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Suggestions for Using “Understanding How Cultural Lenses Impact Teamwork”

Objectives:

- Illustrate the impact that culture has on values
- Show, graphically, how culture and values impact team dynamics and behavior on a regular basis
- Gain awareness about cultural similarities and differences between self and team members in four key areas that influence team performance

Intended Audience:

- A diverse work team, HR professional
- Managers or facilitators of diverse teams
- Internal/external consultant or trainer

Processing the Activity:

- Distribute learning activity and a different color of marker or pen for each participant.
- Discuss four cultural values and the opposite ends of the continuum regarding each. Next, ask participants to put an X at the spot that most accurately reflects their values.
- Tell participants to draw a values profile by connecting dots. Put their name on the paper and, with masking tape, put their profile on the wall.
- Ask participants to get up, walk around the room, and see the different profiles. When finished, they come back to their seats. In different locations, have a spokesperson speak at each site.

Questions for Discussion:

- What surprised you, or what did you notice about yourself when marking your own responses?
- When you walked around and saw other team members' profiles, what struck you?
- What areas have the greatest similarity?
- Where are the most differences?
- What can this team do to minimize the conflict from differences?
- How can we make the differences work for us? Make us stronger?

Caveats, Considerations, and Variations:

- If you have some people who seem reticent, process the discussion in small groups first.