



# Ask Yourself Where You Stand on Pluralism

**T**he trainer is a key element to the successful delivery of pluralism training. Participants are quick to perceive any dissonance between the message itself and the message deliverer. Facilitators of pluralism training have to “walk their talk” or risk losing credibility for themselves and the organization. Here are some guidelines for developing your own awareness, knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to pluralism.

- Evaluate your own beliefs and attitudes toward your own and other racial, ethnic, or cultural groups. Take steps to change those that you know are untrue.
- Examine stereotypes you may have about members of a particular group. Identify ways that you can counteract those stereotyped beliefs.
- Be aware of your own lack of knowledge about people who are different from yourself and take steps to learn more.
- Recognize that racism and prejudice do exist in society. Make a personal commitment to stop the spread.
- Believe that you can contribute to reducing racism and prejudice. Actively look for ways to increase your own knowledge and understanding.
- Be conscious of your own responses to diversity. Discuss with a friend or co-worker the impact of your behavior toward people who are different from yourself. Take steps to change if necessary.
- Monitor your own communications regarding pluralism issues in formal and informal settings. Avoid language that could be offensive to persons of a particular group.
- Seek help from consultants, council volunteers and staff to gain the skills and knowledge you need to serve as a role model.



# Facilitating Pluralism Training

**F**acilitators of pluralism training must be prepared to deal with and effectively manage the many behaviors that may surface in a group as participants grapple with information that requires them to examine their own values and beliefs. Here are some tips and techniques for facilitating training on such sensitive topics as pluralism.

- Listen carefully to diverse viewpoints. Make it clear when you are expressing your own opinion that it is just one of many.
- Provide an open, non-judgmental atmosphere in which adults feel comfortable asking questions and voicing concerns.
- Give factual, responsible answers to questions. Be honest when you don't know the answer.
- Reinforce the idea that all people are not the same and that this diversity is positive and enriching.
- Deal calmly yet firmly with prejudicial behavior or remarks made by others in training. Provide correct information if necessary. Let others know that such expressions are unacceptable.
- Praise and encourage expressions and behaviors that demonstrate positive attitudes.
- Train as part of a diverse team. Model mutually respectful partnership on the team.
- Use language that does not stereotype, generalize, or demonstrate disrespect of others.
- Do things with the point of view of others in mind.
- Involve everyone when gathering information, resolving problems, and making decisions.
- Initiate sharing information with others.
- Extend opportunities to others to participate in leadership roles.
- Apply ground rules and standards consistently and fairly to everyone.
- Be flexible and adaptable to meet a variety of different needs.