HISTORICAL SNAPSHOT: THE HOUSE WE LIVE IN

OVERVIEW

OBJECTIVES – Following this session, participants will:

- To view a piece of U.S. history that captures depictions of prejudice, discrimination and oppression
- To explore how target group’s experience, the systemic dynamics of oppression and its impact
- To identify oppression at four realms – personal, interpersonal, institutional and cultural
- To practice having constructive dialogues across racial differences

SETTING:

- Presentation to large group
- Large group interaction with participants seated in a circle

MATERIALS:

- Laptop computer with DVD player or DVD player (speakers if needed)
- DVD – Race the Power of an Illusion
- The House that We Built – Selected Chapter
- Four Realms handout (grid)

TIME:

- 60 minutes

PROCEDURE:  [brief overview in bullets such as example below]

- Give short lecturette and DVD introduction
- Give participants four realms handout for use during viewing of DVD
- Facilitate full group debriefing
LECTURETTE:

*It may sound something like this...*

Now we will be watching a segment of the DVD “Race the Power of an Illusion,” produced by California Newsreel. This documentary explores the notion of race and its social construction. We will be watching a segment of the DVD entitled, “The House We Built.” At the core of this segment is how race and racism were constructed as a system that privileged white people and targeted people of color. The impact of this history continues to be at the heart of discrimination, prejudice, segregation and other forms of oppression today. The total segment is about 40 minutes so please take a few moments to get yourself comfortable.

I would like for you to watch the DVD while also taking an opportunity to make notes on what you see as examples of what is occurring at four realms – personal, interpersonal, institutional and cultural. I am passing out a reflection sheet for you to capture this information and we will use this information to process the DVD.

Debriefing Exercise
- Ask all participants to go around, one by one, and share one word to describe their reaction to the DVD. Remind them that if they have a problem coming up with one word, they can look at the Six Core feelings posted on the wall for possible assistance
- Process the following questions *(as many as time permits)*
  - What stands out to you as important or significant about this story?
  - What feelings came up for you as you viewed this story?
  - What did you see or hear as evidence that Whites and people of color (specifically African-Americans) are living in separate/different realities?
  - What new information were you exposed to while viewing this story and how does that make you feel?

Let’s take a minute to look at some of the examples you jotted down about what was occurring at four realms:
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INSTRUCTIONS

- Examples at the personal realm?
  At the interpersonal realm? At the institutional realm? At the cultural realm?
- What were the costs to both Whites and people of color who were and are attempting to navigate these inequities?
- How does this historical snapshot continue to impact our society and communities today?

It is very important to look at our nation’s historical roots as they relate to various forms of oppression. For some, this information is a confirmation of historic and current lived experiences, while for others it may be new information that can help clarify the historical roots of the systems of racism and other forms of oppression. Living or experiencing this information for the first time can be hard so it may be important to practice good self-care and compassion, understanding that historically an individual today may not be directly responsible for these injustices, however, many are still benefiting from these systemic forms of oppression. We can ask ourselves, “What are the costs to me and others to maintain these historical forms of oppression that have historical roots but are still in operation today?”

Note to facilitator:

- Make sure that you test all equipment prior to this segment of the workshop
- Make sure that the DVD is cued at the appropriate start of the “selected scene” version entitled, “The House We Live In”.
- Participants may have difficulty expressing their reaction to the DVD in one word. It may be important to practice some flexibility with this portion of the activity, allowing participants to use more than one word AND asking them to “try on” the request. Remind the participants that we will have time to process this DVD in further depth.
- The guidelines of “try on,” “practice both/and thinking,” and “be aware of intent and impact,” may be helpful tools to use with participants who may see this DVD as something that is strictly in the past or struggle with the historical and current impact of these policies and actions depicted in this DVD.

TIME: 60 MINUTES
SUPPLIES: NONE
HANDOUTS: FOUR REALMS HANDOUT