

# Action Steps: Create an Identity-Safe Organization

## Assess and Address Environmental Cues

What signals are there about whether some groups belong and others do not? Anything that reinforces cultural stereotypes?

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

*Imagine you are an anthropologist from another culture looking for clues. Who belongs here? What kinds of people is this place for? What are their beliefs about the ideal person? What would you conclude?*

## Assess HR Policies and Procedures for Stereotype/Identity Threat Triggers and Address Them.

- ➔ 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.
- ➔ If possible, conduct evaluations in a way that allows the evaluators to be “blind” to employee group membership (age, race or ethnicity, gender etc).
- ➔ 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.
    - That mistakes or failures are not due to some fixed characteristics of the individual...
    - ...rather, are an essential and necessary part of growth .



## Monitor Meetings and Group Processes.

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

## Implement Training for All Employees.

- ➔ How protect themselves & others from stereotype/identity threat.

## 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.
- ➔ In many cases, organizations will have to 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.