

Diversity

Purpose: To create an inclusive mentorship program where the differences of all people are respected, valued and utilized towards achieving a common goal.

Objectives: This workshop will give you the tools to effectively:

1. Define diversity
2. Understand yourself
3. Comprehend the difference between paradigms and perceptions

Benefits: Participation in this workshop will help you to:

- Begin appreciating and embracing differences

Supplies: Some supplies are optional and can be substituted for other materials:

- Copies of the “Diversity” handout
- Copies of the “Centers” worksheet
- Large pieces of paper
- Markers

Part 1 (10 min): Workshop Introduction

1. Welcome the group and introduce yourself and the workshop topic. Grasp the group’s attention and ask them how they are, wait to get a response, etc.
2. Review the “Purpose, Objectives and Benefits” (POB).
3. Introduce the Diversity Circle activity.

Facilitator should: Begin the diversity circle by having participants stand in a circle facing the center of the circle. Inform the participants you will be reading off statements and if the statements apply to them they will need to take a step inside the circle. For example: “I identify myself as a dog owner.” The participants who identify themselves with this statement now take a step forward in the circle and acknowledge the other participants who also took a step forward. Proceed with having the participants step back to their original spot in the circle and continue reading statements. Potential statements could include the following:

I identify myself as:

- Having an older sibling
- Coming from a single parent family
- Someone that likes to dance
- Being a student that obtained a C in a class
- Being the first child in my family to go to college
- Having a sibling in college
- Speaking two languages
- Owning more than two pets
- Having a job
- Someone who has traveled outside the US

The objective of this activity is to help the participants visually understand how we all share differences and commonalities.

Part 2 (15 min): What is Diversity?

This workshop will help you brainstorm on the meaning of diversity. Being able to write thoughts linked to the meaning of diversity will plant the seed for a later discussion.

1. Divide the participants into small groups of four to five.
2. Distribute a large piece of paper and have your participants brainstorm on the definition of diversity
3. Review your participants' examples and explain to your audience the dictionary definition of diversity
4. Explain to your participants that the American Heritage dictionary defines diversity as "the fact or quality of being diverse; difference." Emphasize that the differences people bring to the group such as race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, geographic background, education and economic background make us more knowledgeable and stronger.
5. Have each group share to the rest of the participants their definition of diversity and have a discussion of the findings.

Part 3 (25 min): Diversity, Paradigms and Centers Overview

1. Go over the "Diversity" handout (two pages) and explain to your participants the meaning of:
 - Perceptions
 - Paradigms
 - Centers
2. Read the definitions of perceptions, paradigms and centers. Have each participant share with his/her neighbor examples of all of the three meanings.

Examples of Perceptions:

- Bald head and baggy clothes = gangster
- Someone driving a Mercedes car = rich

Examples of Paradigms:

- Pit-bull dog = violent and unfriendly dog
- Money = Happiness

Examples of Centers:

- "I am centered around school"
- "I am centered around my boyfriend/girlfriend"

3. Once the participants have completed reviewing and discussing the "Diversity" handout, have them fill out the "Centers" worksheet.
4. Have a discussion about how centers can positively and negatively affect a person. For example: when you are centered around your boyfriend/girlfriend you view your center optimistically but once the boyfriend/girlfriend relationship ends in a breakup the center suddenly becomes negative.
5. Ask the participants to brainstorm how a once positive center, now negative, might affect a person.
6. What can be done to avoid this?

Part 4 (5min): Using Diversity to Create Synergy

1. Explain: Synergy is achieved when people work together to create a better solution than could have been achieved alone. It is not "your way or my way," but an overall better way. Synergy is celebrating differences, teamwork, open mindedness, and finding new and better ways to accomplish your goals.

Part 5 (5min): Workshop Debrief

1. Relevant Questions:
 - How does this workshop help you view yourself and others?
 - Can you remember a time when you constructed a perception based on observations?
 - What was the most important thing you learned from today's workshop?
2. This workshop was intended to help you understand the meaning of diversity and instill in you the importance of accepting and embracing differences. After all, we are all different in many different ways.
3. Take/ answer questions
4. Thank you!

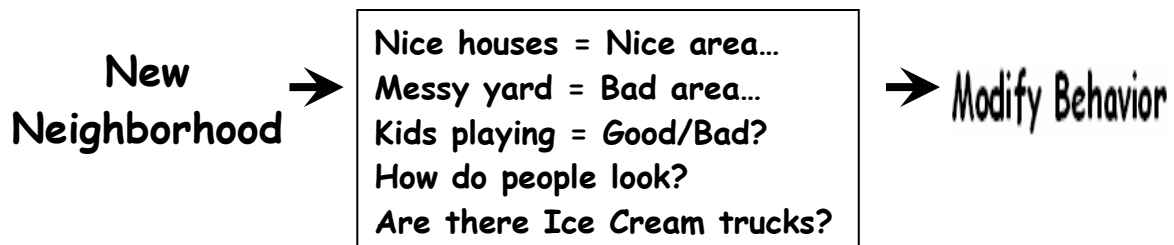
DIVERSITY

We all have incomplete images
of people, places and events...

new people new teachers

new parts new new
of town experiences neighborhood
new schools

Perceptions are scripts that we have developed over time about people or events that we have little information about. When we hear stories, meet new people and experience new events, we have a natural tendency to fill in gaps of the un-familiar with information that we have picked up from other similar experiences we have had in the past. Another word for *perceptions* is *paradigms*, the way that an individual experiences something, their frame of reference, or belief...like looking through sunglasses.



Perceptions and Paradigms

Paradigms of Self:

Negative self-paradigms always put limitations on us. Think about the person who always feels they are never going to do well in his/her math class. If that is his/her paradigm, do you think that person is ever going to do well in his/her math class?

Positive paradigms work to make us more motivated and provide more direction when we set out to accomplish things. One way to develop a more positive view of your self is to spend time with people who believe in you and build you up.

i.e., you just bought a new outfit and you believe you are the best dressed person in the crowd.

Paradigms of Others:

Similarly, paradigms we hold of others help us to understand why people might behave the way they do. Remember the last time you met someone for the first time. Where were they from? What were they wearing? How did they talk? Did these factors paint a picture of this new person for you? When your behavior and feelings towards a person is influenced by the paradigm you developed, problems may arise.

i.e., your classmate is absent frequently and is failing English class. You automatically assume he/she is failing because he/she is ditching class. However, you later learn that the reasons for the frequent absences are because he/she has been diagnosed with cancer and must attend chemotherapy sessions.

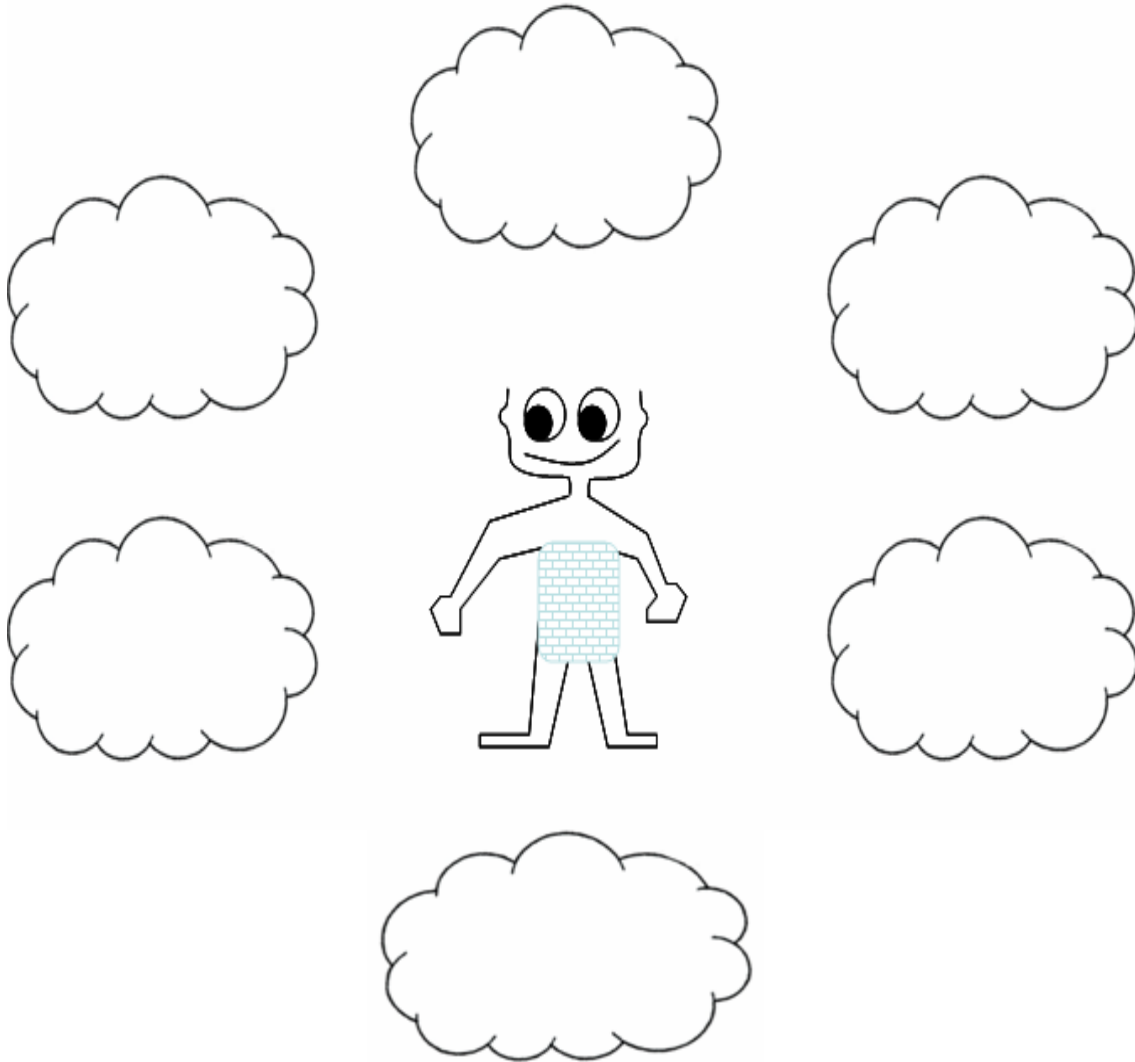
Paradigms of Life:

Just like with ourselves and with others, we also have paradigms about the world. You can determine what some of your paradigms are by asking yourself questions such as “What do I spend my time thinking about?” “What is my driving force?” “What do I look forward to every morning?” As a teen many of your paradigms are *centered* on friends, parents, school, boys/girls, and “stuff.” Be aware that just as they each have strengths they can also be distractions if you *center* your life on any one of them.

i.e., “if only I were rich, I would be the happiest person alive.” You perceive money as happiness, not understanding that money does not equal happiness.

Centers Worksheet

**Fill-in the centers that
you are part of...**



Instructions: Identify the centers that are a central part of your life.
Write your centers inside each cloud. Remember there are different centers that we may focus on.
For example, friends, parent, boys/girls, heroes, MySpace, school, etc.