



CORPORATE TRIBALISM

LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER (LGBT)
CULTURAL PATTERNS



DISCUSSION GROUP LEADER'S GUIDE

VERSION 0916



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LEADER'S DISCUSSION GUIDE PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this guide is to prepare leaders to facilitate group discussions that reinforce and build on the KMA "Corporate Tribalism" cultural diversity web-based training series.

Discussion group leaders help participants increase self-awareness and analyze workplace interactions with the goal of creating new strategies for effective communication. The discussion group objectives are:

- Identify cultural patterns of difference
- Acquire greater self-awareness of communication and cultural styles
- Determine specific strategies that enable multi-cultural flexibility
- Identify opportunities for change that will lead to greater employee satisfaction, development and retention.

KMA Approach

KMA brings more than 20 years of field-tested experience to their training. Understanding the importance of culture and the role it plays in everyday interactions is central to the KMA approach.

Leveraging extensive research, KMA leads organizations and individuals through a unique training process using multimedia, group facilitation and discussion.



“Corporate Tribalism”

The name Corporate Tribalism, given to KMA’s training programs and book, has its roots in cultural anthropology. It’s the essence of what makes KMA diversity training unique. We look at what individuals share culturally by virtue of being members of the same group or “tribe.” Tribal affiliations - social, ethnic, class, sexual orientation, gender identity and age - impact everything from the way we see the world and others, to how we see ourselves.

Corporations have traditionally been places where people are expected to conform and de-emphasize their unique characteristics - and yet, what we’ve learned and teach is that recognizing tribal and cultural differences is the key to unlocking our collective ability to create and excel.

New Ways of Thinking About Fairness

As we work to recognize and respect differences and create more inclusive organizations, we may encounter situations where rules, laws or policies have not been established or still need to “catch up” to meet our changing needs. Quite often rules say as much or more about what we can’t do as what we can do. When such is the case, a creative, flexible approach is often needed to create a win/win solution. In these situations, leaders and managers have a unique opportunity using their discretionary authority to lead this change and reframe what equity means.



TRAINING DESIGN

This leader's discussion guide is divided into four discussion content areas:

- Communication Styles
- Attitudes Toward Authority
- Understanding Behavior
- Transgender Employees

These content sections mirror the construction of the web-based training series and are used to examine specific cultural areas. In this guide we examine LGBT culture and identify challenges in the workplace that both LGBT individuals and non-LGBT individuals face.

Group discussion questions are posed after each video to elicit participant feedback. Discussion group leaders are encouraged to lead participants to a desired conclusion by posing questions and facilitating answers in a directed manner. Potential answers and leader's tips are provided throughout this guide to help support desired conclusions and ensure consistent training.

To ensure your discussion objectives, it's important that every participant completes the corresponding web-based training modules prior to the group discussion and finishes their participant worksheets and guides.

LEADER INSTRUCTIONS AND KEYS

Throughout this leader's guide, you will find grey callout boxes and icons. The following key explains what each icon represents:



To-do checklist for leaders



Ideas and suggestions for leading the learning session



Show video vignette



Discussion item or group activity



PREPARATION CHECKLIST

Prior to leading the discussion, make sure you:

- Distribute an e-mail reminder for attendees
- Review the web-based learning module and preview the DVD vignettes
- Check classroom A/V equipment and hang posters

Materials you should have to lead the discussion group:

- Vignette DVD and DVD player
- Participant Discussion workbooks
- Posters for class or meeting room

SAMPLE E-MAIL REMINDER:

Subject line: Corporate Tribalism Discussion Group

To: [Redacted]

Subject: Corporate Tribalism Discussion Group

Signature: None

Dear participant:

Please join me for an informal discussion on the "Corporate Tribalism" web-based training you recently completed. Our conversation will focus on Communication Styles of Hispanic/Latino (insert appropriate culture and content section) and U.S. Mainstream cultures.

Be sure to bring your web-based learning worksheet and questions or topics you want to discuss. We will meet (insert date/location/timing).

I look forward to sharing ideas and continuing the conversation.



EFFECTIVE WAYS TO BEGIN DISCUSSIONS



Begin the meeting with a quick round of introductions (participant names and work functions). After establishing the ground rules, asking ice breaker questions will allow participants to speak up and become comfortable offering their ideas in the group forum.

GROUND RULES - "SPILLING THE MILK"

To support the training's interactive design, participants must feel comfortable sharing ideas in a non-threatening environment. It's important to review a number of ground rules:

- The discussion group setting is a "safe place" for difficult conversations.
- Participants are present because they want to learn.
- Creating change requires speaking your mind, disagreeing and even making mistakes.
- Experiences and conversations remain in the group.
- Your organization values this change, and as a result, there are no career-threatening mistakes.



Keep in mind: Many people who are LGBT have been stigmatized and have experienced discrimination both socially and professionally because of their sexual orientation and gender identity. They require a very safe and accepting environment in which to share their experiences. Confidentiality should be emphasized and is imperative.



ICE BREAKERS

As you start discussions, ask participants to think back to the culture quiz they took during the introduction module of the web-based training series. Depending on the frequency with which your group meets, you may want to vary the suggested ice breaker questions. Below are specific LGBT questions. Participants may write their answers in their participant workbook and then share with the group.

- When did you learn about homosexuality?
- If anyone in your family or close circle of friends is LGBT, what do you know about their “path?” How were they received when they first “came out?”
- What do you find most difficult/challenging in terms of addressing this issue in the workplace?



Ice breaker note: Allow participants to share some of their personal views as you begin each meeting, but don't enlist a lengthy discussion at this point. Let participants know that the discussion is designed to review and further explore concepts and learning introduced in the web-based modules.

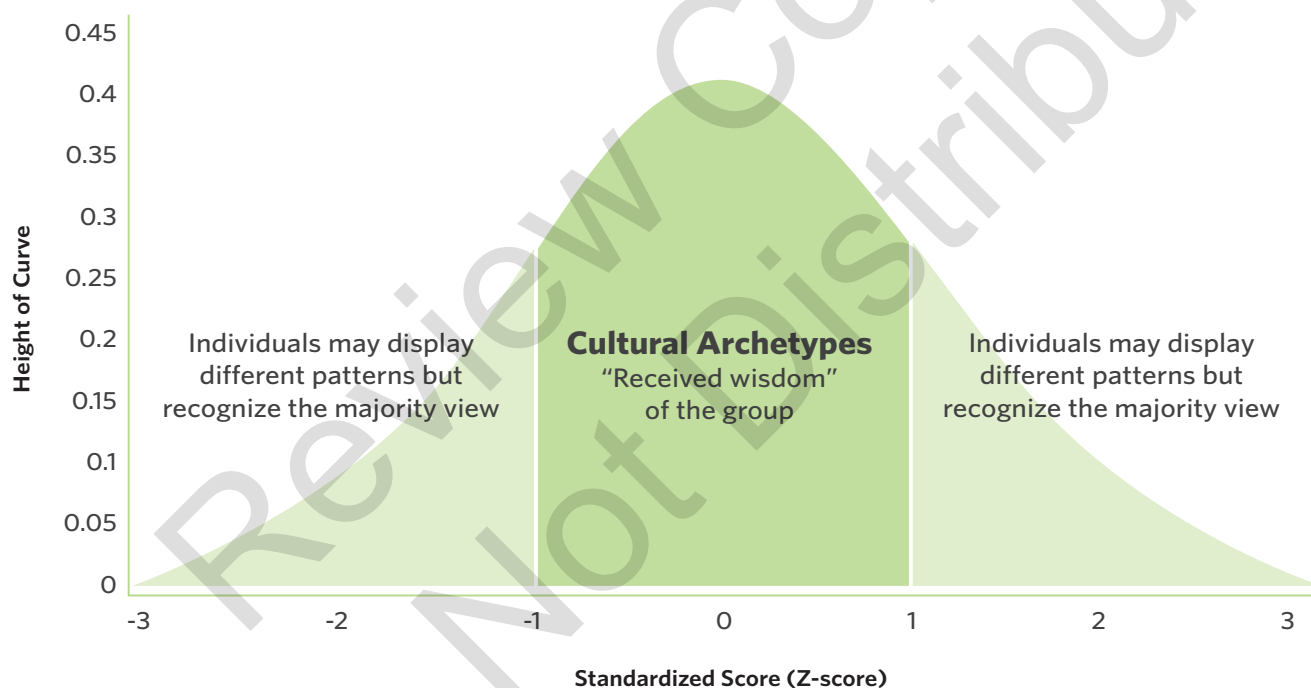
The ice breaker exercise transitions a discussion on addressing resistance. If needed, this should be done before discussing specific cultural archetypes.



ADDRESSING RESISTANCE

ISSUE: CULTURAL PATTERNS DON'T FIT MY EXPERIENCE

The primary issue of concern that many participants have with cultural patterns is when they don't fit their social or cultural experience as a member of that group.



Remind participants:

Archetypal patterns don't have to represent 100% of a group to be culturally representative of the group. However, even those group members who are not in the center of the bell curve - outliers - recognize that the pattern is true for many members of their group.



ISSUE: CULTURAL ARCHETYPING SEEMS LIKE A FORM OF STEREOTYPING

Conventional social etiquette makes many feel uncomfortable talking about group differences. Because generalizations are often associated with stereotypes, over time people have learned to avoid talking about differences.

Some may assert that differences don't exist or that people should be ashamed or defensive about differences (otherwise why would we be reluctant to discuss them?). If the result is that people don't acknowledge and discuss differences, it leads to numerous problems as illustrated in the web-based learning modules.

Remind participants:

Archetypes differ significantly from stereotypes.

ARCHETYPES	STEREOTYPES
Scientifically generated through the "ethnographic" process	Non-scientific observation
A shared value, pattern or attitude that insider's would accept as representative of a significant number of members of their group	An outsider's view of another group's behavior
A descriptive generalization that is applicable to many members of a group	An abusive generalization applied to all members of that group
Represent learned values, beliefs and assumptions	Often assumed to be innate characteristics
Goal: inclusion, right/left thinking; access individuals	Goal: exclusion, right/wrong thinking; assess individuals

- Archetypes are non-judgmental, research-based generalizations with the intent to include, not exclude
- Archetypes are representative of insiders' views
- Archetypes do not have to apply to all group members to be true for a majority
- Archetypes enable constructive discussions about group differences



ARCHETYPES AND LGBT CULTURE

Because archetypes are valuable in enabling discussions about group differences, we use archetypes throughout this discussion guide and other KMA cultural program materials. However, it's important to note that -similar to people with disabilities--individuals within LGBT culture, belong to other culture groups in addition to those based on sexual orientation and gender identity - for example race, ethnicity and age. These multiple group memberships, as noted in the module, together shape and frame what an individual experiences at work. In order to identify what makes a group like LGBT distinct or "different" we need to make comparisons.

We will compare and contrast LGBT culture with U.S. Mainstream culture. Some might question how these two groups align for effective comparisons. In this discussion, it's important to keep in mind that we characterize the U.S. Mainstream cultural group as having incorporated traits of white Anglo Saxon Protestant males that initially established and shaped the values and work style of Corporate America. Today, of course, U.S. mainstream culture also includes white ethnic males, white women, and members of other groups, who also have assimilated to the majority mainstream culture.

LGBT people by comparison represent a minority culture or cultural group within the U.S. workplace. For the sake of this discussion, we will look at LGBT culture as a separate cultural group. We'll compare archetypes of people who are LGBT as a group or co-culture to U.S. Mainstream individuals who are not LGBT to enable analysis, discussion and deeper cultural understanding.



COMMUNICATION STYLES

LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL AND TRANSGENDER (LGBT) PATTERNS





IMPORTANT TERMS TO UNDERSTAND

SEXUAL ORIENTATION:

Sexual orientation is defined as a person's natural romantic, emotional or physical attraction to a person from the same or different biological sex. Sexual orientation is not considered a choice. When the words, choice or preference, are used to refer to sexual orientation or gender identity, many people, who identify as LGBT, find it offensive.

GENDER IDENTITY:

A person's sense of self - whether male, female or a gender outside of the male/female binary - that doesn't always correspond to one's birth-assigned sex.

LGBT:

Acronym for co-cultures: lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender.

VARIATIONS ON THE LGBT ACRONYM:

Although the acronym, LGBT, is common you may also see the co- cultures listed in a different order, for example GLBT. In some instances the acronym will include "Q" for Queer or Questioning and "I" for Intersex. (see additional terms in glossary)

LESBIAN:

A woman attracted to other women.

GAY:

A man attracted to other men. The term gay can also be used as a collective reference for all homosexuals.



BISEXUAL:

A person attracted to both men and women.

TRANSGENDER:

A person whose gender identity doesn't conform to his or her birth-assigned sex. Transgender individuals may also identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or heterosexual.

HETEROSEXUAL OR STRAIGHT:

A person who is attracted to members of the opposite sex.



See a glossary of additional terms at the end of this guide. Take a moment to remind participants that language and references are ever-changing. The important thing is to recognize the power of language for inclusion, awareness and understanding.



LGBT SHARED VALUES

Although the LGBT community represents four distinct co-cultures with significant differences - they share important historical events, legal milestones and workplace challenges that create a collective perspective and shared values - recognized by many within the group.

These values include:

SAFETY:

Both professional and personal safety is a fundamental value. Many LGBT professionals fear disclosing their sexual orientation or gender identity at work will negatively impact career opportunities. Bullying is a significant safety issue.

ACCEPTANCE:

Moving beyond tolerance to active acceptance by everyone is important. Colleagues can play an important role by being allies. Taking a stance against anti-LGBT language and seeking out ways to engage and support LGBT co-workers is an essential value.

EQUITY:

To be treated on par with everyone else is critical, especially when looking at workplace policies and benefits. Workplace equity is especially evident in career advancement and leadership roles, as well as who is chosen to represent the company or organization to customers and clients.

COMMUNITY/CONNECTION

A supportive community or unique connection born out of shared challenges and discrimination is important for many lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.



ARCHETYPES

ARCHETYPES OF LGBT COMMUNICATION STYLES

INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

LGBT colleagues feel supported by the use of inclusive language, both spoken and written. Choosing inclusive words and thoughtfully framing questions, helps colleagues feel accepted and safe. In particular, work-related social events can create opportunities for inclusion - especially when inclusive language is used for invitations and announcements.

LEAD BY EXAMPLE

Leaders and managers have a unique responsibility to ensure the standards of an equitable and safe workplace. Using inclusive language creates a “trickle-down” effect resulting in positive impact throughout an organization.

AVOID ASSUMPTIONS

Because LGBT employees can be an “invisible” part of a workforce, it’s important for colleagues to avoid making assumptions with regard to sexual orientation or gender identity.

SPEAK OUT AGAINST ANTI-LGBT JOKES AND REMARKS

Too often anti-LGBT jokes or remarks are dismissed as harmless or funny. It’s important to recognize them as harassment that can lead to feelings of isolation and anxiety.



ARCHETYPES OF U.S. MAINSTREAM COMMUNICATION STYLES

AVOIDING CONFLICT

U.S. Mainstream culture avoids risk and conflict, especially around “hot topics.” For some mainstream individuals, supporting or promoting LGBT culture is controversial. Doing so publicly may also feel confrontational and risky.

RULE-ORIENTED

U.S. Mainstream work culture relies upon rule-based systems to provide direction and guidance. However, problems occur when existing policies or practices prove to be inadequate for the situation or issue at hand. These situations can create risk or produce unequal outcomes, especially when new policies are not yet in place. This is often the case in dealing with LGBT workplace situations. Managers especially, and other co-workers can feel uncertain and in a quandary on how to act.

CONCEPT OF FAMILY

In mainstream culture, personal life and work life are separate. Personal issues are often seen as an intrusion on work and should be minimized. Non-traditional family structures may not be acknowledged at work because colleagues are unaware or they may be seen as a personal issue not to be shared at work, especially if they are viewed as unconventional.



After reviewing the communication points, play the LGBT Communication Styles vignette: “Planning the Company Picnic.” Ask participants to keep the archetypes in mind as they watch the video.



COMMUNICATION STYLES VIGNETTE

"Planning the Company Picnic"

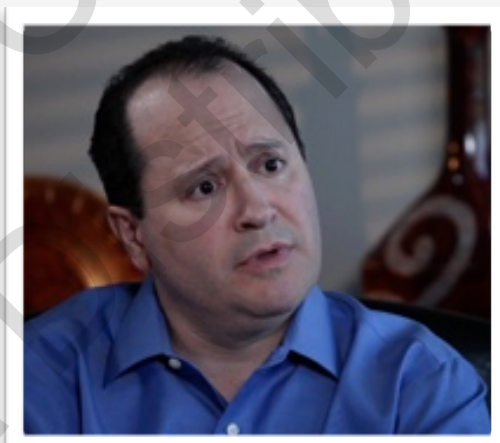
Chloe: I got the park district reservation confirming the picnic on the 15th. I think we should send out an e-mail letting everyone know the date and a few details before the end of this week. What do you think?

Carl: Sounds good. I think I saved the one we used from last year with the clipart – will you use the same one?

Chloe: Basically, but I was kind of thinking about changing the wording a little bit. I think maybe we should mention bringing partners instead of spouses this year.

Carl: Partners? That sounds kind of weird – this has always been a casual, family thing. Is this about the new hire, Mike?

Chloe: Well, yeah. I know he's mentioned his partner to a few people in the department and I don't know if he'll bring him to the picnic – but I think using the word spouse might send the wrong message.





Carl: Do you really think he'll bring his boyfriend? Don't you think that will be kind of weird for some of the families and their kids? I mean what if the kids start asking questions?



Chloe: I doubt the kids will even notice. I think it's important - as a new employee - that he feels welcomed and if he wants to bring his partner - he should.

Carl: Hmm. I hope you're right, 'cause I'm not so sure. You seem like you know a lot about this - can you answer something I can't figure out?

Chloe: I'll try.

Carl: Just the other day I had to use the acronym for gays, lesbians, bisexuals, trans - something - what is it GBT or LGTB - I can never keep it straight and it seems like it's different every time. What's the right way and does it matter?

Chloe: LGBT is probably most commonly used right now. But you're right, I've seen GLBT too. I don't think the order is a big deal -



GROUP DISCUSSION



Discussion management points:

- *The first set of analysis questions are designed to reinforce key information. Be quick to address and correct any misconceptions or inaccuracies that may undermine the learning of the group at large.*
- *If necessary, remind participants that patterns/archetypes are based on research and are not stereotypes.*
- *If necessary, remind participants that patterns do not have to apply to everyone within a group to be representative of the group.*

OPENING POINT

To better understand what is going on in this scenario from a cultural perspective, we need to look at each person and examine how they are acting, what they are saying and why.



LET'S BEGIN BY EXAMINING THE SCENE FROM CARL'S PERSPECTIVE (Possible participant answers in italics)

Why is Carl reluctant to change the invitation wording to "partner" to better include the new employee, Mike?

- *Carl is worried about the possible negative reactions of others if Mike brings his partner to the family picnic.*
- *Carl may feel at risk in that he may be held accountable for creating a situation that he is personally uncomfortable with - Mike bringing his partner to the picnic.*

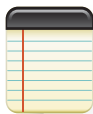
What other ways does Carl demonstrate he is uncomfortable with using LGBT language?

- *Carl admits to Chloe his struggle with not knowing the "correct" terms or acronyms.*
- *He may feel frustrated by the ambiguity of the language or distrustful of using phrases that seem to change frequently, especially if he feels responsible for accuracy.*

NOW LET'S LOOK AT THE SCENE FROM CHLOE'S PERSPECTIVE (Possible participant answers in italics)

What is Chloe's motivation for changing the invitation's wording to include partner?

- *Chloe recognizes the importance of language in creating a more inclusive and welcoming event for her organization and her gay colleague, in particular.*
- *She sees this as a simple effort to make a new colleague feel welcome.*



Next, invite participants to work through some better solutions using their multicultural knowledge and shared responsibility awareness.



REWORKING THE SCENE WITH MULTICULTURAL AWARENESS

Given a better understanding of LGBT and U.S. Mainstream cultural patterns, what are some additional solutions that might impact the situation?

CARL

Carl should examine his assumptions with regard to his colleagues and learn more about LGBT culture - perhaps leading to greater awareness and personal comfort level.

CHLOE

In addition to using inclusive language in her communications, Chloe could work on leveraging this experience toward a consistent, organization-wide use of inclusive language. She also could consult self-identified LGBT employees about potential areas to further improve communications.



STUMBLING BLOCKS

Even when we know what's required, we can still find it difficult to do.

Consider the possibility for Carl to change his attitudes toward including Mike and his partner. Are there other factors that may be getting in the way?

Sometimes straight employees cite personal values or religious reasons for why they cannot or will not accept their lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender colleagues' sexual orientation or gender identity. It is imperative that leaders within organizations explain that creating an equal and inclusive workplace with zero-tolerance for discrimination and harassment is important company policy. Upholding non-discrimination policies and behavioral guidelines is not the same as requiring employees to share personal beliefs or thoughts.



Next, lead the group through open-ended questions. This is an opportunity to further explore the communications patterns and apply them to current situations in the workplace.



DEEPENING THE DIALOGUE

Now, imagine the company picnic has taken place with Mike and his partner in attendance. How should Carl or any other mainstream colleague handle a co-worker's complaint or discomfort at the inclusion of Mike and his partner at the event? What should happen if a co-worker confronted Mike directly?

If a co-worker complained to Carl or another colleague about Mike and his partner's attendance at the event, that individual should reiterate company policy to the extent he or she feels comfortable. He or she could also offer a personal comment like, "They have just as much right to be here as you do - we all work for this company."

Whether a harassing comment is made to Mike directly, overheard by a colleague or made to another colleague, a manager should be notified, a complaint filed and the appropriate disciplinary actions taken with the offending employee.

Keep in mind that joking comments whether made in a group or overheard by a third party are damaging and need to be addressed seriously.



BUILDING SOLUTIONS

GROUP FEEDBACK QUESTIONS:

Take a quick pulse:

- How many of you have noticed inclusive language use in your organization?
- Have you ever brought attention to a communication piece that wasn't inclusive or could be more inclusive?

Call on individuals or address the group with these questions:

- How have you seen others lead by example with regard to inclusiveness (the example doesn't have to relate to LGBT specifically)? Explain the scenario and what happened as a result.
- Think of a time when you were a part of a group of colleagues casually sharing personal information, like weekend plans. What are some ways to avoid assumptions and keep a conversation inclusive?
- Recall a time when you have been told or overheard an offensive joke about lesbians, gays, bisexuals or transgender people. What happened? Are there risks in speaking up? If so, what are they? What might you do differently given the information provided in this lesson?
- How do you define family? Does it include immediate or extended family? Does it include a wider group - members who are not related? Has your definition of family changed over time? If so, why?