

2023 Public Description of Work for Action Collaborative on Preventing Sexual Harassment in Higher Education

The International Ombuds Association

Inaugural IOA September Symposium Ombuds as Change Agent: Ombuds Intersections in the Modern World

Relevant Rubric Area(s):

1. Response: Trauma-informed Programs and Practices
2. Prevention: Identifying and Reinforcing Community Values

Description of Work:

On September 20-21, 2023, The International Ombuds Association launched a new annual event, the September Symposium. This year's program, "Ombuds as Change Agents: Ombuds Intersections in the Modern World," invited aspiring, emerging, and experienced ombuds to explore topics related to diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and trauma, and how those intersect with Ombuds practice.

The event took place over the course of two half-days to meet the needs of international and busy practitioner communities. Topics included intergenerational diversity; indigenous practices; neurodivergence; incorporating DEIB into workshop design; DEIB in the international context; trauma-informed Ombuds practice; and facilitated small group case study work.

The symposium included pre-work to allow attendees to have a shared, baseline of knowledge.

Detailed Agenda:

September 20, 2023

Welcome

Networking

Session I: "Creating Culturally Inclusive Interactions for Visitors, Peers, and Organisational Partners from an Indigenous New Zealand Approach"

Presented by [Christina Tay](#)

In our work as organisational ombuds, we are in service to those that we interact with as visitors, peers, and organisational partners. A part of being in service is ensuring that we are providing holistic care in all of our interactions which extends to cultural consideration and the appropriate inclusion of cultural practices which whilst unique to certain tribes around the globe are all underpinned by the essence of kindness, caring, and respect. I would like to provide a brief introduction to cultural practices that I include from an indigenous New Zealand perspective.

Session II: “Cultural Perspectives on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging in Ombuds Work”

Facilitated by [Marlo Goldstein-Hode](#)

Four panelists representing Africa, Europe, Latin America, and Asia Pacific will share their perspectives and insights on the evolving landscape of DEIB in different cultural and organizational contexts.

Learning Objectives:

- Participants will learn how the concepts of diversity, equity, and inclusion are similar and different in various cultural contexts.
- Participants will gain insights into ombuds work and DEIB issues in various cultural contexts.

Panel Participants

- Arllon Souza Viçoso – IBM Americas & Brazilian Ombuds Association Director, Co-Chair Latin America Caribbean RAC
- Jutta Reitmeier – Mars, Inc. Europe & CIS Ombudsman , Co-Chair Europe RAC
- Zetu Makamandela – Mguqulwa Owner and Director at ZetuMindshift and Chair of the Africa RAC
- Lily Xu – RTX Corporate Ombuds, IOA Board of Directors

Session III: “Practices, Ideas, and Experiences in Designing and Delivering Inclusive Group Experiences”

Presented by [Jenn Mahony](#), [Dan Young](#), and [Mike Rozinsky](#)

It takes thoughtfulness to design a space for creative thinking, exploring ideas, agreeing on solutions, and learning together in ways that celebrate diverse experiences and viewpoints as well as promote inclusion and safe dissent.

In this session, we will share more about our influences and practices in designing and facilitating sessions that go beyond our cultural and identity perspectives while also providing a space for attendees to consider ways in which they might further develop their own practice for designing intentional, inclusive group experiences.

Session IV: "Generational Diversity in the Ombuds Arena"

Presented by [Twillea Evans-Carthen](#)

The presentation of information will include a conversation on moving boldly forward, looking in the rearview mirror of generational practices, understanding of intergenerational diversity, ageism, and behaviors to help enhance diversity awareness, practices, and behaviors for all to foster a culture of acceptance, respect, fairness, transparency, and belonging among fellow colleagues and others.

Learning Objectives:

- Provide attendees with an overview of the five generations in the Ombuds Arena.

- Examine different perspectives of multigenerational environments in relation to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging.
- Analyze common challenges of stereotyping members of each group.
- Assess strategies for communicating with members of each group.

Break

AMA: Ask Me Anything

Small Group Discussion

Keynote: Sunn m'Cheaux, Gullah/Geechee linguist, activist, and instructor at Harvard University.

Closing Remarks

September 21, 2023

Welcome

Networking

Session V: "PEC'ing Order: The Journey of Creating a Space of Emotional Resilience During the Emergence of Challenges to DEI"

Presented by [Derrick Johnson](#)

As an ombuds, Perceptions, Emotional Intelligence, and Coping Mechanisms (PEC) have intersectionality in the success or failure of the persistence to develop equitable-based processes, especially when faced with political or systematic challenges. How do we build support for the emotional effects the impact restrictive policy actions have on ombuds while maintaining the core goals of DEI and recognize that unique ombuds PEC experiences and intersectionality provide for better overall professional and personal development?

Learning Objectives:

- Participants will learn how to assess their individual PEC'ing order and how it intersects with the populations Ombuds serve.
- Participants will learn how to build and maintain emotional support while working within the confines of restrictive company policies or legislation that may not lend to the promotion of diverse initiatives.

Session VI: "Self-Care for Ombuds Professionals: Navigating Trauma and Its Impact"

Presented by [Tuba Bilecik](#)

In this session, the participants will explore the crucial topic of self-care and its profound impact when working with individuals affected by trauma. The presentation aims to provide attendees with essential strategies for maintaining their well-being while navigating the complexities of ombuds work within diverse and dynamic environments. Participants will gain a deeper understanding of trauma's effects on both visitors and themselves, particularly in the way they engage in conflict resolution, and they will learn

practical self-care techniques to enhance resilience and cultivate a supportive work environment.

Session VII: "Ombudsing Marginalized Communities That Are Retraumatized by Microaggression"

Presented by [Aaron Footman](#)

This session will explore how systemic traumas among marginalized community affects employees and the work environment. By examining how micro-aggressions can lead to psychological trauma among groups regularly encountering intense discriminatory incidents and practices throughout their lives. We will also explore how traumatic stress triggers mistrust and disenfranchisement in the workplace negatively impacts engagement and productivity. Finally, we will explore how intersectionality affects how one encounters and copes with microaggressions and trauma.

The goal of this session is to learn:

- How traumatic retention and intergenerational transmission in protective classes lead to microaggressive behaviors.
- Strategies to address microaggressive trauma: individually, institutionally, and systemically.

Session VIII: "Neurodivergent Ombudsing: Personal Reflections and Case Lessons"

Presented by [Amanda Dean](#)

The term neurodivergent has become the catch-all for many mental differences, everything from social preferences to ways of learning and communicating. In this session, an ombuds who identifies as neurodivergent will share her experiences ombudsing with a neurotypical brain and ombudsing for people who are neurodivergent.

Break

AMA: Ask Me Anything

Small Group Discussion

Keynote: [Sunn m'Cheaux](#), Gullah/Geechee linguist, activist, and instructor at Harvard University.

Keynote Q&A

Closing Remarks

Website for further information: <https://www.ombudsassociation.org/2023-september-symposium>

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