Understanding Privilege and its Role in Enhancing Equity

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After participating in this workshop, you will leave with a plan to strengthen your approach to allyship and engage in more genuine support activities.
Ground Rules

• We agree that I’m not here to teach you how to not be racist or biased or accuse you of being racist or biased.
• I will assume that everyone participating today is a good person.
• We need to agree that we are safe and not in any danger, even if we feel uncomfortable.
• We need to be willing to be uncomfortable.
• We will be honest in a way that prioritizes honesty, not what people think of us.
• We will resist the urge to get defensive.
• We will share and consider examples of our own behavior.
  • The Devil does not need an advocate in this space.
• We will give grace.
#1

Awareness and Empathy
Understanding Social Conditioning

Social Conditioning/Bias Develops:

• Over the course of a lifetime and beginning at a very early age:
  • i.e., Pink is for girls; blue is for boys.

• Through exposure to direct & indirect messages
  • Religious teachings
  • Children’s flash cards

• Through every type of media

• With reinforcement (or reflection) from our peers, family, professors, coaches, and others
### Awareness and Empathy: Understanding Different Perspectives

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The Danger of a Single Story
As the saying goes, “you can’t un-ring the bell”. What are some new perspectives you hope to bring into future conversations based on this context of privilege as a useful tool, not just a source of shame.
PROCESSING
BREAK
BREAK
#2
Action and Advocacy
Action and Advocacy:
Using Your Privilege to Enhance Equity

1. Take on the struggle as your own.
2. Transfer the benefits of your privilege to those who lack it.
3. Amplify voices of the oppressed before your own.
4. Acknowledge that even though you feel pain, the conversation is not about you.
5. Stand up, even when you feel scared.
6. Own your mistakes and de-center yourself.
7. Understand that your education is up to you and no one else.

Guidetoallyship.com
Action and Advocacy Enhancing Equity

Performative Allyship
@seerutkchawla

- Band wagoning
- PR/Brand/public profile management
- White fragility
- You're resentful
- Everyone's doing it so I have to
- Your statement appeared after you were called out
- Virtue signalling (showing receipts)
- You're benefitting
- Optics
- Centering yourself
Action and Advocacy Enhancing Equity

Authentic Allyship
@seerutkchawla

- Empathy/grief/outrage
- You're taking risks/holding yourself & others accountable
- Sitting with discomfort
- 'Brand' is of no concern
- It's not about you
- Educating yourself
- Not virtue signalling/ & taking real action
- Committed to anti-racist work
- Examining own privilege & using it to help
Action and Advocacy Enhancing Equity

Performative Allyship
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Optics
You're benefitting
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**Action and Advocacy: How to Address Problematic Behavior**

**BOTD**
- Benefit of the doubt:
  - I know you didn’t intend this, but when you mispronounce my name, I feel...

**Ask**
- Ask questions that reflect/raise awareness
  - How do your parents feel about you being heterosexual?

**Bring Attention**
- Bring attention to the PROCESS of the discussion
  - I’m noticing that whenever we talk about ________, someone changes the subject. I’m curious what others have noticed.

**Ask**
- Ask clarifying question
  - What has been your experience that led you to believe _____?
Action and Advocacy: Barriers to Addressing Bias in real time

Fear

• What if I make a mistake?
• What if I can’t handle the situation?
• What if I say something biased?
• People may get emotional, and I’m not prepared for that.
• Am I making this worse?

Prioritizing Personal Comfort

• The conversation will get out of control.
• Am I ready to have this conversation?
• What if I damage my relationships with others?
Deconstruct bias in real time – Tip #1

Resist the urge to be defensive:

- **Avoid**: “I don’t think [person] meant it that way.”
- **Try instead**: “That perspective hadn’t occurred to me. I’m sorry this comment made you feel that way. How can I help?”
Deconstruct bias in real time – Tip #2

Encourage accountability with grace:

- **Avoid:** “If it really made you that uncomfortable you should report it.”
- **Try instead:** “I believe [person] would be horrified to know they made you feel that way. Let’s try bringing it to their attention and if that doesn’t work, we can pursue other options.”
Deconstruct bias in real time – Tip #3

Step up with courage and vulnerability:

- **Avoid:** Silence due to fear of saying the wrong thing.
- **Try instead:** “I don’t know exactly how to approach this, but your comments have really made me uncomfortable. Can we discuss it?”
PROCESSING BREAK
#3

Practice Creates (Some) Comfort
GROUP DISCUSSION

Reflecting on Privilege

1. What did we learn?
2. Did anything surprise you?
Common Reasons We Retreat Rather than De-Escalate

Fear
- What if I make a mistake?
- What if I can’t handle the situation?

Prioritizing Personal Comfort
- Am I ready to participate in this discussion?
- Am I making this worse?

Prioritizing Personal Reputation
- If I don’t do this well, I’ll let people down.
- If I don’t manage this well, people will get hurt.
Ways to De-Escalate a Conversation

You are in a subordinate role

Benefit of the doubt:
- I know you didn’t intend this, but...

Acknowledge the emotion:
- You seem very frustrated right now and I’m finding it difficult to engage.

With direct reports/those with lower rank and students

Offer affirmation:
- You have a right to be frustrated and I’m sorry for what I did to contribute to your frustration.
- That’s fair
- I never thought of it that way and I appreciate you bringing it to my attention
- You are allowed to express all of your emotions with me.
David: Have you spoken to Frank about the position you were hoping to fill?
Kelly: Yes, but he said there wasn’t any room in the budget for it.
David: Are you sure? When I was in the men’s room I heard him telling Allen that a project was being tabled so it would open up some funds for other projects. I’m pretty sure Allen is going to get a position funded now, so maybe you should circle back.
Kelly: Wow... why wasn’t that mentioned during the leadership meeting?
David: I don’t know. Maybe it happened afterwards?
Kelly: Well why wouldn’t he circle back with me if he knew I had a position to fill? This is classic boys club behavior.
David: Whoa... calm down. I wouldn’t have mentioned it to you if I had known you were going to be upset.
Kelly: Really? Important budget decisions are being made in the men’s bathroom, but I’m the problem for calling it out?
David: Whatever. Just don’t tell Frank I told you. I only told you because you’re one of the Deans I trust. I don’t want any part of the backlash if you don’t handle this the right way.
Kelly: Don’t worry. I know you’re still new

1. Identify all the persons with privilege and how they use it in this scenario?
2. What can each person present or mentioned do differently to reduce the tension?

Frank is the CFO; Kelly is a Dean; David is a Dean from a different school.
Report Out:

1. Identify all the persons with privilege and how they use it in this scenario?

2. What can each person present or mentioned do differently to reduce the tension?
Realistically, how often do you believe you can deploy these methods with people who have NOT attended this training?

- What would be the most difficult aspect and how can you overcome it?
Bringing it all together...
Action and Advocacy: Assessing Your Environment

Highlight Inclusive Spaces/Communities

• Where are the spaces in your organization that are safe and welcoming for all? (Note: there is a difference between “open” to all and “welcoming” to all)
• What evidence do you have that the spaces you oversee (i.e. your building(s), your office, your classroom) are welcoming?

Areas for Improvement

• Which spaces and departments seem to overwhelmingly attract people with privilege?
• What strategies could we implement today to be more inclusive?
TAKEAWAYS

- You must see privilege as useful before you can use it to create more equity.
- Engaging in uncomfortable conversations requires courage and vulnerability.
- Leaning into the emotion of the conversation can often de-escalate faster than trying to minimize or run away from it.
QUESTIONS?
Thank you!

Please remember to complete the *event evaluation*. Your comments will help us continually improve the quality of our programs.
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<td>Proficient in the use of “Standard” English</td>
<td>14. English Literacy</td>
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<td>15. Marital Status</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parent of children born within a 2-parent heterosexual marriage</td>
<td>16. Parental Status</td>
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<tr>
<td>More years on campus</td>
<td>17. Years of experience</td>
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<td>U.S. citizen</td>
<td>18. Immigration Status</td>
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<td>Suburban; valued region of U.S.</td>
<td>19. Geographic region</td>
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<tr>
<td>Light skin; European/Caucasian features</td>
<td>20. Skin color; phenotype</td>
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<td>Nuclear family with 2 parents in a heterosexual relationship</td>
<td>21. Family Status</td>
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<td>Extrovert; task-oriented; analytical; linear thinker</td>
<td>22. Work Style</td>
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