



# Effective Intercultural Practice

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# Centre for Race and Culture

**Mission:** We work to promote and support individual, collective and systemic change to address racism and encourage intercultural understanding.

**Vision:** An inclusive society free of racism.



Facebook: @centreforraceandculture

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# Welcome

- Treaty 6 Territory
- Introductions



# Learning Objectives

- Understand how culture and identity can affect your work.
- Begin the process of developing cultural awareness and challenging our biases and assumptions.
- Understand cultural competency in the context of social inclusion.
- From theory to practice: tools to support intercultural work

# Workshop Guidelines

- Avoid making assumptions.
- Be active – we need everyone's participation for best results.
- Be open to self reflection.
- Share the air.
- Understand that we are in a place of learning.
- Diversity of thought is welcome.

# Section 1: Culture



# I know a culture...

Bizarre

interesting

Normal

gross

Boring

Exotic

Delightful

disturbing

# Culture

What comes to mind when you hear this word?



# Culture

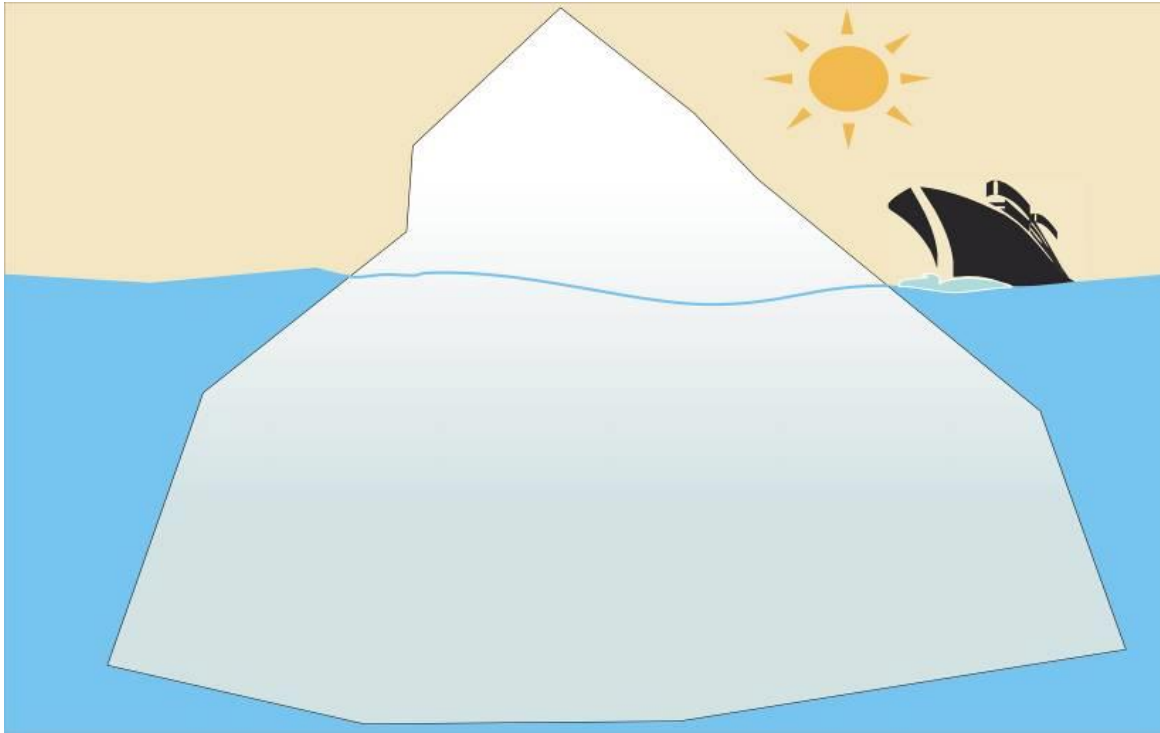
▶ Culture is defined as “the thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values, and institutions of racial, ethnic, religious, or social groups.”

—The Office of Minority Health (2013)

▶ Culture is “*the way we do things around here.*”

-Milton Bennett

# Cultural Iceberg



# The Iceberg Concept of Culture

Like an iceberg,  
nine-tenths of culture is below the surface.

**Surface Culture**  
Most easily seen  
Emotional level - low

Food, dress,  
music, visual arts,  
drama, crafts,  
dance, literature,  
languages, celebrations, games



**Shallow Culture**  
Unspoken Rules  
Emotional level - high

courtesy, contextual conversational patterns, concept of time, personal space, rules of conduct, facial expressions, nonverbal communication, body language, touching, eye contact, patterns of handling emotions, notions of modesty, concept of beauty, courtship practices, relationships to animals, notions of leadership, tempo of work, concepts of food, ideals of child rearing, theory of disease, social interaction rate, nature of friendships, tone of voice, attitudes toward elders, concept of cleanliness, notions of adolescence, patterns of group decision-making, definition of insanity, preferences for competition or cooperation, tolerance of physical pain, concept of "self", concept of past and future, definition of obscenity, attitudes toward dependents, problem solving roles in relation to age, sex, class, occupation, kinship, and ...

**Deep Culture**  
Unconscious Rules  
Emotional level - intense

# Notes about culture

- ▶ Culture is learned.
- ▶ Culture is dynamic – it is always changing.
- ▶ Everyone has culture and we must understand our own culture.
- ▶ Within every group there is considerable cultural diversity.

# Culture assumes that the way “we” do things is...

- ▶ Normal
- ▶ Moral
- ▶ Beautiful
- ▶ Clean
- ▶ Rational and reasonable
- ▶ ...whose culture?

# And the way “they” do things is...

- ▶ Abnormal
- ▶ Weird
- ▶ Immoral
- ▶ Ugly
- ▶ Dirty
- ▶ Irrational and unreasonable

Viewing culture in this way is problematic, but why?

# Ethnocentrism

The tendency to regard one's own culture and group as the standard, and thus superior.



# The Danger of a Single Story



# Solution...

1. **Cultural awareness**: acknowledging that cultural differences exist.
2. **Cultural sensitivity**: recognizing the need to respect cultural differences. It means acting with respect towards people of other cultures.
3. **Cultural competency**: the knowledge and behavior that enable practitioners and policy makers to provide quality care to diverse peoples in a way that is sensitive to differences.

# Cultural Competency

**Cultural Competency is a life-long interest and commitment to:**

- ▶ Acknowledge, respect and respond to cultural differences in respectful and constructive ways.
- ▶ learn about others *and myself*.
- ▶ Grow and *transform* as an individual, community or organization in the process.

# Cultural Competency

## Cognitive/Head

- Self-awareness
- Cultural knowledge

## Affective/Heart

- Curiosity
- Open mindedness

## Behavioural/Hands

- Relationship building
- Listening, empathy, problem solving

# Stages of Personal Cultural Awareness

Highest  
Level of  
Awareness

## Integration (Interculturalism)

- Multicultural attitude – enables one to integrate differences and adapt both cognitively and behaviorally

## Adaptation

- Able to empathize with those of other cultures
- Able to shift from one cultural perspective to another

## Acceptance (Multiculturalism)

- Accepts behavioral differences and underlying differences in values
- Recognizes validity of other ways of thinking and perceiving the world

## Minimizing Differences

- Hides or trivializes cultural differences
- Focuses on similarities among all peoples

## Defense

- Perceives threat against one's comfortable worldview
- Uses negative stereotyping
- Assumes own culture superior

Lowest  
Level of  
Awareness

# What Cultural Competency is not...

Cultural competency does NOT mean cultural 'blindness.'

**Cultural Blindness**: Claiming not to see differences in race, culture, ethnicity, etc. or “treating everyone the same way.”

- ▶ This approach minimizes difference.
- ▶ This approach does not acknowledge your own biases.
- ▶ This approach is “the danger of a single story” ...

# Break Time



# Section 2

## Making Connections & Mapping Our Stories







**Making Connections &  
Mapping Our Stories**

1. Where did you/your family/your ancestors come from? When did you/your family/your ancestors come here?
2. What were the push & pull factors that brought you/your family/your ancestors here?
3. What might have happened if your ancestors had stayed where they were?

# GLOBAL MIGRATION

- Movement from one place to another is certainly not a new phenomenon.
- People migrate for various reasons.
- Movement for economic reasons is also not a new concept.

How does your family's migration story fit into the history of Canada?

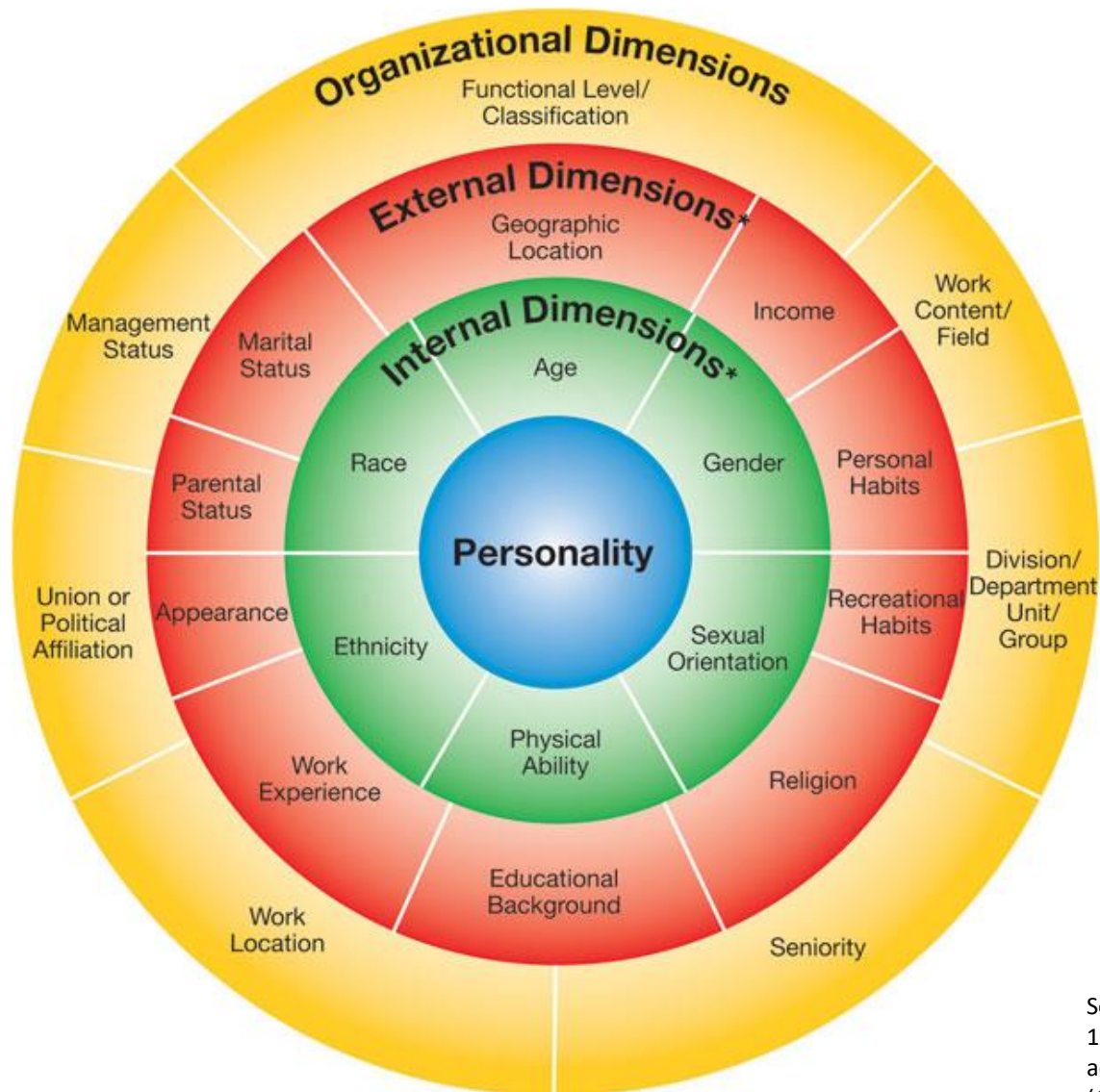
Why did we pause to  
reflect on our stories  
of migration?

- ▶ Many people lose awareness that all non-Indigenous Canadians have a migration story in their past.
- ▶ Racialized individuals can face constant questions of belonging. Visible differences can lead to assumptions about outsider status, and more frequent reminders of people's story/history of migration to Canada.

# Intercultural Understanding

Learning together, based on learning about ourselves & reflecting on our interactions with others; valuing diversity and inclusion

# You as a Diverse Entity



Source: *Diverse Teams at Work*, 1994 (Gardenswartz & Rowe), adapted from *Workforce America!* (1991) (Loden & Rosener)

# Reflection

What reactions to and/or surprises do you have regarding your own diversity?

Describe a situation in which difference (gender, culture, race, etc.) has been a barrier to achieving a successful outcome in your workplace.



# Diversity and Inclusion

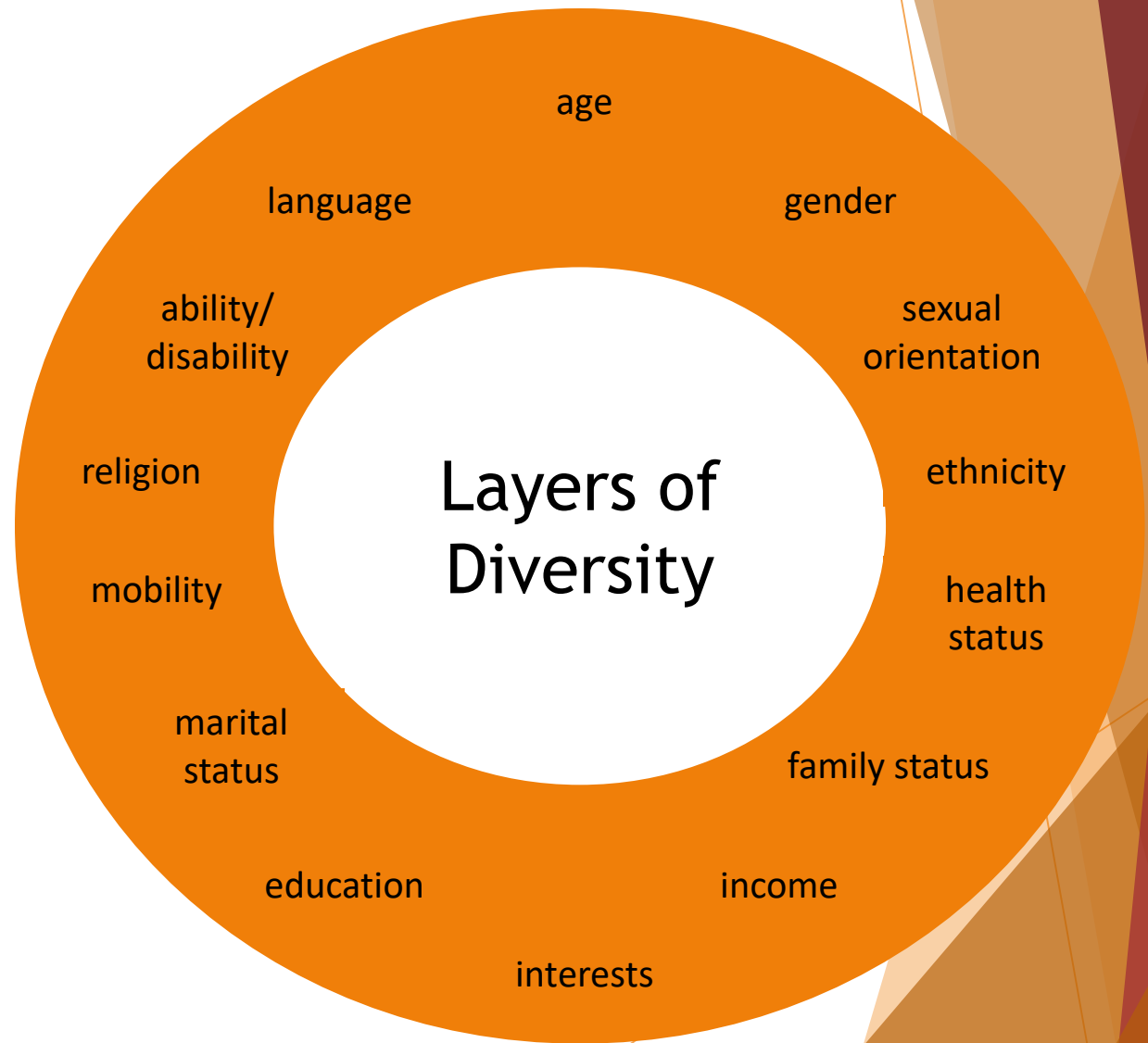
## Diversity

The broad range of human differences.

## Inclusion

Valuing our differences, seeing these differences as strengths.

# Layers of Diversity



- ▶ CDEF: an analytical tool for exploring the difference between a “problem” behaviour and a culturally different pattern of behaviour.

# C D E F .....for TRANSFORMATIVE INTERCULTURAL LEARNING

## CLARIFY

- What are the objective elements of the situation? (describe what has happened)
- What am I feeling?
- What are the power dynamics in the situation?

## DEEPEN

- Why does this bother me?
- What was I expecting?
- What am I tempted to conclude?
- What am I assuming (in moving towards this conclusion)?
- How do I know these assumptions are valid?

## EXPAND

- Is it possible that these assumptions are not true?
- Given what I know to date, what are some considerations and alternate explanations? (what do I know about the other's culture, life history, sub-culture in Canada? ***probe below the water level***)
- Who can I consult with to expand my understanding? (colleague, cultural broker, dialogue with other person involved?...)

## FORWARD

- What can I do now in the present situation? (if it is ongoing)
- What can I do in the future if I am in a similar situation?

# Questioning Assumptions

“In the absence of detailed information, we all work from assumptions about who the user is, what he or she does, and what type of system would meet his or her needs. Following these assumptions, we tend to design for ourselves, not for other people.”

- *Human Factor: Designing Computer Systems for People* by Richard Rubinstein and Harry Hersh

inspireUX

# A Case Study

# Stereotyping

- ▶ Applying a fixed mental picture or image to an entire group of people
- ▶ Applying the same characteristics to all members of a group regardless of their individual differences

# Bias

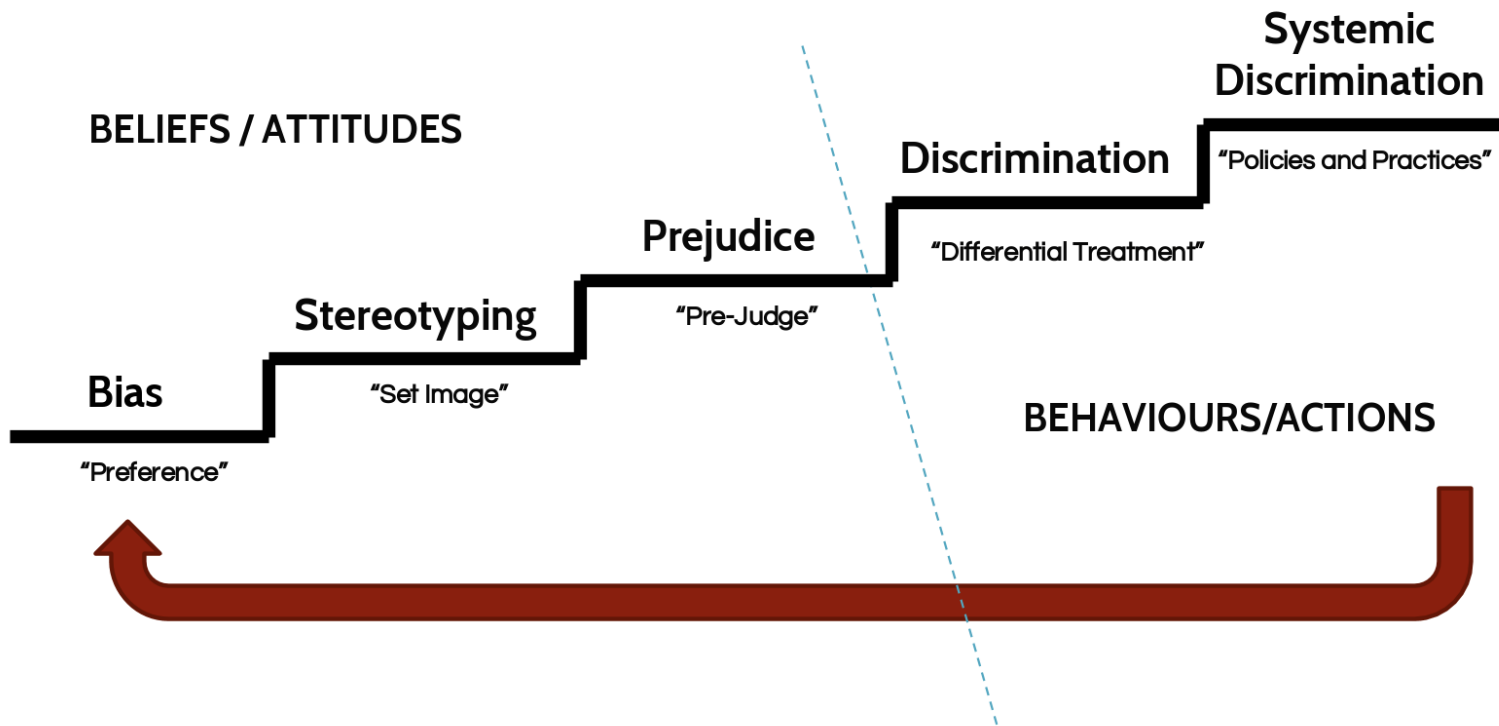
**Bias** is a prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person, or group compared with another usually in a way that's considered to be unfair.



# Bias & Prejudice

Our personal biases and prejudices play an important and often divisive and destructive role in shaping our relationships, our opportunities, and our ability to work together respectfully – they influence our practice.

# The Ladder of Discrimination



Adapted from: B. Thomas and C. Novogrodsky  
(1983) *Combating Racism in the Workplace*.

# Mingle Activity

- ▶ In small groups share some examples of inclusive programming or service delivery used at your agency. Share how you can embed new knowledge from today to strengthen that.



***THANK YOU!***

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