

Getting Started in Cultural Competency





From "An Overview of Diversity Awareness"
Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences
Patreese D. Ingram, 2001

extension.psu.edu

Seven principles of diversity awareness

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<http://agsci.psu.edu/diversity/diversity-awareness>



1. Diversity is an inside job: it's not about 'them'.

It is about each person coming to terms with his own attitudes, beliefs and experiences about others . . .

and gaining comfort with difference.



2. Diversity goes beyond race and gender.

The diversity tent is big enough to include everyone . . .

young and old, homeless and affluent, immigrant and native, white and black, rural and urban, gang member and corporate professional.



3. In diversity awareness, no one is the target of blame for current or past inequities.

All human beings have been socialized to behave in certain ways, and all of us are at times both perpetrators and victims of discrimination and stereotypes.

The idea is to move forward in creating more opportunities.



4. Human beings are ethnocentric.

We see the world through our own narrow view and judge the world by our familiar yardstick.

This is not bad in itself, but it can be a source of conflict if other ways of being are not accommodated and valued.



5. The human species resists changes, continuing to seek homeostasis.

This makes the constant adaptation required by diversity difficult . . .

for people already overwhelmed by staggering transitions in today's communities and organizations.



6. Human beings find comfort and trust in likeness.

We have a tendency to seek the company of those most similar to us in a variety of ways . . .

age, gender and ethnicity just being several of many.



7. It is difficult for people to share power.

History shows us that we rarely do it voluntarily. Understanding this last reality helps clarify why there is sometimes a backlash associated with diversity . . .

from people who may believe they will lose in this experience.



Start with your own awareness

- Recognize differences as diversity
 - not abnormal or inappropriate behavior
- Respect the benefits of diverse values and behaviors
 - to you
 - to your organization



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It's about communication



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Understand the effect of historic distrust on present-day interactions.



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Recognize your own ethnocentricity

Explore your personal history and background.

- *Where are your ancestors from?*
- *What traditions are passed down the generations?*
- *What do you want your children to know about your history?*



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Recognize the similarities that are shared across cultures

- Desire for safety and good health
- Education and well-being for our children
- Love and belonging
- Self-esteem and feeling of worth
- Ability to pursue and achieve our potential



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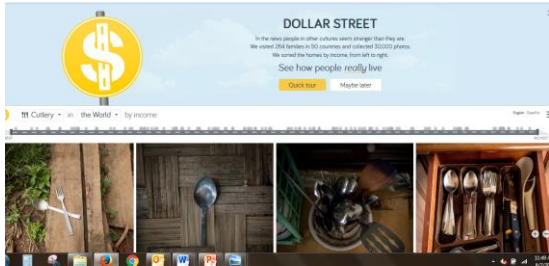
Learn about other cultures and groups with different backgrounds



- Read an article or book
- See a movie
- Attend a holiday celebration, festival or other event
- Ask people about their life stories

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A unique resource for getting smarter



<http://www.gapminder.org/dollar-street>

Take personal responsibility for the way you respond to difference

- Develop skills in conflict management and problem-solving skills
- Develop skills in cross-cultural communication
 - Different languages
 - Different abilities
- Look for ways to work effectively with diverse groups of people.



Be a stereotype buster

A neighbor says:

Look at the junk in that guy's yard! Isn't that just typical of poor people, with trash all over the place?

WHAT DO YOU SAY?



Enjoy your expanded world view

- Teach others about cultural differences
- Develop a mentoring relationship
- Be more patient in your interactions
- Bring diversity learning to everything you do



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A resource you can use

“The Food Gap”

Published in March, 2013 by the Adams County Food Policy Council

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=04SDfeBEpK4>

(or search for Food Gap on YouTube)

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- Festival By Tomás Del Coro from Las Vegas, Nevada, USA - Fiesta Las Vegas Latino Parade & Festival 2013 - Fremont Street Experience, CC BY-SA 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=58272899>
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- Family Portrait By Public Record Office of Northern Ireland - <https://www.flickr.com/photos/proni/513952986/>, No restrictions, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=53066013>
- Planet Earth By NASA/Apollo 17 crew; taken by either Harrison Schmitt or Ron Evans.<http://web.archive.org/web/20160112123725/http://grin.hq.nasa.gov/ABSTRACTS/GPN-2000-001138.html> (image link); see also https://www.nasa.gov/multimedia/imagegallery/image_feature_329.html, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=43894484>



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