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STRIVING TOWARD BEST PRACTICE

Cultural Sensitivity

Newcomers face a multitude of challenges such as loss of culture, community and language at the same time they are adapting to a new home. Understanding the need for cultural sensitivity ensures sponsors respond to settlement issues in a respectful and appropriate way that recognizes and affirms newcomer worth and value, that demonstrates an understanding of their beliefs. We need to avoid treating everyone the same, or making assumptions, generalizations, stereotyping or making inappropriate judgments.

Key guidelines:

How to Support Newcomers

- **Education** – do research, read books, articles, attend community events
- **Learn** – learn about the newcomer's culture and history, and from each other
- **Do not assume** – ask newcomer about his/her experience
- **Give voice** – speak up, but not for; important to advocate but not take away a newcomer's agency
- **Consult** – ask newcomer what works for them
- **Encourage** – open conversation about microaggression; name it to resolve it

The Conversation is not about you

- **The focus** – should be on those you sponsor, their issue, their story, not about your experience; need for respect and not suspicion
- **Tell me more** – encourage newcomer to share their story
- **Cultural superiority** – one culture or way of living is not superior to another
- **The goal** – you want to relate and connect; create a cohesive society

Own your mistakes

- **Apologize** – when we mis-step or make a mistake, own up, be sincere
- **Feeling heard** – ask the newcomer what they need to feel heard; make amends
- **Acceptance**– not everyone will accept; honour that

Connections:

- **The Bystander Intervention Do's and Don'ts from London And Middlesex LIP** - <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5a26d86ebce176ac3b1fed85/t/612e2e5f007ced7e6fff5d36/1630416480927/Bystander+Intervention.pdf>
- **Cultural Bridges** - <https://culturalbridgestojustice.org/detour-spotting/>
- **Guide to allyship** - <https://guidetoallyship.com/>
- **Deep Diversity by Shakil Chaudry** - <https://shakilwrites.com/>
- **Bones of Belonging by Anna Hiddashtgard** - <https://annahiddashtgard.com/books/bones-of-belonging/>

Reference:

- PRSN Lunch & Learn, Cultural Sensitivity, June 2023