Training leaders for cultural responsiveness and equity accountability: A road map for designing, facilitating and sustaining an organizational change initiative

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Session objectives

1. Learn to design, facilitate and sustain an organizational change initiative that stretches leaders' comfort zones.

2. Identify training activities that increase awareness about inequities and various privileges at the workplace.

3. Learn to align leadership development with a larger IDEA strategy.

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Intercultural training design foundations

Intercultural Training Design Model

Training culturally responsive leaders

- Design training for leaders in many forms, not just those in the C-suite or in management.
- Help leaders realize that authority and privilege is a tool for achieving equity.
- Make the most of leaders' time and money.
  - Give them what they need for their work environment.
    - Ensure training is based on learners' needs.
    - Activities are linked to other leadership competencies and training programs.
  - Employ the right training team for the job.
    - Create training team harmony, sync and difference in styles.
    - Build self-awareness of trainer competencies (Paige, 1996)
      - Experience in culturally diverse settings
      - Knowledge
      - Skills
      - Personal qualities:
        - Behavioral flexibility
        - Cultural identity
        - Empathy
        - Interpersonal skills
        - Enthusiasm and commitment
        - Patience
        - Respect
        - Tolerance of ambiguity
        - Sense of humor
        - Openness to new experiences and people
- A note about ethics
  - Beta test each activity before using in training. Seek feedback and adjust, as needed.
  - Learners' well-being remains as a central focus.
  - Remember: Do no harm. Meet participants where they are. Behavior change does not always happen in the classroom.
Equity accountability

- Aligning with IDEA strategy

  Organizational mission
  └──>
  Department goals and business needs
  └──>
  Leadership competencies and behaviors

- Continuous learning and development
  - Create ongoing learning opportunities following training
    - Annual booster session
    - Regular communication through blogs, emails or newsletters
    - Develop and offer online learning modules
    - Webpage of resources with links to tools, readings, talks, local trainings
    - Offer to coach graduates on individual cases or with regular frequency
    - Host department sessions (attend meetings, retreats, intact teams)
    - Host a summer reading club featuring a book selected by graduates
    - Offer Train-the-Trainer sessions for HR and other DEI professionals, especially those embedded within departments
    - Facilitate sessions for HR practitioners who regularly work with leaders to embed cultural competency into regular interactions (i.e. global coaching, training, GROW conversations, hiring, discipline, etc.)

- Sustaining the program
  - Analyze the return on investment and impact of the program
  - Meet program budget targets
  - Share program results with senior leaders and ask for more support
  - Maintain a pulse on the organization's business initiatives, all employee needs and wants
Impact of the Intercultural Communication for OHSU Leadership Program

Highlights:

- Total number of participants in the program since 2015: 165
- Number of training sessions offered: 20 (L1-12, L2-6, B-2)
- Number of employees who have been indirectly impacted by ICL: 1,701
- Percent who have completed both levels of ICL: 29% (52)
- Average number of ICL Booster class participants: 32
- Rate of participant turnover: 25% (135 out of 179 are currently employed)
- Engagement scores in par with OHSU’s average

Post-Class Survey Results (based on the last open enrollment class offered December 2018):

- What value did you find the skills and content presented in the program (0 to 5)? 4.73
- How likely are you to use the skills and content presented in the program? 4.82
- How would you rate the overall relevance of this program to you and your position? 4.82
- Would you recommend this program to others? Yes (100%)

Impact Study of ICL

ICL participants were asked what actions they had taken towards increasing inclusion, diversity, equity or accessibility in their work environment since participating in ICL. Most participants were reflecting how this training had impacted their self-awareness, mindfulness of their own biases and perspective-taking skills. Many of the participants discussed their deliberate efforts to increase the recruitment of diverse staff. They were more thoughtful in reviewing resumes of diverse candidates and being mindful of their biases in selection.

Participants became more aware of the impact of their communication behaviors. They left space to hear from others, be open to feedback, and ask probing questions before responding defensively (i.e. “Tell me more about...”). Many of the participants became more careful how they were saying things, ensuring that they were kinder and inclusive with the language they used. They also slowed the conversation down. They observed and listened more. They were more likely to pause before they started speaking or writing a message in order to think about any cultural impact it may have.

Managers created space for difficult conversations, attempting to raise awareness of cultural competency and its importance in the workplace and educational environment. Many managers changed their thinking that fairness is based on “the one-size fits all” model, defining equity as a situation where everyone gets the same services and treatment. The workshop increased managers’ understanding and empowerment to make adjustments to benefit their team members based on their unique needs.

The impact reached outside the manager-employee relations. Some teams begun conversations about how they could better incorporate considerations about health disparities into their research, discussed how to revamp their approach to internships to improve equity, and raised the HR practices related to equity to a focus area for the next quarter. Some manager were now actively looking for opportunities to participate in diversity initiatives and promoting strategic thinking on equity and inclusive best practices. This included efforts to encouraging the entire leadership team to take this class independently or mandating them to do so as an intact team.
Book recommendations for leadership and intercultural development
References


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