



CULTURE, COMMUNICATION, AND CONFLICT:

Managing Divisiveness in the Workplace



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ROAD MAP

Positive Culture with Greater Productivity



The ARTful
Conversation

The ART
of Inclusive
Communication



The
Bystander
Challenge



The
Exchange



FOR
LEADERS
LIKE
YOU

NCRC

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**“CURIOSITY AND RESPECT FOR
SOMEONE ELSE’S VIEWS ARE
THE FOUNDATION FOR BRIDGING
THE POLITICAL DIVIDE.”**

- TANIA ISRAEL, PhD
UC Santa Barbara,
Author of *Beyond Your Bubble*



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Learning Outcomes

In this workshop, we will reinforce a **mindset of inclusiveness**:

- Reflect on our **own biases** and our **communication style**.
- Consider how **polarizing issues** impact **workplace teams**.
- **Effectively communicate** with employees along the entire spectrum of political beliefs — and help **employees communicate with one another**.

HUMBLE INQUIRY

“Humble inquiry is the fine art of drawing someone out, of asking questions to which you do not already know the answer, of building a relationship based on curiosity and interest in the other person.”

- Edgar Schein



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BREAKOUT

- What stood out for you about a leader's sources of power?
- How does humble inquiry relate to being an inclusive leader of employees who have diverse perspectives on hot-topic issues?



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TYPES OF COGNITIVE BIASES THAT BLOCK OUR ABILITY TO LEAD INCLUSIVELY

In-Group Bias

is the tendency to favor one's own group, particularly in reference to other groups (Dictionary of Psychology).

Confirmation Bias

is the tendency to look for information that supports, rather than rejects, one's preconceptions, typically by interpreting evidence to confirm existing beliefs while rejecting or ignoring any conflicting data (American Psychological Association).



OVERCOMING THE IMPACT OF BIAS

What is the benefit of being aware of your biases as a workplace leader?

What can you do to overcome the impact of in-group bias and confirmation bias?



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Managing Polarization Bias

“People often overestimate the level of disagreement between themselves and members of opposing political groups, the prevalence of extreme beliefs among those groups, and the extent to which those people view them negatively.”

- Dawn Chow and Jeffrey Lees



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BREAKOUT

- What have you seen in the workplace regarding polarization bias?
- What can a workplace leader do to lessen polarization bias? **BRAINSTORM!**



STYLE AWARENESS

HAMMER'S CONFLICT STYLE INVENTORY

**Direct
Communication**

DISCUSSION
STYLE

ENGAGEMENT
STYLE

**Indirect
Communication**

ACCOMMODATION
STYLE

DYNAMIC
STYLE

**Emotionally
Restrained**

**Emotionally
Expressive**



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BREAKOUT

- What are the strengths of your style?
- How do we show respect to all styles on an ongoing basis?
- How would someone's style impact if or how they discuss hot topics?



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"AMERICA'S HIDDEN TRIBES"

The Spectrum of Political Beliefs in the U.S.

LIBERAL
MINDSET

THE EXHAUSTED MAJORITY
67% OF THE U.S. POPULATION

CONSERVATIVE
MINDSET

Progressive
Activists

8%

Traditional &
Passive Liberals

26%

Politically
Disengaged

26%

Politically
Moderate

15%

Traditional & Devoted
Conservatives

25%



BREAKOUT

- **Discuss reactions to “America’s Hidden Tribes” and how you believe this impacts the workplace.**
- **As a leader, how do you respectfully talk to employees, especially with those on each wing of the continuum?**



APPLYING THE ART SKILLS

WHEN AN EMPLOYEE SHARES POLARIZING VIEWS

A CTIVE AWARENESS

- ▶ Remain nonjudgmental
- ▶ Refrain from projecting your mindset onto the employee
- ▶ Manage your neutrality, and check your reaction

R ESPOND RESPECTFULLY

- ▶ Utilize questions to engage the employee
- ▶ Acknowledge emotions and experiences
- ▶ Connect what they are saying to their needs

T ROUBLESHOOT TOGETHER

- ▶ Help them gain better understanding of (not agreement with) others' perspectives
- ▶ Focus on the needs of all involved to work comfortably despite the different perspectives



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The ART of Inclusive Communication

- Humble Inquiry
- A Leader's Social Power
- In-Group Bias, Confirmation Bias, and Polarization Bias
- Conflict Styles
- "America's Hidden Tribes"

What is one takeaway for you from today's session?

WHAT'S NEXT

- Watch "Bridging: Towards a Society Built on Belonging"
- Next Week: The Bystander Challenge: Building Belonging



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