Racism and White Privilege

QUADRANT 3

Name of Activity: Exploring the Impact of Racism Interpersonally, Option A: Race and Privilege Common Ground Activity/Step In, Step Out

Purpose: The common ground activity provides participants the opportunity to name and notice individuals within their learning community. Commonalities and differences should be celebrated as participants provide a visual cue as to how they have been impacted by racism.

Learning Outcomes: This activity allows participants to experience the impact of white privileges/advantages and to see how these separate people from one another.

Time Needed: 15–30 minutes

Materials Needed: Index cards

Degree of Risk: Medium-risk

Procedure: Invite the participants to form a circle. Utilize the list of identifiers below. Read each statement and ask the participants to whom the statement applies to step inside the circle. After going through the list of statements, encourage the participants to name other examples from their own experiences. Remind the participants of the Community Agreements and encourage them to take risks where appropriate.

Please step in the circle . . .

If you are a first-generation college student
If you are a first-generation citizen
If you lived in multiple homes throughout your formative years
If you self-identify as working-class, poor
If you are bilingual or multilingual
If you have been in an interracial relationship
If you have seen yourself as privileged
If you identify yourself as spiritual
If you identify yourself as agnostic
If you identify yourself as atheist
If you come from a single-parent home
If you come from a blended family
If you have been adopted formally or informally by another family or family member
If you have ever been profiled
If you have been affected by depression
If you have had a negative encounter with the police
If you have been affected by family members with addiction

© Taylor & Francis 2015
If you ever felt unsafe or harassed
If you ever witnessed violence
If you have a family member that has been incarcerated
If you have been to a different country
If you receive some form of financial aid
If you have been affected by body-image issues
If you have been made to feel guilty for not speaking your ancestral language
If you are close to your family
If you had to speak on the behalf of your race or ethnicity
If you have been discriminated against because of your race
If you witnessed racism
If you ever went to a rally or protest
If you haven’t felt represented in history lessons
If you have voted
If you have a hard time making friends
If you have ever been bullied
If you ever have been a bully
If you were the only person of your race in a group of over 50 people
If you have ever caved into peer pressure
If you have ever done an illegal substance
If you were born outside of the U.S.
If you have been affected by a family member’s chronic illness
If you have been affected by HIV/AIDS
If you went to private school
If you went to public school
If you ever felt not black, Latino, Native American, man, or woman... enough
If you ever felt like an outsider
If you ever felt ashamed of your own race or ethnicity
If you identify as multiracial
If you ever felt you didn’t belong in certain neighborhoods

Facilitation Notes: Note and draw out the participants’ commonalities as well as differences. Probe to ask what patterns they noticed about their community. Take the emotional temperature of the room to see if the participants are experiencing feelings of guilt, shame, embarrassment, or perhaps anger, frustration, and despair.

It is important to note that, much like an ecosystem, we are interdependent, so oppression experienced by one community affects other communities, indirectly if not directly. Share the quote from Martin Luther King Jr.: “All men are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.” Discuss how this applies here.

Recommended Reading (Participants):

Recommended Reading (Facilitators): None