

 **UUA Youth Ministry in a Diverse World  
Webinar Notes****Description of webinar:**

Join Jessica Laike and Rev. Elizabeth Nguyen for the Inclusive Youth Ministry in a Diverse World webinar! January 10th, 8:00pm EST or January 12th, 1:00pm EST. There is no such thing as a perfect community, but there is such a thing as imperfect, messy, beloved community. We'll explore ways to better include youth of many identities and life experiences. Jessica and Elizabeth will share stories about real ways to create brave space, honor differences, shift culture and widen who we mean when we say "We."

This webinar is based on the fourth competency in the Competencies for Ministry To/With Youth: Creating an Inclusive Youth Ministry.

**Goals of webinar:**

- Resources and basic understanding around specific needs of youth of different identities
- Share personal stories
- What is our vision - safer and healthy
  - Brave space
- Modeling vulnerability things that went well, things that didn't go so well.
- Doing it > doing it perfectly
- Always assume that ALL identities are present in the room.
- Dominant identities are not normal; all identities need support and identity development
  - Caucusing is a good tool

**Agenda:**

75 minutes

8-8:02pm Getting settled

8:02-8:04pm Welcome

Introductions

Linda, Jessica, Elizabeth and our youth leaders

Annie Kern from First Unitarian Society of Denver, is one of our

MDD youth chaplains

Elliot Ferrell-Carretey from First Universalist Church of Denver and is our MDD Jr. Youth Chair for our district YAC (youth -adult committee)

8:04-8:05pm Opening words - Annie

*Waiting*, Marta I. Valentin

Step into the center

Come in from the margins

I will hold you here.

 Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries | P (617) 948-4350 | [youth@uua.org](mailto:youth@uua.org)

[uua.org](http://uua.org)



**UUA Youth Ministry in a Diverse World  
Webinar Notes**

Don't look back  
Or around  
Feel my arms  
The water is rising.  
I will hold you  
As you tremble.  
I will warm you.

Don't look out  
Or away  
Life is in here  
Between you and me.

In this tiny space,  
Where I end and you begin  
Hope lives.

In this precious tiny space  
No words need be whispered  
To tell us we are one.

You and I  
We make the circle  
If we choose to.

Come  
Step in  
I am waiting for you.

8:05-8:06pm More intros! We want to get a sense of who is with us tonight so please open your chat box and share your name, your role and where you are joining us from!

8:06-8:10pm Framing - Jessica and Elizabeth

- Agenda - elizabeth
- Our vision of safer and healthy youth ministry
- There is no such thing as a perfect community, but there is such a thing as imperfect, messy, beloved community.



# UUA Youth Ministry in a Diverse World Webinar Notes

- “We are not in church to be with the people who sing the same music, or rally for same cause. We are in church to learn to love better.....There is really only one choice: between imperfect community and no community. Again and again, we are all called to choose to commit ourselves to building a more just, more diverse, and yet ever messy and imperfect beloved community.” - UU Religious Educator Laila Ibrahim
  - Brave space - Jessica
    - Not about being perfect or feeling 100% comfortable
    - It is about doing it anyway - through the discomfort and the knowledge/fear of messing up
    - Instead of focus on “comfort zone” or feeling “comfortable” before diving into a topic, but instead being willing to sit in discomfort and do the work anyway

8:10-8:25pm

Big picture

- Doing it > doing it perfectly
- Always assume that ALL identities are present in the room.
- Youth of different identities have different needs
  - We’ll zoom in on some of these identities when we get to the littler picture
- All identities need support and identity development - folks who have experience oppression and folks who experience privilege
  - Affinity based space is a good tool
    - Why affinity based space?
    - “Identity-based space is a practice of Unitarian Universalist communities seeking to address the particular spiritual, community, and justice needs of specific identity-groups. Examples include youth caucus and young adult ministries, gender identity and sexual orientation, as well as racial identity caucusing. Identity space can be used to:
      - Support processing and learning when people in cross-cultural community respond differently to workshops and trainings.
      - Express strong emotions when groups respond differently to shared experiences because of specific



**UUA Youth Ministry in a Diverse World  
Webinar Notes**

identity diversity within the group. (Responses include tension, conflict, and sadness.)

- Deepen spiritual growth around themes of history, ancestry, or cultural identity.
- Connect with a community that shares common experiences and history based on identity.” - by Taquiena Boston adapted from framing for GA 2015
- In an orchestra people need to practice in sections - to get strong as the brass or strings or percussion and then they can really join in making music together. Metaphor from Elliot, youth presenter.
- Ground people of color groups in celebration of people of color’s identities and the positive gifts of family, ancestry, ethnicity, legacy, and history.
- Ground white people’s groups in accepting their own whiteness without shame or defensiveness, with curiosity around how whiteness has played out in their family and history
- Gathering around shared identity is a powerful part of our tradition. From women gathering in conscious raising groups to youth leading vibrant circle worship to black UUs calling for transformative shifts.
- Affinity based space where folks gather around a shared identity (age, life stage, areas of interest) is very common - parent’s groups, brunches for elders, youth groups. Gathering by racial identity is simply another way to gather.

8:25-8:35pm - five minutes each Annie/Elliot

- Story of inclusive behaviour - when it went well
- Story of inclusive behaviour - when it could have gone better

Littler picture - five minutes each

8:35-8:40pm

- Economic Privilege - Jessica
  - There is an assumption that all UUs have strong/stable economic means
  - Remembering that you often don’t know or see the economic diversity that is present in our congregations/communities



# UUA Youth Ministry in a Diverse World Webinar Notes

- Scholarship funds
- Story of it coming up in a youth group setting and how was handled
  - Someone made a suggestion of an activity for the group to do which had a cost, like \$10 per person, which they didn't think was very much
  - Others piped up to say that we need to be considerate of everyone's financial situation, \$10 might not seem like a lot to some people, but might be hard for others.
  - Group brainstorming ways to make sure that activities are accessible to all.

8:40-8:45pm

- Differing abilities. Here we will zoom in more on interpersonal access - Linda

Let's start with

- person first language- put the individual before a label or disability
  - John, the guy with autism instead of That autistic guy John, (pause)
  - Kim who has a visual impairment. The visually impaired person, Kim (pause)
  - Using this language sets the stage for respecting the individual in future interactions.
- Culture assumptions and disability assumptions
  - allow for behavioral and communication differences.
  - meet the person where they are, and as they are.
  - Simply put, make space for people to communicate and behave as they need, if this includes unexpected sounds or body movements, respect it as part of the culture of that individual.
- Check Emotional/social norms.
  - Allow for alternative ways to engage in with group.
  - Respect, as a full member, people who take their space in the group differently
  - sitting in a different area, not exchanging customary greetings, asking questions that have been answered, and many, many other ways.
  - Respect the relationship over the task or activity.
- Repair from exclusion



# UUA Youth Ministry in a Diverse World Webinar Notes

- acknowledge the hurt and seek guidance to be more inclusive.
- ask the individual how their needs can be better met,
- then, seek disability awareness and education groups.
- Designate a notetaker and put it all in writing!
  - everything, needs to be written down and made available both in print and electronically.

8:45-8:50pm

- Race - Elizabeth
  - Access to community of folks of color or community of white folks exploring whiteness at the congregational/district/regional/national level
  - Visibilizing U/U/UU ancestors of color and white anti-racist ancestors
  - The prophetic and pastoral are often interconnected.

8:50-8:55pm

- Gender - Jessica
  - Gender inclusive language addressing a group with “folks” or “friends” instead of “hey guys” or “ladies and gentlemen/boys and girls”
  - Conversation around pronouns is sticky - creating the space to have those conversations with your group and helping those who don’t necessarily even understand the conversation
  - Keeping in mind the inherent, unconscious gender bias we all have just because we’ve grown up in this culture
    - Looks like maintaining awareness of which voices are dominating a room or conversation and intentionally creating space for the less heard voices.

8:55-9pm

- Sexual orientation - Elizabeth
  - Sexuality is part of spirituality
  - Sexuality is fluid
  - OWL is a resource - including senior high OWL
  - Suspend assumptions about family structure and who important adults are in youth’s lives.
  - LGB(T)Q youth survival in these times

9-9:05pm



# UUA Youth Ministry in a Diverse World Webinar Notes

- Immigration / documentation - Linda

Voting may not be a way to socially engage.

Immigration is not fair....it is not easy....it is very expensive (see economic privilege)....there may not be a “legal way”.

Assumptions about using democratic processes, risk of arrest (even for legal citizens)

9:05-9:14pm

Q and A

9:14-9:15pm Closing-

“What We’ve Started” was written by Betty Bobo Seiden

We are here today because we want our religious journey to include more than one holy land, more than one vision, more than one scripture....

We sing praises in many styles and in many languages.

We make a joyful noise unto whomever nourishes and sustains all life.

When we look around us here today we see the beauty of diversity—people of various sizes and shapes, heads of different colors and textures. We see an age span of several generations. We are aware of personality differences, of differences in perspective, of ancestors who represent every continent of our world. Come let us celebrate our diversity.

Resources (to be sent out after webinar):

<http://www.uua.org/re/youth/identity-formation/supporting>

Bridging the Web to Life curriculum on Creating Inclusive Community

<http://www.uua.org/re/youth/leading/bringing-web-life/workshop-6-creating-inclusive-community>

Basic intercultural hospitality

[http://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/screenshot\\_2016-11-18\\_16.50.24.png](http://www.uua.org/sites/live-new.uua.org/files/screenshot_2016-11-18_16.50.24.png)

LGBTQ Youth Survival Guide



# UUA Youth Ministry in a Diverse World Webinar Notes

<http://blueboat.blogs.uua.org/2016/11/21/lgbtq-youth-survival-guide-trump-edition/>

Created Equal

Classism Curriculum for high schoolers

<http://www.classism.org/programs/created-equal/>

Different abilities

<http://www.uua.org/accessibility>

**Accessibility and Inclusion Ministry (AIM)**

<http://www.uua.org/accessibility/aim>

YOUTH MINISTRY COMPETENCY that this webinar addresses:

4) Able to create an inclusive youth ministry

Entry Level: Recognize the importance of creating inclusive youth space that affirms all identities of all members

BASIC:

Able to:

- Manage group dynamics in healthy and inclusive ways
- With youth leaders, shift in-group behavior to inclusive behavior

Understands:

- Basics of including youth of color, youth with different gender/sexualities identities, and youth with different development
- That racial and social justice is part of a holistic and inclusive youth ministry

ADVANCED:

Able to:

- Create anti-oppressive and inclusive policies that balance youth, parent, and congregational perspectives with liability concerns
- Help youth understand and include other youth who have disabilities and mental health needs Linda?
- Help youth, parents, and community manage conflict; create and hold space for difficult conversations.

 **UUA Youth Ministry in a Diverse World**  
**Webinar Notes**

- Implement racial and social justice programming and reflection with diverse groups of youth

Understands:

- The intersections among identity, privilege, and oppression; group power dynamics
- Identity development in youth generally and in youth who identify with a group historically marginalized by race, gender, affectional or sexual preference, socioeconomic class, etc.