



***Positive Communication
Two-Hour Skill-Building Workshop Draft Proposal***

For the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology Conference

Training Approach:

EmpowerMT workshops consist of a series of incremental experiential activities that help participants to become leaders in ending individual and institutional oppression by deepening self-awareness, increasing understanding of inequality, and developing intervention and ally skills. Our workshops are structured around participatory activities, small and large group discussions, and drawing on the experiences and expertise of workshop participants. EmpowerMT workshops set a hopeful and positive tone that builds community among participants.

Training Goals:

1. Foster a solid and supportive team that can communicate effectively across group lines.
2. Learn skills in identifying our own cultural lenses and in understanding the lenses of others.
3. Develop and practice positive communication skills and best practices to decrease defensiveness to open up the possibility of positive and productive dialogue.
4. Build tools for effective leadership, collaboration, and advocacy for clients and colleagues.

Training Outline:

- **Exploring Cultural Identities:** Critical to being able to work effectively across cultural lines is identifying our own cultural lenses and understanding the lenses of others. Participants will explore the lenses (work, economic class, age, religion, gender, etc.) through which they see and understand the world and examine how their frame of reference impacts their work and communication.
- **Positive Communication Skills:** Creating and maintaining an inclusive, respectful and welcoming work and service environment requires the positive communication skills of listening to understand, speaking to be understood and correctly interpreting and portraying non-verbal communication to reduce defensiveness and open up the possibility of positive and productive conversation. Participants will identify successes and best practices for achieving positive communication, identify challenges and barriers to communicating with positive communication skills, and help each other problem solve identified challenges and barriers.
- **Emphasis of Power Differential Dynamics:** This skill-building will illuminate, and problem solve, the challenges of communicating with those who hold power over us, as well as illuminate and problem solve the challenges of communicating with those we hold power over.
- **Stopping the Behavior:** Participants will learn this positive communication intervention technique to respond to misinformed, prejudicial, or hurtful comments/behaviors in a way that shifts attitudes without shaming, blaming, or isolating others. Participants will work with real-time examples and learn skills for effectively engaging people in reevaluating their comments or behaviors.