



# **CULTURE, COMMUNICATION, AND CONFLICT:**

**A Certificate Program  
for Leaders Navigating  
Today's 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



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# THE BYSTANDER CHALLENGE

Moving from Bystander to Upstander

## LEARNING OUTCOMES


In this workshop, we will consider the topics of **othering and belonging**.

- Reinforce the important role leaders have in **addressing microaggressions** and **encouraging upstanding**.
- Gain a deeper understanding of the concept of **bridging** and the **leader's role in creating belonging** in the workplace.



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An aerial photograph of a modern cable-stayed bridge spanning a wide body of blue water. The bridge has multiple concrete piers and tall, white, A-frame towers with numerous stay cables. The water is a deep blue, and a few small boats are visible in the distance. The bridge's deck is light-colored, and the overall scene is bright and clear.

“**Bridging** means acknowledging our **shared humanity**, rejecting that there is a ‘them,’ and moving toward a future where there is instead a new ‘us.’”

- john a. powell

*Othering and Belonging Institute,  
UC Berkeley*



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## KEY CONCEPTS IN OTHERING

- “Us vs. Them” mentality – “They” are less trustworthy and less capable than “us.”
- Seeing people only through their group identities (e.g., racial, ethnic, linguistic, political) without giving any thought to them as individuals.
- Negating another person’s humanity and seeing them as less worthy of dignity and respect. This is prevalent in how people with strong beliefs about polarizing topics view those with different opinions.
- Thinking that people outside your social or political group are not as intelligent, skilled, or special as you and your group.



# OTHERING

Othering often happens in the workplace through microaggressions.

# MICROAGGRESSIONS

“The everyday slights, insults, and negative verbal and nonverbal messages—whether intentional or not—that impede your ability to do your work well.”

- Melinda Epler



# COMMON MICROAGGRESSIONS

- Making assumptions about an individual's background or about their beliefs because of their identity.
- Questioning the legitimacy of their position or qualifications.
- Disregarding their input, suggestions, or point of view.
- Paying backhanded compliments.
- Questioning the intelligence or morality of someone based on who they voted for or what political party or candidate they support.



NOTE: Microaggressions can happen to anyone, but the unfortunate reality is that microaggressions are done more frequently to BIPOC and LGBTQ+ individuals, and women.

## BREAKOUT

**Practice responding respectfully. Each person will share an experience of when they were “othered.”**

**The other person responds respectfully:**

- **Demonstrate understanding**
- **Acknowledge impact**
- **Identify needs and values**





# BRIDGING AND BELONGING



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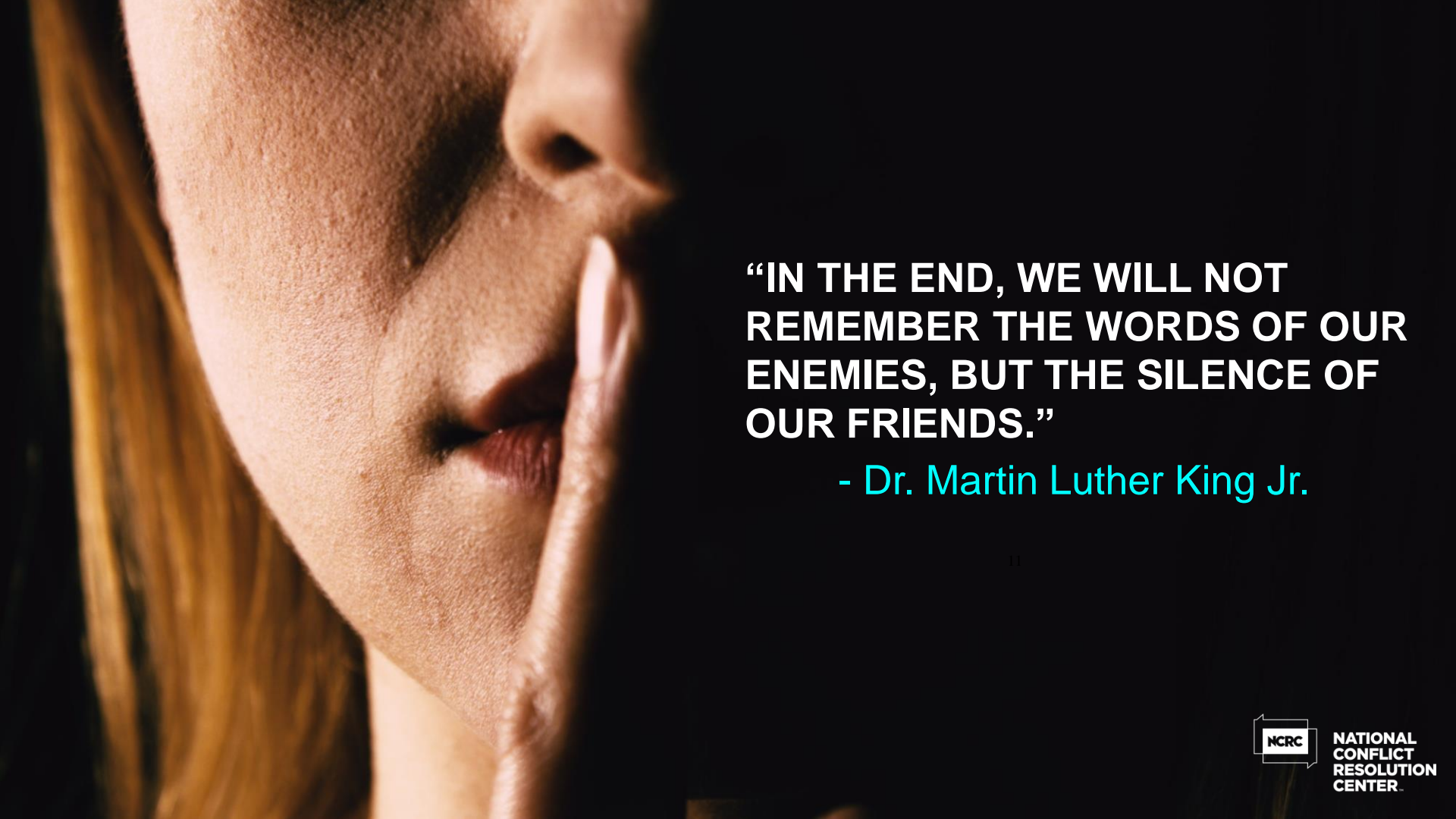
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## BREAKOUTS

- **What stood out for you in the video from the Othering and Belonging Institute?**
- **What are your greatest concerns/fears in helping employees bridge despite their differences on polarizing topics?**



A close-up, high-contrast photograph of a woman's face, focusing on her mouth and hand. Her hand is raised to her lips, with her fingers gently covering them, a universal gesture for silence. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the texture of her skin and the contours of her face against a dark background.

**“IN THE END, WE WILL NOT  
REMEMBER THE WORDS OF OUR  
ENEMIES, BUT THE SILENCE OF  
OUR FRIENDS.”**

**- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.**



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# TYPICAL INEFFECTIVE RESPONSES



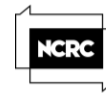
**Accommodate**



**Avoid**



**Attack**





**BYSTANDERS**  
**+ ACTION**

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**= UPSTANDERS**  
+ A Sense of Belonging



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## WHAT MOTIVATES UPSTANDER ACTION?

### Environmental Conditions in Department

- **Psychologically safe environment**
- **Expectation of being supported**
- **Positive workplace culture**

### Personal Qualities of the Employee

- **Empathy for others**
- **Sense of empowerment to take action**
- **In touch with personal values; a sense of moral conviction**





# FOUR EFFECTIVE RESPONSES

**In the Moment**

**DISTRACT  
DIRECT**

**After the Incident**

**DELEGATE  
DIALOGUE**



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# EFFECTIVE RESPONSES IN THE MOMENT

## **DISTRACTION**

**The upstander diverts attention to interrupt or defuse the situation.**

## **DIRECT**

**The upstander communicates something directly to the person responsible but does not attack that person.**



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## CAUTIONS WHEN USING THE DIRECT APPROACH

- It is **imperative** that **leaders make a direct statement** in the moment. By not doing so, they are demonstrating complicit agreement with the statement, microaggression, or action taken.
- Formal and informal leaders need to be aware of their **tone** when making a direct statement. An overly aggressive tone creates a psychologically unsafe space for everyone in the group.





# EFFECTIVE RESPONSES AFTER THE INCIDENT

## DELEGATE

The upstander decides that the best person to intervene is someone else. They delay action until they can request that person to take action.

## DIALOGUE

The upstander has a private, respectful conversation with the person responsible. The upstander is nonconfrontational, shares their own values around how people are treated, and considers the other person's perspective.



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# **DIALOGUE WITH THE PERSON RESPONSIBLE**

**Opening the Conversation**

**Clarifying Your Concern**

**Closing the Conversation**





## BREAKOUTS

Dialogue with the Person Responsible: One person will be the manager and the other person will play Dara.



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# THE ROLE OF LEADERS

## Bridging to Create Belonging in the Workplace

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# CREATING BELONGING IN THE WORKPLACE

**Workplace leaders today have an unparalleled opportunity to foster an environment of belonging, despite political and other divisions.**

*“People will typically be more enthusiastic where they feel a sense of belonging and see themselves as part of a community than they will in a workplace in which each person is left to his own devices.”*

- Alfie Kohn, American Education and Parenting Expert



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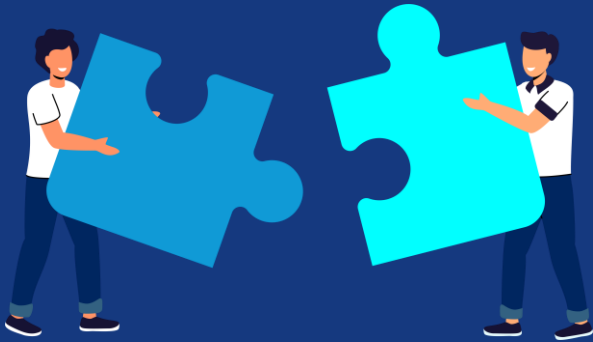
## BREAKOUTS

- **Share specific ways that you have created a sense of belonging at work.**
- **What are additional actions you can take?**





# CREATING BELONGING IN POLITICALLY CHARGED TIMES



- Encourage opportunities for employees to engage outside of work.
- Host roundtable discussions, anonymous surveys, and other formats that encourage open communication and feedback from employees.
- Build shared identities around apolitical interests, such as corporate volunteering.
- Ensure that all team members feel respected and valued.
- Focus on common goals.
- Create safe, highly structured dialogue opportunities.

**Othoring  
Encouraging Upstanding  
Bridging and Belonging**

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

## WHAT'S NEXT

- **Watch video on Stage One**
- **Next Week: The Exchange**