

Build Intercultural Relationships for Better Understanding of Your Neighbor

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Purpose

This lesson aims to help participants build personal awareness of the ways in which they develop friendships and other linkages to those with differing backgrounds, cultures, belief systems, or places of origin.

Audience

This lesson targets youth and adult audiences. This lesson may also target educational and human services professionals who need professional development activities.

Preparation

- » Read through entire fact sheet (MF3340) and leader's guide. Work to internalize the concepts.
- » Explore your own biases when interacting with those who come from differing background, cultures, belief systems, or places of origin, to prepare yourself.
- » Obtain copies of the fact sheet for distribution to participants.
- » Copy the evaluation surveys for distribution to participants and provide pencils/pens.
- » Remember to schedule time for discussion and processing of concepts.
- » This lesson is not meant to be a "once and done" as the concepts are meant for on-going discussion.

The Lesson

Refer to the fact sheet for basic information gathered from a variety of research articles and best practices around intercultural relationships. For concepts that may be unclear, please contact the authors.

Remember, knowing the material well contributes to confidence and poise in teaching and lends credibility to the lesson. Finally, thorough knowledge of the material helps to put a personal touch on the lesson. Please note the following sections:

1. Introduction
2. Community Cohesion
3. What is Culture?
4. Framework of Human Influences
5. Personal Biases
6. Implicit and Explicit Bias
7. Building Relationships
8. Advantages and Implications of Building Intercultural Relationships
9. Recommendations
10. Conclusion

Proceed with Lesson:

A positive impact of this lesson depends on 1) The confidence and commitment of its leader, and 2) Optimal contact with audiences, at least four times, but no less than three, which allows for an ongoing supportive environment. When participants receive more time to mentally process the materials:

- » increased learning takes place,
- » unclear concepts come into focus, and
- » you build an environment to nurture internalization and adoption of new ideas.

Suggested Lesson Breakdown and Points of Discussion for Three or Four Lessons:

First session:

- I. Introduction
 - A. What about human differences make us uncomfortable?
 - B. Do our backgrounds influence how we think about others who are different?

- C. Discuss a time when difference did not make us uncomfortable.
 - 1. Did the environment influence the feelings?
 - 2. What was familiar about the surroundings?

II. Community Cohesion

- A. Describe a “shared vision” that a community might have.
 - 1. Does it involve children and youth?
 - 2. Does it involve infrastructure (sewer, lights, land use, etc.)?
- B. Describe how belonging to a place might be important.
 - 1. Describe what gives a sense of belonging to a place.
 - 2. Is it the environment?
 - 3. Is it the structures?
 - 4. Is it familial?
- C. How can we recognize when a community is not cohesive?
 - 1. Can we call our neighbors by name?
 - 2. Do we trust one another?
 - 3. Are the senior citizens, the poor, or those of difference isolated from others in the mainstream?

III. What is Culture?

- A. Describe a unique family tradition.
 - 1. From where did this tradition originate?
 - 2. For how many generations has this tradition been practiced?
 - 3. How has this tradition changed over the generations?

Second session:

- I. Framework of Human Influences (Please study the graphic for about three minutes)
 - A. Discuss how the spheres of influence might shape our preferences, thinking, and traditions.
 - B. How do locations, organizations, and laws influence our traditions?
 - 1. Discuss how subsistence farmers might differ from corporate farmers, for example.
 - 2. Are there laws that impinge upon freedoms?
- II. Personal Biases
 - A. Identify some personal preferences
 - 1. Can those be changed?
 - 2. Name a time when a personal preference was changed.
 - a) How did it feel to change that preference?
 - b) Was the change gradual?
 - c) Was it age related?

III. Implicit and Explicit Bias

- A. Is it possible for us to identify our implicit (involuntary) biases?
- B. Can we “unlearn” an implicit bias?
- C. What is the difference between conscious and subconscious?

Third session:

I. Building Relationships

- A. Discuss ways in which we find common ground with each other.
- B. Describe a relationship with someone completely different from you.
 - 1. What did you have in common?
 - 2. What did you learn from that person?

II. Advantages and Implications of Building Intercultural Relationships

- A. Describe the concept of pluralism.
- B. Does the notion of pluralism elicit an emotion?

III. Recommendations with the Conclusion

- A. Describe ways to interact with those who are “different.”
- B. How might we interact with those who are different when we live in a homogeneous community?
 - 1. Difference does not always mean ethnically different.
 - 2. Consider socio-economic difference.
 - 3. Consider physical and mental abilities.
- C. Thank you for participating.

Evaluation questions following each lesson, to check for understanding.

- 1. What new information did you learn today?
- 2. How will you put into practice any new concepts learned today?
- 3. What would you like to learn in regard to building intercultural relationships?

Evaluation Form for Entire Lesson Series

Directions: Please answer the following questions; however, completing this survey is voluntary. You do not have to answer every question. You will not be identified with your answers in any way.

1. How do you rate this lesson?

Check one: Excellent___ Good___ Average___ Poor___ No opinion___

2. Will this information be useful to you, personally?

Check one: Yes___ No___ If yes, how?

3. What surprised you, if anything? Tell us about it.

4. What have we left out in this lesson that you feel should have been included?

5. Will you share this information with others? Yes___ No___ If yes, check those that apply:

FCE___ Other organization___ Family___ Friend___ Other___

6. Are you: Female___ Male___ B. What is your age? ___

7. What is your race?_____What is your ethnicity?_____

Other comments about the lesson:

Thank you! Please give this survey to your lesson leader. Your answers help us improve community and family life education. If you are interested in more information about this topic, please provide your contact details:

Name_____ ; Address_____ ; Phone_____ ;
Email_____

For Leaders Only:

Leader's Name: _____ Phone number or email: _____ County: _____

Type of group: FCE___ Other_____ Date when lesson was given: _____

Number of people attending: ___ Number of Men: ___ Number of Women: ___

Please return completed surveys to your county/district Family and Consumer Sciences agent.

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