Diversity, Inclusion, and the Next Generation

*"The great organizations are those that **attract** differences. They seek **harmony**, not uniformity. They hire color, culture, talent, and employees who are willing to experience personal transformation. They strive for **oneness**, not sameness."*

—Gil Atkinson

NDaRECs
North Dakota Association of
Rural Electric Cooperatives
Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative

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Core Objective

To recognize our role in creating an *inclusive culture* and being *responsible* for the ways in which we interact with the people we work alongside and members we serve.

Direction For Our Time

1. *Define* diversity and inclusion.

2. *Experience* diversity from a personal perspective.

3. Define *small acts of inclusion*® and social networking with respect to cultural transformation.

4. Create a *personal accountability* system for bridging differences experienced in the workplace and community.

Defining Diversity

Diversity is:

- *a **value**, established to*
- ***leverage** the power of differences, to*
- *create **exceptional** performance*

Diversity is synonymous with differences.

*The essence of leveraging the **power of differences** is a workplace environment where employees are motivated to **synergize differences** through engagement, support, and inclusion.*

Dimensions of Diversity

Diversity dimensions are classified into three categories:

- *Human Diversity*—physically distinguishing characteristics

- *Cultural Diversity*—beliefs, values, personal characteristics, and worldview

- *Systems Diversity*—structure, systems, and functions

A Diversity Exercise—An Individual Perspective

Have a 10-minute conversation.

In your conversation discuss the following:

- Which of these dimensions do you best navigate?

- What is the characteristic that creates the greatest challenge?

- What major challenge would you need to resolve in order to begin resolution?

Conclusion: The major differences you experience during your working interactions is your personal definition of diversity.

Defining Inclusion

Inclusion is an **employee/member-supportive environment** where **all** employees and members experience equitable opportunity for personal success and to contribute to the organization's success.

An employee-supportive workplace:

- wanted for their diverse membership
- respected as a person in terms of human equality
- valued for the unique, creative perspective they bring

In essence, "What's it like to work here?"

Defining Inclusion

Equitable opportunity means that inclusion is interwoven into the culture, in terms of:

- *mentoring, coaching, and development*

- *visible opportunities, continuous learning, and advancement*

- *Education, training, and exceptional performance*

In essence, "Do I have equitable opportunity for success?"

Small Acts of Inclusion

"Inclusion offers unlimited opportunities where it is presented in a positive light, embraced by the organization, and carefully integrated into the organizational culture."

—William A. Guillory, Ph.D

Small Acts of Inclusion®

Small Acts of Inclusion® is an organizational initiative designed to create an inclusive culture. It focuses on the personal and performance-oriented ways we work together to support our mutual success and the success of the organization.

When small acts are done with *honesty, integrity*, and *no expectation* in return, they have the power to create *inclusive relationships*—characterized by mutual *acceptance, trust,* and *support.*

Social Networking and Viral Dissemination

- *Social Networking* is the process of using everyday interpersonal and virtual interactions between co-workers and members to create cultural transformation.

- The ultimate objective of social networking is to transform the culture by *viral dissemination* through *small acts of inclusion*®.

Small Acts of Inclusion®

"*Authentic human interaction is the most powerful phenomenon for invalidating perceptions we have about each other that have no basis in experiential reality.*"

—Innovations International, Inc.
Small Acts of Transformation

Small Acts of Inclusion Based Upon Core Values

Integrity

- Keep your word—or don't promise

- Be honest with co-workers and members

- Be trustworthy

- Be mindful of others people's shortcomings

- Never gossip about others or participate in listening to gossip

- Solicit feedback about your sensitivity to others

- Say "thank you" more often— and mean it!

- Say only good things about others to co-workers

Performance

- Mentor someone outside of your comfort zone

- Adopt a mind-set of 100% responsibility and 100% accountability

- Give and receive constructive feedback to someone you work with

- Acknowledge outstanding performance by others

- Hold others accountable for their workplace performance

- Teach someone a skill that you know well

- Learn a new skill weekly

- Adopt a practice for personal growth

Collaboration

- Create opportunities for team members to socialize together

- Build informal rapport with co-workers/team members

- Examine the interpersonal quality of your team

- Reinforce a team member's strengths

- Be fully present at team meetings—put away messaging devices

- Respect other's time

- Be an example of what you expect of others

- Communicate routinely across silos

Diversity Behaviors for Creating a More Inclusive Workplace and Community

1. Relating to Others who are Different – Be *authentic and honest* in relating to others who are *different.*

2. Creating Trust – *Gain trust* in others, where differences are involved, by sharing something about yourself.

3. Connecting – Be more *interested* than interesting.

4. Listening to Others – *Listen* openly to the opinions and ideas of others to ensure you understand, particularly if they are *different* from yours.

5. Resolving Differences – *Shift your perspective* when dealing with a difficult co-worker or member.

Diversity Behaviors for Creating a More Inclusive Workplace and Community

6. Creating Inclusive Relationships – Be *sensitive* in your communications that affect your relationship with others.

7. Accepting Change – *Being open* to change occurs more smoothly when you understand the true source of your resistance.

8. Experiencing Change – Use workplace projects and interactions with co-workers and members to experience changing permanently in small steps.

9. Equality and Respect – Become aware if you treat some co-workers or members with more or less respect or equality as a person.

10. Unexpected Learning Events – Be more aware of unexpected learning experiences.

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