

Connecting Banks and Communities Through Cultural Agility

Workshop Facilitation & Discussion Guide

Presented By:

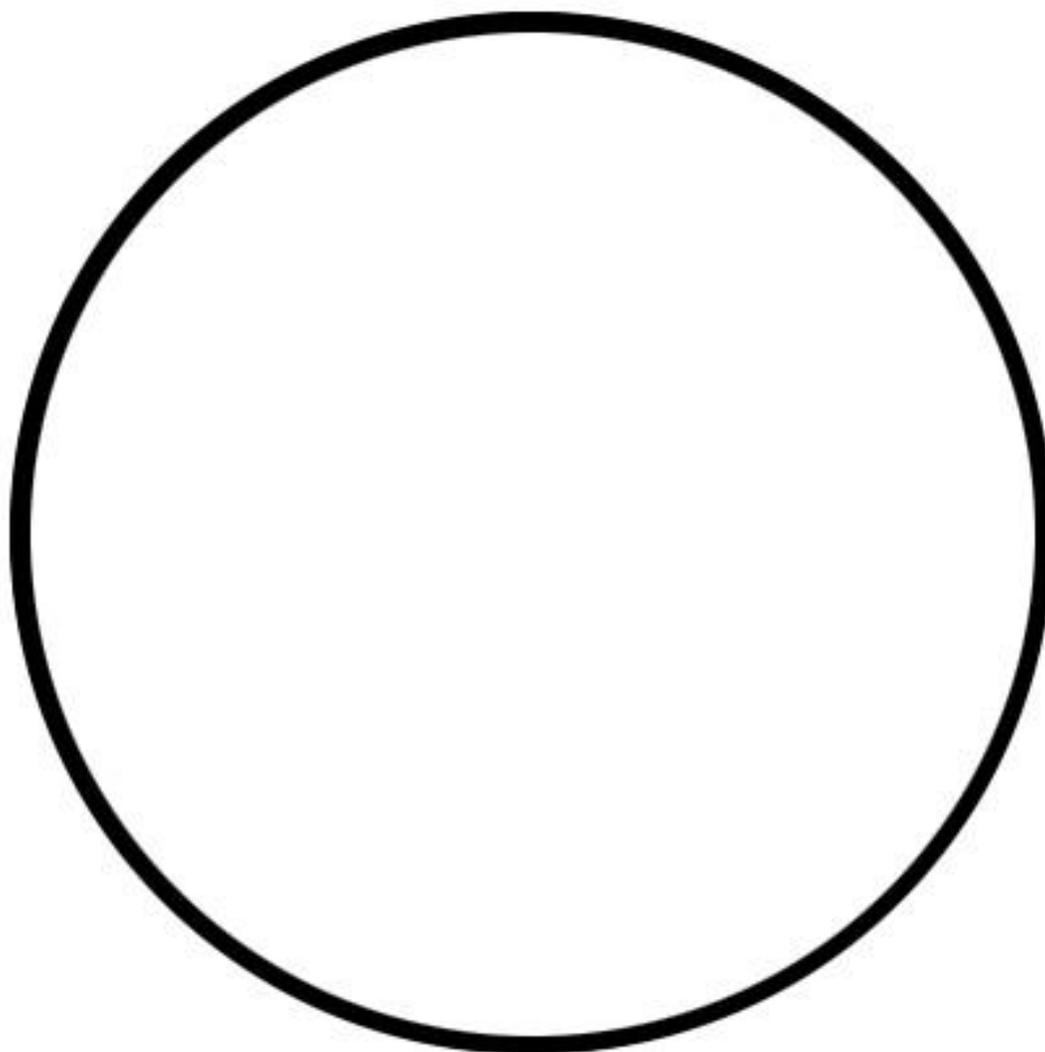
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The Know/Don't Know Model



Facilitating the Know/Don't Know Exercise

Set Up: On a large piece of news print, write “Know/Don't Know” at the top of the sheet then draw a large to very large circle beneath the words.

Explain the Model: Tell the class that this circle represents all of the differences for all the people all over the world. Verbally list some of those differences to get people thinking about diversity topics.

Ask: How much of all of that diversity do you know, sitting here today?

Explain the Five Pieces of the Model:

Know: Draw a small sliver of the pie that represents what you know about diversity. Tell the group that this is what we know with certainty. It represents those aspects of diversity that we are intimately acquainted with or that we have experienced in our own lives. Typically, we are very comfortable in this area and are, in fact, **consciously competent** here. Optional: ask the class to sign their names. Pick a class member and ask how they felt while signing their name.

Don't Know: Draw a bigger piece of the pie that represents what we don't know about diversity. Tell the group that this is what we don't know but at least we know that we don't know it. This area represents those aspects of diversity that are outside of our own personal experience. They are unfamiliar, uncomfortable and strange. This is the area where we are **consciously incompetent**. Optional: ask the class to sign their name with their non-dominant hand. Pick a class member and ask how they felt while signing their name. Typically they will say that they felt strange or uncomfortable, the task was harder etc. Ask the class whether they've ever traveled internationally. Draw analogies to how strange and uncomfortable it was to be in a foreign country where people did not speak English and played by different cultural rules. Ask the class to consider the lot of new immigrants to the U.S. and how strange and unfamiliar our language customs and norms must appear to them – particularly in healthcare. Not knowing the hidden cultural rules by which we play the game slows them down. Simple tasks take on added complexity.

Think I Know: Draw a third piece of the pie that represents what we think we know about diversity. This is the area where we house our assumptions about

people who are different from ourselves. Give examples of times in your life when you have made assumptions about others or when they have made assumptions about you. Distinguish between the concepts of **intent** and **impact**. Often, we don't intend to offend someone by our words or actions but that is the impact that we have despite our good intentions. Tell the class that with respect to diversity, we are responsible not only for our good intent but for our impact on the other person. Significantly, in determining the impact of our actions what matters is not our perspective but that of the other person because they are the one most directly affected or impacted by our actions.

Know But Don't Know We Know: This piece of the pie represents our **culture**. An analogy to culture would be a fish swimming in water. The fish rarely thinks about its environment. We're like that fish. We rarely think about our culture or the hidden rules about how to do things right because we are **subconsciously competent** in this area. We already know the right cultural rules even though we may not be fully conscious of them. Ask the audience to think about the many cultures that they participate in. There are national cultures (U.S. vs China for example) and regional cultures (East, West, North and South). There are racial cultures and gender cultures (Men are From Mars, Women from Venus & Deborah Tannen's work). There are differences in Gay and Straight cultures just as there are differences between the able-bodied and the differently-abled. Every religion has its own culture just as every organization does. Think for a moment about the culture here at Boston Medical Center ...

The Know/Don't Know: Make sure that this final piece of the pie is the largest one in size. It represents what we don't know we don't know. This is an area where we are **unconsciously incompetent**. My daughter's favorite movie is "Clueless." This is an area where we are clueless about diversity. We are flying blind. Once while delivering a seminar, I had a blind member of the audience come up to me following my use of that phrase. "I may be physically disabled," she said, "but I am not cognitively impaired." "Please stop using blindness as a metaphor for ignorance." A recent news story told us of the plight of a well-intentioned British school teacher named Gillian Gibbons who was arrested in the Sudan, a heavily Muslim country, for naming a teddy bear Mohammed, the name of Islam's greatest prophet. Under Islamic law, this practice is considered *haram*, blasphemous and could earn the offender jail time as well as 40 lashes. Gibbons got off lightly but the consequences could easily have been more severe without international intervention. As our world and country becomes more and more multicultural, the greater the likelihood becomes that you and I will have "Don't Know/Don't Know moments, moments that we couldn't possibly have anticipated or prepared for.

Significantly, our **biases** can be found in the Don't Know/Don't Know area of the chart. Our understanding of bias has changed and changed radically in the last 20 years. We used to think of bias as conscious and intentional. Now, we understand that our biases are largely unconscious and unintentional. If our biases are largely unconscious, then they are much more dangerous than we have ever imagined them to be. Our biases are analogous to computer viruses – they operate even when we are wide awake and they can get beyond our best intellectual firewalls to do a great deal of damage despite our best intentions. If participants doubt that our biases are unconscious, suggest that they Google the phrase: Implicit Association Test. The Implicit Association Test is the leading international test for measuring unconscious bias in at least three areas: race, gender and age. Visit the IAT website: <http://implicit.harvard.edu> (sponsored by Harvard University) and it will allow participants the opportunity to take three different tests to measure their personal level of unconscious bias in the areas of race, gender and age. Why those three? Sociologists would tell you in a heartbeat that those are the areas of our most intractable biases.

Note: Don't know/Don't Know is also the area of majoritarian ignorance or blindness. Whenever we are in the majority – on the basis of race, gender, ability, religion, language, sexual orientation etc. the experience of the minority is “off of our radar” so to speak. Our job is to find out what it's like to be a person with a difference at work or, put another way, to find out what difference a particular difference makes.

Summarize: So, the purpose of this class is to increase what we know (draw an arrow moving upward from Know), decrease what we don't know (draw an arrow moving downward into Don't Know), increase our capacity to ask questions about people's differences rather than making assumptions about them (cross out the word assumptions) – because it is our assumptions that get us in so much trouble. This class is also designed to make us more conscious of our culture and raise our biases – what we Don't Know we Don't Know – into our conscious minds where we can manage them. We will never get rid of our biases. The best that we can do is to acknowledge that we all have them and work to actively and consciously manage them.