

# Empowering Leaders to Facilitate Inclusive Environments

## Abstract

In increasingly diverse workplaces, how can we, as leaders, create an environment in which everyone feels empowered to contribute? Through activities and discussion, consider issues of privilege and microaggressions. Leave with concrete tools for facilitating more inclusion in the workplace.

## Overview

- This workshop utilizes evidence-based best practices for adult learning. Participants will learn theoretical frameworks around privilege and intersectionality, then work through applying them to their own workplace environments. In the welcome and introduction, we will collectively create ground rules and expectations to facilitate a safe learning environment.
- Celeste, a sociologist, will provide a brief overview of sociological theories of privilege, oppression and intersectionality. After this, participants will engage in two short activities that show how these issues affect their own lives. This enables participants to create their own understandings of the concepts of privilege, oppression, and intersectionality and their application to the workplace.
- Two short and humorous videos will introduce and explain microaggressions, followed by a short video from the viewpoint of those who have experienced microaggressions. This shows participants the various impacts of these microaggressions on real individuals, thus allowing them to connect this to the impact of microaggressions in the workplace.

- This sets the stage for a discussion of how to recognize microaggressions and respond to them in a way that is appropriate and kind, facilitating dialogue instead of defensiveness. In this activity, participants engage in that kinds of challenging but necessary dialogue to think through how to address microaggressions including such questions as: “Whose responsibility is it to address the microaggression?” “How can we do so in a way that teaches instead of accuses?”
- In the final activity, participants collaboratively create a list of concrete steps and actions they can take to make their workplaces more inclusive, welcoming, and inviting. Instead of providing participants with a list of ways to be more inclusive, we facilitate them doing the work of thinking through and formulating concrete steps for their workplace environment.

## Resources

- Handouts with links to the videos, an annotated bibliography of sources to further explore the topic, and examples of the exercises
- Follow up email containing the list formulated during the workshop

## Learning Objectives

After participating in this interactive and collaborative workshop, participants will be able to:

- Describe the concepts of privilege, oppression, intersectionality, and their application to the workplace
- Describe microaggressions and their impact in the workplace
- Formulate concrete ways to create more welcoming and inclusive work environments

## Agenda

- Welcome and introduction

- Create ground rules
- Discussion of intersectionality
  - Short lecture: Privilege & oppression
  - Activity: Minority tax exercise
  - Short lecture: Intersectionality
  - Activity: Interactive intersectionality exercise
- Discussion of microaggressions
  - Microaggression introductory videos
  - How to respond to microaggressions
    - Small group discussions
    - Large group share out and synthesize
- Group formulation of a take away list

## **Conference Track: Creating Optimal Workplaces for a Diverse, Inclusive Workforce**

In today's workplace, the most effective leaders are those who can work with, and empower, diverse individuals. These leaders create an environment in which each person is encouraged and expected to contribute, each voice is heard and respected, and there is a sense of team through shared goals and expectations. Leaders must understand the obstacles that individuals may face (such as microaggressions), and the actions that are required to create a workplace where everyone feels safe and valued. This workshop empowers leaders by giving them a framework on which to build an action plan for developing (or improving) a truly welcoming workplace.