A Framework for Individuals

Doing justice, equity, decolonization, diversity, and inclusion (JEDDI) work at the individual level means cultivating personal cultural competence and developing an inclusion lens.

An inclusion lens offers a wider perspective, helping us see difference with empathy and better understand how others experience the world. For those working in the creative sector, this lens shapes not only how we engage with colleagues, but how we program, collect, curate, and serve our communities.

Developing an inclusion lens is ongoing work. It requires foundational knowledge applied daily through conversations, interactions, and decisions.

It also requires curiosity to examine the cultural contexts that shape us, and humility to recognize how those contexts inform or bias our thinking.

JEDDI work is never finished, but with time and practice we can move from where we are toward greater awareness, understanding, and action.

Self-Assessment

Assess Your Cultural Competence

Self-Assessment requires objectivity, but most often, it's impossible to truly see our own blind spots to uncover our biases. However, there are excellent tools that can test our knowledge, attitudes, skill sets and orientations toward cultural differences and commonalities.

Mitchell R. Hammer's Intercultural Development Continuum (IDC™) is one such tool that assesses intercultural competence.

Definitions on the next page are excerpts from the IDC™ website. At which stage of the continuum are you?

Learn more at: idiinventory.com

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Creative Equity Roadmap

A Framework for Individuals

For Individuals

Where are you now on the continuum?

Denial	Polarization	Minimization	Acceptance	Adaptation
Misses Differences	Judges Differences	De-emphasizes Differences	Deeply Comprehends Differences	Bridges Across Differences

← Monocultural mindsets

Intercultural / Global mindsets →

Denial Mindset Misses Differences

A Denial mindset reflects a more limited capability for understanding and appropriately responding to cultural differences in values, beliefs, perceptions, emotional responses, and behaviors. Denial consists of a Disinterest in other cultures and a more active Avoidance of cultural difference. Individuals with a Denial orientation often do not see differences in perceptions and behavior as "cultural."

A Denial orientation is characteristic of individuals who have limited experience with other cultural groups and therefore tend to operate with broad stereotypes and generalizations about the cultural "other." Those at Denial may also maintain a distance from other cultural groups and express little interest in learning about the cultural values and practices of diverse communities.

This orientation tends to be associated more with members of a dominant culture as well as members of non-dominant groups who are relatively isolated from mainstream society because both may have more opportunity to remain relatively isolated from cultural diversity. By contrast, members of non-dominant groups who are more actively engaged within the larger, mainstream society are less likely to maintain a Denial orientation, because they more often need to engage cultural differences. When Denial is present in the workplace, cultural diversity oftentimes feels "ignored."

Polarization Mindset Judges Differences

Polarization is an evaluative mindset that views cultural differences from an "us versus them" perspective. Polarization can take the form of Defense ("My cultural practices are superior to other cultural practices") or Reversal ("Other cultures are better than mine"). Within Defense, cultural differences are often seen as divisive and threatening to one's own "way of doing things." Reversal is a mindset that values and may idealize other cultural practices while denigrating one's own culture group. Reversal may also support the "cause" of an oppressed group, but this is done with little knowledge of what the "cause" means to people from the oppressed community. When Polarization is present in an organization, diversity typically feels "uncomfortable."

Minimization Mindset De-emphasizes Differences

Minimization is a transitional mindset between the more Monocultural orientations of Denial and Polarization and the more Intercultural/Global worldviews of Acceptance and Adaptation. Minimization highlights commonalities in both human Similarity (basic needs) and Universalism (universal values and principles) that can mask a deeper understanding of cultural differences.

Minimization can take one of two forms: (a) the highlighting of commonalities due to limited cultural self-understanding, which is more commonly experienced by dominant group members within a cultural community; or (b) the highlighting of commonalities as a strategy for navigating the values and practices largely determined by the dominant culture group, which is more often experienced by non-dominant group members within a larger cultural community. This latter strategy can have survival value for non-dominant culture members and often takes the form of "go along to get along." When Minimization exists in organizations, diversity often feels "not heard."

Acceptance Mindset Deeply Comprehends Differences

Acceptance and Adaptation are intercultural/global mindsets. With an Acceptance orientation, individuals recognize and appreciate patterns of cultural difference and commonality in their own and other cultures.

An Acceptance orientation is curious to learn how a cultural pattern of behavior makes sense within different cultural communities. This involves contrastive self-reflection between one's own culturally learned perceptions and behaviors and perceptions and practices of different cultural groups. While curious, individuals with an Acceptance mindset are not fully able to appropriately adapt to cultural difference.

Someone with an Acceptance orientation may be challenged as well to make ethical or moral decisions across cultural groups. While a person within Acceptance embraces a deeper understanding of cultural differences, this can lead to the individual struggling with reconciling behavior in another cultural group that the person considers unethical or immoral from his or her own cultural viewpoint.

When Acceptance is present in organizations and educational institutions, diversity feels "understood."

Adaptation Mindset Bridges Across Differences

An Adaptation orientation consists of both Cognitive Frame-Shifting (shifting one's cultural perspective) and Behavioral Code-Shifting (changing behavior in authentic and culturally appropriate ways). Adaptation enables deep cultural bridging across diverse communities using an increased repertoire of cultural frameworks and practices in navigating cultural commonalities and differences.

An Adaptation mindset sees adaptation in performance (behavior). While people with an Adaptation mindset typically focus on learning adaptive strategies, problems can arise when people with Adaptation mindsets express little tolerance toward people who engage diversity from other developmental orientations. This can result in people with Adaptive capabilities being marginalized in their workplace. When an Adaptation mindset is present in the workplace, diversity feels "valued and involved."

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