



# THE ART OF INCLUSIVE COMMUNICATION

Building on our success in teaching people to communicate more effectively, the National Conflict Resolution Center (NCRC) has developed a state-of-the-art diversity training that leaves all participants feeling valued, respected, and understood. This interactive workshop helps participants explore their own personal and cultural identities and learn how they relate to communication styles; how these different styles can sometimes be the root of communication breakdown; and, most importantly, how they can learn to recognize when a communication breakdown is happening, so that they can do something about it.

Participants study a model for understanding intercultural (and other identities) awareness and learn skills that help their own development in diverse settings. Fun, yet thought-provoking exercises help participants learn about how the unwritten rules we live by are not always universal. Diversity, in the fullest sense of the word, which includes not only race and ethnicity, but also gender, sexual orientation, age, lifestyle, and abilities, is explored and valued. Recognition of the advantages some have and the history of exclusion are touched upon in a way that helps people move forward together. Additionally, we look at how respectful communication can address difficult comments from others that might be considered racist, sexist, ageist, homophobic, or in other ways derogatory to others. All of this is done in a safe and respectful learning environment.

## GOALS OF THE WORKSHOP

### **Skill Acquisition**

By the end of the course, participants will have the ability to:

- **Learn the skills of inclusive communication;**
- **Apply the principles of collaborative communication in their interactions with others;**
- **Express their perspectives in non-confrontational ways;**
- **Integrate the ART of Inclusive Communication to resolve differences; and,**
- **Be able to work effectively with people with different identities.**

### **Paradigm Shift in Attitudes and Beliefs toward Others**

By practicing the skills from the course, participants will:

- **Understand and value others' perspectives. Value the different lenses through which others perceive situations;**
- **Appreciate how working through conflict can help relationships build and grow stronger;**
- **Have more confidence to engage in serious conversation with peers who have different points of view; and,**
- **Find common ground with co-workers and clients.**

# CONTENT OUTLINE

## I. Welcome and Introductions

- a. Introduction to the workshop, description of goals, and welcome.
- b. Participants introduce themselves in small groups.

## II. Understanding Key Principles

- a. Overcoming the Impact of Unconscious Bias – small group discussion in which participants share thoughts about unconscious bias, while brainstorming strategies for overcoming its impact.
- b. Hammer’s Model of Culture Clash – utilizing the research of Dr. Mitchell Hammer, an interactive exercise helps participants recognize important style differences in how people behave in conflict and how to adapt to those differences without judgment.

## III. The ART of Inclusive Communication

- a. Active Awareness – participants learn that the first step in managing conflict and differences effectively is raising our own awareness about our biases and other internal reactions that we have in these situations.
- b. Responding Respectfully – discussion of what responding respectfully in conflict means as well as the opportunity to practice proven techniques to actively listen are reinforced in this section.
- c. Troubleshooting together – participants learn and practice sharing their perspectives in non-confrontational ways.

## IV. The Importance of Identity

- a. Using the ART in Uncomfortable Situations – recognizing that using the ART strategy is more challenging when conflicts arise that threaten our identity, participants engage in honest dialogue about the responses that they have had and when those responses worked, and when they did not.
- b. Managing Emotions in Conflict – a key issue for many in today’s climate is managing our emotions in tough conversations in which people have different values, beliefs, and perspectives than we do. A thoughtful discussion about managing emotions helps participants learn and reinforce the methods that work for them.
- c. Salient Identity – this last activity is a fun, positive exercise that helps people find common ground and new respect for those with identities that are different from their own.

## V. Putting It All Together

- a. Closure ~ NCRC facilitator closes the workshop by reinforcing the importance of treating others with dignity.
- b. Evaluation.

