

**INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES &  
DIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE**

*Participant's Manual*  
*Comprehensive Public Training Program (CPTP)*  
*State of Louisiana*

# ***INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES & DIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE***

*Comprehensive Public Training Program (CPTP)*

*Sponsored by the Louisiana State Civil Service*

**Revised 7-11-16**

## **INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES & DIVERSITY IN THE WORKPLACE**

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course will examine the ways we handle the individual differences among people in the workplace. Participants will learn how and why we have different perceptions about people and how those perceptions can affect teamwork and productivity in positive and negative ways. Participants will practice dealing with different dimensions of diversity in structured exercises and learn how to create a climate in which all employees' contributions are recognized and appreciated.

### **JOB OUTCOMES**

- Recognizes the value of individuals' differences at all levels of the agency.
- Provides employment and development opportunities to support a diverse group of employees.
- Creates a climate in which everyone is respected and recognized for their contributions.

### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

- Apply approaches to foster an environment in which people from diverse backgrounds can work cooperatively and effectively to achieve agency goals.
- Create a work group that values and understands diversity.
- Develop methods, behaviors, and attitudes helpful in managing a diverse workforce.

**DEFINING DIVERSITY**

When we discuss “diversity” in the workplace, the most common thoughts are those physical characteristics a person possesses (those things we see or hear). However, diversity is a much broader subject than one’s physical appearance or speech. In fact, diversity includes many aspects such as family status, disabilities, and culture.

**Small Group Activity**

*What:* Understanding Diversity

*How:* In your small group, create a definition of diversity. Do this without reading ahead in the manual – aim for a good working definition in your own words.

Once your group has a definition, write it on chart paper and tape it on the wall.

Notes:

## **DIVERSITY AND THE CHANGING WORKFORCE**

Common dictionary definitions of diversity are “a state of unlikeness” or “the condition of being different.” The real meaning of diversity in the workplace is: *The mosaic of people who bring a variety of backgrounds, work styles, perspectives, values, and beliefs as assets to a work group.*”

Diversity can be defined and viewed in many different ways. In this course, diversity refers to all of the ways in which people are different. This includes individual differences as well as group differences.

Workplace diversity is about acknowledging the value of individual differences and making the most of these differences in the workplace. Workplace diversity is one of the greatest strengths of any organization. Embracing diversity in the workplace means creating an environment that values and supports the contributions of people with differences.

Workplace diversity strategies help to build an organization’s relationship with the community, enhance the contribution of its employees, and improve the quality of its programs, products and services. Workplace diversity creates a more inclusive and supportive work environment, better teamwork, and more effective service delivery. It increases productivity, encourages greater creativity, and different ways of thinking for improved decision making. The implementation of effective diversity strategies in an organization will have the benefit of improving employee retention, enhancing productivity, and reducing costs in the recruitment process.

### **Changing Demographics**

The U.S. workforce is usually defined as the employed, civilian, non-institutionalized population aged 16 and up. A workforce is considered diverse if it is composed of two or more groups whose members are distinguishable based on demographic or other characteristics. To note how diverse our workforce has become, recent research demonstrates that as of 2010, almost half of our nation’s new employees will be traditionally classified as minorities. Changes such as these are driven in part by changes in our nation’s population.

**Individual & Small Group Activity**

*What:* Recognizing Changing Workforce Drivers

*How:* Take the quiz on pages 6 - 7.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. 13%</li> <li>b. 25%</li> <li>c. 38%</li> <li>d. 42%</li> </ul>	<p>1. Approximately what percentage of the U.S. population is African American?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. 35%</li> <li>b. 40%</li> <li>c. 50%</li> <li>d. 60%</li> </ul>	<p>2. During the past 10 years (1998 to 2008), the Hispanic population has increased by about:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. 5%</li> <li>b. 7%</li> <li>c. 13%</li> <li>d. 18%</li> </ul>	<p>3. According to U.S. Census data, the percentage of the number of people over the age of 65 is:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. 30%</li> <li>b. 52%</li> <li>c. 64%</li> <li>d. 75%</li> </ul>	<p>4. Approximately what percent of women between the ages of 25-34 are now in the labor force (as of 2010)?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. 8%</li> <li>b. 11%</li> <li>c. 16%</li> <li>d. 23%</li> </ul>	<p>5. Approximately what percent of Americans currently between the ages of 16-24 are high school dropouts (as of 2008)?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. 1,000</li> <li>b. 3,500</li> <li>c. 5,000</li> <li>d. 7,000</li> </ul>	<p>6. Approximately how many students become dropouts each school day?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Male</li> <li>b. Female</li> </ul>	<p>7. Among all races and ethnicities, which gender has a lower graduation rate?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Hispanic</li> <li>b. Black</li> <li>c. American Indian</li> <li>d. White</li> </ul>	<p>8. Which ethnicity has the highest drop-out rate and/or will not graduate on time with a regular diploma?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>e. Hispanic</li> <li>f. Asian</li> <li>g. Black</li> <li>h. White</li> </ul>	<p>9. The best-educated, most affluent households in the United States are:</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Men</li> <li>b. Women</li> </ul>	<p>10. Since 1979, which group had a greater number enroll in college and was also the majority of graduates of college?</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. 0.6%</li> <li>b. 1.3%</li> <li>c. 2.4%</li> <li>d. 4.7%</li> </ul>	11. Approximately, what percentage of women were CEO of a Fortune 500 companies?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. 6.5%</li> <li>b. 11.9%</li> <li>c. 19.6%</li> <li>d. 14.7%</li> </ul>	12. As of 2009, what percentage of those living in America spoke a language other than English at home?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Asian</li> <li>b. Hispanic</li> <li>c. Native American</li> <li>d. Vietnamese</li> </ul>	13. In 2006, more of what group entered nursery school, kindergarten and grades 1 through 12 than did African Americans:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. 11%</li> <li>b. 18%</li> <li>c. 20%</li> <li>d. 34%</li> </ul>	14. Approximately what percent of United States residents had some level of disability in 2010?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. 15.7%</li> <li>b. 19.4%</li> <li>c. 20.7%</li> <li>d. 32.9%</li> </ul>	15. What percentage of people with disabilities is in the workforce today?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. 13.2</li> <li>b. 15.1</li> <li>c. 36.5</li> <li>d. 46.2</li> </ul>	16. Based on 2010 U.S. Census data, how many people (in millions) were considered to be living in poverty in the United States?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. White</li> <li>b. Asian</li> <li>c. Hispanic</li> <li>d. Black</li> </ul>	17. The U.S. Census declared that in 2010, which race had the largest percentage of individuals living in poverty in the United States?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. 1%</li> <li>b. 3.4%</li> <li>c. 5.3%</li> <li>d. 9%</li> </ul>	18. Approximately what percentage of Americans identify themselves as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgender?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. 30.75%</li> <li>b. 39.90%</li> <li>c. 34.41%</li> <li>d. 28.05%</li> </ul>	19. Approximately, what percent of the Louisiana population is considered to be a minority?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. One-half</li> <li>b. One-third</li> <li>c. One-fourth</li> <li>d. Two-thirds</li> </ul>	20. By 2050, what percentage of the U.S. population will be made up of Asians, Hispanics, African Americans and other nonwhite groups?

### WHAT IS DIVERSITY?

Diversity is about the following:

#### *Diversity is about values.*

Diversity is a business/workplace issue that also impacts people's deeply held beliefs, as well as human rights and civil rights. Diversity issues may force people to question 30, 40, even 50 years or more of social conditioning. We aim for balancing an individual's right to their personal values with the organization's right to create a productive workplace. Valuing diversity is a personal decision and a business decision for an organization.

#### *Diversity is about behavior.*

Regardless of personal beliefs and past experiences, organizations expect supervisors and employees to work in the most productive manner possible. Valuing diversity is much more productive than *not* valuing it, considering the productivity potential of a diverse workforce versus the costs of managing unnecessary conflict and the low productivity that may result otherwise.

#### *Diversity is a long-term process.*

Managing diversity is a process, not just one or two events. In some organizations, managing diversity may mean addressing conflict that may arise when the makeup of a long-term, stable work team of very similar employees begins to change with the retirement or promotion of members of that group. It may mean understanding that job-irrelevant criteria are not productive in the long run, and acting accordingly. It also means this -- the workforce and customer/client base is changing and that change is happening at an increasing rate. Being able to manage diversity means we are better prepared for the work environment of the present *and* the future.

## **DIMENSIONS OF DIVERSITY**

Dimensions of diversity refer to specific traits viewed as distinguishing one person or group from another. Race and gender are two dimensions of diversity that are based on someone's genetic (DNA) makeup. A *common misconception* of the dimensions of diversity is that they are mostly concerned with our own genetic background. Diversity is much broader and more complex than characteristics that are driven by DNA.

### **Biases and Prejudices**

Through our senses we perceive things (that is, we collect data), and then through our past experiences and education/training, we make inferences (conclusions) about what the data means. When a person perceives something in his or her environment, that perception may not be true. The perception may lead to assumptions about all members of a particular group of people based on one's actual experience with a single member of that group. When a person does this, he or she is generalizing to a whole group of people based on assumptions he or she has about one or two members of that group. At times, one's perception may be correct, but at other times, that perception may lead to influence in a particular direction (bias) or make a negative judgment beforehand (prejudice).

Biases and prejudices influence how we perceive the world around us. This shapes our behavior, impacting how we act/react toward individuals and groups that are like us and unlike us.

### **Individual & Small Group Activity**

*What:* How Our Mind Works

*How:* Read the case below and answer the question on your own. Once you have answered the question, discuss with your group.

A father and his son were involved in a car accident in which the father was pronounced dead at the scene and the son was seriously injured. The son was taken by ambulance to a nearby hospital and was immediately brought into an emergency operating room. A surgeon was called. Upon arrival, and seeing the patient, the attending surgeon exclaimed, 'Oh my goodness, it's my son!'

Can you explain this?

**Examples of Dimensions of Diversity**

When we talk about the dimensions of diversity, some dimensions are often ignored or minimized. Some people may perceive these (or other) dimensions as less important than race or gender, while others perceive them to be more important.

Below is a list of some of the dimensions of diversity. Note that different individuals may focus on different dimensions as more (or less) important to them:

- Age
- Culture
- Emotional
- Family status
- Generational differences
- Income
- Learning style
- Military experience
- Parental status
- Physical characteristics
- Race
- Sexual orientation
- Values
- Work style
- Communication style
- Education
- Ethnicity
- Gender
- Geographic location
- Language
- Mental disability
- Morals
- Personality preferences
- Physical disability
- Religion
- Traditions
- Work experience

## Individual Activity

*What:* How Our Mind Works

*How:* Individual Activity

The instructor is going to pass around to you four different index cards. On each of the index cards you are to do the following:

- Label the top of the cards with one of the following: Caucasian, Hispanic, Asian, and African-American.
- On the card, list as many stereotypes that are commonly used to describe the category of people written at the top of the index card. You should list stereotypes that you have heard, even if you do not necessarily believe them true or not.
- When you are finished, stack your cards in front of you, and the instructor will pick them all up from your seats.

**Your answers are confidential and will be read aloud by the instructor.**



## Individual Activity

*What:* Experiencing Biases

*How:* Think about a situation in which someone made a biased judgment about you or acted unfairly toward you because of one of the elements of diversity we have previously discussed. Consider the following:

- How did you know that you were being unfairly judged?
- What words or actions were directed at you because of assumptions or stereotypes?
- Why do you think those assumptions were made about you?
- How did the experience make you feel?
- How do you think you should have been treated in that situation?

When you are finished, place your note card in front of your seating area and the instructor will pick them up. The instructor will then pass the note cards to another person to be read aloud so do NOT use any names, or use your name in relating the experience you had.

## Class Activity

*What:* Experiencing Biases

*How:* You will receive a note card from the instructor that has been created by another participant in the class. When it is your turn, you will read the note card aloud and then answer the following questions:

- After reading the note card, how do you feel about the situation?
  
- What would you have done, or how would you have reacted had this happened to you?

### **Group Affiliations and Self-Concept**

The self-concept of an individual is *partly* defined by personal characteristics and group affiliations. Our personal characteristics and group affiliations may have an effect on our experiences in the workplace. This is called our identity boundary. Read the case below as an example:

James is an accountant. He identifies with other accountants (that is, colleagues in his profession). He also works for DEQ. He identifies with DEQ itself as well. On the weekends, James plays soccer. He identifies with others who play soccer.

James is identifying with groups with which he has shared experiences and with which he believes share fundamental values. There is nothing wrong with James identifying with these groups. However, the danger comes in if James develops an “us versus them” mentality towards anyone who is for example in purchasing simply because they are not accountants. This will block the free-flow of ideas or cooperation, and foster distrust in the work group.

James must realize his perceptions and biases, and ensure he doesn't allow these to impact his actions at work. James' supervisor must ensure he trains and socializes James, and teaches him to avoid devaluing the potential contribution of others because of a group to which they belong (or don't belong).

### **CULTURAL DIVERSITY**

In discussions earlier, we learned about workplace diversity, dimensions of diversity and group affiliations/self-concept. Intertwined in all three of these is cultural diversity.

There were once two wise men.

One said: "The squeaky wheel gets the oil."

The other said: "Quacking ducks get shot."

The two men who made these statements came from different cultures. Years later, each culture still operates under the same premise it did when these statements were made. The first idiom is North American meaning the person who makes enough noise will be heard and receives positive attention. The second idiom is Chinese meaning the person who is standing out will receive unfavorable attention. These two simple sayings demonstrate how different our cultures are, and how easily if we act one way in the presence of the other culture, our actions could be mistaken or lead to different outcomes.

Consider other examples:

"A man's house is his castle" vs. "Mi casa su casa".

"God helps those who help themselves" vs. "God willing".

### **Cultural Differences**

Each culture has its own uniqueness:

- Language differences
- Manners and customs
- Religions and cultural orientations (for example, styles of music and art)
- Educational processes
- Traditions

Although it is difficult to learn every aspect of every culture, we must realize that differences do exist and understand overall values. Geert Hofstede's research on cultural dimensions teaches us that a society's values are among the most influential of cultural differences, and that they are important because they shape the way we behave. He called out four values in his research that are relevant for us:

1. **Power Distance** – This describes how members of a culture accept and expect power to be distributed. For example, it is common for a Mexican who is a less powerful member of society to accept and expect power to be distributed unequally.

2. **Individualism versus Collectivism** – This refers to ties between individuals – in more individualistic countries, like the United States or Australia, all members are expected to look after themselves and their immediate families; whereas countries like Indonesia and Pakistan are more collectivist and members are expected to care for each other more.
3. **Masculinity versus Femininity** – This refers to societies that differ in the extent to which they value assertiveness (masculinity) or caring (femininity). For example, Japan and Austria are high in masculinity, therefore the members are more assertive; while Denmark, Costa Rica and Chile value femininity, and therefore their members are more caring (or less assertive).
4. **Uncertainty Avoidance** – This refers to whether people in a society are uncomfortable with unstructured situations where unknown, surprising or unique incidents occur, that is, dealing with surprises. Countries such as Sweden, Israel, and Great Britain are relatively comfortable in this manner, whereas, Greece and Portugal are not.

### **Cultural Competencies**

Often, we do not know what we don't know about other cultures. This caused issues in the workplace. Due to occurrences such as this, we must be "culturally competent." That is, we must recognize there are differences between cultures and treat people equitably with those differences in mind.

There are four levels of cultural competence:

1. **Unconsciously incompetent** – one does not know what he or she does not know (limited knowledge of culture of those around him/her)
2. **Consciously incompetent** – one knows that he or she does not know (having an understanding of one's own cultural values and willingness to improve his / her understanding of other's culture)
3. **Consciously competent** – one is aware of and understands cultural differences (he or she works to build cultural awareness and understanding)
4. **Unconsciously competent** – cultural consideration occurs unconsciously (he or she works to build cultural awareness and understanding on an unconscious level)

The first step to becoming unconsciously competent is to evaluate your current level of cultural competence. Next, you should gain knowledge and apply your learning's at work when dealing with co-workers, supervisors, managers, employees and customers/clients. Following these recommendations will guide you to become unconsciously competent.

## OTHER FORMS OF DIVERSITY

### Disabilities

After Hurricane Katrina, a middle-aged man named John was very upset. John did not lose his home nor did he have to relocate, but when his employer called to tell him their workplace would be closed for a week, he told them if he could get there, they could open. He didn't understand that there was no power there. John was a food preparer for a food service provider, and his job was to season the meat. John had held that job for 15 years and never missed a day. His supervisor never had to correct John because he always performed his task perfectly. John had a severe mental disability but he was able to maintain a job and his livelihood through a little assistance from others (that assistance was transportation).

John's story is true, and demonstrates an example of how a disabled person can be a productive member of a work group and of society. Each work group has a variety of individuals that bring a range of talents to the work group that are job relevant. John's ability to perform his task was job relevant. John's disability was actually an asset to his work group.

When discussing diversity we need to recognize all of the ways diversity can manifest itself in the work group. As supervisors, managers and/or co-workers, we need to look for the job relevant strengths in our work groups. We also need to determine what strengths we can develop in our employees or help our co-workers develop. This should be the basis for our decision making, followed by performance on the job; not if a person is different from us.

Other types of disabilities include physical; deafness, hearing and speech impairment; blindness and visually impaired; medical (such as epilepsy, cancer, diabetes, and others); and veterans with service-connected disabilities.

### **Class Discussion**

*What:* Finding strengths in disabilities

- How:*
- Discuss examples of how disabilities can become strengths.
  - Discuss examples of how you or your work group has adapted to having a disabled person in the work group.

Notes:

### **DIVERSITY'S ROLE IN COMMUNICATION**

Communication is one of the most important factors in the success of any work group. Most individuals in a work group have to communicate with others at some point throughout their day. This communication can take many forms such as face-to-face, phone, email, formal written, memo or fax. When we communicate, we must consider our audience and the method for our communication to be successful.

Diversity may impact our communication due to differences in:

- Perceptions
- Semantics (choice and meaning of words)
- Nonverbal cues (different meanings)
- Ambiguity
- Physical and mental capabilities
- Cultures

The more we know and understand about our audience, the more successful we will be in our communication. Generally, we have more trouble communicating when there are language and cultural differences. To increase the success of our communication, we should take an active role in learning about other cultures and means of communications to individuals who are hearing, speech or visually impaired, or who possess physical or mental disabilities.

### **WHY WE NEED TO VALUE DIVERSITY**

The facts presented about our changing workforce naturally create diverse work environments. As supervisors and employees, it is our responsibility to identify factors that are job-relevant and job-irrelevant in a diverse work environment. This is also critical when dealing with customers (in which situations, we need to identify what facets of the customer's diversity is relevant to our interaction and what is not). When we focus on job-irrelevant or customer-irrelevant information, we enter into a potentially legal situation.

#### **Benefits**

Work groups that have good diversity skills may enjoy a number of benefits of having a diverse workforce *and* the skills necessary for managing that diversity. Some examples of those benefits are:

- Agency benefits
  - More innovation and adaptability
  - Higher productivity, creativity, quality and teamwork
  - Better communication
  - Recruitment and retention of the best employees
  - Less likelihood of incurring costs of discrimination
  - Fewer blind spots
  - Broader service offerings
  - Variety of viewpoints
  - More effective execution
  - Enhanced problem solving due to broader and richer base of experience
  - Enhanced public image
  - Greater customer loyalty
  - Reduced turnover costs
  - Improved employee morale
  - Decreasing interpersonal conflicts
  - Fair and equitable work environment
  
- Personal benefits
  - Freedom to express opinions and thoughts in a safe environment
  - Increase in your contributions and value to self and others
  - Reduced stress associated with marginalization (being excluded)
  - Heightened sense of belonging
  - Improved ability to bring your talents and skills to work
  - Personal satisfaction
  - Learning opportunities

**Class Discussion**

*What:* Positive experiences or successes due to diversity

*How:* Discuss with the class positive examples of when you and/or your work group have benefited from a diverse work group.

Notes:

## **Barriers**

One has to understand the barriers that may prevent a work group from taking full advantage of the potential of a diverse work group. Barriers include, but are not limited to:

- **Stereotyping and prejudice** – allowing traits to bias you against someone
- **Ethnocentrism** – viewing members of one's own group as the “center of the universe” and viewing other’s group less favorably
- **Discrimination** – prejudging someone based on their personal traits
- **Tokenism** – appointing a small group of the minority population to high-profile positions – this slows down the process of hiring or promoting more members of the minority group
- **Gender roles** – gender role stereotypes; for example, a study found attractiveness was an advantage for females only when the job was non-managerial

## **Class Discussion**

*What:* Challenging experiences due to diversity

*How:* Discuss with the class examples of challenges you and/or your work group have faced due to a diverse work group.

Notes:

**Promoting Non-Discrimination**

Organizations benefit when they promote nondiscrimination by encouraging employees to comply with federal, state and local equal employment opportunity laws, which ban discrimination on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, age, religion, and other job-irrelevant personal characteristics, *and* by encouraging employees to refrain from discrimination even when it is not illegal. An organization that does a better job of promoting nondiscrimination among employees is less likely to be the target of costly litigation. Also, that organization is more likely to use the variety of strengths each of their employees has in productive ways.

**Discrimination Laws**

Several federal laws apply towards the prevention of discrimination based on diverse characteristics of individuals. Below is a list and brief description of each. It is beneficial for all supervisors, managers and employees alike to be aware of federal and state laws that protect against discrimination in the workplace. Understanding of the laws can prevent situations from arising and can assist in handling situations that arise. More information on each is located in the Appendix of this course manual.

Laws protecting against discrimination include:

<b>Law</b>	<b>Prohibits / Protects</b>
Civil Rights Act of 1991	Provides monetary damages in cases of intentional employment discrimination
Title VII of the Civil rights Act of 1964	Prohibits employment discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin
Equal Pay Act of 1963	Protects men and women who perform substantially equal work in the same establishment from sex-based wage discrimination
Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967	Protects individuals who are 40 years of age or older
Title I and Title V of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990	Prohibits employment discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities in the private sector, and in state and local governments

## **MANAGING DIVERSITY**

Managing diversity takes a multifaceted approach. The first step is to understand the work of employees and what criteria are job-relevant. The second is to determine if everyone in the work group is aware of their own diversities and what their job-relevant criteria are, and if everyone is not, assist them in becoming aware. Third, recruitment should be conducted in a manner to attract and retain a diverse work group. Lastly, a culture should be created and maintained in the work group that supports and respects diversity. Within that culture, the leadership (supervisors, managers, section heads, and directors) should serve as role models, treat others the way they want to be treated, and project a positive self-fulfilling prophecy, as well as recognize and stop inappropriate behavior immediately.

**Step 1: Understanding the Work.** Managing diversity starts here because we must meet the goals of our agency through the output of our work group. Therefore, we must understand all of the job-relevant criteria for each position and the areas where flexibility in staffing, reward, training, and scheduling exist. Some types of work and jobs will allow more flexibility and others will allow less.

**Step 2: Awareness.** Using the tools provided in this course, one can begin to determine the level of awareness of employees of their own diversities and those of other employees. Supervisors and managers should spend time with their employees to assist in determining the level of awareness as well as to determine the values and reward preferences of individual employees. Supervisors should use this information to assist in creating a culture that supports diversity.

**Step 3: Recruitment and Retention.** Generally, supervisors and managers have a role in recruitment and retention of their work group members. Holding recruitment sessions in a variety of settings will encourage more diversity in the workplace. For example, if one needs to hire a new IT (computer) specialist, he or she may want to recruit from colleges (majority and minority), technical colleges (public and private), military, the Louisiana Workforce Commission, and the general public. Supervisors and managers should work with their Human Resource representatives to establish broad recruitment strategies.

Retention is not only based on employee performance, but also based on supervisor/ manager performance, and culture and climate in the work group. Turnover is very costly, time consuming, and stressful to the other employees in the work group. Also, turnover often causes temporary decreases in performance, efficiency and effectiveness. Efforts to prevent turnover should be built into any supervisor's and manager's strategies for managing the work group. Research has demonstrated that more diverse work groups that are well managed experience lower turnover. Therefore, creating a culture for diversity in the work group may reduce turnover.

**Step 4: Creating and Managing Culture for Diversity.** Creating and managing a culture for diversity is no quick task. Each step above must be executed, and a supervisor or manager must have a plan. Include the following in your plan:

**Role Model:** To begin, the supervisor or manager should serve as a role model. He or she should set appropriate standards of behavior that values diversity and live up to those standards. He or she should be aware of individual differences and showing an appreciation for them. Also, he or she should value diversity in all practices, privileges, and conditions of employment (e.g., hiring, training, setting expectations, promotions, discipline, etc.). Put another way, this means to “walk the talk.”

**Equity vs. Fairness:** Beyond serving as a role model, the supervisor or manager should create policies and procedures that support fair treatment of all employees. This means:

#### **Treating others as they want to be treated**

Previously, the rule was “Treat everyone equally,” or “Treat others the way I want to be treated.” However, the old rules do not take into account individual differences and values. Additionally, they create an environment of assimilation and reduce the assets in the workplace. Our state and nation are much more diverse environments today, and this drives a changing work group. We must respond to these population changes to maintain a quality workforce and to successfully operate with more diverse customers / clients.

**Positive Self-fulfilling Prophecy:** Supervisors and managers must also strive to project a positive self-fulfilling prophecy. A self-fulfilling prophecy occurs when we unconsciously project our expectations of people onto them, affecting how we communicate with them, work with them, and supervise them. This effect has been demonstrated in several valid and reliable research studies since 1969 to impact productivity. That is, if we interact with employees with the assumption that they are competent and will succeed, until we see otherwise, we can have a positive effect on the employees and their productivity.

**Management Strategies:** Several supervisory and management strategies apply to creating and maintaining a diverse work group. These strategies are designed to raise awareness and understanding of cultural and other diversity in the work group, as well as provide methods to maintain a diverse work group. No matter what plan is devised, the first consideration should be to identify if a difference is job relevant. Job relevance means something that will help or hurt productivity, efficiency and effectiveness in the work group.

Strategies to manage a diverse work group include:

- Be self-aware of your own culture, identity, biases, prejudices and stereotypes.
- Test your assumptions before acting on them.
- Spend time with your employees/co-workers to get to know their strengths, weaknesses, goals, and values.
- Be open to constructive feedback.
- Be willing to challenge and change practices that present barriers to different groups.
- Create policies and practices to utilize the job relevant features different individuals and/or groups bring into the work group (such as cross-functional teams).
- Take immediate action when employees in the work group show disrespect for others.
- Ensure assignments and opportunities are accessible to everyone, and delegate fairly.
- Consider individual needs when possible in creation of work group policies (for example, if schedules can be created in a flexible manner, ask employees what they would prefer; or if rewards are not mandated, ask employees how they would like to be rewarded).
- Assign a coach or mentor to employees to assist in building relationships, building and transferring knowledge, and increasing opportunities for employees.
- Send all employees to (and/or recommend to co-workers) diversity training.
- Include employees/co-workers in decision making processes.
- Make others aware of your background and experiences that are job relevant.
- Offer to participate in decision making opportunities.
- Offer to become a coach or mentor to a new employee.

**Individual Activity**

*What:* Defining your path forward

*How:* Use the space below to define the steps you will take when you return to your work group to help create and sustain a diverse work group.

Steps:

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**Individual Activity**

*What:* Managing Diversity Profile

*How:* This is designed to help you examine your diversity management skills. You should indicate your rating

	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Often (4)	Usually (5)	Almost Always (6)
<b>Champion for Diversity</b>						
1. Communicates a diversity vision for organizational success that sparks excitement in others.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Encourages others to promote and explain the diversity vision.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Regularly measures own diversity progress and the progress of staff.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Asks employees for input about diversity.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Total:						
<b>Communicates Across Cultures</b>						
5. Communicates easily with people of diverse backgrounds.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Speaks effectively in front of diverse groups.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Gives constructive feedback effectively to all groups regardless of race, gender, or other diverse characteristics.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. Listens to feedback from diverse groups without becoming defensive.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Total:						
<b>Diversity Orientation</b>						
9. Discusses diversity as strength in the organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. Gives people of diverse	1	2	3	4	5	6

backgrounds equal opportunity for training, promotion, etc.						
11. Seeks to understand the cultural norms and practices of groups other than my own.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. Makes use of the diverse talents of people in work assignments, decision making, etc.	1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Total:</b>						
<b>Leads Change</b>	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Often (4)	Usually (5)	Almost Always (6)
13. Consults with diverse groups to find innovative ways to make change happen.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. Gets input from other employees about changes that will have an impact on them.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. Works to resolve diverse work group issues related to impending changes.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. Keeps people informed during the process of change.	1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Total:</b>						
<b>Empowers Others to Act</b>	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Often (4)	Usually (5)	Almost Always (6)
17. Solicits input from groups regardless of race, gender, or other characteristics.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18. Manages more like a colleague than a boss.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19. Shares accountability with diverse groups equitably.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20. Rewards diverse groups for all their contributions in a fair manner.	1	2	3	4	5	6
<b>Total:</b>						
<b>Develops Others</b>	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Often (4)	Usually (5)	Almost Always (6)
21. Delegates responsibility fully to those qualified to do the work regardless of race, gender, or	1	2	3	4	5	6

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other characteristics.						
22. Works to customize training needs to fit diverse work group members.	1	2	3	4	5	6
23. Counsels and mentors diverse work group members on their interests, preferences, and careers.	1	2	3	4	5	6
24. Demonstrates valuing diversity through you own actions.	1	2	3	4	5	6
Total:						