



DIVERSITY: How does it make us see, hear, feel, think and act?

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Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service



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***“Yes, we are all different.
Different customs, foods,
mannerisms and
languages, but not so
different after all...if we
will disagree without
being disagreeable.”***

- J Martin Kohe

ACTIVITY – Living in a Diverse Environment

- Pick a card any – any card
- Don't look at it
- Hold it to your forehead
- Now we will mingle and interact
 - The ACES are most popular and liked – you will be treated with lots of positivity and respect
 - The Sixes are averagely liked – you will be treated with muted respect and some amount of positivity
 - The Twos are the lowest on the totem pole – you will be ignored or treated with little to no regard
- Can you guess which you were? An Ace, Two or a Six?
- What did it feel like to be ignored/not so ignored/much loved?

Objectives

1. Define diversity
2. Introduce “Isms”
3. Stereotyping
4. About...
5. On the flip side...
6. Consciousness Checks
7. Rules of Thumb

Train-the-Trainer

For a 30 minute presentation –

- Do the card exercise
- Define diversity
- Discuss ageism, ableism, racism, ethnicity and stereotyping
- Teach the consciousness checks and rules of thumb

For a 1-hour presentation –

- Do the card exercise
- Define diversity
- Discuss all “isms”
- Teach the consciousness checks and rules of thumb

Handouts –

**Complete ppt;
survey**

For a 15-minute lesson –

- Do the card exercise
- Define diversity
- Discuss racism, ethnicity and stereotyping
- Teach the consciousness checks and rules of thumb

What is diversity?

Diversity is all the ways that we are different from each other age, race, sexual orientation, socio-economic status/class, religion, gender, physical and mental abilities, education, language, family and marital status.

Ageism

Ageism is discrimination based on age. You are being insensitive when you think:

- You are too young – what do you know?
- Your generation will never get it!

Ableism

Ableism is discrimination based on physical or mental disabilities. When you:

- Feel uncomfortable with visible disabilities
- Look at somebody in a wheelchair and automatically go to aid them. Just ask – can I help? And don't be surprised (or hurt) if they say "no".
- Apologize to someone who has a visual impairment because you said, "You see...", "Let me show you..."
- Use words like "retard" or "handicapped" even in a humorous context

Sexism

Sexism are behaviors and beliefs that rank the sexes (the physical characteristics that define male and female) and genders (the cultural definitions of what is feminine and what is masculine), placing more value on one than another.

Female - ism

When you:

- Say, (before the person is more comfortable with you) “Ooh I like your skirt/dress, where did you get it?”
- Think, “I have a female boss – bet she’s “moody”!”
- Gossip with a female colleague because that’s what women do.
- Motherhood vs. Singlehood

Male - ism

When you:

- Think, “The boss is a male, how not surprising!”
- Say, “The males get all the breaks”.
- Are surprised that the males at work cook, are hospitable or perform “womenly” tasks

Weight-ism

Bias or discrimination against people who are over or under-weight.

- Wow he is big!
- She needs to eat a sandwich
- At the gym you think “they don’t need to exercise”, or “it’s too late for them to be here”.

Racism

Racism is discrimination based on color and/or race and/or ethnicity. This includes discriminatory practices that protect or promote the power of the dominant group. Racism may also be the belief in the inherent superiority of one group over another.

Ethnicity

When you:

- Are surprised that the Latino/a/Hispanic person holds a high position
- Assume that the African-American woman is a secretary
- Are shocked that the custodial staff is Caucasian

Stereotyping

- Oh you must be good at Math, Engineering
- Oh you probably don't know what that means...
- Oh you must be familiar with rap, hiphop etc.
- I am sorry I can't say your name
- I have been to India, do you know...?
- Bet you love dancing!
- Do you play basketball?
- Wow you have a Masters?
- You speak great English!
- I have a friend who is...

About...

- Lack of eye contact – often a sign of respect; not inattentive/unmotivated/rude – give it time.
- Physical contact– handshakes – wait till they extend their hand. Do not be too touchy-feely.
- Saying no – you may not always receive a direct answer.

On the flip side:

I feel that:

- People think I am privileged because I am one of the majority
- Everything is easier for me
- I should prove that I have earned my place

Consciousness “Checks”

You need to explore your sub-conscious self if you answer yes to the following questions

- Are you assuming?
- Is it easy for you to make racist jokes?
- Are you over-explaining; over-justifying?
- When your mind triggers a discriminatory thought are you starting the conversation by apologizing?
- Are you trying to be too sensitive?
- **Take a Diversity Survey – are you really biased or do you simply put your foot in your mouth?**
- **If you are biased accept it and be more mindful of how it manifests itself.**
- **Know that nothing is really offensive unless you mean it to be.**
- **Most people appreciate it when they see you are making an effort.**

Rules of Thumb

- Listen patiently and let the person finish talking
- Smile
- Make small talk
- Be positive
- Be courteous and attentive
- Don't be self-conscious
- Be observant of culture
- Ask for help
- Think before you speak
- Don't gossip
- Clarify your doubts

Additional References

- <http://www.ncehs.com/strategy.htm>
- http://www.aacounty.org/Partnership/Resources/Cultural_Sensitivity.pdf
- [http://www.culturecoach.biz/culturalquic
ktip.html](http://www.culturecoach.biz/culturalquic
ktip.html)

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Living in a Diverse Environment Activity Instructions

Materials:

1. 3 Cards – Ace, 6, 2 – Make as many sets as required
2. Using the provided template you may cut them to shape and just have the person hold the card to their forehead.
3. Optional – laminate the cards so they stick to participants' foreheads.

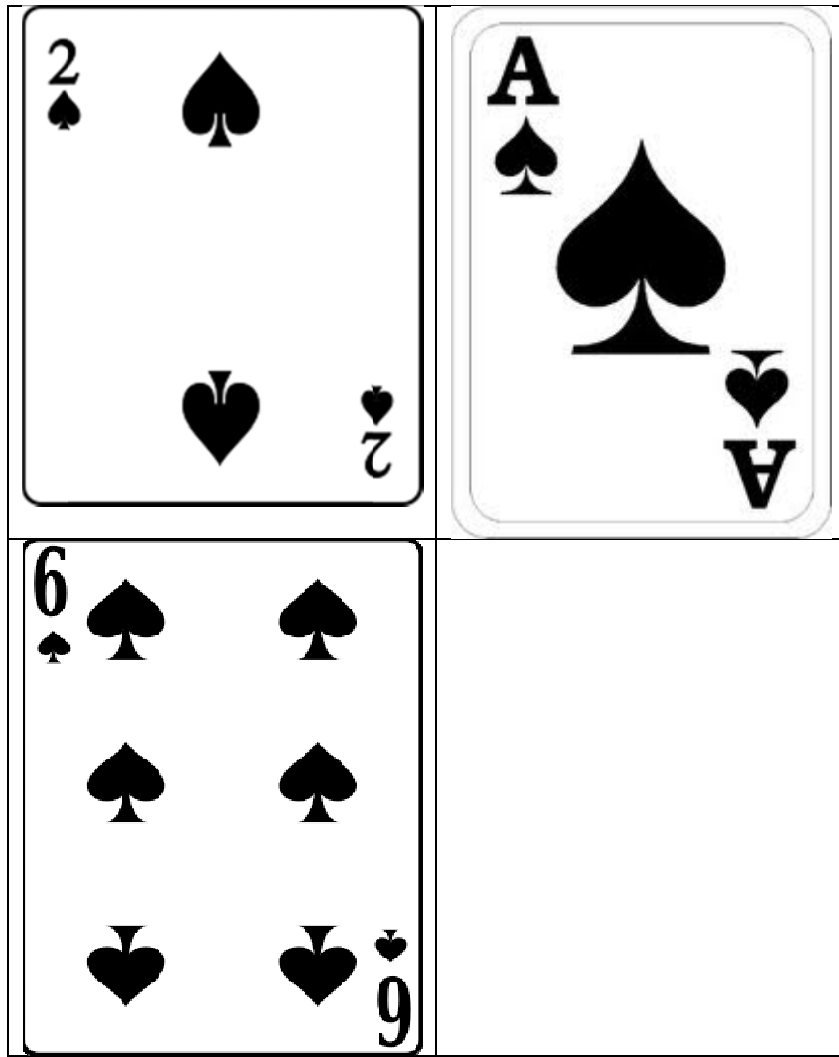
Activity Instructions

1. Pick a card – any card
2. Don't look at it
3. Hold/stick it to your forehead
4. Now we will mingle and interact
 - a. The ACES are most popular and liked – you will be treated with lots of positivity and respect
 - b. The Sixes are averagely liked – you will be treated with muted respect and some amount of positivity
 - c. The Twos are the lowest on the totem pole – you will be ignored or treated with little to no regard

Questions after the Activity

1. Can you guess which you were? An Ace, Six or a Two?
2. What did it feel like to be ignored/not so ignored/much loved?
3. Describe your feelings.
4. Do the sixes feel the same as the twos?
5. What lessons about the impact of diversity did you learn from this activity?

Card Template



DIVERSITY SELF-ASSESSMENT

Rate yourself honestly on the following items.

		Never	Sometimes			Rarely	
1	I understand commitment to diversity.	1	2	3	4	5	
2	I regularly assess my strengths and weaknesses in the area of diversity, and I consciously try to improve myself.	1	2	3	4	5	
3	I'm always asking questions. I'm curious about new things and people.	1	2	3	4	5	
4	When I don't understand what someone says, I ask for clarification.	1	2	3	4	5	
5	I'm committed to respecting all co-workers, customers, and vendors.	1	2	3	4	5	
6	I work willingly and cooperatively with people different from me.	1	2	3	4	5	
7	I recognize how bonding with my own group may exclude or be perceived as excluding others.	1	2	3	4	5	
8	I can communicate with and influence people who are different	1	2	3	4	5	
9	I'm interested in the ideas of people who don't think as I do, and I respect their opinions when I disagree.	1	2	3	4	5	
10	Some of my friends are different from me in age, race, background etc.	1	2	3	4	5	
11	I recognize I'm a product of my background; my way isn't the only way.	1	2	3	4	5	
12	I'm aware of my prejudices and consciously try to control my assumptions about people.	1	2	3	4	5	
13	I try to help others understand my differences.	1	2	3	4	5	
14	I work to make sure that people who are different from me are heard and are respected.	1	2	3	4	5	
15	I help others succeed by sharing unwritten rules and showing them how to function better.	1	2	3	4	5	
16	I apologize when I've offended someone.	1	2	3	4	5	
17	I resist the temptation to make another group the scapegoat when something goes wrong.	1	2	3	4	5	
18	I refrain from repeating rumors that reinforce bias or prejudice.	1	2	3	4	5	
19	I recognized and avoid using language that reinforces stereotypes.	1	2	3	4	5	
20	I include people different from me in informal networks and events.	1	2	3	4	5	
21	I believe and convey that nontraditional employees are as skilled and competent as others.	1	2	3	4	5	
22	I get to know people as individuals who are different from me.	1	2	3	4	5	
23	I turn over responsibility to people who are different from me as often as I do to people who are like me.	1	2	3	4	5	
24	I disregard physical characteristics when interacting with others and when making decisions about competence or ability	1	2	3	4	5	
25	I avoid generalizing behaviors or attitudes of one individual to another group. (ex. "All men are..." "All women are...")	1	2	3	4	5	
26	I say "I think that's inappropriate" when I think someone is making a derogatory comment or joke.	1	2	3	4	5	
27	I recognize that others may stereotype me, and I try to overcome incorrect assumptions that they may make.	1	2	3	4	5	

Add up all the numbers you've circled to calculate your total score.

TOTAL _____

0 to 39 Points: UNAWARE

Unaware people don't realize they exhibit biased behavior. They may offend others without being aware of it. They may accept stereotypes as facts. They may even unknowingly commit illegal acts! An unaware person's scores can fall in any category because an unaware person might answer "always" or "frequently" when in reality he or she simply doesn't comprehend biased behavior. Because unaware people "don't know what they don't know," the only accurate indicator is feedback from others.

40 to 69 Points: TRADITIONAL

Traditionalists are aware of their prejudices and that their behavior may offend some people. However, they continue with derogatory jokes, inappropriate comments and actions as though the laws and company's values don't apply to them. If you fall in this category, not only is it likely your behavior is damaging to workplace productivity and helping create a hostile workplace climate, but your behavior may have legal consequences as well. Examine the questions you scored lowest-you may want to create personal and professional goals to help you break these habits.

70 to 99 Points: NEUTRAL

People in this category are aware of biases in themselves and others. They are working to overcome their own prejudices, but are reluctant to address inappropriate behavior by others. They avoid risk by saying nothing and this is often perceived as agreement. If you fall into this category, look at the questions that you marked the lowest-you may want to identify ways in which you can improve in those areas. You may also want to find ways in which you can become more comfortable as an ally to others. Determine tactful, clear and firm ways to address inappropriate language, behavior and attitudes by others in the workplace.

100 to 129 Points: CHANGE AGENT

Change agents are aware of biases in themselves and others and realize negative impact that comes from action on those biases. Change agents are willing to take action when they encounter inappropriate words, behaviors, and attitudes. They relate to people in a way that values diversity. If your score fell in this range, you can make great contributions to your workplace and your community because you try to find ways to educate others and help others realize the value of diversity.

130 to 140 Points: REBEL

Rebels are acutely aware of prejudice and bias- sometimes to a fault. At times they may come across too strong and appear to be overreacting. Rebels sometimes receive a reputation that causes people to discount their views, avoid them, or not take them seriously. If you scored in this range, you may be a change agent, but you may also be perceived as too radical or reactionary. Asking other people for honest feedback may help bridge the gap between rebel and change agent.