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Suggestions for Using “Symptoms of Diversity-Related Problems: Internal Checklist”

Objectives:

- Identify diversity-related problems within the organization
- Raise awareness and spark discussion about such issues
- Provide a jumping-off point for taking action to deal with diversity-related problems

Intended Audience:

- Managers, supervisors, and first-line staff in a diverse organization
- Trainees at a managing diversity seminar
- Executive staff attempting to identify obstacles to productivity and morale
- HR staff attempting to reduce turnover and grievances

Processing the Activity:

- Individuals are asked to check any of the problems they have experienced within the organization. They may also add others that are not listed.
- Groups can discuss problems checked to get an idea about which issues seem to be most prevalent. They may also assign priorities regarding dealing with the problems, discuss how widespread the problems are, and/or determine which parts of the organization seem to be most affected by particular issues.
- Follow-up will depend on the group involved. Data can be used by managers in solving the problems in their own departments/divisions; by executives in developing or modifying plans or policies; and by HR staff in making recommendations to executive management and in modifying their own procedures. Finally, data can be used in planning management development activities.

Questions for Discussion:

- What seem to be the most frequent problems surfaced?
- How widespread are they? Which sections of the organization seem most affected?
- What is the cost to the organization of these problems? What will happen if these go unaddressed?
- What additional information do we need in order to address these? From whom?
- Where/how do these issues need to be dealt with?
- What do we need to do to address these problems?
- What support, skills, and training do managers need to deal with these issues?
- What organization systems or policies need to be examined and possibly modified?

Caveats, Considerations, and Variations:

- Be careful not to make any premature commitments regarding actions to address these problems. Undoubtedly, further clarification about the problems is needed before solutions can be planned.
 - This activity can be modified for use by a manager to get feedback from his or her workgroup.
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