

Facilitating White Caucuses: Challenges, Dilemmas, and Promising Practices

Facilitated by:

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Varying Formats: diversity/inclusion workshops, trainings on race and racism, intergroup dialogue, academic courses (classroom and online), etc.

Intentions for Social Justice Education:

- Create space for honest, authentic dialogue
- Engage in respectful dialogue
- Treat others with dignity, respect, and care
- Deepen understanding across differences
- Meet the people “where they are” without judgment
- Deepen learning and self-reflection
- “Go with the flow;” trust the process
- Create safety for the expression of differing viewpoints
- Stir cognitive dissonance ~ explore multiple perspectives
- Support disagreement with a person’s ideas without attacking their humanity
- Facilitate engaged, respectful disagreement
- Create space for people to express their emotions
- Demonstrate compassion and empathy
- Leave people feelings whole
- Do no harm
- Use teachable moments and triggering events to deepen learning, understanding, and insights
- “Relate in” to others; see yourself in others
- Deepen connections and relationships with others
- Model the social justice behaviors you espouse: authenticity, empathy, self-reflection, engagement, authenticity
- Model how to effectively respond when you feel triggered
- Model effective recovery skills after making an unproductive comment or when your behavior results in negative impact on others
- Plant seeds; influence hearts and minds...
- Encourage everyone to engage in the dialogue
- Be cognizant of the possible unintended impact of your comments and behaviors
- Explore both the intent and the impact of comments and actions
- Model how to identify deeper issues/unmet needs fueling feelings, perceptions, and behaviors
- Discuss both dynamics of oppression and examples of liberation

Authentic Dialogue With White Allies

Directions ~ In your small group share and *relate* to each other using any of the following prompts:

1. Share an example of a time you spoke up and effectively engaged whites whose comments or behaviors were biased or misinformed: How did you feel? What did you do/say?
2. When are you at your best as a white ally?
3. What are some of your fears as you engage issues of social justice as a white ally? (see handout, *Common Fears*)
4. What common dominant group behaviors and attitudes do you still notice within yourself as a white ally?
5. When and where do you get stuck? Not show up very effective or competent as a white ally? How do you feel when you are stuck and less effective?
6. What would feel supportive from other white allies? To help you continue to grow and develop skills?
7. When have you:
 - a. Felt fear when interacting with people of color?
 - b. Felt fear when interacting with whites?
 - c. Felt guilt or shame as a white person?
 - d. Felt anger towards people of color?
 - e. Felt anger towards other whites?
8. What are 5+ ways you have personally benefitted from white privilege?
9. What are some examples of how you have intentionally used white privilege to help dismantle racism?
10. When have you used white privilege to gain an advantage for yourself? greater access?
11. What racial stereotypes do you still find yourself believing, tripping over?
12. What are 3-5 examples (over the past 1-2 years) when you have reacted out of some of these racial stereotypes: either within a group of whites, or in a mixed race group, or with people of color.

Topics to explore, include:

- Establishing group norms and intentions
- Diverse Community Foundations (Dr. Jamie Washington)
- Cycle of Socialization
- Dialogue skills: RAPS
- Early messages, socialization experiences
- Common Fears
- Feelings as discuss whiteness, racism
- Intent and Impact
- Common behaviors of whites: micro-aggressions, micro-insults (Dr. Derald Sue)
- Discuss behaviors we each have done that perpetuates the status quo
- Shifting from guilt and shame to taking responsibility for creating change
- White privilege
- Internalized dominance
- Common triggers
- Effectively navigating our triggers
- Characteristics of a white ally
- Shifting our attitudes, thoughts, and actions
- Examples of white ally behaviors, dismantling racism
- Making amends, taking responsibility for the impact of our actions
- Personal action planning
- Creating our support system
- Closure and appreciations

The “flow” of activities/discussions and learning outcomes in white caucus sessions at SJTI:

1. Set ground rules, create a container for authentic dialogue ~ be real, relate in, lean into discomfort, say the unsaid in you
2. Share the breadth of feelings we've been experiencing as whites in intensive, cross-race discussions about race and racism
3. Authentic dialogue about what feelings you've been experiencing ~ in real-time
4. Explore the roots of these feelings and attitudes ~ internalized dominance, white privilege, socialization as whites, etc.
5. We “relate in” and claim how we are similar to other whites
6. Own, relate in, and discuss our attitudes and behaviors as whites that result in exclusion, negative treatment of people of color/people who identify as multiracial ~ What specifically have we said or done that was grounded in racist attitudes, white privilege, and internalized dominance?
7. Explore our intentions behind our actions and inactions
8. Continue to engage and support each other as we struggle to participate in authentic dialogue about our personal internalized dominance and white privilege
9. “Leave no one behind!”

10. Shift from guilt, shame and blame to accepting responsibility and a willingness to make amends through changed behaviors and attitudes
11. Explore triggering moments that occurred in the Institute ~ digging for “our part” and identifying what we can do differently
12. Share ways to shift our current narratives and dismantle our internalized dominance and racist attitudes
13. Share examples of how we have acted in ways that dismantle racism and create more inclusive communities
14. Reflect on and share the impact of experiencing these white caucus sessions
15. Identify, specifically, what other whites said or did that helped us have authentic dialogue, deepen self-awareness, increase our commitment to shift our attitudes and actions, etc.
16. Discuss how we can integrate new insights and learnings into our work and personal life
17. Discuss and negotiate ways to support each other as we work to integrate these new ways of being into our lives
18. Publically commit to taking new actions

Dominant/Subordinated Group Dynamics:

Common Patterns of Whites

Directions: review these common group dynamics:

- a. Check-off any dynamics which you have observed or heard a credible story about.
- b. Make a note next to the different dynamics that you have personally experienced, felt, or done.
- c. Add any additional common patterns/dynamics you have witnessed or experienced.

Some/Many Whites Tend to (consciously and unconsciously):

1. believe they have “earned” what they have, rather than acknowledge the extensive white privilege and unearned advantages they receive
2. not notice the daily indignities that people of color experience; deny them and rationalize them away
3. work to maintain the status quo and protect the advantages and privileges they receive
4. believe that white cultural norms, practices and values are superior and better
5. internalize the negative stereotypes about people of color and believe that whites are smarter and superior to people of color
6. want people of color to conform and assimilate to white cultural norms and practices
7. accept and feel safer around people of color who have assimilated and are “closer to white”
8. blame people of color for the barriers and challenges they experience; believe that if they “worked harder” they could “pull themselves up by their bootstraps”
9. believe that people of color are not competent and are only hired/promoted to fill quotas
10. interrupt and talk over people of color
11. resent taking direction from a person of color
12. dismiss and minimize frustrations of people of color and categorize the person raising issues as militant, angry, having an “attitude,” working their agenda, not a team player...
13. focus on their “good intent” as whites, rather than on the negative impact of their behavior
14. focus on how much progress we have made, rather than on how much more needs to change
15. want people of color to “get over it” and move on quickly
16. get defensive when people of color express their frustrations with current organizational and societal dynamics
17. “walk on eggshells” and act more distant and formal with people of color
18. segregate themselves from people of color and rarely develop authentic relationships across race

Some/Many Whites Tend to (consciously and unconsciously):

19. exaggerate the level of intimacy they have with individual people of color
20. fear that they will be seen and “found out” as a racist, having racial prejudice
21. focus on themselves as an individual (I’m not racist; I’m a good white), and refuse to acknowledge the cultural and institutional racism people of color experience daily
22. pressure and punish whites who actively work to dismantle racism to conform and collude with white racism
23. expect people of color to be the “diversity expert” and take the lead in raising and addressing racism as their “second (unpaid) job”
24. minimize, ignore, overlook and discount the talents, competencies and contributions of people of color
25. rephrase and reword the comments of people of color
26. ask people of color to repeat what they have just said
27. assume the white teacher/coach/facilitator/employee, etc., is in charge/the leader
28. rationalize away racist treatment of people of color as individual incidents or the result of something the person of color did/failed to do
29. dismiss the racist experiences of people of color with comments such as: That happens to me too...You’re too sensitive...That happened because of _____, it has nothing to do with race!
30. judge a person of color as over-reacting and too emotional when they are responding to the cumulative impact of multiple recent racist incidents
31. accuse people of color of “playing the race card” whenever they challenge racist policies and practices
32. *track patterns of differential treatment of people of color and intervene to stop inappropriate actions and educate others*
33. *continually learn more about the experiences of people of color and racism*
34. *recognize when people of color might be reacting out of cumulative impact, and offer space to talk about issues and their experiences*
35. *analyze policies and practices to assess any differential impact on people of color and intervene to create change*
36. *constantly track daily organizational activities to ensure fairness, respect, and inclusion for all people with respect to group dynamics, communication, task assignments, professional development opportunities, decision-making, conflict management, mentoring, networking, etc.*

Assessing Your Multicultural Competencies

Directions: Use the following scale to assess your depth of Knowledge, Self-Awareness, Skill, and ability to Infuse Diversity into Daily Work Activities:

0 **1** **2** **3** **4** **5** **6** **7** **8** **9** **10**
 None Low Moderate Moderate-High High

	RACE	
<i>Knowledge ~ How much do you know about...</i>		
K1. History and legacy of this oppression		
K2a. Common daily experiences, behaviors, feelings, and attitudes of dominant group members		
K2b. Common daily experiences, behaviors, feelings, and attitudes of subordinated group members		
K3. Components of the prevailing cultures and world views of the dominant and subordinated groups		
K4. Impact and manifestations of Internalized Dominance and Internalized Oppression		
K5. How to facilitate change and greater inclusion at different levels: individual, interpersonal, group, and organizational		
<i>Awareness ~ Level of awareness about:</i>		
A1. Your membership in the dominant or subordinated group, and how this influences how you are seen, experienced, and treated by others		
A2. Your biases, assumptions, and stereotypes for dominant and subordinated groups		
A3. The impact of your behavior on members of the dominant and subordinated groups		
A4. How your beliefs about what is “effective” or “professional” has been influenced by your socialization and experiences in your multiple dominant and subordinated group memberships (i.e., verbal and written communication style, leadership, supervision, dress code, conflict style, counseling, advising, training, etc.)		
A5. Your strengths and areas needing development as a change agent for inclusion		
A6. How Internalized Dominance or Internalized Subordination has impacted you		
A7. Your common triggers/hot buttons and their intrapersonal roots		
<i>Skills ~ Your ability to...</i>		
S1. Self-reflect to examine your behaviors, assumptions, feelings, and attitudes and their impact on others; and utilize your learning to improve your practice		

S2. Seek and utilize feedback about the impact of your behaviors and attitudes from members of dominant and subordinated groups		
S3. Interrupt, reframe, and unlearn your biases, stereotypes and assumptions about dominant and subordinated groups		
S4. Communicate effectively with members of dominant and subordinated groups		
S5. Seek and utilize input from members of subordinated and dominant groups in planning and decision-making processes		
S6. Recognize dominant/subordinated group dynamics: individual moments and patterns		
S7. Describe the exclusionary dynamics you track: in the moment and later in discussions		
S8. Engage in effective dialogues with members of dominant and subordinated groups about dynamics of inclusion and exclusion on campus		
S9. “Relate in” and “see yourself in others,” instead of judging them or distancing from them		
S10. Effectively use self-disclosure from your multiple dominant and subordinated groups		
S11. Effectively navigate resistance and conflict within and across dominant and subordinated groups		
S12. Navigate strong emotions and triggering events: when you and/or others feel triggered		
S13. Confront and intervene to effectively shift exclusionary dynamics, programs, services, practices, norms, policies, unwritten rules, etc.		
S14. Give effective feedback to individuals and groups about the impact of behaviors, policies, services, programs, norms, unwritten rules, etc., on members of dominant and subordinated groups		
S15. Provide effective and equitable supervision and/or mentoring to members dominant and subordinated groups		
<i>Infusing Diversity into Daily Work Activities ~ Your ability to...</i>		
I1. Map out current programs, services, practices, policies, norms, unwritten rules, etc., with a diversity lens		
I2. Track current utilization of services and group dynamics within your area by group membership		
I3. Gather current data about impact, perceptions, and experiences of your area by group membership		
I5. Identify the discretionary points where bias could result in differential treatment/experience due to decisions, services, policies, practices, norms, unwritten rules, etc.		
I6. Continually revise current programs, services, policies, practices, etc., to create greater inclusion for members of subordinated and dominant groups		

After you complete this assessment, go back through and highlight 5 areas of strength and 5 areas of growth and development for yourself.