

# Belong@KP: Our journey toward equity and inclusion—required for all

**Kristin L Conn**  
SR MED DIR, DIVERSITY

Change happens when we see inequities and realize we have the power to do something, starting with recognizing our own internal bias—something we all have, despite our best efforts. Stereotypes, just one way we perpetuate bias, are “embedded in our culture,” notes **Tessa Chu**, Director, Business Strategy, a Chinese/Taiwanese American woman.

We’re living in uncertain, challenging times, with an ongoing global pandemic, economic uncertainty, political divisions, and calls to address systemic racism and social injustices that emotionally and physically tax us.

That’s why it’s more important than ever to take care of ourselves and one another, that we unite in our shared vision and mission, and that we work for greater equity and inclusion within our organization.

## **Enter Belong@KP**

At the Tuesday, April 6, all-hands meeting, Paul Minardi, MD, CEO, and Susan Mullaney, KFHP President, talked about a new enterprise-wide program, Belong@KP (if you missed it, you can listen [here](#)). This 6-part series will help you learn and practice inclusive behaviors as we work to combat racism and social injustice.

**Belong@KP is now available on KP Learn, and all WPMG clinicians and staff are expected to complete the program (open [KP Learn](#) and search Belong@KP to register). Clinicians will earn maintenance of certification on completion of the 6 modules and activities. Work is underway to ensure everyone can participate during work hours.**

This new program is part of KP's commitment to advancing equity and addressing systemic racism, creating a workplace where we all feel we matter, are valued and treated fairly, and where we share a sense of belonging. The program includes both anti-bias and anti-racism learning with foundational tools for a more inclusive work environment. It also supports the 'culture of wellness' work we're doing, to speak up, and build a community of practice where we learn from each other and grow.

### **Why it matters: Tessa's story**

Since 2020, overall hate crimes dropped by 7% but increased against Asian Americans by 150%. Stop AAPI Hate—a recipient of recent [Kaiser Permanente pledge](#)—has received over 3,795 hate incidents, from verbal harassment to violent attacks, with 2/3 of those targeted to women. Of those groups experiencing hate, Chinese are the largest (42.2%), followed by Koreans (14.8%), Vietnamese (8.5%), and Filipinos (7.9%). (Source: [Stop AAPI Hate](#))

One of our deepest human desires is to belong\*, and belonging is central to engagement, whether at work or in our communities. To better understand how this impacts you or your colleagues, hear from Tessa about being of Asian descent at a time when attacks on Asian Americans have increased:

When I heard about the [mass shooting](#) in Atlanta's Asian spas, I froze. Being an Asian American today, I carry an invisible fear and anxiety made of hypothetical and overreacting scenarios. But on that Tuesday night, the worst came true: a 21-year-old man with a gun drove to three Asian spas, and shot and killed 8 people—6 who were Asian American women. Later, the police officer on camera stated this man had "a bad day." This is a classic description of systemic gaslighting, and I can't begin to describe the fury, pain, and suffering this statement caused.

If it could happen to these women, it could happen to me. I do not want to minimize my pain, trauma, or fear, or have it minimized through omission. Asian Americans are being attacked. We are hurt and hurting. We are constantly reminded that we are not from here—even when we are—and we're exhausted from having to prove we belong.

Hearing Dr. Paul Minardi and other WPMG medical leaders and colleagues speak openly about this, [stand in solidarity with me](#), and emphasize our humanity means so much. Many emailed or sent texts to tell me they're thinking of me and the AAPI community. This makes it easier for me to be at work, knowing I don't have to spend energy ignoring my range of emotions. I'm also grateful that my colleagues and manager were flexible; two days after the Atlanta shooting—the hardest days for me—my boss let me know it was optional for me to attend a meeting and mentioned “no need to reply to this email on a Friday afternoon.” Other colleagues offered to support/balance work if I needed it.

As I spoke up, I met new colleagues and established deeper and meaningful connections, which helped me learn other response capabilities I can use in day-to-day work or in response to other events. I'm so grateful that WPMG is committed to creating an inclusive workplace, to listening, learning, and making a lasting and meaningful difference. This is how we break down barriers to achieve equity and inclusion for all.

### **Belonging is up to all of us**

While not required, it may be helpful to test your own implicit bias before your first Belong@KP module; you can do so through a variety of quick online tests on Harvard's [Project Implicit](#) website. You may be surprised by what you learn.

We must all act inclusively *and* feel a sense of belonging, freeing each of us to be our best for our members, patients, communities, and each other. You're encouraged to learn more about the Belong@KP program, explore the role-based learning journeys, and register for your first learning module on KP Learn. If you have any questions, please reach out to (name removed), program manager, or find supportive resources [here](#) (WPMG EID) and [here](#) (National Belong@KP).

*\*Atomic Habits, James Clear*