

Creating a Welcoming Environment- Organization Styles that Build Diversity

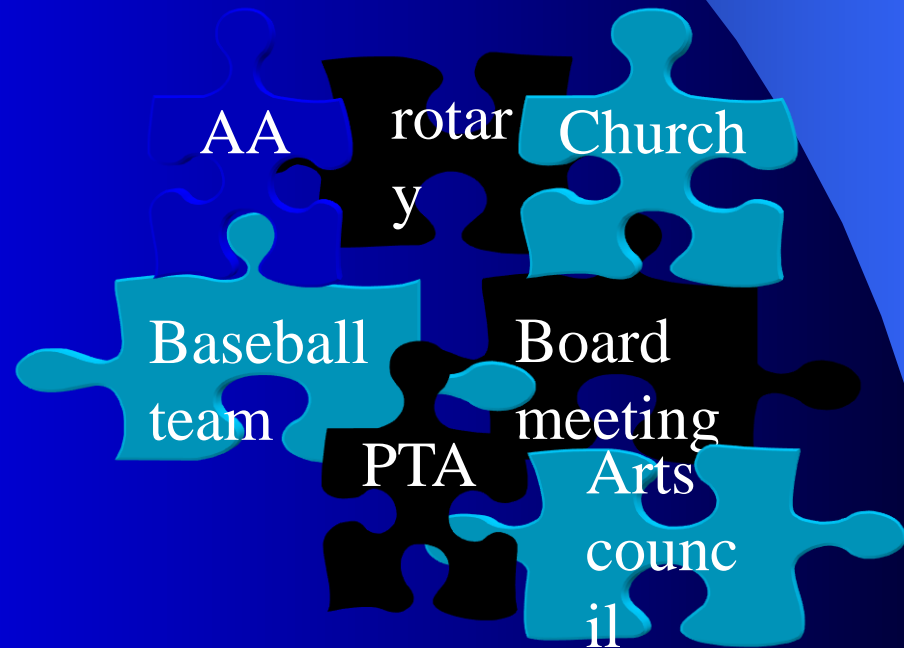
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Brainstorm

- What are the meetings you regularly attend
- What is the style of those meetings?



Meeting Styles

- Roberts Rules of Order
- Collective order
- Consensus
- Interactive group participation
- Top down order
- Bottom up order

The importance of inclusivity

- Why is it important to your group to include new people?
- How does including new people strengthen your organization?
- Is there a target group you would like to include?
- How does that group benefit from engaging with your group?

Sample Questions

Question 1

Imagine it is a warm summer evening. Your neighborhood meeting is located a few blocks off a very popular street with lots of shops, restaurants and coffee shops. One of your long time members arrives at the meeting in a wheelchair. He has been temporarily disabled due to an injury. He very much wants to attend the meeting but there are several steps into the building.

What could you suggest?

- Ask coffee shop to host and put sign on door for meeting notice
- Ask if they want assistance and what type
- One association built a removable wood ramp together
- Have group move outside
- The meetings should always be accessible

Question 2

- Imagine there is a prominent Russian business owner in your neighborhood. She is very well liked and many Russians that live in the area look to her as a community leader. She has expressed some interest in the neighborhood association, but she has limited English. Brining her into the neighborhood association would guarantee more engagement from the Russian community in your neighborhood.

What could you do to engage her?

- Find bilingual speaker to translate and meet with
- Build relationships; engage youth that can assist and also be involved
- Ask her if there is a barrier to participate and what we can do
- Find funds for interpreter
- Translate some or all of newsletters and agendas
- Be cautious using children to translate for parents; overshadows parents'/elders' voice
- Organize potluck or event with Russian community rather than start with integration into the group
- Neighborhood associations could use a portion of their budget to pay for translation since today it is highly in demand as a paid service

Question 3

Imagine two of your association members have recently become single parents; one through a divorce, one through a death. They each have attempted to remain involved by bringing their children to meetings, but the children are bored and get disruptive. You value these members and want them to remain involved.

What could you do to support their members?

- Some groups arrange for paid childcare at all times
- Have activities and space for kids at meetings; also let older kids participate
- Foster good communication effort with parents
- Have group donate items for kids to play with at meetings and bring in bin of toys
- Use communication funds for childcare
- Find other non-meeting activities for parents to be involved, organize cleanup
- Allow kids to be active and run around as parents will deal with any issues

What new strategies can you use to create a welcoming environment?

- Start meetings early for social time
- Do more outreach before the meetings; word of mouth is effective and has doubled participation
- Get pulse of community; survey at events why people don't come to neighborhood association meetings
- Move meetings to more neutral, welcoming and public locations from churches to schools and coffee shops when possible
- Use positive tone and recognize all contributions
- Conduct outreach to different cultural and social groups; engage liaisons to go to the diverse community groups and invite them
- At the beginning let everyone introduce themselves and why they came
- Send out a pre-agenda to incite interest on new topics and distribute in public places a week prior to the meetings

Creating change

- Developing the implementation plan
- Is there a meeting that needs to happen to approve this plan/ how does your system work?
- Who will be a part of the greeting committee?
- Evaluation- How will you know if it worked?

In closing



- What ideas have you come up with to create a welcoming environment in your group,
- how will you implement it and:
- how will you evaluate it's success