

Example Exercises for Conversations on Race *Challenging White Supremacy workgroup*

Exercise 1. Check Out Your Assumptions!

Brief warm-up activity to encourage open mindedness.

When we look at a map, we assume it represents an objective picture of the world.

In much the same way, when we look at our own experiences, we usually assume they represent (pretty much) objective reality.

But, sometimes a map is not just a map.

In the same way, our personal experience may not be all there is to see.

Exercise 2. Terminology (~30-45 minutes)

Workshop size: *Minimum number of people-4?; Maximum number for full group conversation- 25?*

Target audience: *People at any level of advancement in racial dialogue; beginners can be helped by hearing perspectives of those more advanced in the group*

Format: *Full group or small group review of language, discussion and reflections of cultural and personal uses and reactions to the words.*

Materials: *Prepare and distribute handouts of the NEYM minute and exploration of terminology (below); Optional – offer writing materials for participants to anonymously express personal associations and reactions, negative or positive, to the terminology; a flip-chart or white board may be useful to record comments.*

Needed Facilitator Skills: *Mature awareness of one’s own internalized racism, and awareness of, and self-control over one’s own visceral reactions to overt and covert racist words and actions by others; strong listening and reflecting back skills; ability to firmly intervene as needed to interrupt behaviors that may be harmful to others or the constructive advancement of the group as a whole.*

Understanding the Minute on White Supremacy

New England Yearly Meeting Minute 2016-64

We are complicit in white supremacy. We at New England Yearly Meeting have been “colonized” by our white supremacist culture and fall short of our full potential as a gathered body of Quaker Meetings because of this colonization.

We commit to engaging in interrupting white supremacy in ourselves:

- > within individuals
- > interpersonally

Terminology

Complicit - the state of being an accomplice; partnership or involvement in wrongdoing

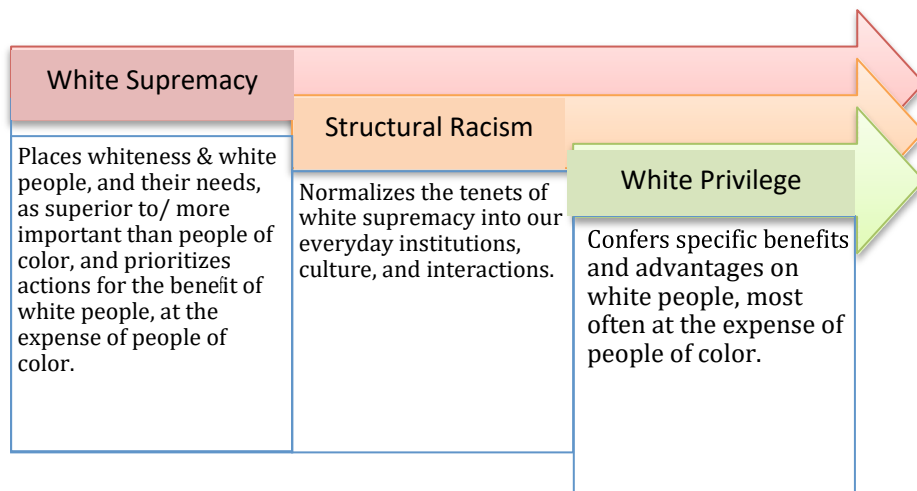
Complicity – association or participation in, or as if in, a wrongful act

- “Black people are victims of an enormous amount of violence. None of those things can take place without the **complicity** of the people who run the schools and the city. --Toni Morrison
- “All our silences in the face of racist assault are acts of **complicity**.” -- bell hooks

Colonization (medical definition) - the development of a (bacterial) infection on an individual. The infected

person may have no signs or symptoms of infection while still having the potential to infect others.

To colonize - (of a country or its citizens) send a group of settlers to (a place) and establish political control over it; appropriate (a place or domain) for one's own use.



Racism --- one word with many meanings!

- ❖ Interpersonal racism – Expression of bias on an individual interpersonal level.
- ❖ Institutional racism - A system of social structures that produces cumulative, durable, race-based inequalities.
- ❖ Systemic racism --- Pervasive racism present throughout society, affecting institutions, and structures. Enshrined in rules, regulations, and laws. Results in economic, educational, political, and legal disadvantages for people of color.
- ❖ Unconscious/subconscious racism (implicit bias) – prejudice of which we are not consciously aware, learned through socialization beginning very early in childhood.

White privilege --- unearned benefits given to white people based only on skin color. Can include

access to resources, social rewards and power, and is usually invisible to recipients.

White supremacy – political and socio-economic system in which white people are given structural advantages (privilege) over People of Color (POC), both at an individual and collective levels

Exercise 3, A and B. Facilitated discussion of early ‘programming’ about race (~30 minutes)

Target audience: For a group that has little to no previous experience (as a group) talking about race; or for a group with many beginners.

Workshop size: Small groups; minimum number of people-4?; Maximum in each small group-7

*Format: Following introductory explanation, examples, and rationale, **3A-** break into small groups for personal sharing. Reconvene for full group sharing. **3A- Alternative format** for a very large group- Fishbowl “intimate conversation” between 2 to 4 people, one of whom is the facilitator, with large group as silent listeners.*

***3B-** See below, “Telling our Stories”: break into diads.*

Materials: none

Needed Facilitator Skills: Invitational, non-judgmental, welcoming, curious, and relaxed quality of presence; mature awareness of ones own internalized racism, and awareness of, and self-control over ones own visceral reactions to overt and covert racist words and actions by others; strong listening and reflecting back skills; ability to firmly intervene as needed to interrupt behaviors that may be harmful to others, or to the constructive advancement of the group as a whole.

Goal for 3A and 3B: To cut through white guilt/paralysis around race, and to affirm what Friends of color observe about the Quaker world, by showing how conditioned everyone is since childhood by a cultural belief in white superiority that demeans people of color and elevates people of European heritage.

I. Introduction

These exercises can be used with or without a facilitator, but need to be introduced to provide examples.

Exercise 3A “Where did we learn “this thing”?”

- Quickly find several folks you do not know and form groups of 3—5 people. Pl
- Please do introduce yourselves; please do not start chatting!
- Group Brainstorm. For 5 minutes, identify places where you as a child learned about racial difference. These can be personal [the little girl whose mother tells her she can’t get the brown doll she covets] OR, more to the point, sources in society and culture that conveyed

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positive or negative value to you around racial identity in “jokes” or ditties, magazines, TV, movies, and songs.

[For example: “Eenie---meenie---miney---moe..”; or, “Why don’t the Chinese have telephone books?”]

- One person records the sources (no need to catch every word).
- Large group report back. What messages were conveyed and what untruths were taught (and internalized in you) by these sources.

Exercise 3B Telling Our Stories: “We can only know what we were taught.”

- Pair up with one person you do not know well.
- Each person talks for five minutes each way to share early personal memories in which the message was conveyed that having a light complexion is an advantage, and that darker skin tones are less desirable . At what age did you realize that white people were regarded as “better”? Did anyone run interference? What feelings does this bring up?
- Listeners: Listen attentively and lovingly! Respond only if asked to so by the speaker.

Exercise 4. Uncovering Evasive Language

Workshop size: Minimum number of people-4?; Maximum number for full group conversation- 25?

Target audience: People at any level of advancement in racial dialogue; beginners can be helped by hearing perspectives of those more advanced in the group

Format: Full group or small group review of language, discussion and reflections of cultural and personal uses and reactions to the words.

Materials: Prepare and distribute handouts

Exercise 4

1. What attitudes and beliefs lie behind these commonly spoken phrases?
2. Why are they unhelpful in dialogues about racial identity?
3. What are appropriate ways to respond when we hear them spoken?

Example phrases:

- “I’m colorblind. I don’t see race”
- “Let’s celebrate “other” cultures- it’s fun to dance the salsa and eat their food”
- “I don’t care if you’re blue, yellow, red, or black—we’re all the same” OR “For me there’s only one race...the human race”
- There are no Black people in our Meeting so we don’t really need to talk about race.”

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- “I’m not racist but...”
 - ...its not fair when an Asian kid gets into Dartmouth and not my son.”
 - ...Indians make too big a deal about mascots. They’re a tradition.”
 - ...I don’t see why a Hispanic person would want to be a Quaker.”
- “Thank goodness Quakers were the good guys...we believed in Abolition and fought against slave-holding.”
- “Why do they say ‘Black Lives Matter’ when ALL lives matter?”

Exercise 5, A and B. Starting a conversation on race by using a game (30 - 120 minutes)

Target audience: For a group that has little to no previous experience (as a group) talking about race; or for a group with many beginners.

Workshop size: Small groups; minimum number of people-4?;Maximum number of groups -8

Format: Following introductory explanation, examples, and rationale, break into small groups for personal sharing. Reconvene for full group sharing.

Needed Facilitator Skills: Invitational, non-judgmental, welcoming, curious, and relaxed quality of presence; mature awareness of ones own internalized racism, and awareness of, and self-control over ones own visceral reactions to overt and covert racist words and actions by others; strong listening and reflecting back skills; ability to firmly intervene as needed to interrupt behaviors that may be harmful to others, or to the constructive advancement of the group as a whole.

5A Materials: **The Road to Racial Justice**, a board game intended for middle/high school students and adults, using real-life examples of discrimination. Available to borrow from Carole Rein or for no-cost download at <https://www.roadtoracialjustice.org/>

5B Materials: **YPIS At Home: Your Privilege is Showing**, a "process oriented educational game that focuses on identifying and naming social injustice in real life, using current events." It is played with cards with set definitions for racism, sexism, privilege, and micro aggression. Available to borrow from Carole Rein or to purchase for \$50 from:

<https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/your-privilege-is-showing-at-home-card-game#/>

Goal for 5A and 5B: To cut through white guilt/paralysis around race, and to affirm what Friends of color observe about the Quaker world, by showing how conditioned everyone is since childhood by a cultural belief in white superiority that demeans people of color and elevates people of European heritage.

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Goal for 5B: Game goal is not about winning or being shamed for being wrong, but acquiring points to become a 'Perfectly Adequate Human'.

For further information or to schedule a facilitated dialogue, contact :

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