

COMING TOGETHER FOR RACIAL UNDERSTANDING

HANDOUTS

DAY #2

Target and Non-Target Groups

Types of Oppression	Target Group	Non-Target Group
Racism	People of Color	White people
Classism	People who are poor, working class; role in organization	Middle, owning class, role in organization
Sexism	Women	Men
Heterosexism	Lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, questioning, intersex, asexual	Heterosexuals
Cissexism	People who are transgender	People who are cisgender
Ableism	People with disabilities	People without disabilities
Lookism	Size, weight, height, appearance	Size, weight, height, appearance (“magazine look”)
Religious Oppression	Jews, Muslims, atheists, Native spirituality, other spiritual paths	Christians
Ageism	People over 40, “elderly”/ elders	Younger adults
Adultism	Children, youth, young adults	Middle-aged people
Rankism/Elitism	People without college degrees; rank in organization	People with college degrees; rank in organization
Immigrant Status	Immigrants	U.S. born
Language	Non-English speakers, English with accent, limited English proficiency	“Standard” English

**“The House We Live In”
Four Realms Worksheet**

What do you notice at four realms?

PERSONAL	INTERPERSONAL
INSTITUTIONAL	CULTURAL

Resources for Facilitators
Guidelines, Approaches to Positive Confrontation and
Back Pocket Responses to Hot Button Topics

As a facilitator for the Coming Together for Racial Understanding initiative, you may experience situations during the workshop where participants are grappling with the process and/or content of the curriculum. This discomfort can be characterized as push back, overt or covert resistance or outright hostility towards you or the information that is being presented. In addition, as a facilitator, you may experience similar anxiety when discussing or presenting certain portions of the curriculum or when a participant raises a “hot button” issue related to the content of the workshop. Hot button topics are typically issues or statements which may cause you emotional pain, cause your blood pressure to rise or are statements which attack or somehow minimize the experiences of target group members. These situations can be either opportunities for a participant to become more resistant or opportunities for tremendous personal growth and development of an individual’s multicultural competency and racial awareness.

Your role as a facilitator during these periods of tension is to provide leadership for the learning process by maintaining an environment which is supportive **and** challenges the participants to examine their realities on the personal, interpersonal, institutional and cultural levels. It is important to remember that you have several resources, which can support your role in this process of multicultural change.

Resource #1 - Workshop Guidelines

Note: this resource highlights how some of the workshop guidelines might be used in difficult dialogues throughout the workshop.

1. You may ask participants to **TRY ON** the ideas or concepts being presented and the possibility that there is more than one perspective on the issue or one “reality” which needs to be recognized.
2. If a long period of time has been spent discussing the idea or concept and there seems to be an atmosphere of “debate” which is occurring, you may ask participants to accept that **IT’S OK TO DISAGREE**, and remind them that **IT’S NOT OK TO BLAME, SHAME OR ATTACK YOURSELF OR OTHERS**. In addition, be careful not to jump in too fast and cut off a dialogue, even if participants disagree with one another. Allow some discussion, dissonance and dialogue to happen. If people are stuck in their disagreement, dominate the discussion and seem unwilling to move on, invite others to share what they think. Keep in mind that real opportunities for learning and growth often happen from moments of disagreement and dissonance.
3. If a participant(s) is attempting to make points which are grounded in generalizations and using numerous, “we,” “they,” “all,” and “those people,” type of statements, you may ask the participant(s) to **PRACTICE SELF-FOCUS** by using “I” statements which take ownership for their own personal experiences, ideas and beliefs. Additionally, don’t allow people to speak for others. If someone says something like “Betty shared that...” gently interrupt and ask the person to share personal experience and feelings using “I” statements.

4. If there is tension around what may seem to be two differing opinions or beliefs or the existence of more than one way of experiencing the world, you may ask participants to **PRACTICE “BOTH/AND” THINKING** and to verbalize what a statement which combines both ways of thinking or experiencing our world might be.
5. Often points of tension and opportunities for growth/change occur when an individual is acting out of a place of good intentions, which are grounded in modern or old fashioned forms of racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism or ableism and other oppressions. In these situations, it is important to point out the guideline **BE AWARE OF INTENT AND IMPACT**. As an individual, I may be operating from a place of good intentions; however, the impact of my actions and behaviors may be very hurtful and perpetuate “isms” and oppression on the personal, interpersonal, institutional and cultural levels.

Although not included as part of our curriculum guidelines, you may want to allow yourself the option to **BREATHE** and ask participants as a full group to remember to stop and **BREATHE DEEPLY** as they struggle together to discuss these very important issues.

Resource #2 - Approaches to Positive Confrontation

As a facilitator of this learning process, you will experience situations where you will need to intervene and confront behaviors, actions, beliefs or attitudes of individuals or the total group. During these moments of tension and opportunities for individual and group growth/change, it is important to attempt to keep the individual relationship or group “community” intact **and** to positively confront whatever might be interfering with the learning process. The **Principles of Positive Confrontation** listed below may be a helpful tool to have as part of your facilitator skills.

1. **Remain calm** - It’s hard to be constructive and respectful when reacting out of anger and rage, even though that may be where the initial feelings/messengers take us.
2. **Use your voice to confront hurtful, inaccurate or harmful statements or actions - individually or in the large group** - Throughout the workshop, focus on maintaining and strengthening relationships grounded in mutual respect **and** be ready to confront situations which can affect the learning of individuals or the total group. You will also need to make a judgement on whether you confront a person individually or whether your remarks should be shared with the total group. Your goal should not be to embarrass, but rather, to educate and challenge.
3. **Be respectful and constructive** - Avoid a patronizing perspective or argumentative approach. It is possible to speak up and stand up for what you and the organization believes in and to do it in ways that are positive and promote growth and learning.
4. **Use “I” statements** - Speaking from the “I” perspective allows there to be ownership for your individual thoughts and beliefs, steering clear of generalizations. For example, “In my target group experience as a person of color, I sometimes feel....”
5. **Use softening statements** - Softening statements may allow for the individual(s) to hear your point without becoming immediately defensive. For example, “I can hear myself saying that same thing a few years ago. Now I’m beginning to more clearly understand how white

privilege works in our society...” or “I have asked the same question and what I have come to understand is....”

6. **Provide accurate information** - Your comments, challenges or thoughts could be connected to and/or incorporate inclusive and equitable values/ beliefs and give accurate information about the group being targeted. Counter participants’ remarks that are rooted in generalizations and stereotypes with accurate information.
7. **Ask for what you need** - It is important for you to respond to the internal messengers associated with your feelings and state your needs. As a facilitator, you may need to gently and firmly remind participants that we are asking them to "try on" the model and information and people's experiences and realities. You may also want them to reflect on the concept of “intent and impact” as well. It is important that you keep the community intact along with taking care of yourself and creating a community, which maximizes the learning of all participants.
8. **Invite further conversation** - Do not feel that you must say everything to the person in your initial comments. It may be just as effective to leave them thinking. Offer assistance in understanding the issue or offer resources to provide explanations of the inappropriateness of the remark, action or behavior. Another option is to listen carefully to participants’ comments in their introductions and in small group work. Weave into your lecturettes and discussions throughout the workshop examples that provide new information that may challenge participants’ thinking.
9. **Be aware of your silence** - Not speaking up may signal consent to be part of the problem. When and how a response is made is dependent on the circumstances of the situation and the use of sound judgment.

Remember that it is your responsibility to model culturally competent skills and strategies for future use by participants. These **Principles of Positive Confrontation** provide skills and strategies. Like anything else, practicing these tools increases skills and builds awareness for application possibilities. These guidelines when applied do work and the more that they can be integrated into difficult discussions, the more barriers will be broken and “isms” interrupted. Each one helps to reduce fear and risk.

Resource # 3 - Back Pocket Responses to Hot Button Topics

As a facilitator for the Coming Together for Racial Understanding initiative, it will be helpful to develop back pocket responses to hot button topics which may come forth during the workshop. Hot button topics are typically issues or statements that may cause you emotional pain, cause your blood pressure to rise or are statements that attack or minimize the experiences of target group members. It will be your responsibility as the facilitator of the workshop to find productive ways to address these situations and keep the learning environment intact. A way of preparing oneself for this role is by practicing and developing back pocket responses, responses that have been developed prior to the workshop to help the workshop participants consider various perspectives of the issue and to challenge their growth. Below you will find examples of hot button topics/statements and possible back pocket responses. We encourage you to develop your own list of hot button topic/statements and back pocket responses to strengthen your role as facilitator.

Hot Button Topic/Statement

“I don’t see color. I was taught to be color blind.”

Back Pocket Response

We all bring to these learning opportunities our past experiences and messages about differences. It is important to understand the intent and impact of such a statement. Your intent may be to show your anti-racist attitude; however, the impact on a person of color may be to minimize the importance of their experience that has been influenced by the color of their skin. I ask you to “try on” that diminishing the importance of color is another way of denying the impact of differences. It is rooted in assuming that everyone’s reality is the same, which is not the case.

Hot Button Topic/Statement

“We don’t have racism in our organization. It’s just that people of color are too sensitive and regularly play the race card.”

Back Pocket Response

From your place of privilege, it may be very difficult for you to see that racism, overt and covert, exists if the systems and policies of an organization support the dominant racial group differently than others in the organization. I may need to listen attentively to people of color (target group members) in the organization who feel that they are being treated as “less than” to understand the full experience of my co-workers. It may also be helpful to be aware of how feelings of shame and guilt may interfere with my ability to be empathetic when people of color share important perspectives for my learning.

Hot Button Topic/Statement

“Sexism is worse than racism. Male dominance is more insidious in the U.S. than racism or white dominance.”

Back Pocket Response

It is probably not helpful to view different forms of oppression in a hierarchy. It may be more helpful to recognize the impact that multiple layers of oppression have on individuals and groups and create ways to develop a “both/and” dialogue which allows there to be discussion about both forms of oppression and ways to address and dismantle these concerns.

Hot Button Topic/Statement

“We don’t have any racial diversity in our county (or community), so we don’t have an issue with racism.”

Back Pocket Response

It is interesting how one might come to the conclusion that racism can only exist when people of color are present in a community or situation. Actually, racism is present in many overt and

covert ways without the presence of people of color. For example, if two white people are telling a racist joke or using a racial slur without the presence of a person of color, than racism is present in that situation. Most of us are inundated with negative, hurtful and fear based messages about people of color and other differences on a daily basis through our consumption of media and that can help support racist ideals/values. All of this can occur without the presence of people of color in our lives or communities. One question that might be helpful for us to ask our homogenous community members and ourselves is, “What are the barriers and reasons for the lack of racial diversity in our community and what can we do to address this in more inclusive and equitable ways.

Hot Button Topic/Statement

“Why do those illegals keep coming into our country? They just come here to take our jobs or live off our welfare system. I am so glad that we taking a strong stand on this issue.”

Back Pocket Response

First and foremost, it is hurtful and inappropriate to refer to a fellow human being as illegal. No human is “illegal.” Secondly, the issue of migration to this country is complex and it might be helpful to become curious as to why we are only given simplistic answers and images as to the reasons why people come to this country and what they do once they arrive here. It may be also helpful to recognize that not everyone in this country agrees with the actions and language related to immigrants in this country and it might be most helpful to remain open, curious and empathetic as we navigate this difficult and important issue.

What are some of your “hot buttons” when it comes to issues of race and racism within a U.S. context? How would you approach these issues from a place of dialogue and not debate?

Doing Our Own Work: Preparing to Facilitate Racial Awareness Workshops

As a facilitator of the Coming Together for Racial Awareness initiative, it is important to find as many opportunities as possible to personalize the content which you are being asked to share with others. Personalizing the information has proven to provide personal growth for facilitators, an excellent opportunity for facilitator modeling of workshop content/application, and a means to bring clarity to complex issues and concepts. Below are some suggested guidelines on how and what facilitators might consider in the process of personalizing the content of the Coming Together for Racial Awareness experience:

Identify your target and non-target status - It is important to self-identify your places of privilege (non-target group membership) and the places where you are impacted by different forms of oppression (target group membership). Having clarity of these statuses and how they affect our lives helps to identify whether our behaviors are forms of oppression (racism, sexism, classism, ableism and heterosexism) or internalized oppression responding to forms of oppression.

Make your examples real and personal - Be willing to model when you have participated in maintaining oppression or “ism” behaviors and how you have acted in response to being oppressed. Participants may be willing to “try on” taking the same risk in response to your example.

Model change and growth - Be willing to model your own process of learning, taking risks, making mistakes and creating more affirming and less hurtful personal or professional environments. Modeling our process may allow participants to see the applicability of the workshop content and concepts while supporting their own personal multicultural growth.

Own our own “stuff” - As difficult as it may be, it is important to be willing to share when we have participated, consciously or unconsciously, in hurtful, destructive behaviors on the personal, interpersonal, institutional and cultural levels. In addition, it is also important to share when we have been willing to own these behaviors and worked through these situations to develop alternative, less hurtful solutions.

Multiple stories, multiple behaviors, multiple “isms”- When we are able to provide multiple perspectives from several of our target and non-target group statuses and the helpful and not so helpful behaviors that accompany them, we open the opportunity for participants to understand the complexity of the workshop concepts/content. It may be helpful, after identifying your target or non-target statuses, to then identify examples for how you have supported or engaged in oppressive behaviors (non-target groups) and how you have been impacted by oppressive behavior and systems associated with that group membership (target groups). There may be visible group memberships, which allow you to share your experiences at one level, and, if you are willing, it may be helpful to push yourself to develop examples and to share the less visible group membership(s) and the associated behaviors. (i.e. behaviors related to racism, sexism, heterosexism, ableism or classism).

Write them down (if helpful) - Individual preparation for the workshop might entail taking the time, prior to the workshop, to write down personal examples how you have operated from your target and non-target identities. Writing this information down may bring clarity to what is shared with participants, thereby enhancing the learning process. It may also be helpful to write down personal examples related to other key concepts of the workshop because once these personal examples are written down, they can easily be inserted into the curriculum for later use.

Invite support for clarity - It may be very helpful to “try on” asking facilitators and participants to assist you with bringing clarity to the information that you share by inviting their questions or asking them to feel comfortable “jumping in” when they feel confused or concepts need clarification. This invitation will also reinforce the notion that we are all co-learners in this process and can actively support each other through these possibly new and complex issues.

Go deeper and personally excavate your behaviors - Think beyond the surface level of your experiences and work toward excavating the more subtle and equally harmful behaviors which you may have supported or participated in. Again, this work can be helpful in modeling for participants what they may need/choose to do in order to apply alternative, more equitable and inclusive approaches and solutions at the personal, interpersonal, institutional and cultural levels.