

STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE DIVERSITY AND
CROSS-CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING

Developed by Anita Foeman, Ph.D. and Nate Terrell, LCSW

- 1) Replace “color blindness” and/or stereotypes with a “cultural lens” which enables one to view members of other groups both within the context of their culture and as unique individuals.
- 2) Understand stylistic and cultural differences among students, teachers, etc. from different cultural/racial groups.
- 3) Celebrate rather than simply tolerate cultural/racial differences and recognize how diversity contributes to the social and educational experience of students.
- 3) Recognize the impact of language on cross-cultural relationships and demonstrate cultural sensitivity through your choice of words.
- 4) Eliminate prejudices, cultural naiveté stereotypes and cultural privilege through the rigorous and ongoing examination of your beliefs, cross-cultural exposure, openness to new information and verbal acknowledgement (which helps expose the fallacy of prejudices and therefore promotes their elimination).
- 5) Acknowledge and understand how past and current inequities impact the perspective held by members of different cultural groups.
- 6) Understand the complexity of cross-cultural issues and develop the ability to view them from a multi-dimensional rather than a narrow viewpoint.
- 7) Overcome fears which prevent honest cross-cultural engagement (such as the fear of “saying the wrong thing” or being perceived as overly angry, sensitive, etc.).
- 8) Dialogue about challenging cross-cultural issues by asking open-ended questions, listening attentively (without jumping to conclusions) and honestly discussing your thoughts, perceptions, etc.
- 9) Speak calmly and rationally (remember that it is possible to have an intense discussion about difficult cultural/racial issues without either party becoming upset, angry, etc.).
- 10) Acknowledge the validity in another’s perspective.
- 11) Focus on changing yourself rather than others.
- 12) **Keep cross-cultural dialogue going** even in the midst of tension, disagreement, etc.

