

Cultural Mindedness, Dialogue, and Action Planning Model

Module Four: The Dialogue Process

Introduction

Practicing the dialogue process presented in this module fosters the personal and interpersonal foundation skills for understanding and practicing inclusion of all forms of diversity in our daily interactions. Dialogues provide meaningful conversations in which people with different viewpoints, opinions, and life experiences can speak openly and be heard with respect. There are two parts to the dialogue process: The first part is the fourteen personal competency behaviors and the second part is the dialogue process.

The fourteen competencies are important individually, and they are interrelated as well. Daily practice of these competencies, the daily work of making them your personal culture by applying them first to yourself, builds a personal capacity for engaging in the dialogue process necessary for gaining emic (insider) information and for understanding diverse viewpoints, beliefs, values, and behaviors. For example, without the reflective practice of the personal competencies as the foundation for dialogue, some of the six barriers (subject of Module 3) will inevitably arise, the dialogue process will be derailed and misunderstanding of issues and problem-solving will be diminished and ineffective.

As with the format of the three previous modules, Module Four presents the conceptual tools, then an experiential learning activity in which the conceptual tools are applied to a case example of a micro-aggression. The case analysis is followed by an example of a student's response to the learning activity and how it influenced their awareness and understanding of diversity and inclusion issues.

Module Four Learning Objectives

1. Describe the fourteen personal competency behaviors as the foundation for the dialogue process
2. Practice the competency behaviors with a self -assessment
3. Define the steps in the dialogue process
4. Demonstrate the competency behaviors in the dialogue process with a case analysis of a micro-aggression

5. Review a student's comments about the learning activity: Practicing the dialogue process with a case analysis of a micro-aggression
6. Read Glossary of terms to enrich understanding of the dialogue process

1. Conceptual Tool: The Fourteen Personal Competency Behaviors

The following competencies have been identified by researchers as most important for respectful relationships in culturally diverse settings. Each of the competencies is, to some degree, interrelated with the others, but each is important on its own as well.

1. **BE NON-JUDGMENTAL:** Stopping one's tendency to negatively judge others who are different.
2. **BE FLEXIBLE:** Readjusting quickly and effectively to changing situations
3. **BE RESOURCEFUL:** Responding skillfully and promptly in new, uncertain situations. Seeking information about the cultures of those with whom you interact
4. **PERSONALIZE OBSERVATIONS:** Recognizing and accepting that one's personal perceptions may not be shared by others; knowing and accepting that "my way is not the only way"; using "I" not "you" messages.
5. **PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR FEELINGS:** Self-reflecting on one's thoughts, feelings, and stress level in order to stay grounded in situations. Self-reflecting also facilitates critical thinking in the sense of an actual, purposeful, and organized effort to increase our understanding of ourselves, other people and the world for problem solving, and working toward goals.
6. **LISTEN CAREFULLY:** Paying close attention to what is being said both verbally and nonverbally.
7. **OBSERVE ATTENTIVELY:** Watching and making mental notes of behavioral patterns of others in order to understand meaning of behavior (e.g., nonverbal messages).
8. **ASSUME COMPLEXITY:** Assuming and perceiving a range of alternatives in situations; recognizing multiple perspectives and outcomes exist.
9. **TOLERATE THE STRESS OF AMBIGUITY/UNCERTAINTY:** Responding to unpredictable situations without getting stressed and irritable.
10. **HAVE PATIENCE:** Staying calm, stable and persistent in challenging situations.
11. **MANAGE PERSONAL BIASES/STEREOTYPES:** Treating people as individuals recognizing that everyone belongs to many groups and that no one represents a group.
12. **KEEP A SENSE OF HUMOR:** Laughing at oneself and with (not at) others; finding humor in irony of life.
13. **SHOW RESPECT:** Behaving in a respectful manner towards others who are different
14. **DISPLAY EMPATHY:** Identifying with the feelings, thoughts, attitudes and experience of others. Attempting to walk a few steps in others' shoes.

2. Learning Activity for Module Four—Competency Behaviors Self-Test

2.1 Fourteen Personal Competencies Self-Test (approx. 10 -30 mins)

Purpose To foster awareness of the 14 personal competencies through reflective self-assessment.

Instructions Rate yourself on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high) in each of the competencies as each is defined by the instructor or read from the previous listing in section,

The Fourteen Personal Competency Behaviors

1. _____ Be nonjudgmental.
2. _____ Be flexible.
3. _____ Be resourceful.
4. _____ Personalize observations.
5. _____ Pay attention to your thoughts& feelings.
6. _____ Listen carefully.
7. _____ Observe attentively.
8. _____ Assume complexity.
9. _____ Tolerate the stress of uncertainty.
10. _____ Have patience.
11. _____ Manage personal biases and stereotypes.
12. _____ Keep a sense of humor.
13. _____ Show respect.
14. _____ Display empathy.

Evaluating the Score

Add up the points:

61–70 = Highly Competent

51–60 = Moderately Competent

0–50 = Need More Practice

2.2 Debriefing Questions

Write your answers to the debriefing questions. Post your responses in the Discussion Board/Forum **if an on-line course**.

1. Describe your personal reaction (feelings, thoughts) to this self-assessment exercise.

Four: Each participant gives voice to their viewpoint. This means that the participants express their thoughts and feelings about the subject of dialogue.

Dialogue can in addition, be used for effective conflict interventions, for problem solving, and for action planning for institutional inclusion of all forms of human diversity. (Hogan, 2013: 65-107). Action planning is the subject of Module Five.

3.1 Learning Activity for Module Four: Case Analysis of a Micro-aggression

Activity: Identify three competency behaviors that could prevent or diffuse any of the Six Barriers in the case example. The case example demonstrates micro-aggressions because of the barriers that surface on the personal and interpersonal level.

Purpose: To practice the competency behaviors and dialogue while analyzing the following case example that exemplifies some of the Six Barriers to effective communication and respectful relationships in culturally diverse situations, worked with in Module Three.

Instructions: Form into small discussion groups of 3-5 participants. Read the case example and then dialogue with others in your group two or three competency behaviors that could prevent or diffuse the conflict (micro-aggression) related to the Six Barriers operating in the case.

3.2 Case Example:

My sister is in a PhD program at a large University. She is a part of the Immunology branch of the program and was selected to be the diversity leader and coordinator because she's the only brown person in the program. One of her responsibilities as a coordinator is to plan different events. The other day she was asked to plan an event for prospective graduate students. Her supervisor asked her to give an impromptu speech to the visiting students because it would make the program look more diverse if the only brown person in the program gave a speech.

The students and adults that were present didn't really listen to my sister as she was speaking since they were talking continually throughout her presentation. After her speech, she was approached by different professors at the school and they talked down to her, minimizing her successes. For example, my sister described how she had several past experiences working in labs. The professors, though, said that the labs she practiced in were not "good enough" because the previous University she attended at the time was not up to par with her current University's educational experience for students. As they walked away, she felt they were insinuating she didn't belong in their Ph.D. program.

3.3 Discuss and write one or two of the 6 Barriers (from Module 3) identified in the case here:

3.4 Write one or two of the Competency Behaviors that could have prevented or diffused the micro-aggression or conflict in the case. Tell which person (s) in the case needs to practice the competencies selected.

3.5 Debriefing Questions for Learning Activity

Write the answers to the following questions in the spaces provided.
(approx. 10 mins)

1. Describe your feelings and thoughts when discussing the Six Barriers and Competency Behaviors identified by you individually or by your discussion group.
2. What did you learn about yourself in the course of this exercise?
3. What did you learn about others in the course of this exercise?
4. Name two ways you can use what you've learned in your daily life.

4. Student Response to the Case Analysis of a Micro-aggression

4.1 Discuss and write one or two of the 6 Barriers (from Module 3) identified in the above case here:

The barriers in this case were: **stereotypes** about women in the workplace who are training to become doctors. In addition, **judgment and discrimination** was shown towards my sister for being a brown woman in the PhD program, selective perception (**implicit and explicit bias**) was shown since the health professionals only focused on the qualities of my sister that made her look like an unsuitable candidate, her brown skin.

4.2 Write one or two of the competency behaviors that may have prevented or diffused the micro-aggression or conflict in the case. Tell which person (s) in the case needs to practice the competencies selected.

The competency behaviors that should have been practiced by the visiting graduate students were to **show my sister respect by listening carefully** during her presentation. The professors who spoke with her needed to **manage their bias and judgment** against the quality of the former University she attended for her Bachelor's degree.

4.3 Student's Debriefing Questions for Learning Activity

Write your answers to the following debriefing questions.

1. Describe your personal reaction (feelings, thoughts) to the foregoing exercise.

Since I was writing about my sister's experience and not my own, it made me feel upset that people weren't taking her seriously just for being a brown woman. I think what made me most upset was that the people that were talking down the most to her and showing the most discrimination were the professors that have had a higher education. It made me upset because I think that professors should all be required to take classes and trainings to become more culturally aware and sensitive.

2. What did you learn about yourself in the course of this exercise?

I learned that although I am not going into the same field as my sister, I still need to be aware and cautious that not all people are going to have their best interests for me. This also made me question the people that I have around me currently as my mentors and see if they like me and have me in their program for my skills or just because my skin color is promoting diversity inclusion.

3. What did you learn about others in the course of this exercise?

I learned that although people like professors with degrees and past experience in school may seem to be culturally aware, they are not necessarily. Classes that talk about diversity and societal issues are not a part of the general education curriculum which means that people in higher positions are lacking in training and experience with how to include cultural diversity and inclusion in their classes.

4. Name two ways in which you can use what you have learned in daily life.

One way that I will use what I learned in my daily life is to continue to push for things like AB 1460 which requires an ethnic studies course to be mandatory for anyone taking a college course. Another thing that I might do is to talk to supervisors that I have about different issues to make sure they are culturally aware. It might be important for my sister to do that as well since her supervisors tend to tokenize her for being the brown person in the health care profession.

5. Glossary

Micro-aggression is a term defined by Derald Wing Sue (1981, 2020), when referring to the many ways that bias and discrimination are directed daily at members of socially marginalized groups in the United States, such as BIPOC communities, (Black, Indigenous, people of color).

Emic refers to information obtained from the people involved in the situation at hand, “insiders” or “locals.” It is an attempt to enter their mental world, to experience the categories and logic by which they see their world, and, to see the content and behavioral patterns of their daily life.

Etic refers to “outsider” information, the authoritative or normative (expert) information about a subject. For example, in relation to defining “vulnerable populations,” etic information is based on authoritative external evaluations of risk; whereas, emic refers to the experiential state of the members of the population being served. In practice, etic is the evaluation of experts who plan the services, and emic is the experiences of those who receive services.

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