

Beyond Diversity

Diversity is Multidimensional

There are layers of diversity—things we cannot change about ourselves and things we can influence and change.

- What are some examples of things we can change through personal choice?
- What is not changeable by choice?
- In your experience, which has the most personal impact?
- Which are people most sensitive about? Why?

Why are the Differences Important?

If we are successful (as individuals and as an organization) in fostering respect, unity and inclusion, what will it mean to us? How will that alter the way we work, how we feel and what we can accomplish? What are the benefits of a diverse workplace?

Perceptions

Our experiences become a filter through which we view the world. Sometimes our lenses are flawed or limited, and they constrain our ability to relate, respect and connect. As we lift our awareness, we create space for effective, productive relationships.

Frames of Reference

Our frame of reference is the way we interpret the world around us. It is a habitual way of looking at things, based on our experiences, background, skills and attitudes.

Can you think of a time when your frame of reference— your interpretation changed?



Frames of Reference

Building Greater Awareness

What are some common workplace stereotypes?

- _____
- _____
- _____

Why are stereotypes so persistent, even when we know they cannot possibly be true?

How have you personally experienced a stereotype? How did that impact you?

Are stereotypes ever true? Is it ever appropriate to stereotype?

How have you personally experienced a stereotype? How did that impact you?

Consistency Theory

Working from our perceptions, we formulate assumptions about people based on their belief systems or personality traits.

He's Republican, so you know he _____.

She is so outgoing. She would be great at _____.

Choose a characteristic (e.g., quiet, shy, logical, conservative, progressive) and apply the Consistency Theory.

Stereotyping

Stereotypes come from the psychological need to categorize and organize things so we can communicate about them. Stereotypes are often exaggerated, overly simplified and (even when seemingly positive) offensive. They are used to describe or distinguish (separate) a group.

Polarization

Again, from the need to organize (this time in opposing categories) we polarize attributes.

- If you are a football player, you aren't _____.
- If you celebrate a Jewish holiday, you can't be _____.
- If you are a single parent, you aren't _____.

Check the labels!



The Language of Inclusion

The Lexicon of Diversity

- Don't single out a person's race, sex, ethnicity or personal characteristics when it is irrelevant to the topic.
- Avoid identifying people based on a disability and describing disabled people with terms like, "victim, poor or unfortunate." Descriptive terms should be used as adjectives, not as nouns (e.g, disability versus disabled).
- Use gender-neutral language (de-gender versus re-gender).

Instead of...	Use...
Chairman, Chairwoman	
Bachelor, Bachelorette	
Career Girl or Career Woman	
Foreman	
Gentlemen's Agreement	
Handicapped	

How has Diversity Touched You?

Take a moment to think about a personal experience with diversity. Perhaps you had an "aha" moment when you discovered that you were stereotyping or labeling.

Maybe you were on the other end of a label.

How have the important issues of diversity touched you? What have you learned? How can you share that lesson?

Avoid stories, photographs and captions that make assumptions based on stereotypes.

- The clock must be ticking, she is 30-something after all.
- He's gay, so you know he's got an eye for decorating.

Avoid stories that emphasize exceptions to stereotypes.

- John actually pulled over and asked for directions.
- Harold over in marketing even changed diapers and did the midnight feeding!

