



# DHS News

Newsletter of the Allegheny County  
Department of Human Services



**November 2019**

## **Training helps attendees learn how to move conversations “from head to heart”**

Communicating across difference was the theme of a train-the-leader event held on October 31 at the Human Services Building.

Nearly 20 DHS staff members from across program and support offices attended the training and participated in a variety of exercises designed to create intentional connection, move interactions from the head to heart, and put differences on the table. Each participant left with a list of ways they could use what they learned to build stronger relationships in the work they do.

The training was offered as part of a year-long Seeding Civity grant DHS received this summer that “offers training and coaching assistance to selected communities interested in deepening work to foster connections across difference.” The grant is supported by Civity and Welcoming America.

“I am impressed with the Department’s dedication to equity and inclusion and I look forward to working with Adriana, Jessica and the rest of the staff to make connection across difference an intentional practice,” said Malka Kopell, co-founder and CEO of Civity and the presenter of the workshop.

“Our membership across different social identity groups affects our beliefs, perspectives and understandings of how these groups operate in society. I am excited about the tools that the Civity team is introducing because when done well, they can lead to the development of trust that can lead to the establishment of authentic relationships. These relationships can result in the mutual understanding needed to advance our equity work,” said Jessica Ruffin, senior leader for equity and inclusion in the Office of Equity and Inclusion.

Staff interested in attending future Civity trainings may contact the Office of Equity and Inclusion at [DHS-Equity@alleghenycounty.us](mailto:DHS-Equity@alleghenycounty.us) to learn more.