

Bowen: Intercultural awareness/understanding – script

1. Introduce the theory
 - a. Remember what theory we learnt in BOOt camp with Derek and Shannon?
 - b. Schlossberg!!! The Transition Model --- but tonight we are focusing on the small portion of the theory which talks about mattering and marginality → very important to our topic tonight about intercultural awareness.
2. Mattering
 - a. What does it mean to matter?
 - b. Why is it important for a person to matter?
 - Think from a 1st year's perspective when they come on Imagine or GALA, what will happen if they feel they matter, if they don't matter? What paths will they be taking? Are they more or less likely to be engaged/involved in the community, more or less likely feeling belonged?
 - The power of language → think about the words that you are using, even the simple ones (i.e. "you guys") and the impact that it makes. Consider that there is a girl in the group who doesn't feel the term "you guys" apply to her because she does not consider herself as included in the "guys" → hence she would feel excluded, and that she doesn't matter
 - From this example, you can see how diversity isn't just something as superficial as race, gender, disability, sexual orientations → it's about the diverse experiences and unique perceptions that each one of us bring into the group
 - So we want to make sure that we do our best to be as inclusive as possible
3. Marginalization
 - a. Stereotyping, categorizing
 - b. Special treatment
 - While we want to make sure that we are including everyone, we want to keep in mind sending off a signal that we are treating them differently than others because they are "different" → that would put them to the edge of the circle, to the margin of the group
 - Don't assume and jump to conclusions just because of what you think → remember your perception is very much different from what others perceive. This applies to a team setting or even in your work with your Leaders. Don't assume that they prefer to do a task you give them based on what you think they would like (a crude example would be: "hey you are Asian, you don't need help in math").
 - Direct communication is the key → inquire (ask questions!!! Get to know them first, and this further reinforces mattering, make them feel important)
 - It's all about achieving a fine balance between mattering and marginalization...in reality you can't possibly please everyone so it's about being adaptable, flexible and open your minds.
4. Personal thoughts
 - There is no right or wrong in this, or exact ways in how you approach this...even I am in the learning process of understanding how I frame my message while keeping in mind inclusivity...it's an ongoing learning process
 - We want to bring your attention to this so that you can start to think critically about your actions and the language you are using when you communicate with your Leaders or even first years → how can you be an effective Leader to them by promoting inclusivity
 - Let me share an example:
 - People tried to include me in conversations, they have good intentions BUT the way they carry out the intention can offend me...for instance, they speak to me in a very slow way "Can you hear me?"...they are trying to include me but at the same time

they are putting me in the spotlight (marginalization – you are reminding me how different I am)

- A few years back, I was on a exchange program for youth with disabilities...met a blind person. I wasn't sure how to communicate with her when navigating her through the airport. I was going "turn right, walk 10 steps...a little bit to your left". The girl told me that all I needed to do is hold her by her arm and just lead the way. So sometimes it's not all about the verbal contact, but the body language...giving her the sense of touch that she matters, and is included in the group