



Critical Conversations©

Working in diverse workplaces requires that we value differences, respect personal perspectives and plainly address the challenges, shortcomings, and mistakes that accompany these realities. Though we cannot expect perfection, we can expect that our counterparts will demonstrate their commitment to Diversity by engaging in clear, honest, and productive discussions about the challenges inherent in learning about and engaging with difference. Fear, shame, or guilt around these realities is not only unhelpful, but it results in a threat to the success of the social enhancement that is being attempted.

Critical Conversations© is a method by which this dialogue can be had in a manner that increases safety, harmony, and promotes both creativity and productivity. By clear presentation and explanation of the process, we hope to provide a simple and transparent way to navigate the “Could Be” dangerous social situations that are common in places where the challenges of Diversity are neither acknowledged nor honored.

Steps:

Plainly address the issue: An individual must feel comfortable highlighting the issue, micro-aggression, or personal reaction to the person involved in the conflict.

Acknowledge the Pain: Both participants must honor and acknowledge the pain that is present- often for both parties. This acknowledgement must be done without defensiveness, blame, or assumption of malicious intent. There must be room for both parties to express their personal connection to the event and its outcome.

Own what you can: If you said it, own it. Intent is irrelevant. When we try to “explain” or highlight our “Innocence”, our “lack of intention to wound”, or our “True Intention”- we invalidate our colleague’s experience. If it was done, acknowledging what “it” was does not mean that you intended to hurt that other person.

Apologize for what you can: An apology does inherently admit guilt, it does not assume full responsibility for another’s interpretation, it does not necessarily declare a mistake. Apologies acknowledge the other person’s reality, experience, pain- and often, interpretation.

Collaborate on a solution or Plan: Healthy relationships hinge on the ability to repair disruptions. Once a situation or challenge has been identified, it is imperative that both parties agree to move forward collaboratively- or the rupture will continue and haunt the work.



Reflection:

Without the ability to address the challenges that are inherent in the process of Diversification, we run the risk of creating a program that threatens that very goal. Engaging across difference requires we acknowledge, esteem, and plan for the tension that is bound to exist. Critical Conversations© is a tool designed to improve the success of initiatives meant to enhance the social functioning and awareness of social service agencies.

Contact Us:

To learn more about this tool and our other programs, please contact our Principal Partner to discuss your professional goals or areas of service in which the group can best serve you. You can reach Laura at: Laura@hindsightconsultinggroup.com or the number listed below. You also can reach our general mailbox via info@hindsightconsultinggroup.com

For more information about who we are and what we do, please visit our website at: www.hindsightconsultinggroup.com

