

GUIDELINES AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Partners for a New Beginning Guidelines

One technique for reinforcing and operating as an inclusive, respectful, global workplace is to address religious differences and respect head on, by facilitating direct conversations about religion, workplaces and respect.

If you're just beginning to address this core aspect of diversity within your company, it might be best to begin these conversations at the senior management level. If you have an already established and robust Diversity & Inclusion function, you may wish to include those practitioners in these conversations and use a "train-the-trainer" model to encourage these individuals to facilitate conversations among general managers. Before you begin, it is recommended that you review the Fact Sheets as well as your company's diversity statement and strategy.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is a stereotype?
 - Historically, how have stereotypes affected workplaces and led to mistreatment of others?
 - How does that mistreatment occur? What does that mistreatment look like?
 - How is it overt? How is it more subtle?
2. How do social media, technology, and the 24-hour news cycle stimulate stereotypes?
3. What policies does our company have regarding:
 - Diversity?
 - Harassment?
 - Religion specifically?
4. Even when companies have strong policies on diversity and inclusion, employees may still hold and take actions based on stereotypes.
 - How can stereotypes affect workplaces?
 - Do you see a relationship between stereotypes and workplace productivity?
 - Are there stereotypes that people have about your religious tradition?
5. What can employees do to help derail harassment based on identities such as country of origin or religion?
6. How could our workplace be more inclusive?

7. Why is diversity important? What can we learn from others whose experiences are different from our own?

8. How can we respectfully ask others about their diverse religious and/or cultural backgrounds? What can we learn from this type of interaction?

9. How could learning about our differences, including our religious and cultural differences, improve our workplace, and our customer/client relations?

10. There is a great deal of information about Muslims in the public square.

- When we look at the facts, what is surprising?
- How do you respond to the demographic data about Muslims worldwide?
- How do you respond to the demographic data about Muslims in the United States? How do the experiences of Muslims in the United States compare to the experiences of other religious and/or immigrant groups in the United States, both historically and presently?
- What can we learn from the cycles or patterns that seem to recur over time?
- What can we do to break the cycles?
- What are the similarities across religious or non-religious traditions? What informs perceptions of Muslims? What can be done to change inaccurate perceptions?

11. Who is targeted in the United States?

- When looking at the history of opposition to places of worship and religious practices in the United States, what strikes you?
- Are there / what are the similarities and differences between what happened near Ground Zero with Park51 and:
 - What happened with other communities throughout U.S. that opposed the building of mosques in 2010-2011?
 - What happened with other communities throughout U.S. history who opposed the building of houses of worship and religious practices?

12. Over the past ten years, we've seen a number of events that have had global implications, such as: 9/11, 7/7 (London Bombings), Madrid Bombings, wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the Arab Spring.

- Can you identify ways that global events impact the workplace? How?
- Should companies address external and potentially divisive global events in the workplace? How?
- What are some of the ways companies can anticipate and respond to the breadth of employee reactions to global events?