Ohio Self Determination Association

Diversity

Policy and Procedure

Policy Statement:

Diversity includes differences like race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion, financial status, a variety of disabilities and other traits, along with different experiences and abilities.

More than just appearing diverse, OSDA is committed to ensuring that its board, Council of Ohio Leaders and everyone is engaged, feels included and that their unique viewpoints and contributions are truly respected and valued.

When looking to engage an individual, OSDA will first define what experience, knowledge of the field, etc., is needed. Then look for an individual who meets those requirements and who would also bring more diversity to the work, including those who meet the requirements and communicate differently.

Recognize that the differences and diverse traits of a person, whatever they may be, should be supported and used to create equality.

Definitions:

Diversity for OSDA, means having different kinds of people with various viewpoints, experiences and ideas. This can lead to better ways of solving problems, making decisions, and creating a fair and welcoming environment.

It's important for organizations like ours to go beyond just looking diverse. We should aim for real diversity, fairness, and inclusion by providing meaningful opportunities for people from different backgrounds.

Intersectionality is the idea that multiple forms of inequality* (not treated the same) and discrimination can compound to create unique challenges for people with multiple identities. It's a way of thinking about how social categories like race, gender, class, sexual orientation, and ability are interconnected and shape a person's experiences.

Tokenism means including someone to show diversity without truly valuing their input. Tokenism can make people feel left out or used, instead of appreciated for what they genuinely bring to the table.

Actions to Promote Diversity:

- Encourage more diversity on boards of other organizations in the disability system and in local communities (city councils, civic groups, Chambers of Commerce, etc.).
- Recognize the importance of Intersectionality – Acknowledging the various aspects of our individual stories makes someone who they are. And how those traits – whether it's race, disability, gender or sexuality – can all impact the reason someone is part of a group and can change depending on the group the individual is with.

*__Inequality__ means: Everyone is not treated the same. There is a lack of equity and fair treatment in sharing of wealth or opportunities.

Equality means: Refers to the quality or state of having the same level of rights and opportunities to all.

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