

**Celebrating Women in Leadership**  
**“Building Diversity and Inclusion”**  
**Friday, February 14th, 2020, Paul Smith’s College**

Facilitated Group Discussions: Tangible Actions and Strategies to Build Diversity and Inclusion; Moderator: **Nicky Hylton Patterson**, Executive Director, Adirondack Diversity Initiative

Thanks to **Dr. Melanie Johnson**, Paul Smith’s College for taking notes!

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Adirondack Diversity Initiative: Strategies that center the lived experiences of women in the region

**K.P.A.C:**

**Knowledge**

- Need for daycare can keep people out of the workforce and from re-entering once they have left: What do we need to know?
  - Generational differences
  - Socioeconomic status
  - Housing
  - Transportation
  - Cultural views (Cultural background story, eg family makeup)
  - Education level
  - Technological familiarity
  - Connections to the area (new, ..)
  - Articulate geographic issues to this area (Regional concerns)
- Do women have health issues/health care needs (reproductive rights, sexual autonomy)
- What jobs they hold/wish they have
- Comprehensive guide to services
- Knowledge about services available in community/region
- Recreational opportunities
- Social support structures
- Resources for caring for the elderly
- Senior citizen needs/concerns
- Group 3: all of the above +
  - Resources for the caregivers
  - NY State: elder care program so family member can care for you and get compensated (name? CDPAP)
  - Wages across the board (all levels)
  - Housing issues
- Group 4:

- Social network: lack of/ability to create/network
  - Someone coming into the area without prior ties, hard to form relationships
- Gender equity/equality especially in smaller offices
- Presence in the workforce: are these workplaces accommodating for new workers (representation in the workplace)
- Group 5:
  - Salary survey
    - Negotiation skills
    - Look at data across the country for comparison: are local concerns shared?
- Group 6
  - Farm communities into new demographics
    - Affinity groups with whom you can identify and work with on concerns
      - Need to build relationships: how to make connections with those leaving workforce and coming in
  - Unintended consequences of programs/initiatives
    - Make sure the questions you are asking are as comprehensive as possible
  - Making sure everyone that needs to be at the table is actually at the table.
    - Accountability/multiple voices
- Sexual orientation
- Social environment
  - Actually welcoming?
- Intersectionality: ~each person is not representative of entire category? ~ multiple categories
- Disability and accessibility
- Environmental factors that might impact someone's ability to stay and thrive in the community

## **Power**

- We need it☺

## **Action**

- Education on necessary skills in schools and in home
  - Learn more about limiting paradigms
  - Learn the vocabulary
  - Develop a curriculum centered around anti-oppression, learning about identities, ... diverse experiences of women
- Having somebody from county come into local library weekly to provide info on available programs (daycare assistance, free lunch programs, social services, ...) Give knowledge/access

- Outside of traditional work hours
- Diversifying the mode of outreach
- Access through employers, schools, ..., like citizen advocates: have similar programs throughout community to share knowledge
  - Wrap-around regarding mental health services (?)
- Remove stigmas attached to cultures/way of life
- Create/be the safe space
- Create support services that address holistic mental health concerns
  - How do we make concerns about mental health more of a community conversation?
  - Making sure that social services are culturally relevant
  - Compiling comprehensive (database) of services
    - Having a compendium of available services/information
    - Ensuring access to these resources
      - Access to and ability to use technology
      - Literacy
- Training customer forward staff to be culturally aware
- Available, affordable housing that is accessible
  - Cost of living reality
  - Absentee landlords
  - How do you find housing when getting started
    - New Americans
- Till the soil to make sure everyone is welcomed

**Change:** What did this process teach you?

- Nothing is simple
- You can not support unless you listen. And there were a lot of good listeners in this room!
- Can not come up with a solution on your own.
- To come up with solution, you need to know what people actually need, not just what you think they need
- Know what is there, how can we augment what is there, and how to connect people to resources, how to make it culturally and regionally relevant, and how to make it available
- Women's issues are societal issues
- Environmental issues are about equity
- Critically think about the environment, the people, the multifaceted nature of people
- Don't shut out people with a different mindset. Don't close the door and/or burn bridges. Potential for change.
- Never invalidate anyone's opinion, even if you disagree with it.
- Build respect, which builds room to validate your position.

- If there is funding tied to something that already exists, build on that, don't compete. Knowledge of existing resources: don't try to re-invent the wheel. Coalition building rather than competition.
- Build network and help each other
  - Shared training
  - Consortiums
  - Reciprocal relationships
  - Overcome differences to build relationships
- Powerful beginning to DEI (Diversity Equity Inclusion) collaboration
  - Human resources, financial resources