

# USING THE EXAMINING WHITENESS CURRICULUM: A GUIDE FOR FACILITATORS

## **TWO FORMATS FOR THE CURRICULUM**

There are two formats for the Examining Whiteness curriculum. One is written for individuals who want to explore the issues of white identity, white racism, and white supremacy. These folks are interested in engaging the issues but they don't have time or interest in leading a group on whiteness in their congregation or community group.

## **THE EXAMINING WHITENESS CURRICULUM FOR GROUP LEADERS**

This is the introduction to the use of the Examining Whiteness curriculum by people who are interested in leading a group in their congregations or community group. In this introduction we will discuss:

- Forming a Training Team
- Using the Materials in an Accountable Way
- Ways of Sequencing the Materials
- Making the Connections between the Stories
- Guidelines for Interaction During the Meetings

There is a different introduction for individuals who want to work with these materials.

## **FORMING A TRAINING TEAM**

Our assumption is that anyone facilitating the use of the curriculum has skills in leading groups and has some knowledge of the issues of racism, white privilege, and white power. In addition, leaders of this curriculum also have a desire to engage white people in a discussion of the issues of white identity, white racism, and white supremacy.

Ideally you will create a training team to lead the program. In our experience it helps to balance gender, age, and sexual orientation in the leadership team. For example, you might have an older white gay male working with a younger white female. Or an older white bisexual female might team with a younger white male.

## **USING THE MATERIALS IN AN ACCOUNTABLE WAY**

We are making these resources available to whoever would like to use them.

Please contact the UUA or Bill Gardiner to let them know that you intend to use the materials in the Examining Whiteness curriculum, or if you have any questions. You can contact the UUA at [araomc@uua.org](mailto:araomc@uua.org) and Bill at [BillGardiner@verizon.net](mailto:BillGardiner@verizon.net). Bill can also be contacted via phone at (339) 368-0968. Using the materials in an accountable way also means that you will give us feedback on the modules. What worked and what didn't work? What suggestions do you have for further development of the curriculum?

## HOW TO SEQUENCE THE SESSIONS

You need to assess the interests and understanding of the people in your group in order to decide how to order the modules in the curriculum.

One way to sequence the modules is to start with “History of White Supremacy in the United States” and “The Racial Identity Journey of the Unitarian Universalist Association,” which explores how white supremacy impacted on the development of our faith community. This approach provides a historical, cultural, and institutional framework for understanding how these larger forces impact on our personal lives and shape us as white people.

Another way of sequencing the modules is to start with the personal experiences of the participants first – their experience of white privilege, the story of their racial identity journey, and their racial identity development – and then introduce the larger historical framework. The value of this approach is that the participants are grounded in their own personal experience of whiteness. They see the relevance of these issues concerning white identity in their personal lives and that helps to build buy in.

***Here is a brief description of the modules in the Examining Whiteness curriculum:***

### THE HISTORY OF WHITE SUPREMACY IN THE UNITED STATES

The culture of white supremacy has a history that goes back over four hundred years. As a result of this history we live in a society based on white cultural supremacy.

- Section one focuses on white supremacy in the context of colonization, the conquest of Native Americans, and the enslavement of African Americans.
- Section two explores a number of important historical events that shaped the development of white supremacy during the time of the American Revolution.
- Section three discusses how race science was developed to ensure white supremacy.
- Section four deals with manifestations of white supremacy from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century up to Reconstruction.
- Section five reflects on the immigration of Europeans to America and the labor movement and how they fit into the construct of whiteness.

There is an opportunity for group discussion of questions relating to the paper on the history of white supremacy and a review of the “Bibliography of Historical Resources.”

### THE EMOTIONAL LIVES OF WHITE PEOPLE

In this section we explore the “emotions of whiteness” including hatred, indifference, amnesia, anesthesia, denial, shame, guilt, anger, hopelessness and helplessness. We also probe the many dimensions of white guilt. This includes discussion of the sins of the fathers and mothers, whites whose relatives came after the Civil War, sins of commission, sins of omission, and the guilty/man woman syndrome.

### RACIAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

White people go through stages of racial identity development. Drawing on the work of Janet Helms we explore the stages of white identity development: Pre-encounter, Encounter, Reintegration, Pseudo

Independence, Immersion/Emersion, and Autonomy. Participants explore how these stages operate in their lives.

### RACIAL IDENTITY JOURNEY

One of racism's powers is to shape identity. We are socialized to be a racist (white person) or a victim (person of color). As white people we internalize this socialization process. We learn to be white. We encourage you to use the video "Brown Eyes, Blue Eyes" as a way for understanding how the internalization process happens. There is also an exploration of the handout "Different Ways of Being White." Here participants learn to talk about their racial identity journey.

### WHITE POWER AND PRIVILEGE

The purpose of racism is to provide power (political) privilege (economic) and benefits for whites. In this session the video "True Colors" is used as an exercise for recognizing white power and privilege. There is also a personalizing exercise that helps participants recognize how they benefit from white privilege in their lives.

### DEVELOPING A POSTIVE WHITE IDENTITY

One of the difficult challenges we face as white people is to identify a positive way of being white while recognizing we live in a culture based on white supremacy. To affirm our whiteness in a culture of white superiority we may end up affirming or supporting white supremacy. But most of us abhor white superiority and all it stands for. Personally, I want to have a racial identity that is not based on the oppression of people of color. I want a racial identity that is not based on the deification of whiteness or white supremacy. Here we discuss the actions that white people can take that can lead to a useful way of being white in the world.

- Be an accountable ally to people of color.
- Work to change racist institutions.
- Learn to live as multi-racial people.
- Take responsibility for our own racial identity journey.
- Learn the truth about the racist history of our country.
- Build a White anti-racist collective.

***There are two additional modules available; to obtain the resources involved in these modules contact Bill Gardiner at [BillGardiner@verizon.net](mailto:BillGardiner@verizon.net):***

### THE RACIAL IDENTITY JOURNEY OF THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST ASSOCIATION: THE IMPACT OF WHITE SUPREMACY ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF UNITARIAN UNIVERSALISM IN THE UNITED STATES

The topics covered here include:

- Pilgrims and Puritans
- Abolitionists and Supporters of the Slave System
- Reconstruction

- Boarding Schools for Native Americans
- The Call to Selma
- The Empowerment Controversy
- Twenty Years of Silence Following the Empowerment Controversy
- Reengagement at the Calgary General Assembly
- The passage of the Journey toward Wholeness Resolution in Phoenix in 1997
- Anti-racism Work Done Since the Passage of the Journey Toward Wholeness Resolution

## RESOURCES FOR CHANGE

In this module, participants use the “Continuum on Becoming an Anti-racist Multicultural Institution.” The Continuum is a tool that people can use to assess anti-racism work in the lives of their congregations or community groups. There is also an opportunity to discuss resources and organizing strategies for making change.

There are eight possible modules in the curriculum. You may want to limit the number you use to five or six. One way to do this is to have people read the papers on the “History of White Supremacy in the United States” and “The Racial Identity Journey of the Unitarian Universalist Association” as background material but not have discussion sessions on them.

## **SEEING THE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN THE STORIES**

This curriculum is grounded in stories. One story is that of our nation’s history in relation to white supremacy. A second story is that of the impact of white supremacy on Unitarian Universalism. A third story is the story of our congregations as viewed through the lens of the “Continuum on Becoming an Anti-racist Multicultural Institution.”

All of these stories are interconnected. White supremacy in United States history and culture impacts on the history of our faith community as it developed here in the Americas. And the way white supremacy plays out in our Unitarian Universalist Association impacts on our congregations.

Then there are our own personal stories of our racial identity journey, our racial identity development, and the impact of racism in our emotional lives. All of these personal stories are intertwined with one another.

In addition, our personal stories are also deeply connected to the stories of our history, culture, institutions, and Unitarian Universalism. For it is racist institutions – families, schools, religious institutions, and media – that socialize us and whose messages we internalize. We struggle with our personal racial identity journeys because of the history of white supremacy in our country. We are thwarted in achieving beloved community in our congregations because of how white supremacy has played out in the history of Unitarian Universalism.

The leaders of the program have an important role in helping the participants understand each of these individual stories and the connections between them.

## **THE CONNECTION TO THE CURRICULUM FOR INDIVIDUALS**

There is another format for the Examining Whiteness curriculum that is written for individuals who want to explore the issues of white identity, white racism, and white supremacy. These folks do not want to lead a curriculum; they just want personal access to the materials.

The pieces in the whiteness curriculum for individuals are written in a different format. You can use these articles as a resource for the course you are leading.

For example, you can encourage the participants in the class to read the articles ahead of a session as a way of preparing for all the class you will lead.

It would be particularly helpful to refer to the online articles on “The Emotional Lives of White People” and “The History of White Supremacy in the United States,” rather than making paper copies. You can point to the online articles that are found in the whiteness curriculum for individuals at <http://bit.ly/hx0YBp>

You can also have participants read a particular section after class in order to review the material.

The articles in the Examining Whiteness curriculum for individuals are:

- The History of White Supremacy in the United States
- The Emotional Lives of White People
- Racial Identity Development
- Racial Identity Journey
- White Power and Privilege
- Developing a Positive White Identity

## **GUIDELINES FOR THE SESSIONS**

1. NO ONE IS A BEGINNER
2. ALL ARE TEACHERS AND ALL ARE LEARNERS
3. SPEAK FROM YOUR OWN PERSONAL EXPERIENCE; PLEASE USE “I” STATEMENTS
4. WE WANT TO CREATE A SAFE AND LIBERATED SPACE
5. WE RECOGNIZE THAT THERE ARE TIMES WHEN WE WHEN WE DISCUSS RACISM THAT WE FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE
6. TREAT ONE ANOTHER WITH CARE AND RESPECT
7. MAINTAIN THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF THE PEOPLE IN OUR GROUP

## **EXPLANATION OF THE GUIDELINES**

Our work together is not about blaming or shaming. We are not about judging one another.

### NO ONE IS A BEGINNER:

Everyone at this event is somewhere on a path of learning about racism and working to dismantle it. Hopefully we will respect each person for where they are on the path.

### ALL ARE TEACHERS AND ALL ARE LEARNERS:

No one has all the answers. Each of us has something to teach. And each of us has something to learn.

### SPEAK FROM YOUR OWN PERSONAL EXPERIENCE; PLEASE USE “I” STATEMENTS:

Speak from your own experience. Don't generalize. Don't speak for people in other communities.

### WE WANT TO CREATE A SAFE AND LIBERATED SPACE FOR EVERY VOICE:

We know from experiences in doing these kinds of trainings this is not easy to create a space that is both safe and liberated.

A safe space is one where participants can ask the real questions that are on their minds and even question the assumptions of the training. It's also safe space when people can express the strong feelings or reactions they may be having. When folks can do that freely we know we have a safe space.

And we create such a safe space when we don't put people down or attack them for their questions or comments but use the questions for mutual exploration and learning. I believe – that as a group - we want to create such a space.

But we also want to have a liberated space. To be in a liberated space is to be in a place where we can be open and honest about the challenging issues of racism – it's a place where we can move beyond the facade of politeness and challenge one another

So we will be trying as a collective to balance these two important qualities – feeling safe and being liberated.

*NOTE TO FACILITATOR:* That is one side of the equation. But sometimes a person will say something in an event like this that really upsets another person and they may react strongly or fire back. Because maybe they don't feel safe. The person who is upset is entitled to their feelings as well. From this reaction the people who raised the issue doesn't feel safe. Sometimes we find ourselves in those moments of deep tension and conflict. At those times we need to work together to take our process to a deeper level

### WE RECOGNIZE THAT THERE ARE TIMES WHEN WE WHEN WE DISCUSS RACISM THAT WE FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE:

The subject of racism is difficult and emotion filled. It generates strong feelings. So we need to make a commitment to struggle with these issues, to explore our growing edges, and push ourselves to new understandings.

In the midst of this challenging process we hope we can all be open, honest, and vulnerable.

We realize that being uncomfortable is part of the process. I hope that when we get into difficult places we will stop to think how is this force we call racism impacting upon me in this moment? *I know that when I get to those places that I am doing the real work.*

#### TREAT ONE ANOTHER WITH CARE AND RESPECT:

Racism is fundamentally about disrespect. Our first principle is to honor the inherent worth and dignity of every person.

#### MAINTAIN THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF THE PEOPLE IN OUR GROUP:

Share what was learned not who said it. I will not attach names to ideas when reporting about this event to others.

We urge you to post and review these guidelines at the beginning of every session. Race and white identity are very emotional issues. We need a container if our discussions are to avoid undue conflict and support people in their emotional process.

#### **ADDITIONAL MATERIALS IN DEVELOPMENT**

There will be additional articles added to the Examining Whiteness curriculum as they become available. One will be called "Toward an Anti-racist Spirituality." A second will be on "Defining the Qualities of White Culture." And a third will discuss "The Barriers that Whites have to Dealing with Racism."

#### **A NOTE FROM BILL GARDINER**

There is another article entitled "The Story of the Development of the Whiteness Curriculum" which tells the story of how the curriculum was written.

In this article I explore the questions raised for me by people of color during the Empowerment Controversy during the 1960s. During the early 1990s I had an opportunity to reengage these issues when I became an anti-racism trainer in the Unitarian Universalist Association.

Being an anti-racism trainer requires a person to study racism in depth. Over the past ten years I have read dozens of books about race and racism. And being involved in Crossroads and in forming teams in UU organizations I have been involved in lots of white caucuses. In the caucus and in the reading I have been particularly interested in the issue of whiteness and white identity. Partly I was trying to figure out my own identity as a white male. I felt a need to deepen our discussions of whiteness in the trainings that we do. I wanted to find an adequate response to the question: What are the issues that we white people should be addressing in our caucuses?