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Let's Talk
About It!
Series

BLACK
LIVES
MATTER

Race & Workplace Trauma During the Age of #BlackLivesMatter

The Winters Group, Inc. *Let's Talk About It! Series*
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Survey Comments

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“I am a Black mother and I can't help but think about the safety of my son and my husband on a daily basis.”

“I am part of a bi-racial family. Continuously having to discuss sequential occurrences is challenging and disheartening.”

“Realizing how privilege comes with being born white has left me brokenhearted. There are habits, life-choices, and instincts that I will never have to practice because of this.”

“The back to back events have been exhausting and are creating more stress in the already stressful day to day life.”

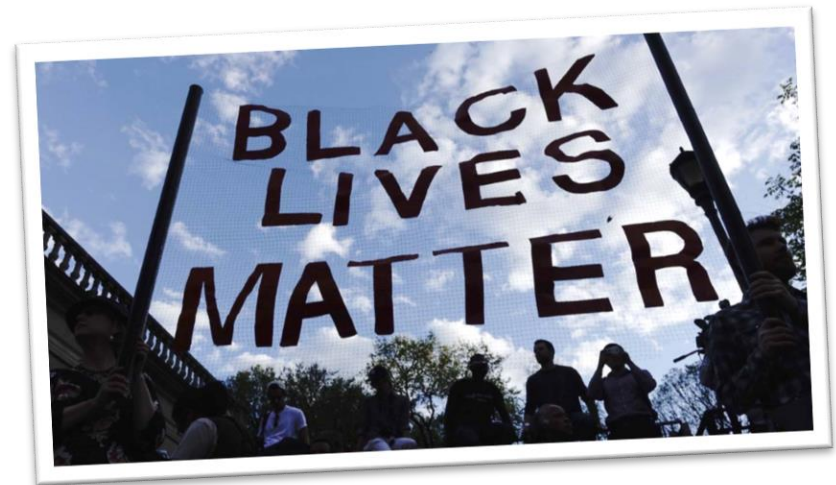
“I neutralize myself at work. I have much stronger views and opinions, but can't express them.”

“While my company promotes diversity, equality, and tolerance, everyone seems to be very hush hush regarding the latest crimes against blacks. However, emails voicing sympathy towards the Orlando night club victims and the Nice victims were sent out within a week of the events. Why is that?”

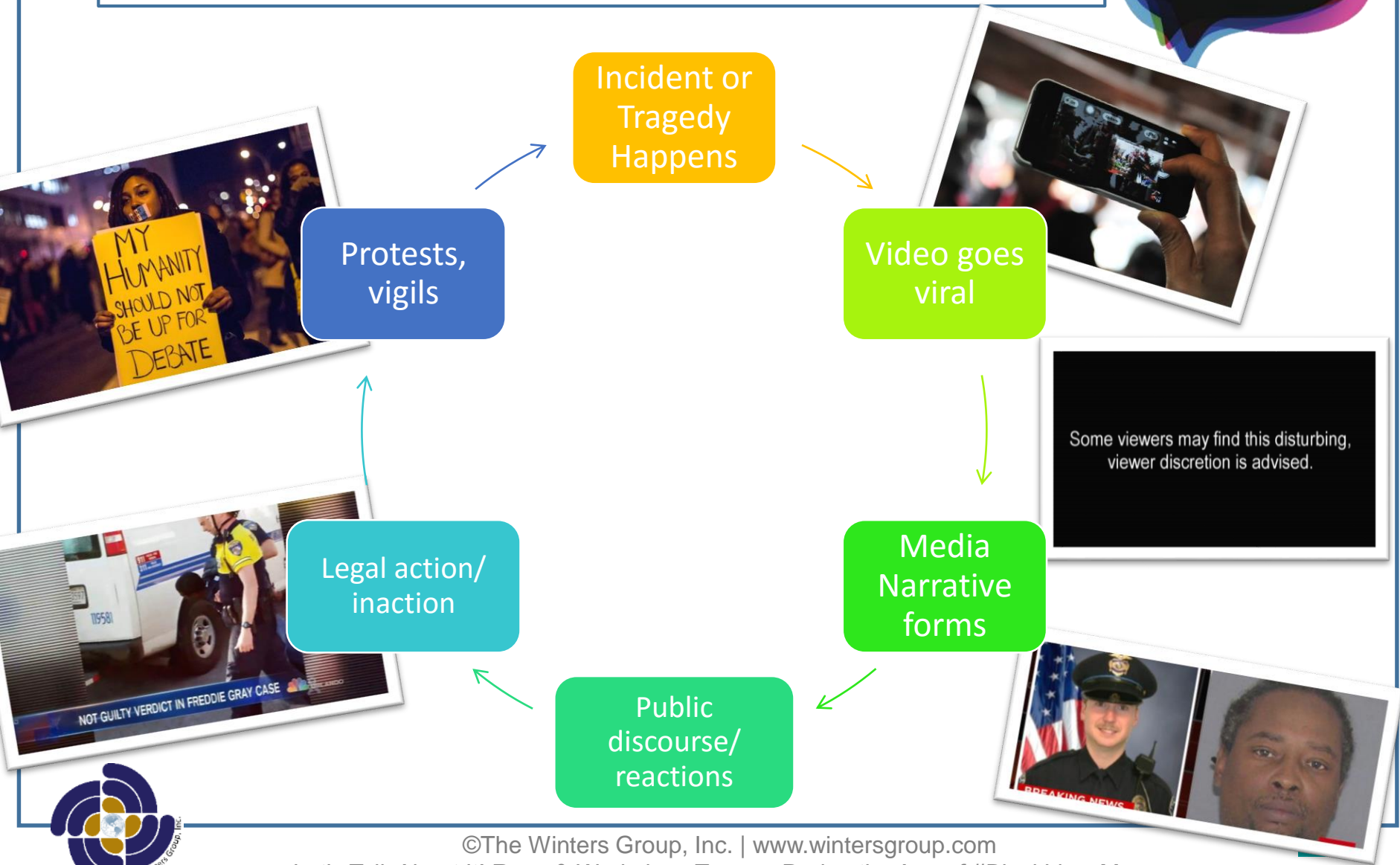


What We Hope to Accomplish

- Provide a forum for dialogue around the recent tragedies
- Identify coping mechanisms for impacted employees of color
- Explore tactics for non-people of color who want to be allies in combating racial injustice
- Share strategies for leaders to create inclusive environments following tragedies



A Familiar Cycle



Trauma in the Workplace

Trauma:

An emotional wound caused by one or a series of multiple events that may cause lasting, negative effects on a person.

- Common responses to trauma:
 - Intense or unpredictable feelings—*anxiety, overwhelmed, irritable*
 - Changes to thoughts or behavior patterns—*loss of sleep, lack of productivity*
 - Sensitivity to environment factors—*“triggers”*
 - Strained interpersonal relationships—*disengagement, withdrawal, disagreements*
 - Stress-related physical symptoms

Discuss: To what extent have we considered the psychological impact these events have on ourselves, colleagues, employees?



Source: American Psychological Association

Disparate Responses to Trauma

Impact & Needs of Individuals Affected

- Affected Individuals may experience:
 - Pain, sadness, anger, numbness
 - Distraction, difficulty focusing on work
 - Cognitive busyness
 - Lower Productivity
 - Social Isolation
 - Physiological effects

Affected Individuals may need:

- time away/alone,
- space to connect with colleagues who will understand

Impacted & Needs of Individuals Unaffected

- Unaffected individuals may:
 - Not be aware that the event was triggering, traumatic
 - Say or do things that minimize, deny or invalidate experiences of affected individuals
 - Misinterpret the reactions of affected individuals

Unaffected individuals may need:

- Support in understanding how others are impacted
- To know that it is normal for traumatic events to impact coworkers/their work differently



Adapted from Robbins, 2013 Leading during traumatic and triggering events

Impact on Psychological Safety, Inclusion

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- Psychological safety describes individuals' perceptions about the consequences of interpersonal risks in their work environment—bringing their full, whole self.
- Employees who are psychologically safe feel freely to **speak up about problems and tough issues**. One's perception of psychological safety is based on a belief about the group norm.

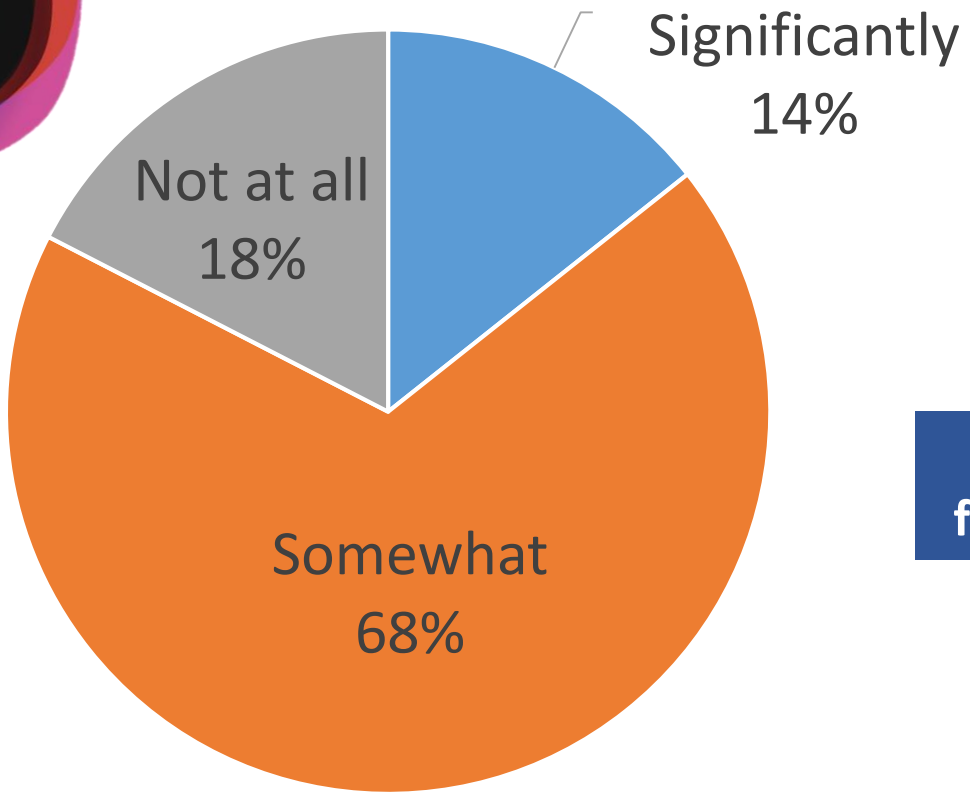


Source: Catalyst



Let's Talk About It ... Emotional Toll

Poll*: To what extent has this impacted your productivity?

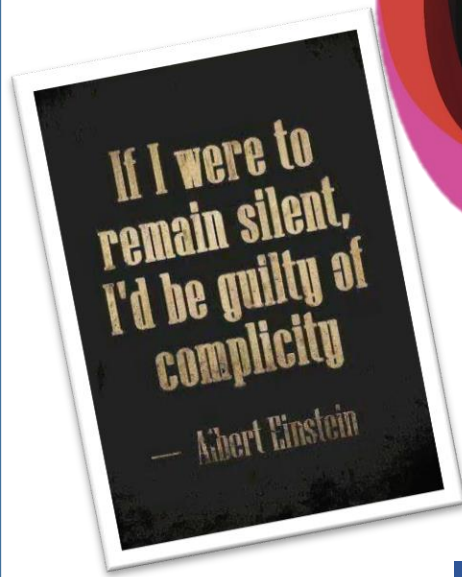
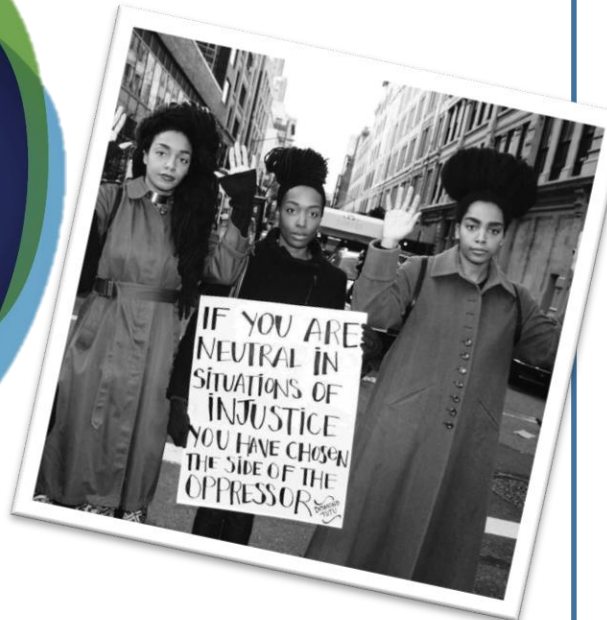


***Responses from session.**



Let's Talk About it ... When Companies Take a Stand

If a company is silent or neutral, to what extent does that impact your engagement/sense of inclusion?



See session responses on next slide.



Let's Talk About It ...

If a company is silent or neutral, to what extent does that impact your engagement/sense of inclusion?

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Responses from session.

"Silence is acceptance so yes it impacts inclusion."

"By the company I work for being open on the issue, it makes it easier to have pertinent conversations in the workplace."

"Doesn't impact me because I wouldn't expect them to respond."

"In times like this, its very important to my engagement."

"Race impacts 100% of our everyday lives whether you are a person of color or white, so if a company is silent or neutral it would make me wonder exactly what their stance was and why they were afraid to take one."

"It greatly impacts my engagement because I will not feel comfortable bringing my full self to work."

"Lack of response occurs to me as a loud statement that it's not important enough to make a statement about it. which is very disheartening...."

"It makes me doubt their commitment to diversity and inclusion, especially if that is a message they put out."



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Let's Talk About It...

*What more
can we do?*



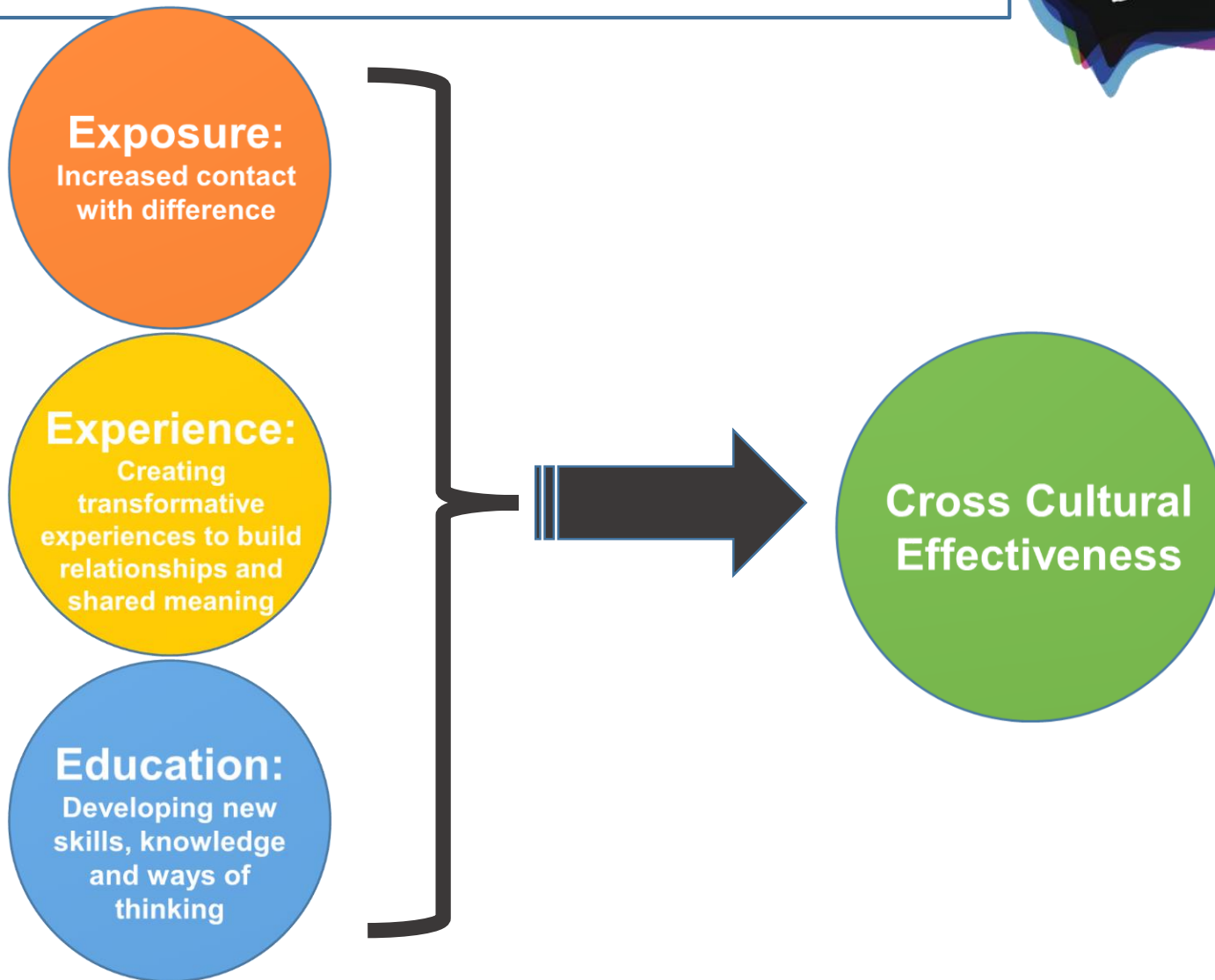
Authentic Dialogue Occurs When...



- Trust has been built
- High level of self-awareness (e.g. blind spots, unconscious bias)
- People will not feel judged or punished
- There is a curiosity to learn more
- Skilled facilitation for team discussions
- Commitment to ongoing learning
- Commitment to expand exposure to difference
 - Example, cross cultural learning partners



To Have Effective Dialogue...



We Are Not Having Dialogue Across Racial Lines

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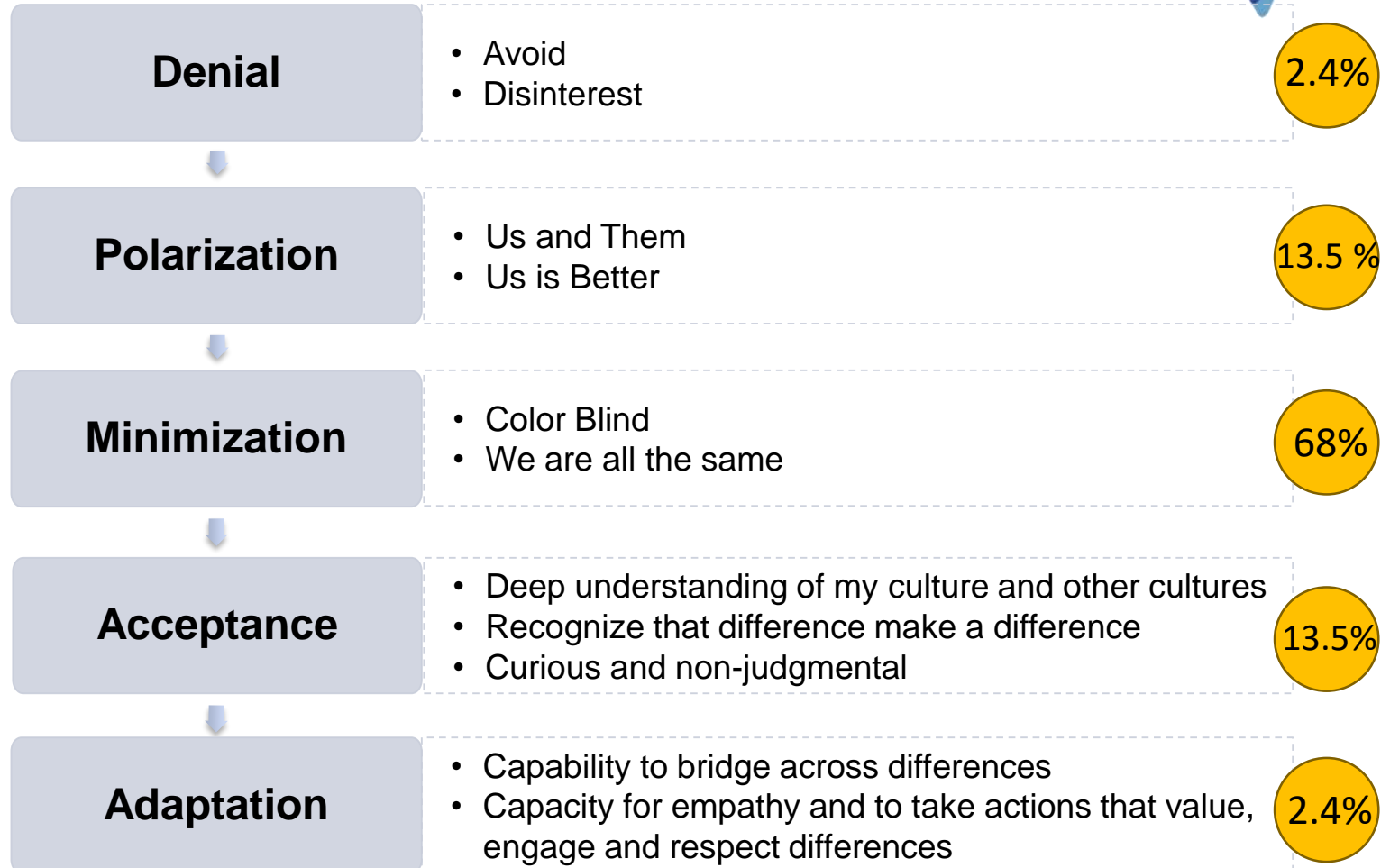
- The Public Religion Research Institute (PRRI) conducted a study in 2013:
 - **Seventy five percent (75%) of white Americans** reported that the circle of people with whom they “discuss important matters” is entirely white and **only 15%** said they have a racially mixed social network.
 - **Almost two-thirds (65%) of black Americans** report having a social network comprised only of black people. However somewhat more than whites, **23% answered** that their network includes a mix of people from other racial and ethnic backgrounds.
 - In contrast, **only 46% of Hispanics** report that **their social networks are limited only to other Hispanics** and 34% report having a mixed social network.
 - There were no gender differences and only slight differences by age.



Is Your Team/Organization Ready?

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Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity



Source: Milton Bennett, Mitchell Hammer



Four Stages of Learning Model

Unconscious
Incompetence

Conscious
Incompetence

Conscious
Competence

Unconscious
Competence

- *We are unaware of how little we know.*
- *We recognize our incompetence and seek to acquire knowledge and skills so that we become consciously competent*
- *We don't even need to think about the skill because it has been internalized.*



Developmental Dialogue Process™

Begin here ↘

1

2

3

Commonalities

What can we agree on

- We all care about our families
- We all want peace
- We all want to belong and feel valued
- We all want to be safe
- We all want to be productive and value adding employees
- We all want to support our organization's goals

Build Trust

Reflection time

Undisputable differences

Factual differences (Statistics, disparities)

- Median net worth of blacks compared to whites (\$110K vs \$5 K)
- Incarceration rates comparisons (40% Black)
- White men twice as likely to be promoted as blacks with similar qualifications

Build credibility

Skill building

Cause of differences

Deep understanding of differences (Values, beliefs, experiences)

- Ability to listen from a lens other than your own
- Being ok with discomfort
- Patience with "mistakes"
- Capability to experience the situation from the perspective of the other
- Capability for non-judgmental evaluation
- Acknowledgement of unconscious bias
- Requires deep self awareness, deep knowledge of the "other"
- Does not necessary mean agreement

Create space for authentic dialogue



Using the Developmental Dialogue Process™ to Start One-One Dialogue

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- **Step 1: Probe for desire**
 - I don't claim to understand how the recent events may be impacting you. Is it something you would like to talk about? I am open and would like to learn more from your perspective.
 - If no desire, then leave the door open to discuss at another time
- **Step 2: If desire exists, seek common ground**
 - Remain neutral and non-judgmental
 - Know the "facts" as they have been presented from all sides
 - Goal is to build trust and reach common ground during first discussion
 - May need to keep your opinion out of the first discussion
- **Step 3: Decide how far to take the first conversation**
 - Listen to each other
 - Seek first to understand
 - Be tolerant of mistakes, misinformation from your perspective
 - Affirm perspectives on the facts
 - Do not debate
 - Be ok with non-closure
- **Step 4: Agree to meet again after time to reflect**
 - In the interim, gather more facts
 - Seek out other opinions and perspectives
 - Check your own biases and beliefs
- **Step 5: Meet again and again as desired (Cross Cultural Learning Partners)**
 - Begin to share differences
 - Remain non-judgmental
 - Try to see the situation from the other person's perspective
 - Be ok if conclusion is agree to disagree



If You're a Leader...

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Model

- Lead by example and engage in your own cultural competence journey. Challenge your assumptions and biases. Your ability to create spaces for dialogue depends on your level of cultural competence.

Develop

- Create learning opportunities for your team, but first, gauge team readiness.

Implement

- Establish team norms and implement practices that support an environment for dialogue (e.g. "Ouch Rule," "Cross Cultural Learning Partners, Check-Ins) and provide outlets for team members coping.

Engage

- Engage in team or one-on-one dialogue. Seek out support from, or partner with D&I leaders. Follow Developmental Dialogue Process.



If You're Coping with Trauma...

Feel

- Validate and acknowledge your own feelings. Mourn, grieve, and experience full range of emotion.

Connect

- Connect with people and communities you trust for support. These communities may not be at work or include co-workers

Move

- Engage in physical activity as an outlet for emotions, feelings, and grief.

Disconnect

- Avoid "triggers," or disconnect from social media.

Understand

- Everyone may not get it. Assume positive intent.





If You're An Ally...

Choose Empathy

- Hone ability to understand and share the feelings of others

Educate Yourself

- Understand your biases, blind spots, and privilege

Educate Others

- Identify areas of your life where you have influence and power, and use it to challenge the status quo

Get Engaged

- Connect with community based organizations that are doing the work to promote inclusion

Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will. Lukewarm acceptance is much more bewildering than outright rejection. - MLK, Jr. (Letter from Birmingham Jail, 1963)



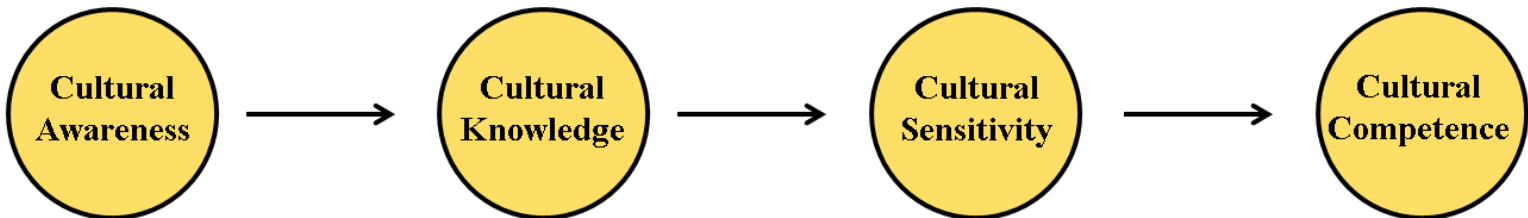
Ask Yourself...

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- What am I feeling right now and why?
- Why did this event induce this particular reaction?
- Am I able to see the situation from all sides or am I looking at it in a polarized way?
- Do I realize that these situations are complex and not necessarily easy to be resolved?
- Am I expecting too much from my coworkers, colleagues, and friends?
- Do I have a trusted advisor/friend/confidant whom I can be open and authentic with?
- Am I fixed in my opinions or am I willing to learn how it might feel from the perspective of the other?
- What energy do I have to expend to learn more about the situation from the perspective of the other?
- Am I willing to put in the time that it will take?
- Am I willing to admit that I have biases and blind spots that may be getting in the way of my judgments?
- Am I willing to cut my coworkers some slack if they don't seem to understand?
- Can I live with the fact that some people really just may not care like I do?
- Can I live with the fact that I may not be able to make them care?
- Am I willing to be patient and recognize that if my coworkers don't understand my perspective it may take some time and many teachable moments to get them there?
- Am I prepared for, and comfortable with agreeing to disagree?



Cultural Competence Model™



“Me-Centered” Analysis

What are my values, beliefs, norms, customs, traditions, styles, biases, stereotypes, and behaviors? (Who am I?)

“Other-Centered” Analysis

What are other’s values, beliefs, norms, customs, traditions, styles, biases, stereotypes, and behaviors

Knowledge Analysis

How are my values, beliefs, norms, customs, traditions, styles, biases, stereotypes, and behaviors the same or different from others ?

What additional cultural knowledge, awareness, and/understanding do I need?

Sensitivity Analysis

Am I open to accepting and respecting differences? Why or why not? What are the benefits? What are the challenges for me?

Can I avoid assigning judgments, be better or worse, right or wrong, to cultural differences? Why or why not?

Competence Analysis

What adjustments both in the way I think and behave do I need to make in order to effectively operate in a different cultural context?

This four-part cycle is a continuous developmental process.



Key Takeaways



- ❑ *Our organizations do not exist within a vacuum.*
- ❑ *Tragic events may cause trauma, emotional toll and potentially impact employees' productivity.*
- ❑ *Be aware of and prepared for the differences and range of emotions/ disparate impact that tragic events may cause.*
- ❑ *It is important that employees who are impacted be given time and resources to cope.*
- ❑ *Allies are critical to social and organizational change—education and competence is key.*
- ❑ *Decide how your organization will respond during times of tragedy and be consistent.*
- ❑ *Your organizational norms/culture and how organizations respond during times of tragedy can impact employees psychological safety, inclusion.*
- ❑ *Create opportunities for effective, authentic dialogue and ensure teams are ready.*
- ❑ *Managers/leaders must have the appropriate tools and learning to support employees during this time.*
- ❑ *Developing cultural competence is a journey, and is requisite to engaging in effective dialogue.*



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