

# BEYOND TRAINING: IDEAS FOR INTEGRATING INCLUSIVENESS

Strengthening Inclusiveness Committees

May 16, 2013

The Strengthening Inclusiveness Committees session on May 16, 2013 focused on the topic of **“Beyond Training: Ideas for Integrating Inclusiveness.”**

**There were twenty-nine individuals in attendance, representing twenty-one organizations** (City of Arvada; Aurora Mental Health Center; Big Brothers Big Sisters; Boulder Valley Women’s Health Center; Center for Work, Education, and Employment [CWEE]; Colorado Alliance for Environmental Education [CAEE]; Colorado Parks and Wildlife; Court Appointed Special Advocates [CASA]; The Conflict Center; The Denver Foundation; Denver Kids; Denver Open Media; Denver Urban Ministries; EarthForce; Facing History and Ourselves; Habitat for Humanity of Metro Denver; Howard Dental Center; Susan G. Komen for the Cure Denver Metropolitan; Mental Health America of Colorado; Rocky Mountain Youth Clinics; and The Women’s Crisis & Family Outreach Center). The session was facilitated by Jamie Morgan.

**The session started with a panel discussion** of different “Beyond Training” activities and areas of focus. Panelists were: Adrienne Mansanares (The Denver Foundation) speaking on books clubs and bridge groups; Andy Tiehn (Denver Kids) speaking on panels and field trips; Kacy Behrend (Rocky Mountain Youth Clinics) speaking on miscellaneous “cool ideas”; Sean Kenney (Big Brothers Big Sisters) speaking on bridge groups and brown-bag lunches; and Carlyne Schultz (Denver Urban Ministries) speaking on caucuses and dialogue groups.

**The session concluded with small-group work.** Participants had three 15-minute opportunities to discuss in smaller groups the topics presented by the panelists. Holly Kingsbury (The Denver Foundation) was table host for the topics book clubs and bridge groups; Donna Cash (Denver Kids) was table host for the topics of panel events and field trips; Kacy Behrend (Rocky Mountain Youth Clinics) was table host for the topic of miscellaneous “cool ideas”; Tracy Slama (Big Brothers Big Sisters) was table host for bridge groups and brown-bag lunches; and Carlyne Schultz, Denver Urban Ministries was table host for caucuses and dialogue groups.

The following is a compilation of ideas shared in the various categories of “Beyond Training.”

### **Book Clubs (as utilized by The Denver Foundation)**

- one of many tools that The Denver Foundation uses in its inclusiveness efforts; different people are attracted to different tools
- it doesn't need to be big or often
- is successful partly because participants can talk more candidly about fictional characters
- meets during the work day, usually over lunch (in that way people are paid for their participation)
- reading lists from The Denver Foundation book club and the Rocky Mountain Youth Clinics book club were handed out (see attached).

### **Bridge Groups**

#### **(as utilized by Big Brothers Big Sisters)**

- a structure that attempts to fill-in gaps between all-staff trainings; is used as a follow-up to those trainings; opportunity to debrief, process, and find ways to apply learnings from trainings
- attendance is mandatory
- needs structure to be effective; facilitation is essential and facilitators are well prepared for their role
- the medium-sized staff (45–48) is divided into 6–8 staff per bridge group; with two Inclusiveness Committee members per group
- people are intentionally assigned to groups, to reflect diversity on many levels
- the composition of the groups is switched out every year even though it might break continuity

#### **(as utilized by The Denver Foundation)**

- B.R.I.D.G.E. is actually an acronym for “building a rich, diverse group of employees”
- a structure that helps the staff stay focused on inclusiveness between trainings; meetings of bridge groups are scheduled soon after trainings
- could also use the bridge groups for more than follow-ups to trainings

- the staff of 50 is divided into five different bridge groups; members are very intentionally assigned
- attendance is supposed to be mandatory but in practice it has not been
- sessions used to be one hour over lunch; often are scheduled two months in advance
- each group has a leader; over the five groups, there is a variety of staff positions represented in that leadership role
- someone takes notes during the sessions and disseminates to all members and the Inclusiveness Committee
- the Inclusiveness Committee addresses issues that come out of the bridge groups and communicates to all staff any ideas, plans, etc.
- bridge group composition is switched up occasionally (The Denver Foundation has only done it once so far); it is beneficial to mix it up although also beneficial for people to have consistency/continuity in their group's membership
- preparation is key, but that's not to say that the groups shouldn't/couldn't also be spontaneous
- there isn't anything formal that Inclusiveness Committee members do in the bridge groups

### **Panel Events (as utilized by Denver Kids)**

- Denver Kids held two very successful panel events in 2012: (1) homelessness in Denver, and (2) impact of immigrant laws on undocumented kids in DPS
- these were offered as life-long learning opportunities, which helps build organizational culture and includes an inclusiveness perspective
- donors, volunteers, and staff are invited to attend
- attendance varies between 35 and 50
- requires a lot of pre-planning on who the panelists will be; to include a broad perspective; to include Q/A
- in 2011 Denver Kids held two viewings of the civil rights movement documentary (*Rebels Remember*), which focused on the impact of the movement on DPS; very well attended
- another movie viewing was held in 2012, *Intouchables*, which included a discussion

### **Field Trips (as utilized by Denver Kids)**

- these kind of happen; everyone/anyone can suggest such opportunities
- the criteria is broadly defined: something that might educate people; get people talking (there is discussion in the hour after the actual trip to share impressions of experience)
- thought it would be held bimonthly, in the months when the Inclusiveness Committee doesn't meet; but it hasn't actually happened that frequently
- inclusiveness is a line item for Denver Kids; it's infused, not separated; "everything we do is through an inclusiveness lens"
- are free, voluntary
- invitation to attend comes from the Inclusiveness Committee (if organization can it will pay for it for staff); families of staff are also welcome to attend (they pay their own way)

### **Miscellaneous "Cool Ideas" (as utilized by Rocky Mountain Youth Clinics)**

- movie club: organization pays for staff to attend a particular movie selection; dinner is scheduled after (staff pays for own dinner) to give opportunity for discussion
- wordsearches: for prizes
- scavenger hunts: to facilitate learning about cultural areas of interest
- book club: has been less successful than other "cool ideas"; maybe it is too time-consuming

### **Brown-Bag Lunches (as utilized by Big Brothers Big Sisters)**

- a structure that attempts to fill-in the gaps between all-staff trainings; to keep a consistent level of engagement around inclusiveness
- is facilitated by Inclusiveness Committee members
- optional attendance (typically two-thirds to three-quarters of staff attend)
- 60–90 minutes in length
- great way to encourage staff to take on leadership roles since sessions are often led by staff; BBBS has realized it has a lot of in-house resources/expertise; some presenters are in-house, others are not; some are paid, others are not
- these sessions may need follow-ups; it is not just what can be covered in one-hour's time
- the best-attended session was one that was used as a follow-up to all-staff training

- needs structure to be effective
- offers a diverse range of experiences; does not include a formal presentation but rather an opportunity to come together and talk
- are promoted ahead of time including asking potential attendees to indicate what they are interested in (on the chosen topic); their feedback is given to the facilitator/presenter so that he/she addresses what people are interested in
- topics have included: serving youth involved with juvenile justice system; serving Latino youth; ableism; gender variance; financials/budgets

### **Caucuses (as utilized by Denver Urban Ministries)**

**Caucus groups** provide opportunities for individuals to gather based on a singular identity to discuss a topic relevant to your organization. Meeting in a caucus group can increase comfort, reduce risk, and help develop allies. Caucus groups also aid in lifting up voices or perspectives that might not be aired in other settings. In establishing caucus groups it is important to create caucuses that represent all identities, including agent and target identities.

- Should always be facilitated. Facilitators should be from the communities represented.
- Should have a specific topic and intended outcome. Caucus groups are not support groups.
- When using this model with stakeholders or clients it is often best to extend the invitation to specific individuals rather than a general invitation to the community.
- A group of 3–12 people is ideal.
- Groups should meet in a private place.
- Establish group rules.
- The group should have a clear purpose and outcome.
- Caucus groups are the least successful when established in response to conflict.
- Examples of caucus groups:
  - People of Color, Caucasian or White
  - Latinos/as, African Americans, Native Americans, Asians, Arab Middle Eastern, European or White
  - LGBTQ, Straight
  - Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender, Queer, Straight
  - Gender Conforming, Gender Non-Conforming
  - Men, Women, Transgender
  - 35 and under, 35 and over
  - Differently-abled, Non-disabled
  - Veterans, Civilians
- Caucus groups should be followed by a dialogue group.

## **Dialogue Groups (as utilized by Denver Urban Ministries)**

**Dialogue groups** provide opportunities for caucus groups to share what was discussed within caucus groups with other caucus groups. Rather than meeting in a discussion setting, dialogues ask for groups to practice intentional listening and speaking. One caucus group will share details about their meeting while the other group listens. When the first group is done, another group will speak while the rest of the groups listen. Once every group has shared, then all participants can discuss what they heard and how they felt. This practice can help reduce the likelihood of a conversation turning into a debate as well as targeting specific individuals.

- Caucus groups should determine representatives to share what they talked about in group
- Dialog groups should be facilitated
- Follow-up or bridge groups is key

**The next session of Strengthening Inclusiveness Committees group will be September 19, 2013** from 8:30 to 11:00 a.m. on the topic of **“Hire, Recruit, and Retain Using an Inclusiveness Lens.”**

This group is designed to meet the needs of nonprofit staff who are leading their organization’s inclusiveness work. To receive notification of this session and other future sessions, contact Holly Kingsbury at [hkingsbury@denverfoundation.org](mailto:hkingsbury@denverfoundation.org) or by calling 303.330.1790 x147.