



ORGANIZATIONAL GROWTH, INC

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STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE DIVERSITY AND ACHIEVE

CROSS-CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING

Developed by Anita Foeman, Ph.D. and Nate Terrell, LCSW

- 1) Replace “color blindness” and/or stereotypes with a “cultural lens” which enables one to view members of other groups both within the context of their culture and as unique individuals.
- 2) Understand stylistic and cultural differences among staff members.
- 3) Celebrate diversity and develop sensitivity to the experiences, perceptions, frustrations, etc. of members of other cultural/racial groups.
- 4) Eliminate prejudices, cultural privilege, stereotypes and cultural naiveté through rigorous and ongoing self-examination, cross-cultural exposure and openness to new perspectives.
- 5) Recognize the impact of language on cross-cultural relationships and demonstrate cultural sensitivity through your choice of words.
- 6) Acknowledge past and current racial inequities.
- 7) Overcome fears which prevent honest cross-cultural engagement (such as the fear of “saying the wrong thing” or being perceived as overly angry, sensitive, etc.).
- 8) Dialogue about challenging cross-cultural issues by asking open-ended questions, listening attentively (without jumping to conclusions) and honestly discussing your perspectives, hopes, fears, etc.
- 9) Speak calmly and rationally (remember that it is possible to have an intense discussion without either party becoming upset, angry, etc. and that you lose credibility by overstating your perspective).
- 10) Understand the complexity of cross-cultural issues and develop the ability to see “shades of gray.”
- 11) Acknowledge the truth in another’s perspective and recognize that two people can disagree and still both be right.
- 12) Focus on changing yourself instead of other people. Paradoxically, this will increase your ability to influence and impact others.
- 13) Keep the dialogue going even in the midst of tension, disagreement, etc.

