Diversity Vignettes

live case scenario
The participants are treated to a number of short stories, "vignettes," that play out different issues of diversity. A menu of vignettes is outlined below. We can also create custom vignettes that will cover any other issues specific to your organization.

"The vignettes and roleplays provided the perfect vehicle for learning about issues of diversity in all their complexity."
-- Manager, Diversity and Change Management, International Oil Company

the mini-plays
DIFFERENCES IN COMMUNICATION STYLES – MEN/WOMEN
Sharon meets her peer Jack in the hallway. He notices she is upset and asks her why. Sharon tells him her manager is questioning her commitment. She says she gave him an honest assessment of her abilities and that led him to doubt her. Jack says that her answer didn’t really inspire confidence. Sharon says she simply told her manager the truth – isn’t that what she’s supposed to do? Their conversation escalates quickly and Sharon ends up walking away angry.

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES
Two managers, James and Maureen, are concluding a planning meeting for an upcoming project. The last issue to be decided is who will lead the team. James suggests Lee Chang. Maureen thinks James is joking; Lee is so quiet no one ever notices him. A discussion ensues with James championing Lee’s qualifications while Maureen points out that Lee doesn’t fit in with the corporate culture and can never be a leader.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION
Kim drops by Frank’s office while on break. She notices a newspaper article on his desk about gays in the military. She tells Frank she doesn’t understand why sexual orientation is part of the new diversity initiative. She thinks it’s a private matter and should stay that way. Frank says he has a friend who’s gay and wants to bring his partner to the company picnic. Kim says his friend should just come alone or say his partner is a cousin. After she leaves, Frank says, “I think I better go alone.”

FAMILY vs. SINGLE PERSPECTIVES
Patricia, a manager, approaches John about staying late. John says he has somewhere to go and asks why Marcy can’t stay late. Patricia tells him Marcy has to pick up her kids from carpool. Patricia tells him, “You can stay late and we look on that very favorably around
here." John wonders why everyone assumes he has no life just because he doesn’t have a family.

THE EXCLUDED WHITE MALE
Jerry and Anna are sitting in a bar after work when Anna tells him about a great job posting she saw. She tells Jerry he should apply. He tells her there’s no point; he’ll never get it because he’s white a male and everyone’s focused on diversity. He rants at her about how he doesn’t have all the power everyone ascribes to being white and male. In fact, he says, he’s being discriminated against because there’s no place for him in a diversified outlook.

WORK/LIFE BALANCE
Sue is a sales rep out on a day of calls with Tom, a trainer. They stop for lunch and over their fries, Sue lets loose with a stream of accumulated stress. She’s been juggling too many things for too long, and feeling like she’s not really succeeding at anything. How can she successfully balance her home life and her work life?

WORKING DIVERSITY – IT’S MORE THAN HIRING
Anisa meets with her former boss Michael during a break at a national managers meeting. Michael has come to seek Anisa’s support for the way he’s handling the company’s diversity initiative. His boss has been critical of him, and Michael recalls that he and Anisa always got along well so he solicits her friendly ear in order to air his issues. But he’s in for a big surprise when he finds out Anisa has some opinions of her own.

THE OUT GROUP
Pete and Jill are walking by the lunchroom and stop to peek in on one of the company’s affinity groups. Pete tells Jill he’d like to join a group but he doesn’t fit in anywhere. He feels excluded from the inclusion groups.

EXECUTIVE SUPPORT
Alex has been volunteered to be a diversity leader and he takes the position seriously. He goes to his manager Katherine in order to elicit her support in the form of time off to attend diversity meetings and better funding for the initiatives. Even though Katherine talks a good game, when it comes right down to it she tells Alex they don’t have the time or the money but she knows he’ll do a great job anyway.

THE SACRED VS. THE PROFANE
A successful salesperson, Frank expresses his frustration with internal staff loudly, angrily, and colorfully. Vicki, his office mate, overhears his constant use of Christian words as his words of choice in expressing his anger. Although she has spoken to him about this, Frank has ignored her comments. On this particular day, Vicki once again tries to have Frank understand that his use of words she holds sacred is offensive.
learning objectives

- To synergize conflicting values and backgrounds
- To identify the unfairness created by unaware behavior
- To build trust in the diverse workplace
- To deal with the myths and fears about diversity

program format

Standard or talk show format

suitable for

- Meetings
- Retreats
- Training Seminars
- Luncheons
- Conventions
- Dinners