



## 2020 NW Diversity Learning Series - Theme & Session Narratives

Presented by the Institute for Sustainable Diversity & Inclusion  
Begins January 2020

### 2020 Theme:

#### **Culture Clash: Imagine Transforming Distrust and Discomfort Into Resilient Relationships**

Culture clashes may arise when diverse groups of people with different worldviews come together and occupy the same space—a workspace, an organization, an apartment house, or a neighborhood.

Cultures clash at three levels:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Level: VISIBLE THINGS, such as which language to speak, which ways to dress and express one's self, which food smells good, or which style is most appropriate;
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Level: WHAT A GROUP SAYS it believes in—what is important—values, goals, strategies, which may, or may not, align with what group members actually do;
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Level: NOT VISIBLE—the taken-for-granted basic assumptions about the right way to do things, which drives behavior and actions. Backed up by shared beliefs, norms and rules of behavior, these assumptions create a worldview that tells members of a cultural group what to pay attention to, what things mean, what to do in various situations, and how to react emotionally.

Clashes at all three levels are occurring in our society and in our workplaces.

In 2020, we want to explore culture clashes at a deeper level. When a person's worldview is challenged, we know it can generate anxiety and discomfort; logic and reasoning may be replaced by emotional responses and emboldened positions. “Us and them” mentality may take over, distrust prevails—ripe ground for bias, prejudice, discrimination, and exercising privilege. Both individuals and institutions can get caught up in the swirling elements of culture clashes.

At the heart of the 2020 Series is the idea of resilience—how can we better recover from culture clashes that involve different worldviews? If we can transform our discomfort and distrust of others into building relationships—ones that withstand the challenges of difference—we, and our relationships, will be more resilient in this time of change.

### 2020 Session Topics at a Glance:

- 1 - Intersectionality
- 2 - White Supremacy
- 3 - Immigrants
- 4 - Algorithms & Bias
- 5 - Latinx
- 6 - Hate & Trauma

## Session #1 – January 29, 2020

### Intersectionality: Confronting the Tensions Of Our Overlapping Identities

**Learning Goal:** Explore the growing impact of overlapping, intersectional social identities within the context of the systems of oppression, domination, and discrimination that undermine creating inclusive workplaces. Learn to look through an “intersectional prism” so that you create a more welcoming and inclusive culture.

**Why:** We believe intersectionality is an idea not fully understood or much less realized. No person is one dimension of diversity—our identities are made up of many dimensions. Exploring the concept of intersectionality helps us understand how one’s multiple social identities experience power structures, privilege, bias and oppression. By examining how relevant social categories such as gender, sexual orientation, race, and ethnicity overlap, we will better understand how they shape our experiences, our life outcomes, and our views of the world.

We have to be more mindful that culture clashes happen right in our midst—people in the dominant culture may minimize and devalue others’ social identities blocking opportunities to participate and to advance. If we want to cultivate an environment where everyone feels a sense of belonging and engagement, where everyone can bring their authentic, full selves to work, we have to disrupt the culture clashes.

We think it will make for a challenging session to bridge discomfort and distrust exploring how to build relationships that take into account the intersections of our multiple identities.

#### Potential Tools:

- Model of social identity (Diversity Wheel, CRIAW/ICREF’s Intersectionality Wheel)
- Model of a “complexity lens”
- Privilege walk
- Self-identity checklist

## Session #2: March 25, 2020

### Call It What It Is: Eliminating the Impact of White Supremacy In Our Systems

**Learning Goal:** Learn how white supremacy became a concept in the United States, and how it became embedded in organizations—conscious or not. Identify the characteristics of white supremacy in organizations that advantage and value some people, and disadvantage and devalue others, and learn what you can do to eliminate its impact.

**Why:** White supremacy has been, and still is, a dominant, overarching principle in the formation of most institutions in the United States—corporations, government agencies, educational institutions, non-profit organizations, neighborhood housing, and it affects everyone. According to the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), white supremacy “is an ideology whose earliest incarnations arose in the early 1800s [in the United States] as a reaction of [white people in the South] to the emerging abolitionist movement [the abolition of slavery].” One of the principle beliefs of this ideology is that white people should dominate over all other people.

The danger of white supremacy is that it couples deep-rooted racist beliefs with power, which ultimately leads to the continual oppression of all minority groups and the perpetuation of white dominance in our society. None of us can stay silent in our organizations while our peers are devalued and knocked down for their cultural and social identities to the benefit of white supremacy.

We believe it is time that we acknowledge the history, understand the daily repercussions, and finally eliminate the impact of the toxic infrastructure that is white supremacy. If we can accomplish this by transforming distrust and discomfort into resilient relationships, our organizations, and all of us, will be far better for it.

**Potential Tools:**

- Historical definitions and manifestations of white supremacy in the United States
- A checklist, “Looking in the mirror”: As a person of your demographic, a list of actions you can take to influence change to dismantle white supremacy
- Checklist of policies & processes to check (for HR, ERG’s, etc.)
- A guide for facilitating a discussion about white supremacy with your team or workgroup

**Session #3: May 13, 2010**

**Marginalizing Immigrants Is an Old Story: It’s Time To Write a New Chapter**

**Learning Goal:** Learn how to make your workplace more welcoming and inclusive of immigrant employees by knowing the historical role immigration has played in the development of the United States, the contributions of immigrants to the advancement of the country and our economy—particularly in terms of start-ups, innovation, inventions and creativity, and confront the biases and myths about immigrants, particularly immigrants of color.

**Why:** We believe with the recent upsurge in anti-immigrant sentiment, it is imperative to set straight the false narratives that amplify the stereotypes and assumptions about immigrants. Hate crimes, discrimination, prejudice and mass shootings have accelerated against immigrants in the last few years. Well entrenched myths abound, such as, “immigrants steal jobs from American workers.” This false narrative has been further exasperated by politicians and the media and politicians. The truth is the “non-human immigrant” (technology/automation/A.I.) is the culprit doing away with human jobs, not incoming real people.

In the context of diversity, where one comes from, in this case, one’s nationality, is an important dimension of social identity (noted in the Diversity Wheel model as geographic location). In terms of intersectionality, to be called out, denigrated and attacked for one aspect of your identity creates fear and anxiety. This is a fierce culture clash currently.

We believe organizations and co-workers can take a higher road ensuring that co-workers and leaders of more recent immigrant background be treated respectfully and fairly so that they feel a sense of belonging and engagement in our workplaces. Creating relationships that are resilient to the cultural clashes surrounding immigrants is worthy of our time and skill development.

Immigration Facts:

- 86.4 million: Population of immigrants and their American born children in the U.S

- \$2 Trillion: Estimated contribution of immigrants to the U.S. gross domestic product in 2016
- 43% of Fortune 500 companies that were founded or co-founded by immigrants or their children as of 2017
- 25% of all new business and half of Silicon Valley high-tech start-ups were founded by immigrants
- 49% of immigrants are Naturalized Citizens

**Potential Tools:**

- An infographic highlighting immigrant contributions to the U.S.
- A timeline to show the history of hateful acts perpetrated against immigrants (in other words, not new in American political and social history)
- The Diversity Wheel (the dimensions of our social identities)
- Create a checklist that focuses on debunking the myths
- Guide: What does “welcoming” and “respecting” immigrants look like?

**Session # 4: June 24, 2020**

**Algorithms and You: Decoding the Bias Within**

**Learning Goal:** Learn what Artificial Intelligence (AI) means, how it impacts you as an individual, your work environment and influences how you and others think, perceive, believe and act. Gain understanding about how AI is affecting diversity and relationships, and what we can do about it.

**Why:** We believe that Algorithms, the engine of Artificial Intelligence, are so pervasive that they are profoundly changing the way we experience and do things, and that we should become more aware of how they will affect us as people of multiple identifies intersecting with equity and inclusion.

One of the developments in A.I. is the use of **persuasion architecture** using demographic and psychographic information to create angst, fear and outrage against targeted identity groups. This development is seeping into the workplace through social media—it seems innocent, but it has negative ulterior motives and hidden agendas.

We believe it is important to build and equip relationships to be more resilient to the culture clashes involving diverse groups spurred by social media and Artificial Intelligence.

**Potential Tools:**

- A primer on Artificial Intelligence and Algorithms and some of the ways they are being used
- A checklist to see which social media platforms are using and potentially manipulating one’s personal data.
- A list of questions to ask:
  - How might AI affect my professional development if my background includes being a person of color, a woman, LGBTQ, an immigrant?
  - What are the intersections I need to watch out for?
  - Are there ways to recognize persuasion architecture in my individual feeds?

## Session #5: September 23, 2020 (Hispanic Heritage Month)

### Latinx Rising: Delivering On the Promise

**Learning Goal:** Encourage relationships between Latinx and other groups by exploring the dynamic sphere of Latinx, from the growth engine it represents in terms of talent, leadership, purchasing power, and population, to continued underrepresentation and lack of inclusion.

**Why:** Latinx, Latino/Latina, Hispanic—what is the evolution of these terms? Do they even resonate with the people being labeled?

We believe the 2020 NW Diversity Learning Series should reflect the attention Latinx are receiving nationally, such as the 2019 *Hispanic Promise*, a collaborative pledge signed by 45+ corporations, including SAP Concur and Microsoft locally, along with more than a dozen Hispanic organizations, to advance and empower U.S. Latinx\* employees, customers and citizens.

The Hispanic Leadership Summit (2018) reported in its 2020 Vision that “a significant difference exists between the demographic and economic presence of the Hispanic community, and how the community participates, and how it is represented and portrayed in American society.” The result of this difference is that “the Hispanic community’s potential is not being realized.”

We believe by encouraging relationship building across groups, we will help disarm the distrust and discomfort some may feel, and steadily replace the culture clash with resilience.

\*The Latinx population is the second largest racial or ethnic demographic group in the U.S. (18%) after whites (Pew Research).

#### Potential Tools:

- Latinx ERGs, best practices and how to develop a Latinx ERG
- An infographic- surprising statistics
- A history lesson: Hispanics in the U.S. – pre-session survey?
- Recruitment and retention strategies for Latinx

## Session #6: November 18, 2020

### Unsettled and Traumatized: How Do I Deal With the Hate Around Me

**Learning Goal:** To learn how to promote a culture of safety, empowerment and healing to support employees experiencing trauma, whether the result of hate crimes, mass shootings, political disagreements, or targeting of ethnic or LGBTQ+ groups, or workplace intimidation or violence. This session will draw on trauma-informed care and best practices for a healthy workplace.

**Why:** We believe companies and organizations should pay attention to the effects of increasing societal hate\* and violence on their employees, on employees’ families, and on their communities. These effects run a gamut of instilling anxiety, fear and trauma, to even emboldening some employees to commit hateful acts.

In addition, high profile sexual abuse cases may traumatize anyone who has experienced sexual abuse or violence. We believe becoming trauma aware and informed will help our organizations develop relevant policies and practices that will help employees transform distrust and discomfort associated with culture clash, to build more resilient relationships across difference.

\*The Southern Poverty Law Center reports the number of hate groups operating across America rose to a record high in 2018: 1,020 documented groups. Most recently in our area, KIRO 7 reported racist fliers were posted in the Columbia City Area (September 15, 2019); the *Bothell-Kenmore Reporter* ran two stories, “Examining hate crimes on the Eastside,” (March 15, 2019) and “Fliers linked to neo-Nazi group pinned outside Kirkland, Kenmore churches,” (July 12, 2019).

**Potential Tools:**

- Trauma-informed principles
- Healthy workplace best practices
- Understanding the sources of hate and ways to diffuse it
- A. E. I. O. U. (behavioral conflict resolution or negotiating model) A=Attack, E=Evade, I=Inform, O=Open, U=Unite
- Critical self-reflection tools
- A list of local community services (Crisis Line, etc.)

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