

## **THE COLORS OF CULTURE SHOCK:**

**EXPERIENCING AND SURVIVING CULTURE SHOCK**

**THIS TRAINING ACTIVITY IS FOR YOU IF  
YOU ARE:**

- ❖ **A TEACHER**
- ❖ **A SCHOOL COUNSELOR**
- ❖ **A UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR**
- ❖ **AN HUMAN RESOURCES PROFESSIONAL**
- ❖ **CULTURAL DIVERSITY INCLUSION TRAINER**
- ❖ **A MANAGER WITH A MULTICULTURAL WORKFORCE**
- ❖ **AN INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION FACILITATOR**

**BECAUSE**

**THE COLORS OF CULTURE SHOCK IS:**

- ❖ **A training activity for coaching individuals**
- ❖ **An interactive activity for small and medium size groups**
- ❖ **A highly participatory activity for large multicultural groups**
- ❖ **The best way to lead any team from ethnocentrism to ethno-relativism**

### **DESCRIPTION**

**THE COLORS OF CULTURE SHOCK: Experiencing and Surviving Culture Shock  
(CCS)**

It is designed to help diversity trainers and cross-culture facilitators transmit to their audience some of the basic foundations of culture understanding including how people describe unfamiliar situations, how they feel about new environment, and how they cope with culture shock. Participants are placed in unfamiliar situations in which they tend to operate on the basis of their own cultural patterns and assumptions. The facilitator progressively leads the team from ethnocentrism or “centrality of culture”, to ethno-relativism or cultural relativity.

The central component of the CCS is a form (included the facilitator guide) that participants are invited to complete. Questions on the form are quite unfamiliar to most participants at the minimum, and may be totally eccentric to others. The way to complete the form is by itself a new way of drafting the alphabet and the numbers. As evidence shows time after time, most people who attend culture training have not had the opportunity to be immersed in a totally different culture, and/or have encountered culture shock in its primary form. This situation often places them in a position of unconscious denial of what culture shock is.

The lack of exposure to a culture with different or sometimes opposing values and beliefs often places people in an attitude of defense in which they assume that culture shocks happen only to others, and that they are more or less prepared to deal with it when it occurs. They often believe that they understand and can manage cultural issues better than others may think, until the day they face real culture shocks. The activity places participants in an atmosphere of shocks, and shines a light on their behaviors and reactions. It goes an additional mile by asking that people justify why they behave the way they do. The results are revealing about how people focus on themselves in sorting out difficulties, and how their background plays a major role in the process.

The CCS is designed to place the participants in an environment of immersion in a totally new culture, in which they are required to behave differently than they usually do. They are asked to provide written responses to incomplete and often strange questions, such as what their "Favorite Disease" is. The activity purposefully places participants in cultural situations where they have to resolve unfamiliar challenges. Like in real life, the answer they provide to each question is based on their own interpretation of the question, their own views of the world, and their own perceptions of current reality.

The role of the facilitator is to lead participants in recognizing, understanding and appreciating differences, by using their own responses to illuminate and guide them in the acceptance of cultural differences, to withhold judgments and to admit that their ways of doing things are neither the only ways nor the best ways.

Components of the Activity:

- ❖ The Facilitator’s guide containing numerous cultural examples and debriefing
- ❖ A master copy PRE- and POST- test cultural inventory (Facilitator will make as many copies as the number of participants)
- ❖ A master copy of “the Culture Shock form” (Facilitator will make as many copies as the number of participants).

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***OR***

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