

ACTION STEPS:

Create an Identity-Safe Organization by Addressing Stereotype & Identity Threat

1 Assess and Address Environmental Cues

Is there anything in the environment that subtly or overtly suggest that some groups belong and others do not? Anything that reinforces cultural stereotypes?

- Examine the environment for stereotype-reinforcing images, documents, artwork. Remove them.
- Add counter-stereotypic imagery, artwork, media, etc.

2 Assess HR Policies and Procedures

Examine your job descriptions and performance standards.

- Write job descriptions and performance standards in a way that does not unintentionally evoke negative stereotypes about a group.

Examine your evaluation procedures for bias leakage and identity threat triggers.

- Develop evaluation procedures that specify measurable outcomes and specific behaviors.
- Reduce evaluation criteria that depend on the feelings of the evaluator(s). This may reassure employees that they are less likely to be judged in terms of specific stereotypes.
- Whenever possible, conduct evaluations in a way that allows the evaluators to be “blind” to employee group membership (age, race or ethnicity, gender, etc.).

3 Train all Supervisors in Identity-Safe Feedback

Communicate:

- High standards for performance combined with...
 - ...the belief that the employee can live up to those standards.
- Mistakes or failures are not due to some fixed characteristics of the individual...
 - ...rather, are an essential and necessary part of growth

4 Monitor Meetings and Group Processes

- Traction: Whose ideas, opinions, or thoughts get no response or follow-up? Whose get attention?
- Time: Who has floor and for how long?
- Disruption: Who is interrupted? Who interrupts?
- Interest & Respect for Input: Who gets asked questions?

5 Implement Training for All Employees.

Provide evidence-based training for all employees that teaches actionable and effective strategies to protect themselves & others from stereotype/identity threat.

6 Develop and Disseminate an All-Inclusive Multicultural Diversity Philosophy

- Develop and widely disseminate a diversity philosophy that explicitly recognizes and values contributions from all groups, majority and minority.
- Ensure all employees (minority and majority group members) report feeling included when they read/hear the philosophy.
- Help employees understand why the organization is moving away from a color-blind philosophy. Many have been taught that a color-blind philosophy is needed to promote group equality and may be initially confused by an all-inclusive multicultural philosophy.