

Talking About Race Learning Circles

Facilitator Training

Sessions Hosted By:



Do Good
Roseville



Session Flow

- 5 min: Wait for everyone to join
- 15-20 min: Grounding
Organization sponsor's non-partisan statement
Guest Community Leader speaker
Introduction of topic
- 50 min: Breakout Group discussions
- 15 min: Commitment to Action
Reminder to complete evaluation and invite for next session

Agreements to Create a Safe Space for Learning

- Everyone gets an opportunity to speak and no one dominates
- Speak authentically and listen actively [if we are to grow, we need to honestly examine our beliefs]
- Experience discomfort and know it's a necessary part of the learning [Be courageous. Talking about race is not easy. It requires facing into a dark side of our socialization, systems and institutions that is uncomfortable.]
- You can always pass on answering a question
- Assume positive intent and agree to disagree [We are on different place on our journey. Respect that we are each here to learn and grow.]
- Comments stay, learning leaves with you [This is a statement about confidentiality]
- Do not record
- The chat box is just for logistics [questions, guidelines, if you are having technical problems]

Facilitator Role in Small Group Sessions

Facilitate a respectful, smooth flowing discussion in Break-Out Sessions:

- Guide the group through answering the questions
- Make sure each person gets to speak and no one dominates
- Don't be afraid to ask someone to wait to ask a question until the speaker has finished, or to encourage someone to speak louder so the whole group can hear
- Clarify and guide conversation
- Try to keep the group on track to answer at least the core questions

Core Questions for First Session

1. State your name and share a meaningful quote, an insight or an “aha!” moment you experienced from reading or watching the material on Historical Foundations of Race.
2. How did the development and evolution of the concepts of race and ‘whiteness’ connect with the rise of commerce and capitalism? How does that connection remain relevant today?
3. How did the American style of chattel enslavement differ from enslavement practiced in earlier societies and even by the early British colonists?

Additional Questions If Time Permits

4. Why did white people work to create scientific reasons for white superiority in the 19th and 20th centuries?
5. What do you think Frederic Douglass meant when he provided the following response to a prominent abolitionist in 1847?
How did the “institutions of this country” see him?

“I have no love for America as such; I have no patriotism. I have no country. What country have I? The Institutions of this country do not know me - do not recognize me as a man.”

6. How were racial categorizations and racial hierarchy written into law?

Handling Issues that Arise

- If someone doesn't understand the question, reword it
- If the group is reluctant to talk, ask a specific person what they think about the question
- If someone does not want to answer, let them pass
- If someone is dominating the conversation, remind the whole group that in order for everyone to get a chance to answer all the questions, answers need to be kept to a minute or so
- If someone is getting off topic , you need to gently interrupt them and bring them back on topic
 - “That is very interesting. Can you help me understand how this connects to [question]”
 - “That is very interesting, but with our limited time could you please focus on...”

Final Large Group Session

- Participants are asked to write down an action they commit to take in the next week

Session 1: Over the next week, what is one action you will commit to that will help grow your understanding about race? Two illustrations provided:

- Reflect on how you were socialized to think about race---what were you told as a child that served as a foundation for how you think about people of other races, consciously or unconsciously, that you would like to revisit based on the new learning
- Reflect on terms or idioms in your everyday language that reinforce racial superiority and you want to stop using
- There will be time for a few volunteers to share the action they are committing to
- Thank participants, ask them to complete evaluation, and remind them about the next session
- Leave them with a quote