Intersectionality 101: A Discussion for Managers

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Schedule for Today

- Setting Our Intentions: Acknowledging the Land
- A few guidelines for a shared space
- Key definitions to get us started
- Intersectionality in Hospitality – Case Studies
- Managing with an Intersectional Lense

Land Acknowledgment

- The City of Hamilton is situated upon the traditional territories of the Erie, Neutral, Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee and Mississaugas. This land is covered by the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, which was an agreement between the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabek to share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. We further acknowledge that this land is covered by the Between the Lakes Purchase, 1792, between the Crown and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation.

- Today, the City of Hamilton is home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island (North America) and we recognize that we must do more to learn about the rich history of this land so that we can better understand our roles as residents, neighbours, partners and caretakers.

Sources and Resources

- bell hooks
- Angela Davis
- Audre Lorde
- Frantz Fanon
- James Baldwin
- Kimberlé Crenshaw
- Patricia Hill Collins

And more recently...

- Robyn Maynard
- Desmond Cole
- Layla F. Saad
- Rachel Cargle
- Ibram X Kendi

Learning Outcomes

- By the end of this discussion you will…

  - Have a clear understanding of intersectionality and related concepts of oppression, power and privilege

  - Understand your own social location and how it has influenced your life and your relationships with others

  - Develop some strategies to manage from an intersectional lense

Critical Reflection

- A process by which we identify the underlying assumptions and values that influence our thoughts, feelings and actions, and how these have been shaped by our personal histories and social locations

- Practicing this allows us to identify the role of the broader context; to make connections between the assumptions underlying our thoughts, feelings and reactions and to align ourselves with our preferred values

- We can use our emotional experience as an entry point; explore the experience from our own perspective and the perspective of the other, and identify how the 'invisible structures' of privilege and oppression may play a role in our experiences

Matching Game

Power | Privilege | Oppression |Race | Ethnicity | Identity | Gender | Sexual Orientation | Class

1. A social identity used interchangeably with biological sex in a system that presumes if one has male characteristics, one is male, and if one has female characteristics, one is female.

2. The system of ordering a society in which people are divided into sets based on perceived social or economic status.

3. A system that maintains advantage and disadvantage based on social group memberships and operates, intentionally and unintentionally, on individual, institutional, and cultural levels.

4. One's natural preference in sexual and/or romantic partners.

5. A category that describes membership to a group based on real or presumed common ancestry, shared languages and/or religious beliefs, cultural heritage and group history.

6. The sense of self, providing sameness and continuity in personality over time; the condition of being oneself and not another.

7. Unearned access to resources only readily available to some people as a result of their advantaged social group membership.

8. A socio-historical category used to divide people into populations or groups based on physical appearance, such as skin color, eye color, hair color, etc.

9. The ability to decide who will access resources; the capacity to direct or influence the behavior of others, oneself, and/or the course of events.

What is Oppression?

- Oppression: the domination of subordinate groups in society by a (politically, economically, socially and culturally) more powerful group
  - Does not require forceful subordination or evil intent – although these can be present
  - i.e. when a person is blocked from opportunities of self-development or is excluded from full participation in society
  - Can occur at the individual, institutional and cultural level and is often invisible – its existence can (and is) often denied!
- Oppression ensures that the dominant group continues to have access to the resources and means to maintain their position of dominance
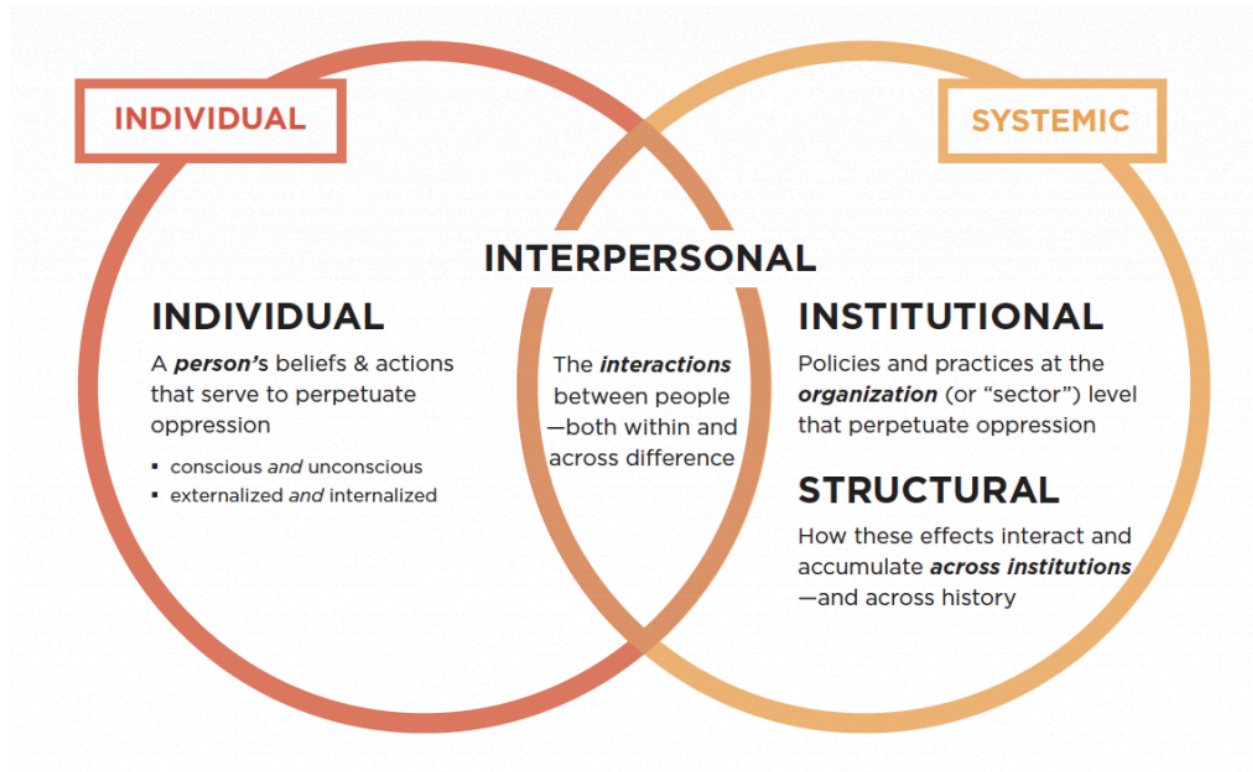
How is Oppression Maintained?

- Power – greater material resources, physical strength, weapons, information, decision-making, control of the media

- Violence – the experience of violence, and the risk or threat of violence

- Stereotypes – although there may be stereotypes associated with dominant groups, due to their position of dominance they are not as impacted by these as oppressed groups are
  - Often include sexual stereotypes

- Risk of separation from one's children

The 5 Faces of Oppression

- **Exploitation:** using people's labors to produce profit while not compensating them fairly
  - Dominant group is able to accumulate and maintain status, power and assets through the energy and labour of subordinate groups

- **Marginalization:** relegating or confining a group of people to a lower social standing or outer limit or edge of society

- **Powerlessness:** inhibitions against the development of one's capacities, a lack of decision-making power, exposure to disrespectful treatment because of one's status
  - Taking orders and rarely having the right to give them

- **Cultural Imperialism:** establishing the culture of the ruling class as the norm – ethnocentrism
  - Stereotypes used to mark 'others', and the experiences and perspectives of 'others' are made invisible

- **Violence:** an obvious and visible form of oppression whereby 'others' live with the knowledge that they must fear random, unprovoked attacks on their persons or property
  - These attacks do not necessarily need a motive but are intended to damage, humiliate, or destroy the person

Levels of Oppression

INDIVIDUAL

INDIVIDUAL
A *person's* beliefs & actions that serve to perpetuate oppression
- conscious *and* unconscious
- externalized *and* internalized

INTERPERSONAL
The *interactions* between people —both within and across difference

SYSTEMIC

INSTITUTIONAL
Policies and practices at the *organization* (or "sector") level that perpetuate oppression

STRUCTURAL
How these effects interact and accumulate *across institutions* —and across history

- Personal Level: individuals form and express personal beliefs and values; includes thoughts, attitudes and behaviours about the 'other' usually based on stereotypes and can lead to unconscious acts of aversion and avoidance, and conscious acts of aggression or hatred

- Cultural Level: social norms are expressed through consensus and conformity; stereotypes are created and certain behaviors and belief systems are reinforced through assumptions and unwritten rules

- Structural Level: systemic discrimination is created and institutionalized through social policy and various public institutions, i.e. education, policing, social welfare; the media can be quite impactful at this level

Some more key terms:

- Implicit Bias: refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an **unconscious** manner.

- Assumptions: a thing that is accepted as true or as certain to happen, without proof.

- Stereotyping: a widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or identity group.

- Prejudice: unreasonable feelings, opinions, or attitudes especially of a hostile nature, regarding an ethnic, racial, religious or other identity group.

- Discrimination: the unjust treatment of different categories of people or things, especially on the grounds of race, age, or sex.

The Nature of Privilege

- Oppression is when someone is blocked form opportunities to self-development, excluded from full participation in society or is assigned a second class citizenship because of their membership in a particular group

- Privilege is when particular advantages are conferred systematically by society on the basis of membership in a group – advantages can be opportunities, access, status – which serve to re-affirm one's position of dominance

- Often the most harmful oppressions occur on the systemic level, not on the individual level

- Privilege and Oppression operate on intersectional lines – we can (and often are) both privileged and oppressed

- Privilege is everywhere, yet at the same time is invisible to those who have it – the 'luxury of obliviousness' is an aspect of privilege itself

Social Identity	Privileged Social Group	Border Social Group	Oppressed Social Group	Related 'Ism'
Race	White People	Biracial People, those that can 'pass'	Black, Indigenous, Persons of Colour	Racism
Sex	Cisgender Men	Transsexual Intersex People	Cisgender Women	Sexism
Gender	Gender conforming Cis Men and Women	Gender Ambiguous Cis Men and Women	Transgender, Genderqueer, Intersex people	Transgender Opression, Transphobia
Sexual Orientation	Heterosexual People	Bisexual People	Gay, Lesbian and Queer People	Heterosexism, Homophobia
Class	Wealthy, Upper Class People	Middle Class People	Working Class, Poor People	Classism
Ability/Disability	Temporarily Able-Bodied	People with Temporary Disabilities	People with Disabilties	Ableism
Religion	Protestant	Roman Catholic (historically)	Jews, Muslims, Hindus, etc.	Religious Oppression
Age	Adults	Young Adults	Elderly, Children	Ageism/Adultism

The Matrix of Privilege and Oppression

What about intersectionality?

- Intersectionality is a way of understanding and analyzing the complexity in the world, in people and in experience

- "the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage"

  - It accounts for the ways in which our social and political identities (gender, race, class, etc.) combine to create *different* experiences of discrimination and privilege

Why is this Relevant to Managers in the Food Service Industry?

- Restaurants are often considered a public space, although they are typically privately-owned businesses
- As managers, you set the tone and expectations for your staff and your guests
- It is your responsibility to ensure that your staff and guests are protected** first, satisfied** second

There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not live single-issue lives.

Audre Lorde

Case Studies

- You are a manager in a small brunch spot downtown. You're in the back working on some administrative tasks, but because it's not that busy you can hear what is being said in the kitchen. Chantelle, a Black female server, is busing a table and you overhear two cooks, Charlie and Ben, comment about how 'hot' and 'curvy' Chantelle is. Charlie comments that Chantelle has a girlfriend, and Ben says 'I could turn her, just give me one shot. You know what they say about Caribbean girls anyway.'

- Process Questions:
    - What are the first things that come up for you – thoughts, feelings, immediate response?
    - How does intersectionality impact your understanding of the comments you overhear?
    - What is the impact of the cooks' behaviour/language?
    - How would you respond or intervene? What is the risk of taking/not taking action?

Case Studies

- Carter recently joined a coalition of managers interested in addressing issues of poverty within the service industry. Carter has been to a few meetings so far and has been asked to take a leadership role on the Board as they are a low income back of house employee with a lot of activism experience. You notice that while Carter is speaking in meetings there is a lot of 'cross talk', and Carter's ideas get overshadowed by other participants.

- Process Questions:
  - What are the first things that come up for you – thoughts, feelings, immediate response?
  - How does intersectionality impact your understanding of Carter's experience?
  - Do you need to know anything else about Carter? If so, what?
  - How would you respond to this situation?

Managing with Intersectionality in Mind

DO MORE

- Lead through modelling – what are you feeling and experiencing, be vulnerable!

- Learn about all forms of discrimination and oppression. Listen. Have difficult conversations.

- Maintain this commitment to actively unlearn and dismantle behaviours and systems that encourage all forms of discrimination and oppression

- Fight oppression wherever you see it in your business – including within yourself

- Amplify the voices of marginalized individuals and communities, even when it's not trending

DO LESS

- Don't doubt. i.e. If a BIPOC person says it was about race, trust their experience.

- Don't let fear of discomfort stop you from having these conversations! You might not have the right language, you might be concerned about what to say/what not to say. Have the conversation anyway.

- Don't single people out. Do not rely on those with non-dominant identities to educate you or your team about marginalization.

Questions to ask ourselves…

- What expectations do we have that are not made explicit? i.e. communication styles, time management

- What assumptions do we make about an employee's situation?

- How have issues about discrimination been managed thus far?
  - Without intervention, issues intensify as time persists

- What are my own values, communication styles, cultural expectations and biases?
  - Make the implicit, explicit!
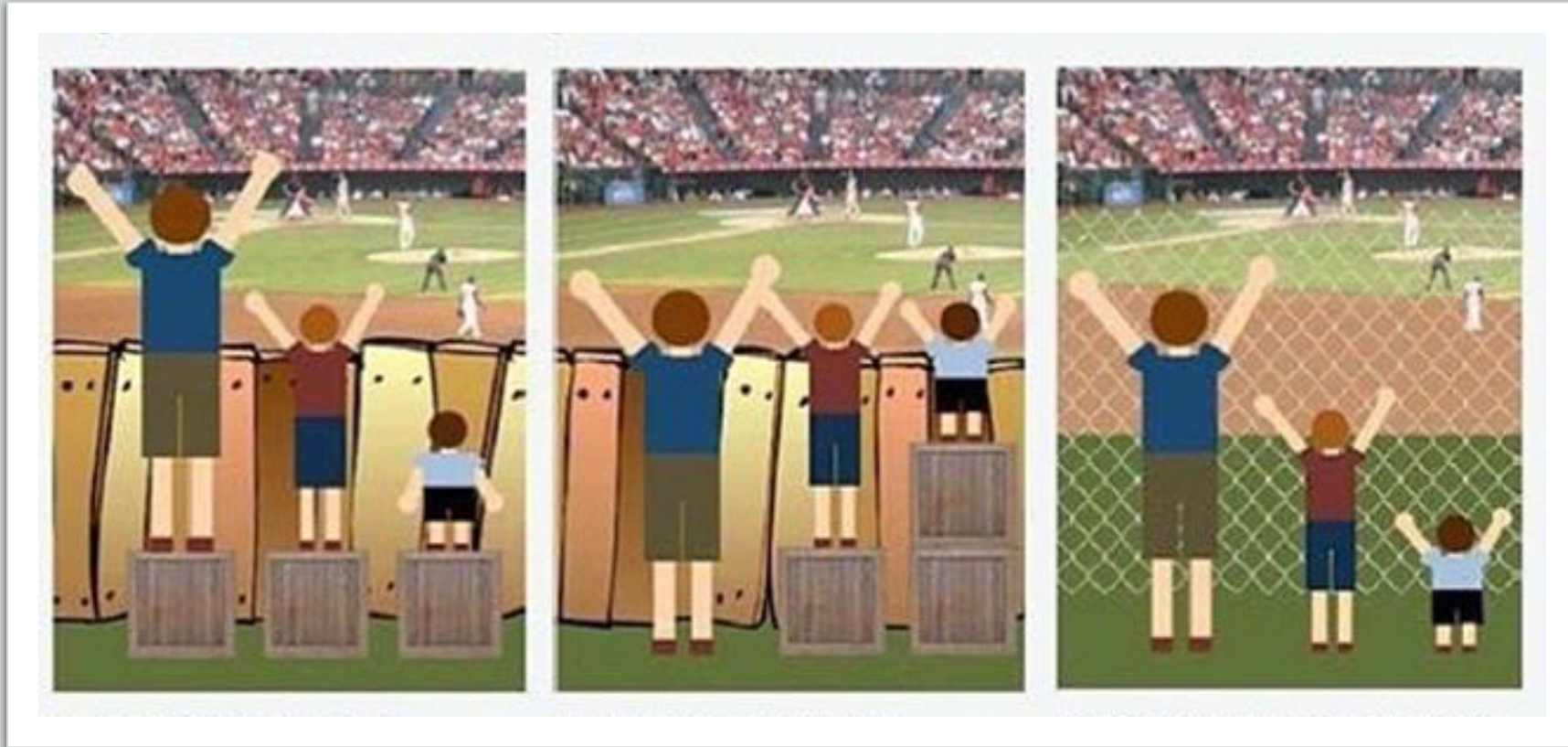
Equality, Equity and Liberation

Silence Reinforces Oppression

- **USE. YOUR. PRIVILEGE.**
  - What individual action(s) can you take to interrupt oppression?
  - What action(s) can you take to create a more inclusive workplace, home, school, etc.?
- Discourses about injustice that do not involve an analysis of power relationships or is disconnected from questions about privilege, makes it more likely for injustice to continue
- Change – big change! – has happened, with concerted effort and collaborative work
- We must shift our 'gaze' from those who have been excluded to those who exclude – question the dominance and privilege of certain groups
- We need to scrutinize our own assumptions, beliefs and behaviours and question the normalized position from which those beliefs grow

Thoughts, Questions, Reactions?

Thank you for your time and efforts!