

Connecting Banks and Communities Through Cultural Agility

Workshop Facilitation & Discussion Guide

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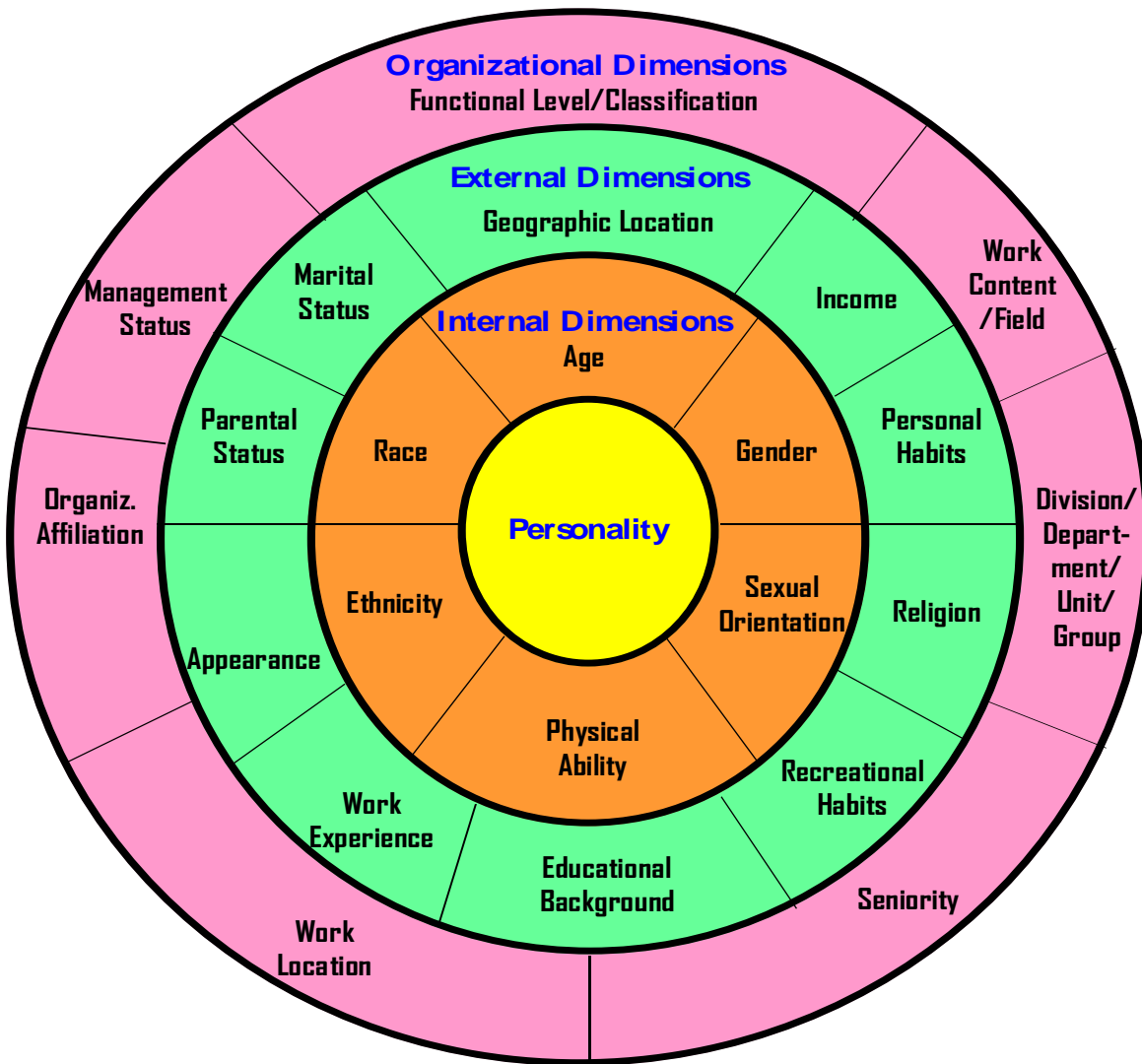
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Defining Diversity

- Diversity is all of our human differences.
- Diversity training is about how our human differences *may* affect our work and employment relationships.

Layers of Diversity



- *Internal Dimensions & External Dimensions are adapted from Marilyn Loden and Judy Rosener, Workforce America! (Business One Irwin, 1991)*

Definition of Diversity

Read the definition of diversity: “Diversity is all of our human differences.”

Comment: Another useful definition is: “any difference that can make a difference in workplace interactions at my organization.”

Ask the class/teaching points:

What do you notice about this definition? (Answer: it is broad and inclusive; it includes both similarities and differences; the term difference goes beyond just race and gender; it suggests that diversity is not a “code word” for race...)

Layers of Diversity Model

Have the class look at the Layers of Diversity Model.

Note: at the heart of the model is our own unique personality and experiences. Each one of us is made up of a unique combination of many of the factors in this model.

Have the class look at the internal dimensions of diversity.

Ask the class what those characteristics (age, race, gender, sexual orientation, physical ability, race and ethnicity) have in common.

The two key points that you want to come out in the discussion are:

- We don’t have any choice over these characteristics; and
- Employment law generally precludes discrimination in the workplace on the basis of these characteristics.

Have the class look at the secondary dimensions of diversity.

Ask the class what those characteristics have in common.

Answer: These are characteristics over which we have some choice or things about ourselves that may change over time.

Finally, have the class look at the organizational dimensions of diversity. Ask someone in the class to give an example of how one of these dimensions of diversity could become an issue at work.

Instructions for the Layers of Diversity Exercise:

1. Tell the class to list 5 characteristics from the Layers of Diversity Model that apply to them as individuals.
2. Then have each person rank order the five characteristics that they have listed in order of importance to them personally. (1 = most important, 5 = least important).
3. Tell the group not to think too hard about the exercise. Note that it's not a trick question and that there are no right and wrong answers. Whatever characteristics they list will be the "right" ones for them.
4. Give the group a total of 10 minutes to produce their individual rankings and to share those rankings with their tablemates.
5. Pick a facilitator to encourage group discussion and to see to it that every member of the group has a chance to participate and share their insights. Options for picking a facilitator include:
 - Person who got up the earliest that morning.
 - Person with a birthday closest to today.
 - The last person to stand up (right now).
 - The point method. (Have participants point their pointer fingers skyward and at the count of three, point to the person at their table that they would like to be the facilitator.)
 - Double-point method. (Same as above except have the person with the most "points" stand and point to the person that *they* would like to be the facilitator.)

Debriefing the Layers of Diversity Exercise:

1. **Ask the class what they noticed or learned while doing the exercise.** This should produce a number of points such as: "My table noticed the differences between us." "My table focused on the similarities between us." "I have never thought about how I would rank or order these characteristics before." "I notice that my rankings change depending upon my age/stage in life/priorities etc."
2. **Ask the class how many of them listed any characteristic that had anything to do with work.** (Have them raise their hands.) Note that some societies are very **task-oriented** while others are very **relationship oriented**. It's a matter of emphasis. It's not that task oriented countries don't care about relationships or that relationship oriented countries don't care about getting things done. It's simply a matter of emphasis. Here in the U.S., most Americans tend to be very task or work oriented. On the other hand, many of our newest immigrants tend to be more relationship oriented. As a result, many new immigrants experience Americans as cold and impersonal.

3. **Ask the class how many of them listed gender as one of their top five in terms of personal importance.** Ask the class to raise their hands. If more women have raised their hands than men, call attention to that fact. If not, tell the class that when we do this exercise around the country, typically there will be more women than men who will raise their hands in response to that question than men. Ask the class why they think that might be. (Be careful to call on women to answer this question.) Typical answers from women around the country include: “Because I am frequently reminded of my gender during the workday.”, “Because it’s still a man’s world.” Call attention to the fact that women are typically more conscious of their gender than men. Ask the men in the room when was the last time they had a conversation with their male friends about what it was like to be a man. The point is that men, particularly where they constitute the majority, do not have to be as conscious of their gender as women do. This lack of consciousness or concern about gender is called male or gender privilege.

4. **Ask the class how many of them listed their race as one of their top five attributes in terms of personal importance.** Ask the class to raise their hands. People of color are more likely than whites to raise their hands in response to this question. Ask people of color who raised their hands to comment on their reasons for doing so or (so as not to single anyone out or put them on the spot) simply observe that like women, people of color frequently experience circumstances during the course of each day that will remind them of their race, thus pushing it into the forefront of their conscious minds. While that can happen for whites too, it occurs much less frequently. Not having to think about race is called white privilege. Note that, just as for men with gender, so also with white people or Caucasians with race. White people often believe that “race” is only something that people of color have. Frequently, there is no white race consciousness and no concept of “groupness” for white people around the subject of race. Often too, white people have been socialized not to discuss race. When whites bring those internalized racial messages to work with them, they create workplace cultures where the subject of race becomes an impermissible topic for discussion. This can be counterproductive today when we have much more racially diverse workplaces. In fact, managers who cannot talk about race or manage a racially diverse workplace are not qualified to manage!

5. **Wrap-up the Layers of Diversity Model by asking the class how often they have these kinds of diversity discussions at work.** If the answer is not very often, ask this follow-up question: “What kinds of business benefits might there be here in our workplace if we made time, periodically, to discuss these kinds of diversity-related differences?” Typical answers might include:
- We would know each other better; reduce levels of Don’t Know/Don’t Know.
 - We would be better able to avoid hurting people’s feelings if we had a better idea of their diversity-related sensitivities.
 - We could build trust and improve team-work.
 - We would know who to go to for answers or who to go to for certain areas of expertise.
 - We could reduce conflict and misunderstandings at work.
 - We could gain new ideas/perspectives by seeing the world through the eyes of other people/groups.
6. **So why don’t we have these discussions more often? Fear! Our next exercise will show you how to get over diversity-related fears and make “Connections”.**