

## Partnering with Others in Diversity

**1. Commit yourself to the ABCD's of diversity: Achieving justice, Bias reduction, Cultural competence, Diversity as value added.**

Make fairness and Universal Advocacy—caring for the good of all groups, not just your own (Chris Sandoval)— an essential part of your personal value system. This also means committing yourself to the well-being of other European-American men like yourself. Diversity is incomplete without you. Create zero tolerance for bias and prejudice. Knowing how to deal with your cultural self and that of others will enable you to bring the most out of human variety in your organization—including the best that your own group has to offer!

**2. Learn more about your cultural self.**

Learn about yourself as a product of your own male culture and see that culture as one among many. Be aware of the myths, values, beliefs and prevailing ideas, which shape you. Try to recognize the “boilerplate,” stock reactions and thought patterns that are automatic to you as a result of your upbringing. These tend to be invisible to you until challenged by difference. Your culture was designed to help you succeed and survive in a certain environment. You must both keep what works and adapt as environments change.

**3. Learn about others. Respect, employ differences.**

Be curious about difference. Use cultural dissonance as a trigger for exploration rather than reaction. Notice what you do and say that creates confusion, stiffening or reluctance in people different from you. Ask about difference before reacting to it. Look for the potential that difference brings. Call on it and use it for everyone's advantage.

## *A Tipsheet for Everyone*

### **4. Create understanding and demand respect for your own culture.**

Resist stereotyping of “white” people, the abusive use of terms like “backlash,” “white male,” “privilege,” “oppression,” while listening for the anger and frustration of those who use them. Help outsiders learn how your culture functions from an insider’s point of view. Share your experiences. Distinguish between “masculinity”—enjoying manhood—from “patriarchy”—a set of dysfunctional features of the social system—and help others to do so. Don’t label yourself or others of your group with demeaning terms like, “WASP,” “Heinz 57,” “mutt,” etc.

### **5. Exercise your freedom to assemble.**

You have every right to gather with other men to define yourselves, to explore and create your own culture, strategize about challenges and pursue your own interests. As part of the larger community, use your togetherness to contribute to the common good. Use your affinity groups to demolish, not build exclusionary structures in your community or where you work. Communicate extensively with other groups to lessen their fears and suspicions of your group.

### **6. “Get over it.” Be an actor, not a victim.**

Becoming part of the diversity effort and creating solidarity with others does not require you to see yourself as a victim. Diversity is about empowering a plural community. Assuming victimhood is disempowering to self and others. When you have power, use it to everyone’s advantage. Many successful diversity efforts owe much to the vision and leadership of men like yourself. You are the perfect person to do this work.

### **7. Enjoy both the identity you share with men as well as what you have in common with others.**

Participate and deal with others in terms of common needs and interests, not on the basis of “whiteness.” “Whiteness” is a powerful political and historical myth that gets in the way of diversity, even among European-American men. Like other groups you have the right to name yourself and to ask others to respect your choice of identity.

## Partnering Inclusively

**1. Listen fully and thoughtfully to everyone in the diversity dialogue.**

Pledge yourself not to: interrupt, paraphrase, analyze, criticize, give advice or interpret when listening to European American men, just as you would when listening to persons of any other group. A member of a target group knows more about that experience than any non-member. Claiming that men don't "feel" or talk or feel is counterproductive if there is no one to listen. Listening to and understanding another's point of view is not the same as agreeing with it.

**2. Work from the assumption that everyone is fully able to adapt and change.**

A rapidly economy demands workers skilled to deal with a cross-section of the world's people. This includes the vast numbers of European American men in the workforce today. Everyone is able to change. We need not fully understand each other, but we do share common experiences that can help us all adapt to each other to build the future. Diversity in the United States gives us the opportunity to learn these skills at home. If successful domestically, we will be leaders in the new millennium.

**3. Master your reactions to others, especially when others are reacting to you.**

Ask questions, take risks, learn to love making mistakes. Welcome others' mistakes about you and your group, then discuss what puzzles, concerns, annoys, or excites you. Learn not to take offense and to calm yourself when your buttons are pushed. Notice what makes yourself and others defensive. Lighten up. Insanity, some say, is doing the same things, in the same way, day after day, and expecting different results.

**4. Do not accept or use stereotypes.**

Cultural patterns exist in every group, but there are no "good" stereotypes for individuals. Assuming that African Americans make good athletes, that Asians excel at math, or that European American men are invariably insensitive fails to acknowledge the different gifts and talents of the individuals in each group. Check your use of stereotypes; challenge others' stereotypes politely but firmly.

## *A Tipsheet for Everyone*

### **5. Respect yourself and others fully.**

Neither shame nor arrogance are useful attitudes for diversity work. If you respect your group, and refuse to put down any member of it, you will help other groups see their own worth and express pride in themselves. Slurs, including those about European American men keep us from building a respectful multicultural society where each of us is valued for our unique abilities. Blaming European American men can be a convenient way of avoiding responsibility and increasing their alienation.

### **6. Seek and create common ground.**

Look for those places where you, and others not like you, can agree or share opinions. Accept that there are many perspectives on any given issue and that there is room for different points of view to coexist peacefully. It's easy to find differences, harder to find similarities. Call on common history, shared experiences, mutual aspirations. Look for matching values especially when you disagree on how to carry them out.

### **7. Communicate patiently, but persistently.**

Communicating across cultures requires us to check assumptions, to discard ideas that no longer have a purpose and to embrace new information and ideas. Become actively aware of your own culture so that you know how and why you believe as you do. Commit yourself to open-hearted dialogue with European American men even when, culturally, they seem like the toughest group to reach. Give this process the time it deserves. When someone "just doesn't get it," you may not be "giving it" in a way that makes "getting it" possible.