

12 – LEADING IN A DIVERSE SOCIETY (CHAPTER 6)

Overview Statement: CAP’s Core Value of respect is the price of admission into our organization. The Core Values teach us that every person is worthy of respect simply by virtue of their basic human dignity. America’s diversity is its strength. Ignorance, insensitivity, and bigotry can turn that diversity into a source of prejudice and discrimination.

Connection to the Curriculum: Ties in with a central theme of chapter six in *Learn to Lead*, Team Leadership.

Estimated Time: 25-30 Minutes

Resources Required: *Learn to Lead*, Module Two; Whiteboard (or chalkboard, butcher paper or easel pad).

Key Terms:

Diversity – “Social inclusiveness: ethnic variety, as well as socioeconomic and gender variety, in a group, society, or institution.” Encarta Dictionary

Intolerance – “Refusal to accept differences: unwillingness or refusal to accept people who are different from you, or views, beliefs, or lifestyles that differ from your own.” Encarta Dictionary

Prejudiced – “To pre-judge someone.” *Learn to Lead*, Module Two

INTRODUCTION

Attention: In 1948, the military broke the color barrier six years before public schools desegregated, and sixteen years before Congress made it illegal for private businesses to discriminate on the basis of sex, race, or religion. It can be said that diversity in the military made the business sector take notice.

Motivation: CAP was founded upon this same commitment to diversity. CAP welcomed people who wanted to serve America during World War II but were unqualified for military service due to age or physical disability. CAP’s first national commander, Major General John Curry, was particularly interested in recruiting females in a day when women’s opportunities were limited. Our first national commander was a progressive whose respect for diversity was ahead of its time.

Overview: In today's lesson we will honor CAP's Core Value of Respect as it applies to our organization's rich heritage of diversity.

Your role in this discussion is to be an active participant. You are free to share your views with each other. Please be involved and considerate of one another. My role will be to take notes on what you say, and I may occasionally ask a question or two. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions. I am simply interested in what you have to say.

MAIN POINT 1: CAP IS CULTURAL

Life experiences shape personality. This can be true of a generation's personality. A cultural generation is a group of people born during a certain window of time, roughly twenty years in duration. One assumption about cultural generations is that when one grows up matters more than where one grows up. Generational differences are another form of diversity.

Respect for diversity will become even more important in the future. Demographics, the statistical study of people, shows that the United States is expected to become an older and more racially and culturally diverse population. Individuals who are uncomfortable in diverse environments today will need to become better skilled in working in a diverse culture.

Question: Describe how you are different from your parents.

Question: Why is the study of generational trends important for a cadet leader?

Question: Should CAP try to attract even more diversity (if so, how)? Respectfully defend your answer.

MAIN POINT 2: WAYS TO FIGHT HATE

Making assumptions about an individual just because they are male or female, black or white, Eskimo or Swahili, practice a certain religion, or display certain personal traits is a form of prejudice. Prejudice is important because hateful feelings too often give rise to hateful actions. Harassment is unwelcome conduct. It's the attitude that says, "I'll make life difficult for someone."

In the workplace, or in a volunteer group like CAP, the organization can be made responsible for harassment, especially if it comes from a supervisor, like an NCO or officer. Petty slights and annoyances are usually not illegal, although they are socially unacceptable.

Leaders are expected not to display signs of prejudice or harass or discriminate against other people. Further, because leaders are responsible for their teams, leaders are expected to create an atmosphere that welcomes everyone. Supervisors who remain silent in the face of harassment and hatred can be held responsible for their failure to lead.

How can leaders effectively counter hatred and bigotry?

Review:

{Draw the following on the board:

Rise Up – Pull Together – Speak Out – Support the Victims – Teach Tolerance}

This five step process can help leaders show their support for democratic traditions and CAP's Core Value of Respect:

1. Rise Up ~ Inaction in the face of prejudice is almost as bad as the hatred itself. When a leader fails to act, he or she signals, perhaps unintentionally, support for bigotry. Leaders need to not let hate go unchallenged.

2. Pull Together ~ Most people have been raised to reject hatred and bigotry. Leaders who see hatred can expect that at least some other members on the team, if not all, will oppose harassment and discrimination. Sometimes it takes just one brave individual to rally others who have remained quiet in the face of hatred.

3. Speak Out ~ Leaders need the courage to act. They can personally challenge the individuals who harass other people. Sending the message that "we don't condone that behavior here," or "those aren't our values" is important. Also, speaking out means telling other leaders in positions of authority about the problem.

4. Support the Victims ~ People who experience harassment and other types of hatred may need support. Depending on the situation, that support can range from counseling and health or legal services to simply having someone they can talk to, following the wingman principle discussed in chapter two. As leaders try to help, it is important they not attempt to speak for the victim or allow their good intentions to re-victimize a victim.

5. Teach Tolerance ~ If there is a silver lining to prejudice and bigotry it is that tough times give leaders an opportunity to teach tolerance. School and the CAP Cadet Program are environments

where young people can learn from their own and one another's mistakes. Leaders ought not to miss the chance to eradicate ignorance.

Question: Why do you think the military formally embraced diversity even before the rest of America?

Question: Would America be a better place if everyone had the same background and experience? Respectfully defend your answer.

Question: Describe one of your responsibilities if you see or hear intolerant behavior and how you would handle the matter. {Instructors, refer back to the five-step process.}

CONCLUSION

Summary: CAP welcomes members from a diverse and rich background to accomplish missions for America. Learning how to combat hate is an important tool for CAP's cadet and adult leaders to embrace.

Remotivation: A former Chief Master Sergeant of the Air Force once said, "Diversity is the greatest strength of our Air Force... The Air Force attracts men and women from all walks of life; we welcome these teammates and value their differences."

Closure: Celebrate the differences of your team!

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

Note to the instructor: Every informal discussion should be followed by one or more hands-on activities that reinforce one or more of the concepts being discussed. These activities should last 25-30 minutes, giving about one hour total block of time for the leadership session at a typical CAP meeting (25-30 minutes for the informal discussion, plus 25-30 minutes for the activities).

Along with any questions found in the activities themselves, you should be sure to ask, "**How does this activity tie in with our discussion?**"

CAP recommends activities from the *Learn to Lead Activity Guide* by Rob Smith (published by the Civil Air Patrol). You are free to substitute another activity, or create your own, as long as you tie in with one or more concepts of the informal discussion.

Main concept for this lesson: **Diversity; prejudice; differences.**