Communicating Respectfully in a Diverse World

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Outline

• Key Definitions.
• Small Group Discussion I.
• Video.
• Small Group Discussion II.
• Why People Stay Silent.
• Concluding Remarks.
Learning Objectives

• After completing this session, you should be able to:
  • Define stereotypes and bias, and identify biased and stereotypical comments.
  • Summarize approaches for speaking up when you hear bias or stereotypical statements.
  • Identify the most common reasons people remain silent in the face of stereotypes and bias.
Definitions

• Stereotype: an oversimplified image or statement applied to a whole group, without regard for the individual; cognitive domain.

• Bias: a predisposition to see events, people, or items in a positive or negative way; attitude or belief.
Definitions (cont)

• Stereotypes can be explicit or implicit.
  • Explicit: consciously and deliberately maintained.
  • Implicit: unconscious linkages that are automatically activated.

• Examples with height and the relationship with power and leadership.*


“No, Where are you REALLY FROM?”

“You don’t act like a normal black person ya’ know?”

“Was your brother in a gang?”
“Why do you sound White?”

“What are you? is NOT a cute introduction.”

“Well you don’t look Indian…”
The University as a Diverse Community

- Although universities like Texas A&M are places that generally respect and embrace a diverse views and experiences...
  - Students, faculty, and staff all have stereotypes and biases

- And, sometimes people working in university settings say things, intentionally or unintentionally, that may be hurtful to some individuals
We know from the Headline News Story Activity, sometimes people on university campuses say things that are hurtful to others based on stereotypes

- Ex. US University Sued over Malaysian PhD student’s suicide after months of racist abuse (The Straits Times, Aug. 7, 2019)
- Ex. Texas A&M investigating ‘abhorrent’ viral video of student using racial slurs in fake biology lesson (Yahoo, July 13, 2019)
An Important Note....
More Definitions

• **Micro-Aggressions** – small and daily verbal or behavioral actions, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate a prejudiced view towards members of a group

• “Pile-On Principle”
  • Micro-Aggressions add up quickly, and help explain why a person might seem “sensitive” to one well-intended comment
  • Maura Cullen, *35 Dumb Things Well-Intended People Say* (2008)
Why Speak Up?

Silent collusion versus ally behavior.

“The simply act of naming a bias as such or objecting to it on the spot establishes a social atmosphere that discourages it: saying nothing serves to condone it.” – Daniel Goleman.
Think-Pair-Share (15 minutes)

Describe a time when...

• You were exposed to stereotypes in popular culture. What message did it send?
• You have been the recipient or target of a stereotype. How did that affect you?
• You have witnessed someone else being stereotyped. What did you do?
Impact of Stereotypes

Watch a brief video, followed by small group discussion, and report out.
Six Techniques for Speaking Up

Assume good intent and explain impact
Ask a question
Interrupt and redirect
Make it individual
Broaden to university human behavior
Say “ouch!”
Six Techniques for Speaking Up

Review the vignettes and identify the Speaking Up techniques used. In some cases, there might be more than one technique.
Silent Collusion

• When a person goes along with something by remaining silent
  • Silence is perceived as agreeing

“We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the hateful words and actions of the bad people but for the appalling silence of the good people.”
  – Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Why We Can’t Wait (Letter from Birmingham Jail)

Why do people stay quiet or fail to Speak Up?
What are reasons professors might choose to remain quiet?
What are steps you can take to be prepared to Speak Up?
Passive Bystander vs. Pro-Active Ally?

- **Bystander** – refers to a person who is present, but not involved; chance spectator; onlooker

- **Passive Bystander** – witnesses a negative situation, but remains silent

- **Pro-Active Ally** – witnesses a negative situation, and responds by taking action to address the situation
Techniques for Pro-Active Allies

• Ask a Question

• Appeal to Empathy

• Interrupt & Redirect

• Make it Individual/Personal
Skills Practice

• Read the four vignettes.

• Discuss your response with the person sitting next to you.

• Be prepared to share.
Other Ways to “Do Something”

- **Be An Ally.** Seek out programs and resources that will teach you to be an effective advocate for diversity and social justice.
  
diversity.tamu.edu – Programs & resources
greendot.tamu.edu – Bystander Intervention Training

- **Report Hate or Concerning Behavior.** Report anonymously or confidentially.
  
stophate.tamu.edu – Online reporting system for hate/bias incidents
tellsomebody.tamu.edu – Online Reporting system for concerning behavior

- **Engage in Self Care.** If you are impacted, remember to take actions to protect your own physical, mental, and emotional well-being.
Reflection

• Spending two minutes each, share with a neighbor:
  • Key points you learned today.
  • Any ‘ah-ha’ moments.
  • How you might apply the material in your personal or work life.
Learning Outcomes (Review)

• Having completed this session, you should now be able to:
  • Define stereotypes and bias, and identify biased and stereotypical comments.
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