“A Dream is a Wish Your Heart Makes…”

Building Belonging from Birth On

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Welcome!

• Who am I?
  • Technical Assistance Coordinator – Midwest PBIS Network
  • PA School Psychologist of the Year (2021)
  • Wife
  • Mommy
  • Puppy Parent to “Biscuit”
  • IUP & Millersville University Alumnae
  • Former Cheerleader
  • Who did I want to be when I grew up: Janet Jackson
  • Disney Fanatic
Once upon a dream....
What is **Inclusion**?

Inclusion is defined as engagement within a community where the *equal worth* and *inherent dignity* of each person is *honored*. An inclusive community promotes and sustains a sense of belonging.

Source: Belonging Through a Culture of Dignity, Cobb & Krownapple, 2019
Inclusion Efforts

- **Identity** diversity and **Cognitive** diversity are important for inclusion.
- Diversity is **not** enough.
- There is a difference between diversity and inclusion.

Source: Belonging Through a Culture of Dignity, Cobb & Krownapple, 2019
When you wish upon a star....makes no difference who you are....
What is Belonging?

Experiencing appreciation, validation, acceptance, and fair treatment within an environment.

When people feel that they belong, they aren’t distracted and worried about being treated as a stereotype or a singular part of their multidimensional personhood.

Source: Belonging Through a Culture of Dignity, Cobb & Krownapple, 2019
The Value of **Belonging**

**Reflection:** Describe a time you felt the need to change or hide something about yourself, to conform, or to achieve something *in order to* gain acceptance or feel good about yourself.

- Belonging is just as important as access.
- *Belonging Uncertainty* (Walton & Cohen, 2007) – has the potential to undermine goals such as student learning or the recruitment and retention of a diverse staff.

Source: Belonging Through a Culture of Dignity, Cobb & Krownapple, 2019
Sacrificing Belonging for Access

Source: Floyd Cobb and John Krownapple. 2019. Belonging Through a Culture of Dignity: The Keys to Successful Equity Implementation
Putting Belonging Where It Belongs

Source: Floyd Cobb and John Krownapple. 2019. Belonging Through a Culture of Dignity: The Keys to Successful Equity Implementation
When Belonging is Absent – Employees

- Emotional Labor and Psychological Toll
- The Pressure to Perform Perfectly
- Navigating Assaults on Dignity

Source: The Diversity Gap, Wilkinson, 2021
Five Essentials for Workplace Mental Health & Well-Being
Almost there.....
10 Elements of Dignity

- Acceptance of Identity
- Recognition
- Acknowledgement
- Inclusion
- Safety
- Fairness
- Independence
- Understanding
- Benefit of the Doubt
- Accountability

Source: Leading with Dignity, Hicks, 2018.
When we honor others’ dignity, we strengthen our own.

– Donna Hicks, Ph.D.
10 Temptations to Violate Dignity

- Taking the Bait
- Saving Face
- Shirking Responsibility
- Depending on False Dignity
- Maintaining False Security
- Avoiding Confrontation
- Assuming Innocent Victimhood
- Resisting Feedback
- Blaming & Shaming Others
- Gossiping and Promoting False Intimacy

Source: Leading with Dignity, Hicks, 2018.
Dignity

“When we look through the lens of dignity, equity comes into clearer focus. Dignity answers the questions:

- Why are we doing this work?
- On what foundation are we building?
- What are we working for?”

Source: Belonging Through a Culture of Dignity, Cobb & Krownapple, 2019, p. 95
When we know better, we do better.
– Maya Angelou
Environmental Scan

Climate is the “heart and soul” of the environment (Freilberg & Stein, 1999)

- Do people feel like they belong?
- Can they call their environment their own?
- Or do they feel alienated?

Culture is the “way we do things around here”........

- To what extent does the organization honor dignity through individual behaviors and its organizational practices and policies?

Source: Belonging through a Culture of Dignity, Cobb & Krownapple, 2019
Sample Casualties of Conditional Belonging

- Drop Out
- Anxiety
- Othering
- False Dignity
- Self-Segregation

- Conformity
- Exhaustion
- Negativity
- Gangs, Cults, & Radicalization
- Emotional Numbing

Source: Belonging through a Culture of Dignity, Cobb & Krownapple, 2019
Belonging through Dignity

Belonging is the beat and rhythm that shows its vitality....

Dignity is the blood that enlivens it....

Relationships are the heart of equity....

Source: Belonging through a Culture of Dignity, Cobb & Krownapple, 2019, p. 98
How far I’ll go.....
Life is a highway.....

What should we start, stop, or continue?
Surface Pressure

WHAT IS OUR “WHY”?

WHAT IS OUR MISSION, VISION, AND ULTIMATE GOAL?
The bare necessities

We need to hear from those we serve.

Are we listening?
Into the Unknown.....

• Are we seeing the outcomes we value?
• Is our system shifting?
• Are we retaining our staff of varying backgrounds?
• What are the learners saying?
• How are families/communities responding?
Circle of Life....
I’ve got a dream....
Where does the dream begin........to build belonging from birth on?

- You need other dreamers.
- You need an “authentic” why?
- You need a logic model
- You need to create a groundswell
- You need to empower the other dreamers
What gets in the way of the dream?

- Time
- Priorities
- Leadership support
- Societal pressure
- Legislative processes and delays
- Burnout
How do we honor dignity in ourselves and others who are trying to understand or resist the dream?

- Authentic Listening
- Develop Trust
- Encourage Vulnerability
- Engage in empathy
- “Go to the Balcony” – R. Heifetz
- Own responsibility

Source: Leading with Dignity, Hicks, 2018.
Lessons Learned

1. Build your coalition of the willing.

2. Never be afraid to dream for yourself and others.


4. Understand that no one owns the work of work worth doing - be ok with no credit.

5. There will be barriers to your dream, but it doesn’t mean the barriers will always be there. Navigate the journey.
“For there is always light. If only we’re brave enough to see it. If only we’re brave enough to be it.”

-Amanda Gorman
Thank you!

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