Promoting & Sustaining a Diverse Workforce

As the work environment evolves, so must our knowledge and relational abilities.

Diversity in the Workplace

∞

Cultural Competence
Equal Rights
Empathy
Fairness
Respect

∞

We know the ingredients...and how they should be used.

Why do we keep ending up with a bitter taste in our mouths?

It is common for human beings to appreciate (and even seek) variety; however, as this variety is continually experienced through…

INTERACTIONS

RESOURCE SHARING

DIFFERING OPINIONS

COMPETING REQUESTS

INTERPRETATION OF LANGUAGE

DISCUSSION OF RIGHTS & BELIEFS

ASSIGNMENT OF BLAME & CONSEQUENCES

…we find ourselves in spaces where *Diversity* is (too often) identified as the sources of intractable conflict.

Is *diversity* (itself) really the issue, or is it our collective narratives about diversity and its societal impact?

In fact, *diversity* is less the issue than our lack of commitment to effective, respectful, solution-focused communication.
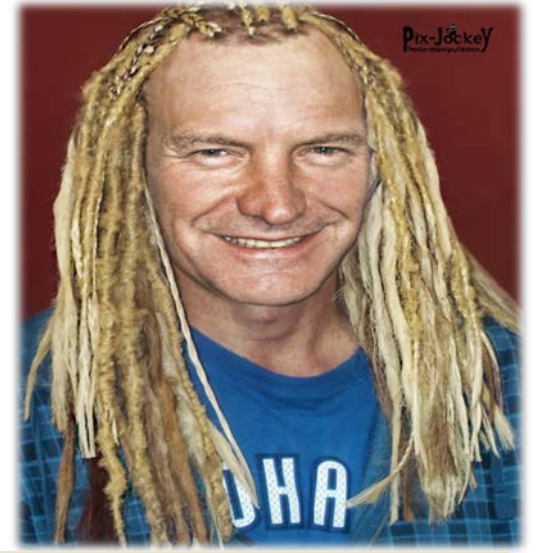
Diversity *is not* a linear concept. It describes humanity, the workplace and the world that is entrusted to us.

How we think and make decisions determines how effectively we coexist.

CONFLICT

A mental struggle resulting from incompatible or opposing needs, drives, wishes, or external or internal demands

Workers in highly diverse and inclusive organizations result in a 26% increase in team collaboration and an 18% increase in team commitment.

Inclusive teams make better business decisions up to 87% of the time.

Teams that follow an inclusive process make decisions 2X faster with ½ the meetings.
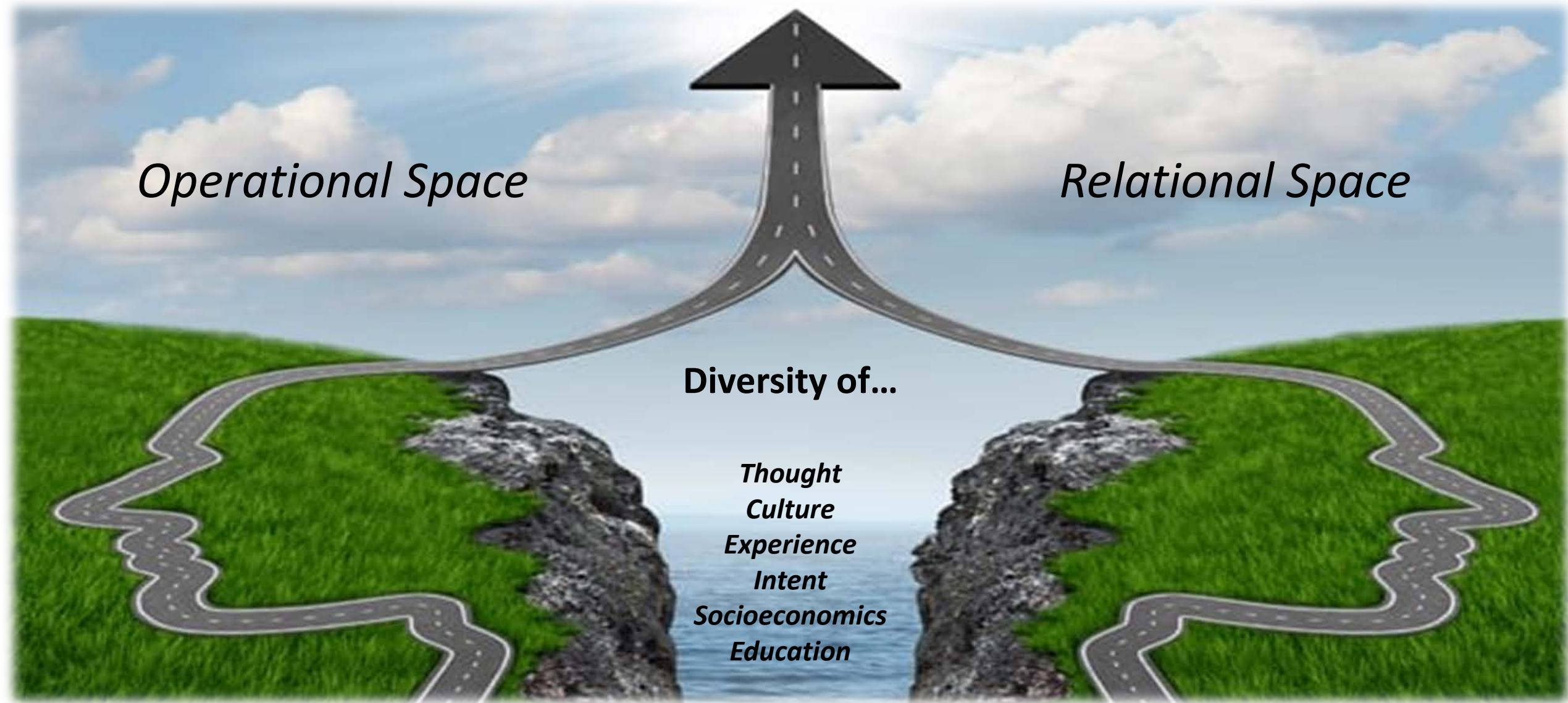
"People are not disturbed by things but, rather, by their view of things."

-- Albert Ellis

..and it would be great if all decisions were straightforward, but we often work in the _grey_

Making responsible, defensible decisions in this space requires *competence, confidence and courage.*

Operational Space

Relational Space

Diversity of...

Thought
Culture
Experience
Intent
Socioeconomics
Education

Clarifying expectations and creating desired outcomes is a shared responsibility.

Communication…Candor…Coaching…Care…Communication…Candor…Coaching…Care…Communication…Candor…Coaching

Here are some examples of what your definitions might look like:

➢ Equity is the foundation for all policies, practices and opportunities initiated by and on behalf of Organization A and its stakeholders. All decisions are made with a goal of acknowledging and respecting unique, individual and collective interests and basic human rights of all current and future members of Organization A.

➢ Diversity is celebrated within Organization A through its commitment to broad marketing and fair, objective evaluation in recruitment; attention to professional development and growth opportunities for all team members; and equitable, respectful consideration through all policies, practices and interactions within the work environment.

➢ More than an ideal, Inclusion is embraced as a lived experience as Organization A welcomes all team members to conscientiously weave their individual talents, knowledge and self-expression into the organization's mission, values and cultural framework to support excellence through all relationships and services.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

How does my employer's DEI(B) narrative shape my employment experience?

Do these basic definitions provide the clarity needed to ensure each member of Organization A
- Receives all the appropriately-applied rights and benefits;

- Is offered opportunities to participate in programs and/or receive services offered by the organization;

- Is welcomed to work with the organization in any approved capacity without being asked to conform to characteristics, behaviors or appearances that <u>are not</u> required to meet performance expectations or comply with statutory requirements; and

- Is provided an organizational environment that is free from bias and favoritism that would negatively impact an individual's ability to engage with others and work in an environment that promotes physical and psychological safety?

Society will benefit from moving away from the historically-tarnished perception of *diversity* when establishing recruitment strategies. When a public servant is hired, the end goal should not be focused on the impact to the department's racial/gender composition. <u>Recruitment should be focused on the broadest introduction of a personally and professionally rewarding career opportunity. The goal should be to offer a valid process to identify the most suitable candidates to be welcomed into a safe, progressive, mutually-respectful organizational culture that supports individuals in providing excellent service</u>.

--LaShon Ross' Perspective

The concept of diversity encompasses acceptance and respect. It means understanding that each individual is unique and recognizing our individual differences. This includes everyone – not just certain groups.

Mastering soft skills and unraveling myths positively influence cultural competence

For clarity's sake

Fair and equitable means fair and equitable.

Get to know the person.

Make expectations and evaluation criteria known.

Practice consistent application of policies and discipline.

Give all employees an equal chance to be heard—ideas and grievances.

Recognize employees for their contributions and ideas.

Managers should commit to being effective models and mentors.

Employees' wellbeing should be recognized and valued.

Be Intentional Toward Stated Goals

Actively recruit to enhance diversity within the applicant pool.

Review Job Descriptions and Vacancy Announcements to validate qualifications and screening processes.

Train Hiring Supervisors and Interviewers on the importance of objectivity, relevance and employment law compliance.

If the organization's mission and values contains words like equity, ethical, fairness, opportunity and inclusive, be sure to align culture and behavior with these behavioral expectations.

The notion of *putting people first* is a broadly embraced concept.
What does this mean...How is this done?

➢ Offer positive regard to all people so that fairness and respect are equally applied.

➢ Listen attentively to others to understand their perspectives and their experiences.

➢ Learn to separate issues from people so that biases and stereotypes are managed.

➢ Be aware, authentic and accountable as you interact with others.

➢ Do not allow disagreement to cancel communication.

➢ Model the values you and your organization uphold.

➢ Seek clarity first...before succumbing to emotions (*that are often rooted in misunderstanding*)

What is really happening?

> **If** many of us are taught from an early age that we should be kind to others; think before we speak; and restrain ourselves when we have an urge to say something disrespectful or inconsiderate; *and*

> **If** young people are taught about characteristics of kindness, teamwork and personal accountability through team sports, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and other youth-focused organizations; *and*

> **If** 70% of Americans participate in organized religions that prioritize kindness and regard for others; *and*

> **If** Atheists and Agnostics tend to be more driven by compassion to help others than are highly religious people; *and*

> **If** 90% of organizations/employers have Corporate Values that often stress consideration for others, teamwork and collaboration; *then*

What might account for this finding from Weber Shandwick and Powell Tate (KRC Research): *"75% of Americans see incivility as having reached 'crisis levels,' and 73% feel that the U.S. is 'losing stature as a civil nation'"?*

Minding Slippery Slopes

What if disrespectful, bullying behaviors look and feel like strength and confidence to me?

What if platitudes look and feel like empathy to me?

What if I equate inclusion and equity with not restricting entry – regardless of what interactions look and feel like inside the organization?

# Leaving nothing to chance

Confirming Civility & Respect

Define — Specifically state how employees are to behave each day so there is no confusion. Because of differing perspectives, what incivility is to one person may be normal, accepted behavior for another.

Align — *Managers should align by modeling valued behaviors; coaching expected behaviors; reinforcing aligned behaviors when seen; and redirecting misaligned behaviors when they occur.*

Refine — *Revisit and refine valued behaviors as needed. Some behaviors may become so embedded that they need no attention. New behaviors may be needed to refine the work environment and meet the needs of new generations of leaders and employees.*
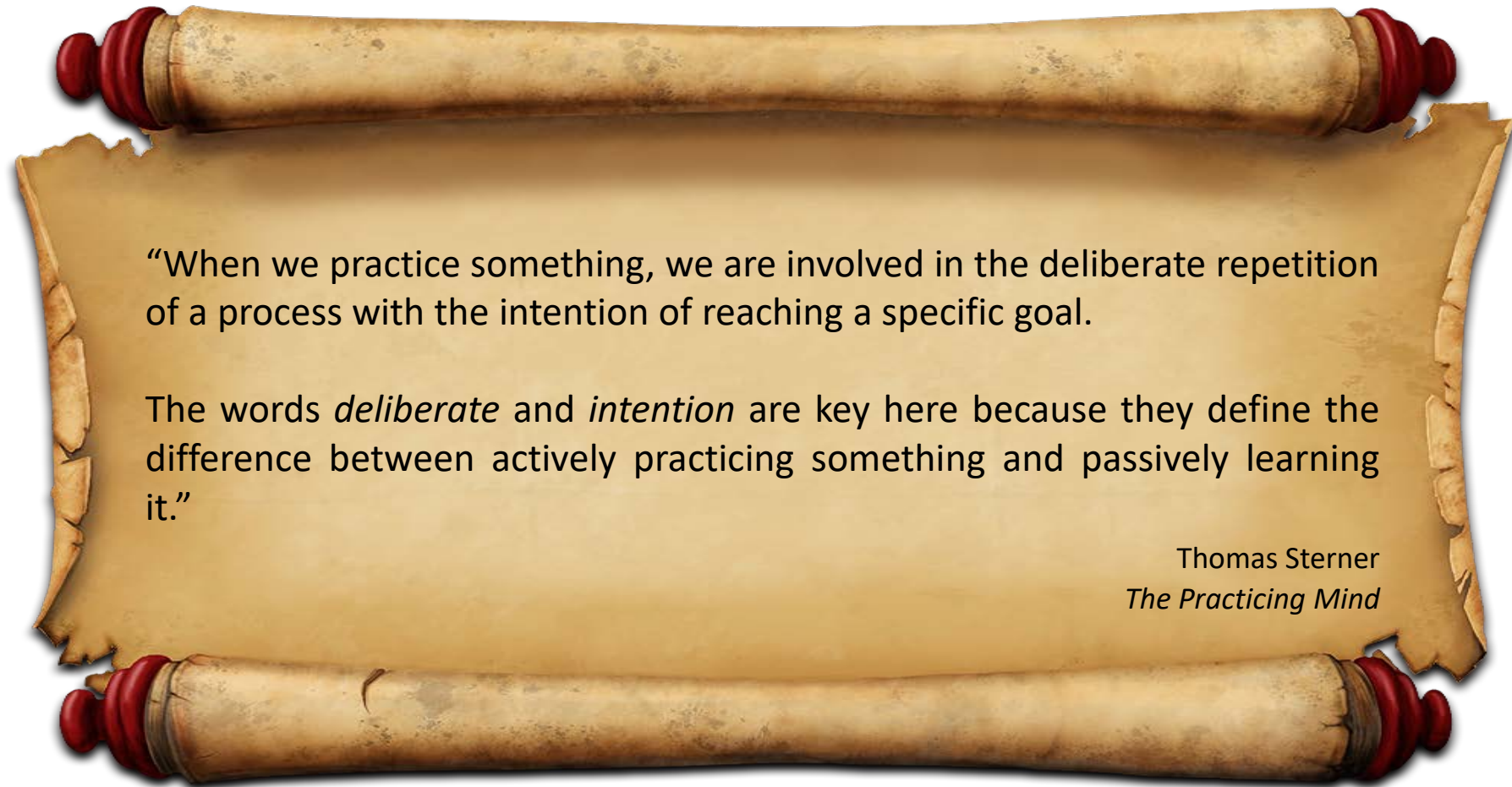
"When we practice something, we are involved in the deliberate repetition of a process with the intention of reaching a specific goal.

The words *deliberate* and *intention* are key here because they define the difference between actively practicing something and passively learning it."

Thomas Sterner
The Practicing Mind

When we learn better, are we expected to do better?

Culture is a determining factor

Be astute…chart the course

Align leadership development with corporate strategy.

Before blaming external forces, assess internal climate.

"Begin with the end in mind."

Have a vision and use it as a basis for decisions.

Address neurotic patterns of interaction that trigger conflict rather than promote accomplishment.
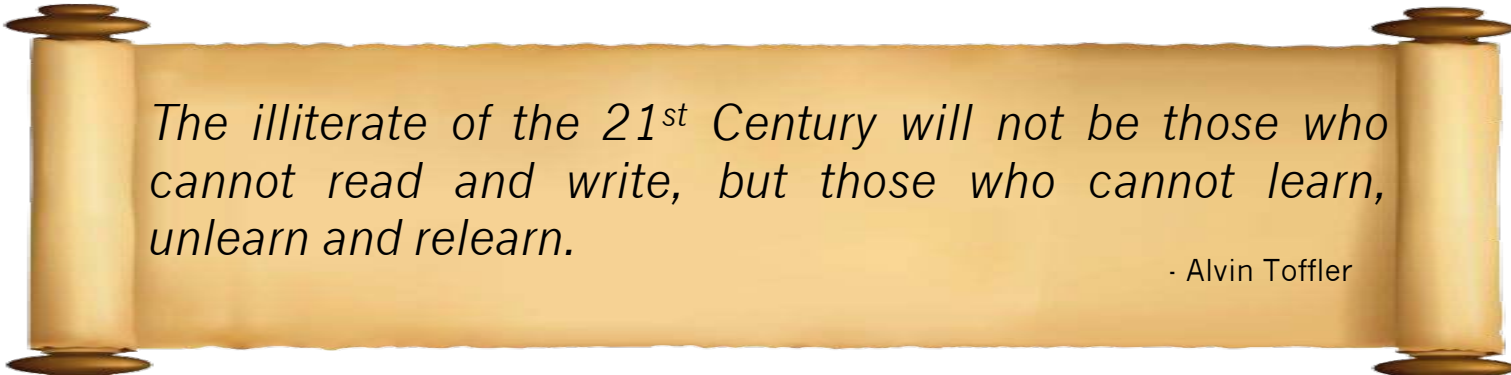
Set the stage for honest, respectful, solution-oriented communication.

Know your role; play your position…well.

Know yourself and how to effectively use language

➢ As societies and languages evolve, so do the meanings and intent of words.

➢ Because awareness and interpretation are experienced differently by individuals, communication styles and word choices can cause confusion and misunderstanding.

➢ In a world where people make a living at communicating, advertising and marketing (all found within municipal government), it is not only important to have clarity in your message; it is also important to think of your target audience and understand how they understand words and messages.

The illiterate of the 21st Century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn.

- Alvin Toffler

2020 Workplace Culture Report Results

--Emtrain

"We have seen for many years now, as company stakeholders, we have to deal with these bad outcomes that seem to catch us by surprise. The idea was to take these bad outcomes –the tricky culture issues like harassment, bias, ethical mistakes, violence- and map them back to the indicators that are tied to behaviors or situations that, in heightened levels or when combined with each other, produce these bad outcomes."

Although organizations increasingly encourage workers to voice their opinions and bring their whole selves to work, only 32% said they strongly agree they can be their authentic selves in the workplace.

46% said their coworkers understand the impact their words or behaviors have on others around them, and 23% said their coworkers can accurately pick up on the mood in the room.

When asked how they would address significant conflict between people with different life experiences
- 60% would talk with their manager later to discuss what happened
- 26% would go to HR or a Senior Leader to discuss or complain
- 7% would do nothing
- 7% would consider job hunting or changing teams

Then

what about reverse racism?
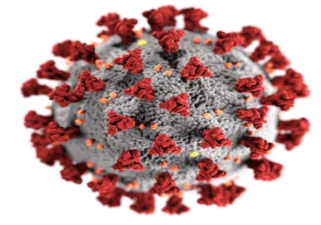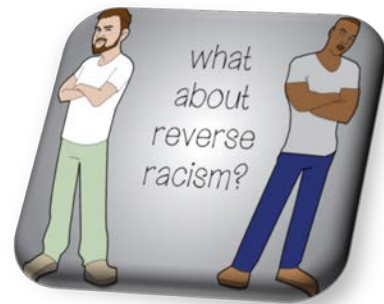
In these spaces, we have to find the language, commitment and courage to have meaningful, respectful dialogue to create solutions for issues that are yet to be embraced and understood...even as some of us choose to stockpile ammunition and energy to hold on to what was.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Louisville Take It Down
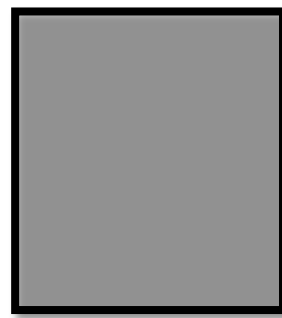
U.S. Flag, Pledge of Allegiance, and National Anthem Etiquette

#ME TOO
STOP sexual ASSAULT and HARASSMENT

black lives matter

COVID-19 Vaccine

In landmark case, Supreme Court rules LGBTQ workers are protected from job discrimination

Now

Cultural Competence

Promoting & Sustaining…Recognizing & Reinforcing

➢ Each of us views the world through our own set of lenses comprising what we have seen, heard, and experienced.

➢ Without honest, considerate communication, there is little opportunity for discovering common interests, clarifying misinterpretations, dispelling myths, and bridging gaps from (*what appears from* afar) to be differences.

➢ Learning the different means by which people perceive others puts us ahead of the curve in understanding behaviors.

➢ As our global society advances in communication with increasingly diverse cultures and individuals, we must strive toward improving and advancing our non-technical (interpersonal) capabilities.

➢ Often, greed drives the myth of scarcity that causes us to think we must destroy others to ensure we have an adequate "piece of the pie."

Awareness and Commitment are key

Promoting & Sustaining…Recognizing & Reinforcing

Awareness

Examine diversity-related values and beliefs to recognize deep-seated prejudices or stereotypes that may create barriers for learning and personal development.

Attitude

The stronger we feel about our beliefs and values, the more likely we will react emotionally when they collide with cultural differences.

Knowledge

Knowing how culture impacts problem solving, managing people and asking for help can keep us connected in cross-cultural interactions.

Skills

We must learn skills and have the opportunity to practice them if our knowledge and awareness are to be sufficient to avoid and manage cross-cultural landmines.

Preservation and respect for one's own culture does not require contempt or disrespect for other cultures.

Diversity is the same acknowledgement of difference it has always been.

Our perceptions and reactions are what drive the changes we see.

We own the outcomes.

Ultimately, how effectively we manage increasingly diverse environments is determined by each choice we make.

Why?

Because *Culture, People* and *Performance Matter*

...and Leaders Lead

When we <u>focus</u> and <u>do our work</u>, competence follows.