

# diversophy®

## Facilitator's Guide

**di - ver' - so - phy®**, n. [Lat. *diversus*, pp. of *divertere*, to turn in various directions + Gr. *σοφία*, skill, wisdom].

1. Wisdom or skill in dealing with people different from oneself; cultural competence.
2. A game whose purpose is to develop this wisdom, skill and intelligence in those who play it.

### *Introduction*

This diversophy® training instrument is designed to enhance the cultural competence of your organization and its people. It empowers those who play it to work and communicate productively across differences.

The game takes players from “ethnocentricity” — being centered in one’s own culture, the way we find ourselves when we first face diversity — to “diversophy,” a state of higher cultural sensitivity and skill.

In their path to cultural competence, players respond to up to five kinds of cards that make up the deck:

1. **diversiSMARTS** (green) cards challenge players’ factual knowledge about specific cultural topics.
2. **diversiCHOICE** (yellow) cards put players in inter-cultural situations that challenge them to make decisions about how best to behave or respond.
3. **diversiSHARE** (blue) cards enhance communication and teambuilding skills. They encourage discussion by asking players to share something about themselves, their opinions and feelings. They underline the message that we are all different, even in our own cultural groups, and that we can continue to learn from each other.
4. **diversiRISK** (red) cards put the players in situations that are beyond their control. Some situations are “positive” (+) and some “negative” (—). These cards allow players to experience, in a non-threatening way, how differences can create unexpected benefits or costs.
5. **diversiGUIDE** (white) cards offer wisdom from different cultures and recommendations that encourage the players to look for opportunities to apply it in their work or life.

## ***Why use a game for intercultural or diversity training?***

Games have long been used as powerful training instruments. They help create working models of human interaction which enable learners to acquire and apply new knowledge and skills. They are especially useful for sensitive topics: they engage players emotionally in the low-risk environment created by an artificial field of play.

Playing games, people create a new culture which can then be examined as part of the learning process:

1. What values do they bring into the game from their own backgrounds, e.g. collaboration or competition?
2. How do they react to each others' values and styles of play?

Because games are involving, they lower players' resistance to trying new ideas and behaviors, so that people learn "despite themselves".

**diversophy**<sup>®</sup> was specifically designed to meet organizations' demands for diversity training materials that:

- Are "hands-on" and experiential.
- Involve several senses in the learning process. Are imaginative, enjoyable and non-threatening. Reduce counterproductive conflict and confrontation.
- Go beyond creating awareness to impart culturally specific information and skills.
- Provide a positive outcome and a sense of successful learning.

## ***Features of the diversophy***<sup>®</sup> ***game***

**diversophy**<sup>®</sup> involves those who play it in an intensive learning situation. Each card tells something about culture and how it functions in individuals and systems. Activities are learning-based, e.g. **diversiRISK** cards may say something about the role fate plays in a specific culture.

The game can be played for up to one hour by the same team of players before the supply of activities is depleted.

All cultural information has been carefully researched, updated with Census information and documented in the literature of diversity, sociology and anthropology.

Knowledgeable representatives of the groups that are described in the game have also reviewed it for its relevance and accuracy.

In addition:

- **diversophy**<sup>®</sup> provides a cost-effective program of serious learning in a form which adds variety and enjoyment to conference or meeting attendance.
- The rules of play are simple. No previous experience or diversity training on the part of the participants is necessary, and even those with a considerable training can learn from the game and enjoy it.
- All the information required to administer the game is found in this *Facilitator's Guide*.

## ***When to use diversophy®***

diversophy® is intended as a training module that can stand alone or be an integral part of a larger training program on diversity, global management, cross-cultural communication and negotiation, etc. diversophy® is designed specifically for groups less than 25 people. We offer a Conference diversophy® version for larger groups.

In addition, the game may be used as:

- Lunch, evening or break-time activity in the workplace.
- An activity to close a diversity session with an upbeat experience that confirms what people have learned in the session.
- A follow-up to training already conducted, administered by line or staff management.

## ***The diversophy® Materials***

diversophy® contains these items:

1. This Planning & Facilitation Guide.
2. A set of diversiCARDS in up to five colors.
3. 3 QuickStart cards for playing with cards only.
4. 3 QuickStart cards for playing the game using cards with the rolling cube.
5. 3 Rolling Cubes.
6. 3 Debrief cards with post-game discussion items.

While this is all you need to play diversophy®, you may also want to pass out pencils and stick-on note pads, so players may attach questions and comments to cards that they might like to discuss further during the debriefing.

## ***Preparing to Play***

It is the Facilitator's responsibility to:

- Be familiar with the rules of the game and the order of play.
- Assist with setting up the room and distribution of materials prior to the game and help with taking down the game at the end.
- Answer questions about the rules that come up during the game.
- Be familiar with the information by reading the cards beforehand.

## ***Facilitator's Introduction***

It is the role of the Facilitator to introduce the game and get the game started.

She or he can briefly but effectively cover the following points in the explanation.

- Explain the connection of the game to the theme of the training or conference.
- Have the players read the rules in their small groups. Walk them through any features you think are particularly important for this group and any changes you may have made to the way the game is to be played.
- The presentation should also set the tone for the game, combining the serious purpose of learning about diversity with a fun way of doing it.

# ***Ways to Play* diversophy®**

There are several ways to use your diversiDECK:

## **1. Play with the Cards Only**

You can play diversophy® in groups of any size using the cards alone. Subdivide the group into teams of 5 or 6. One deck of cards will serve up to 3 teams. In very large groups, have extra facilitators help you troubleshoot the game.

diversophy® plays successfully with over a thousand people in a large auditorium with fixed seating (Conference Version). However, it is usually more comfortable to use a room of ample size with flexible seating or even small tables.

### ***Before the game***

- Randomize the cards by shuffling them until the cards of different colors are thoroughly mixed.
- Divide the randomized deck into 2 or 3 smaller decks, if you have several teams playing. 50 cards per team will normally last for one hour of play.
- You may customize the deck(s) by choosing cards that you want your team(s) to discuss, and omitting those less relevant to this training or group.
- Decide how long you wish to play. Though slightly shorter periods will work, 90 minutes is a good minimal guideline. This includes 5 minutes to set up and a 20-minute debriefing period.
- If you use stick-on notes for debriefing, distribute a pad along with a few pencils, to each group.

### ***Starting the game***

- Introduce the game. Tell the participants that they are going to have a learning experience in the form of a game. Describe your learning objectives. Tell them how long the game will last.
- Give each team one deck of cards and a QuickStart card for playing with cards only and ask a member of each team to read it aloud to the team.
- Tell the teams that you will answer questions about how to play the game, but not about the card content or the correctness of their answers. Tell them to hold such questions for the debriefing.
- If you use stick-on notes, tell players to attach one to any card they would like to discuss later.

### ***During the game:***

- Move about the teams to answer questions as they get started. As they play, sparingly visit the teams responding to problems or questions that arise.
- Some individuals hesitate to do activities found in the instructions of the diversiSHARE cards. Encourage them, but do not force anyone who resists.

### ***After the game***

- Declare the game over at the time you set earlier.
- Ask participants to count their individual points and total their team's point score. The person with the most points is team champion. The team with the most points wins. Remind them that everyone who plays and learns is a winner.

- Debrief the game, in the whole group or in teams, depending on how many participants and facilitators you have. Use the debrief card that comes with the deck or create one of your own to address your own learning goals.
- Collect the cards from each table. Do not let multiple decks become mixed, as it will cost you much time and effort to sort them before you play again.

## 2. Play with the Cards & Rolling Cube

If you use the rolling cube do not randomize the cards beforehand. Leave them grouped according to category colors, but be sure you select equal numbers of cards from each category.

Prepare, conduct and debrief the game according to the instructions in section 1 above. However, when starting the game, pass out the QuickStart card for playing with cards & rolling cube.

## 3. More Uses for the diversiCARDS

- You may use these diversiCARDS in other ways in meetings and at training programs.
- Use one or more carefully selected cards as “icebreakers,” conversation starters, or for a change of pace. Give them to pairs or groups to discuss.
- Base discussions, case studies or role-plays on the situations in the cards.
- Combine these cards with those of other decks to customize the content for a particular subject or event. You can easily sort them into their original decks later, as the logo is different on each deck.
- Add your own cards. Since the card size is 1/4 of a normal size sheet of paper, you can easily print and add them to the existing deck. You can turn players’ work situations into diversiCARDS. For customizing instructions or for instructions on how to customize the Game, contact [service@diversophy.com](mailto:service@diversophy.com).

## *Troubleshooting*

### From ethnocentricity to diversophy

Researchers have pointed out that in order to develop multicultural awareness and skill, most of use must go through a number of stages. It will be helpful for the Facilitator or trainer of the game to be aware of these states and how they impact the game, as well as how players respond to the diversiCARDS will give you clues as to where they are in their development and help you decide what to address as you troubleshoot or debrief the game.

#### **Ethnocentric Behaviors**

Most of us begin in Ethnocentricity, where we believe that our culture is right and sometimes tell others, in effect, “my way or the highway.” Most of the time we are not consciously aware that we have this belief, but it comes out in what we say or do.

Examples of ethnocentric thinking and behavior during the game may include players who:

- Deny the need for the game or insist that the organization or group has other more critical priorities for training, time, resources, etc.
- Use their own values to interpret others’ behavior or the answers they give. This is commonly called “attribution” and is a normal behavior that we learn to manage as we become more adept in understanding and managing cultural differences.

- Express negative stereotypes or judgments, or unfavorably compare other groups with their own culture's way of doing things. This occurs when different groups are mentioned in the cards or come up in discussion, especially when representatives of these groups are not found in the mix of players.
- Say that "we are all really the same underneath," or are reluctant to define or discuss ethnic or other differences as real. They will often claim that doing this is labeling or stereotyping others. Some will insist that the game itself stereotypes others by including culture-specific information on the cards.
- Say, "We Romans have it right, you have it wrong," or at least, "When in Rome do as we Romans do."

Ethnocentric behaviors do not necessarily imply deep bias and prejudice. They are typical of where most people start. Many people are ethnocentric, but open to learning and to new experiences and relationships.

### **Reverse Ethnocentricity**

Reverse ethnocentricity, also called the "romantic stage", "going native", etc is a result of the culture shock that occurs when one is exposed to the power of another culture. One falls in love with or unqualifiedly embraces, praises or imitates what one feels to be the superiority of another culture or group. Everything the others do is right and beautiful and everything about the individual's own culture is bad. Examples of reverse ethnocentric behaviors during the game may include:

- People who extol certain, often primitive, native or oppressed cultures and their beliefs, values or behaviors as superior to their own.
- People who attempt to assimilate, or become totally a part of the other culture.
- "Positive" stereotyping of others, e.g., expecting all Asians to be good at math, all people with disabilities to be good models of overcoming adversity, etc.
- People who disparage their own cultural group, e.g., white men — who put themselves and other men down.
- People who say, "I'm a Roman, too."

### **Toward Cultural Competence**

People in both these stages — ethnocentricity and reverse ethnocentricity — may resist discussing their feelings about others or about their own experiences with prejudice or difference. The purpose of diversity training in general and of the game **diversophy**<sup>®</sup> in particular is to enable people to make shifts in thinking and behavior from these two problematic stages toward "diversophy." Such cultural competence involves further stages of development.

#### ***1. Cultural Understanding***

First, we come to a stage of cultural understanding, sometimes called "cultural relativity." We start to realize that other people's cultures does for them what our own culture does not for us, i.e., gives us an internal set of rules with which to survive and succeed in our environment, and produces these solutions in the form of language, culture, art, technology, laws and social standards, etc. Understanding this, we start to approach differences with curiosity and interest rather than judgment, blame or ridicule.

Behaviorally, people who have begun to experience cultural understanding begin to acculturate and make appropriate compromises, e.g.:

- They say, "We aren't Romans, but we could try it the Roman way and see what happens."

A by-product of this process is coming to understand one's own culture as one culture among many and seeing how one's culture as one culture has its own peculiarities, biases and differences. We realize, "The Romans do it one way, we do it another."

## ***2. Empathy***

This leads us to empathy with others as we seek to solve the problems caused by differences and create relationships that enable us to collaborate. We stop feeling for them (sympathy, which is characteristic of ethnocentricity) and start feeling with others even though we do not espouse their values or agree with their behaviors.

- They say, "I can see how the Romans might think or act that way."

The effective facilitator must first be willing to see these elements in his or her own thinking. Then it is possible to gently intervene to affirm the difficulty and feelings of the players and still challenge them without minimizing the issues.

## ***3. Value Differences***

From this and as our contact with others increases we learn to value differences, both our own and those of others for the rich possibilities they bring to our relationships and our work. This is different from reverse ethnocentricity because it is based on appreciation rather than infatuation. Players in these stages:

- a. Look for ways in which the information they learn may be used to understand others and find new and innovative solutions to problems.
- b. Seek opportunities to learn more.
- c. Are open to taking risks and trying new challenges.
- d. Say, "Here's an old Roman approach that might be the answer to our problem... anybody have any other ideas?"

The individual who goes through these stages finally comes to deeper levels of self-understanding. As a trainer or facilitator, you may have to help some individuals who participate fully in the game and only afterward experience certain strong reactions as a result of never before having expressed certain feelings or discussed certain topics.

Remember in all of this that you as a trainer or facilitator are not the arbiter or judge of the participants and do not have to resolve the issues caused by ethnocentric behavior or speech.

Also, do not label people with these stages. Frequently, individuals behave at one level with some topics or people and at quite another with others. Realizing that you yourself behave at the different levels at various times can keep you empathetic with the players.

## **Handling Specific Reactions**

As with all training situations, expect occasional resistance, defensiveness or conflict while playing the game. Diversity is always a delicate matter because it deals with our own and other people's identities. It calls into question how we behave because of who we are. As a result, there

will be objections to the game itself, e.g. the content game cards, the rules of play, how you administer the game, etc. Some may object that the game is not “politically correct.”

This section of the Facilitator’s Guide addresses questions raised about the game, difficulties brought up by participants and managing conflict. It will be helpful for the facilitator to remember that resistance, defensiveness and conflict are energies that give life and purpose to the game. They are the forms of energy in the process of transformation. Use them without letting them get out of control.

<b>OBJECTION</b>	<b>HOW YOU MIGHT RESPOND</b>
<b><i>I don't want to play this game! (for what ever reason).</i></b>	“That’s fine, observers can learn as well. Why don’t you become part of a team and observe the game? If at some point you decide you want to join in the play, please do so. ” (Try not to have more than one observer per team)
<b><i>Take issue or offense with what other players say in response to diversiCARD tasks.</i></b>	Listen actively and respond to the feeling first, e.g., “I can see you feel strongly about X’s answer... We are all moving from being centered in our own culture to appreciating diversity. The courage to share and the patience to listen without blame are both important steps in creating sensitivity and new skills. Thanks for sharing.”
<b><i>Question the validity of the information on SMARTS and CHOICE cards or attack it as stereotyping.</i></b>	Listen actively and respond to the feeling first. Draw out the consequences they fear of giving up old stereotypes or biases. Don’t feel you have to resolve the issue immediately or prove yourself or the card information correct. Offer to provide further information.
<b><i>Continually minimize the differences between people or the effects of stereotypes or bias.</i></b>	Listen actively and respond to the feeling first. Explore the values of being different, starting with the diverse strengths of the individual who is doing the minimizing. Ask for firsthand experiences of how others in the group have experienced differences in significant ways.
<b><i>Become defensive about their own group, and seek to justify its values and behaviors.</i></b>	Listen actively and respond to the feeling first. Usually such people see their own values threatened. Ask them to share the values that are now important to them. Work toward showing how these contribute to and can be lived out in a multicultural environment.

## **Responding to Defensiveness**

Most of the difficulties that surface during the game will be personal issues in disguise. These tend to get transferred to the process of play itself. It is psychologically safer to take issue with the game than to raise uncertainties about oneself and one's behaviors of others.

There are ways of protecting one's group, oneself and one's familiar view of reality from a perceived threat. DIVERSOPHY® has been designed to give players the right amount of support and challenge to understand and accept differences. However, the dynamics of certain groups may require some management on the part of the Facilitator. Here are some reactions that individuals may have and some useful responses:

The effective facilitator must first be willing to see these elements in his/her own thinking. Then it is possible to gently intervene to affirm the difficulty and feelings of the players and still challenge them without minimizing the issues.

## **Marking the Cards**

"Marking" cards is one device for dealing with conflict that seems to be directed against the content of the game cards. When a player takes issue with or finds the information on a particular card unclear or not to his or her liking, the facilitator can suggest that s/he "mark" the card with a stick-on note for discussion when the game is over and the debrief begins.

Do not hesitate to pause the game to debrief what has happened if a seriously disruptive issue breaks out. It is the purpose of the game to surface, discuss and resolve issues of diversity. While it is rarely necessary to interrupt the game, this is better than having the players continue with some problem taking up all their energy beneath the surface. Often the issue, when discussed, is not nearly as momentous as it feels at the outset and after a few minutes of discussion, the players are ready to resume the game.

## ***Debriefing & concluding***

From the perspective of learning, the debriefing period is as important as the play itself. However you choose to end the game, leave a minimum of half an hour for a debriefing period. This debrief enables the players to share outstanding "learnings" and questions with each other as well as thank each other for insights given along the way. The game is richly designed to maximize interaction among players and surface cultural differences.

The debrief session works best when it focuses primarily on the players' actions and reactions, and only secondarily on the dynamics of play and construction of the game. It is the role of the Lead Facilitator to lead the debriefing session. However, the other facilitators (if there are any) may participate, moving from group to group and troubleshooting where necessary, moving people back to the debrief questions if they have wandered too far, etc.

If you are the Lead Facilitator, plan how you will introduce the debriefing. It is usually best to have the players debrief in the teams in which they finished the game. Your introduction should concentrate on the goals you set for the session of your meeting. This usually means encouraging the participants to discuss such things as:

- Their most important learnings.
- The feelings they experienced while playing the game.
- Questions about diversity that arose as a result of playing the game.
- Cards that were "marked" for discussion.

## Discussion Questions:

1. What insights and learnings came to you while playing the game?
2. How did the playing of the game itself bring out the cultural values of the players? E.g., did you compete or collaborate?
3. What did you learn that you can immediately apply to your job or your relationships with others?
4. What are some consequences you see and next steps you will take as a result of playing this game?

## Customer Support

GSI and our partners provide inter-cultural training using **diversophy**<sup>®</sup>, as well as train facilitators in the use of the game. To schedule an in-house seminar for your own organization or its training professionals, please call or email us.

An on-line catalog of **diversophy**<sup>®</sup> products and services as well as sample versions of games are at [www.diversophy.com](http://www.diversophy.com). We are happy to offer you:

- Suggestions and troubleshooting tips for administering the game.
- Best practices, based on users' experiences.
- How to customize the game for your own needs.
- Articles and reviews about **diversophy**<sup>®</sup>
- Access to research and projects about the game.

We are always ready to troubleshoot the game with you, but we also encourage users of the game to exchange information. Please tell us about your successes, suggestions, and new ideas. Send your questions and concerns. It will help if you describe for us the context, environment and the nature of the groups in which you are using the game.

Please send us feedback about this training instrument at [service@diversophy.com](mailto:service@diversophy.com).



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