

# SOLUTIONS

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At Solutions EAP, we've been doing a lot of training lately on harassment issues – diversity, sexual harassment, bullying, etc. This training is some of my favorite because I get to gently challenge the way many people have been thinking all their lives. This quarter, I'd like to tackle the issue of diversity.

First, we must understand that we are all racist, genderist, ageist, etc. to some degree. Whenever I hear people say, "I don't see color," I know they are lying to themselves and everyone around them. It's impossible not to see color, gender, age, physical challenges, and/or sexual orientation and not have some emotion connected to it. The trick is acknowledging it and overcoming it.

When doing my research for the harassment workshops, I came across one of the most helpful words – *ethnocentrism*. Ethnocentrism is the tendency we have to make whatever group we are a part of be the best in our minds. We always want to be on the winning team! So, whether we're talking about race, age, gender, etc – we think that whatever we are is best. It's really a survival skill. If we thought we were "less than" all the time, we would soon give up. So, it's understandable, but it's just not realistic. And it's problematic in that it does not leave room for other groups to feel good about themselves. So, it becomes a matter of us all fighting to be "number one." And if there is only room for one winner, then everyone else must be losers. No one wants to be a loser!

So, how can we all win at this diversity thing? I have some suggestions:

**Take a look at history.** Exclusion is nothing new. The bible tells of scholars who shunned tax collectors. In medieval times left-handed people were thought to be evil (and some of you may have been forced to write with your right hand even though it felt unnatural). Many groups from different ethnic backgrounds were thought to be unteachable. How ridiculous it all seems now!

**Take a look at your personal past.** How were people "different" from you and your family viewed? Were they talked about? Was it in a positive or negative light? Who was invited to your house? Was it unspoken but clear that only people who looked like you could come over? I have a friend who is physically challenged. She has spent most of her life in a wheel chair. When we talk of her childhood, many of her memories are very sad. She remembers everyone being so nice to her at school, but never once was she invited to birthday parties or over to someone's house to play. Her invitations to do the same were never accepted.

**Take a look at your current life.** Who is in it? Who is clearly not included? Who do you keep on the perimeter, and who is truly a part of the discussion? Oh, you're nice to everyone and say, "Hi," to all, but who do you choose to let in a little closer (and what do you base it on)? Acknowledge that this is an area you need to work on, and begin to make conscious changes. One of my favorite billboards was one that simply said, "He's a well-spoken black man." The word "black" was marked through. It really made me think about how many times I attach a characteristic of no importance to a description of someone. Following this logic, "He's a well spoken black man," becomes "He's a well spoken man," which becomes, "He's well spoken." I challenge you to begin looking at how often you let characteristics skew your view of others.

**Take a look at your business life.** Do you treat people differently based on gender, color, age, etc? Do you assume that one gender can grasp whatever you're speaking about more easily than another? Do you assume that the young person with tattoos and piercings can't possibly have an intelligent conversation? Are people who are different from you truly included in discussions? Do they have a place at the table where their voices are genuinely acknowledged?

The issue at hand is learning to accept each person as an individual without making assumptions based on characteristics. How can skin color make you smarter or dumber? About the same way that eye color can. Not at all.

# Kitchen Burns

While minor burns on fingers and hands are usually not dangerous, burns injuring even relatively small areas of skin can develop serious complications.

## For Children

Young children are at high risk of being burned by hot food and liquids. Keep children away from cooking areas by enforcing a "kid-free zone" of 3 feet (1 meter) around the stove.

Keep young children at least 3 feet (1 meter) away from any place where hot food or drink is being prepared or carried. Keep hot foods and liquids away from table and counter edges.

When young children are present, use the stove's back burners whenever possible.

Never hold a child while cooking, drinking, or carrying hot foods or liquids.

Teach children that hot things burn.

When children are old enough, teach them to cook safely. Supervise them closely.



## For Adults

Treating a burn begins with stopping the burning process. Cool the burned area with cool running water for several minutes. If an ambulance is coming, continue running water over the burned area until the ambulance arrives.

Look for blistering, sloughing, or charred (blackened) skin. Blistering or sloughing (skin coming off) means the top layer of skin is completely damaged and complications are likely. Charring indicates even deeper damage to all three layers of skin. If the damaged area is bigger than one entire arm or the whole abdomen, call 911 or take the victim to the emergency room immediately.

Victims with burns to the following areas need emergency medical assistance: face, hands, feet, genitalia.

Mild burns with reddened skin and no blisters may be treated with a topical burn ointment or spray to reduce pain. Cool water (not cold or warm) may also help with pain. Do not apply butter or oil to any burn.

Over-the-counter pain relievers like ibuprofen can be used for the pain of a mild burn (typically redness only). If stronger pain relief is needed, contact a physician or go to the emergency room.



## Online Orientation

Learning about the services available through Solutions EAP has never been easier. We've added an orientation video to our website which provides a detailed description of the benefits and services that EAP can provide to you and your family.

Come take a virtual tour of our office, meet our therapists, and see what we have to offer in this short video.

We also walk you through the process of what happens when you come into our office.

**Come check us out at [www.solutions-eap.org](http://www.solutions-eap.org)!**

*For caring and confidential help for personal and family problems, call Solutions EAP.*

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