



## GROUP ACTIVITY – AWARENESS OF OUR DIVERSITY

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**What is diversity?** Before beginning the following exercises, engage the audience in a discussion about the definition of diversity. If there is time, the group can create a definition, if time is limited, share existing definitions with the audience. If the organization sponsoring the training has defined the term, use that definition. The following are definitions from multiple sources:

**Diversity** – refers to a range of human perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences as reflected in characteristics such as age, class, ethnic origin, gender, nationality, physical and learning ability, race, religion, sexual orientation, and veteran’s status. Other dimensions of diversity include, but are not limited to, education, marital status, employment and geographic background, as well as cultural values, beliefs, and practices. (Retrieved from <http://www.worldlearning.org/>)

Dictionary definition of **diversity** : The fact or quality of being diverse; difference. A point or respect in which things differ.

The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition, 2004, Houghton Mifflin Company.

### Activities and Exercises

1. Break the audience into small groups of 5-6 people. Acknowledge that in many instances people in the U.S. tend to view diversity solely by race and ethnicity. Ask each group to make a list of as many factors as possible that influence diversity. Allow five minutes for this group task and ask each group to designate a recorder. Next, ask the groups to review their list and determine which factors may be biologically based (e.g. hair or eye color, height, etc.) and which are socially and culturally based (marital status, religion, education, where they grew up, etc.). Reconvene the entire audience for sharing. Ask each small group to share three aspects of diversity without repeating those that were previously shared. Use a flip chart to record these factors and hang the sheets around the room. Remind audience members to consult these lists as they continue through the training experience. Reinforce that a broad array of factors have to be considered when examining diversity and applying this framework to health promotion training.

2. There are a number of effective awareness “ice breakers” that you may find useful at <http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/activityarch.html> at the EdChange multicultural pavilion.

An example of an ice breaker activity that helps introduce participants and the topic of culture might be: As part of the meeting logistics information, invite participants to bring an object that reflects their culture. At the training session, break participants into small groups of no more than 5-6. Ask each person to share the object and explain its cultural significance to the other group members.