

10 COMPONENTS OF EFFECTIVE CULTURAL COMPETENCY TRAINING

I. Key Components to Incorporate Into Your Overall Training Framework

1 – Incorporate the Wheel of Change (WOC) framework. The WOC argues that effective and durable change/transformation work in any organization has three components: *a) Behaviors* – the day-to-day practices/behaviors of individual employees; *b) Systems and Structures* – the policies and procedures of an organization that either help and/or hinder employees in the practice of new skills/behaviors and; *c) Hearts and Minds* – the hopes, fears, anxieties and aspirations that either help or hinder the practice of new skills/behaviors. Effective Cultural Competency training must address ALL three components of the WOC. For more on WOC, visit the Social Transformation Project at stprproject.org.

2 – Create an Audience Centered Experience (ACE) for your training sessions. The ACE approach gives participants the opportunity to contribute to the meaning-making process, engage with each other, and explore the current social context of the topic. The trainer maintains subject matter expertise. But employs the skills of a facilitator to bring other voices/perspectives into the training space.

3 – Increase understanding and awareness with respect to implicit bias. Visit the website of Project Implicit by going to www.implicit.harvard.edu. Click on “Take A Test.”

4 – Understanding the Culture and History of Particular Groups in 8 Areas

- **Overall demographics** – population in the region; where they’re concentrated; migration/immigration patterns; other

- **Language** – primary language spoken; and history with language
- **Faith** – what dates and practices are sacred to the group?
- **Food** – what items do you serve/not serve?; relationship with food (i.e., way of “breaking bread” with others)
- **Family** – role and gender dynamics; notions of extended family; concept of brother, sister, cousin may not be biological
- **Proximity and physical touch** – know what’s appropriate and not (i.e., notions of invading personal space; is it appropriate to shake hands?);
- **Politics** – (i.e., relationship with government institutions; is government viewed as a helper?; or an entity to be feared?;
- **Prevailing negative stereotypes (to avoid)** – (i.e., recent incident with Madonna and watermelon)

II. **Key Behaviors/Skills You Want Every Employee to Habitually Practice As a Result of the Training**

5 – Practice Individuating – Learn detailed information about people who are different; or you perceive them to be; engage in regular, in-person one-on-one meetings as a way to do this; use the handout on individuation as a resource.

6 – Practice Perspective Taking. Identify and practice creative ways to ‘walk in the shoes’ – metaphorically speaking – of people who are different than you or you perceive them to be different; understand the historical background of particular groups by visiting museums, watching documentaries, reading books, practicing intergroup contact.

7 – Practice Counter-Stereotypic Imaging. Use photos, images, symbols, movies and TV shows to counter negative stereotypes about marginalized groups AND also create identify safety.

8– Improve how you make decisions:

- **“blinding” yourself** so that you make decisions based on relevant information; avoid being swayed by non-relevant demographic information.
- **Using “checklists”** to slow down decision-making and encourage more deliberation.
- **Using objective criteria** (versus subjective or ambiguous) to make decisions.

9 – Ask More Questions. Listen More. Talk Less. Four examples:

- *How’s your day going so far?* [allows you to enter the conversation from the person’s experience]
- *I’m wondering if _____.* [if in doubt, simply ask]
- *I would like to better understand _____.* [supports understanding versus agreement; conversation versus conversion]
- *Please say more about _____.* [demonstrates deep listening; supports understanding versus agreement].

10 – Build Rapport Through Effective Communication

- Body Language (posture, positioning, eye contact, smiling)
- Tone (some people/groups talk in a high volume and a lot of passion; doesn’t necessarily mean they’re angry)
- Deep listening – reflect back to person; *“What I think I’m hearing is ...”*

- Use of humor and laughter – reduces stress; lubricates the mind and makes people more open to receiving new people and ideas.