The Value of Valuing Differences in the Workplace

Objectives

At the completion of this module, participants will be able to:

- Gain a broader knowledge base about the dynamics of culture in the US and its influence on the workplace.

- Identify skills that open lines of communication while fostering understanding of others.

- Develop and write personal strategies (and tools) to increase knowledge about different cultures.
The Value of Valuing Differences in the Workplace

Definitions

*Culture*- modes of speaking, believing, relating, and behaving that arise from people’s need to understand and relate to the world(s) around them.

*Diversity*- wide condition of differences that exist between and among people and organizations.

*Hegemony*- inability to perceive anyone else’s identity as valid except one’s own.
The Value of Valuing Differences in the Workplace

Definitions

*Dimensions of diversity*- three distinct segments of cultural diversity that help us understand and value each other: physical, environmental, and psychological/emotional.

*Cultural conditioning*- the degree to which our behavior is controlled by automatic, even unconscious, reflexive reactions to differences in people that stem from our life experiences, ideas, and exposure to others.
The Value of Valuing Differences in the Workplace

Personal Check-In

*Diversity*- a simple definition is *variety*. Think of everyone in your department. Is everyone the same? Do you all have the same background and share the same conclusions?

*Culture*- a simple definition is your *background* and *customs*. Our culture is around us every day with our modes of speaking, believing, relating, and behavior toward others.

1. Is diversity a problem?  Yes  No
2. Is diversity just about minorities and women?  Yes  No
3. Is diversity just about race and gender?  Yes  No
4. Working with people from different backgrounds can be rewarding.  Yes  No
5. Am I open to people from other cultures? Do I try to understand how they differ from my own culture?  Yes  No
The Value of Valuing Differences in the Workplace

Icebreaker: Name That Tune

The Star-Spangled Banner
Jingle Bells
Happy Birthday to You
YMCA
Old MacDonald Had a Farm
She’ll Be Coming ’Round the Mountain When She Comes
We Shall Overcome
Three Blind Mice
The Value of Valuing Differences in the Workplace

Interview Introductions

Pair off with one person at your table you do not know well and don’t work with every day. Interview that person for 2 ½ minutes writing down your partner’s answers to these items. After 2 ½ minutes, flip flop and allow yourself to be interviewed by your partner. Think of a creative way to introduce your partner to the entire group when the facilitator calls “time!”

1. My full name is __________________, and my place of birth is ____________________.
2. My job title is ________________, and I work at ________________________________.
3. One reason that I chose this field is ________________________________________.
4. My greatest hope for this training is ___________________________ ________________________.
5. One thing I enjoy about working in Child Nutrition is____________________________.
6. Training is useful to me when _____________ exists between participants.
7. If I had $50,000 extra and six months off with pay, I would__________________________.
The Value of Valuing Differences in the Workplace

Communication Across Cultures Ground Rules

Define the following in your own words:

- **Stereotype:**
  
  An idea about someone or a group without regard for individual differences.

- **Prejudice:**
  
  A feeling, making a decision about a person or group without sufficient knowledge.

- **Discrimination:**
  
  An action behavior that can follow prejudicial thinking. Discrimination is the denial of fair treatment in many areas.
Communication Across Cultures Ground Rules

When discussing such sensitive issues as age, racism, sexism, sexual orientation, and disabilities, some people can become emotionally charged and very uncomfortable. When discussing such issues:

- Try to remain calm and open.

- Work to identify the issues or emotions in the beginning.

- Try to establish rapport.

- Acknowledge people’s views even when you cannot agree with them. This will send the signal that you respect them as individuals and will help keep the lines of communication open.
Communication Across Cultures Ground Rules

- Be careful with the words you use. Many of the words and expressions we use without thinking can be “hot buttons,” causing rage, suspicion, or hurt feelings.

- One of the reasons parents from different cultural, economic, and religious backgrounds are not involved in their children’s schools is that they feel there is a lack of understanding about their culture by others. This causes feelings of inferiority, hurt, or anger.

- For today, there are no right or wrong answers, just differences in perspectives.
The Value of Valuing Differences in the Workplace

Defining and Understanding Cultures in the US

Brainstorm the following items:

- Define or describe “culture.” What comes to mind when you hear the word “culture?”

- Define or describe “diversity.”
Building a Framework for Diversity

- Awareness of your own culture and that of others.

- Knowledge of the habits, customs, and day-to-day realities of other cultures.

- Skills we can use comfortably in communicating, in planning, and in managing.
The Value of Valuing Differences in the Workplace

Diversity’s Three Dimensions

- **Primary**- Biological
- **Secondary**- Environmental
- **Tertiary**- Personality and Style
The Value of Valuing Differences in the Workplace

Cultural Knowledge Test

T  F  Laughter is a universal symbol of humor.

T  F  Time controls most Latin cultures as it does in the US.

T  F  For most Native Americans, when a child is being reprimanded by an adult, eye contact with the adult is a sign of honesty and respect.

T  F  Since European Americans and African Americans grew up in the same society, they share similar values, beliefs, and behaviors.

T  F  It shows that you respect other cultures when you use words and phrases in their language or dialect.
The Value of Valuing Differences in the Workplace

Checking Out: Think, Pair, and Share

1) Based on your experiences, what are the top three challenges as they relate to diversity
   a) In the city or town where you live?
   b) Within your department?
   c) At your school in general?

2) What action steps can Child Nutrition take to address concerns and issues of diverse groups in the workplace and to build more productive working relationships?

3) What action steps will you take as an employee and recommend to your peers to better address issues related to diversity in the workplace and in customer relations?
The Value of Valuing Differences in the Workplace

African Ancestry
The Value of Valuing Differences in the Workplace

European Ancestry
The Value of Valuing Differences in the Workplace

Physical Characteristics
(Height, Weight, Etc.)
The Value of Valuing Differences in the Workplace

Age
The Value of Valuing Differences in the Workplace

Asian Ancestry
The Value of Valuing Differences in the Workplace

Physically Challenged
Religious/Spiritual
The Value of Valuing Differences in the Workplace

Sexual Orientation
(Heterosexual, Bisexual, Gay, Lesbian)
The Value of Valuing Differences in the Workplace

Male
The Value of Valuing Differences in the Workplace

Female
The Value of Valuing Differences in the Workplace

Native American Ancestry
The Value of Valuing Differences in the Workplace

Hispanic Ancestry