

.....

Suggestions for Using “You as a Culturally Diverse Entity”

Objectives:

- Identify the sources of one's own cultural programming
- See oneself as a microcosm of the societal dynamic of intercultural contact
- Increase awareness about the complexity of each individual's cultural programming, which, in turn, affects behavior
- Raise awareness about the need to find out more about the backgrounds of others in the workplace
- Understand that everyone has a culture
- Learn more about others with whom one works in order to increase understanding

Intended Audience:

- Individuals wanting to increase their understanding and awareness about cultural influences and intercultural interactions on the job
- Trainees in diversity seminars
- Members of work teams wanting to understand each other better
- Managers wanting to learn more about employees

Materials:

- Copies of the worksheet, *You as a Culturally Diverse Entity*
- Easel, flipchart, and markers

Processing the Activity:

- Have the group brainstorm sources of cultural programming and chart responses on an easel or a board. You might get them going by asking them how they learned the rules of behavior they now live by.
- Individuals write one source of their own cultural programming in each circle on the diagram. Under each, they write the most important rules, norms, and values they learned.
- Individuals, in pairs or small groups, share information from their circles. They then discuss their reactions and the implications of the information.
- Lead a total-group discussion of reactions, insights, and learning.

.....
(continued on next page)

Suggestions for Using
“You as a Culturally Diverse Entity” (continued)

Questions for Discussion:

- Which were the most important sources of your programming?
- Where do they come in conflict?
- Under what circumstances does one take priority over another?
- How are these differences resolved?
- What similarities and differences did you find with your partner(s) in your discussion group?
- What do you know about the programming of your colleagues, staff members, bosses, and so on? How can you find out more?
- What insight did you get?
- What does this say about dealing with others who are different from you?
- What is one way you can learn more about the software of others with whom you work?

Caveats, Considerations, and Variations:

- This activity causes participants to look back to childhood, which can be a painful or emotional experience for some. It is not surprising to see eyes filled with tears as individuals share their experiences and memories with others in the room.
- Tell people at the beginning of the activity that they will be sharing their responses with another person or a small group. In this way individuals can control the degree of disclosure.