APPRECIATING DIVERSITY: A WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

About the Training Program

Each of us comes into the world of work with features and ways of behaving that are the products of our cultural differences. Cultural uniqueness is viewed by some as important and valuable in the workplace. Others find cultural differences awaken feelings of discomfort, uncertainty, and fear. The communication process can be both a barrier and a bridge to effective interactions.

Most research suggests that our work worlds are going to reflect an even greater degree of cultural diversity than previously experienced. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics predicts that in the next ten years, ethnic and racial minorities will grow seven times faster than the white population. Women now hold 47.3 percent of all jobs in the United States. Americans with disabilities represent the single largest untapped resource for the job market.

Maximizing and capitalizing on workplace diversity is the challenge for employees in the future workplace. The ability to interact and communicate effectively across cultures is emerging as the number-one interpersonal skill of our time. Toward this end, this program is designed as an introductory experience in building effective interaction and communication in diverse groups.

Training Objectives

Participants will have the following opportunities:

- To review their own ethnic, racial, and cultural uniqueness;
- To explore how one’s culture influences workplace behaviors;
- To become aware of and appreciate the cultural styles and values of different groups and individuals within these groups; and

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Designed by Marie Amey-Taylor.
• To learn and practice using a human relations model to analyze and enhance intercultural relationships.

**PROGRAM OUTLINE**

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I. Opening Activities

A. Why Diversity Training? (Presentation)

1. Introduce yourself briefly and move toward establishing rapport with your group members by conveying your interest and expertise in the topic. Expect varied levels of interest and ease with the topic itself. Express your admiration for their willingness to participate in diversity training. Acknowledge that a degree of anxiety and feelings of anticipation are natural.

3. Review training objectives and agenda. Use a handout and/or post on a flip chart.

B. Ask Me Anything (Group Inquiry)

1. Point out to participants that our initial assumptions about others influence our ability to listen and learn from others. Ask participants to think about assumptions they might have already formed about you, the trainer. Mention that a key feature of this training program is its focus on ways to check out assumptions, self-disclose, and affirm individual uniqueness. These activities are viewed as risky by some. To demonstrate your willingness to model risk-taking behavior early in the training, open yourself up for questions—any questions—from the group. (This is not as brave as it appears, for most questions will focus on professional expertise, interest in the topic, and “safe” personal information.)

2. Provide additional information about yourself that you assume others might want to know but are too cautious or polite to ask. Use humor and keep the tone of the activity light.

C. You Can’t Judge a Book . . . (Icebreaker; Materials: Blank Bingo Sheets)

1. Ask participants to look around the room and think about assumptions they might have formed about one another. Explain that this activity is an enjoyable way to get acquainted and to see that one cannot judge another by his or her appearance. Distribute blank bingo sheets. Instruct participants to mingle, filling in each square with the name of a different participant, in addition to the person’s name, participants are asked to solicit from each person one thing that someone would never guess
about them from simply looking at them. Participants are encouraged to make brief notes next to the person’s name.

2. Ask participants to mingle for approximately five minutes or until all the bingo squares have been filled. Start the process by calling out a name of a participant (e.g., Mary). Have Mary identify herself. Then say, “This is Mary. I bet you would never guess that Mary __________.” Ask Mary to share with the group why she is attending the workshop. All who have Mary on their bingo sheets place an X through the square containing Mary’s name. Tell participants to yell, “Bingo! when they have a full row of X’s (horizontally, vertically, or diagonally). (Everyone will eventually get Bingo several times.)

3. Next, ask Mary to call on a name from her bingo sheet. The process is repeated until all members have been introduced.

4. Commend participants on their first step in the process of self-disclosure and remind them that they will be sharing some controversial feelings and it is important that they begin to feel comfortable with each other.

D. Vive La Difference (Small-Group Discussion; Materials: Post-it ® Pad)

1. Introduce the activity by discussing how society rewards conformity and minimizes, even ignores, diversity. Indicate, however, that in this activity, individual uniqueness is valued. Explain that the small groups formed through this activity will maximize the diversity in the group and thus provide a setting in which participants can simulate and practice real-life behaviors. Mention that participants will remain in these small groups throughout much of the program.

2. Give each participant six Post-it ® sheets or stick-on notes. Ask participants to write on each a label that might distinguish them from some or all of the other participants. Examples of categories: gender, ethnicity, race, age, physical characteristics, sexual orientation, religion, place of birth, educational level, language differences, economic status, and birth order.

3. Have participants stick their labels on their clothing and then instruct them to stand and mingle, advertising their uniqueness. On the basis of what participants find out about the uniqueness of each one, ask them to form small groups consisting of no more than six members. Request that the composition of each group should reflect the greatest amount of diversity possible.

4. Post on the flip chart the following discussion generators and invite the small groups to share responses with one another:

   a. How did you select the characteristics you chose to advertise?
b. What feeling did you have as you mingled and advertised your uniqueness?
c. How did your small group come together?
d. What benefits can be derived through participation in your diverse small groups?

5. Ask participants to read their six labels and to retain their labels for a later activity.
6. Optional Activity: Have each small group give itself a name and create an interesting way of presenting itself and its group members to the large group.

II. Examining Differences

A. Who Gets a Heart Transplant? (Simulation; Materials: Forms A, B)

1. Indicate that the process of exploring areas of bias, stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination can be anxiety producing. To minimize social discomfort and maximize open discussion, explain that a simulation activity will be used to start.

2. Distribute copies of Form A. Instruct participants to make choices individually, without consultation with others. After participants have circled their choices on the forms, direct each small group to arrive at a group decision.

3. After small-group decisions have been made, distribute Form B. Ask participants to answer these questions individually and then to discuss them in their small groups.

4. Ask each small group to select a spokesperson who will summarize the small group’s discussion. The spokesperson will also announce the choices of his or her small group.

B. Headband Activity (Simulation; Materials: Prepared Paper Headbands)

1. In advance, write labels on headbands that reflect areas of difference relevant to the group. Suggested labels include the following: single parent, highly educated, homosexual, physically handicapped, Naming disabled, over sixty, under twenty-five, HIV positive, Native American, African American, Jewish, Puerto Rican, Mexican American, Chicano, Chinese American, African, and West Indian.

2. Ask participants to form circles containing no more than ten members. Hand each participant a headband and ask him or her to tie it across his or her forehead without reading what is written on it. (Members can clearly see one another’s labels but not their own.)

3. Give the small groups this decision-making task to perform” “Role play an employee group charged with the responsibility of determining merit increases for its mem-
bers. The problem is that all but three members can receive increases this year. The other members must wait until next year and try again.”

4. Tell the group they have only twenty minutes to decide and the decision must be unanimous. Instruct participants not to share with another person what label he or she is wearing but to treat one another as they would treat people of the labeled group.

5. Process the activity initially by asking each participant to guess what his or her headband said and to discuss how he or she discerned the label.

6. Post on the flip chart the following discussion generators and invite the group members to share responses with one another:

   • How did it feel to wear a label? Would it have felt better if you had known what it said or had been able to choose another label?

   • Did you treat others according to their labels? Why? Why not? Did you find your behavior changed over the course of the activity? What factors influenced your behavior?

   • Did you feel empowered or disempowered by your role? How? Why?

   • What did you learn about your ability to stereotype and to respond and react to the stereotypic behaviors of others?

C. Self-Assessment of Intercultural Experiences (Questionnaire; Materials: Form C)

1. Distribute copies of Form C. Ask participants to complete it individually and share the results with a seat partner within their small group. (Odd numbers become triads.)

2. Request that the checklist be set aside until the planning section near the end of the program.

III. The Johari Window: Expanding the Intercultural Arena

A. An Overview of the Model (Guided Teaching; Materials: Form D)

1. Provide the background on the Johari Window Model and the rationale for its use in this program.
• The model is named after its co-developers, Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham, two psychologists.

• The Johari Window can be viewed as a communication-and-interpersonal relation window through which information about oneself and others is given, received, and revealed.

• The model will be used to frame discussions and activities designed to increase the level of openness, trust, and positive interpersonal relations within the small groups. It is anticipated that the large group will be influenced positively by changes within the small groups. Organizations are impacted in the same way. Changes within individuals and within work units ultimately enhance relationships and increase productivity in organizations as a whole.

2. Introduce the model by asking participants what makes relationships work and what gets in the way of positive and productive relationships. Record responses and post on newsprint.

3. Distribute Form D and describe the Johari Window. Connect the posted responses to the relevant panes of the window. For example:

• Public arena: shared experiences, trust, information sharing.

• Hidden area: fears, secrets, lack of information sharing.

• Blind area: problems with giving and receiving feedback and retaliatory behavior.

• Unknown area: unconscious behavior.

   Explain that the overall goal for this part of the program is to increase the public arena in each group by reducing the blind, hidden, and unknown panes.

4. To check for understanding of the model and to provide a baseline drawing for comparison later in the program, ask participants to individually draw a Johari Window of their small group. Draw contrasting examples on a flip chart to guide participants’ drawings (e.g., make the unknown pane very large in one sketch and the public pane large in another).

5. Allow a few moments for participants to compare their windows.

### B. Unlocking the Unknown (Mental Imagery)

1. Remind participants that the unknown arena contains information known to no one. This arena represents early childhood memories, latent potentials, and unrecognized resources and desires.

2. Explain that a mental-imagery activity will be used to unlock stored information from within the unknown and bring feelings and events into focus. Conduct warm-up activities to open the mind’s eye, such as asking participants, with their eyes closed,
to try to visualize a rosebud, their bedroom, a changing traffic light, or the patter of rain.

3. Use the following script as is or with your own modifications. * Remember to pause frequently, allowing participants’ images to form.

   Close your eyes and find a comfortable position for your entire body. Breathe in and out deeply several times. Notice the rhythm of your breathing. Go back to a time when you remember feeling “different.” If you can, go back to a childhood memory. How old were you? Where were you? What were you doing? Who else was there? What was that person like? Did anyone say anything to you or to someone else? What did he or she say or do? How did you respond? How did you feel?

   Now remember a more recent time when you felt “different.” Where were you? What were you doing? Who else was there? What was that person like? Did anyone say or do anything? How did you respond or react? How did you feel? Finally, I want you to remember a time when you heard someone whose opinion you respected say something hurtful, harmful, or stereotypic about a “different” individual or group. The remark could have come from a member of your family, community, church, synagogue, mosque, or school. What was said? What was your reaction? How did the information mesh with your reality? What did you say or do? Slowly begin to return to the present. Remember this building, this room, your seat, and the people around you. I am going to ask you to share your images with your small group. When you are ready, open your eyes.

4. Ask participants, in their small groups, to discuss their personal images and memories, noting how earlier experiences have influenced the persons they have become. Ask them to share how their reactions to being or feeling “different” have changed as they have grown older? End with a general large-group discussion. Remind participants that the public arena should increase as information is released and shared from the unknown.

C. Minimizing the Facade (Small-Group Discussion; Materials: Forms E, F)

1. Information from the hidden is released through self-disclosure. Because there is a real element of risk taking inherent in self-disclosure, two activities, varying in their levels of self-disclosure, are described. It is recommended that you assess the group’s desire and comfort level and select the appropriate activity or do both.

2. Autobiography Activity. Distribute Form E. Ask participants to complete the worksheet individually and then to share responses with their small-group members. Each group sets its own rules and methods for the sharing. Cover these key points as you

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* Adapted from a guided imagery by Elise Freed-Fagan, Ph.D., President, Freed-Fagan Associates. Used with permission.
process the activity:

- There are different levels of self-disclosure. It is generally easier to talk about events and feelings occurring “there and then” than to discuss thoughts and feelings occurring “here and now.”
- Fear is a great deterrent to self-disclosure.
- Our self-disclosing often gives others “permission” to self-disclose also.
- The level and nature of self-disclosed information should be appropriate to the type of relationship being established.
- The public arena expands as it accepts information from the hidden arena.

3. *Ethnic Family Stereotypes Activity.* This activity may produce deeper levels of self-disclosure. Distribute Form F. Ask participants to complete worksheets individually and then to share responses in their small groups. Large-group processing points can include the following:

- There are probably more differences within groups than there are between groups.
- Perceived differences are often a matter of language and style differences and not of significant value differences.
- Are some generalizations about cultural groups true? What is the connection between generalizations and stereotypes?
- How influenced are we as adults by lessons taught by our family of origin?
- How do organizations like families relate to inculcating of values?

■ **D. Sticks and Stones (Writing Task)**

1. This activity serves two basic purposes. It is a cathartic experience and is an opportunity to learn how stereotypic remarks and other oppressive behaviors have affected others in very personal and sometimes private ways. This can be a highly charged activity and can bring many emotions to the surface. Give clear instructions, guide the groups gently through this experience, and give participants permission to emote as the need arises.

2. Ask participants to retrieve Post-it® notes set aside from the “Vive La Difference” activity. Have each participant select from the labels those two that have invoked the greatest degree of prejudicial and/or discriminatory behavior toward him or her. Ask each participant to recollect statements or comments made about each of the two labels and make a list for each label. Ask participants to code each list according to the following criteria:
• Statements that are true.
• Statements that are false.
• Beliefs and actions based on the statements that have been the basis for discriminatory behaviors against them.
• One statement they never want to hear again.

3. Instruct participants to discuss the results of their individual findings within their small groups. You may model the process by sharing examples of statements and behaviors that are from your own experiences and are related to your own cultural group(s). Stress the importance of empathetic listening (listening with and for feelings). Ask participants to focus on the feelings that come up for them personally and to state something they now realize about others that they had not realized before the activity.

■ E. Reducing the Blind Arena (Feedback Activity)

1. Remind participants that the blind arena contains information known to others and not to self. Information from this arena is released into the public arena through the processes of giving and receiving feedback.

2. Explain that feedback is information sharing for the purpose of facilitating and enhancing interpersonal communication. Encourage discussion on barriers to both giving and receiving feedback.

3. Discuss how values related to feedback are based on cultural factors and how differences exist across cultures. Relate the discussion to when, where, how, and even if feedback is to be given or received. Explore differences in the group by soliciting individual preferences and behaviors.

4. Using the flip chart, generate a list of guidelines for giving and receiving beneficial feedback. Post sheets and instruct participants to refer to them as the activity proceeds.

5. Describe the problem of facilitating the giving and receiving of feedback in a workshop environment when information about others may be scant and superficial. Point out, however, that most people make amazingly quick assessments of others, in large part because first impressions are often reflective of cultural assumptions, stereotypes, and areas of difference.

6. Ask participants to share within their small groups their “first impressions” and “current impressions” of one another. Remind participants that reactions to differences in appearance, grooming, verbal and nonverbal communication, rules of courtesy, and ways of thinking and behaving are all influenced by cultural differences. For example, braided hair is seen as attractive in some cultural groups and a political statement by others.
7. Complete the Johari-window section of the program by asking participants to redraw their small-group windows based on how they now see their group. Allow time for small groups to compare windows. Solicit comments on the differences in the windows drawn now and those drawn earlier in the training. Reinforce the point that through the examination of differences, self-disclosure, and feedback, more meaningful and productive relationships emerge. As public arenas expand and relationships change, so do work groups and organizations.

■ IV. Planning for Change

■ A. Experiencing Change (Game; Materials: Form G)

1. Ask participants to pair off by finding someone in the full group with whom they have had little interaction. Request that the pairs face each other and observe their partners for thirty seconds. Then ask the pairs to turn their backs to each other and change three things about themselves. After ample time, instruct pairs to face each other and share what they see. Allow time for the exchange of observations and reactions. Instruct pairs to turn back-to-back again and change three new things. Once again, have participants face each other and guess the changes they have made. Ask participants to return to their seats.

2. Encourage participants to share their personal reactions and observations to this activity. Focus the discussion through the use of the following questions:

- What did you experience when you were first given the instructions to look at your partner for thirty seconds?
- How comfortable were you with changing three things? Would another number have been better? Did you need additional instructions?
- What did you think about as you began to make the changes? Were you satisfied with the results of your efforts?
- What were your thoughts and feelings as you turned to face your partner? What were the differences in being an observer and being observed? How did your partner’s reactions to the activity appear similar or dissimilar to your own?
- How did you experience being asked to make three additional changes?
- Observe what you have done now that the activity is over. Have you undone the changes you made during the activity?

3. Distribute Form G. Review the sheet by soliciting information from participants on times when they attempted to make changes in their attitudes, assumptions, and behaviors related to cultural differences. Get an example for each item on the handout, if possible.
■ B. Swiss-Cheese Planning (Writing Task; Materials: Form C Completed, Form G)

1. Invite participants to consider a personal goal for enhancing an interpersonal relationship in which multicultural differences exist.

2. Ask participants to revisit their Form C and notice patterns and/or strengths, skills, and resources that could be used to support the attainment of their goals.

3. Have participants write their goal on a single sheet of paper. Have them fold the paper in half and then in quarters. Accuracy is unimportant. Ask each person to now tear out several pieces from the edges, no smaller than a quarter. **Make sure participants save the pieces they have torn out; they are important.**

4. Instruct participants to open up the large piece of paper. It will resemble a piece of Swiss cheese. Generate discussion about whether the goal appears as formidable as before. Ask participants to speculate on what the smaller pieces are, in relationship to the goal.

5. Explain that the smaller pieces are action steps. Ask participants to review Form G and consider what reinforcements and rewards will be needed to support their efforts related to the attainment of their goal. Then direct participants to write one action step on each of the smaller pieces of paper. Then have plans shared in small groups.

■ V. Closing Activities

■ A. Reminiscing (Full-Group Discussion)

1. Challenge participants to recall, in order, the activities they experienced during the day. Post the results on a flip chart.

2. Ask them to reminisce about these experiences, recalling moments of fun, cooperation, and insight.

■ B. Connections (Experiential Activity; Materials: Yarn)

1. Briefly review the program and invite participants to ask any final questions about ideas, information, and activities presented in the program.

2. Use a skein of yarn to literally and symbolically connect participants. Ask everyone to stand and form a circle. Start the process by stating briefly what you have experienced as a result of facilitating the program. Holding on to the end of the yarn, toss
the skein to a participant on the other side of the circle. Have each person take a
turn at receiving the skein, sharing reflections, and tossing the yarn while continuing to hold on to a piece. The resulting visual is a web of yarn connecting every member of the group. Complete the program by stating that the program began as a collection of individuals willing to learn from and with each other. Cut the yarn with scissors so that each person leaves, as they came, as an individual, but taking a piece of one another. Thank participants for their interest, ideas, time, and effort.
The Heart-Transplant Experience

You are a member of a surgical team at the World’s Greatest Hospital. All the patients listed below MUST receive a heart transplant TODAY or else they will die. There are only TWO hearts available and YOU must decide, from this list, which two patients will be heart-donor recipients.

1. A seventy-year-old female U.S. Senator credited with creating and protecting the nation’s first National Health Plan.
2. A Hispanic ex-offender who is a very successful drug dealer. His “business” allows him to hire community youth, support his entire extended family of fifteen, and be perceived by the community as a leader.
3. An African-American Vietnam veteran and amputee who created a national training program for people with disabilities. He is under investigation for possible embezzlement of program funds to support a known gambling addiction.
4. A White fifteen-year-old female who tested intellectually “gifted.” She is on drugs and supports her habit through prostitution.
5. A scientist/researcher who is known to be closely associated with a white-supremacist group and is very close to discovering a cure for AIDS.
6. An ex-Roman-Catholic priest who works with small children in a day-care center. He is a homosexual and a strong gay-rights advocate. His lover recently tested HIV positive.

Based on an activity modified by Kenneth Hawkins & Associates, Vacaville, CA.
APPRECIATING DIVERSITY

FORM B

The Heart-Transplant Experience Processing Questions

1. What was your initial reaction to being asked to make choices?

2. How comfortable were you in sharing your choices and reasons with your group members?

3. What factors might have prevented you from speaking freely and sharing your thoughts and opinions with others?

4. What were your choices based on?
   - actual personal experiences
   - the experiences of those close to you
   - media information
   - other source(s)

5. How close were the group’s choices to your own? What were your reactions to that?

Based on an activity modified by Kenneth Hawkins & Associates, Vacaville, CA.
APPRECIATING DIVERSITY
FORM C

Multicultural-Interactions Checklist

Place a check next to the “yes” statements.

WHEN I INTERACT MULTICULTURALLY, GENERALLY I:

1. ____ accept opinions different from my own.
2. ____ expect multicultural misunderstandings to occur sometimes.
3. ____ feel comfortable in groups in which I am a minority.
4. ____ welcome the challenges of interacting with others who speak or act differently from me.
5. ____ have a close friend of another race/ethnic/cultural group.
6. ____ do not tell or listen to ethnic jokes.
7. ____ catch myself when old assumptions related to one’s age, sex, state of physical ability, etc., undermine multicultural interactions.
8. ____ ask, “What’s going on here?” and change gears or communication styles when communication problems occur.
9. ____ think intercultural/interracial/interfaith marriages are a good thing.
10. ____ am involved in doing something about the social injustices I see in my workplace and my community.
11. ____ can respect life-style differences based on sexual orientation.
12. ____ give honest and practical feedback; I do not “walk on egg shells” when communicating, across cultures.
13. ____ avoid hot buttons, sexualized expressions, inappropriate touching, and causing public loss of faith.
14. ____ understand how my family of origin has influenced my attitudes about cultural differences.
# APPRECIATING DIVERSITY

## FORM D

**The Johari Window**

One of the best-known diagrams in the training field is the “Johari Window.” The window describes how we give and receive information about ourselves and others. The window has four “panes,” as shown below.

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<th>Public Arena</th>
<th>Blind Area</th>
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<th>Hidden Area</th>
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- The **public** arena pertains to thoughts and feelings that have already been openly expressed in a group or relationship.
- The **blind** area refers to feedback that group members have not received.
- The **hidden** area refers to thoughts and feelings that group members have not disclosed.
- The **unknown** represents thoughts and feelings that neither you nor others are consciously aware of.

By depicting communication with a window, the developers of the model, Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham, are able to make an interesting point: For the “public arena” to increase in a group or relationship, it is necessary to decrease the “blind area” and the “hidden area” in the relationship. This increase can happen only if you reveal some of your secrets and others let you know about your blind spots. This process is achieved by giving and receiving feedback and self-disclosure. A by-product of such communication is the likelihood that previously “unknown” information will be uncovered.

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APPRECIATING DIVERSITY
FORM E

Autobiography

1. If I were a vegetable, which one would I be?

2. What is something I feel proud of about my work and/or the people I work with?

3. If my life story were to be made into a movie, what actor/actress would play me?

4. What is something I have learned, in the past week, from someone different from me?
5. If I could invite any two people (dead or alive) to dinner, whom would I choose?

6. What is an assumption I have had about another cultural group that has proved to be wrong?

7. What is something about my own ethnic/racial/cultural group that makes me proud?

8. What is something about my own group that makes me uncomfortable?
APPRECIATING DIVERSITY
FORM F

Ethnic Family Stereotypes, Myths, and Realities

Determine the degree of emphasis ascribed to each of the items below by your family of origin. Code each item according to the family code” H= high emphasis, M = medium emphasis, and L = low emphasis.

1. _____ Individuality/Uniqueness
2. _____ Emotional expression
3. _____ Behavioral rules and expectations
4. _____ Emphasis on sex roles
5. _____ Impact of ethnicity/influence of culture
6. _____ Importance of “family”
7. _____ Degree of discussion of problems
8. _____ Importance of work
9. _____ Importance of individual relationships within the family
10. _____ Emphasis on education
11. _____ Emphasis on financial success
12. _____ Emphasis on attainment of power/status/prestige
13. _____ Importance on working systems to one’s advantage
14. _____ Emphasis on being a team player
15. _____ Concern for how one is perceived by others
16. _____ Emphasis on risk taking
17. _____ Importance of being assertive
18. _____ Importance of being a role model for one’s ethnic/cultural/etc, group
Factors of Change

• Anxiety, awkwardness, and discomfort are natural.

• External/superficial/easy changes are sought first.

• People first think, “What do I have to lose?” instead of “What can I gain?”

• There are different levels of readiness for change.

• Feelings of going through the process alone are common.

• If new behaviors are not reinforced, the tendency is to revert to previous behavior.

• Establishing a support system can facilitate the change process.