

## Introduction to Bias and Historically Included and Excluded Identities

### **This module will follow the Three Dimensions of Change and Feelings as Messengers**

We have already learned Guidelines for Cross Cultural Dialogue, Culture definition. We have talked about how culture is like an iceberg with some parts visible and a lot that is below the surface outside of awareness, and we practiced sharing some of our cultural story - recognizing there are some parts we like and other parts we don't. We recognized the four levels (neighborhoods) at which we both experience and offer hospitality (or inhospitality/exclusion). And we just finished recognizing the importance of Three Dimensions important for lasting change (adding that the Spiritual Dimension weaves through them all) with a particular focus on the emotional/feelings dimension since this one is often the one that will most quickly lead to burnout and inauthentic engagement at home, work and in relationships cross culturally.

Do you remember earlier when we talked about how human beings have multiple identities. This was in the context of our learning about culture and telling our cultural story. There are some ways we are like everyone else, some ways we are like no one else and some ways that we are like some and not like others. That is, we belong to groups. It is in these groups where the "better than/less than" thinking, behaving and feeling shows up.

These better than/less than dynamics can be both conscious and outside of consciousness. It is kind of like that iceberg illustration, but inside our head. (See the Unconscious/Implicit Bias slide) The question to consider is this: What am I aware of when it comes to my thinking as a result of what I was taught and what I caught about myself and the groups I belong to and others and the groups they belong to? We all have both conscious and unconscious bias. That's a part of being a culturally formed human being. The invitation in this exercise is to bring the unconscious parts into our awareness so that we can then decide if we want to hang on to those assumptions or if we want to unlearn some things, choose new behaviors and move toward new feelings.

Laverne has a great story about recognizing her bias against and fear of dogs because of an experience she had growing up.

David has a story about recognizing his bias against asking for help when feeling overwhelmed, being afraid success and failure is all up to him. Unlearning solo, heroic leadership and trying on collective wisdom and leadership.

### **Definition of Oppression (Inclusion and Exclusion) 10 min)**

We teach this definition of Oppression to provide clarity about what we mean when we talk our "historically excluded" group identities. Oppression is not the same as experiencing being left out on occasion or the experience of not being in the majority. It is possible to be in a minority group and still maintain power and control over others in an ongoing way. This definition invites

dialogue about the experiences of groups of people who have historically, overtime and in an ongoing way been seen as less than, treated as less than and offered less access to society's benefits and resources.

So, can we have a volunteer to read this definition of oppression?

*The process through which -historically, overtime and ongoing -- a group is seen as less than, treated as less than, and offered less access to society's benefits and resources.*

- Ask what you are hearing and noticing?

*Emphasize: historically; not just present day issue. All human societies have patterns of oppression usually presented in what is 'normal' and 'not normal'*

We invite you to keep this definition in mind as we move into this next section where we will learn about our Historically Included and Historically Excluded Identities.

#### Historically Excluded/ Historically Included Chart (20 min)

- A. Define terms: HE & HI
- B. Focus on excluded identities then answer questions.
- C. Focus on included identities then answer questions.

Invite participants to complete this exercise:

(2-3 minutes) Individually reflect on their experience belonging to a Historically Excluded group. Check all the boxes that have ever applied to you. Answer the questions on the right side of the page.

After completing the HE assignment individually . . .

(2-3 minutes) Individually reflect on their experience belonging to a Historically Included group. Check all the boxes that have ever applied to you. Answer the questions on the right side of the page.

After both HE and HI assignments are completed, divide up the large group into small groups of 3 for sharing with one another.

21 minutes

#### **Debrief**

What was this experience like for you? What feelings came up for you? What learning or re-learning came up for you? How does this inform the way you communicate and offer hospitality to someone with both historically included and excluded identities?