

SESSION 5

Can We Live with Racism?

QUOTE

I knew that I could vote and that that wasn't a privilege; it was my right. Every time I tried I was shot, killed or jailed, beaten or economically deprived. – Stokely Carmichael

INTRODUCTION

This session examines the lingering pervasiveness of racism across all spheres of our lives. It invites youth to recognize and practice multicultural competency and helps participants understand how we all perpetuate racism unless we are intentionally working against it.

GOALS

This session will:

- Demonstrate how racism and privilege operate at different levels of human interaction: interpersonal, institutional, ideological, internalized, and intersectional
- Develop participants' multicultural competency skills.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Recognize how racism and privilege operate on multiple levels of human interaction and in every sphere of our lives
- Develop an understanding of multicultural perspectives and build multicultural competency skills.

SESSION-AT-A-GLANCE

Activity	Minutes (90 min.)
Opening	5
Activity 1: Four "I"s	30
Activity 2: Anticipating Diverse Perspectives	25
Activity 3: Exploring Privilege	25
Closing	5

FAITH IN ACTION AND ALTERNATE ACTIVITIES

Faith in Action: Panel Discussion	
Alternate Activity 1: Race and Immigration	30
Alternate Activity 2: Caucusing	40
Alternate Activity 3: Scenarios and Micro-aggressions	20

SPIRITUAL PREPARATION

Take a moment to sit by yourself. Light a chalice, make some tea, or engage in other grounding practices that feel right to you.

Participants in today's session might recall times they have insulted or hurt someone – either intentionally or unintentionally. Can you recall such a time? Did you experience shame, guilt, embarrassment, or other negative emotions? What was that like? What helped you deal with these strong emotions, admit your mistake, and come back to the work of creating beloved community? If you have such a story, sharing it with youth might be helpful. Discuss it with your co-facilitator before the session and decide if it is appropriate.

Is the memory of that time still painful? Such memories might be painful for the youth in the program. It would be good to have a minister or trained chaplain on hand for today's session.

SESSION PLAN

OPENING (5 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- Chalice, candle and lighter or LED battery-operated candle
- Copies of *Singing the Living Tradition*
- Name badges and markers
- Covenant from Session 1

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

- Set up the chalice in an appropriate place where everyone can sit around it in a circle or semi-circle.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

Invite participants to create a name badge, as they enter.

Divide the group into two parts. Read Responsive Reading 576, Litany of Restoration, from *Singing the Living Tradition*. Light the chalice.

Review the covenant created in Session 1. Ask participants to share, popcorn style, anything that was discussed in the last session that still resonates for them. Add anything left out that you wish participants to remember.

ACTIVITY 1: Four “I”s (30 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Leader Resource 1: Stories of Experiencing Racism
- Computer with Internet access and a digital projector, speakers, and projection screen or a large monitor

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

- Locate on the Go Animate website the video “Four I’s (2:02)” by YAYAUUA (<http://goanimate.com/videos/06iTeAGUQVtk>).
- Gather examples of themes and concepts included in this activity, such as institutions, racist ideology, and stories about racism. For example, find articles online about racist incidents at Oberlin College in 2013 (<http://www.newser.com/story/163820/oberlin-cancels-classes-amid-racial-uproar.html>) and an article about the arrest of Harvard University scholar, Dr. Henry Louis Gates, while breaking into his own home (http://www.boston.com/news/local/breaking_news/2009/07/harvard.html). Other examples can be found in Leader Resource 1: Stories of Experiencing Racism.

- Write on newsprint, and post: Four “I”s of Racism: Interpersonal, Institutional, Ideological and Internal
- Test equipment and queue the video “Four I’s.”

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

This activity is based on an activity created by John Bell at YouthBuild USA.

Brainstorm (5 minutes)

Say, in these words or your own:

We're going to brainstorm some institutions now. You can think of institutions as the groups and organizations that operate in your community. What are some of the institutions that you encounter on a daily basis? [e.g. schools, prisons, churches, businesses, city hall, libraries, courts]. Now, what about some systems? Systems link institutions together. For example, the schools are within the education system... [e.g. criminal (in)justice system, legal system, economic system, religious system, etc.]

Affirm that they have made a great list. Tell the group to refer to this list as the activity continues. Now have everyone pair up with a partner.

Pair Share about Racism (5 minutes)

Say, in these words or your own:

Find a partner. Tell a story of a time you personally witnessed a situation that was affected by racism or a time you received racism directed at you. Take half a minute to think about your story. You'll each have two minutes to share. Remind participants to switch at 2 minutes. If they seem to be finished sooner, you can shorten the time; youth may tell very short stories on this topic.

“Four I’s” Video (5 minutes)

Show the video, “Four I’s,” by YAYAUUA.

Using the “I”s (10 minutes)

Say, in these words or your own:

Let's return to the stories you shared. Let's see if we can identify any of the “I”s and where the power or racism may be in any of your stories. Let's also think about the fifth “I”—the intersections in your stories: Did someone in the story hold *another* identity that complicated the situation?

Think back to our “chalk talk” earlier and what we have said about “power.” Where do you see “power” operating in any of the four “I”s?

You may choose to process the story alone or with your partner. A partner can be a useful ally who can help you distinguish patterns you might not see alone. Facilitators are also available for questions.

SHARING (10 minutes)

Reconvene the large group. Invite volunteers to share any general observations they recognized while completing this activity. Ask, “What is the most important piece you will take away from this activity? How will you use it? Has any of your thinking changed or become more clear?”

ACTIVITY 2: Anticipating Diverse Perspectives (25 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- Handout 1: Optical Illusion
- Handout 2: Multicultural Misunderstandings
- Handout 3: Multicultural Competence Worksheet
- Pens/Pencils
- Optional: Laptop, digital projector and screen

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

- Look at the optical illusions (Handout 1) and try to figure out the answers so you can guide the participants if they get stuck.
- Read the examples of the community conflicts or misunderstandings below. Explore your thoughts and feelings about the examples. Prepare some examples of your own to share with the group, if you feel compelled to.
- Decide if you will give out copies of Handout 1 or project the images. If projecting, test your equipment.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

The learning objective of this activity is to prepare ourselves for the inevitability of different perspectives and understandings of situations and interactions. Youth recognize that in any situation, their perspective is not the only one.

Part I: Introduction of the Activity (5 minutes)

Say:

The Four “I”s video showed us how racism can creep into any aspect of everyone’s lives and relationships. How does this happen? In the last session, we discussed the Ladder of Reasoning and we saw how our assumptions and biases lead to discrimination. Now let’s look closer at what it means to bring assumptions around culture into our interactions with others.

Listen to a quote from the writer, Anais Nin: “We don’t see things as they are. We see them as we are.”

We’re going to start by looking at pictures of illusions that show how people are susceptible to influences of which they are unaware that lead to shaping our perceptions and judgments.

Distribute Handout 1 or show each image one at a time using the LCD projector.

Show (or indicate) the first image. Ask the students if they can find a man's face in the coffee bean. This question is deliberately general. If they can't find the man's face, hint that it could be an actual face instead of being made out of coffee beans. The answer is that there is an actual face of a man in the lower left corner of the picture. The question was kept general to portray how cultural assumptions or any assumptions we have can be so general as to be misleading.

Look at the second image. Ask the students if they can read what the writing says. After you get responses, turn the picture 90 degrees to the right and see if it helps the participants read the word. The word spells out in "Tokyo" in Kanji, which are Chinese characters used by the Japanese. These particular characters were deliberately used to resemble the English spelling of "Tokyo."

Say:

These pictures demonstrate that assumptions and perceptions can be unreliable and susceptible to influence. They remind us that it is always possible to see things differently.

Part II: Stories of Misunderstandings (10 minutes)

Break the participants into small groups. Give half the small groups Story 1 from Handout 3 and the other half Story 2. Ask them to take 10 minutes to read their story and answer the questions, keeping in mind what they've learned from the Ladder of Reasoning (Session 4), the Four "I"s, and the illusions. Tell them they will be expected to present a synopsis of their example and how it could have been handled differently. They will have three minutes for their presentation.

Wrap-up of the Activity (10 minutes)

Invite volunteers to report back with a short synopsis of their small group's story, the misunderstanding, and how it could have been handled differently. Ask if their groups used the Ladder of Reasoning, the Four "I"s, or lessons from the optical illusions to understand the conflict in their story. Which particular parts of what they've learned helped them understand? Remind them they have learned how culturally influenced perceptions and assumptions can create misunderstandings which can then lead to larger conflicts.

Explain that Story 2 is based on a true story that happened in a UU community. Does this fact change their view of Story 2? Does it surprise them that this happened in a UU community?

Distribute Handout 3, Multicultural Competency Checklist. Encourage participants to recognize positive behaviors they already do and new behaviors they can commit to using. If you have time, read the items on the checklist together and invite the youth to contribute examples.

ACTIVITY 3: Exploring Privilege (25 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- Leader Resource 2: Examples of Racial Privilege
- “Privilege” newsprint from Session 3, Activity 1, Chalk Talk
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

- Cut Leader Resource 2 into strips of paper, one for each example. If the group has more than 20 participants, make some duplicates.
- Write the Four “I” words—internal, institutional, interpersonal, and ideological—on four separate sheets of newsprint. Place each sheet in one of the four corners of your meeting space.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

Tell participants they will use information they have learned in this session to explore how racial privilege operates in everyday life. Share that while the term “privilege” often is used to mean something generally good that you earn, such as the privilege of a late curfew, in discussions of race the word “privilege” has a slightly different meaning. It is used to describe the difference in experience between racial groups by pointing out privilege automatically conferred on members of the dominant group.

Refer to the “Privilege” chart from the Chalk Talk activity in Session 2, and invite participants to read what they wrote at that time. Ask whether they would like to change or add anything.

Share this quote from “Unpacking the Invisible Backpack” by Peggy McIntosh, the social scientist who is credited with applying the concept of privilege to race.

We usually think of privilege as being a favored state, whether earned or conferred by birth or luck. Yet some of the conditions I have described here work to systematically over-empower certain groups. Such privilege simply confers dominance because of one’s race or sex. I want, then, to distinguish between earned strength and unearned power conferred systematically. Power from unearned privilege can look like strength when it is in fact permission to escape or to dominate. But not all of the privileges on my list are inevitably damaging. Some, like the expectation that neighbors will be decent to you, or that your race will not count against you in court, should be the norm in a just society. Others, like the privilege to ignore less powerful people, distort the humanity of the holders as well as the ignored groups.

Distribute a slip of paper with one of the examples to each participant. Tell them the slips of paper contain examples of how racial privilege works in the lives of their peers who are people of color. Each slip takes the perspective that a privilege is denied based on someone’s color. (If some participants will have the same example, you might give

them the option to work as a small group or you might invite volunteers to write their own examples.)

Invite each participant to read through their example silently for two minutes, and to think about which of the four I's discussed earlier in the session their example of racism illustrates: institutional, interpersonal, ideological and internal. When they are ready, participants should move around the room and place themselves closest to or between the two "I"s that they think most closely match their example. Remind them that there are no "right" or "wrong" answers.

When participants have settled on a place within the room, ask them to share their examples with the people around them and why they picked the location they did. After five minutes, ask them to consider the following question with the same people around them: *What would it take for this example of privilege to no longer exist?*

After an additional 5-10 minutes of discussion, one at a time ask participants to share what their examples of privilege were and what their group decided it would take for the example to no longer exist. Write the descriptions on newsprint. Call on people sitting in different parts of the room, and go through as many as you have time.

Affirm what was learned in Session 2: that racism hurts whites as well as people of color. Participants may be uncomfortable if they hold privilege because they are white, knowing it is not something earned and that others do not hold such privilege. Acknowledge that the power of privilege is something they can use to help dismantle racism.

CLOSING (5 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- Chalice, candle and extinguisher or LED battery-operated candle

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

Announce that the next session is the last in the program. Invite participants to share a way they feel they have been changed by taking part in the program by filling in the blanks: "Before, I used to (blank) and now I (blank)." Leaders should contribute, too.

Invite the youth to blow out the chalice after everyone has shared.

FAITH IN ACTION AND ALTERNATE ACTIVITIES

FAITH IN ACTION: Panel Discussion

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- Long table, chairs
- Microphones
- Optional: Refreshments for your audience

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

- Work with congregational leaders to schedule and publicize the event.
- Invite three to five community leaders working with anti-racism organizations or initiatives. Seek diversity (age, ethnicity, gender, etc...) among speakers. Tell them the format and the topic you would like them to address. Encourage speakers to bring brochures or literature to share. Confirm participation a few days before the event.
- Ask two youth to volunteer to em-cee the event; they will introduce the panelists and, during Q&A, moderate discussion and pass around the mic. Ask your minister or a board member to attend the event to extend a congregational welcome.
- Work with youth to make flyers for the event to be posted and emailed to their faith community, their schools and larger neighborhood. Make sure you ask for rsvp's and assign a person to take reservations by e-mail or phone. You can also use online reservation/invite sites like www.eventbrite.com.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

This activity is designed for participants to engage their larger faith community in the process of deconstructing race.

Find and invite three to five local speakers working on anti-racism projects in your community; they can be lay leaders connecting your congregation to community organizations, speakers from groups in your congregation working on raising awareness of anti-racism, and/or non-profit organization working on anti-racism on a larger level. Contact your district UUA staff if you are looking for regional resources!

Have the youth prepare a list of five questions to help the panelists prepare their talking points. *Suggestion:* The questions can be based around panelists' perceptions of race as a human construct, their experiences of privilege or lack of privilege, and/or what their experiences have been in deconstructing race through their work.

Give each panelist five minutes to talk about their projects and/or organization. Leave time for Q&A (15-30 minutes) plus five minutes to thank panelists and wrap up the event.

Variation: After all the panelists have presented (five minutes each), divide the room in three or four parts and station each speaker in a different part of the room. Give audience members the option to choose which speaker's project connected best with their interests and to gather in that speaker's section for a more in-depth explanation of how audience members can help in their projects. This format is suitable for events where you expect no more than 40 people. It allows audience members to connect with the speakers and with others in the congregation who share their interests.

Re-convene the audience for a wrap-up. Have the youth em-ceeds thank everyone for attending and announce any future events they have planned around anti-racism and the Be the Change! program.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 1: Race and Immigration (30 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- A copy of the DVD *Race: The Power of an Illusion*
- Computer with Internet access and a digital projector, speakers, and projection screen or a large monitor

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

- Obtain a copy of *Race: The Power of an Illusion*. The DVD may be borrowed from your local library or purchased from [California Newsreel](http://www.newsreel.org) at www.newsreel.org. Your congregation's library, your public library, or the library of a house of worship near you may have a copy. Or, borrow the DVD from the UUA's [Lending Library](http://www.uua.org); contact akapitan@uua.org or cmcdonald@uua.org for more information.
- Read the transcript (<http://newsreel.org/transcripts/race3.htm/>) of Episode Three ("The House We Live In"), Scenes 2-5 and/or preview Scenes 2-5 (about 14 minutes) on the DVD. You may wish to read the entire transcript and/or watch the entire one-hour episode. Take notes on the video and familiarize yourself with the discussion questions below.
- Optional: If you will have time, plan to show Scenes 1-8. This will take 23 minutes instead of the 14 minutes you will need to show just Scenes 2-5.
- Explore the immigration reform resources on the UUA website (www.uua.org/immigration). Find out if your congregation has actively supported immigration reform. Prepare to share this information with the group.
- Test equipment and queue the first scene you plan to show.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

Tell the group you will show a clip from *Race: The Power of Illusion* which talks about immigration. Show the video.

Use these questions to start a discussion:

- Did you know that many immigrants from Europe suffered persecution when they arrived in the U.S.? Discrimination affected immigrants from Southern Europe (the Mediterranean) and Eastern Europe. The Irish also suffered discrimination.
- In our country's history with immigration, we see people from different ethnic groups being classified as racially different, though, evidently, those of European descent "become white." What is the difference between ethnicity and race? [Ethnicity is defined as "pertaining to or characteristic of a people, especially a group sharing a common and distinctive culture (religion, religion, or the like). American is an ethnicity, as are Latino/a and European (Ashkenazi) Jewish.]
- When do race and ethnicity get confused in the U.S. today?
- What does assimilation mean?

Present this information, in these words or your own, to continue the discussion:

The laws in our country have changed over time. Originally, only white, land-owning men could vote. After the Civil War, black men could legally vote, though many states enacted laws to limit or deny this right. In 1920, women were given the right to vote. After voting rights were extended to all citizens, our government limited immigration as a tool to keep the majority of voters white. The country set up immigration quotas which determined how many people from each other nation in the world could immigrate legally to the U.S.

Quotas by nationality were legally ended in 1965. new laws codified preferences for immigrants, including those holding certain skills, those with close relatives already in the U.S., and refugees. Still, the path to citizenship is not easy. It is estimated that we have 11 million undocumented immigrants in this country. Other countries' suffering due to international trade agreements and the broken path to citizenship in the U.S. are two factors.

The Unitarian Universalist Association website has this information: "The majority of immigrants who obtain a "green card"—a visa which grants lawful permanent residency—do so through sponsorship by a family member or sponsorship by an employer who is already in the United States. After five years as a lawful permanent resident, an immigrant can apply for U.S. citizenship. But a tremendous backlog in processing visa applications is putting families in the painful position of having to choose whether to follow the law and be separated for up to twenty years in some cases or to break the law in order to be together.

Ask participants what they know about the current immigration issue. Share information on the congregation's involvement and anything from the UUA's website that you find interesting.

Ask:

- More than 100 years ago, as immigrants from Southern Europe settled in this country, some in the white majority feared that with intermarriage, the American population

would darken in skin color. A host of behavioral characteristics—all negative—were feared to accompany this change. How does some of the talk about “the browning of the U.S.” today echo these fears?

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 2: Caucusing (40 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- Computer with Internet access and a digital projector, speakers, and projection screen

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

- Preview the UUA-produced video, Introduction to Racial and Ethnic Identity Caucusing for Youth (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0CYfFtcQ5ms&feature=plcp>).
- Download and read the Discussion Guide for the video (<http://www.uua.org/re/youth/identity-based/workshops/220052.shtml>).
- Consider inviting a minister or chaplain to join the group for this activity.
- Test equipment and queue the video.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

Youth explore racial and ethnic caucusing.

Watch the video and discuss. Invite youth to caucus, using the discussion guide and adding two questions: What has the experience of the sessions of Be the Change! been like for you? Is there anything you wish had been done differently? Tell participants that they will be able to give feedback at the end of the program and should keep their answer to these last two questions in mind.

ALTERNATE ACTIVITY 3: Scenarios and Micro-aggressions (20 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- Handout 4: Examples of Micro-aggressions

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

- This activity introducing the concept of micro-aggressions may bring up strong emotions. Having a minister or trained chaplain in attendance would be helpful.
- To increase your understanding of the nature of micro-aggressions, read [Racial Microaggressions in Everyday Life](http://www.nwpublicemployeesdiversityconference.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/RacialMicroaggressions.pdf) by Derald Wing Sue. (<http://www.nwpublicemployeesdiversityconference.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/RacialMicroaggressions.pdf>)

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

Youth examine common situations in which uncomfortable interactions about race can arise from insensitive comments or actions, known as “micro-aggressions.”

Give participants this example:

“‘You should have been born Asian!’ Said by a white classmate after hearing that I’m taking difficult academic courses. I’m mixed-race (indigenous South American and white). Made me feel stunned and ashamed that I didn’t respond. I wonder how it made the Korean classmate five feet away from me feel.”

Ask them why they think the person of mixed heritage felt bad at hearing that statement by a white classmate. What would have been your reaction if you overheard this remark?

Distribute Handout 4. Discuss the examples. Possible questions include:

- What happened here?
- How do you think each of the characters feel?
- Why might they feel this way?
- What could they say in response?
- What might have been something better that one of the characters could have said?
- If you were a bystander who over heard this interaction, what would you do or say? If you wouldn’t do anything why?
- How do you tell someone they said something racist?

Explain that there is a term for these difficult situations, which speaks to the fact that they are connected to broader racial problems: They are known as micro-aggressions. Offer this explanation from *Racial Microaggressions in Everyday Life*:

Racial microaggressions are brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color. Perpetrators of microaggressions are often unaware that they engage in such communications when they interact with racial/ethnic minorities.

Invite any participants who are comfortable doing so to share any personal experience they have had with micro-aggressions (overheard, directed at them, or committed by them). Keep the conversation focused on race and ethnicity. If there are youth of color in the group, ask: What should someone who has committed a micro-aggression do when they realize they have said something rude or hurtful?

RESOURCES

LEADER RESOURCE 1: Stories of Experiencing Racism

From [Racial Microaggressions in Everyday Life](#), by Derald Wing Sue, Christina M. Capodilupo, Gina C. Torino, Jennifer M. Bucceri, Aisha M. B. Holder, Kevin L. Nadal, and Marta Esquilin, (Teachers College, Columbia University);

<http://www.nwpublicemployeesdiversityconference.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/RacialMicroaggressions.pdf>

Example 1: All during my junior high years, I was friends with a youth, Tony, an Italian American, who had a crush on me. I was content with a friendship only with Tony and politely refused his requests for a date until our ninth grade prom. Tony was thrilled that I accepted his offer to attend prom as his date. The following day, Tony informed me that he could not take me to prom. When pressed to explain why, he embarrassingly admitted that his parents refused to let him date a black girl. I found this extremely ironic: not only because of my lack of romantic interest in Tony, but also because I knew enough of history to know that Italians were discriminated against when they first came to this country. I thought about how often the discriminated became discriminators in order to fit into the dominant culture, to prove their ‘whiteness.’ I told Tony we could still call it a date: we would provide our own transportation to and from the prom, but be a couple at the actual dance. His face lit up, relieved that he had not offended me and happy that we would still attend prom at least partially ‘together.’

Example 2: I [Derald Wing Sue, the senior author, an Asian American] recently traveled with an African American colleague on a plane flying from New York to Boston. The plane was a small “hopper” with a single row of seats on one side and double seats on the other. As the plane was only sparsely populated, we were told by the flight attendant (White) that we could sit anywhere, so we sat at the front, across the aisle from one another. This made it easy for us to converse and provided a larger comfortable space on a small plane for both of us.

As the attendant was about to close the hatch, three White men in suits entered the plane, were informed they could sit anywhere, and promptly seated themselves in front of us. Just before take-off, the attendant proceeded to close all overhead compartments and seemed to scan the plane with her eyes. At that point she approached us, leaned over, interrupted our conversation, and asked if we would mind moving to the back of the plane. She indicated that she needed to distribute weight on the plane evenly.

Both of us (passengers of color) had similar negative reactions. First, balancing the weight on the plane seemed reasonable, but why were we being singled out? After all, we had boarded first and the three White men were the last passengers to arrive. Why were they not being asked to move? Were we being singled out because of our race? Was this just a random event with no racial overtones? Were we being oversensitive and petty?

Although we complied by moving to the back of the plane, both of us felt resentment, irritation, and anger. In light of our everyday racial experiences, we both came to the same conclusion: The flight attendant had treated us like second-class citizens because of our race. But this incident did not end there. While I kept telling myself to drop the matter, I could feel my blood pressure rising, heart beating faster, and face flush with anger. When the attendant walked back to make sure our seat belts were fastened, I could not contain my anger any longer. Struggling to control myself, I said to her in a forced calm voice: “Did you know that you asked two passengers of color to step to the rear of the ‘bus’”? For a few seconds she said nothing but looked at me with a horrified expression. Then she said in a righteously indignant tone, “Well, I have never been accused of that! How dare you? I don’t see color! I only asked you to move to balance the plane. Anyway, I was only trying to give you more space and greater privacy.”

Attempts to explain my perceptions and feelings only generated greater defensiveness from her. For every allegation I made, she seemed to have a rational reason for her actions. Finally, she broke off the conversation and refused to talk about the incident any longer. Were it not for my colleague who validated my experiential reality, I would have left that encounter wondering whether I was correct or incorrect in my perceptions. Nevertheless, for the rest of the flight, I stewed over the incident and it left a sour taste in my mouth.

LEADER RESOURCE 2: Examples of Racial Privilege

I know I am more likely to get stopped by a cop just for “looking suspicious,” and if I do get stopped I know I will likely to be given a hard time by the officer.

Living in a community of color means I am far more likely to be directly impacted or have someone in my family impacted by the system of mass incarceration in our country. *The New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander describes this system, noting there are more African Americans under the control of the criminal justice system today than were enslaved in 1850.

Going to the airport I get pulled out of the security line and have my baggage searched every time under their policy of “random screening.”

When I look at the top leaders in the private sector, it’s rare to find people that look like me. According to Diversity Inc., only 21 of the CEO’s of Fortune 500 companies are non-white. What does this mean for my chances at success?

If somebody makes a racially crude joke or comment in front of me, I don’t get to choose whether to engage with the uncomfortable situation. Instead, all eyes are on me.

When I am an adult, if I want to buy a house I will probably have to choose between living in a neighborhood that has a significant number of people of color or one that has nice schools and streets. I can’t usually have access to these things and still feel comfortably surrounded by people from my same cultural background.

People make all kinds of assumptions when they meet me, based on my race alone, about my athletic ability, grades and academic performance, music choices, tastes in food, cultural identities, and language. I have to push against that to have people see who I am as an individual.

I often get mistaken for the other person of color in my class by teachers and classmates, and sometimes people ask if we’re related. We don’t even look alike. What does that say about how they see me?

Compared to my white friends, I get a much more suspicious attitude in response if I have to deal with a store manager, clerk, teller, registrar or other person in a position of authority.

I get the question “where are you from?” all the time, even though I grew up nearby. It makes me feel like I don’t belong here.

All the packages of Band-Aids at the store match someone else’s skin tone, not mine.

Politicians use terms like “traditional America” or “take back our country” to refer exclusively to divisions between white Americans and Americans of color. Their goal is to keep people like me on the margins of American life and stoke racial resentment in order to win elections.

There are times when my family’s culture and language and “mainstream” American culture and language are in conflict, which makes me feel like my identity is torn in different directions.

Books, TV and movies that are more than 10-20 years old do not include people from my racial group in the “normal” cast of characters. When people from my race are included, it’s in a show or series geared just towards them, not to the broader audience.

I’m often in situations like classes, clubs or groups where I am one of or the only person of color, which forces me to constantly be aware of my own race and what people around me are expecting.

If I live in certain states, even if I am an American citizen, I can be arrested simply for not having the right type of identification on my person if a police officer believes for any reason I am not legally authorized to be in this country. My undocumented friends and family are terrorized by this trend in the community.

Often, in mainstream movies and television shows, there is a story about a group of friends where they are all white, except for one person of color. The person of color is never the main character, often is not fully developed, frequently the comic relief, and almost always has less lines and plots that involve them. It is as if they are added as an afterthought, an accessory to the white character, with whom the producers assume we will identify.

If I want to speak up about something related to race, my view is often dismissed as being simplistic or self-interested.

Native American reservations, like the one where my cousins live, are often stricken with poverty. They are prevented by law from doing certain things that would improve their economic situation, such as selling their land, and forced to do others, like pay for their own basic law enforcement, that drain their resources compared to nearby communities.

When I think about my future plans, like careers and families, I often have to ask myself “How would others respond to a person of color in this position?” “Would I have access to the resources and mentors I need?” or “Will I be seen as betraying my friends and family by acting ‘too white’”?

Leading actors and directors, especially those who win awards, are rarely from my ethnic or cultural group.

In school, children are usually taught that they will be judged by their character and their behavior. As a parent of a child of color, I feel I have to tell my children that they will also often be judged by the color of their skin.

It is harder to find products that meet my needs in the drug store, including hair care, personal care and “skin color” products like pantyhose.

The selection of greeting cards is limited to cards without images of people or “specialty” greeting cards lines, with illustrations of specific groups of people of color. Many stores do not carry the specialty cards.

TV stations and theatres showing “classic” films are seldom showing movies featuring people of color.

If I am in a position of power or high rank (such as an Ivy League school), some of my peers will wrongly assume that I am “only” because of affirmative action and are therefore less smart or capable.

Friends assume my long hair is extensions.

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HANDOUT 1: Optical Illusions

Image 1 comes from 25 Brilliant Optical Illusions for Kids collected by Nisha Patel at <http://slodive.com/inspiration/optical-illusions-for-kids/>. Image 2 comes from What's a Cross-Cultural Mediator To Do? A Low-Context Solution for a High-Context Problem, by John Barkai (<http://cardozoicr.com/vol10no1/43-90.pdf>).

Image 1



Image 2



HANDOUT 2: Multicultural Misunderstandings

Story 1

Aki Suzuki enrolled in grade 10 in the local high school as an exchange student. The students in his homeroom soon elected him to be their representative in the student council. In the council, Aki was put on a committee to select a school mascot. As a new member of the council and a sophomore, Aki did not think it was his place to volunteer his ideas. He assumed that younger or newer members of a group should defer to older or more experienced members, as they would in Japan. So Aki assumed the role appropriate to a lower status person in Japan, offering support for other good ideas. After the discussion had gone on for half an hour, a committee member said to Aki, "Don't you have any ideas of your own?" Aki offered an idea which was turned down. In Japanese culture, people typically do not openly criticize others' ideas. After the meeting, Aki quit the student council.

- What were some of the different elements that led to this misunderstanding?
- What motivated Aki to act as he did? (What message did Aki intend to convey?)
- How did the American high-school students interpret Aki's actions? (What message did the American students receive in this scenario?)
- Why do you think Aki quit the student council?
- What would you have done in his place?
- If the other members of student council knew more about Aki's culture, what could they have done differently to welcome his participation?

Story 2

Alexis, a person of color originally from Uganda just moved from Chicago to a mostly white suburb of Minneapolis. Alexis was a little anxious realizing she was one of two people of African descent living in a largely white neighborhood. She'd never heard of Unitarian Universalists, but there was a church nearby, and she decided to attend a Sunday morning service to check it out. When she entered the UU church, she was greeted by a friendly usher who asked her a bit about herself. Alexis mentioned she moved from Chicago, but was originally from Uganda. To Alexis's surprise the usher told her that she might be more comfortable attending an alternative UU Church in a neighboring city with a more diverse congregation. Alexis felt hurt by the suggestion which she felt insinuated she wasn't welcome in this UU congregation, and decided that she might not consider attending another UU service in the future. The UU usher was perturbed at the turn of the conversation, not understanding what about the suggestion had hurt Alexis.

- Why do you think Alexis was hurt about the suggestion the UU usher made?
- What do you think the UU usher meant to imply by the suggestion?
- Was there a cultural misunderstanding? Why or Why not?
- What other kind of misunderstanding could this be?
- What would you have done if you were the usher?
- What other suggestions do you have to welcoming people of multicultural backgrounds when they visit your UU congregation or youth group?

HANDOUT 3: Multicultural Competence Worksheet

Competency

- can listen and behave without imposing their own values and assumptions on others
- carries an attitude of respect when approaching people of different cultures, which entails engagement in a process of self-reflection and self-critique
- has the ability to move beyond their own biases
- can maintain a communication style that is not based on being argumentative and competitive; can reach shared outcomes without manipulating or wearing down others with compelling evidence
- is curious about the other person and seeks solutions that work across shared interests
- is comfortable asking questions when uncertain or unclear about the assumptions of an individual or group
- intentionally seeks to see, hear, and understand the cultural "other"

Evidence

HANDOUT 4: Examples of Micro-aggressions

These are real-life examples submitted anonymously to The Microaggressions Project, www.microaggressions.com. Used with permission.

Example One: “I got my hair braided into cornrows after having my hair straightened. A Caucasian boy tells me my hair looks ‘ghetto and he likes it better straight.’ I got really heated and we started having a debate about what is ‘ghetto.’ I won the debate because he basically labeled stereotypical black things as ‘ghetto’ when ghetto isn’t even an adjective and I proved his paradigm of ‘ghetto-ness’ was half-baked. But at the end of the day it still annoyed me that the natural hair texture God gave me isn’t looked at as beautiful as a straighter hair type.”

Example Two: “Me: Hey, should I go to a steakhouse or to a sushi place for dinner with my family?”

Friend: I think you should go to the steakhouse because you guys know how to make sushi, right?”

Example Three: “A girl who lived in Africa joined our class in school. She’s white. I’m black. Our teacher says to me, ‘Welcome!’ I say, ‘I’m from Michigan.’”

Example Four: “A girl comes up to the sink next to mine in a public bathroom and asks, ‘Where are you from?’ I say, ‘Albion.’ She says, ‘Is that in China?’ I go, ‘No... that’s in north east Indiana.’ I’m Filipina and have lived in the States since I was an infant. Made me feel shocked and confused.”

Example Five: “‘If you don’t like it here then why don’t you just move somewhere else?’ My White classmate suggested I leave the US because of all the social problems. I’m Native American.”

Example Six: “A girl in my English class described president Obama as ‘Black.’ I mentioned that he had a White mother and therefore this side of his heritage should be acknowledged too as it’s just as much a part of him. The response: ‘Yeah, but he still has Black heritage, so he’s Black, isn’t he? Doesn’t matter what vagina he came out from.’ Made me angry, frustrated at the ignorance, categorized and disheartened – I am a mixed race person.”

Example Seven: “‘Sorry, that must be my Black coming out.’ My biracial friend (African American and Mexican). Whenever she does or says something negative she blames it on the ‘Black’ side of her. Makes me feel angry, belittled, and resentful.”

Example Eight: “‘Maria makes a good point...’” Another classmate in a discussion where I was the only Latina. My name is NOT Maria.”