

UP THE CREEK

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Cultural Diversity: It's Not Black & White

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For this edition we tapped into a new member of Sand Creek's team, Tisa Mitchell. Tisa is one of our account managers and is pursuing her Ph.D. at the University of Minnesota in Education Policy Leadership, a track in the Department of Organizational Leadership, Policy and Development. Tisa's dissertation research is focused on Cultural Competency.

1) Why should I care about cultural diversity?

Technology, social media, and an increase in travel have made the world a much smaller place. Access to pretty much anything nowadays is at our fingertips. As the space between us decreases, the diversity in our surroundings increases. The likeliness of meeting and/or interacting with someone "different" than you is inevitable.

2) What is the definition of "cultural diversity"?

Culture is defined as a set of values, practices, traditions or beliefs a group shares, whether due to age, race or ethnicity, religion or gender. Other factors that contribute to workplace diversity and cultural differences in the workplace are differences attributable to work styles, education or disability.

3) Can it really be that hard to respect each other? We all have differences right?

It is not hard to respect each other. The quick answer is we have to learn more about our own possible implicit bias, and any stereotypes we may be harboring about those outside our own cultural group. Processing those thoughts and asking thoughtful questions to ourselves (and one another) can give us an opportunity to learn more about the other person.

4) What is in it for me as a supervisor?

As a Supervisor, having a better understanding of cultural differences your employees are facing will make your job easier, possibly less stressful, and will widen your level of personal growth and knowledge.

5) How does understanding cultural diversity make me a better supervisor?

Having a better understanding of your employees makes your job easier. Example: If you have knowledge of Ramadan, your perception and/or

In This Newsletter

Supervising employees and leading in an organization is a tough job. This quarterly newsletter provides helpful research based articles with practical ideas to help you grow and flourish in your leadership role.

Business Quote

Creating and managing a diverse workforce is a process, not a destination.

R. Roosevelt Thomas

Fun Fact

No number before 1,000 contains the letter A.



accommodations for the employee not partaking in the staff potluck will be from a place of awareness versus assumptions that they are not a team player or they are being rude.

6) Do you think this is a fad of the day?

NO! As we grow and experience more diversity as humans, it's critical that we become more transparent and direct about culture.

7) We don't have much cultural diversity in our organization. Do I need to know about this stuff?

With ethnic diversity on the rise, it is more likely we will have some interaction with someone different than ourselves at our place of work. If not, it will happen soon or you see it in your daily life outside of work. Outside of the cultural diversity in ethnicity, there are cultural differences amongst all of us. Cultural diversity can be within our socioeconomic status and upbringings or our hobbies and interests, to name a few.

8) How does this differ from treating everyone with respect? Or does it?

Cultural competency does go further than treating everyone with respect. Each culture has norms, routines, and expectations. As well intended as being respectful seems, there are acts of respect some cultures view as disrespectful. For example, in Muslim and some Jewish subsets, touching a woman not in your family is extremely disrespectful. While in American culture, handshakes and hugs are often a common greeting for strangers.

9) How can I learn more?

A good place to start is with yourself. What are your own cultural values and beliefs? By understanding what you value and believe you start to see how you bring your own culture into your work.

In addition, research and ask questions! Bring a new awareness to your interactions and check yourself.

About Sand Creek Workplace Wellness

Sand Creek specializes in providing exceptional workplace wellness services to support the human spirit at work. We embrace our core values of service, hope, trust, compassion, and wisdom in each interaction, thereby upholding our mission of providing helpful solutions to improve productivity and shining a light in the darkest of moments.

Our Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is designed to offer face-to-face counseling and consulting to those that voluntarily reach out to us. We are not simply a phone counseling service or online tool type EAP. Thousands of professional counselors form a worldwide Sand Creek network available to deliver personal care and support to you in your community. Our services are administered nationally, but delivered locally.

Sand Creek supports the relationship between individual health and overall organizational health. Our Organization Assistance Program (OAP) service extends the reach into the organization and provides work teams with a systemic approach to improve the health and well-being of an organization.