Living & Breathing Diversity as a Leader

1. Up – Down
   - Applause symbolizes a key skill for welcoming people at work.
   - Applause lets people know we are glad each group is in the room.
   - Cheering groups on that people belong to lets them know we are proud of them.
   - People get a chance to practice noticing similarities and differences.
   - People also notice the variety of similarities and differences.

2. Pairs
   - Talking openly about groups you are a member of makes it easier for everyone in a group to claim their own identity and pride.
   - Participants learn about the wide range of groups that are included when we speak of diversity.
   - Participants have an opportunity to notice which group identity has primary effect on their leadership – and begin to identify strengths and struggles (often, as a result of a history of oppression).
   - Participants expand their understanding of the strengths and struggles people may bring to a meeting, a work project, or a relationship based on different group identities.

3. First Thoughts
   - Participants openly look at their own records to increase success in relationships with people of all diverse backgrounds.
   - Participants learn that we have all been contaminated by records about each other. A culturally competent leader will want to examine and get rid of these records.
   - A culturally competent leader will also want to create an environment where records can be acknowledged.

4. Caucuses
   - Caucusing, and giving time for people to meet with members of their own group, can increase everyone’s participation in a workplace or school community.
   - Culturally competent leaders will want to know those things that people never again want others to say think or do towards their group, in order to be a more effective leader.
• Structuring effective, respectful conversation about race and differences in a workplace setting should include support for separate constituency/affinity group work.
• A culturally competent leader will want to incorporate constituency/affinity group work into their workplace in a way that increases greater unity of the whole.
• Setting aside time for caucusing/affinity group meetings regularly increases the overall cultural competency of an organization.

7. Speak-Outs

• A culturally competent leader will appreciate the value of listening regularly to people’s stories.
• Effective conversations about race and differences should always include a significant component of listening to stories.
• One of the best tools for improving cross-cultural relationships is making time on a regular basis for people to ask each other questions and listen to each other’s stories.
• At the core of the story telling is an opportunity to learn how people from different groups experience mistreatment.
• Understanding how people from different groups have experienced mistreatment enables leaders to develop non-oppressive policies.
• Developing listening skills through listening to stories of others increases empathy and strengthens leadership and organizational capacity.

8. Skill Training: Handling Oppressive Comments and Upsets; Giving and Receiving Feedback

• Culturally competent leaders will know how to respond to oppressive jokes, comments, and slurs in a non-oppressive way that increases the likelihood that a person can make changes.
• An effective leader knows how to develop several allies at work who can listen out to upsets without engaging or being confused by them.
• A culturally competent leader can listen out to the upsets underlying an oppressive comment without blame, targeting, or judgment.
• Listening out to another’s upset as non-defensively as possible is a prerequisite before giving and receiving feedback.
• A culturally competent leader will practice giving and receiving feedback in a tone that can decrease defensiveness.