

Diversity in the Workplace: Maintaining an Inclusive Environment



Elizabeth Harles, LPCA

Elizabeth Harles is a Licensed Professional Counselor Associate in Raleigh, NC. She earned a Master's degree in School Counseling from Hunter College and holds a Bachelor's of Science degree in Cultural Anthropology.

Elizabeth is currently an EAP Counselor as well as a Youth Program Leader for the LGBT Center of Raleigh. Elizabeth is engaged in activism for social justice and civil rights.



Learning Objectives

- Recognize the importance and value of a diverse workplace
- Discuss strategies for creating and maintaining an inclusive environment, including sensitivity to issues of diversity
- Provide tips for communicating appropriately in a diverse work environment

Survey

Which of the following do you feel is the biggest need in the workplace?

- A. A greater awareness of the value of diversity
- B. More respect for coworker differences
- C. Training on aspects of diversity
- D. Programs to promote diversity and inclusion

Some Common Questions

Isn't the human resources (HR) department responsible for diversity in the workplace?

The responsibility for dealing with diversity issues belongs to every employee in the company. However, your HR department has official duties regarding diversity and can provide advice or guidance if you have questions.

Diversity is just about race and gender, right?

Race and gender are just two facets of diversity. Ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, religion, and disability also enter into the equation.

Some Common Questions

Diversity seems like whining. Why should I bother with it?

There are at least three good reasons why you might want to consider diversity in your organization:

- 1.To adapt to and anticipate the changing applicant pool
- 2.To recruit and retain a broader range of talent
- 3.To use your diverse workforce as a marketing tool to reach multicultural consumers

Diversity is...

- “Differing from one another”
- Differences based on:
 - Race
 - Ethnicity
 - Religion
 - Age
 - Sex
 - Gender
 - Sexual orientation
 - Physical abilities



Why Diversity in Business?

- Mirror the public and customers served
- Greater innovation
- Competitive labor market
- More diverse demographics in America

And, it's the law...

U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission

www.eeoc.gov



Benefits of Diversity in the Workplace

Companies with...

Gender diversity are **15%** more likely

Ethnic diversity are **35%** more likely

...to outperform other companies that aren't gender or ethnically diverse

Commit to Diversity

- Take actions to create an environment that values individual differences
- Solicit feedback from employees on what is working and on which areas need improvement
- Devote time, resources, and energy to inclusion initiatives
- Promote diversity by being good role models



Inclusiveness



What are specific ways you can promote inclusiveness in your workplace?

Quote

“Not everyone thinks the way you think, knows the things you know, believes the things you believe, nor acts the way you would act. Remember this and you will go a long way in getting along with people.”

Arthur Forman



Inclusive Workplaces Involve...

RESPECT



Inclusive Workplaces Involve...


- Recognize the inherent worth of your coworkers
- Eliminate derogatory words and phrases
- Speak with people – not at them – or about them
- Practice empathy - put yourself in others' situations
- Earn the respect of colleagues and coworkers through your behaviors
- Consider your impact on others before speaking and acting
- Treat everyone with dignity and courtesy

Adapted from *Start Right... Stay Right* by Steve Ventura

Building Relationships Through Listening

**MOST PEOPLE DO
NOT LISTEN WITH
THE INTENT TO
UNDERSTAND; THEY
LISTEN WITH THE
INTENT TO REPLY.**

- STEPHEN R. COVEY -

 SYMPHONY OF LOVE
PHOTO BY BEN GREY



Principles for Communicating

- Remain calm and open, and seek to establish rapport with others.
- Be mindful about the words you use – others may find something offensive.
- Accept that there are differences of perspective.
- Even when you disagree, acknowledge other's views.

Source: National Food Service Management Institute (2003)

Avoid Making Assumptions

Assumptions
can be
fueled by:

- **Prejudice:** a perceived opinion that is not based on reason or actual experience
- **Stereotype:** a widely held but fixed and oversimplified idea of a particular type of person
- **Explicit Bias:** when individuals are aware of their prejudices and attitudes toward certain groups; positive or negative preferences for a certain group are *conscious*
- **Implicit Bias:** *subconscious* feelings, perceptions, attitudes, and stereotypes that have developed as a result of prior influences and imprints (past experiences, media, and messages from others)

Microaggressions

- What are they?
 - Verbal and nonverbal slights, snubs, or insults
 - Intentional or unintentional
 - Have a profound impact on those being slighted
- What can we do instead? Practice microaffirmations!
 - Small acknowledgements of other's accomplishments
 - Gestures of caring
 - Listening
 - Being generous



Strategy for Dealing With Our Biases



Source: University of Wisconsin-Madison (n.d.).

Personal Reflection

Take a moment and think of 1 conscious bias you may have.



Now, take a moment and think of what you can replace that with.

In Conclusion

- There are many benefits to having a diverse workplace.
- Inclusion includes greater awareness of our own biases.
- We can each take steps today to demonstrate greater respect for our colleagues!



For More Assistance...

Contact your Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Thank You

Questions?

Works Cited

- National Food Service Management Institute. (2003). *Valuing differences in the workplace*. Retrieved November 28, 2017 from <http://nfsmi-web01.nfsmi.olemiss.edu/documentlibraryfiles/PDF/20080213084508.pdf>
- Office of Personnel Management. (2000, June 25). *Building and maintaining a diverse and high quality workforce*. Retrieved November 28, 2017 from <http://www.opm.gov/diversity/diversity-3.htm>
- Parsi, N. (2017, January 16). *Workplace diversity and inclusion gets innovative*. Retrieved November 27, 2017 from <https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/news/hr-magazine/0217/pages/disrupting-diversity-in-the-workplace.aspx>
- Thakrar, M. (2017, June 9). *How to lead the push for diversity in the workplace*. Retrieved November 27, 2017 from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescoachescouncil/2017/06/09/how-to-lead-the-push-for-diversity-in-the-workplace/>
- Thinkexist.com. (n.d.) *Arthur Forman quotes*. Retrieved November 29, 2017 from http://thinkexist.com/quotes/arthur_forman/
- University of Wisconsin-Madison. (n.d.). *Creating inclusion and overcoming bias*. Retrieved November 28, 2017 from <https://campusclimate.wisc.edu/creating-inclusion-and-overcoming-bias/>

Works Cited

Ventura, S. (2004). Start RIGHT...Stay RIGHT.

Walsh, K. (2015, October 6). *7 ways to promote diversity in the workplace*. Retrieved November 27, 2017 from <http://www.bentley.edu/prepared/7-ways-promote-diversity-workplace>

Workplace Options. (Reviewed 2017). *Celebrating diversity at work: Some common questions*. Raleigh, NC: Author.