

Ameren's Inclusion Cruiser On The Road
with the story of
Stepping Out of Our Comfort Zone

Facilitator's Guide

Description

Stepping Out of Our Comfort Zone focuses on situations that often call for enhanced sensitivity and awareness to those who are 'different' from us. It encourages empathy, connection, and action to bridge gaps. Having the courage to take action challenges us to confront and acknowledge our biases and fears. Participants are encouraged to call upon their courage and take action when faced with personal biases, in pursuit of a true understanding of diversity and inclusion.

Objectives

This video is intended to build awareness of diversity and inclusion by encouraging discussions about:

- To recognize fear is a natural response to the unknown.
- To recognize that fear without courage is destructive, and offers no solutions.
- To learn to speak up when necessary.
- To agree to standards of behavior that allow all of us to be included and respected when we work together.

Target Audience

This program is intended for groups, organizations and people interested in building inclusive communities through dialogue and discussion.

Tips for Facilitating

As a facilitator, your role is to encourage discussion. Considering the opinions and points of view presented in this video, focus discussion on those conversations and thoughts that affect inclusion, respect, and valuing others. To best facilitate the discussion, **carefully review the video and prepared materials in advance of presentation.**

Guidelines:

- Review all presentation materials and the video in advance of your session.
- As you begin the session, establish ground rules for sharing (**see *Ground Rules Samples on page 3***).
- Stress the need to be respectful of others.
- Set expectations for the session by sharing the objectives (**see *Objective Section above***) and agenda.
- Actively manage time to allow sufficient discussion of the topics highlighted in the video.
- You may encounter off topic comments in your session. Prepare to steer the conversation back on topic. An example of something you could say might be “***That is an interesting comment. Let's discuss it further after the session to allow time to cover discussion items more directly related to the video.***”
- At the conclusion of the session, thank everyone for their participation.

Materials and Equipment Needed

Video: "Stepping Out of Our Comfort Zone"

Click on link: [Stepping Out of Our Comfort Zone](#)

Wi-Fi or data connection is needed to view video

Laptop with Video Screen, or Room with Projector and Screen for showing video

Facilitator Guide

Participant Booklet

Time Requirements

Room Set-Up: 5 minutes

Video: 8:17 minute runtime

Discussion Time: 30 - 40 minutes

Courage Beyond What We See

Introducing the Program

Welcome participants. Explain that the story they are about to view focuses on courage and stepping out of your comfort zone - to act with empathy and compassion and to “do” rather than “hope” or “wish” – to build an inclusive community. It features two Ameren customer service representatives in Decatur, Illinois, who decided to take action to make a difference in their community. They collaborated on what they could do to improve the adversity of those less fortunate. Ask participants to think about the message Josalin and Junetta shared and what it means to them.

Give advanced notice that there will be questions following the video for discussion and learning.

Provide Sample Ground Rules for Clips Discussion

Facilitators, encourage people to be involved as active listeners and participants. No one else knows a person's thoughts and experiences as well as that person. Suggested ground rules are below. The bracketed portions are optional, so, feel free to include or not.

| | |
|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Participate | I encourage you to participate. [You will find you will get more out of the program, likely, enjoy it more and hopefully, even have a little fun.] |
| Respect | We expect everyone to be respectful. [Not everyone may agree with each other, but when we are respectful, we live up to Ameren values. With respect, we establish, maintain and even improve the way we relate to one another.] |
| Open | We hope you will be open. |
| Educate | We're here to learn and to inform, but we are all students of diversity. [Some may not have any experience participating in discussions of this nature or on these topics. And some may not have done so in a work environment. So, we expect understanding as we learn how to talk about these issues, because some of us may not feel we have the “right” words to share our thoughts.] |
| Share | Sharing our experiences, respectfully, can help us connect with each other. Doing so, also can help us build trust. |

As you ask questions, remember to allow people time to think before they respond. Do not jump in too quickly with your own answers.

❖ **View Video (Run Time: 8:17)**

❖ **Group Discussion**

For large audiences (more than 10-12 people), consider dividing into smaller groups to discuss questions. Key points from each small group can be shared with the larger group and captured on the flip chart at the conclusion of their discussion.

Discussion Questions

1. What were some of the messages Josalin shared?

Possible Answers:

- It takes courage to be true to who you are – may not fit in, but it doesn't mean you should give up.
 - Perseverance – it takes courage and hard work to stick to what you believe is right for you.
 - Stepping up to a higher level of awareness is essential if we want to change our communities. But doing so requires really SEEING and QUESTIONING the status quo rather than accepting 'the way things are'.
 - If we have a negative experience we can be scarred by it and pass it on, or we can learn from it and help bring about positive change. Either path we choose changes us, and affects our team, organization, or community.
2. Josalin talked about being afraid when she first approached people who were outside her usual social group. Have you ever had to face an obstacle in order to be successful or reach a goal you set for yourself. How did you approach the situation?

Possible Answers:

- Sometimes, we must 'act' as though we have more courage than we really do...in order to find the courage we need. To *act* like the person we want to be.
 - Admitting - and overcoming – the initial fear and doubt are essential first steps in meeting any challenge.
3. The efforts behind the Credit Crusade initiative changed Josalin and Junetta's perceptions to reach out and include others. In the video, they stated they planned to continue their efforts in the community by stepping out of their comfort zone. How can you increase your comfort and confidence to make an impact to your department, organization, and community?

Possible Answers:

- Acknowledge our fears and get comfortable with being uncomfortable. When we feel uncomfortable, there is an opportunity for personal growth.
- Rather than 'blaming' or avoiding groups different from our own, we can reach out and connect with them.
- Although we may not see ourselves as heroes or being able to '*make big changes in the world*', we can make an impact in our homes, our offices, our communities where positive change starts.

4. Ron issued an invitation and a challenge. He referenced the importance of stepping up to a higher level of awareness and to bring together different backgrounds to continue to improve individuals and an organization. What can you do to step out of your comfort zone and bring Diversity and Inclusion to your group?

Possible Feedback:

- Take action that requires us to overcome our initial fear of failure - or rejection- of doing the wrong thing.
- Join one of Ameren's Employee Resource Groups (ERGs). ERGs not only promote diverse thinking but also improve employee engagement and retention. ERG members can assist with innovating on a particular topic relevant to my department.
- Offer a variety of communication mediums as options to encourage collaboration among co-workers. Everyone has a preferred method in which they're most comfortable interacting with others and expressing their ideas. To gain a greater diversity of ideas from co-workers, utilize multiple tools (***such as submitting an innovative idea to the Innovation Action Teams***) so all co-workers feel comfortable contributing.
- Focus outside of ourselves and developing the leadership approach that is in service to others' growth and development.

Review Objectives

- To recognize the fear is a natural response to the unknown.
- To recognize that fear without courage is destructive, and offers no solutions.
- To learn to speak up when necessary.
- To agree to standards of behavior that allow all of us to be included and respected when we work together.

Closing Comments

Conclude the session by sharing your organization's or group's policy statement or position on diversity. Be sure to thank the participants for their contributions to discussions and for their time.

Survey

Please take a few minutes to complete a brief survey on the *Courage to Be All In* video series:

Click on link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2018DiscussionsAcrossDifferences>

Let's keep the dialogue going.