

Thinking about diversity and inclusion

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Thinking about Diversity and Inclusion University of Phoenix Cultural Diversity SOC 315 Stephanie Medley-Rath February 01, 2012 Thinking about Diversity and Inclusion We live in a society and a country that is able to incorporate different cultures and be as diverse as possible. The following paper will address the dimensions of cultural diversity, the ethnic and cultural groups in which I identify, the difference between diversity and inclusion, the importance of workplace diversity training, and my experience with workplace culture. “ Primary dimensions are considered to be more fixed, visible, and relevant to an individual’s identity. Secondary dimensions are considered to be more fluid, and less central to one’s social identity” (Harvey & Allard, 2009, p. 47). Primary dimensions are that of one’s age, race, and gender as these cannot be changed. Secondary dimensions are those of one’s religion, family status, and geographic location. The secondary dimensions can be changed at any time, for example, a person may be single living in California and later be married living in Florida. The primary and secondary dimensions define a person and their ethnicity and culture. Schaefer (2011) believes culture diversity is based on subordinate groups. These can be racial groups, ethnic groups, religious groups, and or gender groups. It is also believed that a person will stay within their group; racial, ethnic, or otherwise, as that is what makes them more comfortable. I am a Caucasian female raised in the South Eastern region of the United States and I was raised within a Methodist church. I married a man in the Air Force and moved to Pennsylvania. These life changes changed my dimensions. I will always consider myself a southern girl, but reside in the north where I do not always fit in with some others. I tend to stick with other

military spouses as they know and understand what it is like to be living in the military. I also work as a nurse so the majority of my friends are also coworkers. Most people will stick within their culture as it is what they are comfortable with and there is a mutual understanding amongst each other. People tend to stay within their own groups have similar lives and experiences as well as no one is not better or worse than the other nor do we judge one another. Diversity is the encouragement of tolerance and having a variety of cultures whereas inclusion is the actual practice of making people feel that they belong and including everyone. Diversity is important to have an open mind when dealing with diversity and be sure that a work place is diverse as well as include everyone in decisions as to decrease the possibility of tension. Diversity can be the differences existing amongst us and inclusion is the working beyond the differences. In a work environment, companies will hire different minorities in order to be as diverse as possible. However, not all companies will include these minorities. For example a company may hire someone that is a different race, gender, or religion; however they do not always reward them with awards and promotions. In order for a company to practice inclusion and make people feel welcome and not feel as if they are different. It is important for any workplace to practice diversity and have diversity training on a regular basis. It is not uncommon for people to not want to work and be friendly with those of different cultures. In today's society companies are hiring all races, genders, religions, and or sexual preferences. There are some people that are used to working with all men or all women and not accustomed to changes. It is diversity training that allows employees to learn about other cultures and educate them to differences. It

allows people to become more open minded to changes. If men are accustomed to working with all men they may not be aware of comments they make that are now considered harassment towards women. Diversity training will teach them the right things to do and the types of things to avoid. Diversity training can also educate employees on what to do when dealing with people that may be disabled and how to handle certain situations. I work with nurses from around the world. There are nurses from around the United States, Canada, Europe, Asia, and Africa. I am from the South but live and work in the North and while some do not agree, that is a major culture difference. It is different in the way I talk and the foods I eat as well as my extended family dynamic. The majority of my unit is from the Philippines including my manager. For the most part everyone gets along and there are no hard feelings. However, there are times for more inclusion on both sides. There are times when people are close minded towards the Caucasian people and only want to talk and work with their own and will keep the easiest assignments for themselves and their friends. However, my manager does try to have meals together and everyone bring food or dessert from their area. Reference Harvey, C. P., & Allard, M. J. (2009).

Understanding and managing diversity (4th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson. Schaefer, R. T. (2011). Racial and ethnic groups (12th ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.