

Getting Started: Core Concepts for Social Justice Education

QUADRANT 4

Name of Activity: Action Continuum and Spheres of Influence

Purpose: The purpose of this activity is to encourage the participants to think about possible action steps they could take to begin to create changes in their personal lives and the lives of their communities.

Time Needed: 20 minutes

Preparation Needed: Print handouts and/or create a visual representation of the “Action Continuum” model and “Spheres of Influence” model

Materials Needed: Handouts and/or a visual representation of the “Action Continuum” model and “Spheres of Influence” model

Risk Level: Low-risk

Procedure: Introduce the “Action Continuum” model to the participants. As the facilitator or facilitators are going over the model, be sure to reference and connect some of the actions mentioned previously during the session to the continuum. Invite additional examples from the participants as much as possible. Acknowledge and affirm the wide variety of action possibilities. Explain that the group is now going to think about the areas of impact that these actions fall within and where in their spheres of influence they want to have the most impact or anticipate the greatest risks.

Using a visual, present the “Spheres of Influence” model. Note that each participant has several spheres of influence where they can extend their own learning and that of others. Ask the participants to think about their own lives at home and on campus, and their interests. For example, in the sphere of self, a person could read a book, explore people’s definitions of sexism, or attend a cultural or educational event that will push their learning edge a little further. In the sphere of work, a person could examine the environment and culture of their workplace to see how inclusive it is of the values, contributions, and experiences of marginalized groups.

Solicit a few examples and discuss how each action carries a level of risk that may vary in light of each person’s circumstances. Interrupting an offensive joke may seem easier with friends but riskier with a boss. Often we have to weigh these risks with our potential to make an impact and decide when it is most effective to take action.

Facilitation Notes: Make sure to emphasize the different levels and types of actions one can take. Generate some examples prior to this session so that the participants can see a range in which actions can take place. Some participants may feel overwhelmed by the idea of “taking action,” so it is important to offer concrete examples that connect to their lives.

Accessibility Notes: None

Recommended Reading (Students): None

Recommended Reading (Facilitators): None

Credits: Adapted by Jess McDonald and Ximena Zúñiga from the following:

Bell, L. A., & Griffin, P. (2007). Designing social justice courses (Chapter 4, Appendix 4B: Spheres of Influence). In M. Adams, L. A. Bell, & P. Griffin (Eds.), *Teaching for diversity and social justice* (2nd ed., pp. 67–88). New York: Routledge.

Bell, L. A., Love, B. J., & Roberts, R. (2007). Racism and white privilege curriculum design (Chapter 6, Appendix 6H: Action Continuum). In M. Adams, L. A. Bell, & P. Griffin (Eds.), *Teaching for diversity and social justice* (2nd ed., pp. 123–144). New York: Routledge.

Zúñiga, X. (2015). *EDUC 202: Exploring social/cultural differences and commonalities intergroup dialogue curriculum*. Social Justice Education, University of Massachusetts Amherst.