

Levels of Oppression and Change

Personal

- Values
- Beliefs
- Feelings
- Attitudes
- Opinions

Institutional

- Policies
- Practices
- Rules
- Procedures
- Systems

Interpersonal

- Treatment
- Relationships
- Behaviors
- Communications

Cultural

- Worldview
- Stories
- Climate
- Shared Values
- Unwritten Rules
- Media
- Public Opinion
- Symbolic/Ritual
- Group Dynamics
- Norms



Personal Level

- Our attitudes, beliefs, values and feelings, regarding the inferiority of certain groups and the superiority of others

- Involves both cognitive misinformation and emotional misunderstanding

- Have been learned either directly (taught) or indirectly (caught)

- Can be conscious or unconscious

- “What do I think and feel about others who are different?”**



Interpersonal Level

- How we behave in light of the assumptions we hold

- Deals with our acts or behaviors, that are based on our attitudes, beliefs, values and feelings

- Can have impact whether intentional or unintentional

- “How do I act/ behave toward others who are different?”**



Institutional Level

Established laws, customs, traditions and practices which systematically result in inequalities in a society or organization

Institutional “isms” are occurring to the extent that a particular institution or its laws and practices support the power of historically included groups

“How does my institution favor members of the historically included groups? What are examples of policies, procedures or customs that result in disparities in inclusion or the likelihood of success?”



Cultural Level

- Both the individual and the institutional expression of the superiority of one group's culture, heritage and values over that of other groups

- It exists if people outside of the dominant norms experience invisibility, lack of belonging, lower chances for success

- “How do I or how does our organization practice exclusion or enforce ‘unwritten rules’ for success?”**



Focus of Change Strategies

Personal:

→ Aim is to change thoughts and feelings; increase awareness & openness to learning.

Interpersonal:

→ Aim is to enhance skills, communication patterns; impact behavior and relationships.

Cultural:

→ Aim is to create environments representative of & welcoming to the organization's diversity; celebrate & utilize differences.

Institutional:

→ Aim is to identify structural barriers and create policies, practices, programs & processes that support equitable outcomes.

