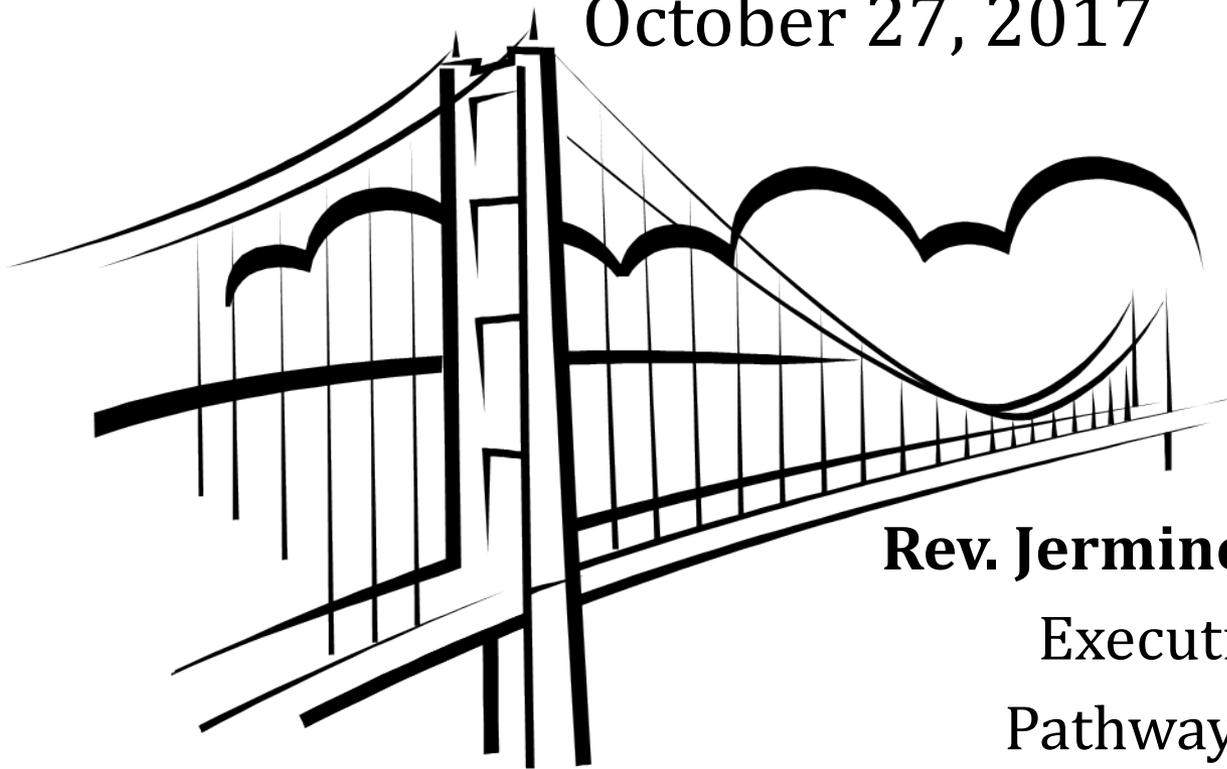# Bridging Faith, Culture & Mental Health
Diversity & Inclusion
in Faith Communities

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Rev. Jermine Alberty, M. Div.

Executive Director

Pathways to Promise

Rev. Deborah Burris, M. Div.

Diversity Consultant

Purpose

- The role of Faith communities
- Dealing with misconceptions
- This presentation will examine issues of cultural diversity in the context of faith communities.

- We will explore a few basic concepts of cultural diversity, explicit/implicit bias.

- These concepts will be examined from an individual, group and community perspective.
- Becoming cultural Interconnected

The Role of Religion in the United States

- Nearly 80 percent of Americans say they practice some type of religion, while approximately 20 percent, mostly younger people, say they do not, according to a 2012 Pew Research Center study.

4 Common Misconceptions about Mental Illness

1. PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS ARE UNSAFE.

2. PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESSES ARE UNPREDICTABLE AND DIFFICULT TO RELATE TO.

3. MOST PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESSES ARE ON WELFARE OR HOMELESS.

4. PEOPLE WITH MENTAL ILLNESSES WOULD RATHER NOT TALK ABOUT IT

How to deal with these misconceptions.

- **LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOUR (WITH A MENTAL ILLNESS) AS YOURSELF**

How do we show love?

What can prevent us from showing love?

Diversity & Inclusion

- Diversity is the range of human differences, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, social class, physical ability or attributes, religious or ethical values system, national origin, and political beliefs.

- Inclusion describes the active, intentional on going engagement with diversity, i.e., employment, service, other systems.

Creating and Maintaining a Safe Space

- Listen actively -- respect others when they are talking.

- Speak from your own experience instead of generalizing ("I" instead of "they," "we," and "you").

- Respectfully challenge one another by asking questions, focus on ideas.

- Participate to the fullest of your ability -- community growth depends on the inclusion of every individual voice.

Creating and Maintaining a Safe Space

- Instead of invalidating somebody else's story with your own spin on her or his experience, share your own story and experience.

- The goal is not to agree -- it is to gain a deeper understanding.

- Be conscious of body language and nonverbal responses -- they can be as disrespectful as words.

Explicit Bias

- Explicit bias refers to the attitudes and beliefs we have about a person or group on a conscious level.

  - Everyone possesses them.
  - Encompass both favorable and unfavorable assessments.
  - Expressions of explicit bias occur as the result of deliberate thought.
  - Can be consciously regulated.
  - People are more motivated to control their biases if there are social norms in place which dictate that prejudice is not socially acceptable.
  - Much of the time, these biases and their expression arise as the direct result of a perceived threat.

https://perception.org/research/explicit-bias/

Implicit Bias

- Implicit bias refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner.

  - Encompass both favorable and unfavorable assessments.
  - Are activated involuntarily and without an individual's awareness or intentional control.
  - Reside deep in the subconscious.
  - Differ from known biases that individuals may choose to conceal for the purposes of social and/or political correctness.

Staats, Capatosto, Wright, Contractor, 2015

Implicit Bias

Characteristics

- Implicit biases are malleable; therefore, the implicit associations that we have formed can be gradually unlearned and replaced with new mental associations.

- Social scientist David R. Williams grounds the conceptual in real world realities when he states, "This is the frightening point: Because [implicit bias] is an automatic and unconscious process, people who engage in this unthinking discrimination are not aware of the fact that they do it."

Staats, Capatosto, Wright, Contractor, 2015

Debiasing

Several approaches to debiasing have emerged, yielding mixed results.

Among those for which research evidence suggests the possibility of successful debiasing outcomes include:

- Counter-stereotypic training in which efforts focus on training individuals to develop new associations that contrast with the associations they already hold through visual or verbal cues.

- Expose people to counter-stereotypic individuals. Much like debiasing agents, these counter stereotypic exemplars possess traits that contrast with the stereotypes typically associated with particular categories, such as male nurses, elderly athletes, or female scientists.

Debiasing

- Intergroup contact generally reduces intergroup prejudice. Several key conditions are necessary for positive effects to emerge from intergroup contact, including equal status and common goals of individuals, cooperative verses competitive environment and support from authority figures.

- Education efforts aimed at raising awareness about implicit bias. Examples include the education of judges and prospective jurors and health care workers.

Staats, Capatosto, Wright, Contractor, 2015

Microaggressions

- Microaggressions are the brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, and environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial, gender, sexual-orientation, and religious slights and insults to the target person or group. *(Derald Wing Sue, 2012)*

Microaggressions

- Sue (2012) identifies three forms of microaggressions:

  - Microassults – conscious biased beliefs or attitudes that are held by individuals and intentionally expressed or acted out overtly toward a marginalized person or socially devalued group. Differ from other two forms in that perpetrator harbors conscious bias toward an identified and socially devalued group.

  - Microinsult – unconscious, interpersonal interactions (verbal/nonverbal) or environmental cues that communicate rudeness, insensitivity, slights, and insults that demean a person's racial, gender, sexual orientation or group identity and heritage.

  - Microinvalidation – unconscious, denial of experiential realities of socially devalued groups; interpersonal and environmental cues that exclude, negate, or nullify the psychological thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and experiences of the target group.

Microaggressions

- Perpetrators are usually unaware that they have engaged in an exchange that demeans the recipient of the communication.

- Derive their power to injure from their invisibility to perpetrators.

- Includes racial, gender, sexual orientation, disability, class, religious and other demeaning messages.

(Derald Wing Sue, 2012)

Diverse Nature of Faith Communities

- Faith communities are diverse on many levels.

- Members of the church, synagogue, temple bring their cultural experiences, biases, problems, gifts, etc. to that community.

- The organization and its structure is susceptible to implicit biases and microaggressions.

Microaggressions

- *What is the impact of microaggressions on the on targets or recipients of the behavior?*
  - *Individuals*
  - *Group*
  - *Community*

STEPS TO CULTURAL
INTERCONNECTEDNESS

EIGHT STEPS TO CULTURAL INTERCONNECTEDNESS

1

Examine your values, behaviors, beliefs, and assumptions.

2

Recognize the "ism" and the institutions or behaviors that breed them.

3

Engage in activities that help to reframe your thinking.

STEPS

- 4. Familiarize oneself with core cultural elements of the communities served, including physical and biological variations, concepts of time, space, physical contact, styles and patterns of communication, physical and social expectations, social structures and gender roles.

STEPS

5. Engage indiviudals to share how their reality is similar to or different from, what you have learned about their core cultural elements.

Unique experiences and histories will result in differences in behaviors, values, and needs.

6. Learn how different cultures define, name and understand disease and treatment.

 individuals to share with you how they define, name and understand their ailments.

STEPS

Develop Develop a relationship of trust with persons by interacting with openness, understanding, and a willingness to hear different perceptions.

Create Create a welcoming environment that reflects the diverse communities you serve.

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QUESTIONS ?????

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