



Session III B, July 24-26, 2017

36. Cultivating Intercultural Empathy

Empathy is one of the most important capabilities of human beings, and it is a core intercultural competency. By allowing us to anticipate and adapt to the responses of others, empathy helps us coordinate our interactions with them. In intercultural situations, establishing empathy is made more complex and challenging by the different cultural frames of reference we each bring to the encounter. In this workshop, we will review the theoretical basis of intercultural empathy, identify challenges to creating empathy in intercultural interaction, and develop practical strategies for cultivating intercultural empathy. This interactive workshop will utilize exercises, structured dialogue, role plays, and case studies to explore methods and tools for constructing empathic spaces for dialogue in intercultural settings.

Designed for: Educators, trainers, program managers, and other professionals who want to further develop their own competency in empathy, help others become more knowledgeable and skilled in the empathic process, and learn how to construct empathic spaces for intercultural learning.

Workshop Objectives

You will have the opportunity to:

- Examine how the empathic process functions in intercultural interactions
- Distinguish empathy from other psychological processes such as sympathy
- Identify the primary challenges to cultivating intercultural empathy
- Explore how intercultural empathy can contribute to building trust and engaging in dialogue in intercultural conflict situations
- Reflect on your own strengths and challenges in relation to empathy
- Develop practical strategies for cultivating intercultural empathy

Learning Activities

This workshop will be highly interactive, built around participant experiences and perspectives. Our focus will be on putting theory into practice, through activities such as the following:

- Participating in structured group dialogue
- Experiencing empathy-building exercises and role plays
- Analyzing critical incidents and case studies
- Exchanging stories and experiences about empathy
- Creating learning activities for use in classes and training programs
- Examining how we can construct more empathic spaces for dialogue in intercultural settings



Dr. Benjamin Broome is professor of human communication at Arizona State University. He teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in intercultural communication, facilitating intercultural dialogue, and peacebuilding. Ben's research is focused on the development and application of culturally appropriate methods that cultivate empathy and enable sustainable dialogue in protracted conflict situations. For over 20 years he has worked closely with individuals, groups, and organizations on the divided island of Cyprus, as well as in Turkey and Greece. Professor Broome's work centers on building cultures of peace, in which the tensions that inevitably result from differences and disagreements become the impetus for dialogue rather than violence.

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