

VIH PROGRAM

Pre- Conference Assignment: Interview with a Gender Minorities Leader

We are pleased to welcome you back to Pittsburgh for the September Leadership Development Conference! The Leadership Development Retreat focuses on leadership as the set of behaviors that influences others to take action and make positive change. Many people think that exerting leadership is the sole responsibility of a person who has been selected, appointed, or hired into the position as leader. We will explore how leadership behaviors can be developed and enhanced in anyone, as well as provide you with experiences to further develop your skills.

Prior to the September Fall Leadership Conference, find a gender minorities leader in your community who is at least 35 years old with whom you are able to conduct an interview. Your goal during this interview is to unravel the story of the individual and their leadership development journey. There are many ways to explore their journey. For example, you may want to examine their education, career choices and professional development. You could focus your questions on what they are passionate about and how their childhood helped to shape their vision for change in a particular arena.

Understanding this leader's interpersonal skills and how they inspire others to action could be central to your interview. You may want to inquire what skills they believe make them an effective leader. It may also be interesting to find out where they were, academically and professionally, in their late twenties, as well as what their intercultural and mentoring experiences were. Finally, you may find it beneficial to inquire about mistakes the leaders had made throughout their journey, how they would handle those situations differently today, and what advice they have for you. Specific questions follow:

1. How has organizational culture helped or hindered your journey as a gender minorities leader?
2. What are the key differences between leadership styles of men and gender minorities in your organization?
3. Is there subtle discrimination (or not so subtle) against gender minorities in your organization? If so, how does it express itself? How do you deal with it?
4. Have you witnessed how gender minorities individuals within your organization are judged for how they look, dress, act and express themselves more than for the quality of their work?
5. Have you experienced the double bind (gender minorities leaders are perceived as competent or well- liked but rarely both).

Please take notes during your interview. Bring these notes with you to the session of the Fall Conference so you can share your insights with the group.

