

Mattering & Marginality

MATTERING

- Please think of a time when you felt as if you really mattered; when who you were or what you did was valued. You do not need to disclose the circumstances of the particular event. For those who choose to do so, please share:

Cues: What in the interaction let you know you were being valued?

Feelings: How did you feel as a result of this interaction?

Actions: What were your behaviors or actions that occurred as a result of this interaction?

CUES

FEELINGS

ACTIONS

- Share an example from your own life to model responding to these questions. List your cues, feelings, and actions under the appropriate header.
- Ask for three volunteers to share experiences of mattering.

MARGINALITY

- Please think of a time when you felt as if you did not really matter; when who you were or what you did was not valued. Sometimes marginalization in an interaction stems from identity characteristics, such as race, gender, perceived sexual orientation, ability status, age, etc. Sometimes marginalization is influenced by our position within an institutional hierarchy. Sometimes it is the result of an interpersonal dynamic in the absence of any other factor. You do not need to disclose the circumstances of the particular event. For those who choose to do so, please share:

Cues: What in the interaction let you know you were not being valued?

Feelings: How did you feel as a result of this interaction?

Actions: What were your behaviors or actions that occurred as a result of this interaction?

CUES

FEELINGS

ACTIONS

- Share an example from your own life to model responding to these questions. List your cues, feelings, and actions under the appropriate header.

Process Questions:

1. If you were a supervisor or a co-worker, which type of person would you prefer to be working for you or along side you? As educators, what type of student would you prefer in your class? (There is a right answer!!! ☺)

2. Given your responses to this exercise, what is the connection you see between an individuals' sense of mattering in the workplace and workplace performance? Do the same for students (how their sense of mattering / marginality impacts performance)

Educational Points:

1. The feelings and actions the group generated are normal reactions to experiences of mattering and marginality.
2. Experiences of marginality impact on individual productivity, team development, and detract from the mission of the organization.
3. Individuals tend to give more weight to experiences of marginality than they do to experiences of mattering. This creates a challenge when trying to create a workplace climate that honors diversity in which all employees experience that they matter.
4. The connection between experiences of mattering and marginality and productivity is one of the key reasons companies are investing time, energy, and money to improve workplace climate for all employees.

Matting

Cues

- Recognition
- Verbal / written validation
- Get “Thank you’s”
- Given Independence
- Given voice
- Specific/positive feedback

Feelings

- Validated
- Valued
- Humbled
- Proud
- Warm and fuzzy
- Good
- Competent

Actions

- Take on more, continue the work
- Respond well
- Give feedback
- Stay emotionally involved
- Try harder
- Take more risks
- Engage more in relationships
- Stay committed to organization

Marginality

Cues

- Excluded
- Disconnected
- Little / No financial reward
- Silenced
- Rubber stamp or lack of acknowledgement
- Shut-down
- Invisibility
- Assumptions

Feelings

- Out of place
- Hurt
- Angry
- Humiliated
- Resentful
- Ignored
- Annoyed
- Isolated
- frustrated

Actions

- Avoid social settings
- Disconnect from work
- “To hell with ‘em”
- Do job and “that’s it”
- Bend rules (negatively)
- Circumvent channels of communication
- Quit
- Get aggressive / passive aggressive
- avoid / withdraw
- Over-achieve = burn-out