Laughter... The Best Medicine
If your fear of saying or doing something improper is holding you back from welcoming a new worker, relax. Creating a welcoming workplace is a lot easier than you think.

Educate yourself about the native culture of your new employee (a five-minute trip to Wikipedia is all it takes), become self-aware, and decide that you want your coworker to feel safe so they can be themselves in their new home—your shared workplace.

Pursuing these goals will help you overcome your fears and biases, model how others can do the same, and allow you to move beyond tolerance to being excited about diversity and inclusion. You will witness a positive force that propels your workplace upward so everyone succeeds.

Coming Together By Cracking Up
Ever notice how just one person can lighten the mood of an entire group? It’s the same reason that a comedian is always funnier when you’re right there in the audience cracking up along with everyone else—laughter is contagious.

Now why would that be? Well, some medical researchers suggest that laughter is more about social bonding than humor. It makes sense if you think about it. There are very few interpersonal conflicts that can’t be at least temporarily diffused by a healthy dose of humor. Laughter is a release that naturally breaks tension, and the effects are immediate.

Why We’re So Afraid To Have Fun
That being the case, why are so many offices so lacking in humor? Part of the reason is that the business world often frowns upon humor, viewing it as being unprofessional or a sign that people aren’t working hard.

The other part is that we simply become conditioned to lose our sense of fun and silliness as we grow older. We’re expected to be serious. And for those of us who aren’t naturally funny, social inhibition can keep us tied to a safe, quiet demeanor.

Making Laughter Part Of Your Day
Ever notice how just one person can lighten the mood of an entire workplace? Laughter is part of a healthy work environment and best of all, it’s free!

So let humor be your secret weapon the next time you’re feeling overwhelmed. Here are some tips to lighten your mood and get the laughs flowing when you need them the most.

Choose to find humor in situations. Instead of saying, “I’ll laugh at this one day,” choose to laugh now.

Learn to laugh at yourself. Self-deprecating humor is the easiest to pull off (and often most appealing to others).

When you find yourself having a hard time finding humor and laughter, surround yourself with positive people. Be there to support others in time of need.

Make a game of being silly. Find a coworker you’re comfortable with and try to outdo each other’s absurdities.

Develop an “Emergency Laughter List”. List memories, jokes or even funny internet videos that always make you smile. Use the list as needed.

Fake it ‘til you make it. Research shows that simply smiling will improve your mood.

Develop a humor bulletin board that encourages fun and appropriate humor. Readers Digest is an excellent source for jokes and funny stories that most everyone can relate to.

Use fun, laughter (and music) in presentations and trainings to encourage engagement and memory.

Bring a few kids’ toys with you to work and keep have them ready for the next time you need to blow off steam.

Use Laughter Resources To Jump Start Fun
Not all of us can be comedians. Sometimes the jokes need a little push. Try clipping a few of your favorite office humor cartoons like Dilbert and sharing them with coworkers. Better yet, ask everyone to bring in an example of something that made them laugh. Not only will it lighten everyone’s mood, you may just be surprised at what you learn about each other.