



*Multicultural Dialogues on
Racism & Bias*

PARTICIPANT MANUAL

Participants may register for one particular dialogue at a time. Deadline is one week prior to the date of the dialogue. Participants may attend one or more of the dialogues, and attend any one dialogue.

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GROUND RULES

We are Each Responsible for Ourselves

Our primary commitment is to learn and achieve understanding from discussion facilitators, from each other, from materials, and from our work.

We acknowledge that racism, sexism, ageism, ableism, classism, heterosexism, and other forms of oppression exist.

We will not Blame or Shame Self or Others

Victims are not to be blamed for their oppression.

We will not demean, devalue, or trivialize anyone or any group for their experiences or perspectives.

We assume that people are doing their best to participate in dialogue and to behave in an antiracist way.

We acknowledge that one of the consequences of racism is the systemic misinformation we have been taught about all groups of people.

We will Appreciate how we are Different

We will be held accountable for repeating misinformation after we have heard and learned otherwise. We have an obligation to challenge the myths and stereotypes about our own groups and other groups.

We will actively pursue opportunities to learn about all groups of people, yet not enter or invade another's privacy when unwanted.

We will Respect Confidentiality

We agree to respect confidentiality and to request it when needed. We will not repeat another's story without their permission.

GUIDELINES FOR DIALOGUE VS. DEBATE

DIALOGUE is the understanding of myself and others.

- ❖ I listen with the view of wanting to understand.
- ❖ I listen for strengths, so I can affirm and learn.
- ❖ I speak for myself from my own understanding and experiences.
- ❖ I ask questions to increase understanding.
- ❖ I allow others to complete their communication.
- ❖ I concentrate on others' words and feelings.
- ❖ I accept others' experiences as valid for them.
- ❖ I allow the expression of real feelings in myself and others.
- ❖ I honor silence.

DEBATE is the successful argument of my position over that of my opponent.

- ❖ I listen in order to counter what I hear.
- ❖ I listen for weakness, so I can discount and devalue.
- ❖ I speak based on my assumptions about others' positions and motives.
- ❖ I ask questions to trip up or confuse.
- ❖ I interrupt or change the subject.
- ❖ I focus on the point I want to make next.
- ❖ I critique others' experiences as invalid.
- ❖ I express my feelings to manipulate others and deny their feelings are real.
- ❖ I use silence to gain advantage.

Respectful Communication Guidelines

R= take RESPONSIBILITY for what you say and feel, without blaming, critiquing

E= use EMPATHETIC listening

S= be SENSITIVE to differences in communication styles

P= PONDER what you hear and feel before you speak

E= EXAMINE your own assumptions and perceptions

C= keep CONFIDENTIAL what is shared

T= TRUST ambiguity because we are not here to debate who is right or wrong, nor to discount anyone's experiences.

WORKING DEFINITIONS

One of the ways to begin true dialogue is to develop a common language. There are many unhealthy ways in which we continue to separate ourselves from each other. The following terms and definitions are five of those ways.

BIAS is a particular tendency, trend, inclination, feeling or opinion, especially one that is preconceived or unreasoned, for or against one thing, a person or a group of people compared to another.

PREJUDICE is a pre-judgment on insufficient grounds; it can be positive or negative.

BIGOTRY is a more intensive form of prejudice and carries the negative side of pre-judgment. The bigot is usually conscious of his/her feelings, nurtures them, and is often defined by them.

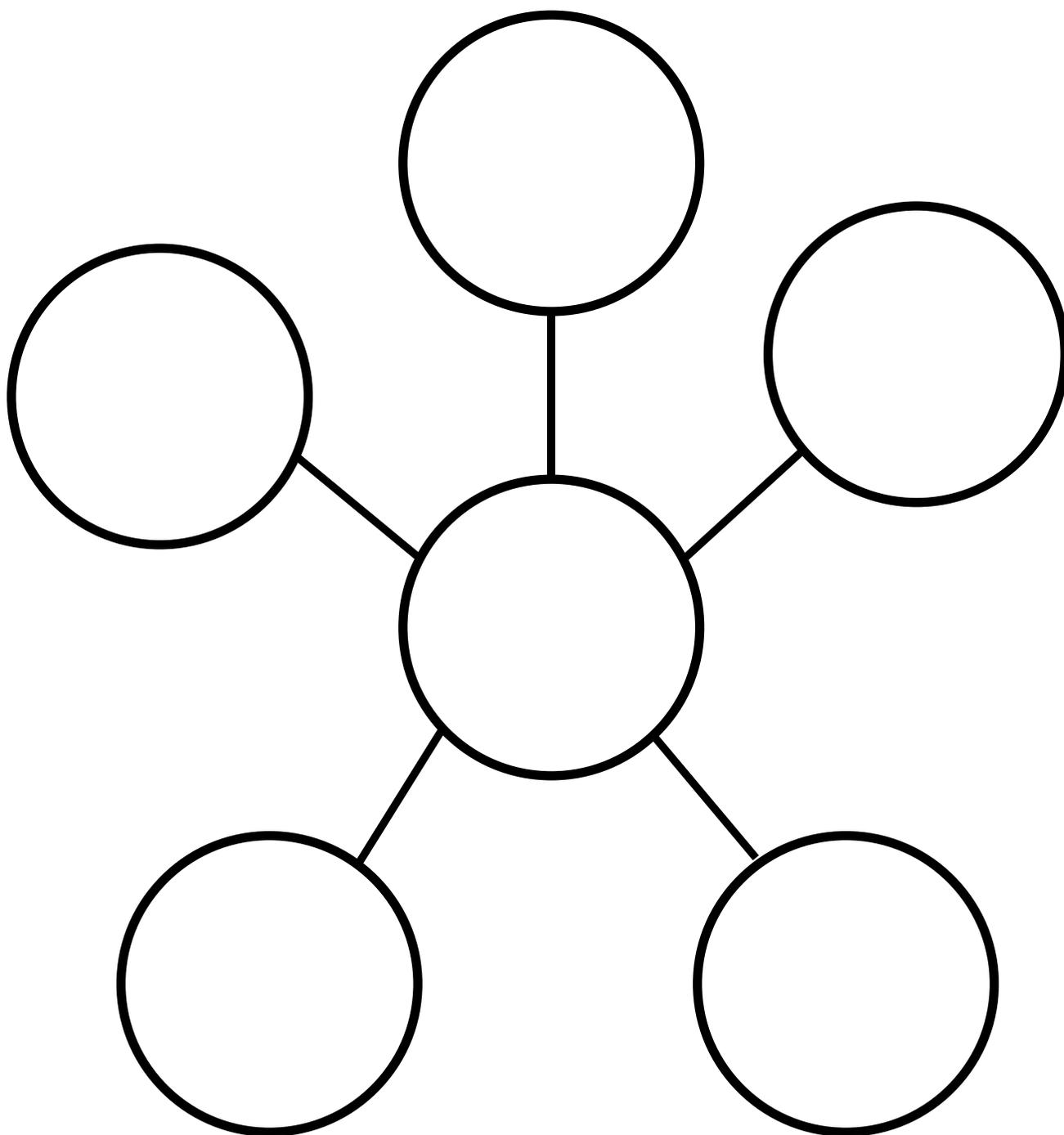
DISCRIMINATION is the act or practice of according negative differential treatment to individuals or groups on the basis of group, class, or affiliation such as race, religion, and gender.

SCAPEGOATING is the act or practice of assigning blame or failure to persons or groups instead of placing it directly on the person(s) to whom the blame or failure actually belongs.

STEREOTYPING is attributing characteristics to a group simplistically and uncritically. Often, there is the assumption that those characteristics are rooted in significant biological differences.

IDENTITY MOLECULE

Please write your name on the central atom.
On the outer atoms write words that identify you.



DESCRIPTION OF THE TOOL

Part 1

Ask the participants to identify themselves using 5 social descriptors (class, ethnic background, gender, sexual orientation,...) and fill the “Identity Molecule handout”, after doing so individually, they share their “molecules” in small groups. Reconvene the group and facilitate a discussion on self identification (why they choose that 5 descriptor? Are these the only identities we have? Are they given or chosen?)

Part 2

The participants are asked to individually complete their Identity molecule using as many social descriptor as they can, and to assess if each of the groups described are sources of privileges or of obstacles in the society they live in.

In small group ask the participants to share their new molecules. Reconvene the group and facilitate a discussion about the link between identity and privilege, and on the use of privileges.

Part 3

The Diversity Iceberg is used in the large group, either as an input or as a brainstorm. Facilitate a discussion about the visibility and invisibility of identities, and what are the links between what we see and what we think.

SACRED SCRIPTURE MATCHING EXERCISE

Can you match the verse from sacred scripture with the correct world religion?

“In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets.”

Judaism – Hillel, Talmud, Shabbat 31a

“What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor. This is the whole Torah; all the rest is commentary.”

Christianity – Jesus, Matthew 7:12

“Not one of you truly believes until you wish for others what you wish for yourself.”

Confucianism – Confucius, Analects 15.23

“We affirm and promote respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.”

Buddhism – Udana-Varga 5.18

“This is the sum of duty: do not do to others what would cause pain if done to you.”

Unitarianism – Unitarian principle

“Treat not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful.”

Hinduism – Mahabharata 5:1517

“One word which sums up the basis of all good conduct... loving kindness. Do not do to others what you do not want done to yourself.”

Islam – Muhammed, Hadith

“Regard your neighbor’s gain as your own gain, and your neighbor’s loss as your own loss.”

Jainism – Mahavira, Suttrakritanga

“One should treat all creatures in the world as one would like to be treated.”

Taoism – T’ai Shang Kim Ying P’ien, 213

“Do not do unto others whatever is injurious to yourself.”

Baha’i – Baha’u’llah, Gleanings 56

“We are as much alive as we keep the earth alive.”

Zoroastrianism – Shayast-na-Shayast 13.29

“Lay not on any soul a load that you would not wish to be laid upon you, and desire not for anyone the things you would not desire for yourself.”

Sikhism – Guru Granth Sahib, pg. 1299

“I am a stranger to no one; and no one is a stranger to me. Indeed, I am a friend to all.”

Native Spirituality – Chief Dan Georg

THE GOLDEN RULE

Christianity – “In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets.” **Jesus, Matthew 7:12**

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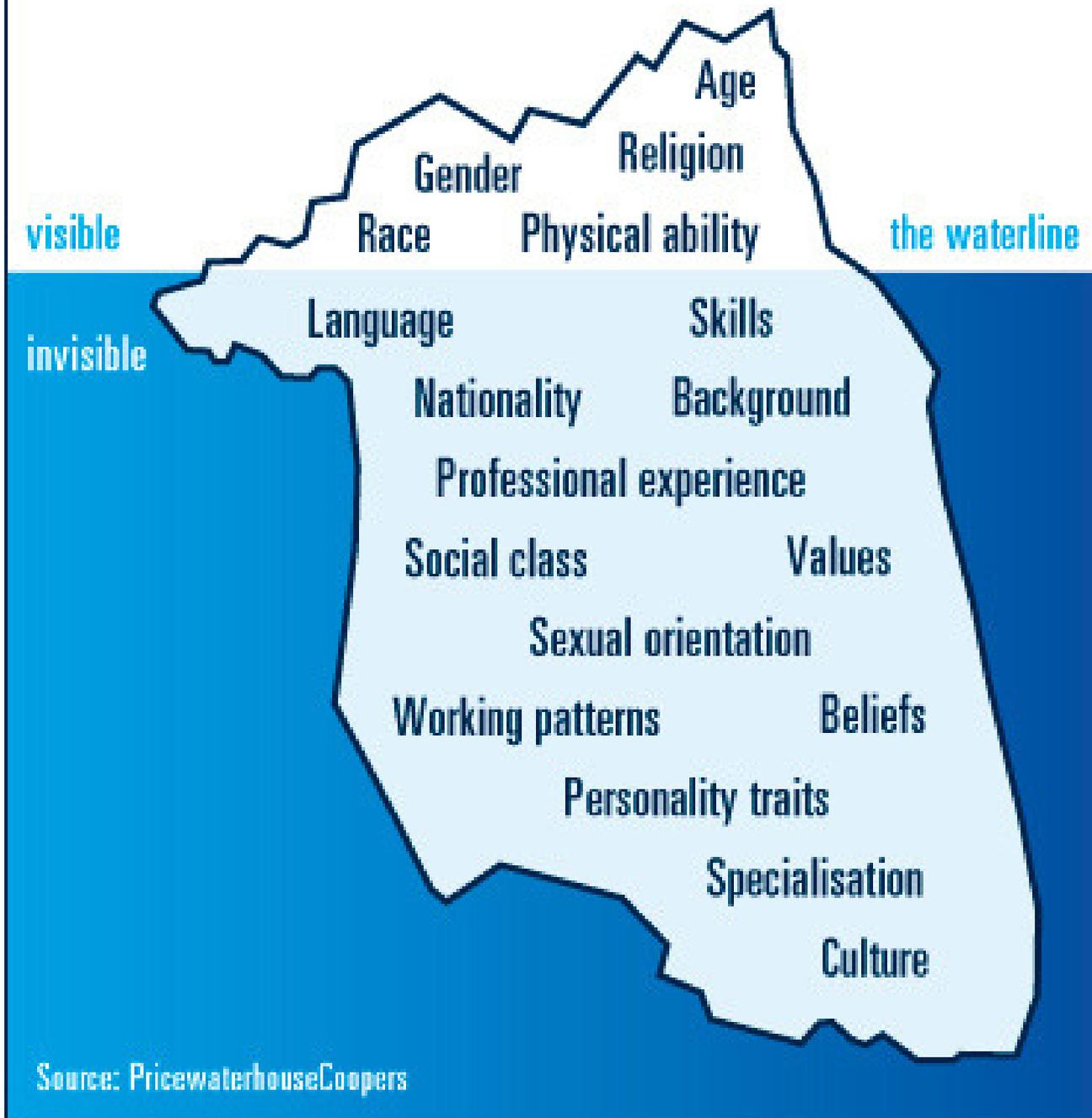
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The *Pyramid* shows biased behaviors, growing in complexity from the bottom to the top. Although the behaviors at each level negatively impact individuals and groups, as one moves up the pyramid, the behaviors have more life-threatening consequences. Like a pyramid, the upper levels are supported by the lower levels. If people or institutions treat behaviors on the lower levels as being acceptable or “normal,” it results in the behaviors at the next level becoming more accepted. In response to the questions of the world community about where the hate of genocide comes from, the *Pyramid of Hate* demonstrates that the hate of genocide is built upon the acceptance of behaviors described in the lower levels of the pyramid.



THE DIVERSITY ICEBERG

THE WATERLINE OF VISIBILITY



PERSONAL INVENTORY QUESTIONS

Instructions: This activity is both a listening and speaking exercise. It is an opportunity for you to explore those influences, incidents, and people in your past that have shaped your thinking and feelings. This is not a conversation, or a problem solving exercise. You will be partnered with another person and will be asked a question that you are to answer within 2-3 minutes. When one partner is speaking, the other is only to listen. You may encourage your partner with nonverbal nods, gestures, or facial expressions, but only one person may speak at a time. If you do not want to respond to the question that you are asked, please say, "May I please have a different question?"

Each of you will answer the same question or a different question before you move on to another partner. At the end of the question and answer period, the whole group will be asked for feedback.

Questions (repeat each for clarity)

1. When and how did you first become aware that there were such things as racial and ethnic differences, and that people were treated differently on the basis of those differences?
2. Growing up, what contact did you have with people whose racial, religious and ethnic heritage was different from your own? What kind of guidance or models did you have for relationships with those people?
3. How did adults in your life help you to understand or interpret the experiences of religious groups or race different from yours? What was their main teaching about these groups?
4. Please describe a painful, personal experience you have had with someone from a different race, religion, ethnicity or class than you? Today, what is your greatest fear about what someone from a different racial, religious or ethnic group might or could do to you? Where do you think that fear comes from?
5. Name a time when you stood up for your rights or the rights of others. What did you do? What do you wish you'd done? What can you tell us about your experience growing up that would help us understand where you got the courage or strength to do what you did?
6. How has racism or prejudice kept you isolated and separate from others? If it were possible, how would you limit the effects of racism and prejudice in your life? How do you feel about the changing demographics of your community? If there have not been any changes, why not?

RACE TO THE WALL

Race to the Wall (or to the Center): To introduce the exercise, have the participants to stand shoulder to shoulder, holding hands, all on one side of the room, (or against opposite walls), to symbolize a choice to share power equally.

Goal: to visualize how bias, discrimination and racism has affected your life.

Instructions: If you can answer YES, quietly, to any of the statements you hear read aloud, let go of the person's hand and "Take one step forward toward the "wall"—

1. If English is your first language.
2. If you are a native-born citizen of the USA.
3. If you are a man.
4. If you self-identify as "white or Caucasian" in the US Census.
5. If, as a child, you had 50 or more books in your home and read some of them.
6. If you have a post-secondary degree or more advanced education.
7. If you can generally be assured that your children will learn about history and culture from a point of view that affirms power for people who look like you.
8. If you have ever owned a home.
9. If you have ever been quoted or pictured in the newspapers, television, YouTube, or some other public venue.
10. If you can see many people of your ethnic background or race widely represented in virtually all communication media, in positive and often powerful roles.
11. If when you use checks, credit cards, or cash, you can be sure that your ethnic background or skin color will not detract from the appearance of your financial responsibility.

RACE TO THE WALL

12. If when you begin a new job, you can work without wondering – or worrying about your co-workers thinking – whether you got the job because of your ethnic background or race.
13. If you can be late to a meeting without having your tardiness attributed to your ethnic background or race.
14. If you can do well in a challenging job, academic achievement or athletic activity, without being called a credit to your ethnic background or race.
15. If you can appear unkempt, fail to promptly answer letters or emails, or curse and be obnoxious without having people attribute these choices to the morality, poverty, or illiteracy of your ethnic background or race.
16. If you are rarely or never asked to speak for all the people of your ethnic background or racial group; or assumed that your opinions or behaviors represent your ethnic background or racial group.
17. If you are stopped by a traffic police officer, you can be sure you have not been racially profiled.
18. If you have never been assumed to be a part of an ethnic group or race other than your own.
19. If you have never been followed or watched while shopping in a large store.

Questions:

1. What did you notice?
2. What disparities became evident?
3. Did anything about this exercise surprise you?
4. Did the exercise evoke any feelings you would like to share?

THE POWER OF BIAS

Systemic Discrimination = Bias, Prejudice + the Power of Systems & Institutions

The Systemic Portrait

The three exponential dimensions of the power of bias & prejudice in the USA are:

(P1) Its victimization of people who are not considered part of the presumed dominant group.

(P2) The granting of power and privilege to those who are considered part of the dominant group;

(P3) The entrapment of all in the belief that the social construct of the dominant group is real and a valid, visible framework for human identity. Coupled with the belief that it is unalterable, this paradigm is transformed into an ideology that entraps all within the designated social reality.

e.g. Forms of Bias

1. A conscious or unconscious assumption, or a belief or doctrine, claiming that the dominant group is superior to other groups. (individual bias).
2. Acting on this belief when relating to others (interpersonal bias), usually expressed in the form of prejudice, stereotyping, scapegoating, discrimination, or bigotry.
3. A policy, program, or system incorporating belief in superiority, power and privilege of the dominant group (institutional bias).
4. Cultural norms, standards, practices that inherently affirm the privileged group and ignore, exclude, or demean anyone who is not part of it (cultural bias).
5. Power granted and practices perpetuated by institutions, government and culture that favor the advantaged or privileged group and collectively enforce this belief, even when many advantaged or privilege group members disagree with it (systemic bias).

Definitive results of Bias & Discrimination

Victimization and oppression of all those outside the empowered group. Benefits experienced by the dominant group (power, privilege) which, as they are accepted, even unconsciously, inherently favor members of the dominant group.

Systemic change requires First, re-defining ourselves as fundamentally opposed to the system. Second, collaborating across interracial, interfaith, multicultural lines as resisters to oppression, we can join the diverse movement that is strategizing for systemic change. This movement is grounded in faith communities and is closely related to ecumenical and interfaith work, as well as some secular efforts.

THE COST OF OPPRESSION

The phenomenon of internalized oppression occurs when those who are oppressed begin to internalize or take into themselves the opinions of the oppressor, as if they were true. There are many kinds of oppression - racial, gender, religious, ethnic, LGBTQIA, citizenship status - and all of these can be internalized by the persons who are the targets of the oppression. It is important to understand that what first occurs is the oppression; that is, before the internalization can happen, the oppression must have happened. Teachers, neighbors, co-workers, even family members can reinforce the misinformation of the oppression experienced. Persons come to believe that the oppressive actions or opinions of others are true because they experience them over and over again.

The following are examples of the behaviors that are costs of oppression:

- Feelings of powerlessness and hopelessness
- Criticism and unrealistic expectations of their own group
- Invalidation of children by parents with excessive fault finding and criticism potentially destroying the child's self-esteem and confidence
- Instilling patterns of self-hate and low self-esteem
- Overuse of alcohol and drugs and engaging in other self-destructive activities
- Feelings that some members of their group are more legitimate than others due to superficial physical traits
- Perception that certain behaviors are "acting white" or assimilated.
- Over consciousness of skin tones and hair texture resulting in the placing of a higher value on lighter skin and straight hair
- Feeling that "I" must uphold and represent my group at all costs and that a failure on my part will negatively affect all the members of my group.
- Negative self-assessment resulting in dysfunctional behavior which has the potential to undermine relationships
- Feeling pressure to adapt to dominant group standards and norms
- Limiting one's own ability to set or achieve life goals

THE COST OF BEING WHITE

The personal inertia that underlies racism include these **fears**, held consciously or unconsciously, and are fed by media and associates: **that**,

- ❖ what privileges and opportunities I have are unearned;
- ❖ I might lose them if I don't protect them and the culture changes;
- ❖ I am in danger of having some of what I have taken from others less privileged;
- ❖ my safety, even my life, may be in danger at the hands of someone who is not considered "white"; I am afraid of individuals who do not look like me.
- ❖ people who are not "white" will attain a majority before long and reverse the long American history of white privilege;
- ❖ people not "white" may see the shallowness of my soul, the ways in which I continue to benefit from my "white" privilege while pretending to openly renounce it, and how I let racist images, stereotypes and scapegoating continue to guide my actions.

Some other costs that white persons pay for their "white" privilege include:

- ❖ We remain ignorant and uninformed of the history of racism in America and the continuing oppression that affects people of color in America today.
- ❖ Until we demonstrate otherwise, we are often seen by people who are not "white" as active, potentially aggressive oppressors; individuals who are not "white" do not initially trust me and my motives.
- ❖ We are limited in our capacity to build healthy interracial relationships without explicitly addressing what our dominant culture has done to our broader social context.
- ❖ We are trapped in denial through our normative relationships with other "white" people who resist talking about race.
- ❖ It is likely that my children will be denied fully accurate interpretations of "American" history and will receive limited and often misleading information about other national and cultural groups throughout the world – and, especially, about how the USA has acted toward them historically.
- ❖ I am likely to let prejudicial stereotypes about people who are not "white" continue to emerge in my thoughts and actions, unless I deliberately, actively work to be anti-racist and against stereotyping, and develop interracial relationships.

SOCIAL CLASS IN AMERICA

An analysis of American culture might reveal two differing attitudes that prevail: some take their class status for granted, while others refuse to acknowledge that there is such a thing as a set class structure in this country. The fact that there is, in reality, some small fluidity for certain individuals born into the lower class who are able to move into the middle class causes some to question that class is a determining factor in where one lives, works, is educated, and even where one can attend church.

<http://www.pbs.org/program/people-like-us/>

What is the meaning of class? Is it about:

- Social and/or economic position?
- Income?
- Education?
- Prestige?
- Power and control?
- One's culture?
- Taste and lifestyle?
- Race, religion or ethnicity?
- Job?

Respond to this statement: ***"The United States is a classless, egalitarian society."***

Discuss class delineation and if that is real.

Have one facilitator tally the responses and report back to the group at the end of the exercise.

Alternate activity: Put the terms: Upper Class, Middle Class, Lower Class on newsprint (or words such as rich, poor, white collar, blue collar, merchant class, assembly line worker, etc.). Have people walk around and write descriptive words that come to mind when they see that particular word. If time, have them discuss with their table groups what they have written. Observe the many ways that the people in the video define or think about class.

SUGGESTIONS TO COMBAT BIAS & PREJUDICE

1. Continue to study and learn about both the contemporary nature and historical roots of bias and prejudice. e.g. anti-Semitism, racism, sexism, heterosexism/gender identity/homophobia, Xenophobia, Islamophobia.
2. Be aware of your own biased feelings and thoughts. If possible, ask what in your growing up or past experiences have caused you to have those feelings or attitudes.
3. Don't let bias and prejudicial feelings and thoughts turn into behaviors.
4. Instead of explaining that a person's behavior (which you don't like) results from his/her race/ethnicity etc., think of other reasons for the behavior. e.g. difference in age, life experiences, interests, life skills, etc.
5. Commit yourself to discouraging and disagreeing openly with offensive jokes, emails, comments and acts that occur around you even among close friends and family. Practice in advance how to respond calmly without being belligerent or hostile.
6. Our social group identity is the beliefs and attributes that we believe define us as individuals. Educate yourself about the differences in history, tradition and customs between your group identity and those of other identity groups. Remember that different from your group does not mean inferior to your group. Believe that yourself.
7. Commit yourself personally to the eradication of institutional discrimination and all its forms. If you are part of the dominant group in an institution or workplace, be aware of the unearned privilege you have as a member of the dominant group.
8. If you are on a search committee, for example, work to make sure the pool of applicants is diverse.
9. If you are in an educational setting, make sure the examples of people are diverse and respectful.
10. Understand that the diverse differences between us have been systemically imposed upon us, without factual grounding; that the social assumptions that define us and others are deeply influential and often controlling of individual, institutional and cultural behavior - including in the faith communities.
11. Start a journal as you begin to think about these suggestions.
12. Become involved with faith communities or organizations that are committed to dealing with bias, prejudice and oppression, and its effects on all people.

