**Diversity and Inclusion Audit of Hillside Family of Agencies**

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**Abstract**

The purpose of this field research project was to identify a need for diversity and inclusion in the workplace.  The field research project aimed at assessing the culture in the workplace, groups impacted by discriminatory practices, organizational workplace distress and the need for inclusive practices. The data was collected by completing face to face interviews with upper management selected from a committee who attempts to identify cultural competence issues in the workplace, using open-ended questions in a controlled setting. The individuals interviewed were purposefully selected from upper management to gage an understanding of their awareness and understanding of the need for diverse and inclusive policies, protocols and procedures. The data that was collected was used to compile a group paper with no intent to use the data for externally.

**Introduction and Researched Organization**

Theory confirms that each individual culture has its own exclusive context and characteristics which creates their unique definitions of diversity (Mor Barak, 2014). This is also true for organizational cultures and how they define and implement diversity and inclusion in their company. People’s ability to identify themselves as part of a diverse group or to share diversity characteristics affects their perception of inclusion and exclusion (Mor Barak, 2014). This paper will audit the organizational culture of Hillside Family of Agencies and its sub-department Bridges to Health regarding organizational policies towards diversity and workers perception of inclusion.

    Hillside Family of Agencies is a child-and family non-profit human service organization, that is considered one of the largest and oldest human service organization of its kind in the United States. The organization was founded in 1837 and partners with youth, adults, and families to ensure and provide care in the areas of individualized health and education through their integrated care system (Hillside, n.d.). The organization offers physical and mental health services, child welfare, youth development, special education, juvenile justice and developmental disabilities services to Western and Central New York, Washington, DC, and Prince George’s County, MD.  According to Hillside’s website, the organization served an estimated 14,000 diverse youth and families in 2017 across 120 different programs (Hillside, n.d.). The demographic profile of those served by Hillside includes 54% female and 46% male clients, 44% African American, 30% Caucasian, 14% Hispanic or Latino, 8% Multi-racial, 4% other race or ethnicity. Hillside Family of Agencies also served clients with a diverse age range including 12% ages zero to ten, 67% between the ages of 11-18, 8% ages 19 to 26 and 13% ages 27 or older (Conversations: Annual Report Fiscal Year 2017, 2017). The 120 programs are divided into seven categories including Crisis Support, Education and Vocation, Foster Care, In-Home and Community Support, Residential Treatment, Behavioral Health Services, and Family Resources.

           Hillside Family of Agencies is a vast organization with an equally complex and tall organizational structure. The organization’s President and Chief Executive Officer is Dennis Richardson, and Robert Stiles is the Board of Governors Chairperson. The Hillside Family of Agencies consists of six partnering organization: Hillside Family of Agencies, Hillside Children’s Center, Stillwater Children’s Center, Snell Farm Children’s Center, Hillside Work-Scholarship Connection, and Hillside Children’s Foundation, each with board members, agency directors, officers, and governors. Hillside Family of Agencies has six Officers, 15 Governors and 14 Executive Director Level Administrator according to the Conversations: Annual Report Fiscal Year 2017 (2017).  The agency employs 2,400 staff members. Hillside Family of Agencies has a strong vision, mission promise and strategic intent which are the driving force behind the agencies organizational culture. Hillside Family of Agencies identifies its promise and philosophy of service as a “Family-driven, youth-guided, trauma-informed, and culturally competent…[that] promise to provide compassionate, comprehensive, innovative and effective services to help families in the communities we serve reach their full potential” (Hillside, n.d.).

**Organizational Department**

Within the Hillside Family of Agencies is the Bridges to Health Department, located in Buffalo New York. According to Lindsey Newman, supervisor within the Bridges to Health Department, there are 30 employees in the section including 21 staff, made up of 14  Caucasian females, five Caucasian males, one African American female and one Asian male. The department also has six supervisors made up of four Caucasian female and two Caucasian males. The organizational structure is complete with two Caucasian female managers (K. Blue, Personal Communication, June 12, 2018).     
 The Bridges to Health aids 120  youth in foster care deemed to be high needs and or high-risk youth involved in the Juvenile Justice system through care management services. The program allows youth and their families to choose from 13 distinct services that deter vulnerable youth from further involvement in delinquency and prevent hospitalization and residential placement (Bridges to Health, n.d.).  
            The Bridges to Health Program has a unique subculture regarding diversity and inclusion. Within the Bridges of Health is a team of workers known as the Cultural Champion Group. This group has been tasked with identifying and discussing what the Buffalo areas need regarding, diversity management, training, and communication. The Cultural Champions group began in 2017 after many complaints were made to Human Resources about discrimination. Due to the number of complaints, grievances, and complaints, the Human Resource collaborated with the Winter’s Group and developed a confidential assessment titled the “Dennison Survey”. The Dennison Survey was comprised of many questions geared for employees to answer around the meaning of cultural diversity, the culture of the agency, work environment, accountability, supervisor-employee relationship and how to encourage employees to join workplace committees.   
    The outcomes presented by the Dennison Survey highlighted a greater need to for a diverse environment and a need for employee input, ownership of workplace issues and solving the problems to make a more diverse agency. As a result, the Cultural Champion committee was developed for managers only to tackle the issues presented because of the survey. Employees were not a part of the committee work, however, of more recent the management group allowed staff to join the committee to help gain a better perspective of what change is needed to enhance the strategic plan, which is to become a more diverse and inclusive workforce.   
    The Winters Group offers customized diversity and inclusion professional development training and education (Winters Group, n.d.).  The Bridges of Health staff can take advantage of this learning option with the virtual cultural diversity portal that is accessible on the organization's intranet (K. Blue, Personal Communication, June 12, 2018).  Hillside Family of Agencies is listed on the Winters Group website as being a client that the Winters Group has helped unlock the unlimited human potential and develop sustainable diversity and inclusion strategies (Winters Group, n.d.)

**Criterion for a Diverse Organization**

Research identifies and supports four main characteristics of a diverse organization including employee perception, level of commitment or buy-in to diversity, fairness, and attitudes of respect (Garcia and Hoelscher, 2010).  According to Michalle Mor Barak (2014), employees, perception and workplace behavior is driven by their perception of reality. Furthermore, individual perception of inclusion in an organization is significantly affected by their status of being in the minority or majority of the organization (Mor Barak, 2014).  For example, in organizations where employees perceive their value to the organization to be high, they display higher job involvement and innovation. Garcia and Hoelscher (2010), also collaborate Mor Barak position on employee perception stating that the diversity climate within an organization echoes shared employee perceptions concerning the anticipated consequences of different forms of workplace discrimination and harassment. “In other words, a positive organizational diversity climate will be intolerant of workplace harassment and discrimination, whereas a negative diversity climate will convey to employees that harassment and discrimination are tolerated by the organization” (Garcia and Hoelscher, 2010, p.196).

Mor Barak (2014) stated understanding employee perception give great insight in understanding the organization diversity environment. Therefore, for an organization to be diverse, it must have a significant representation of diverse employees. Based on this research the evaluation group identified the following criteria as one of the standards to audit Hillside Family of Agencies: “Representation of diverse people (race, gender, age, ethnicity, physical and mental challenges, etc.) in all levels of the organization as well in advertising and publications” (Marwaha, 2018, p.15).

Often the phase put your money where your mouth is, is used to evaluate level of commitment.  A company’s willingness to allocate funds and resources can be used to evaluate the organization level of commitment to a cause or an initiative such as organizational diversity and inclusion. The article titled Pursuing Organizational Cultural Competence states “It is important that leadership be genuinely committed to the effort and that their support be tangibly apparent in the allocation of relevant resources” (Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, 2014, pp. 15). Does an organization spend finite resources and human capital on making their  organization more diverse and inclusive? This question allowed the evaluation team to identify the following criteria as developed by Marwaha (2018) as another standards to evaluate Hillside Family of Agencies: “Human capital programs that aid in recruitment, support, and retention of a diverse workforce, such as special recruiting efforts, flexible work arrangements for parents and/or older workers, employee resource groups, mentoring programs, partner benefits, flexible holiday policies, etc.” (p.15)

Redia Anderson and Leonora Billings-Harris (2010) discuss the importance of having a dedicated and committed CEO to move initiatives such a diversity and inclusion forward in an organization. “CEO commitment is an essential first step in inclusion and diversity strategy implementation” (Anderson and Billings-Harris, 2010, p. 27). Level of commitment by the CEO and Senior Leadership Team according to Anderson and Billings-Harris (2010) can be seen in sharing of information, company wide-meetings, memo’s or email communication, the formation and meeting with employee resource groups or diversity council and regular updates from management. Creating a budget which includes funds for specialize recruiting effort targeting a diverse population or being flexible with employee’s schedule is another example.     Another example of buy in and human capital program as identified by Anderson and Billings-Harris (2010) is community involvement and social responsibility. A sense of social responsibility allows the organization to connect and stay involved with their community, incentivize and motivate community improvement by employees with volunteering. By partnering with in the community, organizations increase their access to unique talents and ability to influence and mentor community members to create talent acquisition (Anderson and Billings-Harris, 2010).

The final criteria used to evaluate Hillside Family of Agencies is “Evidence that the organization is inclusive, i.e. diversity is connected to the main mission of the organization (Marwaha, 2018, p.15). Based on the research and review of the literature, this criterion was chosen because the organization’s vision, mission and value statements are critical in creating theoretical framework that promotes culturally responsive services in behavioral and social services (Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, 2014.). In many cases, the mission statement is the first chance for stakeholders, employees and client to see an organization's commitment to diversity and inclusion. Mor Barak (2014), states “Adopting diversity management are evident in the mission statement and corporate ethos of many companies” (p.229). When an organization includes diversity and inclusion in their mission statement they are supporting one of the three-pronged rationale identified by Mor Barak of “ Diversity is a reality here to stay, Diversity management is the right thing to do, and Diversity makes good business sense” (p.229).

**Evaluation Instrument Development**

A common theme of employee dissatisfaction, exclusion and lack of connectedness appeared in most of the interviewee’s responses. Mor Barak (2005), identifies that organizational culture and diversity contributes to perceptions of inclusion-exclusion in the workplace which then added to increasing job satisfaction, task effectiveness, organizational commitment and individual well-being. Based on this recurring theme the evaluation team decided to use an evaluation tool which focuses on employee perception to audit Hillside Family of Agencies. The team choose to use The Mor Barak Inclusion-Exclusion Scale (Mor Barak, 2014). According to Mor Barak (2010), this scale is used to measure the extent to which employees feel a part of critical process within the organization. Some of those processes include influence in the decision-making process, access to information, involvement and participation within the organization.

The evaluation team felt this tool would be beneficial in auditing diversity and inclusion at Hillside Family of Agencies because it takes into account the workers sense of belonging. The tool focus on the following five work-organization systems:  workgroup, organization, supervisor, higher management and social/ informal and then is intersected by the following three inclusion dimensions of information networks, decision-making and participation/involvement (Mor Barak, 2010). The scale consists of 15 question in the categories listed above, with six possible answers using the Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Agree Strongly. The 15 items are summed up according to Mor Barak (2010), and the higher score, the higher the sense of inclusion is within the organization. To reduce systematic answering of questions, three questions require reverse scoring on the questionnaire and are denoted by the symbol ®. The Mor Barak Inclusion-Exclusion Scale is noted in Appendix B.

The scale measuring inclusion and diversity developed by Mor Barak has been used in numerous research to gauge perception of inclusion in an organization. Acquavita, Pittman, Gibbons, and Castellanos-Brown (2009), used Mor Barak Inclusion-Exclusion scale to study inclusion and exclusion and its association to job satisfaction, organization diversity and perceived inclusion amongst social workers.  The study found that supervisory support, organizational diversity, and perceptions of inclusion-exclusion were significant in predicting social workers' job satisfaction.

Pelled, Ledford, and Mohrman (1999), used two of the three indicators of inclusion identified by Mor Barak in the Inclusion-Exclusion Scale to study demographic dissimilarity among co-workers. The three indicators used were decision making, access to information and job security. The results of the study found that race and gender were associated negatively with dissimilarity, while education and tenure were associated positively with the three inclusion indicators. Shore, Randel, Chung, Dean, Ehrhart, and Singh (2011), concludes that practicing sharing of information, insider status, involvement in decision making, and having a voice is all critical reflective measure of the perception of inclusion amongst employees. Furthermore, Shore and colleagues states measuring the level of inclusion in an organization has positive consequences for both the individuals and the organization (Shore et al., 2011).

The evaluation group decided it was also essential to ask some follow-up interview questions to get a better understanding of the perception of inclusion and diversity within Hillside Family of Agencies. The group created 10 questions based on general themes in the research and their own experiences as minorities in the workforce. The 10 items are noted in Appendix A. The questions focused on the meaning of diversity to the employee, how the organization addresses discrimination, diversity, and inclusion in the workplace and demographic information about the organization.

**Organizational Visit**

Arriving to the organization, it’s important to note the location of the agency as Hillside is centrally located in Buffalo, New York only a few blocks away from the Buffalo Zoo. The office is nestled in a residential community with a small number of for-profit and not-for-profit businesses. The agency logo is firmly planted on top of the building coupled with a few banners that invite people from the community to become foster parents and to learn more about the agency. The area the agency is located in is predominantly White, however, as you cross over Main Street you enter into East Side of Buffalo where the residents are predominantly African American. Therefore a more significant issue remains as the outside agency appeals to the greater majority, and not the minority, as the location invites people in power, with the more substantial influence on policy changing and high incomes to provide care for children suffering from severe emotional disorders and mental illness. As there will be similar issues to address, we will further explore such matters in the limitations and recommendations section.

As a current employee of Hillside Family of Agencies access was easily accessible by using the key fob to enter into the side door of the building. Once granted access, all employees can enter all areas of the building by presenting your work badge. Anyone entering the building, clients, and visitors are not given the same privilege and must be signed in at the front door and get buzzed in by the secretary. During the site visit, we were greeted cordially with enthusiasm, candidness, and transparency as interview number one shared her perspective on diversity and inclusion.  The structural design of the building was a small design with only three levels separated by various programs within the agency; Preventive, Bridges to Health and Work Scholarship. The building included separate men and women laboratories, two kitchen areas equipped for cooking and two boardrooms for staff meetings.

During the tour, we noticed upon arriving through the front door, some artifacts depicted inclusion as the mission, vision, equal opportunity signs placed in the front foyer. In some of the family rooms, the artwork appeared diverse and inclusive of all races from Black, White, Latino, Asians, etc. In the hallways, there were signs of equality, strength, opportunity, hope, courage, and respect for anyone to view as they enter the building. The outside of the building has three entrances to help ensure clear evacuation in the event of an emergency or security issue. There was a fire extinguisher in the kitchen area, peephole on the side door along with a bell to ring to alert the front desk staff someone is here to enter the building. There were no elevators to accommodate anyone with a disability, therefore, visitors would need to walk up and down the small stack of stairs to get access to the different offices. There were visible signs for handicapped parking and a ramp to enter on the side door, but very limited accessibility once inside the building.

Before the interview process, employees were given the MBIE survey to complete ahead of time. As a result, some questions were derived from utilizing the Mor Barak Inclusion-Exclusion (MBIE) Scale with the interviewees to obtain a broader scope of what diversity and inclusion mean to employees. The MBIE scale presented with some limitations as it did not capture a thorough general working knowledge of each aspect of diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

Some of the narratives from the interviewee’s responses regarding diversity and inclusion focused on the theme of zero tolerance policy. The interviewees described different workplace procedures to handle issues about discrimination.  Due to the nature of the work, which is meeting with children and families within their natural environment, you couldn’t help but notice the absence of noise. This is partly because staff is conducting meetings, home visits or traveling on the road to meet clients. Early social work practice was premised on the “Person in environment” approach which is supported by the works of Jane Addams and Mary Richmond.  These two pioneers helped shape the development of social casework and reform by working with individuals and families within their natural environment (Cornell, 2006). Therefore, the zero-tolerance policy aims to cease any form of discrimination. However small groups typically form as employees develop relationships with others because of a commonality two or more people might share, such as being female, LGBTQ-I, African American, single parent, mistreated, overworked or alienated. Such behavior can lead to the exclusion of specific groups, unintentionally, as upper management are far removed from the intricacies of an employee’s work life balances, and issues regarding discriminatory matters become heightened.

Another theme that was present during the interview was the need for more emphasis on inclusion. The interviewee appeared vulnerable when describing that the agency has made some improvements to the policies and strategic plan, but more work needs to be done. Several of the interviewees shared that the agency has identified a greater need to improve diversity inclusion in the workplace but without definitive resolutions. A few participants did not even acknowledge discriminatory practices are occurring but were able to share how to address such matters. Mo Barak (2014), identified there is more than one form of discrimination including overt, covert discriminatory acts, individual, institutional, and intentional/unintentional discrimination. Although the participants did not explicitly share any information about acts of discrimination in the workplace, they alluded it exististance in the organization. This speaks to what Mor Barak expressed with overt or covert acts of discrimination presents because Hillside employees are aware of discrimination but are unwilling to discuss how it affects employee and job satisfaction.

The tour of the agency provided a snapshot from the lens of the employees, in various roles including management, top management, and middle management on what matters most. The way services are delivered to its stakeholders aims to have productive employees by internally addressing cultural competency with the employees. During the first interviewee’s meeting, the supervisor was proud to meet to discuss the importance of shaping employee’s and creating a safe, encouraging and stress-free environment. Some other important themes that were mentioned focused on having the discussion regarding diversity and inclusion on an ongoing basis.  Anderson & Billings (2010), noted we must create an environment to support and respect, the differences in its broader sense. At Hillside, staff use the intranet to view the plethora of webinars and educational tools for employees to learn about culture, diversity, inclusion and policy changes. The participants shared that this is one of the ways employees can become well versed and buy-in to the philosophy of service that meets the mission. One of the limitations of this is the fact that open discussions surrounding race and discrimination and taboo in the workplace.

Most commentaries shared that the agency continues to do a good job with finding ways to become more inclusive by creating committees, workgroups and task force for staff to join and help increase diversity and inclusive matters. One of the program managers shared that Hillside is striving for excellence and cultural competency as they conducted a recent Native American awareness training for staff. The purpose of the exercise was to help educate staff on learning how to effectively work with Native American population as removal from tribal reservations and placing children in Caucasian foster homes goes against the Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 (ICWA) act. ICWA is a federal law that governs the removal and out of home placement of American Indian Children (Child Welfare Information Gateway, 2018).

Mor Barak (2014), defines diversity management and inclusivity in the workplace as one that values and utilizes individual and intergroup difference of its own workforce, active in the community, participates in state and federal programs to include population groups such as immigrants, women, and the working poor; “and collaborates across cultural and national boundaries with a focus on global mutual interests” (p 238). Hillside takes a stance at becoming more inclusive with its employees by encouraging training, collaboration with external agencies and creating partnerships with its stakeholders and employees from all levels.  Another position towards inclusivity is the development of town hall meetings, which allow employees to have greater access to the administration. The town hall address departmental changes, updates to policy, salary increases, employee benefits, health insurance, programmatic changes and open discussion and forum for employees. The town halls are virtually done where the Chief Executive Officer, Chief Operating Officer, Chief Practice and Performance Officer, Executive Directors and Director of Quality and Risk Management officer from the Rochester office sit in a room to provide updates and communicate with staff. This form of communication aims to strengthen the open-door policy of the agency by inviting employees to bring concerns, ideas, needs and wants in a public forum.

**Evaluation**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **The Mor Barak Inclusion-Exclusion Scale** | **1**  **Strongly Disagree** | **2**  **Moderately**  **Disagree** | **3**  **Slightly**  **Disagree** | **4**  **Slightly**  **Agree** | **5**  **Moderately**  **Agree** | **6**  **Strongly**  **Agree** | **Result Totals** |
| **1. I have influence in decisions taken by my workgroup regarding our task** |  |  |  | **X** | **X** | **X** | **15/18** |
| **2. My coworkers openly share work-related information with me** |  |  |  |  | **XXX** |  | **15/18** |
| **3. I am typically involved and invited to actively participate on work-related activities of my workgroup** |  |  |  | **XX** | **X** |  | **13/18** |
| **4. I am able to influence decisions that affect my organization** |  |  |  | **XX** | **X** |  | **13/18** |
| **5. I am usually among the last to know about important changes in the organization ®** | **XXX** |  |  |  |  |  | **18/18** |
| **6. I am usually invited to important meetings in my organization** |  |  | **X** | **X** | **X** |  | **12/18** |
| **7. My supervisor often asks for my opinion before making important decisions** |  |  |  |  | **XX** | **X** | **16/18** |
| **8. My supervisor does not share information with me ®** | **XXX** |  |  |  |  |  | **18/18** |
| **9. I am invited to actively participate in review and evaluation meeting with my supervisor** |  |  | **XX** | **X** |  |  | **10/18** |
| **10. I am often invited to contribute my opinion in meetings with management high than my immediate supervisor** | **XX** | **X** |  |  |  |  | **4/18** |
| **11. I frequently receive communication from management higher than my immediate supervisor ( i.e Memo, emails)** |  |  | **XX** | **X** |  |  | **10/18** |
| **12. I am often invited to participate in meeting with management higher than my immediate supervisor** |  |  | **XX** |  | **X** |  | **11/18** |
| **13. I am often asked to contribute in planning social activities not directly related to my job function** | **X** | **X** |  | **X** |  |  | **7/10** |
| **14. I am always informed about informal social activities and company social events** |  |  |  | **X** | **X** | **X** | **13/10** |
| **15. I am rarely invited to join my coworkers when they go for lunch or drinks after work ®** | **XXX** |  |  |  |  |  | **18/18** |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  | **293/324**  **90% inclusive** |

Mor Baraka, 2014

Interpreting the data from the MBIE survey, results indicate employees who scored high 18/18 shows a significant staff inclusion. The low-end scores show a greater need to increase workplace activities that foster a social inclusive environment.  During the interviews, there was a theme that indicated a greater need for employees to be included in decisions of the agency. Employees are not familiar with the Cultural Champions committee which is spearheaded by top level and mid-level managers. Recently staff expressed interest in joining the committee to help employees feel a sense of belonging and diversify the agency. The Cultural Champions committee aims to increase awareness, changing the cultural dynamic of supervisory-staff relationship as there was an increase change in staff/supervisory relationships. Hillside has a long-standing reputation in the community for its effective results, outcome, and family-driven care to clients. Hillside had also been known to have a better salary, autonomy of work/caseload and evidenced-based outcomes and results.  Working in an environment that excludes other groups can create more significant problems. Therefore, the need for an inclusive workplace is paramount. Mor Barak (2015), endorsed the Vallas study which found that minority groups had a much difficult time developing skills and expertise when they were not part of the dominant group because they did not have the social support or allies.

Due to high staff turnover and lawsuits regarding discrimination and physical abuse of clients as indicated in the news article written by Gannett (2018), ensued.  Hillside strives to increase diversity efforts with continued training on care of children, youth and families from diverse backgrounds; with the intent for employees to have a working knowledge of demonstrating respect, empathy, trust, partnering for safety, minimizing risks to the employee and clients. This is reflected throughout Hillside’s new employee manual, onboarding process during the probationary period and continued internal training on a quarterly basis. Rizzo (2016), posited the theory that employees have higher job satisfaction, job security, increase positive attitudes and productivity when inclusion exists.

All of the efforts to become more inclusive does not mean the agency has failed, they are continuing to find more significant ways to keep having discussions and put action steps into practice. It’s important to compare the scores that were less than 7 on the MBIE scale which is indicative of exclusion from social activities and contribution to meetings.  This is reminiscent of the conversation that occurred in class from the group work addressing Trailblazers chapters eight; and research says, facts versus myths. This chapter pushed the group out of their usual comfort zones to engage in challenging and risky conversations. The group worked together and respected one another’s opinions to discuss issues that were taboo, personal, unorthodox or compromising as the group composition was made up of one Caucasian male, one-African American male and one-African American female. Despite the group's structure, They adhered  
to the guidelines and respected one another’s values, beliefs, and opinions.  Each group member opinion was relative, respected and discussed thoroughly to include all group members.  
Anderson & Billings (2010), emphasized the need for diversity and inclusion in the mission, training, recruitment, mentoring, retention and exit interviews to sustain the workforce.

**Recommendations**

Due to the increased amount of harassment lawsuits in the workplace globally, there is a growing need for transparency, cultural competence and creative ways to enhance the diverse workforce. Roundtable conversations, open forums, TedTalks and social media platforms have shaped the ever growing need to address matters immediately at times with reactive solutions. Change comes from within, individuals and groups need to become more self-aware of the prejudices, biases, intolerance, ignorance, and lack of knowledge that needs to be obtained to embrace a connection for change and inclusivity. Hillside efforts to address the lack of diversity and inclusion in the workplace by creating the cultural champions committee, Dennison survey, town hall meetings and focus groups they have laid the groundwork for additional work to be done.  As an employee of the agency, the vision and mission are instilled on placards of brochures, the back of identification cards but not reviewed during staff meetings. There is staff who do not know the vision and mission of the agency but can tell you that we work with children, youth, and families. It would be helpful to have staff sit in on interviews for recruitment efforts to help increase the employee diverse which is predominantly White and female. Our clientele demographics do not mirror the workers, and we need to find ways to connect with all populations. Some of the risks would be the potential to mission creep, become so inclusive we lose sight of the overarching goal.

Some measures that would need to drive the change could include being apart of strategic planning meetings with administration. Some risk would consist of staff productivity would decrease as the focus would shift to participate in conferences and strategic planning efforts. Another measure would be to attend external training in the community and train staff to become more inclusive which would decrease productivity and impact billing. Change does not happen overnight night, therefore, a timeframe would be vitally important to see growth and track  
progress. To implement the change this would take time, commitment and effort.

**Conclusion**

Hillside values its stakeholders who are children, foster families, external partners, service providers, and employees. As the agency serves children, youth and families throughout 14 counties of Western New York, employees pride themselves on providing a unique service with high expectation. The expectation is to strive for excellence by providing optimal care and quality services to all families regardless of nationality, creed, religion, socio-economic backgrounds, race, or sexual orientation. The agency aims to embrace cultural sensitivity, awareness, and cultural competence by providing platforms for employees to feel inclusive. The agency recognizes that the work is ongoing and on a continuum as diversity and inclusion is ever-changing. A unique aspect of the work they do is approaching clients within their own natural environments.

Hillside has made improvements on having difficult conversations with employees during the interview process to address cultural competency. Sinha & Kumar (2016) describes emotional intelligence as the ability to manage emotions intelligently, upper management positions require emotional intelligence to deal with difficult situations. Leaders

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**Appendix A.**

Interview questions  
  
1.    What does diversity mean to your stakeholders?  
2.    How do you address diversity & inclusion in the workplace?  
3.    How are matters handled related to discrimination for employees?  
4.    How do you view the organizational strategic plan?  
5.    What is the culture of the organization?  
6.    How often is the mission discussed with employees?  
7.    How are employees supported during times of workplace distress?  
8.    What is the size of the department?  
9.    What resources are explored to help employees gain training regarding diversity & inclusion?  
10.    Do you feel the locations provide direct access to a diverse population in the WNY community?

**Appendix B.**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **The Mor Barak Inclusion-Exclusion Scale** | 1  Strongly Disagree | 2  Moderately  Disagree | 3  Slightly  Disagree | 4  Slightly  Agree | 5  Moderately  Agree | 6  Strongly  Agree |
| 1.I have influence in decisions taken by my workgroup regarding our task |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2. My coworkers openly share work-related information with me |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3. I am typically involved and invited to actively participate on work-related activities of my workgroup |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4. I am able to influence decisions that affect my organization |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5. I am usually among the last to know about important changes in the organization ® |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6. I am usually invited to important meetings in my organization |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 7. My supervisor often asks for my opinion before making important decisions |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 8. My supervisor does not share information with me ® |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 9. I am invited to actively participate in review and evaluation meeting with my supervisor |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 10. I am often invited to contribute my opinion in meetings with management high than my immediate supervisor |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 11. I frequently receive communication from management higher than my immediate supervisor ( i.e Memo, emails) |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 12. I am often invited to participate in meeting with management higher than my immediate supervisor |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 13. I am often asked to contribute in planning social activities not directly related to my job function |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 14. I am always informed about informal social activities and company social events |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 15. I am rarely invited to join my coworkers when they go for lunch or drinks after work ® |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Mor Baraka, 2014