserated about I mean, it makes me sad, but it also makes me feel obligated to help be a part of creating a next generation of allies. We need these kids to get it earlier. I was raised colorblind that was super unhelpful. We all see color, you know and so to talk about, you know, incidents of sexism, racism, homophobia, ableism, whatever ism Moms at play is an opportunity to help our kids grow and learn and be better. And at the end of the day, like we're doing them a disservice by keeping this information from them. Like it's just, they're a global world right now. And it's going to be super global for them. And multicultural is one of the fastest growing demographics, especially for our kiddos. So they are going to experience this and we're gonna experience this quicker, they're gonna get it quicker. And his parents, I think sooner they've talked about this as parents and caregivers and educators alike, I think there's a real fear factor of that Bumble and stumble that smoke calls it, I think there's a real, you know, we want to protect our kids, we want to be the experts. And this isn't something I know a lot about. So I'm going to, you know, we call it the dance. And one of my favorite things that we share a lot often like our tips is it always comes back to meeting kids where they're at finding the space to meet them where they're at. And you don't have to have the answers you can say, I wonder I noticed or did you notice like those types of questions

or thought prompts are super helpful for the dance. So that conversation is opening ears. And listen, I mean, if you talk with somebody in your life, whether that's a child a, you know, adult 20 work with personal or professional have a conversation about inclusion, I think if we were just having more of those conversations, things would happen more quickly. But Tim, the forecasts are pretty grim for racial diversity and gender equality, like we're still, you know, at least 100 plus years away, unfortunately, and COVID is kind of set some of that stuff back contrary to what I think people think just talking about, it has not solved a lot of the systemic issues.

**Tim Villegas 11:30**

So in your roles in Dei, like, how often does disability come up in that conversation?

**Julie Kratz 11:37**

Yeah, I mean, it's interesting, like smart. I'm curious, from your perspective, I think most people go to race and gender. And we encourage people to broaden it. And we've had folks that talked about physical disabilities on the podcast, as well as cognitive disabilities like neurodiversity as well. But that's an area I think we're a little weaker in on our podcast, to be honest. I mean, we've had several guests, and it's something we're actively working on. But in particular, you know, as we're talking about through the lens of kids, like the books, there's not a lot of great books that talk openly about abilities and disabilities. I just happened to read one over the weekend about disability awareness. And so much of it is like the do's and don'ts, like the words to say and not say, and unfortunately, these are words I've like heard come out of my daughter's mouth already at age eight. So this stigma about it someone I think, one of my favorite guests on the podcast, Deb Daggett, that she said, You know, I'd love what she said about it, like developmentally meet them where they're at, but like kids, you know, one of the most common situations that happened, this has happened to me with my kiddo. They're curious, they notice and they point at someone in a wheelchair, or Jane was actually shocked that a kid could be in a wheelchair, like she did not know that was actually possible, because she'd never seen it before. And so having that conversation, not shushing them, no point is probably not the best thing to do. But talking about, Yeah, I noticed that too. And it's okay to talk to that person. And we should talk to that person openly and greet them as we would anyone else. Whereas we usually have rigor eye contact, you know, we're afraid to say or do something, if kids are curious, it's okay for them to ask a curious question and a thoughtful, respectful way. Don't shy away from it. Don't shut your kids down, because then they learn not to talk about it. And that continues later in life.

**Simone Morris 13:15**

Yeah, I think that's a great point, Julie, because just because we are uncomfortable or thinking we're doing the right thing, like, you know, it's not necessarily the right thing to do. So again, back to that dancing with discomfort, you know, being uncomfortable and having the conversation and admitting you don't know, I don't know, because we've had, I'm forgetting her name. Right now we have this little girl. We've had a couple people with different abilities on the inclusion school podcast, I remember we had a little girl and we were taught, we talked to her and her mother not remember her name right now, Julie, I don't know if you remember

her name. And she's got a YouTube channel and all this stuff. And it was just very educational for us to have the conversations and to even have the conversation with parents about their experience and what promoted their activism really was enlightening for us. So I think we're starting to see more of I wouldn't give us an A D. Julie, I might give us a C on the inclusion school podcast, that you know, because I you know, we've had different slices of abilities. On the podcast, we've had the expert level, we've had the child level, we had the parent level and we didn't had educators chime in on some of that in the classroom. So we've got some resources. And I think in my day job, if you will, it comes up it comes up in employee engagement survey where people are wanting a broader reach of what the focus is more than race and gender. So I think we will see a lot more around abilities and and making space for abilities in the workplace.

**Julie Kratz 14:52**

Yeah, one of my favorite podcasts another one you were thinking of, although I know that season one or season two, or we talked about that. Now Yeah, I'm like fit well, one of our most popular podcast episodes my casts remember, yeah, I love lying loved it. Yeah, yeah. And he, he goes into schools and talks with kids about his, you know, blindness and and talks very openly about it. So then they're not afraid when they see somebody that has, you know, a seeing eye dog or you know, has, you know, clearly the lack of vision so I just loved his stories because like you can make it fun getting a disability, there is a natural vulnerability that comes with it, I think that scares us is because any of us could get a disability at any point in our life. Like as unlike a lot of the other dimensions that diversity, like you're not going to change races or ethnicities or your gender can be fluid, of course, but for disability in particular, like that could change for me this afternoon. And I think that that creates fear for parents, because we don't want to think about things that could cause us pain or, you know, attack our mortality or our ideas of it. So do you think finding ways to reduce the stigma and open up the conversation and to talk about it, as you know, it's not a negative thing to be pitied? I think that's something I've really wrestled with is I was conditioned and taught that to pity you know, to go into that Savior mode. And that's absolutely not helpful with any dimension of diversity, but very important to remember what disability

**Tim Villegas 16:14**

I think, you know, in our space in inclusive education, we've got misconceptions that we tackle all the time, but I would love to know in your space, what is the common misconception about inclusion?

**Julie Kratz 16:26**

I think people think it's gonna be like this really hard conversation. Oh, my gosh, we're gonna have to sit down for like two hours and talk at length and cry. You know, I find most often I'd be curious, you know, what you find with Millie. But with Jane, I mean, my two year old can barely have a conversation. So we're not we're not there yet. But my eight year old is has been since she was probably five or six, we have talked about things we've noticed or things we could do better, or things we could learn about. What does that just go into like an you know, a restaurant that's of a different culture than ours? And talking about how people around the

world eat different types of food? Or, hey, when we go somewhere? There's a lot of diversity of different types of people. And sometimes there's not and like, why might that be? And one of the examples I remember very starkly, that really confused me at the time. And I've learned about it since but we went rollerskating. Jane really likes roller skate. We had a birthday party at roller skating rink, there's a lot of diversity, and just lots of different types of folks that happen to be at the roller skating place and have one we've gone consistently, well, then we go ice skating. And it's totally opposite, right? It's all white people. It I think I counted one person of color. And you know, we just I was like, I noticed something. Did you notice that? And then jeans like, Huh? Now, I don't know why that is like why? Why would one place have a lot of diversity? Why would another not and you know, I've unpacked that with my friends of color. And I get how it's tied to socio economics, I get how rollerskating I've been told as a form of dance a lot of times in the black community. And so it's just really interesting that, you know, comparing my perceptions to other people's perceptions, and everyone has different perceptions around this. But just noticing and drawing attention to it, I have found some on, it's not an hour long conversation, Jake gets older attention that long, it's usually a 510 minute. And then next time she's in a situation, she might notice that again, another we have to draw attention to it and have a conversation every time about it, but starts to notice places where people feel a sense of belonging and maybe a place where people don't and how can we be more inclusive in those spaces. So that's something I think that parents caregivers, educators struggle with, or kids are gonna say something really inappropriate, like they don't actually learn now, when we listen to them. I remember Jane telling me like racism does not make sense, mom. Yes. And here I am trying to explain the history of it and how we came to be to this place that she's like, that just sounds terrible. Mom, this are some bad decisions. As mature adults, say that outlet

**Tim Villegas 18:47**

got a long history, quite a long history of bad decisions.

**Julie Kratz 18:52**

It's not to oversimplify, but I think in a child's mind, like it's okay to say, yeah, that was absolutely wrong. That was absolutely wrong. And just sometimes that's enough for them.

**Simone Morris 19:01**

I think, for me, it's a it's about, it's not always outward, it could be inward as well. And what I mean by that is that we're teaching our children how to be inclusive, but there could be scenarios where they don't feel included. And I don't know if that's more prominent for me because I'm or my daughter, because we're black. But there are instances where your child could feel like they are not included, it does not have to be overt racism, you know, gender, etc, where kids just don't include them and giving them the skills to navigate when they are on the receiving end of not being included as something. I mean, I work at that a lot with my daughter, because she's black. So her experiences may happen more frequently, but it could happen to other kids where they don't feel included. And it's interesting. Julie, you talking about the ice skating because I remember when we chose to go ice skating. We were the only black family there and we're like where's everybody? Oh, no, it was it was sort of, you know, I was kind of

hoping for more representation, but there just wasn't our school had an ice skating activity. And we tend to in our family embrace opportunities for different experiences based on how different it is from what we experienced growing up. So Millie is very lucky, she's got exposure to being in Austria. I mean, she just had these experiences that it feels like I'm experiencing it as well when she's experiencing it, because I simply did not grow up that way. But with that, there's a lot of lessons around how do you deal with not being included because perhaps you're not expected to be in spaces. And the other thing that came up for me is that we as parents can choose to not be an inclusive environments for sake of giving experiences. And I know that from a summer camp perspective, because I've had that experience, where I've put Mellie in a situation that was not diverse because of access, and because of experience. And then when I tried to move her to a diverse experience, he was resistant, because she likes the access and the experience, and that opportunity. And so I wrestle with making the right decision, knowing what I know, as a practitioner, knowing what I know, as a parent, but you gotta listen to your child and you want them to be happy. So I think, you know, there's a misconception that you have to choose diversity. But if you don't choose it, you have to come to grips with it. And and perhaps you can bring some of your diverse experience and knowledge into a space that there isn't a lot of diversity. So that's something that I have been thinking about a lot

**Tim Villegas 21:40**

more after a quick break

what can educators and families who want equity who are pursuing inclusion for learners in their schools, you know, what can they learn from professionals like yourselves it because, you know, the people who listen to this podcast are mostly educators, and they're interested in inclusion in inclusive education. And we're, when I say inclusion, I'm talking about disability, you know, but really, and why I think it's so important for our listeners to hear to hear your voices is I really want to connect those worlds of people who are interested in disability and inclusion, and also diversity, equity and inclusion. So for our audience, what do you think? What What can they learn from from you? And in your space?

**Julie Kratz 22:35**

Yeah, I think they're intersectional. Like you said, I mean, it when I've tried it, and I made this mistake myself, like I eight years ago, when I started down this work, yeah, eight ish was gender white woman, and I'm straight and cisgender. Right now I have all my abilities. So I focused on my experience, my lived experience, and I think there's something to your lived experience, much like Simone just described with being a person of color. And that's a different lens. However, like you said, it's intersectional. Like when we, when we look at disability, like a quarter of Americans have a disbelief, right, like a billion people on the planet. So if we're not talking about that, we're only talking about race, we're only talking about gender, and not the intersectional identities that often people carry, you know, especially for kids that are going to see these lenses, it's just human parts of being human. And it's really important that we look at the different aspects and the nuances of each one of those different lenses on the lived experiences, because they do look and feel very different, you know, Simone, and feel free to build off of this, but I was just thinking, it's like for educators, you know, one of the things we



do in the corporate space, and so I can't speak to it, educators do but much like black history month, December, early December is disability awareness. I know there's a national day, and I believe there's a calendar month in October that also addresses some of this. So that's an opportunity to right to bring some content, I think into your classroom or to consider just having a conversation about what a disability is, and words to use and not to use because a lot of times people still use I don't want to use these words, because they're outdated, but handicap that's just not a word we use anymore, right? Um, and kids may not understand it, because they might have seen like their parents say handicapped parking or something like that. That's outdated language, just simple things like that. But I think you could talk about and how much disability affects children because like my daughter, if you haven't seen it, it's hard to believe it. It'd be hard to even know that that's something that's the thing, they're not going to be scared they're not going to feel shame around it. We're going to learn they're going to grow that people are different and come into this experience differently. Yeah, I'm

**Simone Morris 24:30**

gonna go a different angle it for me. I think educators can leverage parents and caregivers as partners. And so here's an example for me. My daughter is experiencing differences in the classroom so they they mix and mingle the classroom. So there may be a child in the classroom with different abilities. Now, remember, in preschool, she had a little girl that was in a wheelchair, and so they did different things during recess. CES, etc. But there was no notification to me as a parent to be a partner of discussion. It was just handled in the classroom. So I think, you know, we're talking a lot about parents meeting children where they are, while there's some of that for the parent, too, because my daughter is learning these skills, and I want to reinforce it at home. But I don't really know what the child has, or any education around that that's an opportunity for an educator to say, oh, you know, we recently received something, no birthday parties in the classroom, we've got a child with a nut allergy, life or death, we're not willing to celebrate birthdays in a different way, please make sure you don't send anything peanut allergy. I mean, that was a notification that came to all the parents, well, if there's a child with differences, and my daughter is interrupting, and she's saying, this person, this is not happening, but this person is bothering her whatever, because they have a different skill set or ability. And there's someone in the classroom that's helping them through that. But I don't know that I may interpret that and create a totally different story, because I'm not well equipped. I'm just hearing one side. So I feel like the communication and partnership, potentially there's an opportunity there.

**Tim Villegas 26:12**

Yeah, I can see that. For sure. The I can't remember who said it, but the fact that we don't have that many, like what I'm hearing is the experience of the your children in school is that there's not a whole lot of interaction with people with disabilities. Isn't that a problem? Right? Because if it's, if it's so rare, that we have to put a spotlight on it, you know, and shouldn't be like, I know, I'm in I'm in my territory here. Because, you know, that's what, that's what we are promoting. We're improving inclusive classrooms where students with and without disabilities learn together side by side, right. But I mean, I'm also talking about it, as you know, from my experience as an educator, you know, when, because I taught in a self contained special

education classroom. So if one of my students, let's say, who you know, has a disability is included in another class, it is sometimes so rare that the kids come home, and they're like, Yeah, this, this kid is in my class, and they're different. And they did this, you know, whereas if they were naturally included, then it wouldn't necessarily be such a big deal. Right. I don't know. What do you think? I

**Julie Kratz 27:23**

mean, it's exposures part of the issue. I mean, we as humans learn from the experiences that we're exposed to, and actually done when you were sharing that I found the podcast you're talking about? Yeah.

**Simone Morris 27:35**

Yeah, you've had a journey journeys world.

**Julie Kratz 27:38**

Yeah, her and her disability. Yeah. And I think about both of those stories. So yeah, journey, talked about her own story from a from a child that was experiencing perspective. And she shares her story, you know, publicly or you know, upon request, and Janae shares a story about her daughter and her daughter is, is unable to walk in a wheelchair and has Rett syndrome. And she takes her daughter with her to talk to kids about here's what she can do. And here's what she can't do. And she said kids, one thing I remember from both those podcasts is kids are so curious, in a good way about like, oh, what can she do? You know, like, how does she do that? That's so cool. You fell in, it's like, that's the part that's neat, right? It's the Shining or the, you know, diminishing of disability that makes me learn that right from us. So the more we can showcase those stories, and that's, that's the beauty of what we learn with the virtual world, like you can tune in, you know, as an educator, find these folks their stories, feel free to peruse our podcast not to tout that but there are some really

**Tim Villegas 28:38**

good people we talked to No, no, please tout it. These people like

**Julie Kratz 28:41**

they do guest speaking they have books, they talk openly about this. And you can find content online that you can just bring into your classroom, or better yet, bring them virtually into your classroom or in person, whenever that makes sense. So do think finding those stories and, you know, the folks that we've had on our podcasts, I've written books or share their stories or not ours Pong, you know, again, it's something you could easily weave into an existing time slot in your curriculum for the day, you know, 1520 minutes to talk openly about it. And that's thanks, Simone. We've learned too is this isn't the one conversation and the one month of the year to talk about this. This is like consciously sprinkle it in, you know, once a month commit to doing something with disability as an activity. And these are podcasts as a guy because this is a passion project for me. So we'd love to share the content or put you in touch with great potential speakers or books.

**Tim Villegas 29:30**

Yeah, so on that note, are there any particular like you mentioned a few podcast episodes, but there any other podcast episodes if people want to check out inclusion School, where where's a good place to start?

**Simone Morris 29:42**

Yeah, I think going to our website inclusion school.com either going to resources because, uh, you know, Julie's team does a great job of coordinating or curating the resources that we talk about on the podcast so you can easily download resources that Julie and I have put together or For additional resources that our guests have shared, whether it's an assessment or a list of books, or whatever it is, you can get that but also going to the episodes, and we referred to Season Two a lot in this conversation. So the episodes that we referred to about using Rett syndrome to teach inclusion that season two, Episode 12. And we also talked about journeys world that season two episode 10 journeys world, you're gonna have something about mental health, season two, episode nine when we talk about mental health awareness and support. So we are very descriptive in the titles of our articles. So I think once you get in, and again, these are about 30 minutes, 2030 minutes long episodes, you can just, you know, on your lunch hour or in the morning or whatever, get one in and just promote additional thinking, or how can I incorporate this in?

**Julie Kratz 30:51**

Yeah, yeah. And so yeah, there's a slew of web pages with videos, books, podcasts, we try to link and promote other folks work. And I would just say to, you know, for listeners, if you know of somebody that would be a great guest on our podcast, or you want to be a great guest on the podcast, we are always kind of looking for folks. And so you can easily contact us or the website or just email us and talk to us at inclusion, school calm.

**Tim Villegas 31:15**

So in inclusive education in the, in our language, we talk a lot about belonging. And so I wonder in Dei, or in your experience, in, in, in working with businesses and in your own families. Where does belonging fit when you talk about inclusion?

**Simone Morris 31:33**

I mean, I sort of gave an example when I talked about my my daughter at the playground where the kid told her, I'm forgetting if he used you don't die, think that he said you don't belong. You don't belong here. And so it's sort of close to the end. Does she feel included as a result of someone telling her that she doesn't belong? She's She, that we use a lot of language around having a seat at the table? So do I belong? So am I welcomed? And a part of this? And how do you include me so that I continue to feel like I deserve to be here. So I think it's a close dance between inclusion and belonging, and they can support one another?

**Julie Kratz 32:14**

Yeah, I know, there's a lot of metaphors and it's work, especially in the corporate space. And any one of our favorites is Verna Meyers dei later right the the dancing and a party are

distancing you know, like diversity is being invited to the party inclusions like feel like you can dance but belongings. I feel like I can dance and not give a rip, you know, do the running. Yeah. carwash, listeners. Yeah, that'd be falling on my butt. But it's a different feeling. You know, even if the school was doing everything for Milly to feel included. That kid took all that away in five seconds. And I just viscerally I mean for parents, caregivers, educators, listening to that story. I mean, no one you share that Sonos like, I am so angry, and it didn't happen to me, it happened, somebody I've just met, but it happened to a child like that. I mean, when you think about belonging our kids all deserve we all feel like we we need to as humans, that's Maslow's hierarchy, right connection and belonging isn't far up the pyramid once you're been fed and have shelter, but that's not enough, right? We have to connect and belong we're a social species. So if kids don't feel that belonging and that more psychological safety as a grow up, that's a scary thing for mental health. And this is why we see higher rates of mental health challenges. And because if you're getting those threats, those micro aggressions or macro aggressions like that kid did your whole life like that builds up in that weathers. We know that kids that experience diversity, have, you know, a weathering effect that happens to them and belonging is just so so important. And unfortunately, you know, someone wanting to do workplace work have yet to reach a real culture of belonging, maybe small teams or big corporations like yet? Nope, we're just not there yet. And we got to start earlier. Yeah. Yeah, it's hard. It's hard. How do you create that environment? And I do think, you know, knowing your audience as educators that we talk a lot with educators to like, I do think modeling that at least in your classroom, your 2030 Kids, or hopefully not more, but I know many have more like, like, how do you model that, that foster a sense of belonging so that all kids really feel like they can be themselves be weird, be themselves whatever it is, because we get those social cues from a young age and it's sad and you just don't get the most from people when they're filtering and covering and pretending to be different versions of them.

**Tim Villegas 34:33**

Yeah, I'd like to thank Simone e Morris and Julie Kratz for being on the thick inclusive podcast and please go and listen to the inclusion school podcast.

**Simone Morris 34:42**

Thank you so much for having us.

**Julie Kratz 34:44**

Yeah, keep in touch send us a note inclusion. school.com I'd love to hear from you.

**Tim Villegas 34:55**

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