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Four working Assumptions

Page ___ of your packets is entitled the 'Four Working Assumptions'

As we go thru the weekend and make a start to building the community we've just envisioned we going to assume four points that begin to create the framework for the work to follow:

1. Racism is long-standing and pervasive - we all absorb it. We're not to blame, but we are responsible for change.

It's like the air we breath; we absorb racist misinformation from the very moment as children we begin to perceive our environment.

Do we ever feel guilty about this misinformation? (YES)

Why is the guilt an obstacle to acting to interrupting the cycle of oppression?(guilt is anti-productive we are not to blame for what we are taught as children)

As adults once we become aware of this misinformation we are responsible for actively working to interrupt the cycle of oppression.)

2. Unlearning and undoing racism is a lifelong journey.

Why is it a life long journey? Why can't we just hand out certificates and say we're fixed?

Should any of us feel ashamed for 'doing it wrong' or feeling awkward at first?

The only shame is in not taking risk or not trying.\

As long as racism is the norm in society, anti-racist work is a continuing struggle

As long as a s racism is the norm in society, we are never fixed.

Undoing racism is a lifelong journey.

3. White people and people of color are, both, negatively affected by racism, but in different and asymmetrical ways.

For people of color racism harms :

materially,

psychologically,

physically,

spiritual

emotionally.

How does racism harm white folks?

What emotion is the cause racism and prejudice? (Fear)

What is this fear derived from? (ignorance)

If racism continues to be a hindrance in our community as it stands now, what are we all being

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denied? (Our community vision)

(4.)

Why do the Anti-racism work? (Ideal community)

How so we feel within this ideal community? (*Add to ideal community* Brainstorm: Safety, trust, love compassion, hope...)

-These feeling are all profoundly human. They go beyond race and beyond ethnicity.

-Continuing to living complacently in a racist society makes it impossible to realize or even hope for this community we've envision or the quality of life it represents.

- By breaking the cycle of oppression and changing injustice the richness and the humanity and the liberation that this ideal community represents.

The fourth assumption is that **"The price of continuing racism is our collective destruction, physical and spiritual. The reward is our collective survival and liberation."**

The reason for doing this hard and scary work is that it's even scarier not to do it.

But doing anti-racist work is also **joyous** and **liberating**, despite the great emotional risk we take by doing it.

It's the **joy** of new friendships and new relationships.

It's the **potential** for new and rich interactions with people.

It's the **instant** and **dramatic increase** in the size of our world.

It's the **belief** in something larger than ourselves.

It's the **hope** of creating a better future and the **satisfaction** of living a life that more closely resembles the **Ideal Community** we want for ourselves.

These are the things that make fighting racism worthwhile.

Keep your eye on the Prize

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Interconnectedness of Oppression Saturday 10:15 - 11:15AM

PURPOSE OF THE EXERCISE

- In the next 2 exercises) we're going to examine various forms of oppression.
- The purpose of these exercises are to demonstrate that:

1. Oppressions are interconnected
2. We are all simultaneously oppressor and oppressed.

EXPLAINING THE WHEEL

*(trainers set large copy of wheel with blank axis; except for heterosexual/LGBT.)
Referring to the easel:*

This is what we in the Dismantling Racism Project refer to as the **Wheel of Oppression**

- Each space on the dominant or oppressor side has a subjugated or oppressed opposite.
- Everyone of us occupies multiple space on the wheel, sometimes as the oppressed and sometimes as the oppressor.

Refer to heterosexual/LGBT axis

Oppressor in the context is defined as those whom society privileges and rewards based on their membership in the dominant or majority category.

- in the example of the 'homophobia' axis the oppressor spoke is represented by anyone in our society who is straight.

While **oppressed** in this context refers to those whose membership in the in the subjugate or minority category automatically disadvantages and punishes them.

- that means each of us, being queer, is occupy the LGBT spoke.

A WORD ABOUT PERSONAL RESISTANCE

As mentioned earlier our own resistance to the presence of privilege can be a very valuable tool in successfully affecting personal growth in the arena of anti-racist change.

- these exercises should afford each of us at least one opportunity to recognized the cues to our own personal resistance.

It is important to remember that **there is no hierarchy of oppressions.**

1. the complexities of any given oppression can not over rule or deny the existence of any other oppression.
2. and that while each of us in this room is oppressed, we are not equally oppressed, nor are we absolute oppressor.
3. Each of us is responsible for over throwing the ways that we are individually oppressed. and
- 4.Each of us is responsible for over throwing the individual ways in which we are oppressors.

BRAINSTORMING THE WHEEL

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- Participants are asked to call out the major categories of the wheel

- Trainer translates responses to the following:

Racism: White people/people of color

Ableism: people with disabilities and people w/o disabilities

Sexism: men/women

Classism: People w/ wealth; people w/o wealth

Ageism: People in the middle years/ children, young people and old people

Anti-Semitism: Jews/ non-Jews

(Judeo-) **Christian-sentricism** Judea-Christian values/ non-Judea-Christian values

SPINNING THE BOTTLE OF OPPRESSION:

-trainer asks for four volunteers (4)

- floor model of wheel is unfurled on floor in center of room

Who here remembers spin the bottle as a kid?

Is there any one who is unfamiliar with spin the bottle?

determine which 2 volunteers will spin and which 2 will ask questions

the purpose of the exercise is to:

1. demonstrate the interconnectedness of oppressions
2. Allow us to examine our 'mental Rolodex learned perceptions'

I have a mental Rolodex.

When I see a person on the street or sitting across the table from me, my mental Rolodex tells me all kinds of things about that person.

Guess What? We all have them.

How many of us have used or heard the term 'Gay-dar'?

Short of being psychic, How do you tell if someone is gay?

"Gaydar" is based on the information in our Rolodex.

While someone may set off my gaydar, they don't necessarily have the same effect on my partner.

Why is this? (Because we have different information file in our respective Rolodexes)

As we go thru this exercise think about some of the information you have stored in your mental own mental Rolodex and how it relates to any of your personal resistance triggers.

THE EXERCISE

Everyone please pay special attention to the instructions. You will all be participating in this exercise in smaller groups after this initial demonstration.

1. (Volunteer #1) You're going to spin the bottle and it will land on an axis.
2. You'll then move physically to the subjugate or oppressed axis.
3. We (the trainers) are then going to give (volunteer #2) an index card with sample Questions to get the exercise process started.

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4. (Volunteer #2) will stand opposite (volunteer #1) and check the card for any special parameters with regard to the axis you are occupying.
5. (Volunteer #1) Your goal is to occupy the axis. Put yourself in the place of an individual that lives this oppression .
6. (Volunteer#2)Your goal is to assist (Volunteer#1) in inhabiting the axis by asking questions that lead them and you to understanding the role.
7. At the end of 5 minutes, the bell will ring and (volunteer #1) will move to the dominate or oppressor spoke and (volunteer #2) will move opposite.
8. The questioning process is repeated.
9. If at any time either of you feel like your 'stuck', the rest of us will be here to assist you.
10. Please comment if either of you notice that you've crossed over into another axis or oppression.

Begin.

To the Volunteers

Did you find it difficult to inhabit only one axis?

Did you find yourself analyzing life learn information or misinformation in you 'Rolodex'?

Participants are counted off into _____ # of groups.

Bags with axis cards are handed out to the groups.

Directions

1. Determine the order
2. Occupy subjugate spoke, begin questioning
3. At the end of 2 min, bell will ring, switch.
4. Come to the assistance of group members when asked.
5. Repeat for each member.

WHAT DID WE LEARN

-talk about our unconscious mental Rolodex that tells us each how to categorize individuals in society. Example of 'gaydar' While some of us may be able to claim physic ability the rest of use the mental Rolodex of physical descriptions and conceived notions.