



True Diversity:

HOLISTIC DIVERSITY
TRAINING & RESOURCES

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Introduction

Philanthropy Roundtable's True Diversity initiative is dedicated to creating a more inclusive approach to embracing diversity — one that looks beyond physical characteristics alone. We seek to return love, compassion and empathy to the diversity discussion. Unfortunately, policies that emphasize box-checking and quotas are hindering the ability of nonprofits to advance their missions and serve those in need. That's why True Diversity exists.

True Diversity is an equality-based, holistic framework for embracing diversity that values each individual and allows charitable organizations the freedom and flexibility to pursue the most effective ideas and strategies available to serve their communities and solve problems.

The Roundtable is proud to join dozens of other charitable organizations and community leaders to share this holistic framework for embracing diversity and looks forward to helping others put this vision into practice.

In this toolkit, we highlight five of these partners, who practice a holistic approach to diversity and inclusion training. Everyone also has a unique story about their journey to becoming a diversity practitioner and what continues to drive them forward.

Five Principles of True Diversity

◆ **VALUE EACH INDIVIDUAL**

Each person is a unique individual worthy of dignity and respect. It is only by taking the time to know and understand people, their challenges and their circumstances, rather than simply making assumptions based on how they look, that we can best support them.

◆ **ADVANCE THE MISSION**

Excellent results are best achieved by bringing together people with diverse skill sets, backgrounds and perspectives to further a common mission. Each organization is in the best position to know what types of diversity in leadership and staffing will best support its mission — and thus strengthen the communities it serves.

◆ **SEEK DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES**

Good ideas can come from anywhere, and there are many ways to address social challenges. Bringing together people with diverse views is the key to encouraging a robust competition of ideas, experimentation with different approaches and ultimately better answers and outcomes.

◆ **EMBRACE CONVERSATION**

Discussion and debate open the door to progress. Direct, honest and respectful conversation may take courage, but it is the antidote to division, resentment and stagnation.

◆ **CULTIVATE EMPOWERMENT**

The best way to uplift individuals and strengthen communities is to foster the sense of agency that only comes when everyone is empowered to reach their full potential.



For additional resources and more information about the Philanthropy Roundtable's True Diversity Initiative, please visit TrueDiversity.org.



BrighterSideHR LLC



Stephanie Holmes

FOUNDER

- ◆ Bachelor of Arts, Political Science & American Studies, Illinois Wesleyan University
- ◆ Juris Doctor, The Catholic University of America, Columbus School of Law

SERVICES

- ◆ Workplace training, including a half-day interactive diversity and inclusion seminar that includes a review of legal considerations
- ◆ Workplace investigations
- ◆ HR consulting
- ◆ Mediation

SPECIALTIES

- ◆ Employment law
- ◆ Conflict resolution

brightersidehr.com

“We cultivate respect for viewpoint diversity and value employees as unique individuals.”

Stephanie Holmes, founder of BrighterSideHR LLC, helps employers and business leaders navigate human resources challenges. In addition to other services, BrighterSideHR offers workplace training for employers, including diversity and inclusion training. BrighterSideHR's approach to training focuses on workplace conduct, rather than asking employees to adopt any personal or political ideology unrelated to their job responsibilities.

"We cultivate respect for viewpoint diversity and value employees as unique individuals," Stephanie says.

Viewpoint diversity is a key element of BrighterSideHR's approach to diversity. According to Stephanie, measuring an organization's diversity exclusively by gender, race, and other protected characteristics may create legal risk for employers and create division among employees. Stephanie says it's important to help companies mitigate their legal risks and build positive workplace cultures when it comes to diversity programs. BrighterSideHR helps organizations strike a balance between valuing the individual while promoting unity among team members.

For fourteen years, Stephanie has been practicing labor and employment law. In recent years, she says she noticed that the current, mainstream approach to DEI – focusing almost exclusively on race and gender - is creating legal risk for employers and causing division among employees — the exact opposite of what HR should do.

Stephanie says, "The content of some mainstream DEI training programs is putting employers at risk for claims under Title VII, the federal law that prohibits employment discrimination, or equivalent laws. Depending on the approach, there is risk for hostile work environment claims based on race or gender, for example."

Rather than creating further division, Stephanie was inspired to help employers approach diversity

in a better way. Valuing diversity of thought is only one piece of the equation. She wanted to create a framework that helps organizations show greater appreciation for each employee's unique skills, background and experiences and helps to promote more respect, kindness and grace in the workplace.

"I believe diversity is best achieved by embracing a diversity of perspectives," Stephanie says, "and by focusing on the uniqueness of each employee."

BrighterSideHR offers a half-day interactive diversity and inclusion seminar that includes a review of legal considerations. According to Stephanie, the courses focus on three major areas: "compliance, culture, and conflict resolution."

Before working with an organization, BrighterSideHR asks questions to get a feel for where the employer stands on several important areas. These include their opinions on viewpoint diversity and their thoughts on measuring diversity beyond the most common major categories, such as race and gender.

"It also is helpful to understand the company's current approach to diversity, relevant company policies, any prior training efforts and whether the organization is facing any specific challenges," she says.

Above all, it's important for senior leaders to be involved in their company's diversity efforts, since their stances will ultimately trickle down to employees and set expectations.

"I would encourage senior leaders to be thoughtful and proactive in how they want to define diversity for their organization and be prepared to respond to both internal and external questions about their diversity and inclusion efforts," Stephanie says. "The more clearly their vision can be known and communicated to employees, the better the outcome, as employees will know what to expect."

Constructive Dialogue Institute



Caroline Mehl

CO-FOUNDER AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

- ◆ Granddaughter of a Holocaust survivor
- ◆ Bachelor of Arts, Yale University
- ◆ Blavatnik Foundation Scholar, University of Oxford

SERVICES

- ◆ Training sessions called “Perspectives” that distill psychological insights into approachable, practical knowledge and skills. (Eight, 30-minute lessons). This also includes four structured peer-to-peer conversations for teams or communities who want to include that human component in the experience.
- ◆ Live workshops for leaders
- ◆ Employee onboarding, managing training and educational services

SPECIALTIES

- ◆ Corporate workplaces
- ◆ Universities
- ◆ Communities

constructivedialogue.org

Caroline Mehl, co-founder and executive director of the Constructive Dialogue Institute, works with universities, communities, philanthropists and workplaces to create cultures that are more open and inclusive. She facilitates training sessions called Perspectives, which help individuals from a wide variety of backgrounds communicate effectively despite their differences.

Caroline began her career in private equity but wanted to pursue a career that allowed her to make more of a social impact. She was inspired to pivot into psychology and social entrepreneurship.

As the granddaughter of a Holocaust survivor, she grew up hearing firsthand stories of European Jews' religious oppression. After she moved into psychology, she wanted to understand why prejudice and animosity take root in society.

"One thing I learned was that there's a very clear path from having contempt for others to dehumanizing them and ultimately being willing to commit violence against them," Caroline says. "I became really concerned about that trajectory, and I also started to notice that we're starting to see those same kinds of themes crop up in the United States."

In 2017, Caroline and Jonathan Haidt co-founded the Constructive Dialogue Institute, originally called OpenMind. The Constructive Dialogue Institute is both a nonprofit and nonpartisan organization that focuses on helping individuals develop the mindset and skills to better communicate despite the things that divide them.

"We were really concerned about the fact that, as a society, we're growing more and more deeply divided," Caroline says. "We had lost the ability to communicate across our differences. And we wanted to do something about that."

The Constructive Dialogue Institute's primary offering is an online program that distills psychological insights into approachable, practical knowledge and skills. It is composed of eight impactful, 30-minute lessons that cover:

1. How the mind works, including how to incorporate more rational thinking in inconvenient situations
2. The roots of what makes us different
3. How to encourage intellectual humility
4. Opening your mind to alternative perspectives
5. Exploring worldviews other than your own
6. Deconstructing why online conversations are so toxic and what to do about them
7. How to manage your emotions when conversations get heated
8. How to effectively navigate difficult conversations

Caroline says Perspectives training is often incorporated into employee onboarding programs. Front-loading this training gets teams on the same page early on. She describes it as a "blended learning program" that employees can complete individually or in groups. Caroline recommends that employees be paired with a partner to participate more effectively in the peer-to-peer conversations that make up part of the training.

The Constructive Dialogue Institute also offers live workshops for leaders.

"We can either lead those workshops ourselves, or we also offer a 'train the trainer' model, where we train facilitators in-house at the companies to be able to lead those workshops themselves," Caroline says.

"We had lost the ability to communicate across our differences. And we wanted to do something about that."

Iniversity Solutions



Karith Foster

CREATOR

- ◆ Creator, INIVERSITY™ C.A.R.E. Academy, F.R.A.M.E. (Foster Russell Alliance for Meaningful Expression)
- ◆ Founder, Iniversity Solutions and Iniversity Foundation
- ◆ Author, "You Can Be Perfect or You Can Be Happy"
- ◆ Humorist, TV & Radio Personality, Speaker, Entrepreneur

SERVICES

- ◆ Keynotes & “Keyshops” (workshops featuring a keynote speaker)
- ◆ Training sessions
- ◆ Workshops
- ◆ Consulting
- ◆ Online learning with seven training modules

SPECIALTIES

- ◆ Corporations of all sizes
- ◆ Universities
- ◆ School Districts
- ◆ Industry Associations

iniversitysolutions.com

“The idea within INIVERSITY™ is to, first, stop pigeonholing people and then, understand that what makes us diverse isn’t just what we see from the outside.”

Karith Foster, founder of INVERSITY™ Solutions, is a speaker, trainer and consultant offering an empowered alternative to “traditional diversity” training that focuses on people’s similarities rather than their differences. She works with school districts, universities, industry associations and corporations of all sizes, supporting teams through keynotes, consulting, workshops, executive leadership retreats and online coaching.

In particular, Karith prioritizes supporting people in diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) leadership roles who were placed in those positions with little to no preparation for what their work would really entail.

“A high priority for me is to offer support for those who have been thrust — and I do mean thrust — into chief diversity officer positions,” Karith says. “Many of them were ‘panic hires’ where companies felt compelled to hire into these positions as a defensive measure. These people found themselves in their role because they come from a ‘marginalized group.’”

Karith has first-hand experience as a media personality who was placed in a similar position: as comedian and Don Imus’ co-host on his show, *Imus in the Morning*. Imus’ 2007 remarks about the women’s basketball team at Rutgers University sparked outrage, placing the host in the precarious position of changing the national conversation around racism in the United States.

“As a nationally headlining comedian who had multiple radio hosting positions under my belt

— and an educated Black woman — I was in a position to engage in that dialogue,” Karith says.

“The question I asked myself was, ‘How can I help? What can I do?’ I realized the tools in my arsenal were storytelling and humor — universal ways to bring people together.”

Initially, Karith designed *Stereotyped 101*, a diversity program that encouraged audience participation and used humor and personal anecdotes to engage people in discussions about racism and similar difficult subjects. That evolved into INVERSITY™.

“It’s the inverse of the word ‘diversity,’ which has divide/division at its root,” Karith says.

Karith explains that many DEI programs are geared toward working from the outside to change another person’s beliefs, feelings or thoughts. Conversely, INVERSITY™ works to celebrate the individual’s identity and diversity of thought, while inspiring genuine, positive change from within.

“The idea within INVERSITY™ is to, first, stop pigeonholing people and then, understand that what makes us diverse isn’t just what we see from the outside,” Karith says. “If you’re operating from the traditional DEI standpoint, it can be quite limiting.”

The program’s pillars include actualization, awareness, reception, courage, conscious communication, grace and energy. Its secret ingredient, according to Karith, is humor.

John Chisholm Ventures



John Chisholm

FOUNDER AND CEO

- ◆ Four decades of experience as an entrepreneur and investor
- ◆ Author, "Unleash Your Inner Company"
- ◆ Trustee, Santa Fe Institute
- ◆ Past President and Chair, MIT Alumni Association
- ◆ Former Trustee, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Corporation

SERVICES

- ◆ In-person workshops and keynote presentations. Workshops last from as little as 90 minutes to several days long

SPECIALTIES

- ◆ Entrepreneurship
- ◆ Innovation
- ◆ Education
- ◆ Economic growth and abundance
- ◆ Achieving human potential

johnchisholmventures.com

"To fight racism and sexism, we must refuse to think fast and superficially about people, and instead think slowly and deliberately about them."

Silicon Valley entrepreneur John Chisholm is a dedicated advocate for diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), but with a holistic twist. A long-time entrepreneur, thought leader and author, John works with entrepreneurs and corporate executives to start and grow businesses and strengthen company cultures. In higher education, he has collaborated with leadership at MIT, Harvard and other top universities to promote True Diversity through a deeper understanding of the individual.

As John says:

Diverse lived experiences and viewpoints improve our thinking, sharpen debate, foster innovation and can potentially mitigate or reverse harmful prejudices and polarization. Thousands of attributes make individuals diverse and unique. Alas, most DEI initiatives today have a problem: they narrowly focus on very few attributes, especially physical/identity ones, such as race and gender. Physical/identity attributes are just one of several categories of attributes that make individuals unique. Two other categories are cognitive/intellectual attributes — such as abstract vs. concrete thinking, risk aversion vs. risk neutrality and long- vs. short-term time horizons — and auxiliary attributes — such as geography/zip code, household income and civil organizations joined. What I call holistic diversity encompasses the whole individual — all three categories.

John says DEI initiatives today urgently need more emphasis on cognitive/intellectual attributes and auxiliary attributes. By ideologically prioritizing a few physical/identity attributes, today's DEI

initiatives reduce diversity in other important attributes. Conventional DEI's focus on readily visible race and gender is an example of "thinking fast," he says. These immediate reactions are akin to attacking or running away from a threat.

"Fast thinking is the very behavior that drives unwanted racial and gender discrimination. To fight racism and sexism, we must refuse to think fast and superficially about people, and instead think slowly and deliberately about them," he says. "Recognizing character, like most cognitive/intellectual attributes, requires slow, deliberate thinking. We should not disregard them just because they are not immediately visible."

Before John came out in his 30s, he knew that if he were chosen, promoted or elected, it was due to what he had contributed or accomplished, not to the fact he is gay. Now that he is openly gay, he can't always be certain. He believes no one should have to deal with that insecurity and uncertainty. To avoid undermining the very individuals we intend to serve, we instead need to use many dimensions of diversity with a light touch rather than a few dimensions with a sledgehammer.

"Resist the temptation to reduce standards, a recipe for mediocrity, to select or admit candidates based upon inclusion in any group. Instead, leverage marketing and outreach to grow candidate pools," he says.

John earned bachelor's and master's degrees in electrical engineering and computer science from MIT and an MBA from Harvard Business School. He has founded multiple Silicon Valley companies including Decisive Technology, now part of Google, and CustomerSat, now part of FocusVision.

Theory of Enchantment



Chloé Valdary

FOUNDER

- ◆ Entrepreneur, Lecturer and Writer
- ◆ Former Bartley Fellow, The Wall Street Journal

SERVICES

- ◆ Six-week intensives for teams who have already gone through initial Theory of Enchantment training
- ◆ Corporate workshops
- ◆ Monthly coaching with small workplace cohorts
- ◆ Self-paced home training composed of 25 video training sessions

SPECIALTIES

- ◆ Compassionate anti-racism
- ◆ Combining character development and interpersonal growth with social-emotional learning for leadership development

theoryofenchantment.com

"It also requires the willingness to see yourself as both a leader and a follower, or a teacher and a student, even if you're in the senior level at your workplace—and perhaps especially so."

Chloé Valdary, founder of Theory of Enchantment, believes that many popular antiracism and diversity training programs make workplaces, schools and other organizations more toxic. In some cases, she says, these trainings reinforce stereotypes and create further division. Theory of Enchantment focuses on love instead.

Chloé grew up in a strict Christian home where she was raised to observe many Jewish holidays and traditions. As she grew older, she began to observe anti-Semitic sentiment in others — something she believed the world had left behind. In a religious studies class her senior year of college, an agnostic professor defied Chloé's expectations by standing up for Christians, shattering the box Chloé had unconsciously placed her in.

Eventually, Chloé was inspired to create Theory of Enchantment to combat the dehumanization of individuals and groups based on race, gender, sexual orientation, physical attributes, religion or ideology.

“The Theory of Enchantment is an antiracism program that teaches participants how to successfully combat supremacy by learning how to love themselves and others,” she says. “We have three guiding principles. First, treat people like human beings, not political abstractions. Second, criticize to uplift and empower, never to tear down or destroy. Third, try to root everything you do in love and compassion.”

Theory of Enchantment promotes the idea of developing fully integrated individuals, a principle galvanized by Daoist philosophy.

“In truth, there is light in darkness and there is darkness in light,” Chloé says. “Each depends upon the other to exist. And for people to make peace with these complementary forces, we must make peace with how they show up within us.

“This requires the pursuit of an integrated, whole way of being, where we get in right relationship with our insecurities, baggage and other human ‘stuff,’ so that we’re less likely to project things we dislike about ourselves onto others.”

The framework Chloé has created focuses on compassionate antiracism, combining character development and interpersonal growth with social-emotional learning. Theory of Enchantment serves workplaces, alumni associations and individuals who want to educate themselves and their teams about antiracism through a lens of love and compassion. Through workshops, leadership intensives and online courses, Theory of Enchantment strives to educate without causing further division.

According to Chloé, leaders have the responsibility to create environments where people can feel like they belong. But that also means these leaders must be willing to become followers and students themselves.

“The senior team at an organization needs to have a conversation about whether or not it's willing to adopt a culture of practice and habit formation when it comes to this work, which is ultimately about creating a place of inclusion and belonging,” Chloé says.

“That means being willing to build new systems into the organization. It also requires the willingness to see yourself as both a leader and a follower, or a teacher and a student, even if you're in the senior level at your workplace — and perhaps especially so.”

Building new habits and culture into an organization means overhauling current systems. Theory of Enchantment helps organizations do this through entertaining, engaging education driven by pop culture.

About True Diversity

Philanthropy Roundtable's True Diversity initiative provides an equality-based and holistic framework for embracing diversity. It values every person as a unique individual and empowers charitable organizations with the freedom and flexibility to advance their missions and help those in need.

Learn more at [TrueDiversity.org](https://www.TrueDiversity.org).



About Philanthropy Roundtable

Philanthropy Roundtable is a nonprofit organization dedicated to building and sustaining a vibrant American philanthropic movement that strengthens our free society. To achieve this vision, the Roundtable pursues a mission to foster excellence in philanthropy, protect philanthropic freedom and help donors to advance liberty, opportunity and personal responsibility.



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