

European American Brave Space (Ideas and exercises for meetings in their becoming anti-racist)

Ground rules: Confidentiality, tell own story not someone else's, be brave and listen deeply to yourself and others. Make sure everyone has a chance to talk before someone has a second chance.

Major Idea

- We (people of white European heritage) are good people who want connection with all human beings and all creation. We have been hurt in early childhood in ways that make us numb to the effects of white supremacy on us and make us unwitting agents of the oppression of people of color. White US ers have the freedom to choose not to look at racism, white supremacy and how it distorts their lives and damages their heart. So deciding to talk to each other on an ongoing basis about this is a first step in ending racism.

Exercises

1, Mingle: select a number of quotes or quires, Facilitator read one and ask people to choose a person to talk to about that quote for two minutes. Time could be up to five minutes. Make sure each person gets a chance to talk. Facilitator keeps time and ask people to move to another person at the end of the two minutes and talk about the same quote. This can be done a number of times.

Major Idea

- We need to be rooted in our past and understand the goodness of our ancestors and where they were coming from. Whiteness is a construct to facilitate oppression and the collection of wealth and power by one group over another. Our ancestors were escaping oppression (war, famine, exclusion, genocide) and wanted to make sure their children had a better chance. Because they were not able to heal from how they were oppressed and the trauma it created they repeated the cycle of oppression on people of color and each other.

Exercise:

1. Draw and share. Take 10-15 minutes to draw a representation in any way you would like to of your family history. It might include why you got your name, where your ancestors came from, why they came to the US, their class background through history, famous and infamous relatives. After drawing get together in three or four ways and have each person have a chance to share their family story.

Major Idea;

We all have a story of trying to understand the irrationality of the world we were born into. Remembering and getting a chance to talk about our earliest and then subsequent contact with people of color helps us deconstruct the ways we have been separated and helps us heal from the trauma of being silenced and separated by the oppressive society.

Exercise; In pairs trade time (5, 10, 20 minutes or the time available) talking about the your earliest remembered contact with a person of color. What happened, how did you feel. Make sure each person has equal time. At the end this can be debriefed for insights people had.

Other listening ideas for traded time: (some of these can be debriefed on for the whole group. You can think of lots of quires that would open up chances to become aware and undo trauma.

- What were the messages about “the other” (black people, Asian people, native people, Hispanic people etc. , quotes, that were passed down in your families?
- What is the worst mistake you have made?
- What are things I have done or said that might be experienced by someone else in a different way than I intended?
- Deep listening support groups for people who share a similar background (slave holders in the family, Jewish origin, Catholic origin, Irish origin, Quaker origin, fundamentalist Christian origin etc.) Each group has a different story about their relationship to racism.

Major Idea: Asking each other about the state of our heart. Opening the space for healing.

We might ask each other: How is your non-segregated life going?

Major Idea: What is my stake in Racial Justice?

Major Idea: We want to move from where we are now to the next level and awareness and connection. To do this we need to take action. There are personal actions that help us heal from trauma and open up connection and make a personal world community possible and there are actions that take on the institutions that perpetuate white supremacy and the oppression of others. We need to do both.

Exercise: In small groups have each person have a chance to commit to a next step for them. It is also possible to focus this on corporate action. Try to come to agreement on a next collective action toward ending racism.

Racial Justice Prayer

Thank you god for lifting the blinders of privilege from me.

Bless me by allowing me to remain in a state of awareness to all (that is not right) the suffering and anger around me.

Thank you, for the chance to do something to change the present situation

Deliver me from arrogance

Remove from me the self-criticism that immobilizes me.

Give me the courage to take responsibility for all I come in contact with and make it right

But guide me from the urgency of unfaithfulness and allow me to center in

The gift of the miracle of your presence

To remember that all is well and that our universe is benign and I am connected to everything and everything is connected with me.

There is no blame in the universe, only taking responsibility Pamela and chuck

Listening is a most powerful tool in healing victims and perpetrators of oppression

A good set of ears drains a thousand tongues B. Franklin

There is no hope for a better past and peace and reconciliation cannot happen until people have decided that they can consider forgiving people in the present. Then truth, peace and reconciliation are possible. Landrum Boulding

Everyone when the entire situation has been taken into account has always done the very best they can, this particularly is true of you. H. Jackins

Feeling bad about oneself is at best time consuming at worse immobilizes one. Therefore I decide to put my attention on the fact that I am enough just the way I am. Chuck

*I am totally unprepared and unready to face the challenges placed before me, fortunately or unfortunately I am the best person available. Jackins

Everything is in chaos, the situation is excellent. Mao

*Racism is not simply about the attitudes, dislikes and motivation of individuals or individual acts of bigotry and discrimination. Instead, racism refers to the way society as a whole is arranged, and how the economic, educational, cultural and social reward of that society is distributed. It is about collective injustice. Project Hip-hop

We must delve into the depths where neither liberals nor conservatives dare to tread, namely, into the murky waters of despair and dread that now flood the streets of black America. Cornel West

Being on the receiving end of prejudice spawns more prejudice. Muhammad Ali

*Daddy taught me that racism was a sickness and to have compassion for racist whites as I would have compassion for a polio victim. Racism wasn't a problem with me, he told me, it was a problem they had. Andrew YOUNG

Racism is so universal in this country, so widespread and deep-seated, that it is invisible because it is so normal. Shirley Chisholm

Whatever white people do not know about Negroes reveals, precisely and inexorably, what they do not know about themselves, James Baldwin

The oppressed are always experts on their oppressor.

*There are many persons ready to do what is right because in their hearts they know it is right, but they hesitate, waiting for the other fellow to make the first move and he intern waits for you. The minute a person who's word means a great deal dares to take the openhearted and courageous way, many others follow. Marion Anderson

How does leading a non-segregated life fare with you today?

So much time, so little to do Patty Wipfler (contradiction to US life)

We'll win. (Said in a matter of fact understated way)

Helen Keller

*Security is mostly a superstition. It
Does not exist in nature nor do the children
Of man as a whole
Experience it.

Avoiding danger is no safer in the
Long run than outright exposure

Life is either a daring adventure or
Nothing. To Keep our faces toward
Change and behave like free spirits in
The presence of fate is strength

Undefeatable

Tim Jackins: No oppression is more important than any other in a human sense. They must all be ended. But this one (Racism) must be challenged for us to move forward collectively-now.

Pope John Paul II: It is not a question of giving one's surplus to those in need. It requires changing lifestyles and established power structures.