Cultural Diversity: Discussion Topics

The following questions can be used to discuss diversity in the workplace. Consider working through these questions with coworkers as a way to constructively explore issues of inclusion and diversity. Conversations with employees about diversity and inclusion are a great indicator of the cultural competency of the group and can indicate where further work is needed.

- What is diversity?
- What might be barriers to valuing diversity?
- Discuss: “It is the responsibility of the employer to ensure a work environment which is bias-free and inclusive for all employees.”
- How can we understand how our behavior affects others?
- How can we better learn to understand, respect, and value individual differences?
- How can we develop strategies for working together to increase productivity and to attain better results?
- Discuss the implications of “agreeing to disagree.”
- How can we work to inspire a shared vision?
- Do groups with diverse members make better decisions? Discuss.
- What are the challenges when an organization practices valuing diversity?
- What benefits result when an organization practices valuing diversity? Are benefits greater than costs involved?
- When we value the diversity of different groups, why is it important to understand the groups’ histories of oppression? Why not?
- How does racism/sexism/ageism/heterosexism/ableism affect an entire community?
- Explain and discuss: “Texas was Mexico before it was Texas.”
- Discuss: “A positive stereotype does not exist.”
- What are examples of terms that may be acceptable when used by members of one culture when talking to one another, but not acceptable when used by a person from another culture? Identify the cultural group and terms.
- Discuss: Do you consider yourself to be culturally competent when interacting and talking with persons of the following groups?
• Persons with various types of disabilities.
• Persons who are gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered.
• Persons with a religion different than your own.
• Persons with a different race, ethnicity, and/or nationality than your own.

Are there any groups you are more competent about than others?

• Discuss: Each of us should learn to be accountable for what we say and do, such that when accused of being discriminatory or harassing, we do not fall back on a somewhat common response of “That is not what I meant.”

• How do cultural influences (television, media, etc.) make whiteness (or heterosexuality, or Christianity) the norm and people of color (or non-heterosexuals or non-Christians) “the other”?

http://cearthur.wordpress.com/pub_pres/equityinclusion/