

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION RESOURCES

developed in partnership by North American Interfraternity Conference and Association of Fraternal Leadership & Values (AFLV)

Cultural appropriation

“

It's about understanding the value and traditions of the symbols that are appropriated to ensure that their use is appropriate, and benefits those they belong to.”

—Sass Brown, *Not Just a Label*



DEFINE

Cultural Appropriation is the act of taking or using things from a culture that is not your own, especially without showing that you understand or respect this culture.

SELF-REFLECTION ACTIVITY

- How would you define your cultural identity?
- How would you feel if someone else took credit for your cultural identity?
- Can you think of an instance in which you've seen cultural appropriation (in person or in the media)?

GROUP ACTIVITY

Watch the video. When you are finished, answer the questions below as a group.



WATCH VIDEO: *The Difference Between Cultural Appropriation and Appreciation* (RUN TIME:55 SECONDS)

GROUP ACTIVITY DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What are some examples of culture appropriation that we see in our daily lives? In our own communities?
- What thoughts and feelings come to mind as we identify these instances of cultural appropriation?
- How do you learn about other cultures? Where do you get your information?
- What are the potential consequences when we generalize an entire group of people based on culture?
- How does the media portray cultures (music, language, hairstyles, art, movies etc.)? Is the media's portrayal of cultures accurately representing the culture or performative and tokenizing?

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COMMITMENT

1. Educate yourself on your own hidden biases
2. Educate others in your organization
3. Collect relevant data that shows hidden biases
4. Evaluate the “subtle messages” within your organization
5. Hold each other accountable and have leaders do the same



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

LISTEN

[Cultural Appropriation vs Appreciation: From a Black, Neutral Perspective](#)

READ

[So, You Want to Talk About Cultural Appropriation](#)

WATCH

[About Cultural Appropriations and How to Connect with Each Other](#)

- Name some ways in which cultural appropriation differs from cultural appreciation? Check out the [University of Maryland's tips](#).
- What does it look like to intervene when you see someone taking part in cultural appropriation?
- Understanding power dynamics in play; how can I celebrate and bring awareness to other cultures without personal monetization?

EDUCATE



WATCH VIDEO: *7 Myths About Cultural Appropriation*

(RUN TIME: 6 MINUTES, 11 SECONDS)

- Part of the issue with cultural appropriation is the lack of understanding around the importance that an image or concept can carry within a specific culture.
- This can be based on misinformation and cultural norms that have existed for decades and perpetuated by mass-media.

WHEN OUR MEMBERS DON'T UNDERSTAND IF A COSTUME OR ACT IS CULTURAL APPROPRIATION, SOME GOOD QUESTIONS TO ASK ARE:

- Is this costume or image a stereotype of a group of people?
- Does this object/image hold important cultural or traditional significance?
- How does removing the context of this costume/object change its meaning?
- Does my usage of the costume/object trivialize a culture or group of people?

ACTION



What should we/I START DOING?

List ideas/items:

- Things that are not being done but should be done
- Things to begin doing to get better results
- Things worth trying or experimenting for better results



What should we/I STOP DOING?

List ideas/items:

- Things that are not working or helping
- Things that impede or are not practical
- Not delivering desired results
- We or others dislike



What should we/I CONTINUE DOING?

List ideas/items:

- Things that are working well
- Things that we want to keep
- Worth continuing to see if they're worthwhile
- We like or need