

CREATING CONFLUENCE

Overview packet



A PROGRAM OF
INCLUSANT

What is CREATING CONFLUENCE?

CREATING CONFLUENCE is a community-building educational public program initiated by Inlusant in 2017 that focuses on sustainable practices for promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Participants become part of an intentional learning community by attending an **immersive diversity leadership workshop**, followed by ongoing opportunities to deepen awareness, skills, and knowledge within a cross-sector cohort.

The program promotes lifelong commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion through its unique design, which begins with a CREATING CONFLUENCE workshop in which participants engage with core issues in a radically collaborative mode. After attending the initial workshop, members are invited to participate in future 2-hour breakout sessions led by diverse community facilitators addressing emerging topics.

The goal of CREATING CONFLUENCE is to expand collective capacity in Pittsburgh for creating more equitable and just communities. It offers education for leaders and trainers/facilitators to acquire critical competencies that are crucial for successfully engaging with diverse constituencies, championing equity, and making transformative change possible. The workshop learning is meant to support direct action and implementation suited to specific contexts.

The curriculum for CREATING CONFLUENCE is based on the original model **ASK** and includes education about historical barriers to equity in the United States, experiential learning activities, peer-to-peer education, discussion of best practices for facilitation, action planning, and problem-solving.

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The proven need for CREATING CONFLUENCE

Pittsburgh is a much-beloved city – but it experiences some of the greatest disparity between demographic groups found anywhere in the United States. If we are not actively working to bridge those gaps, then we cannot genuinely claim to be serving our communities well.

Since 2014, Inclusant has worked with nearly 40 local organizations, helping them identify challenges related to diversity and inclusion so that they can overcome them to better achieve their stated goals. Our clients repeatedly describe their biggest obstacles in terms of:

- ! segregated spaces, including schools, neighborhoods, and workplace “silos”
- ! not knowing how to make sustainable change
- ! feeling uncomfortable talking about differences like race or LGBTQIA+ issues

Rather than continuing to work only within individual organizations, Inclusant opted to help build a community of practice for ongoing and strategic improvements in these key areas through CREATING CONFLUENCE.

Our focus is “Training Leaders, Leading Trainers.”

Greater diversity, equity, and inclusion are only possible if leaders (decision-takers and change-makers) know how to take the lead in successfully overcoming existing challenges. And local trainers/facilitators need expanded opportunities to continue their own learning and to be in community with others whose expertise is different than their own.

But neither local leaders nor trainers routinely have opportunities to develop and strengthen core skills related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

CREATING CONFLUENCE was built to fill this urgent local need.

In the past two years, over 50 people have become part of the CREATING CONFLUENCE network.

Among many benefits, the network gains access to ongoing equity education, because greater inclusion does not result from a one-time meeting or seminar. Instead, excellence in this area requires the same kind of commitment and practice as for any other leadership competency.

If you are a leader, you must take the lead on equity, because others look to you for guidance.

If you are (or seek to be) a trainer or facilitator, join our cross-sector conversations, so we can keep learning from each other.

We invite any and all Pittsburghers to join us in creating confluence.

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Previous Breakout Sessions

*On the second day of each **CREATING CONFLUENCE** program, the original curriculum from the first day is complemented by optional 2-hour seminars focusing on specific topics and communities. View more details about breakout sessions at on our website.*

DISABILITY JUSTICE- February 2018. This session explores disability identity as a natural experience that enhances, rather than diminishes, one's life... Facilitator: Chaz R. Kellem (YWCA of Greater Pittsburgh).

DIVERSITY: A STORY OF THORNS AND ROSES- April 2017. This workshop covers types of diversity, challenges of diversity, and communication and management strategies for diversity... Facilitators: Akwasi (Duquesne U) and Marian (Berlitz) Opoku-Dakwa .

EVERYONE IN!- October 2017. We may want equality in our group decision-making, but it doesn't always happen organically even with the best of intentions... Facilitator: Susan Loucks (Bayer Center for Nonprofit Management at Robert Morris University).

FACILITATING FOR OPENNESS- April 2017. When discussing difficult topics such as oppression, we can be sure to touch on deep pain, possibly trauma, and hidden rage... Facilitator: Hannah du Plessis (Fit Associates).

FROM CONFLICT TO CONNECTION- April 2017. Explore how conflict shows up in our workplaces and how it complicates communication and professional relationships... Facilitators: Dawn Lehman and Vanessa Mayers-Snyder (Center for Victims).

GENDER AND SEXUALITY- October 2017. This workshop offers an examination of diversity within the LGBTQA community and beyond...Facilitator: Vanessa Davis (THRIVE of Southwest PA).

MOVEMENTS FOR CHANGE- April 2017. Participants strategize how to engage in movements for racial and economic justice... Facilitators: etta cetera and Yvette Shipman (Walk the Talk Pittsburgh).

NEURODIVERSITY- October 2018. This workshop invites participants to engage with revolutionary ways of thinking about divergent bodies and minds through the neurodiversity paradigm and models of disability justice... Facilitator: Cori Frazer (Pittsburgh Center for Autistic Advocacy).

WHAT IS IMMIGRANT JUSTICE AND WHY DO WE NEED IT?- February 2018. Gain a better understanding of the current political climate. Understand what options immigrants have to come to the United States. Learn struggles immigrants face once they are here in the United States and discuss ways to support immigrant justice work... Facilitator: Monica Ruiz (Casa San Jose).

Would you like to offer a breakout session?

Please email info@inclusant.com for a link to our intake form and share this invitation with other local facilitators.

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Participant Feedback

CREATING CONFLUENCE has provided me with valuable experience... The group of people, coaches and thought leaders brought together was remarkable and inspiring. I am grateful that CREATING CONFLUENCE exists in Pittsburgh as a space where important learning happens.

I really appreciated practicing strategies for having difficult conversations. The cultural humility framework was new for me (I was familiar with cultural competence) and I will practice that in all of my work and relationships.

It was great to connect to more local folks doing the work. And I felt the whole weekend started from a good thoughtful grounding in common goals and expectations.

Something really simple but very powerful - the intro "exercise" that was used at the beginning of the session where folks could introduce themselves and talk about anything that would help them be able to participate fully in the session. It was a great way to set the tone for the day and allow for vulnerability, honesty, and sensitivity right from the get-go.

ASK! So useful and brilliant :). The training also reminded me to slow down my own facilitation and ensure that I am making space for inclusivity and diversity.

There was a lot of valuable information that forced me to look into my work and reporting we do. I am grateful for all the connections I had a chance to build.

Such a wonderful, inspiring, meaningful, thoughtful weekend! It was exactly what I needed and I am coming off of it feeling so grateful for the conversation, information, and community. The community! You truly attract some amazing people with your presence, passion, and your work and I am so appreciative for your generosity in sharing your time, energy, and networks.

FAQs

How is this different from other diversity training?

CREATING CONFLUENCE was intentionally designed as a program in which participants gain immediately applicable knowledge and a variety of new tools to practice with. In addition to providing attendees with a solid foundation for addressing emerging diversity challenges, the training offers access to facilitators with varied areas of expertise, emphasizing that issues of diversity of course require diverse perspectives and strategies.

Also intentionally, the program was built over several years in dialogue and collaboration with dozens of local stakeholders with expertise in diversity, equity, and inclusion; social justice; anti-oppression practices; and community organizing. The curriculum was designed with input from local thought leaders in business, government, community organizing, activism, higher education, policy development, and mental and behavioral health, and through actively seeking out perspectives from diverse constituencies, who were then asked to make recommendations for other people for outreach.

Based on this preparation, an original curriculum for CREATING CONFLUENCE was created, based on the model of **ASK**, which encourages awareness, teaches skills, and introduces knowledge that one needs to be a genuine diversity leader.

Participants discuss

- Research and data about patterns of inequity in the U.S. and in Pittsburgh (in a global context)
- Contemporary “buzzwords,” such as privilege, white fragility, and cultural appropriation
- Engendering genuinely inclusive and meaningful dialogue
- Methods for incorporating equity at all points of activity
- Institutional and individual biases
- Strategies for sustaining difficult conversations
- Preparing for inclusion challenges that come up in the future

CREATING CONFLUENCE takes nothing for granted-- including what we mean when we use terms like diversity, equity, and inclusion. The curriculum is rigorous and constantly updated. The program begins with extended discussion of the vocabulary we use, so that participants leave better able to name the actual issues in their spheres of influence, leaving them more prepared to address those issues and make positive change.

We believe that local leaders need to be leaders in diversity as well as other competencies, because equity initiatives only succeed when there is clear and decisive guidance. Leaders must innovate in terms of equity every day, with intentionality and sustained energy, or they will find themselves disconnected across departments, units, generations, organizations, and so forth. This hurts communities as well as “the bottom line,” as extensive research continues to demonstrate.

Unlike historical diversity programs for which many people have justified impatience, CREATING CONFLUENCE is based on evidence, research, and reliable data. We share the

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sources for our information and conclusions, while also constantly exposing ourselves to diverse viewpoints and techniques, so that we are conversant with emerging knowledge and current debates.

We engage participants in an expansive conversation that ideally enables them to deal more inclusively and effectively with the complexity and richness of human diversity. This is important professionally as well as personally.

What are breakout sessions?

The curriculum for Day 1 of each **CREATING CONFLUENCE** workshop and the framework for ongoing learning were designed in collaboration by: Lizzie Anderson (Facilitator/Therapist), anupama jain (founder of Inlusant), Leigh Solomon Pugliano (Straightforward Consulting/New Sun Rising) and Monica Ruiz (Executive Director of Casa San Jose).

For Day 2 of each **CREATING CONFLUENCE** workshop and also on stand-alone occasions, members of the network have the option of participating in breakout sessions focused on specific topics related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

To encourage ongoing learning, these sessions represent a more limited commitment of 2-hours and \$25 per participant. Because all breakout session attendees have a shared experience in the first-day of **CREATING CONFLUENCE**, these represent deeper engagement and more opportunities to develop actionable solutions to collective social challenges.

In order to amplify diverse voices and not limit the conversation to those already within our networks or “silos,” the **CREATING CONFLUENCE** team released a public invitation to local facilitators and trainers to partner with us and offer educational seminars based on their lived experience and expertise.

This process resulted in a number of new collaborations and the ability of **CREATING CONFLUENCE** to offer education on topics that network members wish to become more informed about. Breakout session topics have included: Disability Justice, From Conflict to Connection, Gender & Sexuality, Movements for Change, Immigrant Justice.

Read more details about these sessions online at www.inlusant.com/creating-confluence-workshop/

What makes it worth the cost and time commitment?

CREATING CONFLUENCE is worth the investment of time and resources because you benefit from:

- cross-sector engagement that dismantles “silos” which limit effectiveness
- access to breakout sessions by facilitators representing different communities
- diversity training certification
- maximized learning in a group of no more than 20 people
- an introduction to customizable approaches such as ASK (awareness, skills, and knowledge), the intersectionality web, and cultural humility
- a curriculum built around original research and evidence-based solutions to problems
- CEUs offered by Pitt's School of Social Work

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If the fees are not manageable or you want to learn more about how we determined costs, please email info@inclusant.com to request a scholarship.

What if there are other barriers to my participation?

We have worked with all individuals who have pointed out obstacles to their participation. In almost every case, we have been able to determine a mutually acceptable means to overcome those obstacles and include the participant in **CREATING CONFLUENCE**. Reach out to us at info@inclusant.com so we can keep dismantling barriers together.