DIVERSITY LEADERSHIP

Manual For Trainers

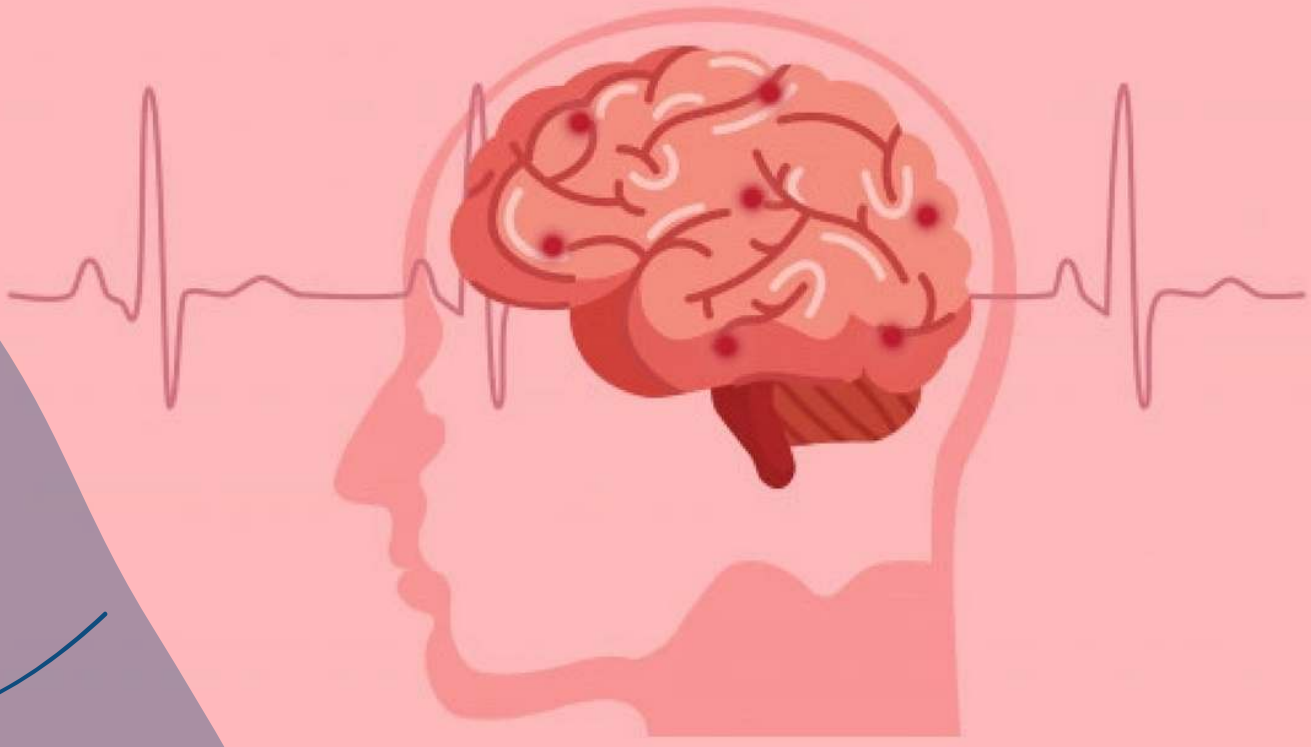


TABLE OF CONTENTS

5 **ENVISIONING DIVERSITY LEADERSHIP FOR TRAINERS**

8 *"Approach" vision*

10 **DIVERSITY LEADERSHIP AS A MULTI-LAYERED APPROACH**

12 *Surface current*

14 *Conscious undercurrent*

16 *Subconscious undercurrent*

21 *Source*

23 **POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY AND DIVERSITY LEADERSHIP**

27 **DEVELOPING A DIVERSITY LEADERSHIP MINDSET**

30 *Principle of self-awareness and self-regulation*

32 *Principle of value and appreciation*

34 *Principle of empathy*

36 *Principle of fairness and respect*

38 *Principle of curiosity and collaboration*

41 **INSPIRING TRAINERS TO EMBRACE DIVERSITY LEADERSHIP IN THEIR PRACTICE**

42 *Your Ideas Matter*

45 *BEST*

51 *International School of Entrepreneurship*

58 *European Learning Network*

60 **EMBEDDING DIVERSITY LEADERSHIP IN ADULT EDUCATION**

61 *Connecting with the source layer through Sedona method*

63 *Exploring systems*

66 *Asking systemic questions*

67 *Creating connection in the group*

69 *Balancing the dominant archetypes*

73 *Peer consultation*

77 **DIVERSITY LEADERSHIP CODEX FOR TRAINERS**

79 **SOURCES**

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ENVISIONING DIVERSITY LEADERSHIP FOR TRAINERS



Global socio-economic trends, technological advances and demographic changes influence our lives and society in many ways. On the one hand, we all are affected and experience these rapid changes as a society. On the other hand, we perceive these changes in our own, individual and very diverse manner.

> ***The effects of the fast-paced and complex world we are living in today increases the pressure on some people to sustain and lean even more towards familiar cultural values. Whenever we perceive someone as having different cultural values other than our own, anxiety can quickly arise (Lumby & Morrison 2010).***

Thus, very often, the diversity in adult education classrooms can lead to critical training situations, in which misunderstandings and conflicts between participants or trainers and participants can easily occur. Surely, this is not a completely new insight to anyone working in the field.

But it does however raise the question of how trainers can best approach the growing diversity in their training programmes. So, what does it take to become a diverse leader and to embrace diversity leadership in adult education as a new type of workstyle? Clearly, there are elements to the concept of leadership that remain unchanging.

> *Leadership encompasses the capability of motivating and influencing other people towards a common objective or a certain direction.*
>
> *(Lumby et al. 2007)*

Additionally, given the heterogeneous environment when working with adult learners, the ability to effectively manage this diversity remains an important skill for trainers to have in their teaching repertoire. Therefore, engaging with this skill and continually practising it will contribute to trainers' successfully developing a leadership style that satisfies both the needs of diverse groups of learners and helps to constructively meet the potential challenges of diverse teaching settings.

Trainers, who seek to (further) develop their diversity leadership qualities can draw on basic principles that we identified as lying at the core of a diversity leadership work style.

This manual provides trainers with comprehensive guidelines and current knowledge on the topic. In the following chapters, we invite you to explore in more detail the concept of diversity leadership and specific traits and qualities that make for a great diverse leader.

You will learn about the concept of diversity leadership, how to develop and nurture the diversity leadership work style and you will better understand how to link this mindset with training specific groups of adult learners. This will be enriched by practical activities that allow you to embed the diversity leadership approach in your daily work with adults at risk.

"Approach" vision

Ideally, trainers seek to create an atmosphere of respectful cooperation and trust, which allows for learners to feel safe and accepted by all the people involved in the learning process. In light of learners' diversity, their individual interests, competencies and creative potential resulting from their individual life and learning experiences, trainers are very often challenged – if not overwhelmed – by the high level of diversity in the workplace. How is it possible for trainers to manage and synergise learners' individual differences and turn them into an advantage that ultimately benefits the whole group?

A broad view of diversity means to take on an inclusive view and to consider the many different aspects that constitute individuals. For example, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, values, beliefs, nationality, cultural background, educational background, language, lifestyle, physical appearance, income – an inclusive view of diversity means that trainers are aware of all the aspects that tend to influence the way we interact with each other (Lumby et al. 2007).

The APPROACH vision represents exactly this – encouraging trainers to employ a broad view towards the diversity of their learners.

Taking on a broad view of diversity can help trainers in generating a positive and fruitful training environment.

What do we mean by a broad view of diversity?



APPROACH proposes an inclusive view of leadership, a view that embraces a multi-layered approach and is inspired by the principles of Positive Psychology. The inclusive concept of diversity leadership presented in APPROACH is a possible way to view the differences within a group as enrichment and opportunity for personal, social and organisational growth.

The underlying vision builds on a multi-layered approach that acknowledges underlying forces, which are active in all of us. This approach is therefore able to accommodate the wide range of diversity dimensions that trainers are presented with in their daily work. In combination with the concept of Positive Psychology, specifically the PERMA-Model put forward by Martin Seligman (Seligman, 2011), the manual provides the basis for recognising and encouraging trainers to develop their strengths in diversity leadership and to let this potential flourish. Following a multi-layered approach and the principle of Positive Psychology opens up new possibilities for trainers to embark on an internal journey of development and to cultivate their diversity leadership competencies.

Diversity leadership in this sense is to be understood as a resource and strength-oriented approach, which focuses on promoting the individual development of trainers and learners alike. It is therefore a mutually dependent process. If trainers take on an approach that is rooted in a positive attitude, this will also influence their learners in a positive way: learners' performance and their motivation to learn as well as their overall well-being increases.

> **This positive diversity leadership style will lead to adult educators' increased engagement in the training process. Naturally, motivational effort automatically rises in positive environments (Ebner, 2018).**

DIVERSITY LEADERSHIP AS A MULTI-LAYERED APPROACH



The way learners respond and react towards trainers and how group interaction is structured highly depends on learners' individual backgrounds and what they expect from their trainers and training programmes. It goes without saying that trainers cannot please every learner. After all, learners have to be willing to accept and let themselves in on the training offer. There are, however, some guidelines and tools that trainers can rely on to manage difficult training situations more effectively.

Developing a diversity leadership training style is a complex process that requires continuous inner work – it is closely connected to behavioural patterns, and it thus takes time to become ingrained in our mental models. It is a mindset that helps trainers to cope more effectively with increasingly dynamic groups. We have identified a multi-layered approach that can help trainers to better discern and evaluate learners' behaviour in diverse group settings, because many layers come into play when interacting with heterogeneous target groups. The diversity leadership work style supports trainers in taking more adequate actions i.e. responding to learners' needs more appropriately and creating a more productive learning environment. By tapping into the information of the individual layers, trainers are not only able to better evaluate their own role in the process, but they will also grow professionally and personally.

We distinguish the following layers:

THE SURFACE CURRENT

THE CONSCIOUS UNDERCURRENT

THE SUBCONSCIOUS UNDERCURRENT

THE SOURCE

Surface current

This layer contains the facts, figures, behaviour and everything we can sense with our five senses. This is the layer where learners ask a question, are unwilling to contribute or have a fight with another learner. This is where we see behaviour of not talking to another learner or making mean remarks. Facts are neutral, however, on grounds of our interpretation and perception, we attach a certain meaning to them.

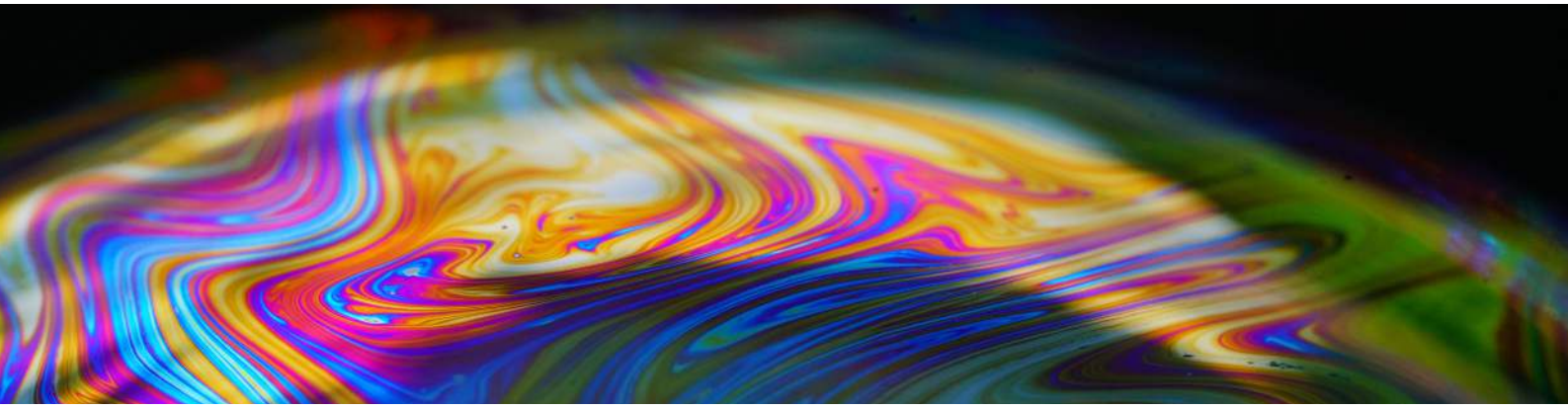
This is the layer in which we perceive learners' behaviour. It is the layer that presents us with the facts that are visible on the surface, such as learners' physical and behavioural aspects. And in case of critical training situations it is the layer where we see the behaviour that we label as excluding other people.

Most trainers will by their role as educators act and intervene on this layer too. By acknowledging that this is 'just one of the layers' that is active in a situation, trainers can better understand and assess learners' individual needs and abilities. They realise that there are also deeper issues that influence the situation with the learners on the surface and therefore they will start their journey of becoming diverse leaders. Trainers will approach critical training situations in an adequate way. They will draw on appropriate intervention methods and avoid setting ineffective actions.

For example, when there are mechanisms of exclusions at work, diverse leaders will create space for those that are not automatically included. They will – in their role as educators – call upon learners' empathy and ask them "How would you like to work together in this group? Let us agree on a set of rules." It is about setting up mutual agreements between everyone involved in the learning process that helps to establish a positive working atmosphere and supports positive relationship building.

It is therefore the layer, in which we engage our learners to become active agents of their own learning process. We motivate them to contribute with their knowledge and personality, shaping the quality of group relationships.

Understanding the workings of this layer supports trainers in identifying the different roles they have learned to choose from to create classroom management and from there to select on the surface level adequate activities and tasks for diverse learners.



Diverse leaders are aware that learners have unique needs and competencies.

Conscious undercurrent

This layer consists of a person's emotions, beliefs, assumptions, and values. This is the layer where we are including or excluding other people on a deeper level. This is where we have a belief that we are better than others, that others don't belong here or that we feel strong resistance to work together.

Because this layer is hidden and underneath the surface, it is not always perfectly clear why someone is excluding another person. The behaviour in the first layer that we label as exclusion can also be caused by fear, uncertainty or lack of confidence and doesn't have to be rooted in the other, but it can also be an issue of the one that excludes him/herself (projection).

As a trainer, you need to be able to ask questions that invite the learners to explore this conscious undercurrent. Resorting to the example of setting up group rules and getting closer to the conscious undercurrent, you could go on to ask learners:

✔ Which behaviour do you value in another person?

✔ How does that connect or not to your own values?

✔ How do you want to be treated by other people?

✔ Which behaviour do you find disturbing or cannot be tolerated by the group?

✔ What of yourself (i.e., what kind of behaviour) do you need to leave out, for our group to be able to work (e.g., being on time, refraining from making mean remarks, talking too loudly, etc.)?

Exploring these questions together with learners will raise their awareness of what causes them to show certain behavioural patterns, informed by individual values and beliefs. Discovering the conscious undercurrent, i.e., finding out more about what is below the surface, is both valuable for trainers and for learners.

This is also the layer where we become aware of the more collective cultural-based values we carry in us and propagate, without realising it most of the time.



Subconscious undercurrent

Below this general undercurrent, we distinguish a deeper undercurrent that is mostly subconscious – we are unaware of its presence. It contains many systemic relationships, connections, and energy that is feeding the surface current through the undercurrent.



This is the layer where we see the systemic, energetic and archetypal principles at work. By connecting to the information in this layer, we can get a clearer understanding of the interactions and conflicts in the surface current.

> **The term systemic was developed in German by Gunthard Weber, one of the founders of organisational constellations, together with Bert Hellinger and Jan Jacob Stam (Stam, 2018).**

Systemic is by no means the same as systematic! Systemic means something like "related to the whole system".

Twenty years of systemic work and working with family and organisational constellations have led to the emergence of three life-giving forces that apply to each system and are universal and timeless.

The three life-giving forces are:

INCLUSION

Every system wants to be complete. Therefore, it makes sure that everything and everyone that belongs to the system will have its 'rightful' place. This also counts for people, events, and parts of the system in the past.

ORDER

Every system has a natural order. In family systems that is the order of generation and the one of age. In other systems there are orders like seniority, hierarchy and experience, but also age. It is important to acknowledge this order when working in a system.

EXCHANGE

In order to survive, every system exchanges with its surroundings. If this giving and taking is balanced, systems tend to thrive.

Symptoms in the surface current can find their roots in disbalances in these three life-giving forces. If not everyone and everything is included and given a place, if the order is disturbed or if there is an imbalance in giving and taking, the so-called system conscience will kick in and find a way to include, re-order, and balance giving and taking again. Often this occurs in a way that we call a problem or problematic behaviour. Especially if problems reoccur in different parts of the system, or when they repeat, it is often due to a systemic problem in the subconscious undercurrent.

Family, business, and organisational constellations are a way of making the underlying dynamics clear. By placing people in a room as representatives of the different parts of a system, the underlying patterns and dynamics are shown. It is a very powerful way of finding the root cause of a problem in the surface current.

The concept of archetypes belongs to depth psychology and was put forward by Carl Gustav Jung. Archetypes are (hidden) narratives or primal behavioural patterns and energetic movements that are active in each of us individually, as well as in groups and in organisations (Pearson, 2021).

The archetypes form the basis of your character, your tendencies, feelings, beliefs, motivations and actions. You can see them as 'inner selves', that can support you in difficult times. They can also hold you back and take control over you and your life in a way that isn't helpful at all.

Most archetypes are named after a historical role in life, e.g. Mother, Imposter, Master, Child, Rebel, King, Queen, etc. . They can also be universal events or situations, e.g. death or rebirth, or things or places, e.g. door, threshold, key, cave, sea, mountain, etc. These 'primal patterns' therefore carry symbols, images and themes, which are separate from educational systems, cultures or the zeitgeist in which one was raised.

There are extensive number of archetypes. Everyone has "all" archetypes within him- or herself. But everyone expresses these archetypes in their own individual way. For example, we recognize the archetype of 'Mother' or 'Leader' anywhere in the world and yet the mothers and leaders all over the world are different and unique.

All these inner archetypes aren't active at the same time, because then our behaviours would be very chaotic and unpredictable. Most of us have a group of 8 to 12 dominant archetypes active within ourselves. The specific archetypes being active, differ from person to person.

We can look at the archetypes as an inner network or support team, helping us through difficult times in our own unique way. But they can also become overwhelming (e.g. when we get really angry, our inner Warrior is likely to be active) and thus rather impede our actions instead of helping us.

The archetypes are therefore visible in the way we express ourselves and interact with our environment.

Training a diverse group of adults at risk, we should be aware that there are always also systemic, energetic and archetypal issues at work that influence their behaviour in the surface current. Thus, the more we are aware of the influence of this subconscious undercurrent and how to recognise these issues in a given situation, the better we are able to determine how to deal with critical moments in the surface current. We can make informed decisions about which direction to take in such situations.



How does the subconscious undercurrent support the development of diversity leadership competencies?

There are certain tools and methods that allow you to tap into this layer and reveal the deeper movements that are influencing the behaviour of yourself as a trainer and that of the learners.

Trainers learn to put learners' behaviour in a broader context, showing the collective connections with the learners' and the trainer's family, educational, cultural and historical background. It also shows the relationship of the current situation with something that has happened in the past, either on an individual level or on an organisational basis.

As you can see, it is this layer that places the learners, their behaviour, interactions, and attitudes in a broader context. It also raises trainers' awareness of how powerful the influence of the subconscious context is on human behaviour. By using specific tools that make the systemic, energetic and archetypal information from both the learners and their trainers visible, trainers will learn to understand how they are interconnected. It basically refers to all the underlying forces that influence our behaviour in the surface layer.

By acknowledging the subconscious undercurrent, trainers' awareness of what happens in the first layer is increased. So being aware of this layer helps trainers to see beyond the individual and to see the connections of systems and archetypes in a larger context. By engaging with this layer, trainers are able to better discern instances of stereotyping. This is because they are able to connect learners' behaviour to the influence of different systems, the life-giving forces, and inner archetypes, fostering understanding and appreciation for their behaviour instead of stereotyping.

This layer also allows the trainer to see all interactions in the group as expressions of systems, archetypes, and energetic movements that are hidden below the surface. This way, they zoom out and explore what is really happening, instead of labelling it as bad, annoying or negative. They can see the problems as symptoms of something else. This gives the trainer the possibility to use another intervention that will create much more balance in the group.

Source

This is the layer that is beyond diversity. It is the layer where we are all one and everything is connected. There is no you and no me. There is no time nor place. It is the layer in which all polarities dissolve. Although it is more of a spiritual layer than a practical one, it is important that trainers are aware of the existence of this layer. It allows for trainers to see a situation from a holistic perspective and gives them a certain distance to stop judging others.

There are different ways of connecting to this layer.

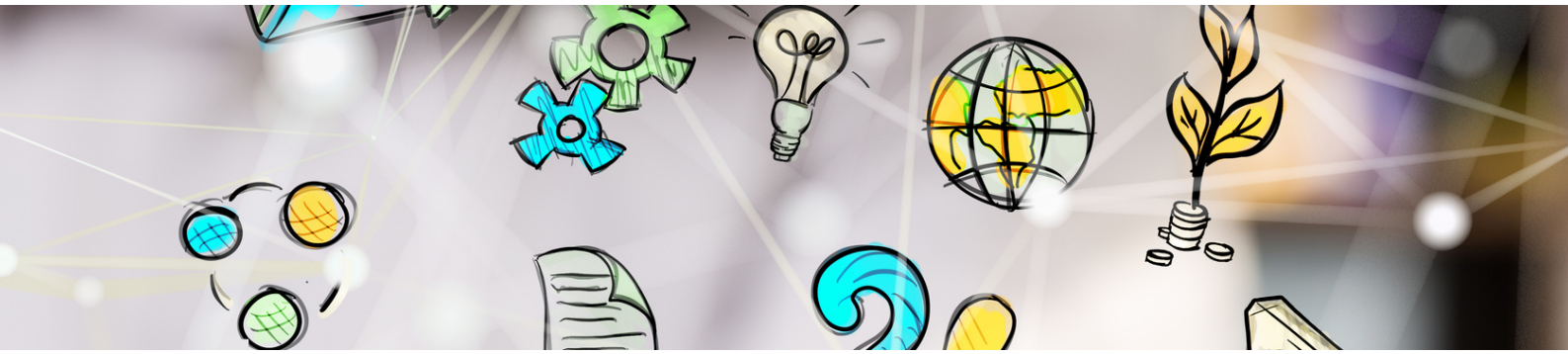
1 First, release techniques like the Sedona method, the Work by Byron Katie, or Emotional Freedom Technique, can help trainers to let go of limiting beliefs, experiences, or patterns, and create a stronger connection to this source layer.

2 Second, certain meditation techniques help to clear your mind, emotions and body and allow trainers to dive into this source layer.

By practising to connect to this source level time and again, trainers can create new mental and behavioural patterns so they can then quickly reconnect with this layer.

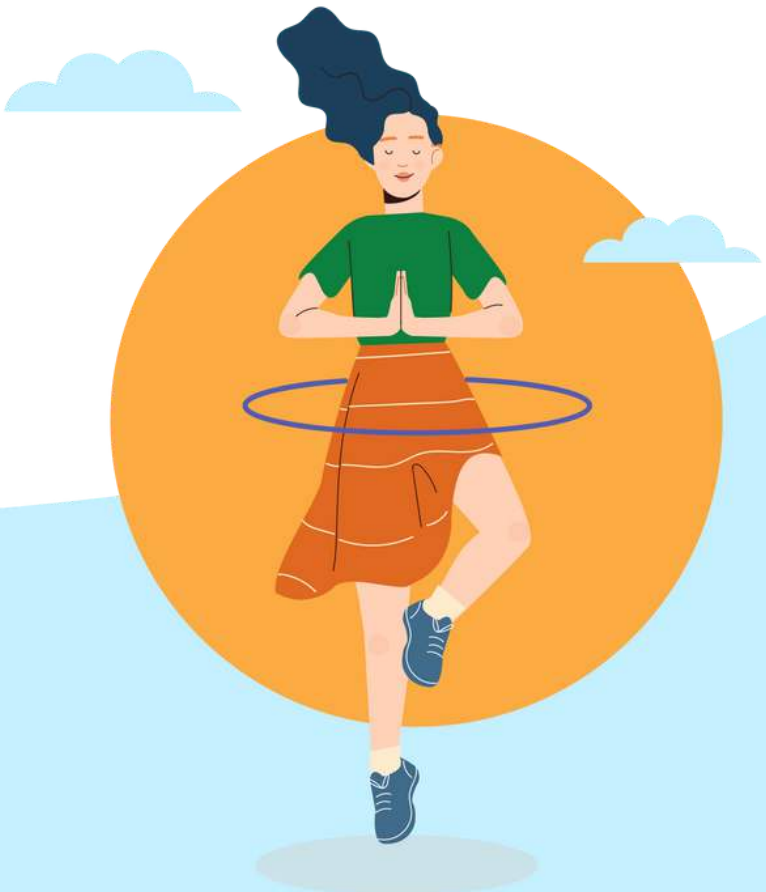
This way they can access this level during training, which is especially helpful when critical training situations arise.

Connecting with this layer helps trainers to find inner peace and act from there instead of all kinds of defence mechanisms. By acknowledging this layer, trainers are able to approach their learners with an open mind, interacting with them in an accepting and understanding way. This layer helps trainers to establish a culture of communication based on respecting others, being open to alternative opinions, attitudes and ideas, which is characteristic of the diversity leadership approach.



Employing a multi-layered approach, hence integrating different perspectives in training adults at risk, provides trainers with a solid basis in effectively building up professional competencies when teaching diverse groups of learners. Complementing this approach further with the principles of Positive Psychology is the starting point in becoming a diverse leader.

POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY AND DIVERSITY LEADERSHIP



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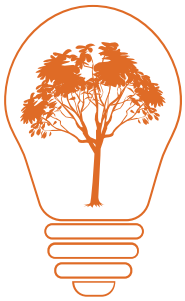
In essence, Positive Psychology is focusing on positive emotions. Focusing on positive emotions, such as optimism, positive relationships, meaningful engagements in tasks and activities that are resulting in meaningful accomplishments are essential to delivering a successful training. Relying on the principles of Positive Psychology does therefore not only strengthen our well-being, it also contributes and nurtures fruitful cooperation with others. In fact, positive emotions are the key starting point for establishing well-functioning relationships.

Another highly valuable ability that is connected to Positive Psychology is trainers' **capacity for resilience.** Resilience is an ongoing process. It is the ability to adapt and grow, albeit adversities, setbacks, crises or negative experiences that one experiences. It means to be able to recover quickly from challenging life situations. Resilience does not only mean to be a tough person. It is an emotional journey that requires people to work through challenges, bearing pain or negative experiences and to learn from hardships.

The more resilient trainers are, the better they can respond to stressful situations. Thus, when difficult situations in training settings arise, resilient trainers will react differently. They are able to adapt and move forward more easily.

Professional resilience helps to view a situation more objectively, and prevents trainers from reacting instantly. Instant reactions tend to be more emotional and therefore oftentimes hinder us from taking a step back, which would however provide the necessary space for evaluating a situation from different angles and handling stressful moments more adequately. Therefore, strengthening one's personal capacity for resilience allows for maintaining a focused perspective. This again helps trainers in communicating clearly with their learners, reconciling opposing views and conflicts among learners.

For example, trainers are frequently presented with learners from different socio-cultural backgrounds not wanting to work together or refusing to get engaged at all. This may disrupt the group and tensions can arise. Especially trainers with little experience need to build up resilience and are easily irritated and perplexed by this behaviour.



Which intervention would be appropriate in this situation? First of all, it is important to stay calm and to see critical situations as an opportunity for change. To connect the learners, trainers should focus on the one thing that unifies the group. Pointing towards the common goal, which can be the achievement of a qualification for example, highlights learners' shared responsibility to make the group work.

Facilitating a group discussion to determine the individual roles (i.e. tasks, expectations, responsibilities, etc.) can help the group to revitalise. Whenever learners are reluctant to engage in training, you can simply ask them the following:

> **"Imagine, what would happen if you decided to actively participate? What if you could learn something new by working together with other learners?"**

Make learners realise that their differences can be an asset. Asking learners positively worded questions and also voicing what is happening inside you, makes you authentic and it is easier to find a connection with them. Focusing on positive emotions a useful instrument to stay integrated and more resilient during training.

The **5 principles of Positive Psychology proposed by the PERMA-model** can also help you to solve group issues and problems. They serve as core guidelines for the diversity leadership work style. The focus is on the well-being and flourishing of the individual:

01 **Positive Emotions.** Integrating positive emotions, such as joy, interest and gratitude into our daily lives – at home or at work – fosters the individual's physical and psychological well-being and contributes to positive relation building with others.

02 **Engagement.** Refers to participating in activities one feels passionate about. It is also connected to individual learning processes and finding the right balance between challenge and one's own strengths / competencies when engaging in a task or activity.

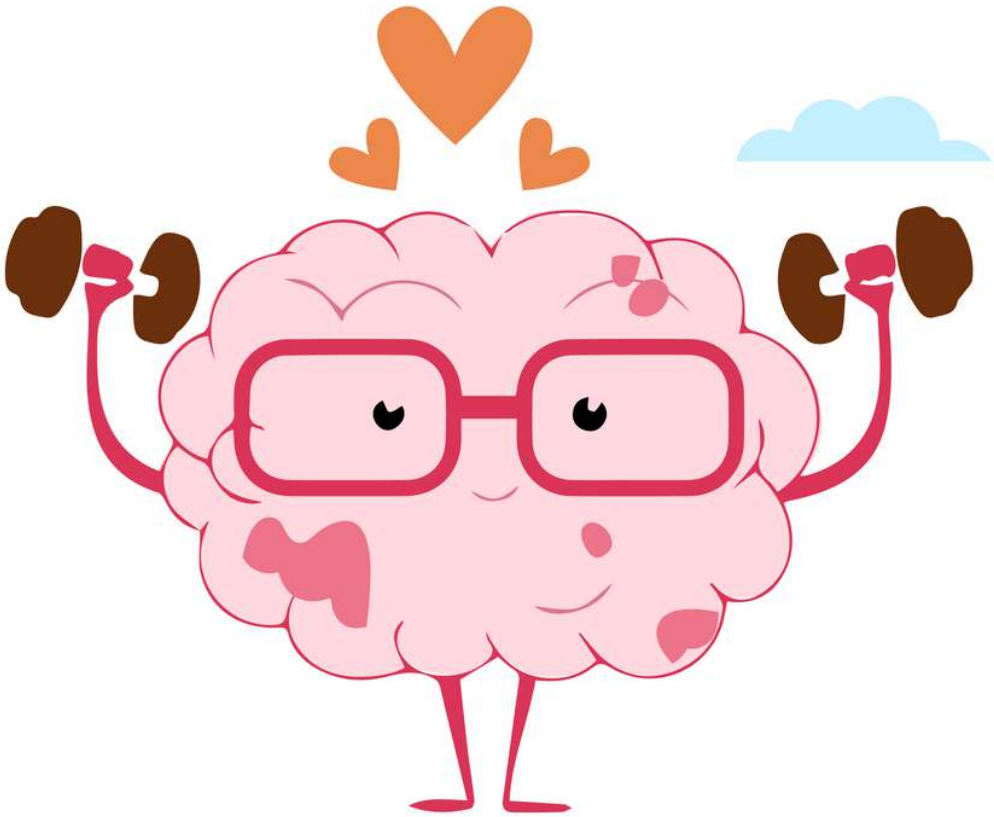
03 **Relationships.** Building relationships with others is fundamental in creating positive emotions. Sharing positive emotions with other people and showing authentic interest for other people's lives gives rise to positive relationships.

04 **Meaning.** It refers to having a purpose in life and working towards a goal that we feel connected to. This helps us to concentrate on things and activities that matter to us.

05 **Accomplishments.** Accomplishments contribute to our well-being because they are the result of having achieved a goal. In order to accomplish a goal, we need to find internal motivation and set SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound) goals.

The value of combining Positive Psychology and diversity leadership is that it fosters a learning atmosphere of acceptance. Now, the question arises in which respect the multi-layered approach enriches the principles of Positive Psychology and diversity leadership, to be explored in the next pages.

DEVELOPING A DIVERSITY LEADERSHIP MINDSET



Diversity leadership reflects an innovative, inclusive and modern way of how adult trainers can lead their learners effectively. There are different approaches to achieve this. The common pattern that all these approaches share is linked to an ongoing internal self-training to organically embed these principles as part of one's personal and professional development. Applying diversity leadership principles therefore requires adopting them as part of one's mindset. A trainer who opts for adopting a diversity leadership mindset will have to develop a capacity to interact effectively with diverse learners' needs and preferences on a daily basis. Furthermore, he or she would need to accept unexpectedness and unpredictability of processes as natural elements of diversity in the classrooms, which is often the case with learners coming from different backgrounds (cultural, socio-economic, educational and health).

> Addressing unpredictability of events is linked to the concept of resilience. Resilience can be defined as the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or significant sources of stress (APA, 2012). It can be further defined as the capacity to be flexible in one's thoughts, feelings and behaviours when faced by a life disruption, or extended periods of pressure, so that to emerge from difficulty stronger, wiser and more able (Pemberton, 2015).

Adopting this broad definition to the context of applying the diversity leadership style in training, resilience can be defined as the internal capacity to effectively address challenging training situations daily.

Through developing one's resilience, trainers will prevent the risk of professional burn-out and will have the necessary stamina to ensure a positive atmosphere in the training environment.

By applying the principles of diversity leadership, trainers are able to:

teach their learners to value the individual rather than putting persons into categories. This is important, because on the basis of categorising people, we define who is "in the group" and who is "out of the group". This raises awareness of how stereotypes are built. By making this process explicit, we become more aware of when stereotypes are being generated.

make them aware that putting into categories has to do with the system you come from. Also make them aware that everything you exclude will cause problems.

encourage an open and respectful discussion in the classroom – not only on the topic of diversity, but as a basic rule of communication altogether.

motivate learners to participate in class, be it in terms of developing ideas and strategies or giving their opinion. As soon as learners feel that they have a say in decision making, they are more likely to participate.

Embracing diversity leadership means to recognise learners' uniqueness, their individual strengths and competencies and finding a way of interaction that allows for learners to develop their full potential. Following these principles, diversity leadership can be characterised as an inclusive process, integrating and managing the diversity and differences of all people involved. This can increase performance levels and foster creativity within a training group. Learners need to feel that they as individuals are important. They need to feel that their contributions are being valued by the group. This is when they are much more likely to make a contribution. So diversity leadership is all about shared ownership and inclusion as well as appreciation of different perspectives. Practising the following key principles of diversity leadership facilitates a mindset shift in trainers. This list of principles is based on Seligman's theory of Positive Psychology and Peter Senge's theory of the Learning Organisation.

Principle of self-awareness and self-regulation

Diverse leaders are aware that everybody, despite best intentions, has unconscious stereotypes. Taking a step back and looking at things from a different angle alleviates the effects of it, providing us with new insights and ideas. By practising self-awareness, self-learning and self-reflection we become more aware of our hidden stereotypes or unconscious bias that might influence our behaviour. We will also get used to stepping out of our comfort zone, a habit that enables personal growth and allows us to see the bigger picture.

Self-awareness helps to better understand ourselves, our reaction towards other people. Ultimately, it will strengthen the capacity of self-leadership. Because you can only lead others, if you can first lead yourself.

The multi-layered approach helps to explore the undercurrents and transform the roots of problems that arise in the surface current. It helps trainers to become aware of and better understand learners' behaviour, be it positive or negative.

Exercise for practicing the principle

The exercise will help you to take a step back, to calm down and regulate your emotions. Whenever your mind feels a little rattled it will support you in raising your self-awareness for the present moment, balancing your inner emotional landscape. Self-awareness is not always easy to realise, as it requires continuous effort. However, practised frequently, this exercise helps you in letting go of negative feelings and patterns more easily. It therefore supports you in identifying, which behaviour or reaction serves you in a positive way in your daily work. Having established a clear mind, you are more able to come up with new ideas and perspectives. This will positively contribute to your own personal development and that of the people around you.

Timing:

10-15 minutes

You need:

chair, bolster or mat, a quiet place

Instructions:

1. Find yourself a comfortable seating position, on a chair, on the ground or you could also lie down on the ground. Support yourself with props, if needed. Ensure that you can implement this exercise in a calm environment.
2. Close your eyes and focus on your breath, flowing in and out of your body. Try to only focus on your breathing for the next few moments. Let go of all thoughts that do not serve you at this moment.
3. Then, bring your awareness to your bodily sensations and notice how your body is starting to feel grounded to the earth beneath you. Breathe in and out through your belly, slowly and mindfully.
4. Observe the thoughts that are coming to your mind. Try not to linger on a thought. Let them come and let them fade away.
5. Next, visualise that with each inhale, you relax each part of your body a little more, while with each exhale you let go of all the (negative) feelings and thoughts that are present in that moment. Imagine that each inhale and each exhale grounds you a little more, absorbing the energy of the earth beneath you.
6. After 10 minutes, slowly open your eyes and gently stretch your hands and feet. Thank yourself for this little break you have given to yourself and set a positive intention for the rest of your day.

Principle of value and appreciation



Diverse leaders are committed to appreciating the uniqueness of all learners.

We all need to feel accepted and valued for the individuals that we are, with our individual characteristics, strengths and competencies. An atmosphere of acceptance also allows for us to unfold our full potential more easily. Maintaining an atmosphere of appreciation can make us feel more connected to a group and elevate the quality of our relationships. A diverse leader ensures that group membership is stable and no one gets left behind. By appreciating other people and their views, attitudes and mindsets, we avoid running the risk of excluding them. Clearly, appreciating different perspectives can be challenging at times, because it also means acknowledging opinions that differ from our own. Practising an attitude of value and appreciation, we also become more aware of our own limitations and imperfections, being more open to learn from criticism and different points of view.

The multi-layered approach helps you to see that people come from another system and that this is influencing the way they act. Connecting to the subconscious undercurrent, you will acknowledge that you have your own background and personality that was shaped by your particular biography. The multi-layered approach will support you in becoming familiar with the systemic principle of inclusion: everything and everybody belongs. If you exclude something, the system will make sure that it is included, causing all kinds of problems in the surface current. By practising appreciation and value you can restrain the effect of exclusion. Finally, becoming aware of the archetypes that are at play in a situation, trainers will know more easily which intervention to draw upon.

Exercise for practicing the principle

Practising appreciation regularly will help you notice the good things happening throughout your day. It will bring your awareness to details that you might otherwise take for granted. Cultivating appreciation will help you identify things to be grateful for more easily. This will strengthen your ability to nurture a positive-thinking mindset and to also accept the people around you for who they are. Ultimately, it can support you in adopting a humbler attitude, admitting mistakes when made and seeking for support (e.g. from experienced colleagues) to master personal shortcomings.

Timing:

10 minutes

You need:

Pen and paper, a quiet place

Instructions

1. At the end of a day, take some time to sit down and reflect on your work day. Think about 3 positive things that you appreciated during training. For example, a learner might have held open the door for you or another might have greeted you in a friendly way. These instances are valuable. And it is even more valuable to consciously take notice of such moments.

2. Then, you could note down positive moments that are deserving of appreciation. Focus your attention on the positive things, things that motivate you and be grateful for every act of kindness that comes to your mind or has crossed your path throughout the day.

3. Think about ways of how you could express genuine appreciation to your learners. This doesn't have to be and even shouldn't be expressed through exaggerated friendliness. Of course, everybody interacts differently with other people. However, showing authentic appreciation and expressing your feelings in the right tone can mean a lot to your learners.

Principle of empathy

Empathy is one of the most important principles to adopt when developing a diversity leadership mindset.

The principle of appreciation and value is closely connected to empathy: acknowledging others in their uniqueness will foster empathy. Empathy is a reflective process. You practice empathy by putting yourself in the shoes of others, visualising what it feels like to be that person. Having empathy for someone doesn't mean that we feel sorry for them or that we necessarily want to help them. It means trying to understand a person's behaviour, trying to understand their thoughts, priorities and behavioural patterns that are also influenced by their socio-cultural background.

Exploring the subconscious undercurrent is to explore the layer in which relationships manifest and connections are made. The undercurrent influences the way people show up and want to be seen by others on the surface layer. Knowing about the workings of the undercurrent helps trainers to place the behaviour of learners in a broader context. Raised awareness of the different systems at work, and the life-giving forces can foster trainers' capacity for empathy.

Acknowledging the active archetypes in oneself and in learners helps to create empathy.

Exercise for practicing the principle

You can look at empathy practice as a workout that keeps you emotionally fit and stable. Practised frequently, you will automatically develop a natural ability of connecting to other people. This will improve the quality of your relationships and help you nurture your diversity leadership competencies. This exercise can be implemented on a regular basis and will help you in cultivating positive energy and kindness towards yourself and others.

We recommend that you repeat this practice on a regular basis. It will help you to become more accepting of other people, especially those you are having a hard time with. By offering them your sincere and loving thoughts, you will automatically nurture your capacity for empathy and consequently strengthen your diversity leadership competencies.

Timing:

10-20 minutes

You need:

an open mind, a quiet place

Instructions

Before implementing this exercise, take a few minutes to relax and let your mind settle down. Try to tune into a mode of mindfulness. Focusing on your breath and bodily sensations will help you to do so. With each breath your body will relax a little more, letting loose of all tensions.

1. Take a seat in a quiet place, where you can practice silently.
2. Now, take some deep breaths in through your nose, and out through your mouth.
3. First, you warm up with some self-love: start by saying the following sentences aloud, directed at yourself: “May I be happy. May I be safe. May I feel joy., etc.”. By saying these positive affirmations aloud, you tap into a state of acceptance, which lies at the heart of empathy. Pause after each sentence and take a deep breath. Let the words sink into your body and mind.
4. Next, focus your attention on a family member, a friend or someone dear to you. Direct the positive affirmations towards that person: “May you be happy. May you be safe. May you feel joy.” Feel how your mind is making a connection with that person, the sentences expressing deep empathy. Continue breathing consciously.
5. Then, imagine a person you don’t feel very much connected to, or a person which you might feel resentment or negative emotions for. Try to accept any emotions that arise, when visualising the person in front of you. Whatever you feel is ok. Don’t push yourself
6. Now, address the positive affirmations towards that particular person. Try to be genuine and to mean them.

Principle of fairness and respect



A characteristic of diversity leadership is to treat others with fairness and respect.

Committing to being fair and respectful to one another, you will set a positive example in your organisation and for the people you work with. It is a continuous learning process, requiring patience and a range of different skills, such as listening to learners and hearing their needs, using positive language (i.e. it's not what you say, but how you say it) and providing learners with constructive feedback, showing them that you have their best interest at heart.

Treating learners fairly, however, does not mean that everyone is treated in the same way. It means to treat others in the ways that best suit them, to be attentive to their needs and interact with them based on their needs. Besides, fairness and respect teach us to acknowledge and value different cultures. If you are tolerant of differences, you will discover new possibilities of learning, because you are more tolerant of new ideas. Clearly, we all have mental models that influence our emotions, attitudes and actions and we cannot abandon them completely. Our mental models are part of our identity, shaped by our own cultural values and beliefs that are embedded and intertwined with different systems. But you can raise your awareness of your inner mental models, becoming more tolerant/sensitive towards different cultures.

Connecting to the source layer, trainers can experience that we are all one. This is especially helpful to avoid judgement and bias and to clear the mind from negative thoughts towards other people. This layer therefore allows us to interact more efficiently with the individual learner.

Exercise for practicing the principle

This activity is about reflecting on how we implement the principles of respect and fairness in our everyday lives. The more often we engage in self-reflection and consciously think about the ways we interact with people, the more aware we become of our behavioural patterns. We can then change particular behavioural patterns, focusing on fruitful relationship building with our learners.

Timing:

20-30 minutes

You need:

pen and paper, a quiet place

Instructions

Before starting the exercise, give yourself a short break and clear your mind from any distracting thoughts. Take some deep breaths and try to relax so that your mind can completely shift its focus on the self-reflection exercise.

1. Take a seat and read the following open questions one by one.
2. Allocate 3-5 minutes for contemplating about and answering each question. You can modify this exercise, substituting the term “respect” with other concepts that you would like to reflect about.

- ✔ What does it mean to you to be respected by others?
- ✔ What does it mean to you to be disrespected?
- ✔ What would you describe as respectful behaviour?
- ✔ How do you show respect towards others (your learners)?
- ✔ How do learners earn your respect?
- ✔ Can you think of a situation, in which you might not have treated someone respectfully? Why did that happen? What can you learn from it?
- ✔ What would help you in creating a more respectful and fairer atmosphere in your classroom?

Principle of curiosity and collaboration



It is essential for diverse leaders to stay curious and open to new ideas and experiences.

They embrace a life-long learning attitude, viewing critical situations and obstacles as an important source of learning and development. Diverse leaders are also proactive in approaching and collaborating with others, because they are curious about hearing other people's opinions and viewpoints. Diverse leaders are not afraid of ambiguity, instead they are embracing it and specifically asking others to bring in their views, even if they are different from one's own. Your colleagues might have dealt with similar situations after all and learning from each other's experiences, you are creating valuable synergy effects that strengthen collaboration within your organisation as a whole. It can sometimes be daunting to ask others for help, but don't judge yourself for not knowing it all. Try looking at it as being a strength, rather than a weakness. Embedding the principle of curiosity and collaboration in everyday work life will foster a trainer's perspective-taking and collaboration skills.

The multi-layer approach can help you to explore the subconscious undercurrent of your beliefs and presumptions. It is the layer that deeply influences our ability to build relationships with others and how well we can collaborate with the people around us. This is also determined by the archetypes that are activated in all of us. By connecting to the archetypes when working with a group, we can explore how to balance them and be in charge of them. The concept of archetypes allows us to better categorise learners, their behaviours and our response to it.

Exercise for practicing the principle

In order to establish agreements among your team on how to work together and how to support each other in diversity training settings, you could invite them to do a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis together (Mindtools, 2022). It basically is a simple tool for focused discussions/ brainstorming sessions, in which you develop common guidelines of how you could handle challenging situations individually, but also as a team of diverse leaders. Focusing on how to work together as a team in diversity settings (i.e. working out agreements, discussing experiences/ success stories between trainers, etc.) by doing a SWOT analysis, doesn't only provide new insights and encourages a team's problem-solving strategies, it also fosters team responsibility and collaboration. Using a team's resources wisely, will leverage productivity and facilitate innovation.

Timing:

60+ minutes

You need:

4 or more people of your team, whiteboard and markers, worksheet SWOT analysis

Instructions

1. Ask your team members if they are interested in dedicating their time to doing a SWOT analysis together. The aim is to work out common agreements and guidelines of how your team can successfully work together in diversity training settings.

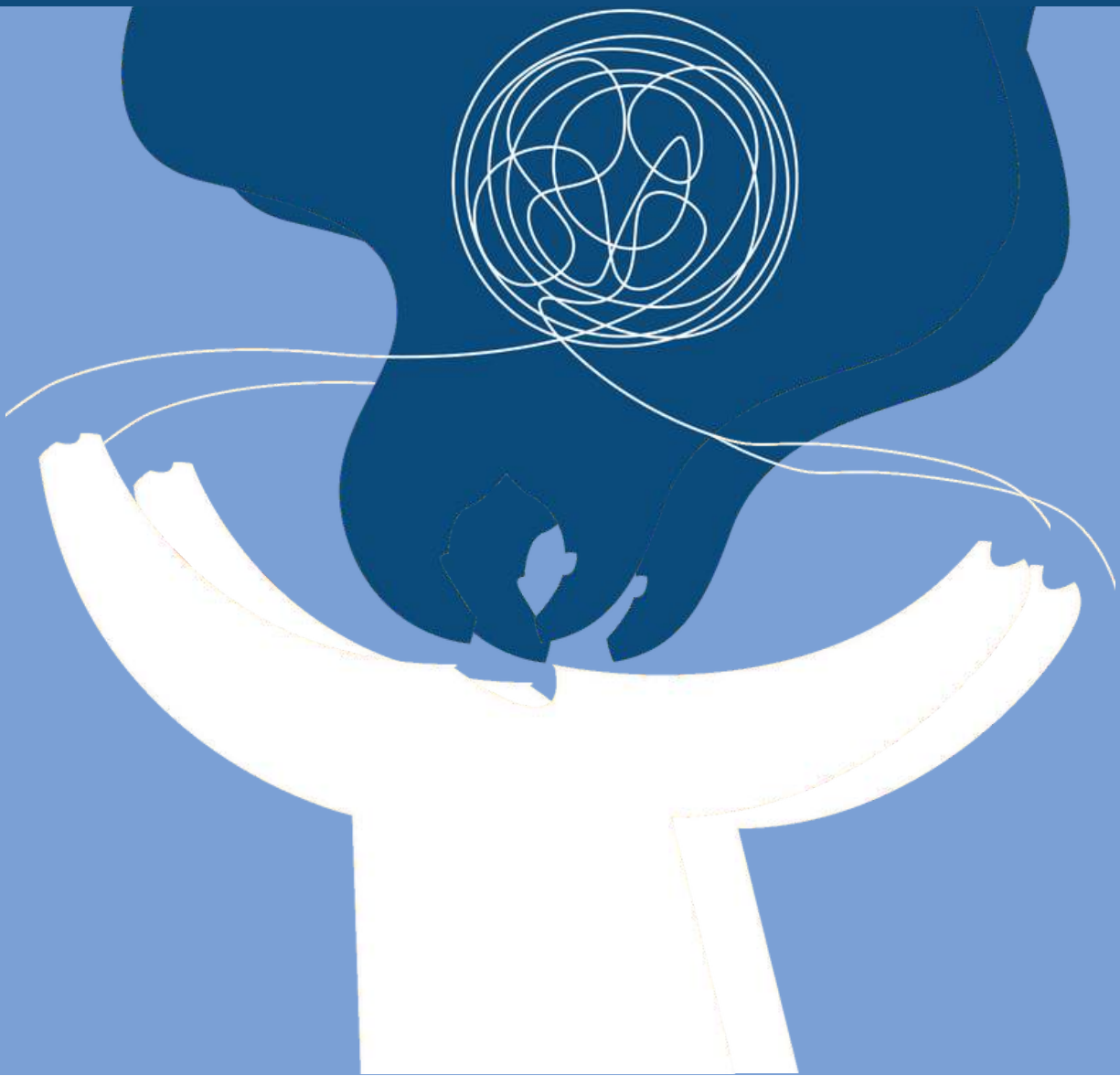
2. Prepare a sufficient number of copies of the worksheet SWOT analysis. Gather with your colleagues. Introduce them to the topic of discussion and briefly explain the SWOT analysis technique. Ensure to create a safe environment, in which your colleagues feel comfortable to speak openly. You may want to set some ground rules first. Then, Explain to your colleagues why you have initiated the discussion and what you are aiming for and highlight the added value this exercise will have for you as a team. This way, you are motivating your colleagues to actively participate and make it a common project.

3. Go through the worksheet together. Whenever you identify a strength, weakness, opportunity or threat, note it down. Try to reach a common understanding of what diversity leadership can mean to you as a team.

4. Together you are developing guidelines that you think are relevant for you as a team and would help you in better dealing with critical training situations. Together you brainstorm solutions, pointing out new ways of dealing with a situation. Take your time to analyse each idea and evaluate together, which one is most likely to be successful. Order your collected options and think of unexpected changes or potential risks. Rank the guidelines / solutions according to their feasibility and choose the ones that seem most durable.

5. Work on a step-by-step plan to implement your agreements.

INSPIRING TRAINERS TO EMBRACE DIVERSITY LEADERSHIP IN THEIR PRACTICE



This part of the manual provides practical reflections and examples of Approach project's partners, which are training providers, representing diverse contexts (United Kingdom, Netherlands, Austria and Bulgaria). It aims at encouraging other trainers to apply the diversity leadership principles in their work.

Your Ideas Matter: The power of diversity leadership principles

Your Ideas Matter

For four years, the team of trainers of Your Ideas Matter (Bulgaria) was engaged in the delivery of international capacity building modules for adults, engaged as volunteers, experts and leaders of patients' organisations. These programmes were conducted under the auspices of the European Patient Forum. **The groups of learners were diverse on several levels:**

They came from different countries in Europe, representing different socio-cultural traditions.

They had different levels of expertise and experiences.

The represented age groups ranged from 21 to 60+.

The majority of learners were patients themselves, representing different life-changing conditions.

The trainers' task was to implement long-term learning experiences, involving a combination of face-to-face training activities and online individual and group coaching / mentoring sessions. It was a challenging task for a team, who represented a homogenous group of trainers and coaches. Searching for the best approach, it was agreed to follow and apply a set of basic principles. At that point we did not know that these principles were aligned to the principles of a diversity leadership mindset.

The list of principles with some examples of their application can be summarised as follows:

HUMBLENESS

Trainers become trainers as a result of a long professional development journey. While this is a positive and logical precondition, it also might pose the risk for a trainer to develop a certain degree or position of being "above" the learner. In the preparation for our work, we acknowledged this risk and adopted two main measures: 1. Self-observation for an attitude from the position of "I am superior" during training and coaching sessions. 2. Peer observation during planned activities and peer discussions during regular team meetings with mutual feedback.

VULNERABILITY

Trainers sometimes tend to demonstrate that they know everything and are prepared for anything. Our learners inspired us that it is okay to demonstrate vulnerability. When you demonstrate vulnerability, you open space for authenticity, which is one of the key ingredients to build trust between you and your learners. It can be a part of our introductory sessions, first minutes of a training or coaching session, or on an ongoing basis.

POSITIVE AFFIRMATION

Throughout the whole learning journey, we emphasised on learners' unique contributions to the process.

We can also name this approach as “the BRAVO principle”. Whenever you have an opportunity to provide positive feedback to learners and to encourage them to be positive about their achievements, do it and it will transcend the whole experience to a new level.

ACCEPT LEARNER'S CHOICE

As coaches we are trained that the client is shaping the agenda of coaching sessions and that it is the clients who choose what direction to take. Still, in our first months delivering above-mentioned programmes, we had great challenges and dilemmas, what to do, when learners were not attending the planned training and coaching sessions. Eventually, we realised that the diversity/ individuality our learners represented was actually influencing their choice of learning process and this was the reality, which we needed to accept to maintain high quality of our work. For some learners attending a webinar was enough to find inspiration and trigger positive action. For others the main value was linked to attending individual coaching sessions.

ACCEPT LEARNER’S ACHIEVEMENTS

As trainers and coaches, we were highly motivated to help our learners excel in their personal and professional development. While this might seem a positive starting point, in our case it caused significant challenges during our first training and coaching activities. We fell into the trap of self-criticism because our learners were not reaching the targets at the speed we thought was the “best for them”. When you accept the diversity in achieving progress of learners not as a weakness, but as an opportunity to see the individualised impact of planned training activities, you will acquire the right balance between flexibility and keeping up with the learning objectives. You will also feel calmer and in the flow of your contribution to their desired personal and professional growth.

BEST: The power of asking the right questions for setting the training design

BEST

BEST Institut für berufsbezogene Weiterbildung und Personaltraining GmbH is a private institute located in Vienna / Austria with longstanding experience in offering and designing tailor-made educational / training programmes for (young) adult learners on national and international level. Focusing on improving the career prospects and fostering the social integration of adult learners as well as empowering them to become their own agents of change, BEST is dedicated to continuously developing further its programmes and concept designs. All our training programmes are guided by the principle of placing participants' needs and competencies at the centre. Talking about the needs of adult learners goes hand in hand with talking about learners' diversity. The variety of differences among our learners is vast – ranging from diverse educational and socio-cultural backgrounds, personal life stories to diversity in character traits or motivation, interests and learning preferences.

We know from experience that diversity can have positive or negative effects on group dynamics: it can either propel a group to use its richness of experiences and resources to reach a common goal or in the worst case, the differences among individuals become insurmountable, disrupting and eventually dissolving the group.

Handling the diversity of learners is a tricky task for trainers. They ought to anticipate conflicts or critical situations, ideally knowing when to seize the right moment, in which a conflict situation can serve as a turning point to promote individual and group development. Trainers therefore need to be equipped with specific knowledge to be able to guide their learners responsibly.

Our years of experience from practice has informed us that a particular mindset is required to make group collaboration work in an effective manner. Reaching momentum as a diverse leader, however, requires practice and awareness of how to handle conflicts so that they do not reverberate in the group. In order for trainers to leverage the potential of differences of their learners we have identified certain qualities that are incorporated in the proposed diversity leadership mindset of this manual.

The following questions and answers summarise our trainers' experiences and shall serve as practical guidelines and recommendations of how trainers can adopt a diversity leadership workstyle:

What are your experiences with managing diversity in your educational setting/ organisation? How do you prepare for working with a new group of learners?



#1 You firstly have to be aware of the framework and context you are operating in. Think about your target group, who are they, why are they participating in the training programme, what's their story? This will give you a clearer impression of who your prospective learners are and it will allow you to connect to their potential needs more easily.

#2 We therefore recommend that you learn about the peculiarities and needs of your target group in advance. This includes researching details about your learners' age, (educational) biography, learning motives and preferences, their aims and interests. Usually, learners provide this information before entering educational programmes (e.g. during assessment).

#3 You could therefore ask programme managers and other personnel responsible for the selection of learners, if they can provide you with any information that would support you in addressing the needs of your future learners.

Whether you are new to the field or already experienced, it is always a good idea to exchange your thoughts with and ask experienced colleagues for advice.

What aspects are important to consider when teaching diverse groups of adult learners?



In order for trainers to be able to create a culture of diversity leadership in the classroom, trainers have to firstly be aware that diversity starts with themselves. This is to say that diverse trainers acknowledge that – despite best intentions – they might have unconscious biases towards learners and that these require deconstruction. Otherwise, stereotypes about others might prevail and this might narrow trainers' perspective, perhaps resulting in unfair decision-making.

So as you can see, reflecting on one's own role as a trainer, the personal perception and interpretation of learners' behaviour is therefore a fundamental practice of diverse leaders, as it favours an increase in trainers' self-awareness, allowing them to put in place an environment of fairness and respect. In this sense, trainers should stay open-minded, perhaps even welcoming different points of view. And this will also support them in developing authentic understanding/ empathy, being cognizant that each learner has unique needs and that each group is different.

Being able to see the positive nature of learners' diversity also means to wisely use the diversity of resources one finds in a group. That corresponds to our overall teaching and working approach: each learner has individual competencies and it is diverse leaders' responsibility to acknowledge and nurture them.

What can trainers do to strengthen the feeling of group membership at the beginning of training with a new group of learners and to this end develop preventive conflict resolution strategies?



Experience has shown that whenever trainers meet a group for the first time, they should focus on the common goal that unifies the group. Moreover, communicating this commonality clearly to the group will set the scene for establishing a sense of belonging among learners.

Essentially, it is all about highlighting the value of what is, highlighting the value and opportunity this training / education may have for them individually and as a group. Try putting yourself in your learners' shoes. What would motivate you to work together with people you barely know? Building up a shared aspiration and understanding of how you want to work together as a group is always a positive action trainers can take when they meet their group of learners for the first time.

There are different ways of how to do this:

✔You may want to establish a set of group rules at the beginning of training. Inspire your learners to think about ways of how you want to work together, talk about what is (un-)acceptable for everyone in the group.
✔You can do a brainstorming activity or implement an open group discussion.
✔Stay curious, ask them questions that will deepen your understanding of their needs.
✔Encourage your learners to exchange their ideas.
✔Change your perspective and put on "systemic glasses" that will allow you to better understand where your learners are coming from and what is important to them.
✔If you (or your learners) are finding it difficult to understand what a group member is trying to convey, rephrase their contributions or offer/ work with images or role models to better exemplify learners' point of view.

Referring to an established set of group rules will immensely help, when critical training situations arise. This is because they were elaborated and recognised by the group. Group rules thus call upon the self-responsibility of all learners. Self-responsibility is a key word that you should point out to learners on a regular basis. The success of the course is to a large degree dependent on the self-responsibility and effort each learner is willing to contribute. Highlight to them the purpose / responsibility of your own role and the purpose / responsibility of their own role.



How can trainers manage to stay resilient in challenging situations?

While some trainers might naturally be more resilient than others, it is still a skill that can be trained and developed. But how to do this? There are different ways of increasing your resilience and we would like to suggest the following:

Resilient people are able to regulate their emotions more easily. Being in control emotionally, provides us with a sense of self-empowerment and a feeling of being in control over our lives. So resilience is connected to individual wellbeing, both mentally and physically.

To build up your resilience, you could start investing in your own growth, consciously and intentionally. Invest in the things that you enjoy doing, the things that bring you pleasure. This doesn't necessarily have to be bound to your professional development, but it can be something that you enjoy doing in your leisure time and that is nurturing your equilibrium (e.g. sports or cultural activities, community activities, voluntary work, talking to friends or family, reading a book or trying out a new recipe etc.).

The approach to take here would be that you focus on the added value that pursuing these activities has on your personal growth. Ask yourself in which ways you can learn to grow, when dedicating your time to the things you enjoy? What can you take with you that nurtures your personal development? Looking after and investing in oneself has to do with self-care and focusing on your own personal growth.

Resilience also means to encourage your learners to break through obstacles, or to accept feelings of uncertainty/ ambiguity whenever they arise. In this respect it is sometimes helpful to tell learners a personal example of how you yourself managed to cope with uncertainty/ ambiguity in your life and what strategies you have found particularly helpful in such situations. As a trainer, you are also a role model for your learners.

Therefore, you are setting an example by encouraging them to invest in things that recharge their batteries rather than lingering on things that won't bring you any further. And sometimes it is helpful to just simply address learners in an optimistic way, offering them emotional support by communicating that they can get through something, that things will be okay.

International School of Entrepreneurship: Training the Trainers

International School of Entrepreneurship
FROM SOURCE TO SUCCESS

The International School of Entrepreneurship is based in the Netherlands. We support trainers, coaches and entrepreneurs to increase their impact. By implementing the multilevel approach in the practice of their profession they bring transformative depth into their training, workshops and coaching sessions. As the multi-layered approach is about connecting to the inner individual, the group and collective around us, we all together contribute to a better world where everybody can tap into their full potential.

We worked with a team of 27 independent coaches that worked together for a big tender of the French government. It is a network organisation with no clear hierarchical structure. They are organised in circles of coaches that share a certain responsibility like communication or skill development.

Due to the COVID pandemic they had been working remotely for almost 18 months. Now they wanted to come together and reconnect. At the same time, they wanted to look at what it was that connected them. Finally, they also wanted to know what was needed to move into the future together.

PREPARATION

Preparing this one-day training, we talked to a few of the coaches to find out what their expectations were and what they saw as the issues that should be addressed. We listened not only with our ears, but also used our bodies to register the information. This way we could sense when the coach was talking about a topic that really mattered or when it was something that was of less importance. We also 'knew', using the intelligence of our intuition, when to dig deeper and ask questions, or when to let go.

We prepared the training in broad outline, leaving room for what would emerge during the day. So, we decided what to do first and also second. Then we had a few options and work forms that we could use during the day.

THE TRAINING

#1

To have the coaches (re)connect on the subconscious undercurrent and even on the source layer, we asked the group to walk in the room and sense. We invited them to first focus on themselves and later connect with the others. We then asked them to choose a partner and look each other in the eyes and breath three times. Then they would say what they had missed about the other person. They moved on to the next person and did the same. Using the breathing and looking into each other's eyes really created a deep connection, which also provided them with a sense of safety, which was beneficial for a positive progression of the day.

#2

Then we asked them to create couples. They had to show each other with a bodily expression why they were so excited to be with the team again. First, they showed this to each other and then they had to come up with a joint body movement that would express their common excitement. Then we asked them to match up with another couple and show the other couple their body movement. Again, we asked them to create a joint movement that expressed their joy and excitement about meeting. We asked them to find another group of four and then another group of 8, until the whole group was together and they had created one common movement. They moved like one organism. This created much connection and bonding at a very deep level.

#3

Next, we decided to have them create a timeline of their team. They put flip charts on the floor and wrote the start date on one end and today's date on the other end. We invited them to walk along this timeline and sense their bodies. As soon as they would sense a movement in their bodies, they would write down the event, milestone, or remarkable happening on the timeline. Using their bodies they connected with the subconscious undercurrent to then use this information to create important markers on the timeline of their team. Slowly but surely the history of the team emerged on the timeline. Automatically they started talking about the different spots on the timeline and what people had put on the line. We followed this flow and asked them to move over the timeline and explain to each other what had happened and why it was important to put it on the line. This created a curiosity and dialogue in the surface current that was very vivid and lively.

#4

Then we asked them to create couples. They had to show each other with a bodily expression why they were so excited to be with the team again. First, they showed this to each other and then they had to come up with a joint body movement that would express their common excitement. Then we asked them to match up with another couple and show the other couple their body movement.

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#6

Then, we asked them to stand beside the timeline at the point that they got involved in the team. This way a systemic order in the subconscious undercurrent was shown and experienced. Again, this created curiosity towards the small team that started this whole journey. It also created gratitude and respect from the new team members to the older ones. You could sense that it really connected them on all the layers from the multi-layered approach.

Now that we had looked at the past and had used it as a way to connect the coaches, it was time to move on to the present. What were they facing right now?

We decided to use a business constellation as a method to explore the dynamics in the subconscious undercurrent and find out what entanglements, hidden blockages and possible show stoppers were there.

#1

In the business constellation we asked different participants to represent a certain stakeholder. As soon as they represented a stakeholder, they would follow their feet and find a position in the room. This way we created a living image of the most important stakeholders. The special thing about business constellations is that the representatives get information from the subconscious undercurrent. This way they provided us with a lot of information about the dynamics, relationships, tensions, and possible ways to solve them. It didn't become a role play, but instead, the representatives tuned into their bodies and their senses. We facilitated this by inviting them to follow their feet and move. By asking questions about how they related to the other participants and what they were sensing, we prevented them from thinking about the situation and talking about what they thought was happening or should be done. Instead, they were able to tune into the subconscious undercurrent and share the information that they picked up and sensed.

#2

After the break, we split up the group into groups of 5. This time we worked on the surface current and at the same time asked them to reflect on what had happened in the morning and therefore activating their connection with the deeper layers. They had to come up with 3 important issues that they needed to deal with, if they wanted to be able to move smoothly into the future. Each group presented their 3 issues that they thought the team should work on. This was a clear surface current activity where people explained what they meant and others asked questions.

#3

Then we asked the group to decide about what issue they would like to work on this afternoon. We knew that in this kind of new organisation with no hierarchy, decision making can be hard. One team had also put decision making as one of the three issues on their list. So we expected that this would lead to some interesting dynamics. And it did indeed.

#4

The group talked for one hour about what issue to select. In the surface current we saw many things happening. People suggested a way to make a decision but then no one followed. Another suggestion, some arguments, a question, and then no action. They asked us to make a decision, because it didn't matter. All issues were important and they trusted the process that whatever was necessary would happen. Again, in the surface current, we could have easily taken a decision, but we sensed in the deeper layers that this wouldn't help them, so we said no. An elder coach, being close to the founding coach, said that she wanted to make a decision, but that she thought it would not be good for the group, if she did. So again, there was no decision.

#5

Someone even started to take out her knitwear and started knitting. This annoyed some people and we were also surprised by it. In the surface current, this is behaviour that is not constructive and we could have asked her to participate and put away her knitwear. Instead, we saw this as a signal from the subconscious undercurrent which made her do this. So we pointed out that this coach apparently was quite sensitive to the signals from the undercurrent and the team could use her behaviour as an indicator of how the team as a whole was doing. In this case she showed that the team had to be aware that in the subconscious undercurrent there was something stuck and that it wouldn't help to keep talking about the problem in the surface current.

#6

During this process, we could sense that in the subconscious undercurrent there was a strong force keeping them from taking a decision. It was as if there was some rubber band connected to a point where you don't take decisions. As soon as people moved too far away from this point and started to come to a decision, it pulled everyone back to the point of not taking a decision.

#7 After an hour and sensing this strong force of keeping the team from taking a decision, we decided to do a business constellation about this force and what would be needed to be able to make decisions as a team. The constellation revealed that there was something in the history of the founder of this team that caused him to not step in as a leader when necessary. At the same time the constellation showed that the whole team needed some support, some backup, to allow them to make decisions more easily.

Although, it wasn't very clear in the surface current, what kind of support or backup was needed, nor what the founder had to do tostep in as a leader, the team sensed in the deeper layers that something had shifted. They had sensed the movement and something had moved within each one of them and in the group as a whole. #8

#9 We finished the training with a meditation for everyone to reconnect with him- or herself and to integrate all the flux that was created during the day. This helped them to align the different layers within themselves.

AFTER THE TRAINING

A week after the training we contacted our contact person and asked what the training had set in motion. She replied that it had made their diversity and uniqueness more explicit and visible. The training had reinforced the link to their DNA. Besides, they were able to explore the new leadership style that they needed as a team. The same new leadership that they were bringing to their clients and even to the world.

European Learning Network

At European Learning Network Ltd (ELN) – a London / UK based organisation focusing on youth & adult education and training solutions – diversity leadership is embedded in the philosophy and vision of the company. Set up as an organisation on the premise that “future cities will be technology driven and companies need to embark on digitisation”, ELN’s motto is based on the concept of 3Es: to EMBRACE diversity, ENHANCE knowledge and EMPOWER people.

ELN’s vision and mission is to "develop enterprise culture through creativity and innovation". It helps both the staff and the learners acquire basic skills and competencies for personal development, future employment and active Global Citizenship through hands-on innovative solutions. ELN's philosophy is that “Every Learner Matters”, irrespective of gender, age or socio-economic circumstances. This philosophy guides the trainers, teachers, coaches and mentors in their daily delivery of innovative, educational and life skills programmes.

The organisation actively takes part in European Union programmes, such as Erasmus Plus, where it sends its staff and learners on various trainings that build communication skills, and are inclusive on all levels based on gender, age and socio-economic backgrounds. During these programmes - be it local, regional or European levels - ELN actively engages the participants in increasing their self-esteem while thinking about their own personal journeys. These strong transferable life skills allow the learners to embark on meaningful personal journeys and perhaps they might even consider becoming future mentors and trainers themselves or starting their own (social) enterprises, alleviating some of the issues related to unemployment in London and other EU cities.

Also, together with our associated organisations, we hope to bring an entrepreneurial approach to the personal journeys of disaffected and marginalised people integrating them into the society where they embrace diversity, enhance knowledge and empower people.

For example, in the programme Social Inclusion Through Education (SITE) the learners were taken on a journey to build their stories via self-improvement and teamwork, sharing their learning through presentations both online and offline. Focused on gender equality, SITE allowed single and migrant mothers to develop their self-confidence, resume-building and pitching ability to re-enter the job market over a period of six months. The programme was 100% successful and all mothers either found a job or developed their own social enterprises to support other mothers within their local communities in London. Thus, in a small way, ELN empowered marginalised women to become leaders within their own communities while building their self-esteem.

Across the UK there are many other examples where diversity leadership is embedded within the company policies and organisations actively pursue this concept. For example, Imperial College, London started a diversity leadership programme. Under this programme, called “ILead”, the university addresses under-representation within its academic staff of BME (black, ethnic and minority) people. The programme is delivered by the Professional Support Services at the university and accredited by the Institute of Leadership and Management. Key aims are assessing capabilities and strengths for promotion opportunities, identifying potential barriers to progression, developing strategies to manage careers and exploring strategies for succeeding as a minority in a majority culture.

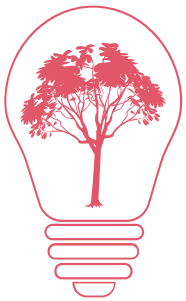
The programme includes 4 modules including a 2-day residential workshop, a half day briefing for participants, a series of coaching sessions and a business-critical project.

EMBEDDING DIVERSITY LEADERSHIP IN ADULT EDUCATION



In this chapter, we invite you to explore how you can embed the diversity leadership approach in training diverse groups of adults. We will provide you with practical examples and activities that you can implement to nurture a positive learning environment, use learners' diversity as an asset and increase your diversity leadership competencies.

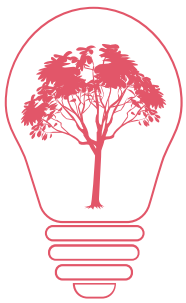
Connecting with the source layer through Sedona method



The basic idea of the Sedona method is to realise that you are not your thoughts, emotions, nor body. You are much more than that. So much more! You are the infinite, the whole, the universe. Your ego, however, thinks that this is who you are and will do everything to keep controlling.

Another premise of this method is that when we experience something negative, we tend to want for it to go away. We are going to fight it, push it away or hide it. Whatever we do, it will not go away, since we are focusing on it. You can't fight something that is not there. So, if you want to fight it or push it away, it needs to be there. Jung already said, "What you resist, persists". It will even grow bigger.

Knowing that you are much more than your thoughts, emotions, and body, it is just a decision to let go of limiting or negative thoughts, emotions, or bodily experiences. It is not something you ARE, but something you HAVE. Everything you have you can release.



One way of releasing is going through the following four steps:

01

Can you allow it to be?

The first step invites you to let go of the resistance. Can you just experience that, what is? Without wanting it to go away?

If you can't, can you then allow the resistance? This is also just something you have.

You don't have to accept it, embrace it, or like it. Just experience it.

02

Could you let go?

With this question you ask yourself if you are able to let go of it. From this larger consciousness that you are, could you let go of the emotion, thought or bodily experience? It is like a pen in your hand. You are not the pen. So could you let go of the pen?

03

Would you let go?

This step invites you to deliberately take the decision to let go. Do you want it?

Consider if what you are holding onto is making you happy? Is it something you like, or is it something that is bothering you? Then ask yourself if you would let go of.

04

When?

Now you decide when you let go. Of course, you can wait another week, month, or year, or for the right time. The invitation is to choose to let go of it NOW. It is your decision, so whenever you want.

Then, you observe what you sense now. Often a new sensation arises and you just follow the same four steps to release this sensation, thought, or emotion.

There are a few more ways of releasing with the Sedona method. We recommend you find a way that suits you. You might want to ask a professional to guide you through the first rounds of releasing.

Exploring systems

There are two ways to explore the systems in the subconscious undercurrent of your training context that are affecting the situation you are in.

1 Explore the systems with the learners

If a difficult situation arises during the training in which you sense that it is beyond the individual level, you might want to do a systemic intermezzo for the learners to be able to feel safe again.

✔Ask all the learners (the ones involved in the conflict or difficult situation and the ones that weren't involved) to focus on themselves. First, ask them to write down what the situation triggered within themselves. What emotions do they experience? How do their bodies react? What thoughts are coming up? Tell them that everything is okay. Everything that they experience is theirs and is totally okay.

✔Now, ask them to imagine that they are connected with many different systems (country, gender, family, culture, school, work, friends, sports, religion, etc.). Ask them to do a drawing in which they draw themselves in relation to all those systems. So they draw themselves on the piece of paper and all the systems that they are connected to. Then they draw the connection between themselves and the systems. There are no rules, they can draw this in any way they want.

✔Then, ask them to take notes of all that was triggered within themselves and the drawing of all the systems.

Ask them to write the notes in the drawing in a way that it shows the relationship of the thoughts, emotions, body sensations with the different systems. For example, the thought "This is a stupid guy" could be connected to mother or to the group of friends they are part of. The tension in the throat can be connected to religion. They don't have to understand, but deeply inside they will know with what systems the emotions, sensations and thoughts are connected.

✔Finally, ask them to look at the drawing with the systems and the notes of all the thoughts, emotions and sensations. Let them connect with this drawing and then look at the difficult situation or conflict again. What are they sensing now? When they look at the learners involved in the conflict, you might want to ask them to imagine how they too are connected to all kinds of systems.

2 Explore the systems yourself before or after the training

When you have had a difficult situation in training or you are expecting a difficult situation to arise during a training, you can do the following to explore the systems that are involved.

✔Take a few sheets of paper and write your own name on one of them. This is the so-called floor marker for yourself. Also create a floor marker for the conflict or difficult situation. Just write "conflict" on a sheet of paper. You don't have to describe the conflict. Then create one floor marker for every person involved in the conflict (if there are more than 4 people involved, you might want to select the 2 that have the greatest influence) by writing their names each on a sheet of paper. Create a floor marker on which you write "the systems he / she is connected to in this conflict" for every learner involved in the conflict. Finally, create a floor marker with "The root cause of this conflict" written on it.

✔Now, imagine every floor marker is a person that you are going to place in the room. Take a floor marker and walk around in the room and put it down where you sense that it should be. Also be aware of the direction the person would be looking, if there would be a person standing on the floor marker. This way, you place all the floor markers. Take your time to do this. Observe what information this process is already giving to you.

✔Then step on your own floor marker, facing in the direction you have put it, and observe how it is in this position. What do you sense? What thoughts come up? What emotions? How do you relate to the conflict, to the learners involved, to their systems, and to the root cause of the conflict? Again, take your time to sense. The information can be very blunt and clear, but also very subtle and soft. Slow down to be able to register it all.

✔Now, you can explore some of the other positions by stepping on the different floor markers. This way you can look at the situation from different perspectives. You will also get a sensation of how the different elements are involved and how they feel. You can also check out the root cause of the conflict by stepping on it. Just be curious and open to the information that comes to you.

✔Make sure that you clearly step off of one floor marker before you step on another one. You might even take some time to let go of the energy. We advise you to end on your own floor marker to fully step into your own energy again.

✔When you are finished, you thank all the floor markers and consciously put them away and end this constellation.

These steps are based on the method of family and business constellations, developed by Bert Hellinger in the 1980's (Hellinger, 1999). It is a powerful way to tap into the subconscious undercurrent and make the information more conscious.

Asking systemic questions

A way to include the subconscious undercurrent in dealing with a diversity conflict, you can ask systemic questions (Bakker, 2019). They invoke the systemic knowledge inside the others and without understanding the systemic theory, people are able to tap into the systemic wisdom inside themselves.

The Systemic Leadership Fan provides a number of questions divided into categories (Stam et al., 2019). The following questions are taken from that fan and are meant to inspire you to ask questions that dive deeper.

✔What is the price of including someone again?
When excluding someone, what instead wants to come in?
✔ How much courage does it take to exclude someone?
✔ When two people have a conflict and one person is looking at the other; whom or what else does he see?
✔Are the reactions of the people having a conflict suitable for the context, or do they seem to come from another context?
✔On behalf of whom are they talking?
✔Which superpowers are battling here?
✔If these people would not be in conflict, where would the conflict be seen instead?
✔For how many people does the judgement speak? 10, 1,000, 1 million or more?
✔When or where was the seed for this crisis sown?
✔What news is this crisis trying to create room for?
✔For what is the crisis not big enough?
✔What does the crisis try to say is over?
✔What pattern does the crisis try to disrupt?

✔What identity must be given up to be diverse?

✔How can space be created for those that are not naturally included?

✔Can you also love the fate / background of those that you need to be diverse?

✔What of yourself do you need to leave at home to allow for more diversity?

We invite you to use these questions firstly for reflecting on the situation. They help you to take a more systemic look at what is happening. You might also want to use some of the questions when working with the learners to invite them too to look at a conflict from a more systemic perspective.

Creating connection in the group

Before you start working on the real content of a training, you could invite the learners to first connect with each other on a deeper level. There are several ways to do that.

A MEDITATION

Ask everyone to sit comfortably and close their eyes. Then guide them to first focus on themselves, relax their bodies, slow down and become aware of their bodies. Ask them to focus on their feet, the connection with the floor and with the earth, then their legs, their bottom, and so on...all the way to the top of their heads.

Every time they breathe out they can relax a bit more. You might even ask them to tense the muscles in a certain part of the body and then to release them again. This way they become really aware of their bodies.

Then you can ask them, still with their eyes closed, to connect with the group and feel the other people. They can imagine a white cord or circle connecting all of them in a comfortable way. Then you can ask them to feel gratitude towards the others for being part of their learning process. This might be a comfortable way of support, but also in a more challenging way by providing a mirror for themselves.

WALK AROUND

Ask the learners to walk around and first be aware of themselves. Let them connect with their bodies, ask them to feel every step, feel their breathing. You can invite them to walk faster, and slower, and even more slowly or even faster. Ask them, while still walking around, to connect with the others by looking at them.

Then ask them to choose someone and stand opposite of this person. Ask them to look into each other's eyes and take 3 breaths. This might be very uncomfortable but encourage them to do this in silence and just notice what is happening. Ask them to move again and to choose someone else. You can do this a few times. Then ask them for a reflection.

ONE SYSTEM ORGANISM

Ask the learners to form a circle. Ask them to hold hands. You also join the circle. Explain that you are going to experiment with communicating as one organism, one body. You do this by squeezing the hand of the person to your left, after you have felt a squeeze in your right hand.
Now you start by squeezing the person to your left. In a while you will feel a squeeze in your right hand and you squeeze the person to your left again.
What will usually happen is that the squeeze will travel faster and faster until it is almost instant. This is when everyone is really connected.

Balancing the dominant archetypes

When dealing with a diversity conflict situation, besides the behaviour you notice in the surface current, there is also a set of dominant archetypes at play in the subconscious undercurrent. The following steps can be helpful to reflect on the conflict situation afterwards to recognize the archetypal patterns that were active. If you use this reflection more often, you'll recognize the patterns more easily during conflict situations and will be able to change your intervention based on this knowledge.

Basically, all our archetypes are neutral. This counts for the ones that seem positive, like the Sage, the Magician, and the Nurse for example. But also, for the ones that seem negative at first sight, like the Judge, the Saboteur, or the Thief. Every archetype has a light and a shadow sight. Besides this, archetypes also work in pairs or even groups that (re)balance their activities, like the Warrior and the Nurse, or the Boy and the Father.

To neutralise a conflict situation, it is helpful to notice what the dominant energy or atmosphere is and find a way to rebalance it. You can use the following steps to do so.

#1 **Connect to the dominant energy in this situation by using your sixth senses to notice all the different voices that you hear inside.** What are they telling you? Stand still for a moment and sense, hear, see, feel and taste with your whole body what is going on inside of you. These are the dominant archetypes for this situation.

#2 **If you would have to name this or these dominant archetypes, what would it be?** Make a list of them. This could be a historical role, like father, mother or warrior, a thing, a place, a life experience, like birth or death.



For example, you could say that there is a lot of Warrior energy, or there is a Soldier energy, or maybe more of a Joker or angry Father energy. Note that everything is okay, there is no right or wrong. These are your inner archetypes and you are the only one entitled to name them.

#3 **Write down what characteristics these archetypes have for you, add these to the archetypes on your list.**

#4 **Now, determine what energy or characteristics you are missing.** What is needed to balance the atmosphere that has been created?

#5 **See if these characteristics are the light side of the ones on your list already,** or that you have to connect to their counterparts. Which ones are those?

#6 **Connect to those missing counterparts** and again sense with your whole body what these archetypes are telling you about the situation, about your own behaviour and about the learners.

#7 **Put into words,** images, actions or next steps what you want to do differently next time.

If you repeat these steps more often after different situations, you will discover your patterns that are active in the subconscious layer.



Your can use the sample list of archetypes below as a map of possible energies being in place during diversity conflicts.

Archetype	Some of acrchetype's characteristics
Beggar	• begs for attention, love, authority and / or material objects • refers to modesty and humility • stimulates your self-empowerment, but can also be the cause of your constant dependency of others

Archetype	Some of archetype's characteristics
Bully	• bullies not only other people, but also your dreams/wishes etc. • masks your inner Coward • if you recognize the Bully, ask yourself 'What are you afraid of?'
Child	• our innocent, spontaneous, pure self • remains young in body, mind and spirit • looks at the world with an open and curious mind • holds memories (traumas) of your childhood
Father	• responsible • nurtures independence • protects his family • wants to be in control
Hero / Heroine	• calls for adventure • wants / dares to take risks • contributes to personal growth • letting go of certainties
Jester / Joker	• knows how to share profound messages through humour • puts things / situations in perspective • holds up a mirror • risks of not being taken seriously
Lover	• shows great passion and devotion to another or to something • brings (or has) sensuality • understands the longings of others on the emotional and physical level • risks of losing him/herself in longing for the other

Archetype	Some of archetype's characteristics
Master / Teacher	• craftsman • inspires others, mostly his / her pupils and students • stimulates growth and development • be aware of perfectionism
Mother	• stands for unconditional love • taking care • forgiveness & consolation • gives birth to new life
Rebel	• key component to human growth and development • stands up against injustice • fights out of idealism or against the traditional order • is convinced of a different (better?) truth
Saboteur	• also called the inner Critic • helps you to recognize when you undermine yourself or others • the fears and warnings of the saboteur are all about low self-esteem • blocks your own empowerment and success
Servant	• gets energy of serving others voluntarily • calls us to make ourselves available to others or the whole community • being in serve of others, instead of focusing on ourselves, stimulates modesty and humility • makes us aware when we serve or should serve our highest potential

Archetype	Some of archetype's characteristics
Victim	• alerts you when you are in danger of being victimised • avoids that you victimise others • might paralyse you and stimulate self-pity
Wanderer	• independency & adventure • trusts his intuition and coincidence • is in search for wisdom and truth wherever that might be • watch out for becoming a lost soul being on an aimless journey
Warrior	• defends and stands up for what is really important for you • is courage and your right arm • is fierce and fearless • represents physical strength

Peer consultation

Peer consulting sessions (Palmer and Blake, 2018) facilitate knowledge and experience exchange across organisational boundaries. Exchanging ideas and learning from each other contributes to the development of a diversity leadership culture on organisational level. To implement a peer consultation, a group of colleagues gathers to discuss and develop a solution to a question or an issue one member of the group is experiencing.

In this sense, the diversity leadership work style is being amplified and adapted to the context of working and exchanging expertise in a team of adult trainers. This way, you are giving rise to the diversity leadership approach on yet another level, actively seeking not only a change in perspective – which will give you new ideas and insights – but also building up meaningful relationships with your colleagues and being mutually supportive. This type of interrelated exchange with your colleagues is motivating and helps to discard feelings of anxiety or stress that are caused by critical situations.

#1 The benefits of peer consultations are:

✔easy to implement (without external consultants)
✔empowers and activates growth on individual and team level
✔provides space for reflection on one's own professional practice
✔provides space for critical feedback from colleagues in a non-judgemental area

Peer consultation can therefore serve as a key dynamic in strengthening one's capacity for resilience. Especially when working with diverse learners it is recommended to exchange opinions with other professionals working in the field and to use their collective intelligence.

#2 A peer consultation takes around an hour and basically consists of three different roles:

✔advice seeker (= presents the case / problem situation)
✔interviewer / facilitator (= moderates the session)
✔consultants (= the group members providing advice / feedback)

Before organising a peer consultation, share your idea with your colleagues. Highlight the added value of exchanging your expertise and ask them whether they would be interested in participating. Then, collect the names of those who would like to present a case and organise a date and location.

We have identified six phases that you can follow as guidelines for peer consultation.

#1 Clarification of tasks (5-10 minutes)

At the beginning of the meeting, determine the roles (i.e. choose the facilitator, etc.). Next, the advice seeker spontaneously explains his / her situation to the facilitator:

✔What is the (background) of the situation?
✔Who are the people involved?
✔What is the specific problem / How is this situation influencing my teaching?
✔How did I respond / react to the problem?
✔How does it make me feel?

Then, explain the result that is envisioned by doing the peer consultation.

#2 Comprehension questions (5 minutes)

The consultants can now ask comprehension questions with the advice seeker answering. Solutions, however, are not yet discussed. The facilitator moderates.

#3 Consultation (15-20 minutes)

Now, the consultants, including the facilitator, share their ideas, impressions and hypotheses about the case. The advice seeker only listens and takes notes. The facilitator and the group as a whole should ensure to use positive and empathic wording throughout (e.g. “From what I understand…”, “The way I understand it…”, “Putting myself into your shoes… ”, “What can we learn from this situation…”, “What is the situation trying to show…”)

#4 Taking a stand (5-10 minutes)

Then, the advice seeker explains why or which impressions and hypotheses do or do not apply to his / her case.

#5 Proposing solutions (15-20 minutes)

In a group discussion / brainstorming, the consultants work out various solutions, suggesting new perspectives to the advice seeker.

#6 Feedback (closing statement) (5-10 minutes)

The advice seeker gives thanks and feedback to the group, explaining which suggestions could be helpful and how he / she experienced the peer consultation. The consultants and the facilitator can also give feedback and share their experiences (e.g. “The most important thing for me to take away from this consultation is…”, “…was a new perspective for me.”)



DIVERSITY LEADERSHIP CODEX FOR TRAINERS



#1 Accept who you are and accepting what is.

#2 Embark on a journey of self-discovery to become aware of potential “blind spots”.

#3 Approach people with an open-mind, let go of your presumptions.

#4 Focus on achievements, not on shortcomings.

#5 Leverage a group’s diversity of perspectives and experiences.

#6 Don’t be afraid of making mistakes. They are signposts of learning.

#7 Support open communication. Encourage active listening, ask questions, voice what is happening inside of you and be open to what others are saying.

#8 Create a safe environment that includes everything, but also be aware of when to set necessary borders to ensure safety is maintained.

#9 Look at things from different perspectives and adopt a new mindset to help you overcome obstacles and challenges.

#10 Connect to the source level - the level, where we all are one - to go beyond the differences.

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