

## My View of the World

Description: An interactive exercise to help the definition of culture “come alive”.

**Culture:** A socially transmitted worldview learned and shared by a group which influences **values, beliefs, customs and behaviors** and which is reflected in their language, material culture, food and social institutions.

Needed: Space for participants to line up on a continuum.

Facilitator Comments: Our personal culture has a great impact on how we view the world and the people around us. We all know this but sometimes it is good to have a reminder of how even small things can make a difference in how we interact with others and go about our work. Let’s take a few examples.

First, let’s pretend that this wall (or other space) has a continuum on it – from 1 – 10. (*Indicate where the continuum will be.*)

I am going to give you a statement and I want you to line up on the continuum according to how you relate to that statement. After you have placed yourself on the continuum gather with 2 – 3 other folks at the same place or close to you. Ask yourselves, “How does where I am on the continuum, affect my values, beliefs, customs and behaviors (view of the world) and how I interact with those around me?” Discuss in your small group.

For example, I might say to you, “Line up on the continuum according to whether you prefer sweet foods or salty foods. Then you would discuss how this preference has affected your world. Such as, I don’t really like sweet foods so I don’t go out to ice cream with my work mates. So sometimes I miss out on social/bonding times with the group.

Statement #1: Line up in the continuum according to how many siblings you grew up with during your childhood.

You may define “siblings” however you want. One end of the continuum is 0 or only children and the other end of the continuum is 5 or more siblings. (*Indicate to the participants which end of the continuum is 0 and which is 5+*)

Gather with 2 – 3 others in your area of the continuum and discuss how growing up in this size of family may have **influenced your values, beliefs, customs and behaviors**. (*If there is time, small groups may share one or two thoughts or you may just go on to the next statement.*)

Statement #2: Line up on the continuum according to how many languages were spoken or that you heard on a regular basis in your home as you were growing up.

Statement #3: Line up on the continuum according to the highest level of education one or both of your parents attained.

Statement #4: Line up on the continuum according to the role that religion or spirituality played in your home as you were growing up.

Statement #5: Line up on the continuum according to the size of the community where you grew up.

Statement #6: Line up on the continuum according to how many times you moved until you were 18.

Statement #7: Line up on the continuum according to the social-economic status of your growing up family.

Statement #8: Line up on the continuum according to how much your ethnic heritage was referred to or celebrated in your growing up home.

#### Adaptations:

- If there is not space for a continuum in the room, participants may gather in small groups and discuss their similarities and differences.
- Any statements may be used to fit the needs of the group as long as the statements reflect the culture in which the participants were born.

#### Reflection Questions:

- What happened in your small groups? Were you surprised by anything that was shared or that you realized about yourself?
- How does thinking about your view of the world possibly affect how you view others and their view of the world?
- How does what you realized or learned in this exercise possibly change how you might interact with others in your workplace?

#### Follow Up Thoughts:

- Everyone has a culture.
- We have no control over the culture we were born into or how we were taught about our culture.
- What we do have control over is **HOW** we use our awareness of our own personal culture to interact with others.