

*Spurred to Action: Voices of Participants in
“White People Challenging Racism:
Moving From Talk to Action”*

White People Challenging Racism
Facilitators Group



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**White People Challenging Racism
Facilitator Group**

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Summary

In the United States today, structural racism pervades all our major institutions and power continues to be concentrated among white people. This reality betrays our nation's founding principal of liberty and justice for all. While white people today did not have a hand in creating or institutionalizing racism, all of white society benefits from and is complicit in the continuation of such institutions. We, the facilitators of the course *White People Challenging Racism: Moving from Talk to Action* (WPCR), believe that white people who value social justice must work to dismantle these systems if equal opportunity is to prevail. Furthermore, we take our cue from Malcolm X's famous words of advice that white people need to fight racism in their own communities. WPCR was founded to provide white people with tools and resources to challenge and change attitudes and actions that perpetuate racism.

After five years of offering *White People Challenging Racism*—typically a 10-hour course held over five weeks—we wanted to assess the impact of our work. Since its inception in 1999, more than 400 people had taken WPCR, most of them in the metropolitan Boston area. Was our model working? Was WPCR changing participants' thinking and behavior? Did it move them to challenge racist remarks, behaviors, and systems? With support from the Haymarket People's Fund and sponsorship from Community Change, Inc., we set out to gather anonymous feedback from the people who took WPCR between 1999 and 2004 via a confidential web-based survey. Of the 165 participants we located, 103 (62 %—an excellent response) completed our survey.

The results of the survey show that WPCR does in fact spur people to anti-racist action: 82 percent of former students reported that they carried out some or all of the action plan they had devised in class to push for change in a variety of institutions. Eighty-four percent reported that the course also led to challenging racism in other arenas as well.

As for the course's effect on participant lives, *every respondent* indicated that WPCR had an impact. For two percent, the impact was "life changing." According to one respondent, "As I have begun to recognize my white privilege, I look at the world completely differently. It has changed my life." For 46 percent of the respondents, the impact was significant; for 41 percent, modest; and for 12 percent, minimal. No one chose the answer option "not at all."

It was also clear from the responses that one important function of the course is that it provides a space where white people can talk openly about racism. Equally important is the course's capacity to provide encouragement, support, and mechanisms of accountability. Our detailed report follows.

Introduction

White People Challenging Racism: Moving from Talk to Action (WPCR) educates white people about white privilege and racism in order to galvanize them to anti-racist action. Our mission is to provide white people with tools and resources to challenge and change attitudes and actions that perpetuate racism. Since its founding, more than 500 people have taken WPCR in the Boston metropolitan area.

The course was first offered in 1999 at the Cambridge Center for Adult Education (CCAIE) when Tracy Gibbs, CCAIE's Community Outreach Officer and Education Coordinator, and Jennifer Yanco, a long-time community activist and educator, conceived of a workshop expressly for white people to address racism. Since then, seventeen WPCR “grads” have joined Yanco to become facilitators of WPCR.

All WPCR facilitators identify as white, and we facilitate mostly in mixed gender pairs. Our conviction is that whites must take responsibility for educating other whites about racism, rather than to leave this work to people of color. As Malcolm X exhorts, “*Where the really sincere white people have got to do their ‘proving’ is [...] on the battle lines of where America's racism really is - and that's in their own home communities; America's racism is among their own fellow whites. That's where sincere whites who really mean to accomplish something have got to work.*”¹

As white people, we know a tremendous amount about racism—including how to dismantle it. But like a muscle never used—in fact discouraged by the dominant culture—our capacity to take a stand against racism needs to be developed, practiced, and exercised. In this way, we become increasingly stronger and more effective anti-racist agents over time. This vision informs WPCR.

WPCR runs for five weeks per term, two hours per week, with assignments between sessions. The course has expanded from CCAIE to Brookline and Newton adult education programs. We have also offered WPCR to colleges and universities (Wellesley, MIT, and Tufts), two suburban New England high schools, two Western MA college conferences, two Green-Rainbow Party conventions, and a civil rights conference in PA. Since 2003, the WPCR facilitators group has met monthly to strengthen the course and share strategies for managing the challenges of WPCR and of standing for racial justice in a deeply racist society.

Our mission is to provide white people with tools and resources to challenge and change attitudes and actions that perpetuate racism.

In 2003, as we were poised to recruit new facilitators and expand to new venues, we wanted to assess WPCR's impact. Was our course making a difference? Did it change participant thinking and behavior? Did it galvanize students to challenge racist remarks, behavior, and institutions? With support from the Haymarket People's Fund and sponsorship from Community Change, Inc., we set out to survey past participants in WPCR in search of answers to our questions.

¹ *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, Alex Haley and Malcolm X (Ballantine: 1964): 383–384.

Survey Methodology

For eight months the WPCR facilitators group researched contact information for the hundreds who had taken the course, designed a survey, and identified and contracted with a web-based survey company. We launched the survey in December 2004 (see Appendix I), and responses came in over the next several months. A few months into the survey, we made follow-up telephone calls to those who had not yet responded to urge their participation. When 103 people responded (62%) we closed the survey and began to analyze the data.

Course Leads to Anti-racist Actions

Our most critical finding is that WPCR leads participants to take anti-racist action. The survey documents the range of actions that participants have taken: 82 percent of respondents to the question about action reported that they carried out the action plan they created in the class, partially (58%) or fully (24%). An even greater percentage of respondents (84%) reported that the course led them to challenge racism in other arenas, as well.

The survey also asked respondents to name other actions taken "as a result of the class." The range of responses shows the potential for WPCR to motivate participants to challenge racism in a wide variety of institutions:

[I led] a discussion at my work place, an executive search (headhunting) company, about the need to take more deliberate steps to recruit candidates of color. I put together a large manual with suggested steps for recruiters to take. I led a discussion about these strategies in a staff meeting.

I co-led anti-racism workshops in Acton Boxborough Regional High School during my sophomore and seniors years of high school. I co-facilitated a WPCR class in Cambridge and a one-day workshop for white students participating in The City Schools' Summer Leadership Program.



Action Plans Provide Impetus to Challenge Racism

In the final weeks of WPCR, each participant draws up an action plan. Fifty percent of participants' action plans related to effecting change in an institution. Plans involved workplace issues, media-related concerns, and participating in larger social justice struggles. The course, therefore, has led participants to challenge systemic racism in a wide variety of gatekeeper institutions.² Such institutions included schools, places of worship, non-profit organizations, for-profit businesses, youth programs, media outlets, professional networking organizations, a historical society, a headhunting company, an R&D firm, co-op housing, a publishing company, a law firm, a poetry reading series, an engineering firm, and a hospital.

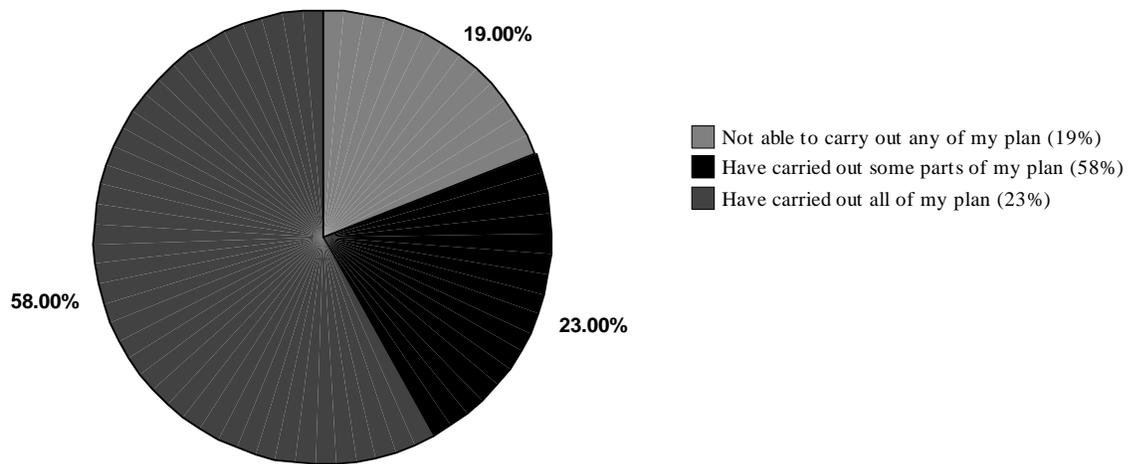


²The Undoing Institutionalized Racism Task Force defines “gatekeepers” as people in an institutional/organizational role or position who can grant or deny access to institutional resources or equity. Gatekeepers are, by structural design, accountable to the institutions they work for, rather than the people they serve. They function as buffers between their institutions and the community.

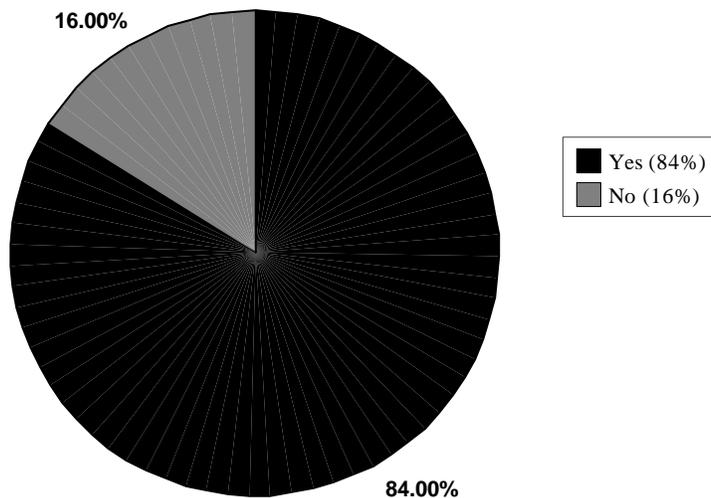
Action plan goals included:

- *To address racial discrimination in hospitals, as [I am] a Spanish interpreter in a hospital setting.*
- *To change gratuitous racial identifications in my local newspaper's crime reports.*
- *To be pro-active with new hires who are people of color so as to know their issues and concerns.*
- *To volunteer at the Fair Housing Center of Greater Boston.*
- *To help students stop racist comments in school halls.*

Q5. Have you carried out your plan?



Q8. Has the course led you to further challenge racism in your life?



Respondents Identify Factors that Help or Hinder Action

We also sought feedback on factors that helped or hindered people in carrying out their action plans. Participants reported that the main factor that facilitated their taking action was the existence of anti-racist social support.

Having a friend do my plan with me, someone to confer with over strategy and follow up; also, knowing the people in power who could help me (ACLU) or who would take my request seriously helped.

Support from classmates was very helpful. Several of us continued to meet on a monthly basis for about two years after taking the course as a means of support in following through with our action plans and challenging racism in general.

Support from family was really important to examining racism within our own family. Support from friends helped me to stick my neck out at school. The mentors I spoke with gave me the beliefs.

On the other hand, factors that hampered participants in carrying out their action plans included the pull of work and family obligations, fear of marginalization, inertia, and a lack of responsiveness or apathy in their communities.

- *Fulltime work and mommy of one - my priorities are to my young children right now.*
- *Fear of being pigeon-holed as the one kid who is a crazy anti-racist activist.*
- *The comfort of doing things the same old way without changing.*
- *I'm in South Dakota and I've offered to facilitate the course several times to different organizations, but no one seems to see the need. I'll continue trying. [This participant's efforts did eventually bear fruit: she facilitated WPCR in a largely white town near a Lakota community in late 2005.]*

Since the dominant (white) culture does not reinforce efforts to challenge white supremacy—and in fact teaches whites that racism is not our concern—attempts to name racism are often met with indifference or hostility. We fear serious consequences for standing up against racism, and those fears are not unfounded. Given that apathy and complicity are rewarded more often than speaking out, we were not surprised to learn that fear and comfort hampered student success in carrying out their action plans. It underscores for us the need to provide a community that positively reinforces standing up and speaking out against racism.

Course Format is Effective

The majority of class participants found the combination of short readings, discussions, role-plays, writing assignments, videos, and creating an action plan to be an effective class format for providing tools to challenge racism:

The readings... trained me in a whole other way of thinking that in thirteen years of schooling I had never [experienced].

[The] Peggy McIntosh, Robert Jensen, and Tim Wise readings made me see the endemic reality of racism and to recognize it in its various forms.

I have the club I advise at school read "White Privilege" at the beginning of every school year and it hangs in my classroom for everyone to read.

"The Color of Fear" was a powerful film that I probably wouldn't have seen otherwise.

Role-plays were specifically mentioned by 23 respondents as a vital aspect of the course. Role-plays are drawn from students' lives: each participant is asked to bring to the class a situation involving racism where she or he was at a loss for how to respond effectively, and then these situations are role played in class. This activity gives participants practice in challenging racism, after which the group discusses the most effective responses.

As much as I dread role-playing, I believe that practice is an important way to get comfortable with speaking up.

The role-plays were particularly helpful in showing me that I could act differently in situations that I was very worried about (e.g., acting in an anti-racist way at family holidays).

I often find myself in those situations that were role-played [in the class]. I try to act in the way the behavior and responses were practiced.

Similar numbers of respondents named **class discussions** as central to their ability to challenge racism. Discussions help people understand the connection between white privilege and racism, and between these and their lives. Ten respondents cited the **supportive class environment** as key to enabling them to speak openly and honestly about racism:

The discussions I had while taking WPCR were by far the most amazing and influential conversations I ever had in my life.

It was nice to be in a program where everyone was open to examining their personal biases and difficulties with recognizing and admitting that we all had some sort of racism within ourselves.

I learned the most from listening to other participants.

Two respondents lamented the limited amount of discussion time available in a five-week class, an inevitable regret given the enormity of the subject and the paucity of venues where it is discussed openly.

Participants Form a Diverse Group

While roughly 95 percent of WPCR respondents identify as white, the survey revealed that WPCR participants represent a range of ages, occupations, and motivations for enrolling in WPCR. Age ranged from 13 to 81 with the largest age cluster being people in their 20s and 30s, and many participants being 40 years old or older. A third of respondents were students or teachers, and an equal number were employed in health care, social work, or community organizing. A smaller number were employees or consultants for corporations or non-profits. A similar number described themselves as self-employed (e.g. artists, filmmakers, writers, or editors). Many were parents; some were retired or unemployed.

Survey responses also suggest that people with varied levels of experience with anti-racism took the course. Personal motivation for taking the course varied from general interest to having had a particular incident related to racism:

I had volunteered in an organization where one white person had pushed for anti-racism training [and this] caused tension; I wanted to understand my own resistance [to the training].

A racist event occurred at a Gay Pride function in which many whites denied the racism [that was present].

[I had] my own white privilege challenged by classmates and a professor.

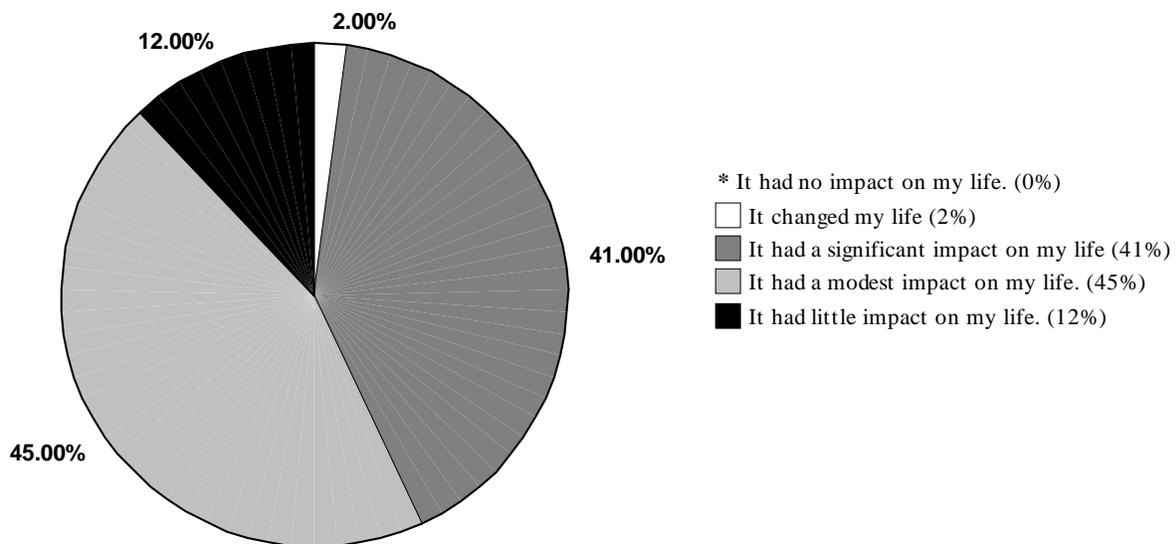
It's just something I've become more aware of. I'm trans[gender] and as I started to deal with male privilege, I became more aware of my white privilege and wanted to start addressing both.

Course Has an Impact on Participants' Lives

Asked about the course's effect on participant lives, 100 percent responded that yes, WPCR had had an impact. For two percent that impact was "life-changing," for 44 percent of the respondents it was significant (e.g., for housing and career decisions), and for 53 percent it was minimal or modest. No one chose the answer option "not at all."

- *I am training to become a teacher and have been focusing on recognizing the racism within our schools in terms of curriculum, special ed placements, assessment practices, teachers' disciplinary modes as well as racism implicit in some theory supporting present day teaching practices.*
- *Since I took the class, I moved to a more racially mixed part of Boston, and have purposefully put myself in the path of a more diverse group of people.*
- *I think I began to have more empathy for whites struggling with racism, and I would hold them more accountable for their behavior.*
- *I went into it not knowing what to expect and I came out a different person.*

Q1. How would you rate the overall impact of the White People Challenging Racism course upon your life?



Survey Reveals Different Levels of Awareness among Participants

While survey comments were largely positive, it is also clear that the course can be improved. One issue concerns the varying levels of existing awareness among students about racism. Those new to discussions about racism and white privilege tend at first to express feelings of guilt and shame.

More experienced participants sometimes become impatient with such expressions, wanting instead to discuss specific strategies for making concrete change.

The class should be split into experience/ knowledge levels. I felt the course was too elementary and basic for me, and I wasn't consistently, substantially challenged.

The class felt like a support group at times (not that this is a bad thing because we all need emotional support when engaging in a fight against oppression). But I felt like I was ready to move from the "white liberal guilt" and move into more theoretical and structural issues that we could be challenging.

The discussions were like confession, too focused on personal experience and white guilt. Get over it, create a new reality.

Others with considerable anti-racism experience found the course still works for them:

- *I knew about racism and considered myself an anti-racist, but needed to look at what my whiteness meant.*

Other respondents specifically mentioned feeling less guilt after taking the class:

- *Since I took the class, I moved to a more racially mixed part of Boston, and have purposely put myself in the path of a more diverse group of people.*
- *It allowed me to become more comfortable challenging myself and my own assumptions with less guilt and more honesty.*
- *When I was in the class, I realized that looking head-on at this problem was giving me a lot of energy and enthusiasm, instead of a lot of guilt and despair. That was a great revelation and one I have referenced repeatedly in situations afterwards, including but not limited to racist questions.*

Respondents Provide Direction for the Future for WPCR

A significant number of respondents want to be part of an ongoing community that will support their commitment to anti-racist action.

It would be nice to have a website or bulletin board or list-serve to describe situations and get help with how to respond.

My first suggestion would be to work at creating more opportunities for community among participants.

Would it be too much coordination to have a potluck supper a couple of times a year to bring together people who have taken this course? I think that helping others recognize allies and hearing what others are doing is so energizing and vital to the continuation of the work.

It would be great to stay more involved with the "graduates" of the classes — stay in touch, see how they are doing, see if they need any additional support, perhaps circulate letters/newsletters. It's easy to just fall back in the swing of everyday life.

We are now planning a gathering for former WPCR participants. Our goals in doing this are: 1) to provide a space for former students to get energized and motivated in their individual anti-racist work; 2) to create a network of former students who want to organize collective action against racism; and 3) to build white anti-racist leadership by recruiting new WPCR facilitators, identifying and securing new venues for WPCR, and by expanding class offerings at existing venues. This gathering will also give us the opportunity to discuss with former students some of their suggestions, including:

This course could easily span twice as many weeks and/or the attendees would meet in small groups several times to permit more discussion.

Have you considered a "next steps" course? My initial plan was modest and easy and I think I'm ready for something more, but I'm not sure what.

In addition to this gathering, we plan to continue encouraging WPCR alums to be active in the larger Boston-area anti-racist community through Community Change, Inc. and with organizations such as the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, the Women's Theological Center, and Encouraging Multicultural Initiatives/EMI. We will also continue to share information about groups focused on interracial dialogue (Citywide Dialogues), personal growth (United to End Racism), faith-based activism (American Friends Service Committee, Jewish Organizing Initiative), and advocacy (Fair Housing Center of Greater Boston, Green-Rainbow Party, Boston Undoing Racism Network/BURN).

Conclusion

As we contemplate expanding the course to new venues and bringing in new facilitators, the frank and substantial feedback of these 103 respondents has given us encouragement to continue, criticism to consider, issues to discuss, and direction for the future. We now have a database of former WPCR participants for use in future organizing work, as well as a wealth of quotes and anecdotes from WPCR participants for use in publicizing and promoting the course and our focus on the responsibility of white people to challenge and end racism. We end our report with a piece of advice to us from one of our respondents:

You are doing something which is good and important, and also difficult. No one can ever know for sure the impact they may be having on those around them. Be creative and flexible, keep your goals in mind, take the time to be reflective, and do not give up.

We extend our gratitude to the Haymarket People's Fund for funding this study and to Community Change, Inc., our fiscal sponsor. The support of these anti-racist allies has made it possible for us to conduct this survey, the results of which continue to encourage and challenge us. We would also like to acknowledge the Cambridge Center for Adult Education, which was instrumental in the creation of this course and which has been steadfast in its support of WPCR since its founding.



Appendix 1: Survey Questions

Question 1: How would you rate the overall impact of the *White People Challenging Racism* course on your life?

Question 2: Did the course affect how you feel, think, and/or talk about racism and white privilege? If yes, how?

Question 3: Do you think this course had a role in changing your behavior? If yes, how?

Question 4: In most of the courses, participants prepared action plans. Briefly describe your action plan if you made one.

Question 5: Have you carried out any part of your action plan?

Question 6: What factors helped you carry out your plan or parts of it? (e.g., support from friends, family; having a clear plan; confidence in my beliefs; having someone to talk with)

Question 7: What got in the way of your carrying out your plan? [e.g., fear of rejection, fear of retribution (economic, social, physical), hopelessness, conflict avoidance, isolation, my own anger, lack of role models, discouraged by negative reactions, tried but was rebuffed]

Question 8: Has the course led you to further challenge racism in any area of your life? (We are interested in hearing about any action you may have taken, large or small, to challenge racism--from having a conversation, to organizing an event; from passing an announcement on to friends, to opposing racism in your workplace.) If yes, please describe.

Question 9: What aspects of the course (readings, activities, discussions, community connections) were particularly helpful to you in supporting your ability and commitment to challenge racism?

Question 10: Please share any additional comments or suggestions you may have regarding the course.

Questions 11 & 12: Tell us about you: Name: Company: Address: City: State: Zip: E-mail:

Question 13: Age:

- 18-22
- 23-25
- 26-30
- 31-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60-69
- Over 70

Question 14: What were you doing when you took the course? (e.g. student, teacher, artist, unemployed, executive)

Question 15: How did you hear about the course?

- Adult Ed. Catalogue
- Flyer
- Word of mouth
- Other (please specify)

Question 16: What led you to enroll in *White People Challenging Racism*? Were there specific reasons, such as a situation involving racism or a relationship that had been affected by racism? Incidents in the workplace or community?

Appendix 2: WPCR Facilitators (Past and Present)

Peg (Eagan) Bad Warrior

Barbara Beckwith

Chris Carney

Ted Cullinane

Marjorie Dove

Patrick Gabridge

Stacie Garnett

Pamela Goldstein

Eliot Graham

Lisa Graustein

Alexandra Gubin

Emily Heaphy

Hannah Mermelstein

Jennifer Powell

Robert Sapiro

Steven Saranga

Mark Schafer

Jennifer Yanco

Appendix 3: Sample WPCR Syllabus

White People Challenging Racism: Moving from Talk to Action

Cambridge Center for Adult Education

April 1–28

Tuesdays 8:00pm-10:00pm

Co-Facilitators: *Name (e-mail address, phone number)*

Name (e-mail address, phone number)

Workshop description:

This course focuses on white people's role in challenging racism. Those of us who are white may think that we're not racist, but racism is deeply ingrained in our culture. As we re-educate ourselves, we'll make explicit the systems that give us privilege at the expense of people of color and develop ways to stand against these systems. We'll discuss short readings and share everyday situations in which we did not speak up or act as we wish we had. Using role plays, we'll develop strategies for effective action and practice them. Together we will draw up concrete plans for challenging racism in ourselves and our communities.

Session 1: Introduction to and Defining Racism and White Privilege

- Opening and Introductions:
 - ◊ Why are you here? What were your motivations for coming to this workshop? What are your expectations/goals/fears coming in?
- Workshop Objectives: How we will move From Talk to Action
- Ground Rules
- Open Discussion: Many of us may be used to being part of a unit that is mostly, or completely white. But we are here together talking about race and racism, subjects that usually are not discussed in majority or all-white settings. What are our thoughts and feelings about confronting racism in a majority-white setting?
- Starting to Define Racism and White Privilege: Reading *The Words We Use Matter* as a group. Pairs Discussion: Our thoughts/feelings/reactions to this list
 - ◊ Before next class, e-mail us your answers to the following questions: Why are you here? What were your motivations for coming to this workshop? What are your expectations/goals/fears coming in? What can the group do to help you reach your goals? What can you bring to the group? What is most important to you in this workshop?

To read and think about for next week: Recognizing racism and white privilege in our world

Readings

White Privilege, Color and Crime: A Personal Account (Peggy McIntosh)

White Privilege Shapes The U.S. (Robert Jensen)

More thoughts on Why the System of White Privilege is Wrong (Robert Jensen)

Whites Swim in Racial Privilege (Tim Wise)

- ◊ By Session 3, bring in a news article from a local or national source that brings up issues of race and racism.

Session 2: Examining How the Systems in Our Society Have Been Internalized:

- Opening and thoughts since last week
- Pass out compiled list of individual/group needs and expectations (from e-mails)
- Open discussion of last week's readings and reflections
- Open discussion for this week: Systems of Oppression.
- The Three Is of Systems: Institutional, Interpersonal, Internal
- Discussion: Personal experiences of the three systems of oppressions

To read and think about for next week: Understanding and confronting our racism

Readings

White Racism (Christine Sleeter)
How Whites Are Hurt by White Privilege (Mary Elizabeth Hobgood)
Let's Cut Our Losses: Disinvest in Whiteness (By Paul Marcus)
Aspects of White Culture (Janet E. Helms)
Working Together to Heal Racism (Introduction) (Tim Jackins, et. al.)

Quotations and Questions

- ◇ What were you taught about race and racism? Formally and informally? What do the terms *race* and *racism* mean to you? Have your definitions changed? If so, why?
- ◇ Racism is all around us, in the media, in our schools, in our news. Racism has been taught to us, absorbed by us. What messages have you internalized? What are your stereotypes and fears of other cultural groups? Examine your ideas about different groups of people of color, where you learned them, and how. How do these messages, stereotypes, and fears affect your communication patterns and behavior patterns with people of other cultural groups? How are they reinforced? How have/can you work to unlearn them once you have acknowledged them? What strategies do you use to work against them?
- ◇ We always assume that the only victims of racism are people of color. White people are also harmed by racism. How has racism hurt you?
- ◇ McIntosh writes, "I have found it is hard to keep alert of myself as white . . . I myself find that a retreat from the subject of being consciously white is tempting. I see it as curling up and falling asleep, and sleep has its place, but nightmares will come. And I would rather be awake and not a sleep walker." Challenging racism may be difficult, especially when so much in white culture is telling you to stop. What can you do to help yourself persist?

Session 3: How Can Change Occur?

Opening and thoughts since last week

- Discussion of last week's readings and reflections
- *Video: The Color of Fear* or role plays
- Discussion on reactions to video or strategies from role plays

To read and think about for next week: Moving Towards Action

- ◇ Write down your reactions to the film. What particularly struck you? Why? What stayed with you? What did you learn about yourself in viewing the film?
- ◇ **Bring in examples for role-plays.** Next week we will start role plays to practice speaking up. Have you ever felt tongue-tied or otherwise reacted ineffectively in an attempt to interrupt racist behavior? If so, you're not alone. Take one example from your experience and write it up as clearly as possible. Bring two copies to class; we'll break into pairs and role play what could have been said or done differently that might have made a difference.
- ◇ Racism is not just found in individuals, but is embedded in our institutions as well. These institutions help perpetuate racism, often without our even realizing it. Look at one institution you are familiar with—your work, school, neighborhood, club, congregation, or political organization. What is the racial makeup of the group? Why do you think that is? Where do you advertise/announce jobs, events, membership opportunities, etc? How are decisions made in the group? Who has power in the group? Are there policies or statements regarding anti-racist practices? Is there room for improvement on anti-racist work?

Readings

Traps Anti-Racist White People May Fall Into
How Homophobia Hurts Everyone: A Theoretical Foundation (Warren J. Blumenfeld)
Continuum on Becoming an Anti-Racist Multicultural Institution (UUA)
Assessment: At Work (Paul Kivell)

Session 4: Changing systems step by step: Speaking Up

What does it mean to be complicit with white supremacy? What happens when we speak up?

- Opening and thoughts since last week
- Open discussion of last week's reflections

- Role Plays
- Open discussion: What strategies worked best?
- Partner Discussions: Spheres of Life

To read and think about for next week: Taking Action

Reading:

The Mismeasure of Maria Baldwin (Nathaniel Vogel)
Facing the Fear; White Leaders, Diverse Communities, and Racism (Patti De Rosa)
 I Would Be a Perfect Ally If...-Being a Strong White Ally-Basic Tactics and Assessment: At Work (from *Uprooting Racism*, by Paul Kivel)
Principles to Keep in Mind When You Challenge People on What They Say or Do That You Consider Racist (United Auto Workers)
 Copies of Action Plans from previous classes
 Current News Articles (from class collection)

- ◇ What were your observations from the role plays? How might you have reacted or responded differently? What did you learn from the exercise?
- ◇ **Come up with your action plan:** an action that you will take after the workshop is completed. This can be a single act or the start of an ongoing process. Your action plan may address racism on the internal/interpersonal or institutional level. What is your goal? What steps will you take to get there? What challenges or obstacles might you face? What resources can you draw on to carry out your plan?
- ◇ McIntosh writes, “Having seen unearned power or permission to dominate, how can I use my unearned power to distribute power more fairly and to weaken systems of unearned privilege?” Where will you go from here? Bring in information to share on local resources, campaigns, or events related to this work.

Session 5: Where do we go from here?

- Opening and thoughts since last week
- Synthesizing what we’ve learned
- Where each of us wants to go from here: Sharing Action Plans

To take with you:

Strategies that Worked--developed by our workshop
 Bibliography/videography
 List of community groups, resources, and contacts for further action
 List of some possible actions (from small to large)

Put your Action Plan into action!

Post-workshop communication:

We’ll send you a copy of the action plans you come up with.
 We will put all interested students on a class list-serve so we can stay in touch with each other and share announcements of anti-racism events, articles, etc.
 We’ll give your contact information, if you agree, to Community Change so they may add you to their list.

Appendix 4: Malcolm X, On Being a White Ally

“I knew, better than most Negroes, how many white people truly wanted to see American racial problems solved. I knew that many whites were as frustrated as Negroes. I’ll bet I got fifty letters some days from white people. The white people in meeting audiences would throng around me, asking me, after I had addressed them somewhere, ‘What can a sincere white person do?’

“When I say that here now, it makes me think about that little co-ed I told you about, the one who flew from her New England college down to New York and came up to me in the Nation of Islam’s restaurant in Harlem, and I told her that there was “nothing” she could do. I regret that I told her that. I wish that now I knew her name, or where I could telephone her, or write to her, and tell her what I tell white people now when they present themselves as being sincere, and ask me, one way or another, the same thing that she asked. The first thing I tell them is that at least where my own particular Black Nationalist organization, the Organization of Afro-American Unity, is concerned, they can’t join us. I have these very deep feelings that white people who want to join black organizations are really just taking the escapist way to save their consciences. By visibly hovering near us, they are “proving” that they are “with us.” But the hard truth is this isn’t helping to solve America’s racist problem. The Negroes aren’t the racists. Where the really sincere white people have got to do their “proving” of themselves is not among the black victims, but out on the battle lines of where America’s racism really is—and that’s in their own home communities; America’s racism is among their own fellow whites. That’s where sincere whites who really mean to accomplish something have got to work.

“Aside from that, I mean nothing against any sincere whites when I say that as members of black organizations, generally whites’ very presence subtly renders the black organization automatically less effective. Even the best white members will slow down the Negroes’ discovery of what they need to do, and particularly of what they can do—for themselves, working by themselves, among their own kind, in their own communities.

“I sure don’t want to hurt anybody’s feelings, but in fact I’ll even go so far as to say that I never really trust the kind of white people who are always so anxious to hang around Negroes, or to hang around in Negro communities. I don’t trust the kind of whites who love having Negroes always hanging around them. I don’t know—this feeling may be a throwback to the years when I was hustling in Harlem and all of those red-faced, drunk whites in the after hours clubs were always grabbing hold of some Negroes and talking about ‘I just want you to know you’re just as good as I am—.’ And then they got back in their taxicabs and black limousines and went back downtown to the places where they lived and worked where no blacks except servants had better get caught. But, anyway, I know that every time that whites join a black organization, you watch, pretty soon the blacks will be leaning to the whites to support it, and before you know it a black may be up front with a title, but the whites, because of their money, are the real controllers.

“I tell sincere white people, ‘Work in conjunction with us—each of us working among our own kind.’ Let sincere white individuals find all other white people they can who feel as they do—and let them form their own all-white groups, to work trying to convert other white people who are thinking and acting so racist. Let sincere whites go and teach non-violence to white people! We will completely respect our white co-workers. They will deserve every credit. We will give them every credit. We will meanwhile be working among our own kind, in our own black communities—showing and teaching black men in ways that only other black men can—that the black man has got to help himself. Working separately, the sincere white people and sincere black people actually will be working together.

In our mutual sincerity we might be able to show a road to the salvation of America’s very soul. It can only be salvaged if human rights and dignity, in full, are extended to black men. Only such real, meaningful actions as those which are sincerely motivated from a deep sense of humanism and moral responsibility can get at the basic causes that produce the racial explosions in America today. Otherwise, the racial explosions are only going to grow worse. Certainly nothing is ever going to be solved by throwing upon me and other so-called black ‘extremists’ and ‘demagogues’ the blame for the racism that is in America.”

The Autobiography of Malcolm X, Alex Haley and Malcolm X (Ballantine: 1964): pp. 383–384.



White People Challenging Racism

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