Unlocking the World of Cultural Understanding

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What is Culture?

- Culture is the learned and shared values, traditions, norms, customs, arts, history, folklore and institutions of a group of people.
- Culture encompasses beliefs, behaviors, rules, and knowledge that are learned and shared by members of a group and that members use to interpret and generate social behavior.
What is Culture?

- Culture is the guiding force behind behaviors and actions within specific social settings.
- Culture is not fixed but evolving all the time.
- Culture includes: national, ethnic, and racial groups. It further includes gender, age, religious beliefs, regional differences, housing status, sexual orientation and physical and mental capacities.
What is Culture?

- Culture allows you and me to be who you and I are.
- Culture allows for the differences that make us unique.
The Changing Workplace
Twenty-five to thirty years ago the average worker:

• Was white
• Was male
• Was about 29
• Had less than 12 year of education
• Was married to a woman who became a homemaker
• Had children
• Worked in the region of his birth
• Was conservative politically
• Held beliefs about work, the role of men and women, minorities, authority and family that were similar to those of other workers.
The Changing Workplace

Twenty-five years ago:

- Women generally worked in the home or worked part-time.
- Working women were teachers, nurses or support staff.
- Only certain jobs were open to ethnic minorities.
- Loyalty to one’s employer was expected and authority was obeyed.
- Older workers were considered smarter because they were more experienced.
- People with disabilities were not found in the workplace.
Tolerance Scale

- **APPRECIATION** - you view differences as positive and enjoy people.
- **ACCEPTANCE** - differences do not matter to you, you are comfortable around people.
- **TOLERANCE** - you don’t appreciate differences, but you can work with them. You feel people should be respected.
- **AVOIDANCE** - you do not understand differences, you avoid them.
- **REPULSION** - differences are not normal, working with them causes you discomfort to the point of illness.
A Look at My Culture

♦ What traditions were important to your family?
♦ What holidays were celebrated and how?
♦ Who made most decisions for your family?
♦ Who was responsible for child rearing?
♦ What role did grandparents play in your family?
♦ Were the expectations of boys and girls different, how?
♦ What practices and beliefs were adopted from your family?
♦ What practices and beliefs have you rejected and/or modified?
Acculturation

- **ASSIMILATION** – adopting the attitudes and behavior of the larger society; abandoning one’s own cultural heritage in the process.
- **INTEGRATION** – maintaining one’s own cultural heritage while actively participating in the larger society.
- **SEPARATION** – maintaining one’s cultural heritage while rejecting the culture of the larger society.
- **MARGINALIZATION** – losing ties with one’s own culture and failing to establish ties with the culture of the larger society.
Managing Diversity

- Know yourself
- Understand others
- Learn about differences
- Learn how to communicate with Diverse people
- Learn how to resolve conflict
- Make diversity a strength
Diversity Conflict Resolution

- Understand your own perceptions and point of view, beliefs and values.
- Seek to understand the other’s point of view, beliefs and values.
- Center the discussion on the “interests” not “positions”
- Search for creative solutions.
- Reach agreement
Judgment vs. Appreciation

- No matter how justified we feel in judging another person we still pay the price.
- Judgment dilutes energy and blocks effectiveness with others.

- APPRECIATION is one of the most powerful energizers of people.
EQUALITY GUIDELINES

- Do Not Ignore It
- Explain and Engage
- Don’t Be Afraid of Possible Tension or Conflict
- Be Aware of Your Own Attitudes, Stereotypes And Expectations
- Be Open To Discovery
- Project Feelings of Understanding
- Recognize the Struggle
- Intervene
- Be A Role Model
REMEMBER!!!

ISSUES OF HUMAN DIGNITY, EQUALITY, AND SAFETY ARE NON-NEGOTIABLE