



Introduction:

This exercise can build empathy and lead to better decision making by highlighting: 1. The need to have people from diverse backgrounds in the room where decisions are being made. 2. The need to learn how to consider diverse perspectives to better inform one's decisions.

Participant Instructions:

1. Experience: Filling the Diversity Chair

It helps to have visual reminders to practice diverse perspective-taking. An empty chair, alone, is not enough of a cue because we would think about, and fill the chair with, customers similar to ourselves.

Think of an easy solution first: diversify the chair. Each of you, imagine how to make the chair a reminder to think of diverse customers. Write down what you'd do and draw the diversified chair.

After five minutes to be creative, present to the group what you were thinking about and show the chair. Describe how it is "inclusive" and how it helps you think about diverse others.

2. Reflection:

After each group presents their chair, each group will reflect on how your chair was similar or dissimilar to the chairs imagined by the other groups. What does this say about other perspective-taking?

Go beyond thinking about a specific chair. Think about your study or workplaces. What else could you do and/or what other measures could you put in place, to serve as a reminder to make decisions and conduct everyday business with diversity and inclusion in mind? Discuss as a group.

What might you now intend to do? Can you come up with a group action plan?

3. Debriefing:

Discuss what it was like to do this activity. Did you find it uncomfortable? Were your ideas included in the group's concept of a chair? Was everyone in the group able to use the chair analogy to generalize to the larger issues of making the whole of the workplace or study place inclusive?

References:

Todd, A. R., Bodenhausen, G. V., & Galinsky, A. D. (2012). Perspective taking combats the denial of intergroup discrimination. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 48(3), 738-745.

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DavidLivermore.com. <https://davidlivermore.com/2016/01/18/new-book-on-culturally-intelligent-innovation/>