

Understanding Diversity and Respect for Differences

Target Audience: K-12 educators and After School Professionals

Why is understanding diversity and respect for differences important?

Too often, differences make students anxious and/or become a focus for bully behavior. Given that teaching and learning rests on relationships, how we understand, manage and celebrate diversity matters! To the extent that differences result in ongoing teasing and bully-victim behavior it will undermine a positive school climate, student learning and achievement and positive youth development.

More and more schools and districts are invested in making their school community more inclusive for all students. We all share concerns for the student who has trouble finding a seat in the cafeteria, is on the margins of the "in" crowd, is never picked for group work by his or her peers, or is always at the periphery because of difference.

How can this *Understanding Diversity and Respect for Differences* program help my school?

This professional development series provides an opportunity for teachers, administrators and school-based counselors to reflect on how they support and institutionalize respect and an appreciation of diversity.

The three goals for this workshop series are:

1. Explore past and current efforts that support understanding and a respect for diversity;
2. Develop a series of instructional as well as school wide and school-home-community strategies that support understanding and an appreciation and even, celebration of diversity in your school community;
3. Develop practical strategies and a comprehensive plan that support students, parents/guardians and school personnel appreciating the building healthy, caring relationships provides an essential foundation for learning, positive youth development and responsible and engaged citizens.

What do I get with the *Understanding Diversity and Respect for Differences* program?

When schools become involved with this workshop series they receive:

- Pre-workshop consultation with our consultant to determine the timeline, audience, and outcomes for this professional development strand;
- A series of meetings and work sessions over a 12 to 18 month period that would include student-faculty focus groups, a planning retreat, and specialized training for student leaders and adult sponsors of youth development and peer leadership initiatives. Our work with student leaders is always carried out in partnership with teachers from the school.



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- ✓ Typically, we meet for an initial full day meeting with key administrators, teachers and adults who will help to lead this effort in their school and/or district. This initial meeting is focused on our own diversity-related experiences as well as preliminary action planning for the 12 to 18 month effort.
- ✓ A second full day meeting will occur within a month after the first full day meeting. In the morning the adults will meet with our consultant. Later in the day, we will meet as a larger team with student leaders. Student and adult members of your Youth Leadership Team will learn how to:
 1. Understand the schools current strengths and challenges in this area;
 2. Support and coach adults and students who facilitate youth development activities;
 3. Develop implementation plans that support teachers and students infusing diversity related learning into lesson plans, Advisory activities, student government, community service and service learning and more.
 4. Promote students' social, emotional and civic participation skills through student forums, cross-group dialogues, leadership retreats, and peer education.
 5. Design and carry out successful school-wide campaigns, orientation programs, and leadership training initiatives that place students front and center in building a more respectful, welcoming, and caring school climate that recognizes and celebrates diversity.

What do I receive with the *Understanding Diversity and Respect for Differences* program?

- Pre-workshop consultation with a consultant to determine the timeline, audience, and outcomes for this professional development strand;
- Comprehensive School Climate Assessment (optional but recommended)
- A series of meetings and work sessions over a 12 to 18 month period that would include:
 - ✓ A daylong meeting with students and faculty conducting focus groups and synthesizing what has emerged from these meetings.
 - ✓ A day long planning retreat where students and staff with our consultant will develop a series of preliminary classroom-based, Advisory, Service learning and/or school-wide intervention strategies to promote understanding about diversity and a respect for differences. Participants will receive field-tested materials, guidelines and tools to support this planning and work.



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- ✓ A day-long (or two ½ day) workshops for teachers to support their infusing diversity related themes into existing curriculum. Participants will receive field-tested materials, guidelines and tools to support this planning and work.
- ✓ A daylong workshop for student leaders and adult sponsors of youth development and peer leadership initiatives.
- ✓ One or more follow up meetings
- Periodic phone and email contact between our consultant and a designated “point person” in the school(s) will be an intermittent but ongoing part of the process. This will allow our consultants to understand successes and challenges and be helpful – from afar – in any and all ways that they can.

To find out how the *Understanding and Appreciating Diversity* program can serve your school or district, call us at (212) 707-8799 or write to us at info@csee.net to learn more about our Professional Development Services.