

HOW TO **CREATE,**
NURTURE, AND **SUSTAIN**
ACCEPTANCE WITHIN
YOUR DIVERSE
WORKGROUP: AN
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE
PERSPECTIVE

NEIL MCGILLICUDDY, PH.D

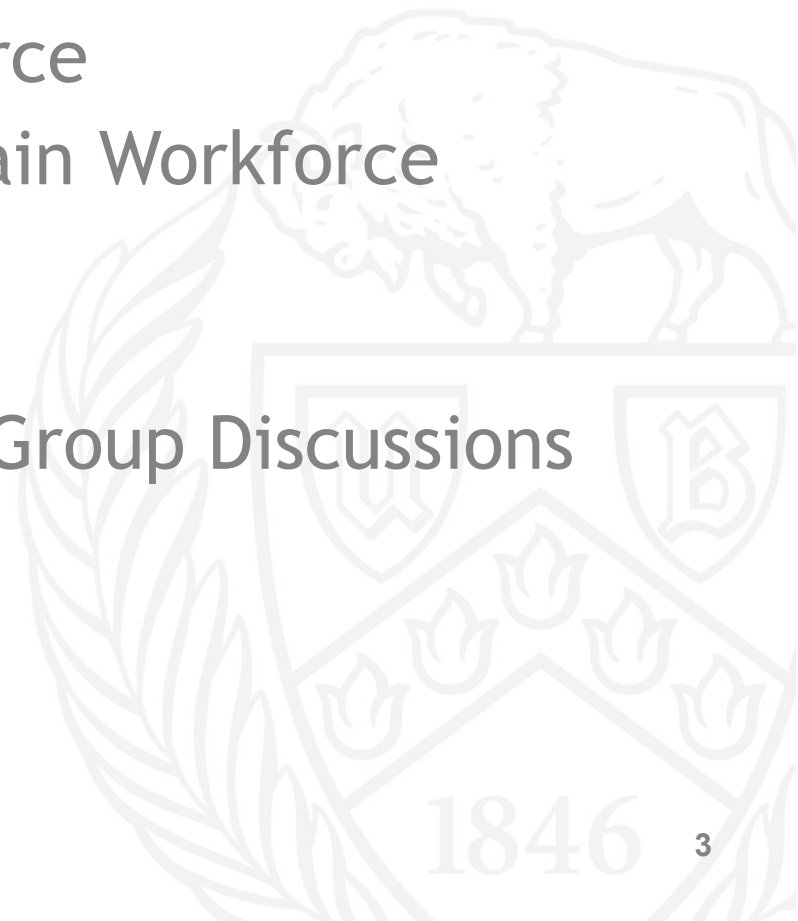


Photo: Similarities/Differences



Goals for Today

- Reasons for Diverse Workforce
- Ways to Develop and Maintain Workforce diversity
- Participation from You
- Roleplays/Activities/Small Group Discussions



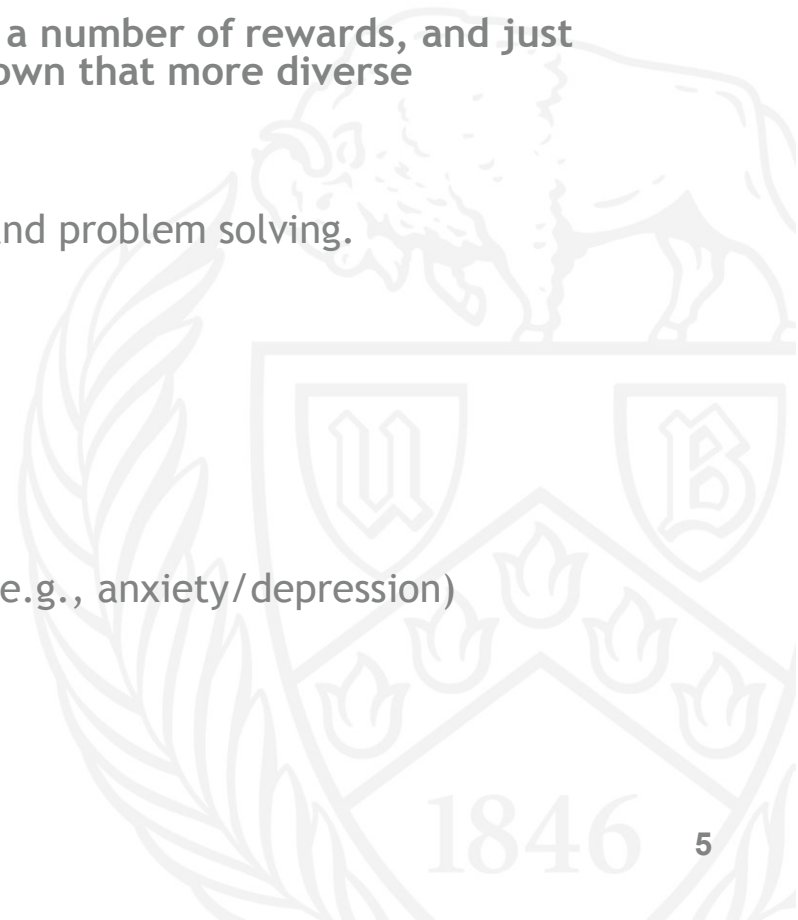
Why Create Diversity?

- Talents, skills and experiences
 - Though some crossover of skills can be beneficial when it comes to assisting each other, it's important to hire people with the appropriate skills to fit each of the roles within the unit. This also helps [the team](#) learn from each other
- Play on each other's strengths
 - Sometimes done by hiring, other times by observing and re-shuffling.
- Grows your talent pool, resulting in improved staff.
- Improves employee performance
 - Equality in the workplace is important for encouraging workers from all backgrounds to feel confident in their ability and achieve their best. The higher the team morale, the more productive employees are.
- Can Expand to Other Markets
- Better Bottom Line

Why Create Diversity?

Encouraging acceptance in the workplace can reap a number of rewards, and just makes good sense. To summarize, research has shown that more diverse workplaces have:

- More open communication.
- Better team decision making/Increased creativity and problem solving.
- More effective and productive teamwork.
- Greater loyalty among staff.
- Natural retention of valued people.
- Greater respect and trust.
- A more positive environment.
- Less absenteeism/Fewer stress-related conditions (e.g., anxiety/depression)
- A larger pool of talent to recruit from.



How to Play on Each Person's Strengths

- Examples
 - People on the autistic spectrum flourish in repetitive tasks
 - Talkative people can engage and charm and sell
 - People who are “number people” can really do a lot of wonderful things with digits

What About in Your Office?

Challenges to Diversity

- “We’ve always done it this way” silences new ideas and inhibits diversity
- Communication --- Taking the time to understand, Listen with openness, is not always easy
- Hiring the same types of people/like yourself
- It’s too difficult to do this/Time Waster
- Need more than training sessions ... need to create a culture

Bolstering Inclusion

- Establish a mentoring program that pairs new employees with well-established or well-respected team members



You Have a Diverse Staff ... Now What?

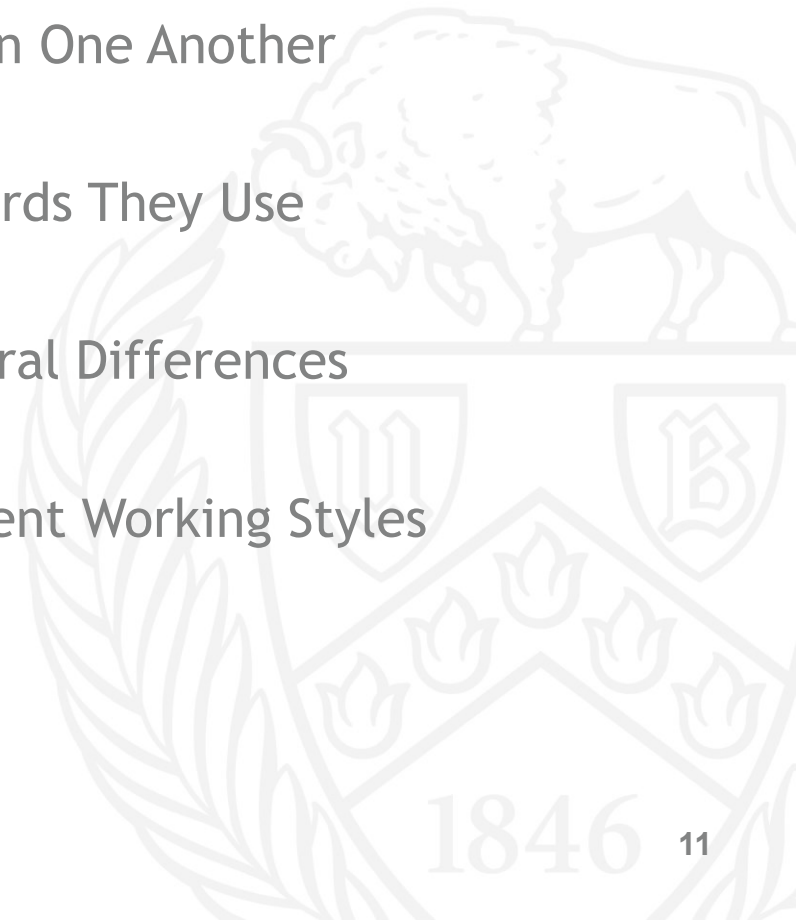
- Learn about the cultural backgrounds, lives and interests of staff. Building relationships through increased understanding and trust helps to foster inclusion
- Include opportunities for staff to interact outside of work so they feel comfortable. Be creative
- Organize collective meals where employees can learn about one another's cultures by sharing food
- Ensure all employees have the opportunity to take part in decision-making and planning
- Be aware of, and provide time off for, culturally significant events and holy days.

You Have a Diverse Staff ... Now What?

- Recognize and acknowledge special days and events such as International Day of Persons with Disabilities (Dec 3), International Day to End Racism (March 21), Gay Pride celebrations (Early June), etc.
- Today, June 20 is “World Refugee Day”
- Create Intranet-based multicultural calendars to avoid scheduling important meetings on major cultural holidays
- Permit flexible schedules so that employees who observe religious practices can arrange their schedules around their beliefs
- Acknowledge all faiths present in your workplace.
- Avoid heterosexist terms, examples, language etc.

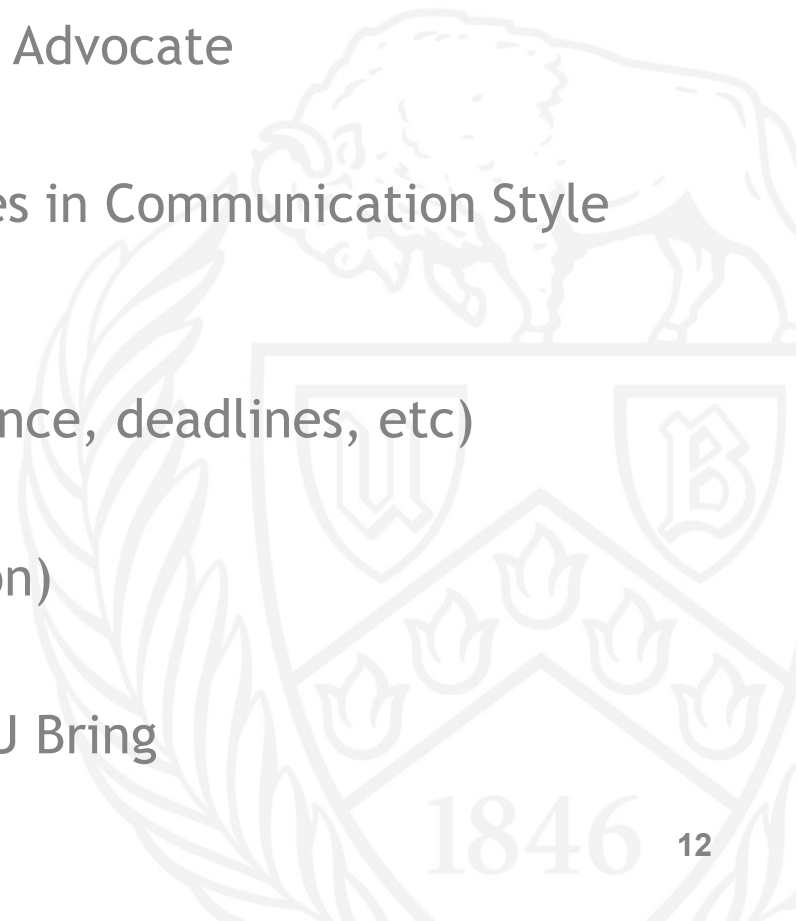
Managing Mutual Acceptance Within Your Team

- Encourage People to Take an Interest in One Another
- Encourage Staff to Think About the Words They Use
- Encourage People to Understand Cultural Differences
- Show People How to Appreciate Different Working Styles
- Get Involved
- Set a Good Example



Maintaining Strong Outcomes

- Plan for Diversity of Opinion --- Devil's Advocate
- Recognize Diversity-Related Differences in Communication Style
 - Gender, Country of Origin, etc
- How Time is Considered (worklife balance, deadlines, etc)
- Work Hard to be Inclusive (Silent Person)
- Understand the Diversity Elements YOU Bring



Team Member Self Test for Accepting Diversity

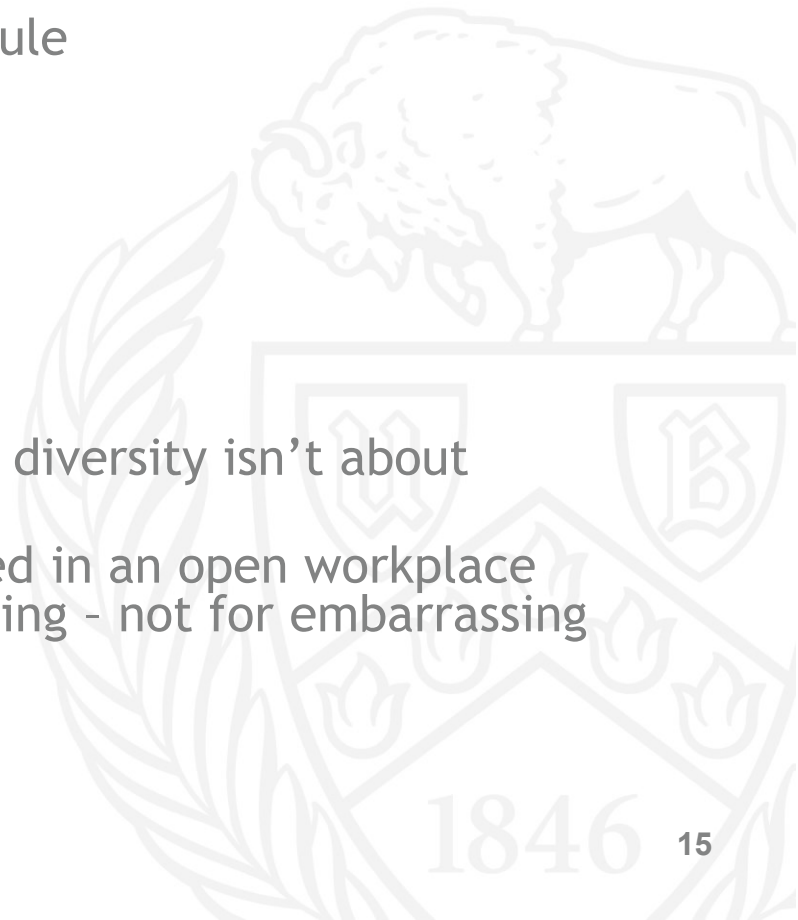
- Do I believe there is only one right way of doing things, or that there are a number of valid ways that accomplish the same goal? Do I convey that to staff?
- Am I comfortable with each of the people I work with? Do I know what their goals and interests are, how to make them feel good about themselves?
- Do I feel comfortable disagreeing with everyone on my team equally?

Team Member Self Test for Accepting Diversity

- Do I bring it up, or change it myself, if I believe dept policies/procedures impact a group differentially?
- Am I willing to listen to constructive feedback about ways to improve the work environment? Do I implement suggestions and acknowledge their contribution?
- Do I take immediate action with people I work with when they behave in ways that show disrespect for others in the workplace, such as inappropriate jokes and offensive terms? **ROLEPLAY**
- Do I ensure that assignments and opportunities for advancement are accessible to everyone?

Team Member Resolutions

- Not the Golden Rule, but the Platinum Rule
- Fair vs Same Treatment
- Diversity Must Work for Everyone
- Employees need to know that a focus on diversity isn't about being *perfect*.
 - Diversity and inclusion is best nurtured in an open workplace where mistakes can be used for learning - not for embarrassing or shaming individuals.



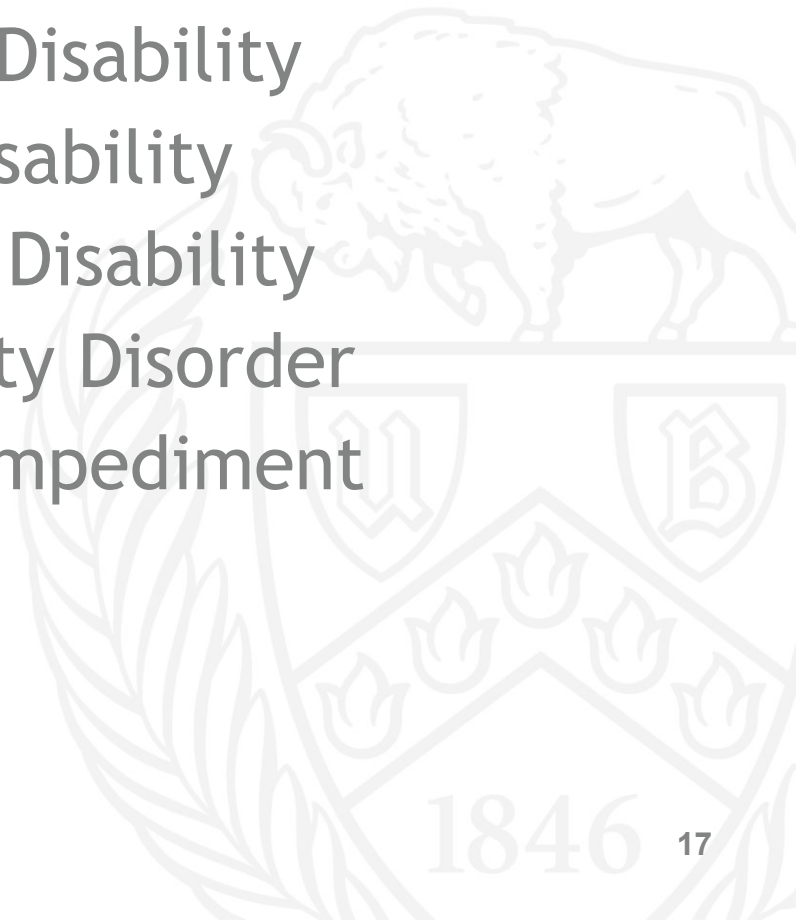
Small Group Discussions

- Go Into Groups of 3 or 4



Ideas For Special Circumstances

- Team Member Has Physical Disability
- Team Member Has Visual Disability
- Team Member Has Auditory Disability
- Team Member Has An Anxiety Disorder
- Team Member Has Speech Impediment



Questions

Comments

Employee Assistance Program

716-645-4461

<http://www.buffalo.edu/eap>

