Embracing Language Diversity in the Workplace

As workplaces become increasingly diverse, managers and supervisors must find ways to promote effective communication and collaboration among linguistically diverse employees. Here are some tips for UT Southwestern managers and supervisors to foster an inclusive workplace that values diversity and respects all employees:

1. Understand UT Southwestern's policy related to language and communication in the workplace, particularly concerning restrictive language policies. The Equal Opportunity policy, ETH-151, prohibits discrimination based on national origin, including related characteristics such as culture, language, and accent.

2. Restrictive language policies, like English-Only rules, may violate ETH-151 if they disproportionately affect employees of a certain national origin or create a hostile work environment. Consult the Division of Equal Opportunity for guidance before implementing any policy restricting language use.

3. Under ETH-151, there are situations where restrictive language policies might be permissible, but they must be (1) narrowly defined and (2) based on legitimate business needs. Departments should carefully evaluate the potential impact of such policies and explore alternatives that accommodate all employees' needs and preferences.

4. Create an inclusive work environment that values diversity and respects all employees, regardless of language abilities. Strive to address concerns on an individualized basis without resorting to language-restrictive policies.

5. Report language policy concerns or issues to the Division of Equal Opportunity for guidance and support. Together, let's create an inclusive work environment that values diversity and promotes respect for all employees.

Remember, embracing language diversity in the workplace benefits everyone. Let's work together to create a welcoming and inclusive environment for all.