

WORK GROUP DYNAMICS AND DIVERSITY



STUDY UNIT 7

Models of Diversity Development in Work Context

Individual Development Models

- **Bennett Model: Developing Intercultural Sensitivity**

- 1) Stage 1: Denial of difference**

- No recognition of cultural or other differences
- Tendency to show extreme prejudice
- Dehumanise people seen as outsiders
- Example: “London is just like Paris, lots of people & noise”
- Interventions: Explicit behavioural guidelines; interventions aimed at recognising differences

Individual Development Models

2) Stage 2: Defence against difference

- Recognise differences – but evaluate them negatively
- The greater the differences – the more negative the evaluation
- Differences are denigrated & negative stereotyping occurs
- Example: “Immigrants make good workers; they don’t communicate well enough to be managers”
- Interventions: Focus on similarities; emphasise commonalities; explicit behavioural guidelines

Individual Development Models

3) Stage 3: Minimisation of difference

- Recognise & accept superficial differences – but hold that all people are the same
- Emphasis is on similarity & the commonality of values
- Example: “Jane, you are very good at strategy. You think like a man”
- Interventions: Simulations; role playing the part of someone different; building relationships with people who are different

Individual Development Models

4) Stage 4: Acceptance of difference

- Recognition & appreciation of differences
- Differences are accepted
- Example: “I accept that people who prefer intuition are different from those who prefer analysis. We’ll just have to learn to work together”
- Interventions: Emphasise recognition & respect for differences; practise using different communication styles; learn a new language etc.

Individual Development Models

5) Stage 5: Adaptation to difference

- Individuals develop effective cross-cultural communication skills
- Effective use of empathy & shifting one's frame of reference in order to understand & be understood
- Example: "In order to communicate successfully with my child, I need to think from her point of view and incorporate the appropriate emotional messages"
- Interventions: Cultivating of empathy; challenging opportunities to practise & use their developing competencies .

Individual Development Models

6) Stage 6: Integration of difference

- Internalisation of multicultural frames of reference
- Maintains a definition of identity that is marginal to any culture or group
- Example: “I’m at my best when building bridges between people and providing mutual interpretation. I sometimes feel like I don’t belong in any particular group”
- Interventions: Locate & network with others who feel this way; spend time clarifying own personal values.

Individual Development Models

- Mendez-Russell Model: Hand, Head & Heart

Categories explored	Deeper exploration
Knowledge (head)	Stereotype Factual information
Understanding (heart)	Awareness
Empathy	Acceptance (hand & heart)
Tolerance	Respect
Behaviour (hand & heart)	Self-awareness Interpersonal skills

Individual Development Models

- Mendez-Russell Model: Hand, Head & Heart
 - (1) Gain new knowledge on the differences between individuals
 - (2) Learn to understand people who are different by becoming aware of their feelings (empathy)
 - (3) This understanding should help change reactions towards people who are different (more tolerant)
- This leads to awareness of own behaviour towards others & becoming more sensitive to them & developing new interpersonal behaviours