

# Communicating Diversity and Inclusiveness

## Agenda

1. Circle Introductions
2. Participant Introductions
3. Activity 1: Similarities and Differences
4. Barriers and Builders to Communication
5. What is Diversity and Inclusion
6. Diversity Discussion
7. Inclusion Discussion
8. Activity 2: Empowerment
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# Communicating Diversity and Inclusiveness

## Circle Introduction

### Purpose of Circle

A way of creating a space where:

- Everyone is respected
- Everyone gets a chance to talk without interruption
- Participants explain themselves by telling their stories
- Everyone is equal - no person is more important than everyone else
- Spiritual and emotional aspects of individual experience are welcomed

Circles are useful when two or more people:

- Need to make decisions together
- Have a disagreement
- Need to address an experience that resulted in harm to someone
- Want to work together as a team
- Wish to celebrate
- Wish to share difficulties
- Want to learn from each other

Talking piece - What is it?

### Values:

1. Speak from the heart
  - When you have the talking piece speak not only with your head and your ideas, but with your feelings as well. Tell your own story as honestly as you trust in the moment. When you speak consider: What would serve me? What would serve this circle? What would serve everyone?
2. Listen from the heart
  - When another person has the talking piece listen without judgment, listen with an open mind, even if you disagree with what the person is saying. Listen not just with your mind, but with your heart
3. Speak Spontaneously
  - Invite you to wait until the talking piece comes to you before we decide what we want to say. There are good reasons for this. First, if you are thinking about what you are going to say, then you are not listening completely to the person who is speaking. Second, when you don't pre-plan what you are going to say, you will often be surprised by what comes to you when it is your turn.
4. Speak Leanly
  - When you speak, keep in mind that others would like a chance to speak, and that there is only so much time. Use only words necessary to get your point or story across. Please remember, no one is required to speak.

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### Introductions

Who are you?

What do you hope to get out of today's conversation?

### Activity 1: Similarities and Differences (30 Mins)

In small groups find 3 similarities and 1 difference amongst the people in your group.

#### Review questions:

Which were more difficult to find - differences or similarities? What did you find out about your group members?

Why do you think it is important to note similarities as well as differences?

How does being comfortable with discussing difference and similarities help with problem-solving and conflict resolution?

### Barriers and Builders to Communication:

**Barrier:** Behaviors that undermine self-confidence and block trust from forming in relationships; each barrier behavior reduces the capacity of a relationship to support, affirm, and encourage the other party. The attitudes inherent are negative and disrespectful. Recognizing them and refraining from using them will significantly improve relationships.

**Builder:** Behaviors that constantly affirm and validate people and our belief in their capabilities. The attitudes inherent are positive and respectful. Using them brings about even more dramatic improvement in relationships.

**Barrier # 1, Assuming:** Borne out of expediency; we often assume we know what other people think and feel without asking them. Helen Keller's family (before her teacher) is a dramatic example of "assuming". By assuming, we say, "What you were yesterday is all I will expect you to be today"

**Builder # 1, Checking:** Conveys respect for the person's capabilities to make decisions; "How can I use this situation to check out what this person knows, sees, is ready to learn, or can do?"

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**Barrier # 2, Rescuing or Explaining:** Effective and respectful communicators are not those that explain everything to others who may not know something, but try and help others discover meaning for themselves. Those who rescue/explain too quickly are called enablers because they rescue people from their inadequacies and thus enable them to remain vulnerable and dependent.

**Builder # 2, Exploring:** “I’m just wondering, what is your understanding of what was happening?” “What do you think might have caused that to happen?” “Having had that experience, what could we learn from it that might help us next time?” What things might be beneficial for you...?)

**Barrier # 3, Directing:** The more directive a person is in their communication, the more resentful and resistant the recipient might become. When we are quick to step in and direct, we create hostility, aggression and resistance. Two questions to ask yourself when you are tempted to direct another human being:

1. “Will the world come to a screeching halt if I don’t handle every detail of this transaction my way?” If the answer is “yes” then of course we should step in and handle it. However, directing should be our last response, chosen after careful consideration, not our first knee-jerk reaction. If the answer is “no”, then we can ask the second question.
2. “Will this person ever have to work on their own, without my assistance?” If the answer is “yes”, then we should simply avoid directing so that the person can learn to make plans of their own and deal with the possible consequences”

**Builder # 3, Encouraging/Inviting:** Whenever people are invited or encouraged to contribute, they are generally willing, cooperative, and responsive. An attitude of acceptance of mistakes is especially helpful: “What do we need to do in order to...” “I appreciate any help you can give toward...” “What are your ideas for solving...?”

**Barrier # 4, Expecting:** We need to have high expectations, but when we point out someone else’s failures to reach the standard, this is discouraging and destructive, as, “I expected you be the kind of member I am”

**Builder # 4, Celebrating:** “I think that there are some things that you do really well” Leave out the “but”, in the “You did a nice job, but...” The “but” will devalue the compliment and increase the receiver’s sensitivity to criticism. Too often we notice what is not happening and overlook what is happening that is good.

**Barrier # 5, Discounting:** Avoids acknowledging and dealing with negative emotions or comments by reducing the importance or impact of the events associated to the emotions. This is done by actively avoiding the impact of our behavior on others or avoiding the impact of others behaviors on us. Such words used with this minimization, it is “no big deal”, “just a small thing: etc.

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**Builder # 5, Respect:** Instead of judging people for what they don't see, we need to encourage them to seek understanding of themselves and others. The language of respect is, "What was your understanding of...?" "Let me be sure I understand..." "Under what circumstances would..." When we ask such questions, we show respect for uniqueness of each individual's perception and the diversity of the human race.

### What is Diversity and Inclusion?

Diversity: is any dimension that can be used to differentiate groups and people from one another. E.g.: culture, gender, age, physical/mental ability, sexual orientation, education, and religion.

Inclusion: is a state of being valued, respected and supported.

Diversity is the mix; inclusion is getting the mix to work well together.

Questions about Diversity:

What benefits does diversity bring to your communities?

What are the challenges of diversity in your community?

How has your community engaged people of diverse backgrounds?

### **Cultivating Diversity** (Diversity in Action, Province of Ontario, 2007)

1. Awareness - often we may not be aware of our own culture, we simply act and think in certain ways. It is only when we have something to compare our culture too that we realize there are different ways of doing things
2. Understanding - Gaps in cultural understanding can be bridged, but it takes commitment and effort based on respect. We are each grounded in our own cultural history, which has provided us with norms for right and wrong, rules for behaviour and lenses through which we see the world.
3. Competence - Achieving the goal of a welcoming environment in which to live is about acquiring knowledge, developing a new outlook and then acting upon it. The process

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begins with self-reflection which leads to heightened awareness at both individual and organizational levels.

### Building Inclusiveness

Empowerment: is the restoration to individuals of a sense of their value and strength and their own capacity to make decisions and handle life's problems (sometimes called a shift from weakness to strength).

Recognition: is the evocation in individuals of acknowledgment, understanding, or empathy for the situation and the views of the other (sometimes called a shift from self-absorption to responding to the other).

### Activity 2: Promoting and Experiencing Empowerment

Work in pairs, a speaker and a listener. The speakers will think of a situation in which they are unclear or uncertain about what to do. The goal of the listeners is to ask questions in order to help the speakers gain clarity about the situation without being directive. After 10 minutes, switch roles.

Remember how you felt both as a speaker and a listener.

### Creating a more inclusive Co-op: (Diversity in Action, Province of Ontario, 2007)

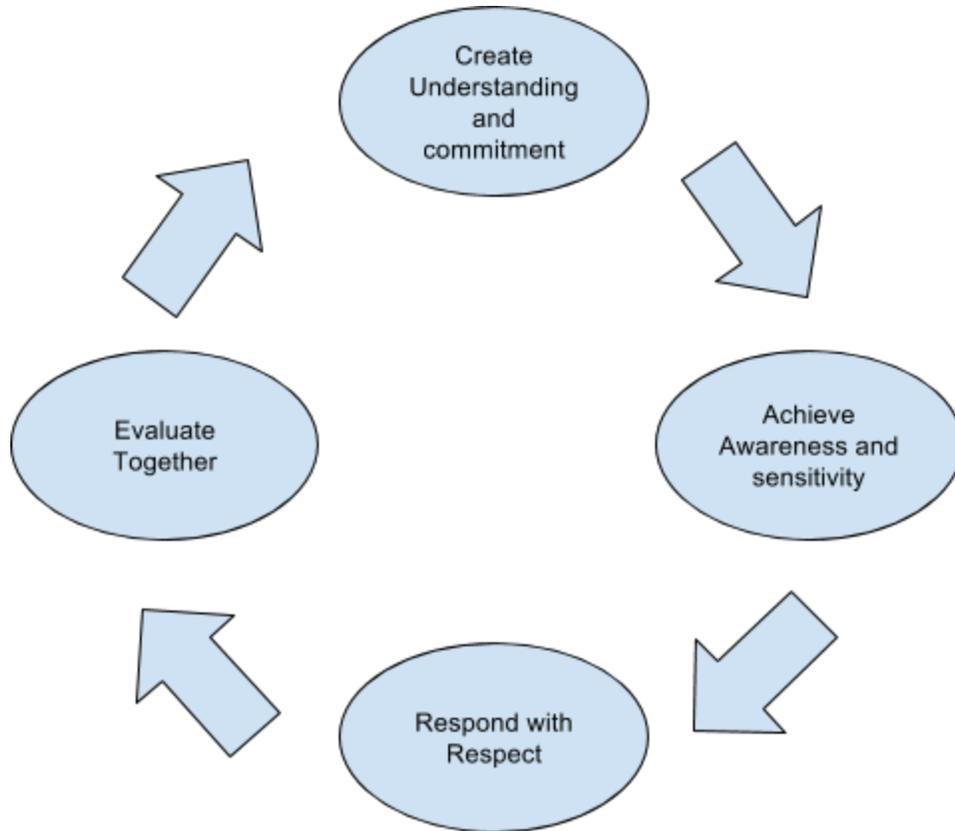
Creating understanding and commitment - awareness of the need for change, knowledge of what needs to be done and the will to change

Achieving awareness and sensitivity - develop practices and implement policies that promote diversity and inclusiveness

Responding with respect - integration of new practices and the manner in which those practices are applied

Evaluate Together - review and follow-up on the results, using feedback to alter the plan if required

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### Curious vs Right

#### Curious

Learn more  
Ask questions  
Take a risk  
Listen  
Open  
Get Information  
Show you care  
Let go of outcome  
Feeling  
Focused on others  
Understand their issues

#### Right

I'm better  
Someone is wrong  
Defensive  
Controlled  
Closed  
Righteous  
Power  
Focus on outcome  
Facts  
Egocentric  
Explain why they are wrong

### Curious Response

Are you saying \_\_\_\_\_?

Tell me more

What is it about that that upset/angered/hurt you?