

Diversity/Sensitivity

Louisville Metro Government
Training & Development

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Agenda

- ▶ Introduction
- ▶ Terminology
- ▶ Impediments to Cross-Cultural Communication
- ▶ Benefits of Workforce Diversity & Inclusion
- ▶ Diversity Best Practices
- ▶ Privilege

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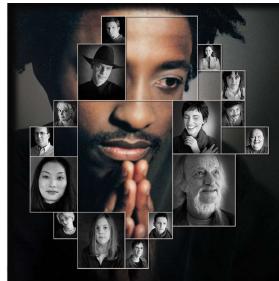
Goals of this Training

- ▶ Explore communication skills for promoting inclusion and respect in the workplace.
- ▶ Create an opportunity to discuss diversity, openly and respectfully.
- ▶ Understand the impact of stereotypes and biased statements, even when casually said.
- ▶ Identify the most common reasons people sit silent in the face of bias and stereotypes.
- ▶ Enhance skills for speaking up against stereotypes without blame or guilt.

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Diversity Defined

Diversity is the mosaic of people who bring a variety of backgrounds, styles, perspectives, values and beliefs as assets to the groups and organizations with which they interact.



<https://hbr.org/topic/diversity-and-inclusion>

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Taking a look within

Understanding diversity begins with understanding yourself

As a start complete each statement below

1. I often feel uncomfortable around people who are_____
2. When I hear people speaking another language, I think they're_____
3. I really feel like an outsider when_____
4. My ethnic or culture heritage is special because_____
5. I'm often attracted to people who_____

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Culture is multi-layered

It exists at individual, group and societal level:

- ▶ **individual** assumptions, values, beliefs shaped by family and social group
- ▶ **group** membership based on ethnicity, gender, age, class, race, religion, sexual orientation, region of the country, etc.
- ▶ **societal** institutions that shape our world - schools, workplaces, the media, government

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Organizational Culture

- ▶ The expression of an organization's collective values, beliefs, and behaviors.

?Question?

- ▶ What's wrong with just being "color-blind" or "gender-blind" or whatever-kind of blind?

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Terminology

▶ Stereotypes

- An oversimplified image or statement applied to a whole group of people, without regard for the individual.

▶ Bias

- A predisposition to see events, people or items in a positive or negative way. Bias is an attitude or belief.

▶ Silent Collusion

- To go along with through silence.

▶ Ally

- Someone who speaks up on behalf of someone else.

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Barriers to Cross-Cultural Communication

- ▶ Irrational Assumptions
- ▶ Misunderstanding
- ▶ Prejudice
- ▶ Fear

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Irrational Assumptions

- ▶ An irrational assumption is a belief that is founded on baseless supposition, often skewed by bias.
- ▶ One of the best examples of irrational assumptions are the stereotypes we formulate about people based on their association or membership with cultural or ethnic groups.

*"If we all worked on the assumption
that what is accepted as true is really true,
there would be little hope of advance."
--Orville Wright*

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Misunderstanding

- ▶ Misunderstandings are a normal part of communication either because we unintentionally or intentionally use the wrong words or because we don't understand what is being said to us.
- ▶ To prevent misunderstanding know who you're talking to, be respectful, and be sure of what you want to say.

*"Listen, I'm going to talk to the Indians.
It's probably a misunderstanding."
--General Custer*

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Prejudice

- ▶ By definition, prejudice is either a bias in favor of or against something.
- ▶ Such biases can of course be benign, however, those preferences having to do with people can be hurtful and cause problems especially in the workplace.

*"Just as a child is born without fear,
so it is born without prejudice.
Prejudice, like fear, is acquired."
Marie Killea*

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Fear

- ▶ Fear of change in the workplace is counterproductive, especially fear of ideas and people who are different from us.

"I think we have to own the fears that we have of each other, and then, in some practical way, some daily way, figure out how to see people differently than the way we were brought up to."
--Alice Walker

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Diversity vs Inclusion

- ▶ Diversity often focuses on differences.
- ▶ Inclusion focuses on valuing all individuals and leveraging their diverse talents.
- ▶ Simply having a diverse group, team, workforce, etc., is not enough.
- ▶ Diversity is what you have. Inclusion is what you do.
- ▶ Everyone should feel safe and encouraged to fully participate and share and be on equal footing as everyone else.

<https://my.iww.org/>

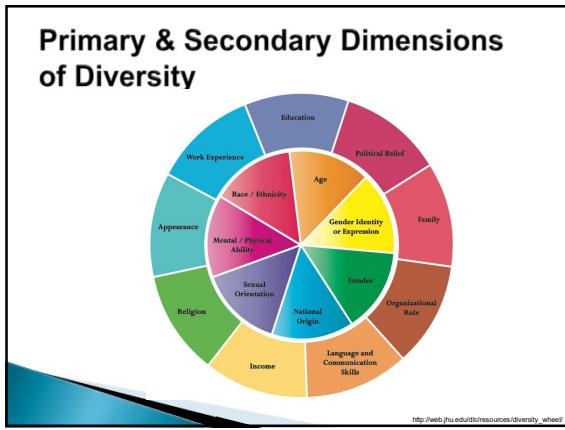
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Primary & Secondary Dimensions of Diversity

- ▶ Primary dimensions
 - Internal dimensions that are *usually* permanent or visible
- ▶ Secondary dimensions
 - Dimensions that are acquired and change over the course of a lifetime.
 - We also have the choice of whether to disclose this information or not; we can conceal these characteristics.

http://web.jhu.edu/dtc/resources/diversity_wheel/

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What is privilege?

Societal privileges that benefit people beyond what is commonly experienced by marginalized groups of people under the same social, political, or economic circumstances.

Society gives **privilege** to groups by assigning

- **unearned overadvantage** to some groups and
- **unearned underadvantage** to others

Privilege is similar to a fish being unaware of the water in which it lives

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Many kinds of privilege

- White privilege
- Class privilege
- Gender privilege
- Heterosexual privilege
- Able-bodied privilege

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Do We Recognize Our Privilege

- ▶ White people have unearned advantages in society due to skin color.
 - Most are unaware of white privilege.
- ▶ People are taught about racism, not privilege.
- ▶ White people are taught to identify racism as putting others at a disadvantage; however, white people are not taught about white privilege putting them at an advantage.
- ▶ Even though men are aware of women's disadvantages, men do not recognize their male privilege.
- ▶ Men want to work to improve women's status, but not lessen their own.

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How can you address privilege?

- ▶ Do not assume that all differences are the same
- ▶ Acknowledge and validate everyone's experience
- ▶ Avoid assumptions
- ▶ Listen with compassion
- ▶ Create safety and room for everyone
- ▶ Speak from your experience, not generalities

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Benefits of Workforce Diversity & Inclusion

- ▶ Improved understanding of those you work for, with, and around.
- ▶ Creates a work environment that allows everyone to reach their full potential.
- ▶ Provides multiple perspectives on problem solving.
- ▶ Better performance outcomes.
- ▶ Increases employee productivity.
- ▶ Increased retention rates.
- ▶ Boosts employee morale.
- ▶ Improved customer relations.
- ▶ Reduces complaints and grievances.
- ▶ It's the right thing to do!

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How Can Managers Promote Diversity & Inclusion?

- ▶ Lead employees by example; respect people and differences in the workplace.
- ▶ Create a welcoming, inclusive environment in which to conduct business.
- ▶ Incorporate diversity in policies, strategic plans, operational procedures.
- ▶ Learn and practice early conflict resolution strategies.
- ▶ Practice regular, effective, and open communication; empower your employees; requires trust.
- ▶ Demonstrate executive commitment to diversity on an ongoing and regular basis.
- ▶ Walk the talk.

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Diversity Best Practices

- ▶ Leadership commitment.
- ▶ Effective communication and transparency.
- ▶ Equitable employment practices.
- ▶ Recruitment outreach.
- ▶ Continuous learning and career development.
- ▶ Coaching and mentoring.
- ▶ Early conflict resolution.
- ▶ Flexible work culture.

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Leadership Commitment

- ▶ Communicate and practice commitment to diversity and inclusion n.
- ▶ Reinforce diverse work and employment practices, including diversity of thought.
- ▶ Practice constructive conflict management.
- ▶ Educate the workforce on the business value of diversity and inclusion.
- ▶ Mentor and coach diverse employees.

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How Can Employees Promote Diversity?

- ▶ Practice positive, constructive work habits in the workplace; work cooperatively towards a common goal.
- ▶ Live up to the social contract; contribute to your fullest potential; strive for excellence.
- ▶ Recognize and respect others and their individuality.
- ▶ Think before you speak and be sensitive to others.
- ▶ Talk about your differences and ask tactful questions about how people want to be treated.
- ▶ Eliminate stereotypes and generalizations.

<https://www.diversityinbestpractices.com/>

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Parting Thoughts

“When we feel a sense of belonging it is not because we are the same as everyone else, but because we have been accepted as we are.”

(Author unknown)

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