**Intentionally Moving**

**Toward Joy:**

**Understanding Oppression**

**Facilitated by:**

***Tanya O. Williams, Ed.D.****Associate* VP for Institutional Diversity and Community Engagement  
Union Theological Seminary   
[**twilliams@uts.columbia.edu**](mailto:twilliams@uts.columbia.edu)

*Authentic Consulting*   
[**www.tanyawilliams.org**](http://www.tanyawilliams.org)

**Interrupting Indifference:  
Jesus, Justice, Joy  
United Methodist Women  
National Seminar 2015  
Chicago, IL**

**BINGO!**

**Directions:**

**\* Find someone to talk about a topic in one of the squares.**

**\* Both share your responses. \* Sign each other's sheet.**

**\* Each find a new person to discuss a new topic.**

**\* When you have filled in ALL the blocks, yell BINGO! And help others win!**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| What is your vision of an inclusive and socially just world? What are the “benefits” if we achieve this vision? What are the costs if we don’t? | What’s a source of your PASSION, COMMITMENT to create partnerships among people of color and whites to dismantle racism and create greater inclusion on campus? | What’s hard about “diversity” to you?  What’s easy about “diversity” to you? |
| Talk about a time where you had a turning point in your awareness – an “ah ha!” moment in your awareness of these issues made you stop and think | Why should United Methodist Women be thinking about institutional oppression? | What do you want to contribute to this training today? What do you want to leave this training with today? |

**Tanya’s Training Truths**

* Liberation (institutional liberation and personal liberation) and change are possible in our lifetime
* For me institutional liberation means the creation of communities, classrooms, living environments, and mindsets that are characterized by liberty, social justice and equity ; personal liberation is about self-actualized folks who are able to bring all of themselves to a situation – both kinds of liberation are needed to produce residence halls
* Liberation is a journey and a destination – social justice
* We are all inherently connected, brilliant, hopeful, and loving
* We live with the outcomes and effects of historical and contemporary oppression
* We are all affected by oppression
* We are experts of our own experience, not of others’
* We all bring life experience, knowledge, perspectives and wisdom
* This work that we do together on these issues benefits ALL OF US
* This work is NOT EASY…but worth it.

**Common Fears**

**Directions: Check-off any of the following fears that you have felt or anticipate as you engage in conversations or experiences involving diversity, inclusion, and social justice.**

1. What if I make a mistake?
2. What if I say something stereotypic or biased?
3. Will I be seen as a fraud?
4. What if I can’t handle a situation?
5. If I don’t manage this well, will people could get hurt…
6. If I don’t manage this well, it might hurt my relationships with students…staff… faculty…
7. Am I making this worse?
8. Am I ready to participate in this discussion?
9. People will get defensive and I won’t know how to respond.
10. The conversation will “get out of control.”
11. People will get too emotional and I won’t have the skills to manage the situation.
12. I don’t know enough to engage in the conversation effectively.
13. If I don’t do this well, I’ll let people down.
14. “Things won’t change.”
15. My comments will be dismissed.
16. I’ll feel triggered by someone’s comments or behaviors.
17. My personal opinions and behaviors will become the focus of the conversation.
18. I will lose credibility and be seen as less competent.
19. If I am too confrontational, there will be repercussions.
20. People will be disappointed in me.

**Kathy Obear, ALLIANCE FOR CHANGE**

Dominant and Subordinated Group Patterns

**Dominant Groups**

* Greater access to power and resources
* Make the Rules
* Define what is normal, “right,” the “Truth”
* Assumed to be leader, smarter, competent...
* Given the benefit of the doubt
* Often unaware of dominant group membership and privilege
* Less aware about uninclusive and discriminatory treatment of subordinated group
* Are more comfortable with members of subordinated groups who share similar behaviors, appearance, and values to them
* Hold to dominant cultural beliefs, often without examination
* Collude, and if challenge, risk being ostracized/punished
* Focus on “how far we’ve come”

**Subordinated Groups**

* Less access to power and resources
* Often seen as less than, inferior, deficient...
* Often assimilate, collude, abide by the rules, try to fit in...
* Track the daily indignities they experience; very aware of oppression
* Punished if challenge the status quo
* Have their truth and experiences questioned and often invalidated
* Know more about members of dominant groups than dominant group members know about them
* Often struggle with finding a balance between who they are and who they are told they need to be to be “acceptable”
* Often struggle with finding their voice and speaking up to challenge
* Focus on “how far we need to go

**Key Concepts of Dominant/Subordinated Group Dynamics**

* Not always about numbers
* Visible and Invisible; Innate and Chosen
* Multiple Group Memberships
* Not always about individual behaviors or feelings
* You didn’t ask for it and you can’t give it back

**Kathy Obear, ALLIANCE FOR CHANGE**

**Dominant/Subordinated Groups**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Dominant Group | Subordinated Group |
| **1. Age** | Mid-30’s to early 50’s | Younger; Older |
| **2. Race** | White | Person of Color; People who identify as Biracial/Multiracial |
| **3. Biological Sex** | Male | Female; Intersex |
| **4. Gender Identity and**  **Gender Expression** | Appearance and behaviors are congruent with the Gender Binary System ~ either masculine OR feminine; cisgender | Transgender; Gender Variant; Gender Queer; Ambiguous; |
| **5. Hierarchical Level** | President, Dean, Director, Faculty, Supervisor, Program Coordinator, etc.; Core business of the college | Provide direct service to students; auxiliary services |
| **6. Sexual Orientation** | Heterosexual | Gay; Lesbian; Bisexual; Queer; Questioning |
| **7. Class** | Upper class; Upper middle class; Middle class | Working class; Living in poverty |
| **8. Educational Level** | Graduate or College degree; Private schooling | High school degree; Public schooling; 1st generation to college |
| **9. Religion/Spirituality** | Christian ~ Protestant; Catholic | Muslim, Jewish, Agnostic, Buddhist, Atheist, Hindu, Spiritual, Mormon, Jehovah Witness… |
| **10. National Origin** | U.S. born | “Foreign born;” Born in a country other than the U.S. |
| **11. Disability** | Able-bodied | Differently abled; People with a physical, mental, emotional and/or learning disability |
| **12. Ethnicity/Culture** | “American;” Western European heritage | Puerto Rican; Navajo; Mexican; Nigerian; Chinese; Iranian; Russian; Brazilian; Jewish… |
| **13. Size/Appearance** | Fit society’s image of attractive, beautiful, handsome, athletic… | Perceived by others as too fat, tall, short, unattractive, not athletic… |
| **14. Use of English** | Proficient in the “Queen’s English;” use “Proper” English | Not proficient use of English; have an “accent” |
| **15. Marital Status** | Legally married in a heterosexual relationship | Single; divorced; widowed; in a same-sex partnership; in an unmarried heterosexual partnership… |
| **16. Parental Status** | Parents of children within a 2-parent heterosexual marriage | Single parent; do not have children; LGBTQ parents… |
| **17. Years of experience** | More years on campus | New; little experience on campus |
| **18. Athleticism** | Very athletic | Not very athletic |
| **19. Geographic region** | Suburban; valued region of the U.S. | Rural; urban…less valued region of the U.S. |
| **20. Skin color; physical characteristics** | Light skin; European/Caucasian features | Darker skin; African, Asian, Aboriginal features… |

**Moving Toward Liberation**

* **Liberation:** the creation of relationships, societies, communities, organizations and collective spaces characterized by equity, fairness, and the implementation of systems for the allocation of goods, services, benefits and rewards that support the full participation of each human and the promotion of their full humanness. (Love and Dejong, 2013)
* **Liberatory Consciousness:** a way of living in a world characterized by oppressive systems with awareness and intentionality. It enables us to maintain an awareness of the dynamics of oppression without giving into despair and hopelessness and an awareness of the roles played by each individual in the maintenance of that system without blaming them for the roles they play. And it enables humans to live outside the patterns of thought and behavior learned through oppressive socialization process to support us in being intentional about our role in working toward transformation and the elimination of internalized dynamics (Love, 2003)

**Examples of Actions of Liberation**

* Knowledge of self/ culture is key; strengths of culture – replace racist socialization with racial socialization
* Celebrate culture and self to increase healing
* Be brave about claiming mental liberation; take responsibility for inner world (health, diet, stress)
* Have faith that change is possible/educate future generations on inherent worth
* Integrity to your fully actualized selves
* Identifying and facing pain; refusing addition to dull painful realities
* Acknowledging that you have the capacity to heal yourself
* Critically examine all factors holding subordinate indentities back – not just race
* Start expressing self/anger/discomfort with the system
* Remaining critically vigilant, willing to interrogate patterns of internalized subordination
* Critique a politic of representation that values (colorism)
* Develop a clear sense of racial, gender, class, etc. identity
* Identifying with something other than how the oppressor identifies you
* Actively letting go of white (heterosexist, ableist, classist) supremacist thoughts
* Critical thinking/ living consciously to circumvent racist exploitation
* Politic and practice of self-reliance
* Gain awareness / realize ways individual and group has been dehumanized
* Though attempts at assimilation are attempts at survival, colonized must forsake assimilationist perspective
* Self-recovery/movement toward authentic nature is essential
* Unification with others in group

Tanya Williams, *Authentic Consulting* [www.tanyawilliams.org](http://www.tanyawilliams.org)

**Developing A Liberatory Consciousness**

A Liberatory Consciousness enables humans to live their lives in oppressive systems and institutions with awareness and intentionality, rather than on the basis of the socialization to which they have been subjected. It enables humans to maintain an awareness of the dynamics of oppression characterizing society without giving in to despair and hopelessness about that condition, to maintain an awareness of the role played by each individual in the maintenance of the system without blaming them for the roles they play, and at the same time practice intentionality about changing the systems of oppression. A liberatory consciousness enables humans to live “outside” the patterns of thought and behavior learned the socialization process that helps to perpetuate oppressive systems.

**Elements of a Liberatory Consciousness**

The labeling of these four components in the development of a liberatory consciousness is meant to serve as reminders in our daily living that the development and practice of a liberatory consciousness is neither mysterious or difficult, static nor fixed, or something that some people have and others do not. It is to be continually practiced event, by event, each time we are faced with a situation in which oppression is evident.

**Awareness**

This component involves developing the capacity to notice, to give our attention to our daily lives, our language, our behaviors, and event our thoughts. Living with awareness means noticing what happens in the world around you.

**Analysis**

This component involves thinking about what you notice in the world and theorizing about it – that is to get information and develop your own explanation for what is happening, why it is happening, and what needs to be done about it.

**Action**

The action component of a liberatory consciousness proceeds from recognition that awareness and analysis alone are not enough. There can be no division between those who think and those who put thinking into action. The action component includes deciding what needs to be done, and then seeing to it that action is taken.

**Accountable / Ally-ship**

The accountability element of liberatory consciousness is concerned with how we understand and manage opportunities and possibilities for perspective sharing and allyship in liberation work.

**Taken from Barbara Love’s article “Developing a Liberatory Consciousness”**

**Liberatory Consciousness Worksheet**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Element** | **Information I have gained today to help me develop this characteristic** | **What will I do/ How will I continue my development in this area** | **What will I do/How can I support others as they do work in this area** |
| **Awareness** |  |  |  |
| **Analysis** |  |  |  |
| **Action** |  |  |  |
| **Accountable/**  **Ally-ship** |  |  |  |

What Could You Do?

**Directions**: Choose 1-2 examples of difficult situations or microaggressions. Write each one in the left-hand column. Then discuss and note how you could ADDRESS the situation in the other column.

**Consider as you discuss**:

* + - * What is the probable impact if **no one speaks up** in this situation?
      * What could be the **positive outcomes if someone does intervene** and speak up?
      * What could you do to ***ADDRESS\**** the situation?

**A** = Acknowledge (that something occurred)

**D** = Distract (the person)

**D =** “Document” (tell someone; use a reporting system)

**R** = Redirect (the conversation)

**E** = Educate (the person)

**S** = Stop (the exclusionary behavior)

**S** = Support (the people impacted)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Microaggression, Exclusionary Situation** | ***WHAT COULD YOU DO?*** |
|  |  |
|  |  |

**Developed by Naomi Sigg, Director of Office of Multicultural Affairs, Case Western University, 2015** [**nxs399@case.edu**](mailto:nxs399@case.edu)

**Evaluation and Development**

Your voice is important in the designing and implementing new and exciting trainings. I appreciate your thoughts. All information you provide will be anonymous and confidential. Thank you.

1. What aspects of the workshop did you find most valuable/helpful? Please indicate why.

2. What aspects of the workshop did you find least valuable/helpful? Please indicate why.

**Facilitator Feedback**

4. What did you appreciate most about the facilitator’s teaching style/approach? Please give specific examples.

5. What would you ask your facilitator to change or improve to help others connect more with their training style? Where possible, please give specific examples and concrete suggestions.