DIVERSITY, MULTICULTURALISM & ANTI-OPPRESSION

A Manual for Domestic Abuse Programs in Wisconsin

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Anti-Oppression Manual

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Introduction

Our goal for Anti-Oppression work is to create a cultural transformation in domestic violence programs that makes the elimination of oppression and the promotion of social justice a core part of our work, in a way that mirrors the transformation we are working for in society as a whole.

This Anti-Oppression Manual was created to help explore ways in which an anti-oppression framework can be applied to our work on a daily basis to end domestic violence.

Oppression is the systematic and pervasive mistreatment of individuals on the basis of their membership (or assumed membership) in a disadvantaged group. Institutional and interpersonal imbalances in power contribute to this mistreatment. Oppression involves the systematic use of power to marginalize, exploit, silence, discriminate against, invalidate, and/or not recognize the complete humanness of those who are members of a disadvantaged group.

The goal of anti-oppression work is to fight for social justice and create alternative models for personal, institutional, and cultural interactions. Those doing anti-oppression work strive to recognize power imbalances and actively work to change those imbalances, both within the organization and within the community.

The Access Committee hopes to approach our anti-oppression work in a spirit of cultural humility. We recognize that anti-oppression work is a life-long commitment, which involves confronting our own prejudices, dismissing stereotypes, fighting discrimination and valuing differences.

We want to create an Anti-Oppression Manual that sparks interest and, more importantly, raises consciousness about the structural nature of oppression and how it affects how people view their work. The

purpose of this Manual is not to offer any definitive answers, but to facilitate a continuous process where those who are working to end domestic violence can engage in critical self-reflection.

This Manual is meant to be user-friendly, one that you can pick up and read and use as fits with your work. Because of the reflective nature of the Manual, we hope that the articles and activities will be used through both individual and group processes.

A few disclaimers:

• The Access Committee acknowledges that the Manual is not complete in its current form. Due to the limitations of experience and expertise of the Access Committee members, important issues of and for many traditionally marginalized groups are not reflected in this Manual. We invite people from a broad range of diverse groups to submit materials and ideas that we may consider for inclusion. We hope to add articles and other resources on a regular basis.

• The articles and exercises brought together here have been developed by many different individuals and groups over a couple of decades. Out of respect for the original pieces (and their authors), we have not changed specific wording or terms to match how we might have written them. While crediting original articles, we encourage readers to adapt pieces to be most effective to your choice of language, changing understandings of the use of language and concepts, and to meet the needs of your community.

Access Committee

Governor's Council on Domestic Abuse

The Governor's Council on Domestic Abuse works to make the issue of domestic violence visible to the residents and policy makers of the State of Wisconsin. The Access Committee of the Governor's Council plays an important role in accomplishing this mission. The Committee works to improve the effectiveness of and access to domestic abuse services by all individuals, with an emphasis on people from underrepresented groups. The Committee's work is focused around the following goals:

1. Facilitate collaborative decision making between domestic violence service providers and advocates for diverse communities in areas of mutual interest.

2. Provide a forum for concerns expressed by underrepresented groups.

3. Research and review statewide systems and services that have an impact on victims of domestic violence and report on such activities to the Council.

4. Plan, promote and evaluate Anti-Oppression training.

5. Promote the development of culturally specific services.

Our overall goal/vision for anti-oppression work is:

"to create a cultural transformation in DV programs that makes the elimination of oppression and the promotion of social justice a core part of our work, in a way that mirrors the transformation we are working for in society as a whole."

The Committee meets five times a year. Members represent a diverse group of people from around the state, Council and non-Council members alike. If you would like to get involved, have your group speak to the Access Committee about a specific issues, or have a question about the Access Committee, contact Sharon Lewandowski at 608-266-0700 or Sharon. Lewandowski@wisconsin.gov

Initiating a Power Analysis:

Asking the Right Questions

The underlying dynamics of power and opportunity are played out through our policies, processes, and assumptions. Policies are the decisions made about how our organizations and communities will be built and governed. Processes are the ways in which those decisions are made and carried forward. Assumptions are the underlying values that shape every process and define every policy. Often, assumptions are hidden. Critically assessing our policies and processes can help reveal assumptions. When we challenge assumptions guiding our organizations and institutions, we reveal new ways of thinking, and new ways of doing things.

We need to be proactive and ask the questions about what to do to move forwards and make positive change in out organizations and communities. The process we suggest for charting a new path is to look at a problem, ask new questions, see the problem in a new light, and generate new solutions. This is a flexible framework that can be adapted to any issue, and most importantly, this framework highlights interconnections among issues. Below we have listed what we believe are the central questions to begin when working towards positive change in our organizations and communities.

Looking at the policies:
1. What are the outcomes?
2. Who benefits?
3. Who is left out?

Looking at processes:
1. Who is at the decision making table?
2. Who has power at the table?
3. Who is being held accountable and to whom or what are they accountable?

Unearthing assumptions:
1. What values and assumptions underlie the decision making process?
2. What is assumed to be true about the world and the role of the institution in the world?

Central questions for designing new policies are:
1. What outcomes do we want?
2. Who should be targeted to benefit?

Central questions to help develop new processes:
1. How should the decision-making table be set?
2. Who should hold the decision makers accountable?
3. Where should this accountability take place?

Central questions to define new assumptions:
1. What are our values?
2. What would it look like if equity was the starting point for decision-making?

Adapted from:
Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, Connections Summit, November 6, 2010

Additional Resource:
Shining the Light: A Practical Guide to Co-Creating Healthy Communities, Isaiah and Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity; May, 2010
http://isaiahmn.org/newsite/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/Kirwan-Shining-the-Light-Field-Guide-to-Practical-Communities.pdf

Articles

Introduction to Defining Racism Section

Racism is a complex and endemic aspect of our society in this country. While it is woven into the very fabric of our culture, it is often difficult to see and to understand our own relationship(s) to and with it, particularly for those of us who are white.

This section has three articles. The Collected Definitions of Racial Oppression article describes a number of different aspects of racism. The articles, Common Expressions of White Privilege and How to Counter Them and Membership Has its Privilege both help make white privilege more visible to white people and provide suggestions on how to acknowledge it and respond, the former article addressing it in a workshop setting and the latter in more public situations

These articles are not about blaming or accusing anyone. Rather, they are an opportunity to begin or continue exploring how to work against this very powerful, and sometimes unacknowledged, force of racism in our society.

Discussion Questions:

Which examples from the Common Expressions of White Privilege article stand out for you?

Which definitions of racial oppression caught your attention?

Which examples from the Common Expressions or Membership Has Its Privilege articles were helpful for you in understanding white privilege? Which remind you of your own experience? Which ones were surprising for you?

What definitions were clear? Where were you confused about the definitions?

What new views/understandings do you have after reading these articles?

What questions did they raise for you personally? For your work? For your organization? For your community?

What actions are you inspired to take for yourself? Within your organization? Within your community?

Additional resources that may be helpful:
YWCA Madison, online Racial Justice Class http://www.ywcamadison.org/site/c.cuIWLiO0JqI8E/b.7968335/k.A744/Racial_Justice_Online_Class.htm

YWCA Madison, Racial Justice Readings http://www.ywcamadison.org/atf/cf/%7B2487BD0F-90C7-49BC-858D-CC50637ECE23%7D/RJ_Reading_Life_Long_Journey.pdf

Racial Equity Tools
http://www.racialequitytools.org/index.htm

White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack
http://nymbp.org/reference/WhitePrivilege.pdf

Collected Definitions of Racial Oppression

Collected Definitions of Racial Oppression
Kirwan Institute

Culture – sum total of ways of living, including 1) values, 2) beliefs, 3) aesthetic standards, 4) linguistic expression, 5) patterns of thinking, 6) behavioral norms, and 7) styles of communication which a group of people has developed to assure its survival in a particular environment. We are socialized through "cultural conditioning" to adopt ways of thinking related to societal grouping.

World View – the way an individual perceives his or her relationship to the world (i.e., nature, other people, animals, institutions, objects, the cosmos, their creator). One's memories, expectations, assumptions, beliefs, attitudes, values, interests, past experiences, strong feelings, and prejudices, influence a person's worldview.

Oppression - the systemic mistreatment of the powerless by the powerful, resulting in the targeting of certain groups within society for less of its benefits - involves a subtle devaluing or non-acceptance of the powerless group – may be economic, political, social, and/or psychological. Oppression also includes the belief of superiority or "righteousness" of the group in power.

Racism - the systematic oppression of people of color; occurs at the individual, internalized, interpersonal, institutional, and/or cultural levels; may be overt or covert, intentional or unintentional.

Personal Racism – individual attitudes regarding the inferiority of one group and the superiority of another that have been learned or internalized either directly (i.e., negative experiences) or indirectly (i.e., imitation and modeling of significant others' reactions, affective responses to the media); these attitudes may be conscious or unconscious.

Internalized Entitlement/Privilege – White privilege is about the concrete benefits of access to resources and social rewards and the power to shape norms and values of society that whites receive, unconsciously or consciously, by virtue of their skin color. These are unearned entitlements-things that all people should have-such as feeling safe in public spaces, free speech, the ability to work in a place where we feel we can do our best work, and being valued for what we can contribute. When unearned entitlement is restricted to certain groups, however, it becomes a form of privilege that McIntosh calls "unearned advantage". Unearned advantage gives whites a competitive edge we are reluctant to even acknowledge, and much less give up. The other type of privilege is conferred dominance, which is giving one group (whites) power over another: the unequal distribution of resources and rewards.

Internalized Racism – the personal conscious or subconscious acceptance of the dominant society's racist views, stereotypes and biases of one's ethnic group. It gives rise to patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving that result in discriminating, minimizing, criticizing, finding fault, invalidating, and hating oneself while simultaneously valuing the dominant culture. This internalized racism has its own systemic reality and its own negative consequences in the lives and communities of people of color.

Interpersonal Racism – actions that perpetuate inequalities on the basis of race. Such behaviors may be intentional or unintentional; unintentional acts may be racist in their consequence.

Institutional Racism – laws, customs, traditions and practices that systematically result in racial inequalities in a society. This is the institutionalization of personal racism.

Cultural Racism – the individual and institutional expression of superiority of one race's cultural heritage and values over another.

Prejudice – a negative attitude toward a person or group, based on pre-judgment and evaluation, using one's own or one's group standards as the "right" and "only" way.

Discrimination – the behavioral manifestation of prejudice involving the limitation of opportunities and options based on particular criterion (e.g., sex, race, age, class).

Ethnocentrism - the belief that one group is right and must be protected and defended. The negative aspects involve blatant assertion of personal and cultural superiority. "My way is the right way".

Modern Racism/Racialization - suggests that the culture of racial prejudice in America has changed. Many people currently use non-race related reasons to continue to deny blacks equal access to opportunity.

Internalized Oppression – the internalization of conscious or unconscious attitudes regarding inferiority or differences by the victims of systematic oppression.

"ISMS" – a way of describing any attitude, action, or institutional structure which subordinates (oppresses) a person or group because of the target group, color (racism), gender (sexism), economic status (classism), older age (ageism), youth (adultism), religion (e.g., anti-Semitism), sexual orientation (heterosexism), language/immigrant status (xenophobism), etc.

Multicultural Education - a structured process designed to foster understanding, acceptance, and constructive relations among people of different cultures. It encourages people to see many different cultures as a source of learning and to respect diversity in local, national, and international environments. Multicultural Education refers first to building an awareness of one's own cultural heritage, and understands that no one culture is intrinsically superior to another; secondly, acquiring those skills in analysis and communication that help one function effectively in multicultural environments. (Pusch, 1979)

Cultural Pluralism – recognition of the contributions of each group to the common civilization. It encourages the maintenance and development of different lifestyles, languages, and convictions. It is a commitment to deal cooperatively with common concerns. It strives to create the condition of harmony and respect within a culturally diverse society (Pusch, 1979).

Structural Racism/Racialization – the word "racism" is commonly understood to refer to instances in which one individual intentionally or unintentionally targets another for negative treatment because of their skin color or other group-based physical characteristics. This individualistic conceptualization is too limited. Racialized outcomes do not require racist actors. Structural racism/racialization refers to a system of social structures that produces cumulative, durable, race-based inequalities. It is also a method of analysis that is used to examine how historical legacies, individuals, structures, and institutions work interactively to distribute material and symbolic advantages and disadvantages along racial lines.
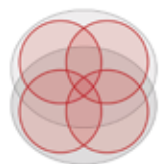
KIRWAN INSTITUTE
for the Study of Race and Ethnicity

**At the Kirwan Institute, we think that identifying and addressing structural racism/racialization is a key civil rights challenge for the 21st century. Our work operates on the premise that opportunities exist in a complex web of interdependent factors, and that to alleviate inequalities in any single area, we must first consider the entire structure that supports inequalities. Without this holistic framework from which to view social inequalities, our work becomes reactionary at best, and at worst, we can actually produce problems in one area while seeking to remedy them in another.

The Kirwan Institute attempts to bring a structural analysis to all its work. Our extensive work around spatial racism, for example, brings the structural lens to bear on our land use policies to understand how space has become racialized and how racialization denies people of color access to opportunity and reproduces disparities along racial lines.

Common Expressions of White Privilege and How to Counter Them

Ilsa Govan, M.A. and Caprice D. Hollins, Psy.D

Abstract

When facilitating workshops about the social dynamics of racism and privilege, those dynamics are always in the room and can trigger responses in both the participants and the facilitators. Skilled facilitators not only recognize expressions of White privilege and counteract them, they also use these instances as an opportunity to grow the understanding of workshop participants. In this article we will share several ways we've seen White privilege manifest itself in workshops and strategies we've used to successfully deepen, rather than shut down, the conversation. Topics covered include dominating the conversation, reframing or invalidating the experience of People of Color, valuing the product over the process, believing that logic, reasoning and linear thinking do not involve emotion, being agenda bound, and distancing oneself from other White people.

When talking about the social dynamics of oppression and privilege, whether in a workshop, classroom, or conversation with friends, those dynamics are always present in the room. The ability to recognize and name privilege during a conversation about privilege requires knowledge, persistence and practice.

Many of the expressions of privilege we highlight are common across multiple forms of oppression. For example, members of dominant groups (heterosexual, male, wealthy, etc.) frequently reframe and reinterpret the experiences of members of subordinate groups to fit dominant paradigms. Dominating the conversation is also a common form of male privilege and White privilege. However, the strategies shared here grew from our experiences facilitating workshops on racism and White privilege and those are the examples we will focus on in this article.

Skilled facilitators not only recognize expressions of white privilege and counteract them, they also use these instances as an opportunity to grow understanding. This article spotlights several ways we've seen White privilege manifested in workshops and classrooms. After explaining each form of privilege, we clarify the role of the facilitator then offer specific language we've used to counteract this form of privilege. The responses are not designed to be memorized, but rather to serve as a strategic guide in developing your own facilitation skills. Readers may also find many of these tips helpful for individual conversations, outside of a workshop setting.

Dominating the Conversation

Dominating the conversation tends to happen when people are eager to process out loud what they've learned and share it with others. While processing is important to learning new information, participants need to be mindful of the

impact this has on others in the room. Dominating conversations is an unconscious behavior often resulting from socialization that teaches White people their opinions and voice are more valuable than those of People of Color. This also comes from and reinforces White culture's norm of individualism. Rather than collaboratively sharing airtime and learning from one another equally, dominating the conversation reinforces hierarchies that don't allow for full participation of some members of the group.

Facilitator Role

The facilitator's role is to interrupt the speaker without shutting them down. You can do this by validating their participation so they don't feel bad about having shared, but at the same time create space for other learners.

Countermeasures

"I appreciate how much you have been willing to share with us today. I'm a verbal processor too (if that's true). I'd like/need to give those who haven't shared, the opportunity to offer their thoughts about…."

When a participant who has dominated the conversation starts to open up and share again, you can gracefully put your hand up, move into close proximity and say, "Hold on Sheila, I first want to give others the opportunity to share," or, "I would like to hear from those who haven't had a chance to share yet," or, "Thank you Sheila for being willing to take risks and share your thoughts about…. I'd like to hear from those who have not spoken yet." Allow wait time for others to speak. This may require sitting in silence.

Reframing or Invalidating the Experience of People of Color

Most people aren't aware when they invalidate a Person of Color's experiences. This is a classic case of impact vs. intent. Their intent was good but the impact leaves the Person of Color not feeling heard. This usually takes the form of a White person telling a Person of Color that they are misinterpreting their own experiences. It might sound like, "That wasn't racism, Mr. Wilson is like that with everyone," or, "When I go shopping I'm followed too," or, "I know Mr. Wilson pretty well and I just don't think that's what he meant." Sue et al define invalidating experiences as a racial microaggression or, "brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicates hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward People of Color" (Sue 2007). These microaggressions build on each other over time, and invalidation becomes a pattern, rather than an isolated incident.

Facilitator Role

Help the White participant understand how People of Color experience the world differently and create an environment where People of Color can share experiences without having their interpretations reframed to fit dominant norms. Push the speaker to reflect on the Person of Color's experiences.

Countermeasures

"What if that was the case, as Angela describes it, how would that make you feel?" "We interpret our experiences in different ways, and oftentimes our experiences are based on the privileges that we hold in society. For example, my husband who is dark skinned and over 6' 5" experiences the world differently than I do as a light skinned, short woman (use your own example). The purpose of the workshop today is to gain understanding of how people experience the world differently so that we can broaden our perspectives."
What is your intent when you share your thoughts with Angela?" After participant responds, validate their intent and have them explore the impact that their comments might have had on Angela.

Ask participants, "What is our reality based on?" You are looking for the response "past experiences". Inform them of how past experiences don't have to be our own in order to shape our reality. They can also be historical experiences of people who look like us, as well as family members, friends and community. These past experiences shape our reality and form our perceptions of how we see the world and therefore the way in which we interact with others.

Talk about 'mental labor'. Mental labor is common amongst people who are targets of oppression. It is the act of having to constantly interpret someone's actions toward you because of your past experiences, based on the color of your skin, gender, sexual orientation, etc. For example, when a Person of Color is asked to produce I.D. at the check out stand it's not uncommon to think, "Did he/she ask me for I.D. because I'm Black?" It doesn't matter whether race was tied to it or not. The fact is that the Person of Color is constantly faced with trying to interpret why they are receiving a certain type of treatment. This comes from many prior experiences of unequal treatment and stereotyping, not just the one experience at that point in time.

Some will claim People of Color having a "victim mentality" when it comes to perceived racism. Point out that a real victim mentality would be believing that one was personally flawed so profoundly that all their negative racial experiences were actually due to their own incompetence.

Valuing the Product over the Process

Valuing the product over the process happens most often when facilitating workshops on personal awareness that require participants to look deep within themselves. Common statements include, "Why can't we just move on," or, "We keep talking about it but I need strategies," or, "I just need to know what to do."

By asking to move on to strategies, the participant is avoiding the difficult personal work involved in acknowledging, coming to terms with, and consciously counteracting her own biases. This is like learning to dive before we learn to swim. We might put on a wonderfully graceful show in the air, but when we hit the water, we drown.

Facilitator Role

Help participants understand that there is no cookbook approach to this work. The more aware we are of our own biases, stereotypes, values, attitudes and beliefs, and the more knowledge we develop of diverse groups, the more likely we are to develop skills that help us to effectively work across cultures. People are too complex to have a one size fits all approach. Keep in mind that these are usually the participants that need to do the awareness work the most.

Countermeasures

"I appreciate your eagerness to want to learn skills to effectively work across cultures, but that can only happen when you are aware of your own biases, values, and communication styles, and you increase your knowledge of the specific groups with whom you work."

"Unfortunately, this is one of those areas where there are no easy answers. There's no cookbook that tells us how to work with people, given the complexity of individuals and groups. However, if you are willing to do the work of looking at yourself as a racial being and increasing your knowledge of others, I guarantee it will increase your ability to effectively work across cultures."

"As I mentioned at the beginning of this workshop, the purpose of today is to focus on increasing your awareness of…."

With educators, tell them up front you could give them a great lesson plan that may or may not work with their group of students or you can give them a critical lens they can use to modify and develop their own resources, based on a better understanding of their students.

"What I am hearing from you is that it is important for you to be able to leave with some strategies that you can take with you. Can you

think of some things that were shared/discussed today that might help you in developing effective skills?" If they struggle, ask the other participants.

Share a story about how your own awareness has helped you to develop skills. For example, "If I'm aware that I tend to value eye contact, and I have knowledge that a person whom I'm interacting with sees it as a sign of disrespect, I will not have that expectation of them, particularly if I am in a position of power i.e., student to teacher."

"What things are within your control? What is in your circle of influence?" Have participants draw concentric circles and identify points where they can make a difference based on their networks of friends, coworkers, and institutions.

Have a couple of skills/strategies for participants at the end or provide a resource list. We set up a table with multiple resources and mention them throughout the workshop.

Briefly emphasize how we have become a society wanting quick fixes. State that you don't have any quick fixes but refer them to resources that will help them.
Ask them about specific strategies that they are looking for. It is much easier to help come up with strategies if you know specific situations they are dealing with.

Put it back on them. "Let's think about this for a minute. Where do you think you can have the biggest impact in your life? What personal strengths do you bring to this work?"

Explore what they mean by "tell me what to do". This can help to get at the complexity of this work.

Believing that Logic, Reasoning and Linear Thinking Do Not Involve Emotion

The movie The Color of Fear provides a useful example to illustrate this expression of privilege (Mun Wah 1994). At one point in the movie, Victor Lewis was angry, loud and also very logical and clear about what he was conveying. He wasn't out of control. However, for some people the anger, coupled with stereotypes of Black men being dangerous, prevents them from seeing the logic. This can be conveyed by a White person telling a Person of Color to calm down or, at the beginning of the day, requesting that the workshop be "safe" for them.

Facilitator Role

Allow participants to express a diverse range of emotions and create a space where learning can occur with the emotion present in the room. Be aware of your own reactions to crying, yelling, and silence. Be ready to name tension and have participants reflect on their feelings.

Countermeasures

"What does 'safe' mean to you?"

"What's going on in your mind at this moment, hearing Lisa express her thoughts with so much emotion?"

"How were you taught to express emotion?" You may be able to name the emotion being exhibited such as anger, but this can create defensive feelings if you identify the wrong emotion.
It is better to identify the behavior, such as raising the voice, and then ask what he is feeling.

"Which emotions were you allowed to express or taught not to express?"

Tie in how stereotypes often interfere with our ability to appropriately assess our reactions to different emotions. For example, a common stereotype for African American men is that they are aggressive or dangerous. Frequently Whites, particularly White women, become very uncomfortable, even fearful, when they are in the presence of an African American male expressing how he feels. Help White participants explore where they received messages about African American males. This can help them to assess the validity of their fear while affirming the very real anger many African Americans feel about racism.

Whenever possible, bring it to the here and now; what's happening in the room at this very moment.

Being Agenda Bound

When we conduct workshops on privilege and oppression, we are looking for opportunities to deepen and broaden people's perspectives. There is no one activity or prompt that is guaranteed to move everyone. Therefore, when an opportunity arises, the skilled facilitator can recognize something important is happening and abandon some planned activities. Educators call this a "teachable moment." It may happen in the form of heightened emotions, engaged dialogue in small groups, or a critical question being raised.

Similarly to valuing product over process, because this challenges members of dominant groups to closely examine themselves, some may try to use the posted agenda as an avoidance strategy. Being agenda bound is when participants want to focus on the agenda and move forward in a linear fashion. It's okay to get off track as long as you are still moving in the direction of your goals for the workshop. Make sure you identify your goals prior to beginning so you can make thoughtful decisions as issues come up.

Facilitator Role

Take the conversation to deeper levels of learning. This may mean that you have to be flexible by moving away from the schedule of the day. Assess and see what is working best for the entire group, not one individual. There is a risk here of catering to the person who has the least understanding going into the workshop. Because you want to help everyone grow their understanding, it is also important to be conscious of time spent educating one person.

Countermeasures

State in the beginning of the workshop, "The agenda is a tool to guide us in the direction we are going in. If something else takes us to the outcome that I am trying to help you achieve today, I may facilitate us down a different path than was originally planned.

I know that this is not something that everyone feels comfortable with, depending on their learning styles, but I am going to ask you to trust that you will get what I have planned for you to receive today, regardless of whether or not we cover everything on the agenda."

"When something like this comes up, we're going to sit in the fire and wrestle with it. Sometimes it's important to stay with the here and now."

Whites Distancing Themselves from Other Whites

This often occurs in the form of criticizing other White people for comments they make. There is a sense of superiority in the tone. It feels like they are saying, "You don't understand what I have come to understand about these issues." Underneath there can be shame, guilt and embarrassment about one's own Whiteness that comes off as aggression towards other Whites who are early in their development of racial cognizance.

Facilitator Role

Unpack the issues between White people. Keep in mind that the goal is not to shame people into understanding, but rather to guide them from where they are to new understanding. We don't want to lose our allies but rather help them to better understand their behavior so they can be more effective in their work.

Countermeasures

Point out the behavior that you see occurring "Michelle, I noticed that you have responded negatively three times to the comments of other White people in the room, did you notice that as well? Where do you think that's coming from?"

"I see you as someone committed to this work.

Throughout this workshop you have been engaged and willing to take risks. So, I'm going to trust that you can engage on a deeper level.
I've noticed that (point out the behavior)."

Start out with a sincere complement or something positive you've noticed. Try to get to the deeper issue that may be occurring e.g., embarrassment, shame, disassociation, i.e., "I don't want people to see me as someone like you."

If they struggle with responding, name what you think is going on, for example, "In most of the Ethnic/Racial Identity Development Models, they mention a person experiencing shame and embarrassment towards their own ethnic group. Do you think this might be something that is occurring for you today?" (Ponterotto 1993, Sue 2003).

Normalize these feelings. Suggest that what's important is that they identify what they are experiencing and work towards alleviating those feelings. While they are normal to have, it's not a good place to stay. Feelings of shame, guilt and embarrassment become barriers to our growth and the growth of others.

When closing the conversation acknowledge the difficulty of the work and praise everyone, observers and participants, in their willingness to stay engaged.

Praise the person you assisted in going deeper by identifying their strengths in handling the conversation. "Michael, this was very difficult. Many people would have shut down but you didn't. Good work! How are you feeling right now about what just occurred?"

Conclusion

By identifying and counteracting expressions of White privilege in workshops, all participants come to a deeper understanding of cross-cultural dynamics. This builds our skills so we can engage in more authentic conversations about what is being communicated through what is not being said, as well as what is spoken. Because of the nature of White privilege, even the most skilled facilitators will still have participants who shut down or walk out of the room. The goal is not to make everyone feel comfortable, it is to allow people the space to experience the discomfort that comes from realizing the world is not as they had thought, while not using oppressive tools of shame and guilt to try to force new learning. These strategies help us bridge racial divides and create cross-cultural connections.

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Membership Has its Privileges: Seeing and Challenging the Benefits of Whiteness

Being white, as the old saying goes, means never having to think about it. Perhaps that's why I get looks of bewilderment whenever I ask, as I do when lecturing to a mostly white audience, "What do you like about being white?" Never having contemplated the question, folks take a while to come up with anything.

We're used to talking about race as a Black issue, or Latino, Asian, or Indian problem. We're used to books written about them, but few that analyze what it means to be white in this culture. Statistics tell of the disadvantages of "blackness" or "brownness," but few examine the flipside: namely, the advantages whites receive as a result.

When we hear about things like racial profiling, we think of it in terms of what people of color go through, never contemplating what it means for whites and what we don't have to put up with. We might know that a book like The Bell Curve denigrates the intellect of blacks, but we ignore the fact that in so doing, it elevates the same in whites, much to our advantage in the job market and schools, where those in authority will likely view us as more competent than persons of color.

That which keeps people of color off-balance in a racist society is that which keeps whites in control: a truism that must be discussed if whites are to understand our responsibility to work for change. Each thing with which they have to contend as they navigate the waters of American life is one less thing whites have to sweat, and that makes everything easier, from finding jobs, to getting loans, to attending college.

Even those whites who would never support, let alone join a hate group, ultimately are steadied by their existence, as they are an ever-present concern and damaging distraction for people of color, just trying to live their lives. One more thing with which to contend, and which for most whites, unless they are gay or Jewish, serves mostly as an oddity or talk show entertainment, rather than as a true source of pain, fear and anxiety.

On a personal level, it has been made clear to me repeatedly: Like the time I attended a party in a white suburb and one of the few black men there announced he had to leave before midnight, fearing his trip home — which required that he travel through all-white neighborhoods — would likely result in being pulled over by police, who would wonder what he was doing out so late in the "wrong" part of town. He would have to be cognizant, in a way I would not, of every lane change, every blinker he did or didn't remember to use, whether his lights were too bright, or too dim, and whether he was going even five miles an hour over the limit: as any of those could serve as pretexts for pulling one over, and those pretexts are used regularly for certain folks, and not others.

The virtual invisibility that whiteness affords those of us who have it is like psychological money in the bank, the proceeds of which we cash in every day while others are in a state of perpetual overdraft. Yet, it's not enough to see these things, or think about them, or come to appreciate what whiteness means. Though important, this kind of enlightenment is no end in itself. Rather, it is what we do with the knowledge and understanding that matters. If we recognize our privileges yet fail to challenge them, what good is our insight? If we intuit

discrimination yet fail to speak against it, what have we done to rectify the injustice?

And that's the hard part: because privilege tastes good and we're loath to relinquish it. Or even if willing, we often wonder how to resist: how to attack unfairness and make a difference.

As to why we should want to end racial privilege, aside from the moral argument, the answer is straightforward: The price we pay to stay one step ahead of others is enormous. In the labor market, we benefit from racial discrimination in the relative sense, but in absolute terms this discrimination holds down most of our wages and living standards by keeping working people divided and creating a surplus labor pool of "others" to whom employers can turn when the labor market gets tight or workers demand too much in wages or benefits. Furthermore, economist Andrew Brimmer notes that discrimination against African Americans alone siphons off about $240 billion annually from the economy in terms of lost productivity since it artificially restricts talent, ability, and black output. And that is a siphoning with consequences for everyone, as it approaches the same amount as that which our nation spent on defense at the height of the cold war, and is far more than the amount spent on all social programs for working-class and poor folks combined.

We benefit in relative terms from discrimination against people of color in education, by receiving, on average, better resources and class offerings. But in absolute terms, can anyone deny that the creation of miseducated persons of color harms us all? And even disparate treatment in the justice system has its blowback on the white community. We may think little

of the racist growth of the prison-industrial complex, as it snares far fewer of our children. But considering that the prisons warehousing black and brown bodies compete for the same dollars needed to build colleges for everyone, the impact is far from negligible.

In California, since 1980, over twenty new prisons have opened, compared to only one new four-year public college, with the effect that the space available for people of color and whites to receive a good education has been curtailed. So folks fight over the pieces of a diminishing pie — as with Proposition 209 to end affirmative action — instead of uniting against their common problem: the mostly white lawmakers who prioritize jails and slashing taxes on the wealthy, over meeting the needs of most people.

As for how whites can challenge the system, other than by joining the occasional demonstration or voting for candidates with a decent record on race issues, this is where we'll need creativity.

Imagine, for example, that groups of whites and people of color started going to department stores as discrimination "tester" teams, and that the whites spent a few hours in shifts, observing how they were treated relative to the black and brown folks who came with them. And imagine what would happen if every white person on the team approached a different white clerk and returned just-purchased merchandise, if and when they observed disparate treatment, explaining they weren't going to shop in a store that profiled or otherwise racially discriminated. Imagine the faces of the clerks, confronted by other whites demanding equal treatment for persons of color.

Far from insignificant, if this happened often enough, it could have a serious effect on behavior, and the institutional mistreatment of people of color in at least this one setting: after all, white clerks could no longer be sure if the white shopper in lady's lingerie was an ally who would wink at unequal treatment, or whether they might be one of those whites: the kind that would call them out for doing what they always assumed was acceptable.

Or what about setting up "Cop Watch" programs like those already in place in a few cities? White folks, following police, filming officer's interactions with people of color, and making their presence known, when and if they observe officers engaged in abusive behavior.

Or contingents of white parents, speaking out in a school board meeting against racial tracking in class assignments: a process through which kids of color are much more likely to be placed in basic classes, while whites are elevated to honors and advanced placement, irrespective of ability. Protesting this kind of privilege, especially when it might be working to the advantage of one's own children, is the sort of thing we'll need to do if we hope to alter the system we swear we're against.

One thing is certain: We'll have to stop moving from neighborhoods when "too many" people of color move in, or pulling our kids out of schools and school systems once they become "too" black and brown.

We'll need to consider taking advantage of the push for publicly funded "charter schools" by joining with parents of color to start institutions of our own, similar to the "Freedom Schools" established in Mississippi by the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee in 1964. These schools would teach not only traditional subject matter, but also the importance of critical thinking, antiracist commitment, and social and economic justice. If these are things we say we care about, yet we haven't at present the outlets to demonstrate our commitment, we'll have to create those institutions ourselves.

And we must protest the privileging of elite, white male perspectives in school textbooks. We have to demand that the stories of all who have struggled to radically transform society be told: and if the existing texts don't do that, we must dip into our own pockets and pay for supplemental materials that teachers could use to make the classes they teach meaningful.

If we're in a position to make a hiring decision, we should go out of our way to recruit, identify and hire a person of color.

What these suggestions have in common — and they're hardly an exhaustive list — is that they require whites to leave the comfort zone to which we have grown accustomed. They require time, perhaps money, and above all else, courage; and they ask us to focus a little less on the relatively easy, though important, goal of "fixing" racism's victims (with a bit more money for this or that, or a little more affirmative action), and instead to pay attention to the need to challenge and change the perpetrators of and collaborators with the system of racial privilege. And those are the people we work with, live with, and wake up to every day. It's time to revoke the privileges of whiteness.

Introduction to Examining Oppressions

Oppression, power and privilege exist in many forms in our society. This series of articles invites you to learn about and reflect on a few of the sometimes hidden and often unacknowledged oppressions

The articles are not meant to catalogue all of the oppressions or "isms" in our society, or to use blame and guilt to motivate change. Rather, this presents an opportunity to broaden our awareness of the systematic oppressions faced by other groups and to examine our own views and actions regarding those groups.

Discussion Questions

Which article(s) caught your attention?

What are the points that stood out for you?

What is your personal experience of any of the oppressions?

What's missing from this list?

Do you agree with Audre Lorde that there can be no hierarchy of oppressions?

Why or why not?

Audre Lorde's essay speaks to the issue that "no one should be oppressed for their 'condition of being'".

What does this mean to you?
Give examples from your own life where you have experienced oppression based simply on something about yourself that you cannot change.

There is No Hierarchy of Oppressions

Audre Lorde

I was born Black, and a woman. I am trying to become the strongest person I can become to live the life I have been given and to help effect change toward a loveable future for this earth and for my children. As a Black, lesbian, feminist, socialist, poet, mother of two including one boy and a member of an interracial couple, I usually find myself part of some group in which the majority defines me as deviant, difficult, inferior or just plain "wrong."

From my membership in all of these groups I have learned that oppression and the intolerance of difference come in all shapes and sexes and colors and sexualities; and that among those of us who share the goals of liberation and a workable future for our children, there can be no hierarchies of oppression. I have learned that sexism (a belief in the inherent superiority of one sex over all others and thereby its right to dominance) and heterosexism (a belief in the inherent superiority of one pattern of loving over all others and thereby its right to dominance) both arise from the same source as racism - a belief in the inherent superiority of one race over all others and thereby its right to dominance.

"Oh," says a voice from the Black community, "but being Black is NORMAL!" Well, I and many Black people of my age can remember grimly the days when it didn't used to be!
I simply do not believe that one aspect of myself can possibly profit from the oppression of any other part of my identity. I know that my people cannot possibly profit from the oppression of any other group which seeks the right to peaceful existence. Rather, we diminish ourselves by denying to others what we have shed blood to obtain for our children. And those children need to learn that they do not have to become like each other in order to work together for a future they will all share.

Within the lesbian community I am Black, and within the Black community I am a lesbian. Any attack against Black people is a lesbian and gay issue, because I and thousands of other Black women are part of the lesbian community. Any attack against lesbians and gays is a Black issue, because thousands of lesbians and gay men are Black. There is no hierarchy of oppression.

I cannot afford the luxury of fighting one form of oppression only. I cannot afford to believe that freedom from intolerance is the right of only one particular group. And I cannot afford to choose between the fronts upon which I must battle these forces of discrimination, wherever they appear to destroy me. And when they appear to destroy me, it will not be long before they appear to destroy you.

From: *Homophobia and Education* (*New York Council on Interracial Books for Children, 1983*)

Ableism

Leslie Myers
Access Committee

Ableism is defined as stereotyping, negative attitudes, and discrimination toward people based on a physical or mental disability resulting in discrimination and/or prejudice[1]. As children many people were told not to stare or point at someone with a disability and that asking questions was considered rude. While the intention behind these suggestions may have been good, ignoring someone with a disability may actually bring about discrimination. Awareness is the key to combating ableism. Teaching about diversity and every person's uniqueness can begin to counteract myths about people with disabilities; this is especially important in anti-violence work since these myths may actually lead to the abuse of people with disabilities.

Estimates show that people with disabilities are four to 10 times more likely to be victimized than people without disabilities, yet no one agency collects statistics on violence against those with disabilities. Victims with disabilities suffer repeatedly because so few of the crimes against them are reported. Caregivers often do not believe them when they do report abuse, turning people with disabilities into easy targets for predators. Support program for crime victims are largely inaccessible to people with disabilities. Many people with disabilities live in places such group homes or nursing homes, segregated from the community and its support network. The problem is expected to increase as the population of people with disabilities also rises.[2]

1.University of Vermont, Center for Cultural Pluralism
2.“Abuse of Disabled: A Mostly Ignored Epidemic”, Erickson, Stephanie, Milwaukee Sentinel, May 24, 2003.

There are many reasons why people with disabilities are at great risk of abuse and violence. Some of these reasons include:

- Many people with intellectual disabilities do not receive sex education so when abuse occurs, they know something is wrong but are unsure what it is.

- People with disabilities have often learned to be passive, which is reinforced in institutional and residential settings.

- The degree of physical dependency and fragility of support may prevent someone from reporting abuse by their caregiver. If the individual is dependent on the abuser for their most basic needs, reporting abuse may make the individual even more helpless.

- Those people with disabilities living in institutional or residential settings are hidden with little or no access to police, support services, lawyers, or advocates.

- Anyone living in service settings is potentially exposed to a large number of personal assistants or support workers.

- Abuse is about power and control, and offenders often choose victims who are unlikely to resist or report.

- Even if the victim with a disability does reach out for help or justice, services are often inaccessible and/or staff do not know how to respond.

"About the only value the story of my life may have is to show that one can, even without any particular gifts overcome obstacles that may seem insurmountable...I have only three assets: I was keenly interested, I accepted every challenge and opportunity to learn more, and I had great energy and self-discipline."

–Eleanor Roosevelt

 It is the social implications of the disability and not the actual disability that increases a person's vulnerability to violence. The language we use to talk about people with disabilities (e.g., crazy, cripple, retarded, etc.) is no different from the oppressive language surrounding race and culture, and the institutionalization of people with disabilities is no different than racial segregation or the annihilation of people based on religious beliefs.

 Words have power, so it is essential that we consider whether the words we are using are empowering or disempowering. Using "people first" language is not about being politically correct, it is about respect and moving away from the thinking that has kept people with disabilities oppressed and discriminated against. Children with disabilities are children first adults with disabilities are adults first. Here are some examples of "people first" language:

Example of People First Language	
Say: People with Disabilities. He has a cognitive disability (diagnosis). She has autism (or a diagnosis of). He has Down's Syndrome (or a diagnosis of). She has a learning disability (diagnosis). He has a physical disability (diagnosis). She's of short stature/she's a little person. He has a mental health diagnosis. She uses a wheelchair. She has a developmental delay. Children without disabilities. Communicates with her eyes/device/etc. Congenital disability Brain injury Accessible parking, hotel room, etc. She needs....or she uses....	Instead of: The handicapped or disabled. He's mentally retarded. She's autistic. He's Down's, a Down's person. She's learning disabled. He's a quadriplegic/is crippled. She's a dwarf/midget. He's emotionally disturbed/mentally ill. She's confined to/wheelchair bound. She's developmentally delayed. Normal or healthy children. Is nonverbal. Birth defect Brain damaged Handicapped parking, hotel room, etc. She has problems/special needs.

(Adapted from: Snowe, K. (2001), To Ensure Inclusion, Freedom, and Respect for All, We Must Use People First Language, Disability is Natural Website, http://www.disabilityisnatural.com/explore/people-first-language)

Nearly 20% of the population, 54 million Americans, are people with disabilities. Disability is one of the largest "marginalized" minority groups in the US, and the only one that anyone can join at any times in their lives.[3]

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3. DE Mian, H., Ableism, Accessibility and Inclusion (2005).

Adultism

End Abuse Wisconsin: the Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence
Children and Youth Committee

Adultism is the systematic exploitation, mistreatment and abuse of young people by adults. There is an appropriate power relationship between adults and children.[1] Young people need adult protection and supervision and should not be making decisions or placed in situations beyond their developmental capabilities. Yet, adultism uses adult power as an excuse to deny children and youth age-appropriate autonomy and self-determination and to discount their abilities, experience and opinions. Adult failure to provide youth with proper care, guidance and education is also adultism.

Adultism is enforced through "physical and sexual violence, neglect; police harassment; lack of trust and respect from adults; extreme pressure to succeed or harsh criticism of abilities; attacks on self-esteem; being paid less for equal work; lack of safe alternative living arrangements for youth in abusive families [and] adult stereotypes of young people."[2] Other examples of how adultism appears in society include:

- speaking to children in a way which denies their intelligence and individuality;

- fear and mistrust of youth, especially youth in groups;

- parents appropriating the successes of their children (such as in academics or sports) to enhance their own status;

- lack of ability for young people to influence decision making in organizations and institutions that affect them, e.g., not being interviewed by guardians ad litem or family court judges about decisions that affect their futures;

- access to services (such as mental health, sexual assault, and domestic violence) restricted by parents' permission;

- exploitation or denigration of youth culture, such as criticism of expressions of youth culture, clothing, hairstyles, etc.;

- exploiting youth culture in order to groom young people to become consumers.

Examples of how adultism may appear in some domestic violence programs include:

- rules against teen boys in shelter;

- children and youth not informed about aspects of their mothers' safety plans that affect them;

- youth safety plans not incorporated into those of their mothers;

- fewer resources (staff, space, programming) for children and youth;

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1 Paul Kivel, Allen Creighton and the Oakland Men's Project, Making the Peace (Alameda, CA: Hunter House).p. 73
2 Ibid.

- lower status for children's advocates;

- rules that place a burden on children and youth for the benefit of adults (as opposed to rules that benefit all);

- staff may not recognize and understand normal childhood reactions to trauma;

- viewing the needs of kids through adult eyes.

Adults can address adultism by:

- listening to the voices of young people and respecting their experience, ideas, and opinions;

- letting children and youth tell their stories in their own ways;

- understanding the lives of children and youth from their perspective;

- granting young people a role in decision making authority as appropriate to their developmental abilities;

- recognizing the value of play for young people;

- providing youth with representation in organizations and institutions that affect their lives;

- allowing children to be appropriately assertive without labeling them as oppositional.

Audism: " the notion that one is superior based on one's ability to hear or behave in the manner of one who hears."

– Tom Humphries

Audism and Its Impact on Services for Deaf

Alice M. Sykora

Audism is a word coined by Dr. Tom Humphries, a renowned American deaf educator and author of at least two books and other publications related to American Deaf Culture. Audism is not to be confused with "autism," a pervasive developmental disorder that affects many children. The term "audism" is derived from a Latin word, audire (to hear) and added with an "-ism" (as used with classism, sexism, racism); it is described as an attitude that is negative, paternalistic or oppressive towards Deaf* people by people in the mainstream and organizations, and a failure to recognize American Sign Language (or other Sign Languages in other countries) as a legitimate language of Deaf people and as a language of equal footing as other spoken languages. This attitude also puts emphasis on speaking and English, and "hearing-centered" values and behaviors. Examples of this attitude are: expecting deaf people to lipread and use speech to communicate; assuming that Deaf people grieve for their "hearing loss" and want to be "hearing"; perpetuating the notion that one is "superior" based on one's ability to hear or behave in the manner of a hearing person; or, demanding that Deaf people adapt to "the hearing way because it is a hearing world" (Gulati, 2003).

Audism is a systematic "authority" created by hearing people (as well as Deaf people who adopt "hearing" values and behaviors) about Deaf people, professing to know and determining what is best for Deaf people, without incorporating considerations and input from Deaf people. Deaf people are disempowered from evaluating their options, making choices and decisions about their lives, and are denied opportunities to receive culturally and linguistically competent services. Hearing people take deafness related jobs because they feel it is a benevolent thing to do (coined by Lane as a "mask of benevolence") and that Deaf people are not capable of doing these jobs.

Examples of audistic attitudes in services include but are not limited to:

- Viewing the Deaf person (or the "hearing loss") as the problem, as opposed to seeing a culmination of life experiences compounded or complicated by the lack of opportunities or equal access to services or cultural competent services;

- Asking or insisting the Deaf person to use spoken communication (e.g., talking and lipreading), and not considering other communication options, such as an ASL interpreter or a Deaf professional who can communicate;

- Compromising qualified interpreting services by using a staff person "who can sign" while in reality possesses barely passable fluency in American Sign Language, thus making it adverse for the

Deaf person to fully understand the message;

- Making decisions for the Deaf person assuming that the Deaf person is incapable of making decisions or choices for herself (and/or that the hearing person presumes to know what is best for the Deaf person);

- Not including Deaf people in advisory or consulting roles or treating them as "tokens" when they serve in such roles;

- Not recognizing that a "Deaf world" exists with a community of Sign Language and distinctive cultural values and norms and a model based on these could be instrumental to optimal services

Recommended Readings:

Gulati, S. (2003). Psychiatric treatment. In N. S. Glickman (Ed.), Mental Health Care of Deaf People: A Culturally Affirmative Approach (pp. 33-107). Mahwah, NJ; Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.

Lane, H. (1992). The Mask of Benevolence: Disabling the Deaf Community. New York: Vintage Books.

Lane, H., Bahan, B.; and Hoffmeister, R. (1996). A Journey into the Deaf-World. San Diego: DawnSign Press.

Padden, C., and Humphries, T. (1988). Deaf in America: Voices from a Culture. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

* A capital Deaf denotes a cultural distinction, defining a group of people who are deaf and identify themselves members of a linguistic and cultural group. This is akin to other ethnic groups, such as Hispanic, African-American, Pacific Islander, etc.

This article uses the terminology "Deaf people" rather than "people who are deaf" because Deaf is the very core of our existence and experience; our world view comes from this core. "People who are deaf" implies that 'deaf' is secondary, or people dealing with a condition (and to us, "Deaf" is not a condition, but rather an identity). This differs from the "people first" language employed throughout the rest of the Manual.

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Additional Resource:
Deaf Unity website: www.deafunitywi.org/

Breaking Down Fatphobia

Increasingly, the way we think about oppression in the US is as follows: "bigotry exists intentionally in individuals, and I do not intend to be bigoted, therefore I am not a bigot." The problem with this logic? It acknowledges oppression in its smallest form, so that oppression in its larger, more nuanced forms can be denied or eschewed. On top of that, being "a homophobe," "a racist," "a bigot," et cetera, is also narrowly defined—usually as whether or not you physically or verbally attack others on the basis of their identity.

This is not to say there isn't a lot of individual oppression happening out there—there is. But to acknowledge that as a means to deny the experiences and needs of marginalized communities on a broader scale is a red herring. The reasoning goes like this: I don't use homophobic slurs, so I'm not a homophobe. Homophobia exists intentionally in other people. Because I have acknowledged this, and proven that I am not a homophobe, all of my opinions are objectively true. Because I do not observe institutional homophobia, it therefore cannot exist.

While many of us may recognize how oppression (and denial of oppression) operates within many communities, not all of us understand how that works with fat people. As with any system designed to exclude, shame or oppress people on the basis of shared characteristics or identities, it can be easy to assume that fatphobia only exists one-on-one, person-to-person. Not so. It's a series of complex, interlocking systems designed to shame, silence and "correct" fat people.

Because discussions of fatphobia are new to many of us, we may not recognize it as a layered system of oppression. Plus, when we fail to recognize the ways in which fatphobia operates, it becomes difficult to recognize that it even exists, much less how to effectively interrupt it.

There are several levels of fatphobia. Among them: ***personal fatphobia, cultural fatphobia and institutional fatphobia***. Let's walk through what each of them look like in action.

Personal Fatphobia

This is where the conversation begins—and often where it ends. I'd define personal fatphobia as **the ways in which fatphobia is perpetuated on a one-on-one, person-to-person basis.** It's important to note that personal fatphobia doesn't need to be intentional. Regardless of what you meant by what you said or did, its impact remains the same. Some examples include:

- **Policing what a fat person is eating**, or telling them about their own health. Again, nobody knows more about diets, exercise, health and nutrition than fatties. Friends, family members, doctors, partners and even strangers on the street have freely suggested a million and one things that we can do to change our bodies. Many of us have tried them all. And for those of us who've decided to stop hating our bodies, policing what we eat is a harsh reminder that, within current social systems, we are prohibited from defining our own bodies.

- **Shaming fat people for wearing "unflattering" clothing.** See above. When I was in high school, my mother made a list of things I shouldn't wear: cap sleeves, belts, skirts with hemlines above the knee, horizontal stripes, bright colors, drop waists, tank tops, pencil skirts. Needless to say, my mom-approved outfits looked like, well, something a mom would wear. The problem is that damn near every style guide and fashion magazine agrees that I should retreat to a life of caftans, muu-muus and graduation gowns. The implication here is that telling fat people what not to wear is doing us a favor, and allowing us to define how we want to be seen would cause us grievous harm. I heartily disagree.

- **Giving unsolicited suggestions about weight loss "for our health."** This one's problematic on a couple of fronts. First, as witnessed above, lots of fatties know a whole lot about losing weight. For real. Second, my health doesn't require weight loss. Every physical I have shows that I'm healthy as a horse. Third, my health is nobody's business. Seriously. Fourth, and perhaps most basically, the assumption underlying unsolicited weight loss suggestions is that we can all agree that my body is repulsive and abhorrent, and that I must hate it and desperately want to change it. Except that I don't.

- **Insisting that fat people are universally unattractive,** or publicly refusing to date us. That one's pretty basic, right? You don't have to want to date us, but you don't have to shout it from the rooftops, and you can't speak for the whole rest of the world.

Again, personal fatphobia is a big challenge, and is where a lot of internalized fatphobia comes from. But personal fatphobia isn't the whole picture.
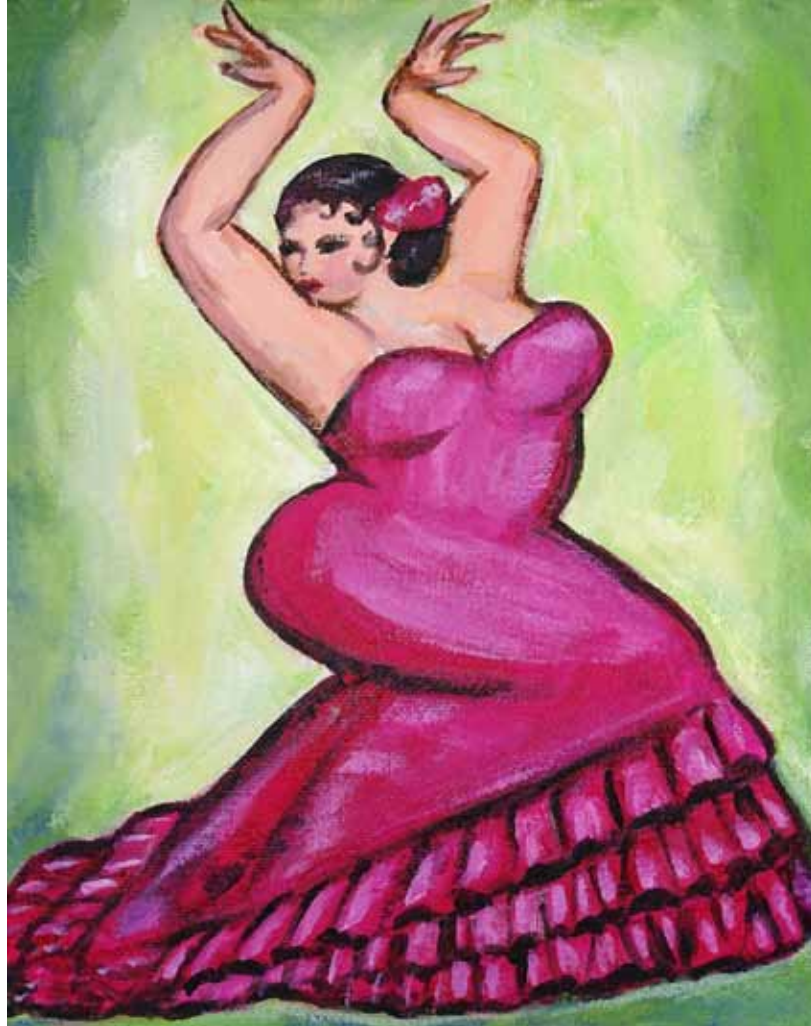
Cultural Fatphobia

I'd define cultural fatphobia as the **norms, values and practices of a culture that devalue fat people, and value thin people as the norm.**

A note on thinness: it does not, in and of itself, qualify someone as fitting into the beauty standard. Other determinants like race, ability, age, gender presentation and much, much more play into that. Plus, there is still some deep, longstanding pathologization (and simultaneous fetishization) of people—usually women—who are perceived to be "too thin." As someone who has not ever been considered "too thin," I can't and won't address that. When I say that a culture values "thin people" as the norm, I'm referring to the culture's hegemonic values.

That said, here's what cultural fatphobia looks like in action:

* **Media images of fat people.** We've all seen them. In the best cases, we're jolly, fun, full of personality, and totally unsexed. In the worst cases, we're slovenly, unhygienic, smelly, lazy, and morally corrupt. Either way, the roles we're allowed to play are extremely limited. And an attractive, charismatic fatty? Perish the thought. Meanwhile, thin people (again, this is colored by many other characteristics & aspects of identity), can be anything. Not all thin people in movies, on TV, or in magazines are culturally defined as attractive, but damn near every person who's culturally defined as attractive (and interesting, worthy, charismatic, etc) is thin.

The myth that thinness has always been the beauty standard. Not so, y'all. Beauty standards are always, always, always defined by a time and place. They reflect the values, class politics, available resources and technologies, and historic context of the time and place they come from. Historically, fatness has, in varying times and places, been considered a sign of wealth, fertility, virtue and more.

Institutional Fatphobia

Institutional fatphobia is arguably the farthest-reaching of them all. Institutional fatphobia can be defined as **the ways in which institutions exclude, underserve and oppress fat people.** Again, these institutionally fatphobic policies don't need to be intended to exclude fat people—but they do disproportionately impact us. Examples:

- **Changing BMI standards, and the consequent "Obesity Epidemic."** A lot has been written about this, including [this]() and [this](), and I'm sure I can't do it any better. But to give a quick recap, in a nutshell, the standards of the body mass index changed in the late 1990s, making 25 million people overweight or obese overnight. And, while nutrition, exercise and health are sorely under-addressed in the United States, to define that as an obesity epidemic is incredibly reductive, and it deflects attention from the way that classism, racism, sexism and other forms of oppression play into body image, food availability, and more.

- **Concrete policies around nutrition, availability of food, and health education all break around lines of race, class and gender.** Take schools, for example. People with more money are likelier to be able to attend smaller schools, where students get more individual attention and schools are likelier to provide fresher, more nutritious foods (i.e., less mass-produced canned and processed foods). When we talk about fatness, though, it's a two-dimensional conversation about reducing fat and calorie intake, rather than a multidimensional conversation about getting your body the vitamins and nutrients it needs. And it's almost always a question of individuals at the expense of a conversation about policies. Ultimately, blaming fat people for a lack of willpower deflects from a much broader cultural conversation about nutrition, and reifies existing systems of oppression while making them invisible.

- Policies that require fat passengers to buy two seats on airplanes. Regardless of whether or not you think that fat people should have to buy an extra seat on an airplane, this policy inarguably excludes many fat people, especially those of us who can't afford to find out at the gate that we need to drop an unexpected $400 on an additional plane ticket. (Sorry, poor fat people! No air travel for you.) Plus, the policy is decidedly punitive. It's not designed to be equitable. It's not designed to make fat people more comfortable. It's designed, quite literally, to make fat people pay for their size, and the tone almost always steers the conversation toward a moral referendum on fatness.

What's Missing & What's Next

These lists and definitions aren't complete and they aren't meant to be. Fatphobia is dynamic, changing over time and adapting to the culture that produces it. So what's missing from these lists? What kinds of personal, cultural and institutional fatphobia do you see at play?

Introduction to Aspiring Allies Section

Several articles on this section of the Manual use the term "ally" to refer to a person who acknowledges the oppression of others (in terms of race, ethnicity, differing abilities, gender identities, and other identities) and who commits to working against that oppression. Members of the Access Committee acknowledge that the term "ally" may be problematic. The term "allies" implies that people in the dominant group are in accountable relationships with each other and with people of the oppressed group, and that there are covenants shared and agreed upon among these individuals and groups. Because the structures of oppression obstruct these types of agreements and accountability, "ally" is a term that should be used with caution. Instead, we recommend using the term "aspiring ally", as used by the Women of Color Network, to indicate the intent and the work being done towards being an ally in an accountable and meaningful relationship with others addressing oppression. We recognize that being an aspiring ally is an on-going process.

Discussion Questions

What changes does your program need to make to be a more effective aspiring ally to a marginalized community? With whom do you need to develop an authentic relationship? How can we identify marginalized communities within our own larger community?

When did your work as an aspiring ally support the development of authentic relationships? What did you personally learn from that experience?

Do you think your organization is seen as an ally to others in the community? Why or why not? If not, what do you need to do?

What is the role of accountability in anti-oppression work? How do aspiring allies hold themselves accountable to traditionally marginalized groups? How do aspiring allies hold each other accountable?

How do you have this discussion in an honest and authentic way if everyone in your organization is from a homogenous group?

What Does It Mean To Be An Ally?

Lolly Lijewski and Kathleen Rice

(reprinted from ADARA Update, Issue 3, 2004)

The place of an ally in any civil right movement is tenuous and delicate at best. Oppressed groups must have allies in order to bring about social change. Allies play a critical role - no social change movement could function or make progress without them -but learning that role can be difficult and sometimes painful. Allies must develop an excellent sense of timing; they must learn when to walk ahead and speak for the group they are working with; they must learn when to walk beside and affirm the statements of their compatriots; they must know when to walk behind and remain silent.

As the members of the oppressed group uncover layers of internalized oppression, the role of the ally in the group changes. As an individual ally grows personally and professionally in his/her understanding of the process of social change, the sensibility of the ally involves. One can learn how to be an ally by talking with other allies as well as by talking with member of the oppressed group.

Some characteristics of an ally:

- Allies work to understand history, culture, feelings, struggles, rode, and needs of the group(s) with which they are allied.

- Allies work to understand history, culture, feelings, struggles, rode, and needs of the group(s) of which they are members

- Allies listen to the members of the oppressed group(s) and respect their individual experiences as truth

- Allies respond to the needs of the oppressed group(s).

- Allies work to be allies all of the time.

- Allies believe it is in their own self interests to be allies and do not expect rewards for doing "the right thing."

- Allies are committed to embarking on the inward personal journey required of allies.

- Allies take responsibility for initiating and implementing personal, institutional, and societal justice and equality.

- Allies communicate the successes of the group(s) with which they are allied to others.

- Allies have a sense of humor and use it appropriately.

- Allies work to understand the root of the problems faced by the oppressed group(s).

- Allies spend time immersed in the communities with which they are allied.

- Allies expect support from, and give support to, other allies.

- Allies expect to make mistakes, and will, but do not use them as excuses for not taking (further) action.

- Allies are aware of the ways in which they have received unearned privileges.

- Allies recognize that they continue to have a lot to learn and actively seek ways to learn more.

- Allies understand and can articulate how oppression has impacted their own lives both as both victims and perpetrators.

- Allies understand that they contribute to an oppressive system and seek to understand how that is the case.

- Allies support members of oppressed groups as they struggle to come to term with internalized oppression.

Source: Lolly Lijewski and Kathleen Rice (199, 1990) Access Press. 10/10/99

Guidelines for Being Strong White Allies

Adapted from Uprooting Racism:
How White People Can Work for Social Justice

by Paul Kivel

WHAT KIND OF ACTIVE SUPPORT does a strong white ally provide to a person of color? Over the years, people of color that I have talked with have been remarkably consistent in describing the kinds of support they need from white allies.

What People of Color Want from White Allies

"Respect us"

"Listen to us"

"Find out about us"

"Don't make assumptions"

"Don't take over"

"Stand by my side"

"Provide information"

"Don't assume you know what's best for me"

"Resources"

"Money"

"Take risks"

"Make mistakes"

"Don't take it personally"

"Honesty"

"Understanding"

"Talk to other white people"

"Teach your children about racism"

"Interrupt jokes and comments"

"Speak up"

"Don't ask me to speak for my people"

"Your body on the line"

"Persevere daily"

Basic Tactics

Every situation is different and calls for critical thinking about how to make a difference. Taking the statements above into account, I have compiled some general guidelines.

1. Assume racism is everywhere, every day. Just as economics influences everything we do, just as gender and gender politics influence everything we do, assume that racism is affecting your daily life. We assume this because it's true, and because a privilege of being white is the freedom to not deal with racism all the time. We have to learn to see the effect that racism has.
Notice who speaks, what is said, how things are done and described. Notice who isn't present when racist talk occurs. Notice code words for race, and the implications of the policies, patterns, and comments that are being expressed. You already notice the skin color of everyone you meet—now notice what difference it makes.

2. Notice who is the center of attention and who is the center of power. Racism works by directing violence and blame toward people of color and consolidating power and privilege for white people.

3. Notice how racism is denied, minimized, and justified.

4. Understand and learn from the history of whiteness and racism. Notice how racism has changed over time and how it has subverted or resisted challenges. Study the tactics that have worked effectively against it.

5. Understand the connections between racism, economic issues, sexism, and other forms of injustice.

6. Take a stand against injustice. Take risks. It is scary, difficult, and may bring up feelings of inadequacy, lack of self-confidence, indecision, or fear of making mistakes, but ultimately it is the only healthy and moral human thing to do. Intervene in situations where racism is being passed on.

7. Be strategic. Decide what is important to challenge and what's not. Think about strategy in particular situations. Attack the source of power.

8. Don't confuse a battle with the war. Behind particular incidents and interactions are larger patterns. Racism is flexible and adaptable. There will be gains and losses in the struggle for justice and equality.

9. Don't call names or be personally abusive. Since power is often defined as power over others—the ability to abuse or control people—it is easy to become abusive ourselves. However, we usually end up abusing people who have less power than we do because it is less dangerous. Attacking people doesn't address the systemic nature of racism and inequality.

10. Support the leadership of people of color. Do this consistently, but not uncritically.

11. Learn something about the history of white people who have worked for racial justice. There is a long history of white people who have fought for racial justice. Their stories can inspire and sustain you.

12. Don't do it alone. You will not end racism by yourself. We can do it if we work together. Build support, establish networks, and work with already established groups.

13. Talk with your children and other young people about racism.

Paul Kivel is a trainer, activist, writer and a violence prevention educator. He develops and conducts workshops on preventing domestic violence, ending racism, understanding lass and economics, and other issues related to social justice. Feel free to contact Paul at this web site www.paulkivel.com to learn more about his many publications and workshops.

National Ally Statement
By Those Aspiring To Be Allies To
Women of Color Advocates and Activists

Edited and Distributed by the Women of Color Network
July 2008

Use of this statement:

This statement is meant to challenge us all to more concretely address the experiences of women of color within our programs and ultimately strengthening our anti-violence against women movement

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I. **Declaration of Agreement on the Call to Action for Women of Color and Aspiring Allies:**

We who aspire to be allies to women of color advocates and activists have come forward to join these national calls, as white women and men, and as men of color, to discuss and share in the company of women of color our understanding of what an "ally" truly is.
We represent 336 voices that have experienced in this complex journey great learning, fear, defensiveness, anger, excitement, patience, and wonderful connection with many others seeking to make individual and movement-wide change. We have collectively come to the following assumptions that guide our work together.

We share and agree that the use of the term "ally' alone is not helpful because this concept can be and is often misused. It is best to name the process one is engaged in as opposed to assigning titles that give the impression of having already reached the role of "ally"; hence the use of the term "aspiring ally". This is not intended to be a certification, nor should you expect to be anointed an "ally".

We share and agree that white people often express "discomfort" or guilt, shame, etc. in talking about race. This does not result in action: we need to deal with the issue because it won't go away. Men also resist digging deep in discussing sexism but should be prepared at all times to receive feedback and to participate in dialogue.

We share and agree that it is important for people of color to be present when those aspiring allies are in discussion at various points in the journey. This provides some checks and balances as well as some accountability for genuine discussion and support for not backing off issues.

We share and agree that serving as a white ally, male ally or an aspiring ally of any kind can be a trap that places you once again at the center because attention is brought back on you. The goal must be to put the issue at the center, not ourselves.

We share and agree that it is ultimately key to engage in a daily process of truthfully evaluating yourself and coming to grips with how your silence actively perpetuates the ongoing oppression of women of color and to DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT.

This document is to provide all who read it with a roadmap for the journey of being an aspiring ally. We all agree, however, that one does not get to label oneself an ally nor should one be fooled into believing that the journey of being an ally is finite. In fact, as one shared, *"I was always told by women of color that my ally status 'expires every day at midnight!' We must strive to work at it on a daily basis."*

II.   Framing the Problem

In our discussions, we have identified the following as common attitudes from white or mainstream advocates in our programs when discussing or addressing issues of race and ethnicity:

- Defensiveness and anger in merely discussing the issue

- Reacting rather than listening to the information that is shared

- Not wanting to "talk about race anymore" amid the declaration of "being tired of this topic" or "have had it up to here with this"

- Artificially scapegoating these issues as a way of shutting down the topic of race altogether; ie., stating that there are other topics that need to be discussed such as heterosexism and homophobia, abelism, classism, etc. and resisting altogether a conversation about race

- Assuming that a discussion about race will not also include the intersection of the above topics

- Abuse and misuse of the term "ally" as a compulsory label for oneself whether your actions reflect this or not –and without seeking critique from others on consistency and quality of your "ally behavior"

- Selective support for one or two "acceptable" women of color but blanket negativity for all women of color

- Reliance upon privilege to pick and choose when you will and will not discuss, challenge, or collude with " the race issue"

- Degree of help is tempered on a day to day basis where women of color are never sure how far you will go to serve as an "ally"

- Assumption that as an "ally" this entitles you to speak for women of color, to take a lead role in entities developed by and for women of color, and to be present in all arenas in which race and ethnicity are discussed

- Conscious and unconscious action to silence those you don't want to hear from and making room for voices that are more palatable

- Bias and aggression disguised as passivity and/or fear of an individual or group of women of color

- Willingness to work together on one case involving a battered or sexually assaulted woman of color, but once we step away from that table we engage in tactics that disempower women of color in our program and communities of color as a whole

- Seeking validation from those women of color who we feel "safe" enough to approach to assure us that we are "okay" in our actions; we will shop until we get the answer we want

- Using privilege as a cushion by attempting to soften the topic and to protect the emotions of those seeking to address race, class or gender.

In the anti-violence against women movement:

- We have come to see that most often, white women are simply not interested in sharing power, much of which is unearned and simply bestowed and passed on by other white people. Even after "cultural competency" and diversity training, even after the training on race and ethnicity of which we claim to have had enough, we still choose those who walk, talk, think, and act as we do as our successors. Only those women of color we perceive as "non-threatening" are the ones we will consistently let in.

- We are "squatting" in our privileged positions of power because we "worked hard" to get here, and don't want to see what we built "destroyed"; thus we only trust those we can count on carrying on our legacy.

- We are coming to understand that "our legacy" has been one of pain, restriction, and a unique form of workplace violence that holds antiquated beliefs and hierarchy in place. Our legacy is not complete because it is from our point of view, our limited vision, one that can't possibly imagine all that is needed to serve the myriad of women that come into our program, and those who wouldn't dare ask us for help.

We have also come to understand that from women of color advocates the following in their day-to-day experience working with white women and men in this movement as a result of "our legacy":

- There is a different "walk around", daily life experience for women of color overall than for white women in this movement.

- Women of color are "endangered" in this movement (as coined by the Women of Color Network), and as such should be likened to an "endangered species" in that their work, their voice, their efforts, and they as human beings are co-opted, silenced, underutilized, or "poached" as to be removed or eliminated from their programs and the movement overall.

- Women of color are much less likely to serve in leadership roles, and those who are in leadership are often targeted and/or fired as they seek to make lasting changes and make the most of the time they have on behalf of those, such as young women, who are silenced and overlooked.

- There is a lack of access to advanced or specialized training around such areas as technology or public policy; women of color are not as visible in these discussions and are

usually the last to learn or receive current information in these areas

- More and more women of color are dying and are incarcerated with very little attention in our programs or in the media paid to this reality.

- When the topic of race, class, or gender is softened to protect those who are privileged, this has the opposite effect for women of color, who often experience this softening with great pain and emotion. The cycle of endangerment is reinforced if this pain and emotion is expressed in the form of further targeting.

- There is also the paradox of potentially being perceived as "less threatening" due to style and tone of speech, shared interests with those who are privileged, and even appearance (i.e., straighter hair, muted clothing and accessories; lighter skin, etc.). This further divides women of color and creates a triangulation effect.

III. Recommendations for Aspiring Allies

Being in agreement with this declaration, and recognizing that as white women our anti-racism work is on-going and our white privilege is present everyday, we invite all white women working in the anti-violence movement to engage with us in the implementation of the following recommendations. These recommendations do not address the role of men, and we encourage future work to develop additional recommendations to more fully address men.

- Do not assume you are doing the right thing in your work as an aspiring ally – be responsible to get feedback and be accountable by seeking out caucus or advisory supports and do your own research.

- Take this on as your own work - don't wait for women of color to make the work start happening, and don't expect them to be responsible for our work.

- Embrace your aspiring ally work and don't ever think you have "arrived'. This is a daily process, see it and treat it as such.

- Advocate for the institutionalization of an adequate response to these issues within your programs and agencies. Advocate for a Board, staff and volunteers that are representative of the communities you serve and are aspiring to serve.

- Don't steer away or avoid the topic of race – it is too easily pushed aside.

- Develop anti-racism action and discussion groups if you don't already have them accessible to you.

- If in management, change language so that you are not referring to staff as "my staff" or "my assistant"…this allows you to take one step away from assuming any form of ownership over those with whom you work.

- It is time to consider **HOW** racism is functioning in your agency, not **IF**. Racism and privilege reside in all levels of the organization and movement.

- Move beyond "information seeking" where you've attended one training and bought one book. Time to move to direct action and outcome and evaluate yourself and organization on a daily basis.

- Look at how race has impacted service delivery and formation and how it needs to be addressed to improve services. Conduct an audit of your services with outside support and input, and seek and welcome the expertise and input of women of color.

- Be able to work with, listen to, support and follow the leadership of women of color. Within organizations, this should be a measurable, tangible and documented action.

- Honor the work that culturally-specific programs have been doing in addressing violence against women. Be prepared to either be included or not included ion their work; communities of color are too often ostracized, excluded and minimized on the basis of seeking to serve their own communities without the involvement of the mainstream.

- Speak to those effecting public policy and funding to ensure that there is money set aside for programs to do culturally-specific work.

- Be willing to share resources such as access to funding, positions of power, and opportunities for decision-making and to be heard and visible on a local, state, and national level.

- Respond to women of color – don't fall completely silent as if to dismiss the issue –even if you don't completely understand what is being stated around difficult issues.

- Acknowledge that the anger of women of color is real and understandable.

- White women in particular need to take sexism and use it as a window for considering the impact of racism. However, don't assume that this is a true translation or equivalent point because some experiences tied to colonialism and imperialism may not ever be translatable.

- Read the original publication, *"National Response to the Call from WOCN: Collective Voices on the Endangered Woman of Color Advocate"*, published April 20, 2007, (http://womenofcolornetwork.org/special_update95.pdf) and stop allowing yourself to say "not this issue again". For countless women of color, these issues are a daily reality.

Introduction to Anti-Oppression and Cultural Humility

Oppression involves the systematic use of power to marginalize, exploit, silence, discriminate against, invalidate, and/or not recognize the complete humanness of those who are members of a disadvantaged group.

Each year, domestic abuse programs and spirited advocates from around the state work passionately for victims and their families. They promote peace and safety and diligently strive to eliminate institutional and cultural beliefs attitudes that often perpetuate the cycle of abuse.

As we strive to end domestic abuse, we also recognize that the individuals we serve and the communities that we work in are evolving. Individuals from unique cultural and/or linguistic groups often encounter multiple barriers that require "non-traditional" responses and services. Domestic violence programs work with limited funding and resources and often must find partnerships and allies to assist in providing meaningful support that honors the differences among clients.

Anti-oppression work is a strategy that is centered on fighting for social justice. It is fundamentally based on our personal commitment to recognize power inequalities and to work towards making changes in the inequalities that exist within the organizations and communities we serve. Anti-oppression work is a process that starts with personal reflection, recognizing our own prejudices, confronting stereotypes, fighting discrimination and valuing differences. The personal reflection allows us to enhance our advocacy and engage our organizations and communities to be more inclusive and embracing of the diversity of the individuals we serve and communities that we live in.

The following articles are resources to guide you through the journey of making anti-oppression core to your work to end domestic abuse.

Questions:

Making Anti-Oppression Core To Your Program

1. What is your understanding of anti-oppression work? What are the challenges?

2. What are the diverse groups that been served through your organization? What were the successes in serving them? What were the challenges?

3. How has your organization been able to develop relationships with diverse groups in your community?

Diversity/Multicultural/Anti-Oppression Work: Just What Kind of Work Do We Want To Do Anyway?

1. What model currently describes your personal work and philosophy? Your organization's? What model would you like to work towards?

2. Who are the individuals or organizations that are within your community that can support or assist in making anti-oppression core to your work?

Cultural Humility

1. What are your thoughts on the concept of Cultural Humility?

2. What partnerships or support would you need to be able to engage in the on-going self-evaluation and self-critique described in the article?

Making Anti-Oppression Core to Your Program

Access Committee, Governor's Council on Domestic Abuse

These are examples of concrete strategies that an organization committed to anti-oppression may want to consider. We encourage all domestic abuse programs to come up with methods and strategies that work in their communities. Anti-oppression work is an on-going process. Realize that we are never done with this work.

Set the Stage/Create an Atmosphere Through Training and Education

- Include questions about an applicant's understanding of anti-oppression in application materials and interview questions.

- Incorporate anti-oppression in training for all volunteers, staff, and board members.

- Offer on-going in-services that focus on how to better serve people from traditionally marginalized groups.

- Pick an issue to focus on intensively for the year: conduct in-services for staff and volunteers, visit other organizations working on this issue, have individual staff people read an article related to the issue and lead a discussion at staff meeting.

- Conduct an accessibility audit of your facility and develop a long-range work plan to make it more accessible. View accessibility broadly; consider both physical and "attitudinal" accessibility. Involve persons with disabilities as key consultants, partners, and planners.

- Bring anti-oppression training to groups you are part of, such as I-teams or Coordinated Community Response teams.

- Don't push historically marginalized people to do things because of their membership in an oppressed group (tokenism); base it on their work, experience, and skills.

- Remember these are complex issues and they need adequate time and space.

Create Space Within Your Building

- Designate an office or space within your building that staff from partner groups such as Refugee Family Strengthening, UNIDOS, and Deaf Unity can call their own. Strive to make them feel a welcome part of your agency.

- Offer partner groups use of copy machines, computers, phones, etc.

- Get to know staff from partner agencies: invite them to join in staff meetings, agency events, notify them when you have vacancies.

Make Anti-Oppression A Part of Your

Strategic Plan

◉ Ask each staff person to include at least one thing in their yearly work plan that reflects working towards making anti-oppression work core to his/her job. Make their progress on this a regular part of employee evaluations.

◉ Pay for one of your staff people to attend a language class at your local Technical College, or bring language training in-house.

◉ Conduct surveys of survivors, staff, board, community members each year to check in on how you are doing.

◉ Have a different staff person discuss an article related to anti-oppression each staff meeting. Strive to have honest and candid discussions.

◉ When recruiting board members, connect with diverse groups in your community.

◉ Hold board positions open until you can assure you are working towards a board that is more reflective of the survivor populations you serve.

◉ Have a bilingual position(s) be part of your general agency budget, not a position under a specialized grant or funding stream. Make it a permanent position.

◉ Make a collective commitment to hold people accountable for their behavior so that the organization can be a safe and nurturing place for all.

Build Proactive Relationships With Diverse Groups In Your Community

◉ If you have a multi-cultural center or other collective group in your community, assign a staff member to attend their public meetings and events. Expresses a genuine interest and support for their work without requesting anything in return.

◉ If your community has annual celebrations (such as Martin Luther King Day, Cinco de Mayo, Hmong New Year), become a sponsor of the event. Learn about the history and cultural significance of the event.

◉ Let groups know that they have an open invitation to attend events sponsored by your group.

Make sure your agency "wish list" or in-kind donation requests include items that will make all your service recipients feel welcome. Consult with representatives from different communities about what is most needed.
Consider diversity in:

- hair care products

- personal items/toiletries (soap, lotions, makeup, etc)

- foods

- dolls of color, toys/games from other cultures

- art and decorations that reflect a variety of cultures

- music/movies (different languages, closed captioned, etc)

- clothing

Volunteers

- Connect with diverse groups to expand your volunteer bases. Look to your local Retired Senior Volunteer Program, faith communities, and culturally-specific organizations or identity groups.

- Sponsor open houses specifically for seniors and other groups to learn about volunteer opportunities.

Diversity/Multiculturalism/Anti-Oppression Work
Just What Kind of Work Do We Want To Do Anyway?

The following is a model which illustrates some of the ways individuals and agencies approach what is often called "diversity work". While the terms and definitions diversity/multiculturalism/anti-oppression are fairly reflective of the way most people think of these concepts, we realize that not everyone defines these term sin the same way. The definitions below are adapted from work done by Beth Richie and will give us common definitions to work from. Please consider how the following definitions affect you personally and how the affect the agency.

Diversity	Multiculturalism	Anti-Oppression Work
The goal is to have people from different backgrounds integrate into existing project/program	The goal is to have people from different backgrounds integrate into the atmosphere and to profit from the richness of human diversity.	The goal is to fight for social justice and create alternative models for personal, institutional, and cultural interactions.
One of the characteristics is that there is no recognition of power imbalances.	One of the characteristics is that there is no recognition of power imbalances.	One of the characteristics is a recognition or power imbalances and actively working to change these, both within the organization and in the community.
Empowerment is individual.	Empowerment is individual.	Both the individual and the social institution are taken into consideration with empowerment.
Organizational Level	**Organizational Level**	**Organizational Level**
People from disempowered groups are invited/recruited into the reorganization but nothing, including the structure and attitudes of the organization, changes.	People from disempowered groups are invited/recruited into the reorganization and surface changes are made such as putting up ethnic posters ("celebrating diversity") but overall structures and attitudes of the organization do not change. People from these groups are still expected to change to fit the organization.	People from disempowered groups are an integral part of the organization and the structure and attitudes fit this diversity.
Individual Level	**Individual Level**	**Individual Level**
The individual works with/ relates to people from other disempowered groups but doesn't reflect on how his/her attitudes might be oppressive. Sees people from oppressed groups as the same as in "I don't think of you as a lesbian."	The individual works with/ relates to people from other oppressed groups and recognizes that differences might exist, but doesn't work to change interpersonal and societal power dynamics.	The individual working with/ relating to other groups recognizes the unequal power dynamics and works to correct these on an individual and societal level.

Cultural Humility & Domestic Violence

How can we do our work to end domestic violence and work to support the widest diversity of individuals to increase safety while we still have so much to learn about the different issues and barriers for different groups of people? Many of us have found these "cultural humility" concepts by Tervalon and Murray-Garcia* very helpful in identifying that we must be constantly self-reflective and humble in our work, always open to recognizing how much more we have to learn, and recognizing that becoming "culturally competent" is a lifelong project.

CULTURAL HUMILITY

Cultural humility incorporates a lifelong commitment to self-evaluation and self critique, to redressing power imbalances, and to developing mutually beneficial partnerships with communities on behalf of individuals and defined populations.

CULTURAL HUMILITY IS

◎ Being flexible & humble enough to assess anew the cultural dimension of the experience of each person.

◎ Being flexible & humble enough to say we do not know ... and to search for and access resources that might enhance the care we can give.

IS NOT

◎ A discrete endpoint of mastering a finite body of knowledge.

◎ An isolated increase in knowledge without a consequent change in attitude & behavior.

*Ideas on this hand-out were inspired by and taken from "Cultural Humility versus Cultural Competence: A Critical Distinction in Defining Physician Training Outcomes in Multicultural Education" by Melanie Tervalon & Jann Murray-Garcia, in J*ournal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved*, Vol. 9, no. 2, pp. 117-125. Although that article specifically addresses the role of cultural humility for physicians, we feel the concepts are just as important and useful for people working to keep anti-oppression work core to all domestic violence work. The full article can be found at: http://info.kp.org/communitybenefit/assets/pdf/our_work/global/Cultural_Humility_article.pdf

A Guide to
Measuring the Empowerment of Women of Color in Feminist Organizations

Are you a woman of color who often feels disenchanted by empty promises and racism within our organizations?

Are you a white woman who feels committed to unlearning racism and working well with women of color but feel discouraged by how little progress our organizations have actually made in empowering women of color?

This article may help you think about things in new productive ways. This is one of the few articles we know that specifically explores the unique and hard issues of addressing racism and the empowerment of women of color in predominantly white organizations.

Don't be put off by the length of this important article. Choose one or two of the sections to read and discuss with colleagues. Or, discuss one or two sections at a staff meeting.

For domestic violence programs, we especially recommend the sections, "Questions for Evaluating the Empowerment of Women of Color".

Measuring the Empowerment of Women of Color in Feminist Organizations

Loretta J. Ross, Executive Director
National Center for Human Rights Education

This essay will address measures for evaluating the empowerment of women of color in predominantly white feminist organizations, and offer suggestions for women of color as well as white women to interrogate the institutions and movements that purport to unite all women in the struggle to end all forms of oppression. This evaluative process is critical because women of color have experienced many degrees of empowerment and disempowerment in the women's movement, from outright white supremacy and xenophobia to careless tokenism and objectification. Yet, many women of color still agree that it is important to be engaged in white feminist organizations, and that our participation should enable us to address gender and racial oppression in all its intersectional forms, inside and outside these formations.

This paper will also briefly examine historical and contemporary efforts by women of color to bring attention to the racism and alienation in the women's movement, from its anti-slavery roots in the first wave of the women's movement to the second wave efforts to bring women together across fissures of race and class. While it is important to write about the achievements of women of color in building the modern feminist movement because this is a much neglected topic of research and documentation, that is not the purpose of this essay. This essay seeks instead, to define the specific criteria for measuring the empowerment of women of color within the feminist movement and to address some of the difficult issues attendant to this process.

In particular, I wish to constructively address the frustration many women feel when they make efforts to empower women of color within predominantly white institutions, frustrations that are shared by both women of color and white women. These activists who are committed to the process recognize that the empowerment of women of color takes place in a risky and unequal environment, and those who choose to embark upon this task often end up discouraged, alienated, and marginalized by the experience.

I believe the most difficult part of the task is to openly confront and deal with various aspects of white supremacy within the feminist movement, which I will explore in more detail later. But an additional part of the problem is that we have yet, as feminists of color, to specify empowerment on our own terms in three significant ways:
(1) the targets and indicators needed to track progress;
(2) the individuals and institutions needed to be held accountable; and
(3) the measures needed to accelerate progress.
Without creating objectifiable and quantifiable goals and measurements of empowerment, women of color are disenchanted by efforts that tokenize our participation and we are annoyed by the rhetoric of empty promises without implementing actions. White women are also disempowered by failed attempts, particularly those who have allied with women of color in various recruitment strategies but see no lasting results of their efforts, or who choose strategies that are deemed shallow and inadequate by the very women they were intended to benefit.

This essay is only the beginning of what will undoubtedly become a multi-year project to develop viable, accessible, and practical ways to plan and assess efforts to empower women of color in the feminist

movement. It builds on previous analyses of racism in the women's movement, as well as important work to examine gender empowerment in the field of development.

I have worked for the past 30 years in the women's movement in the United States, beginning my feminist career in the early anti-rape movement in the 1970's as the third executive director of the very first rape crisis center in the world. The Washington, D.C. Rape Crisis Center was not only a pioneer in the anti-rape movement, but also pioneered the empowerment of women of color within a feminist organization, a success story that has been rarely duplicated.

The Center was started by a group of white, working class women who began a conscious -raising group in 1971 that evolved into the D.C. Area Feminist Alliance or DCAFA. Out of these discussions grew an awareness that women were being raped in the community with no one to help them. They decided to start a rape hotline in 1972, and that began the history of the D.C. Rape Crisis Center. At first the Center was run by volunteer labor, a difficult task for women who had other jobs and lacked financial support to be full-time volunteers. They also observed that the majority of women who called for help were African-American, which was not totally unexpected in a majority-black city like Washington, D.C. At this point they made another important and revolutionary decision: that when they obtained funding for paid staff positions, they would hire African American women so that women providing the services came from the communities being served.

The simple decision probably was not automatic or easy for these pioneers. Many of them needed jobs themselves, and recognized that paid jobs in the feminist movement were very rare. Moreover, they did not know many feminists of color and had to work particularly hard to seek out candidates for their positions. There were accusations of "reverse racism" by opponents of the plan, who felt that white women were being unfairly discriminated against. Nevertheless, they persevered and hired an African-American women, Michelle Hudson, as the first black woman and woman of color to direct a rape crisis center; a decision even more momentous because it was the pioneering center that helped launch a worldwide movement to end violence against women that has impressively reached every corner of the globe.

The benefits of that decision are still unfolding 30 years later. Hundreds of women of color gravitated towards the Center, getting their early training in feminist theory and anti-rape practice. The Center became a literal hotbed of early black feminist organizing and theorizing in the 1970's and 1980's. The Center sponsored the first National Conference on Violence Against Third World Women in 1980, which brought together more than 200 women of color from around the country. It linked women of color activists/scholars like bell hooks, Gloria Anzaldúa', Barbara Smith, Cherrie Moraga, Beth Ritchie, and P. Catlin Fullwood who challenged many aspects of the movement to end violence against women, not the least of which was racism, homophobia, and classism.

These early activists also criticized the movement's over-reliance on law enforcement to end violence against women of color because automatically calling the police is always problematic for women n communities under siege by the state. Because of the influence of feminists of color, the definition of violence against women was expanded to include institutional violence like racism and xenophobia, economic violence like poverty and homelessness and state violence like police brutality and militarization. This broadening of the agenda beyond the violence committed by individual men is still at the core of the analyses of women of color, as demonstrated in the newer Color of Violence conferences organized in 2000 and 2002 by Andrea Smith, a young Native American woman who has picked up the baton and now attracts thousands of women of color to these events.

Structurally, the decision transformed the D.C. Rape Crisis Center. Women of color not only served in staff positions, but they joined the board of directors and helped make important policy and financial decisions. They became the representational voice of the Center, appearing in the media, testifying before Congress, and developing relationships with funders. While this transformation was not easy or without its problems, the Center demonstrated that the empowerment of women of color was possible within a feminist institution, and that the empowerment enabled the Center to full fill its mission of serving all women who were vulnerable to all forms of violence.

It is this early success story that I keep in mind as I begin the project of discussing empowerment of women of color in the women's movement. It has been written from the perspective of a veteran of the struggle who

has worked at both extremely large and extremely small feminist organizations. In addition to working at the Center, I also launched the first Women of Color Program for the National Organization for Women (NOW) in the 1980s, and have also worked at black feminist organizations like the National Black Women's Health Project. It is from these many locations as a woman of color that I have observed the often painful process of trying to integrate women of color into predominantly white organizations, or at least recruit them to the social movements represented by organizations, such as the movement to prevent abortion rights.

Oppressing Ourselves

The women's movement has tried many strategies to deal with issues of racism, classism and more recently, homophobia within its midst. Most of these efforts have been unsuccessful, particularly those attempts to integrate women of color into the ranks of majority-white feminist organizations. A sizeable number of books have been written by women of color and white women on the alienation of women of color from the feminist movement, largely attributing the separation to issues of racism or classism or both.

Each wave of the women's movement has been confronted by its inability to include or represent all women, beginning from the earliest days when activists like Sojourner Truth or writers like Harriet Jacobs challenged the overt and subtle white supremacy of the early women's movement. Jacobs, an escaped slave, wrote in 1857 that while she appreciated the offer of one of her white benefactors to purchase her freedom,

"being sold from one owner to another seemed too much like slavery." She disliked the apparently generous offer because it affirmed the chattel status that offended her human dignity. This passage highlighted the inability of well-meaning white women to understand the agency of black women because the white woman proceeded to purchase Harriet against her will, causing Harriet to describe her bill of sale as follows: "I well know the value of that bit of paper, but much as I love freedom, I do not like to look upon it."

Sojourner Truth was arguably the most outspoken black woman on racism within the women's movement in the 19th century. In her demands for universal suffrage - voting rights for black men and all women - she challenged that portion of the women's movement that sought to advance women's rights through white supremacy. Over the next century, other women ofcolor writers like Lucy Gonzalez Parsons, Amanda Berry Smith, Emma Tenayuca, Mary Church Terrell, Ann J. Cooper, and Ida B. Wells echoed the demand that white women confront the racism within their ranks in order to build a movement that could truly include and improve the lives of all women. White feminists like Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Lucretia Mott joined them, but they also experienced betrayal by other white feminists like Susan B. Anthony who opposed linking voting rights for women to enfranchisement of African Americans.

The 1960's are most often pinpointed as the beginning of the second wave of the women's movement in the United States, largely because women coming out of the civil rights and anti-war movement founded the National Organization for Women (NOW) in 1966.

One of the important books addressing the question of empowerment of women of color in this second wave was <u>Common Differences: Conflicts in Black and White Feminist Perspectives</u> by the black/white team of Gloria Joseph and Jill Lewis. This groundbreaking study examined the ways in which racial and sexual factors interact in the oppression of women, with a focus on racism in the dominant white culture and its subversion of the feminist goal of ending all forms of oppression. bell hooks electrifying book, <u>Ain't I a Woman: Black Women and Feminism</u> challenged the anti-feminist claim that black women are not victims of sexist oppression, but also challenged white feminists to center the struggle against racism in their work to overcome the barriers that separate white and black women. Perspectives that went beyond the dominant black/white paradigm were offered by Cherie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa' who wrote <u>This Bridge Called My Back" Writings by Radical Women of Color</u> examined "incidences of intolerance, prejudice, and denial of differences within the feminist movement….to create a definition of what 'feminist means to us'". This book brought together the voices of women of color representing Latina, Asian American, Native American, and African American feminists who offered a critique of the racism of white women.

Each of these books – and many more not mentioned – called attention to the lack of empowerment of women of color within the feminist movement. Moreover, they affirmed the feminism and agency of women of color, and a number of them offered possible strategies for overcoming the racism and classism of the women's movement. Moreover, they affirmed the feminism and agency of women of color, and a number of them offered possible strategies for overcoming the racism and classism.

Women of color frequently demanded that the feminist movement address all forms of oppression in order to fully achieve feminist goals, practices and agendas. This includes expanding the agenda beyond ending women's oppression to questioning all forms of authority and domination, particularly social structures of racism and classism. The Combahee River Collective captured an early articulation by Michelle Wallace of the driving intersectional need in the 1977 black feminist movement:

We exist as women who are Black who are feminists, each stranded for the moment, working independently because there is not yet an environment in this society remotely congenial to our struggle – because. Being on the bottom, we would have to do what no one else has done; we would have to fight the world.

This "fighting the world" imagery referred, of course, not only to fighting the sexism of men of color, but also white female racism, a criticism echoed by many women of color writers including Paula Giddings, Joy Harjo, and Angela Davis, but particularly pointed out by bell hooks in <u>Ain't I A Woman</u> which examines the politics of racism and sexism from a feminist perspective. She refuted claims that racism and sexism were two separate issues. bell hooks pointed out in 1981 that racism and sexism were naturally and inextricably intertwined, and only by committing themselves to the struggle to end all forms of white supremacy could the women's movement achieve its goals.

Gloria Yamato details how the resistance to confronting white supremacy and racism occurs in four primary forms.

(1) aware/blatant racism, or the gutter epithets openly practices by members of hate groups like the Ku Klux Klan;

(2) aware/covert racism. The type practiced by whites who use various justifications for discrimination that maintain traditional patterns of exclusion such as refusing to rent houses to people of color, or automatically assigning children of color to remedial education classes;

(3) unaware/unintentional racism that objectifies and romanticizes people of color, usually deriving from a well-intentioned but inadequate "tolerance" framework; and

(4) Unaware/self-righteous racism that seeks to prove whites cannot be racist because they are more well-read about people of color issues, more able to indulge in ethnic chic, and who prove their anti-racist credentials by engaging in interracial relationships with people of color.

Each of these types of racism can be found in the predominantly white feminist movement, although open name-calling has largely gone underground. However, many women of color who appear "white" and a few ethical white women report that when no visible women of color are present, racial epithets leap alarmingly fast to the tongue, particularly in cases of conflict over the empowerment of women of color within a white institution. Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia also operate in this covert manner.

Another white supremacist trend the women's movement borrows from its conservative male counterparts is to accuse women of color of reverse discrimination when women of color organize events limited to women of color. This is generally the first accusation made against women of color events or organizations – that we are "separatist" or "exclusionary" – although similar interpretations are not made by feminists who organize "women only" events for themselves. Such accusers find their kindred spirits in other white supremacist movements that oppose affirmative action, promote xenophobic immigration restrictions, or advocate for English Only legislation.

Because of the success, mutability, and intransigence of white supremacist ideas, women of color have observed that one does not even have to be white to subscribe to racist beliefs. In fact, women (and men) of color who are apologists for white supremecy are often used to thwart the empowerment of others who challenge the system.

Empowering women of color within the feminist movement must have as its task the development of theoretical and concrete strategies that directly confront the racism, classism, and the power imbalances inherent in a movement that has yet to divorce itself from its white supremacist origins. As Barbara Smith points out, "feminism is the political theory and practice that struggles to free all women: women of color, poor women, disabled women, lesbians, old women - as well as white, economically privileged, heterosexual women. Anything less than this vision of total freedom is not feminism, but merely female self-aggrandizement."

Not the Universe, but a Beginning

What this essay will not do at this time is:

1) Discuss the difference between the women's movement and the feminist movement, but will instead elide these arguably separate movements for the purposes of these discussions;

2) Focus on the autonomous organizations and movements developed by women of color that address issues of empowerment in their own particular ways, because the focus of this essay is on predominantly white organizations;

3) Address the question of whether women of color should be included in white organizations or not, which is a lively ongoing debate among women of color but not the purpose of this paper which instead assumes that some women of color do wish to engage with predominantly white organizations and addresses itself to the question of means;

4) Analyze the differences on the philosophies of feminist organizations, separating them into the academically inspired categories of liberal, radical, gynocentric, cultural, or post-modernist feminisms, largely because the problems of empowerment and the proposed criteria transcend these divisions;

5) Offer prescriptive suggestions that are immutable or universal because each specific situation must be analyzed within its own content and realities;

6) Define precisely who is a woman of color by addressing the inclusion or exclusion of groups of women such as Arab Americans, Jewish American or various mestizo categories among women of color, but instead will deal with the four predominant subgroups of African American, Native American, Latina/Hispanic, and Asian and Pacific Islander;

7) Assume that women of color or white women are monolithic homogeneous groups in eternal dichotomous opposition to each other but this essay uses the rather simplified binary description merely for the purposes of this analysis;

8) Address the reality that race as well as gender are socially constructed categories and socially learned roles, behaviors, expectations designed to perpetuate systems of domination and oppression so that every human being is racialized and gender-identified to fit into the system;

9) Discuss all forms of disempowerment, such as homophobia, rural/urban disadvantages, ageism, ableism, education, etc. This is not because those topics are not germane to the topic of empowerment - because they are - but they are not addressed because of limits of time and space available at this moment. However, it is my belief that the empowerment measures offered herein will also be useful in assessing other means of exclusion and marginalization, and will readily lend themselves to substitution of other variables as this work progresses and is adapted and used by others to address their particular situations.

What is the Empowerment of Women of Color?

By the term empowerment, I extrapolate on the conscientização concepts offered by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire in 1970 to demonstrate the power of conscious thought to negate accepted limits and open the way to a new future. The term conscientização refers to learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions in society, and to take actions against oppressive elements of reality. Freire, who had as his goal teaching illiterate peasants to read, recognized that education is not a value-free, neutral process, but one that can be used to either empower or disempower learners. He sought to use education as a way to understand historical and social and economic processes of oppression and not accept their inevitability. Instead, learners were to analyze their situations both subjectively and objectively in constant dialectical relationship that enabled them to reflect upon and act upon the world in order to transform it. In this pedagogical approach, Freire began to define two of the vital elements of empowerment: (1) the providing of knowledge or information, and (2) establishing the self-worth of the individuals or groups involved so that they believed they were worthy or deserving of such knowledge.

Freire's concept of conscientização was transformed into consciousness-raising by the second wave of the women's movement that recognized that women might lack the courage to choose to develop and use their capabilities because of the oppressive patriarchal systems in which they are located. Thus, the women's movement extended the concept of conscientização into a process of empowerment. A particularly useful and updated definition of empowerment is available in the United Nations' Development Fund for Women's Progress of the World's Women 2000 Report. Empowerment is not defined as an event fixed in space and time, but as a continuing process that includes:

(1) acquiring knowledge and understanding of gender relations and ways in which these relations may be changed;

(2) developing a sense of self-worth, a belief in one's ability to secure desired changes and the right to control one's life;

(3) gaining the ability to generate choices and exercise bargaining power; and

(4) developing the ability to organize and influence the direction of social change to create a more just social and economic order, nationally and internationally.

Moreover, empowerment also requires both an internal process of self-awareness in which women claim the time and space to re-examine their own lives critically and collectively, but also requires an external enabling environment in which other actors (corporations, the state, civil society, etc.) work together to remove external obstacles to empowerment. These obstacles often take the form of human rights violations that include, but are not limited to poverty, racism, xenophobia, silencing, marginalization, or disenfranchisement. Thus, empowerment is a two-fold process: it involves the development of women's agency and the removal of barriers to the exercise of this agency.

When applied to women of color, the empowerment process must incorporate several key strategies defined by feminists of color. First of all, the concept of consciousness raising pioneered by the early feminist movement has been married by women of color to a process of examining and understanding internalized oppression, often called Self-Help. Self-Help was initially propagated through the feminist movement by the National Black Women's Health Project in the 1980's, but since has been incorporated into other ethnic organizations such as the National Latino Health Organization. Self-Help has as its philosophy the idea that social change can be enhanced by personal transformation and so encourages the re-evaluation of old behavior patterns that have been created by individuals as their responses to multiple and

intersecting oppressions. The lives of women of color have been influenced by these oppressions and this sometimes affects the way we deal with each other as well as with white people.

Working on internalized oppression unfolds some of the internal barriers to the agency of women of color. Women must first be given the information with which to make decisions about their lives. This is the political education step. Then they must work on understanding why they do not or cannot act on this knowledge. This is the self-help step. It is an entirely human dilemma that is applicable to everyone: why we don't act on known information even when it is in our interest to do so. For example, everyone agrees that exercise and proper nutrition lead to healthier lives, but most people don't act on this knowledge, proving that knowledge alone is insufficient to create empowerment.

Other aspects of internalized oppression for feminists of color are our subversive gestures and interlocking and interchangeable identities with which we survive multiple oppressions. Most people recognize the bi-lingual nature of our lives, as we switch back and forth between our native tongues (Spanish, "Ebonics", Tagalog, Vietnamese, etc.) and standard English. However, our cultural competency goes much deeper than linguistics, because in order to become less vulnerable to oppression we had to, in the words of Gloria Anzaldúa', "acquire the ability, like a chameleon, to change color when the dangers are many and options are few. In other words, we are compelled to wear masks that "drive a wedge between our intersubjective personhood and the persona we present to the world." Continuously wearing and interchanging masks exact a

toll on women of color, according to Anzaldúa'" "After many years of wearing masks, we may become a series of roles, the constelled self limping along with broken limbs."

Questions for Evaluating the Empowerment of Women of Color

The empowerment of women of color at predominantly white feminist institutions may be evaluated in two important ways: (1) the process by which the empowerment was sought; and (2) the results that were actually achieved. In a sense, the first aspect examines the intentionality and process, while the second aspect monitors outcomes regardless of intentions. In this way, these empowerment measures go beyond the legal standard used in the American judicial system for determining discrimination. All civil rights-based complaints of racism in the United States have been narrowed by Supreme Court decisions into only examining intentionality, creating a much more difficult standard of proof for claimants. For example, it is not sufficient to prove that traditional patterns of exclusion results in a discriminatory outcome, i.e., an all-white work force. It is necessary to prove that such traditional patterns were intentional and not the results of tradition or other factors such as the public's preference to visit white doctors.

However, the effort to evaluate the empowerment of women of color should use the higher human rights-based standard of performance that assesses both process and outcomes. Only in this way are true results evaluated, because even good intentions can lead to disappointing outcomes. An example of such policies frequently occurs when feminist organizations advertise for employees and require advanced degrees or ten or more years' experience in the women's movement. These apparently objective criteria will most assuredly result in a smaller pool of applicants available from communities of color because of historical discrimination in higher education and the relatively fewer numbers of women of color who have worked for at least ten years in women's organizations. Such indicators are never unambiguous, but they can be powerful tools with which to dialogue with people in power and to seek change in institutions.

The following questions are divided into four categories based on the previously named definitions of empowerment.

The first category asks the question:

Do women of color have the opportunity to acquire knowledge and understand gender and racial relationships and ways in which these relationships might be changed?

Several key points of research and analysis may be grouped under this question:

(1) Are partnerships among women of color both within and external to the institution facilitated by the organization? Frequently, women of color are "minority" staff persons who are numerically out-numbered by their white co-workers, particularly at the management level. Thus, is it vital that opportunities are provided that allow them to network with other women of color similarly situated within or outside the organization. This could mean providing additional support and resources for them to attend conferences, meetings, and coalitions at which they could develop peer relationships with other women of color.

(2) Are in-service training and educational opportunities provided so that women who lack extensive experience in the feminist movement have the opportunity to study feminist theory, the history of feminist organizations, and the history of women of color? Does the organization's in-house library contain ample books by and on women of color? Can a woman of color obtain additional funding to build her own library, enroll in a women's studies course, or study in-depth the history of her own ethnic community?

(3) Does the organization pit groups of women of color against each other, encouraging competitive victimhood? Does it prefer to work with more assimilated women of color who more closely resemble and articulate white middle-class values? Does it assume that women of color are interchangeable, and fail to pay attention to the way different women of color are being used or integrated into the women's movement? In the words of Sangrita Chari, a South Asian feminist, "while white organizations have to diversify across the board, we as women of color have to be vigilant that brown women are not used to displace black women in a way that allows white women not to deal with the relationship that is at the core of white supremacy, which is their relationship with and to black women."

The second category addresses the process of supporting women of color in developing a sense of self-worth, a belief in one's ability to secure desired changes the right to control one's life. Several areas of examination may be gleaned from the following questions:

(1) Does the organization invest in self-help, self-esteem and self-improvement trainings for all staff, with a particular focus on providing such for women of color? Does the organization actively help create the time and space for women of color to actively examine their lives critically and collectively, such as women of color caucuses or study groups? Quantifiable indicators can only measure the objective conditions that enable or disable women of color, not the subjective variables of whether women of color believe in their ability to speak out and take control of their lives, so this focus is particularly important.

(2) Are there opportunities for furthering or completing one's academic career, such as flexible work schedules to allow women of color to attend college, or financial support for such opportunities?

(3) Does the culture of the organization consciously or unconsciously operate using an information hierarchy in which those who have access to the most information are rewarded, and those who do not are disadvantaged? Such a situation can make all women, but particularly women of color, fearful of disclosing their lack of knowledge or confusion when the rewards and power system clearly favor those who are most informed?

(4) Is there a process for mentoring in place which teams more experienced staff with newer ones? This process not only provides the basic staff orientation all new staff receive, but also should engage in self-disclosing shared learning that explicates the mentor's political development, and in a sense, her movement "scars" so that the woman of color learns not only from the mentor's successes but her challenges as well.

(5) Is the woman of color expected to be representative of her entire race, or even worse, of all women of color, so that she is expected to unfairly shoulder the responsibility of speaking for many silenced voices, a position in which most white women are not placed?

(6) Does the organization recognize that much of the work that women of color do in their communities may be unnoticed or unmarked by the women's movement because it presents itself in forms and structures unfamiliar to white feminists? For example, work with a women's committee in a church or mosque may not be recognized or appreciated as part of the women's movement, although this may be the site in which significant organizing by women takes place.

The third category addresses the question of gaining the ability to generate choices and exercise bargaining power within the organization. Sample questions under this heading may include:

(1) Are women of color in leadership, governance

or management positions within the organization? If so, how many, how long, and what decision making authority do they have? What is the diversity table of the board, staff, and volunteers?

(2) What percentage of the organization's budget is devoted to advancing issues identified as priorities by women of color, particularly in relation to expenditures in the overall budget? Do women of color have the authority to suggest budget re-allocations towards the priorities of women of color?

(3) What public policy initiatives or legislation does the organization promote or endorse that specifically benefit women of color? For example, does the organization support or oppose affirmative action, welfare reform, immigration restrictions, etc.?

(4) Are women of color visible as organizational spokespersons in the media and other public efforts? What media skills training are available to women of color so that the organizational images in the media are not always white women?

(5) Are fundraising strategies sensitive to the needs of women of color, and do not create contradictions in communities of color? For example, an anti-rape organization may decide on a direct mail appeal that focuses on rapes in the community. However, carelessly singling out images of black male rapists may unintentionally reinforce racist stereotypes in the community. Unfortunately, many non-profits have discovered that increasing white racial fears increases financial contributions because this strategy reinforces pre-existing prejudices. Another strategy used by predominantly white groups is to seek funds for their "women of color" programs and projects, unfairly competing against autonomous women of color organizations that lack the established relationships with the predominantly white funding world. In a similar vein, are women of color provided with access to key funders and allowed to attend funders' conferences so that they may develop relationships with funders that are not mediated by white women?

(6) Does the organizational culture create informal rules and social settings in which key discussions are held and pivotal decisions made that inadvertently exclude women of color?

For example, is it customary for the leadership to meet socially because they live in the same neighborhood, participate in the same sports, or share the same interests? If so, these practices may exclude women of color who do not have the same opportunities for informal interactions.

(7) Are there systems of power and control that affect all women's institutions and not just women of color, but that have the net effect of disadvantaging women of color? For example, it may be customary for the leaders of a large feminist organization to insist that it will only share power with other women's organizations that bring the same high level of resources to the table, like the ability to sponsor buses to a national march. This policy, while race-neutral, would disadvantage women of color organizations that cannot allocate thousands of dollars to sponsor buses, so that only organizations with multi-million dollar resources would be allowed into the inner circle of decision-making.

(8) Does the institution provide fair access to technology and appropriate training so that women of color are not disadvantaged? Given the well-reported "digital divide" in communities of color, it is not unusual for women of color to have the skills to use the latest in technology.

The fourth category addresses the question of developing the ability to organize and influence the direction of social change to create a more just social order.

Questions in this category may include:

(1) Does the organization clearly state its feminist and anti-racist principles and ethics and are these values incorporated into every aspect of the organization? Are these values shared and understood by everyone in the organization and is there a process for ongoing political education so that staff may reflect on, internalize and improve upon these values?

(2) Does the organization incorporate and focus on the needs of economically disadvantaged women to address issues of class? Lesbian women? Disabled women? etc? Does the organization assume the hiring of women of color automatically provides them with access to poor women? Often many

white middle class women do not recognize that women of color in the movement are also middle class, and wrongly assume that because a woman is African American or Chicana, she knows about, understands, or can be the voice of poor women.

(3) Even if the organization focuses on a single political issue, does its political analysis connect the dots between all issues of oppression so that work to end one form of oppression does not further another type? For example, does work ending racism set up a victim competition between victims of racism and victims of homophobia?

(4) Does the organization use the human rights framework in its analysis, so that local or national issues are connected to the global movement for human rights around the world? Does it recognize the existence of human rights violations in the United States? Is appropriate human rights education provided internally and externally so that all organizational stakeholders understand these connections?

Clearly, this is just the beginning of the process by which the empowerment of women of color may be measured and evaluated within feminist organizations. Furtherance of this work may result in a lessening of tensions and confusion when feminist organizations seek to engage women of color within their programs and activities. There are many settings in which an empowerment evaluation may be useful, such as white funders who support women of color organizations and projects, as well as potential employers who are making hiring decisions about women of color. The ultimate goal is to create an empowering and enabling environment that allows the development of successful and healthy relationships between and among women of color and white women. This requires frankly acknowledging the immensity of the task at hand but also appreciating the tremendous rewards that may be gained. A united women's movement, no longer divided by race and class that challenges all forms of domination can only move forward in improving the lives of all women. In the words of Audre Lorde,

"Learning to consciously extend ourselves to each other and to call upon each other's strengths is a life-saving strategy. In the best of circumstances surrounding our lives, it requires an enormous amount of mutual, consistent support for us to be able to look straight into the faces of the powers aligned against us and still do our work with joy. It takes determination and practice."

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The Politics of Identity

Violeta Iguchi
Access Committee

When we are asked to describe who we are, we often include social and cultural categories. Aside from woman and mother, we would probably include attributes such as: immigrant, lesbian, pilot, fan of "Color Purple", middle class, etc. Some of these labels refer to our own social identity, that is, our belonging to specific social groups.

The social and political changes of the women's movement in the 60s, 70s and 80s, as well as the Civil Rights movement, enlarged the sphere of women's membership to areas otherwise the privilege of males, particularly white, educated males. The early women's movement began as a liberation movement which was dedicated to the elimination of ways in which women were oppressed, and the removal of social barriers that had constrained women's choices. Out of this movement we gained reproductive choice, educational and occupational choices, legal rights, as well as freedom of sexual orientation and personal relationships. This initial movement did not see women as "better" than men, but fought to obtain for women similar opportunities that were available to men, in an attempt to eliminate societal sexism. The early feminist movement was in favor of a gender-neutral society where everyone should be allowed to exercise their freedom of choice. It is due to this early feminist movement that behaviors which were widely accepted by society became criminalized, such as marital rape, sexual harassment at work and domestic violence.

However, with the emergence of the new conservatism of the 1980s, it became obvious that there were no compelling changes in the societal model to accommodate the fairness and justice movement, and so many progressive minds retreated to niches and focused on their own selves, based on a victimized identity. These groups included ethnic minorities such as Native Americans, African Americans, but also groups whose reputation was perceived as "tarnished" by the majority at large, such as gays and lesbians, and people with disabilities. This phenomenon became known as identity politics.

Identity politics is centered on an emphasized (and sometimes artificial) separation between groups, while, at the same time, stressing the groups' strong collective identities. These identities represent for many a retreat from a condemning society to a virtual space which is perceived as comfortable and safe from the assaults pervasive in society. As a self-defense mechanism, identity politics defined groups in a way which prohibited any overlap of interests, and which in effect made it impossible to fight for a common cause. Identity politics has been called a "politics of despair", as it promotes the fight of one group against another - it is a fight which nobody wins. It is a struggle that pits Jewish women against non-Jewish women, mothers against non-mothers, African Americans against Puerto Ricans, etc., leading to the creation of narrower and narrower identity groups unable to think and act cohesively for social change.

Identity politics forces women to whittle through the complexity of their own social identities and choose narrower and narrower niches to which they could belong, while instilling a sense of betrayal for belonging to more than one group, since the differences between groups were perceived as unbridgeable. Its growth and wide acceptance within the feminist movement has

prevented a larger scale feminist movement that could have effectively challenged sexism and societal oppression of women.

It is now our task to rise above the narrow confines of identity politics, put differences aside, and focus on our commonalities, and combine interests of distinct social groups, who are willing to work together in an effort to create effective changes at the level of laws and institutions.

As Joan Mandle eloquently explains, "… we need to affirm the early women's movements' insight that the personal – sexism in personal relationships, the tragedy of sexual violence or abuse, the division of housework within families, or the poverty that women disproportionately experience – can be an important factor in creating a politics of engagement. By so doing, we can join with others to construct a vision and politics that promises real democratic participation, self-determination, and egalitarian justice for all."[1]

1 Mandle, Joan, How Political is the Personal? Identity Politics, Feminism and Social Change, http://www.beyondintractability.org/internal-biblio/23818

The Politics of Identity

This section is designed to facilitate discussion about the possibilities, roles and responsibilities we have to do anti-oppression work when we are not members of a specific oppressed group. It is also meant to understand divisiveness that sometimes arises along identity lines.

Questions to consider:

1. What does it mean when women assume that men have nothing to offer the domestic violence movement? What does it mean when men think that violence against women isn't an issue for them? How can we respond when, for example, women of color assume that as white women, we are the enemy and have nothing to offer women of color? How can we respond when lesbians assume that as heterosexual women, we are also heterosexist?

2. What does it mean to be an aspiring ally of an oppressed group?

3. What does it mean to have "women-only", "lesbian-only" or "Latina-only" space?

4. How do the questions listed above relate to counseling and advocating for victims of domestic violence both within your program and in the community?

Myths, Stereotypes and Manifestations of Oppression

Facilitator: This exercise is intended to be conducted in small groups with 2-5 individuals, which report back to the main group for discussion.

For the following exercise, please list the manifestations of individual, institutional, and cultural oppression for different oppressed groups. Please note that no single human characteristic automatically signals an "oppressed person" and that many "oppressed groups" have affected social change on their own, without help from persons of the "dominant culture." Also list the myths and stereotypes which help to reinforce/perpetuate the oppression. How are these perpetuated and what are their histories? How does this relate to violence against women and what is the impact on domestic violence service provision?

Individual - Intentional			
Oppression	**Manifestation**	**Myths and Stereotypes**	**Impact on Domestic Abuse**
Racism (Example)	Defacing the property or possessions of people of color.	People of color are "lesser than" and/or "don't belong" in certain areas.	Women of color are often seen as the "property to deface."

Individual - Unintentional			
Oppression	**Manifestation**	**Myths and Stereotypes**	**Impact on Domestic Abuse**
Racism (Example)	Unintentionally making it a point that people of color sit together at lunch or socialize together (perceiving it as separatism) while ignoring the fact that whites sit together and have their own social groups.	People of color "gang up" on white people and/or don't want to associate with them.	Impact on domestic violence: Individuals and organizations which are predominately white may see racial/ethnic organizations/ groups as "separatist" and not work with them without realizing their own "white separatism."

Institutional - Intentional			
Oppression	**Manifestation**	**Myths and Stereotypes**	**Impact on Domestic Abuse**
Racism (Example)	Instructing sales personnel to watch Black people carefully in the store for fear of robbery.	Black people are more likely to be criminals.	A disproportionate number of Black men are charged with acts of violence against women.

Institutional - Unintentional			
Oppression	**Manifestation**	**Myths and Stereotypes**	**Impact on Domestic Abuse**
Racism (Example)	Assuming that white staff can meet the needs of all people but staff of color can only meet the needs of other people of color.	White people can meet every persons needs but people of color can only relate to other people of color.	Negative impact for service providers who subscribe to this philosophy, and uneven workloads.

Societal-Intentional			
Oppression	**Manifestation**	**Myths and Stereotypes**	**Impact on Domestic Abuse**
Racism (Example)	Into the 1950's, Native American children were sent to schools off the reservation where they were made to speak English and punished for speaking their own language.	English is the "correct" language.	People who don't speak English are less able to find help after being assaulted and are often discredited.

Societal - Unintentional			
Oppression	**Manifestation**	**Myths and Stereotypes**	**Impact on Domestic Abuse**
Racism (Example)	Holidays like Columbus Day and Thanksgiving are celebrated as national holidays. These holidays are more likely to be considered days of "national mourning" for many people of color in the United States.	The "correct" history of the country is the white perspective and European colonizers were heroes.	Closing program services on these days and celebrating may cause many people of color to feel as if the service providers aren't sensitive to their history of oppression.

Dealing with Discrimination in Domestic Abuse Programs

This exercise is intended for small-group discussion, with each sample situation assigned to a group of 2-5 participants. Each small group should designate a representative to summarize their decision to the larger group after 5 minutes of small group discussion.

⚬ Anita, the new Children's Program Coordinator, is significantly less energized than her predecessors. At a staff meeting, Rebecca, the Shelter Coordinator, wonders aloud whether the Children's Program Coordinator should transfer to another job within the agency. Rebecca says she's concerned that "Anita's weight problem" might be getting in the way of her work.

⚬ In an intended compliment, a receptionist tells a Native American interviewee as she leaves her interview, "I'm glad you might work here. Having minorities around really livens things up."

⚬ At a regular meeting for shelter residents, you receive complaints from several residents about how "physical" some of the women on staff are with each other. One resident says, "It's as if a bunch of lesbians were running the place."

⚬ It has been brought to your attention that a shelter resident doesn't want her children playing with "mixed race" children in the shelter because she "doesn't want them to become smart-mouthed."

⚬ Your program recently hired a counselor/advocate with visual impairments. While working in the shelter, you overhear an earnest volunteer trying to find a substitute counselor/advocate for a new resident who says she wants " a real advocate instead of an affirmative action advocate."

⚬ A staff person reports overhearing a resident requesting a Latina volunteer to stop heating tortillas in the shelter kitchen. The resident complained, "I can't stand the smell of those things."

⚬ You hear survivors in a shelter asked that the captioning option be turned off on the TV, saying they find it distracting.

Questions for Discussion

How might you use your role in your domestic violence program to best deal with each of the following situations?

If the situation involves clear discrimination, what does the law require? What does fairness require? What are some of the challenges in implementing either?

How can we create a welcoming environment and a better understanding of the role of culture in our domestic abuse programs?

Ethical Dilemmas in Domestic Abuse Programs

These scenarios are adapted from real life situations in Wisconsin domestic abuse programs. Some identifying details have been changed.

Scenario 1

A woman who has been in shelter for several weeks is heard saying a racist comment to another shelter resident. The woman making the comments has been in a very dangerous situation and is definitely in need of the safety the shelter provides. Half the staff has stated that they believe this resident should be asked to leave immediately because of the racist comment, and cite one of the shelter guidelines: "No racist or sexist language will be tolerated". The other half of the staff agree that the comment was terribly offensive, racist and hurtful, but point out her need for the safety of the shelter.

Scenario 2

A number of advocates from your agency have been able to attend some great conferences over the past year, including several out of state. All have applied for and received scholarships, and all are members of a traditionally marginalized group (women of color, lesbian, living with a disability). Some of the advocates on staff who are straight, white and able-bodied have expressed that they feel it is unfair that not all staff get the opportunity to attend conferences equally.

Scenario 3

A sexual assault/domestic violence program has hired a Hmong advocate to provide culturally-specific services to the Hmong population. As her time permits, the Hmong advocate also provides advocacy services to all survivors. She enjoys the support of her co-workers and they function well as a team. One day she is scheduled to work with a Caucasian survivor. The survivor asks to work with a white advocate who will "understand her better" and "speak good English". The program supervisor considers this request and decides to grant it in the interest of "survivor empowerment" and honoring survivor choices. Both the Hmong advocate and her white coworker are dismayed and uncomfortable with this decision and come to the Director for resolution.

Scenario 4

An advocate of color who works for a victim service agency attends a local Coordinated Community Response (CCR) Team meeting for several months, but her voice is never heard. She is ignored by the others in the group. When a Caucasian person from the same agency attends, she not only is recognized, but another Caucasian person from the CCR ignores the woman of color sitting between them to ask questions about the work of the agency. The questions could easily have been answered by the advocate of color and cover information she has been trying to impart for several months. The Caucasian staff person answers the questions the best she can. The advocate of color expresses concern at a staff meeting that she feels let down by a colleague and asks that something be done to address the situation.

Scenario 5

A Latina advocate at a domestic abuse program, at the request of a client, calls the police for assistance. Instead of offering assistance, the law enforcement officer asks the advocate about her own immigration status and if "she has papers". The advocate insists that she is with a client who needs assistance; the law

enforcement officer ignores her and continues to harass her about her status. The advocate reports the situation to her director. The agency has been making good progress in their relationship with law enforcement and wants to maintain good relations.

Scenario 6

A Muslim woman comes to the shelter with her four children, two boys and two girls. It's a Saturday night and the staff is warm and welcoming. As she is getting settled in, a staff member talks with her and reassures her that it is now OK for her to take off her burkha (traditional outer garment that cloaks the entire body). The staff member tells her that she is safe and she is in America so she doesn't have to wear it. "Go ahead, take it off, it's really OK", the staff member says. She also says that her daughters will be much better off now that they are free from the male domination of Islam. A new advocate, herself an American Muslim, is present during the exchange and is clearly uncomfortable. She brings up the situation at a staff meeting and asks that all staff be trained on understanding and working with a Muslim population and that steps be taken to hold the staff member accountable.

Scenario 7

A community service club in a small rural town requests a speaker from the local domestic abuse program. The club will be having their meeting at a community center in the small town at 7 p.m. in late November. The domestic abuse program is located in an urban area with a population of about 125,000. The town where the meeting will take place is located about 25 miles away. Most of the club members are white men in their 50's, 60's and 70's. The DV Program Director has asked the Community Education Coordinator to arrange her schedule to accommodate this request for a speaker. The Community Education Coordinator, an African American woman in her 30's, is new to the area and states she is uncomfortable doing the speaking engagement and has concerns for her safety. The Director, a white woman in her 50's, assures her that the group is friendly, tells her this is part of her job duties and asks her to adjust her schedule accordingly.

Scenario 8

A male advocate in a DV shelter accuses the staff of being "men haters" and "old-fashioned" for their frankly feminist comments and positions. The Executive Director, not wanting to appear discriminatory towards men, instructs the advocates not to talk about "violence against women" anymore and to use only gender neutral language, since both men and women can be either victims or perpetrators.

Scenario 9

An advocate for persons with disabilities is asked two days before the annual Take Back the Night event to identify access issues that may have been forgotten. There is not sufficient time to survey the route, but organizers are confident that the overall route is accessible, so the event goes ahead as planned. Numerous victims and advocates with disabilities attend the event only to encounter a problem along the route (stairs leading down a hill in the park). This leaves a dozen people with disabilities moving back the way they came, alone, at night, through the streets, as the rest of the Take Back the Night participants continue the route together. The able-bodied participants finish the event, as the participants with disabilities struggle to return to the event site, making it back in time only for the very end of the event.

Questions for Discussion

1. What are some of the ethical dilemmas or organizational challenges that you see in the scenarios?

2. What are some of the barriers or challenges in addressing the issues you identified? How can we break through some of those barriers?

3. Take a look at the definitions of oppression in this Manual. Describe some of the oppressions you identify.

4. Describe some similarities or differences in these scenarios with what happens (or could happen) in your own organization.

5. One of the definitions of racial oppression has to do with "internalized racism". It is difficult, and some would argue unethical, for white people to undertake this discussion before dealing with white privilege. How do you feel about this? Can an organization support both discussions?

One Story, Three Frames
Frames, Frame Analysis, and Worldview

**(Exercise adapted from Strategic Practice/Grassroots Policy Project:
http://www.strategicpractice.org/system/files/Introducing_Worldview.pdf)**

Framing refers to the ways that groups use elements of worldview to give meaning to an issue or social problem. For our purposes, a good frame defines the problem, the causes and solutions. It can take the form of a story that helps people make sense of the issue and relate it to their own lives. Or it can be very condensed—a cartoon or photo can 'frame' an issue by relying on stereotypes and catchphrases to convey a complex message about the issue.

To help us lift up the worldview elements that shape and constrain political and social issues debates, we like to use a tool called 'frame analysis.' When asked for a definition of power, a commentator once said: "Power is the ability to define what the problem is, who the good guys and bad guys are, and what can be done about it." This is exactly what a good frame does. A frame is simply a way of organizing information and ideas into a story that defines the problems, causes and solutions for an intended audience. It is much like a picture frame that surrounds a subject to highlight and distinguish it from its surroundings. Issue frames are central organizing ideas that provide coherence to a designated set of idea elements, such as themes and values, along with carefully-chosen facts and information from authoritative sources. They are not the same as policy positions, but they can be used in service of policies and agendas.

Introducing the concept of Framing

Purpose:

Participants experience the power of framing to define the problem, suggest the causes and point people toward some solutions while steering them away from other solutions.

Steps:

1. Ask some opening questions: What does worldview or perspective mean? How would you define it? What influences or forms our worldview? Describe your own world view.

2. Hand out the worksheet called "One story, three frames."

3. Read aloud (or ask someone to read aloud) Version One of the story. Discuss the three framing questions that follow version one.

4. Divide the participants into smaller groups of four or five people.

5. In each group, have someone read the second version of the story, followed by the three framing questions. Discuss the questions. Then, have someone read aloud the third version of the story, and discuss the framing questions.

6. Bring the groups back together. Capture highlights from their discussion of the two versions of the story.

Discussion:

1. What's something (word/phrase) that stood out from the whole exercise or any of the three stories?

2. How did the answers to the questions change from version to version?

3. Which story felt the most true to you? Why? Which one gave you the most doubt? What made you not believe that one?

4. What influences which version you believe? What are 'stories' or perceptions about women that people have? About people who are different from the dominant society? How does that impact how we respond to situations and people?

5. This is an example of framing a story. You can tell very different stories about an event or problem depending on which aspects you want to emphasize, which details you want to include or leave out.

Summary Points — what frames do:

◉ They tell us a story about what the issue or problem is, and they suggest what the causes and solutions are.

◉ They draw upon assumptions, stereotypes and themes in society.

They either implicitly or explicitly reinforce a set of values.

◉ They tend to serve a set of interests. This is what happens in public discussions and political debates about issues.

One Story, Three Frames (Housing)

Please read each version of the story and answer the questions about each.

Version One

An infant left sleeping in his crib was bitten repeatedly by rats while his 16-year-old mother went to cash her welfare check. A neighbor responded to the cries of the infant and brought the child to Central Hospital where he was treated and released to his mother's custody. The mother, Angie Burns, from the South End, explained softly, "I was only gone five minutes. I left the door open so my neighbor would hear him if he woke up. I never thought this would happen in the daytime."

Questions about Version One:

1. What is the problem?
2. What is the solution?
3. What is the cause?
4. What title would you give this story?

Version Two

An eight-month-old South End boy was treated and released from Central Hospital yesterday after being bitten by rats while he was sleeping in his crib. Tenants said that repeated requests for extermination had been ignored by the landlord, Henry Brown. Brown claimed that the problem lay with the tenants' improper disposal of garbage. "I spend half my time cleaning up after them. They throw garbage out the window into the back alley and their kids steal the covers for sliding in the snow."

Questions about Version Two:

1. Does your thinking about the causes and solutions shift after reading this version?

2. What solution or solutions are suggested in this version?

3. Would you give this story a different title?

Version Three

Rats bit eight-month-old Michael Burns five times yesterday as he napped in his crib. Burns is the latest victim of a rat epidemic plaguing inner-city neighborhoods labeled the "Zone of Death." Health officials say infant mortality rates in the neighborhoods approach those in many third world countries. A Public Health Department spokesperson explained that federal and state cutbacks forced short-staffing at rat control and housing inspection programs. The result, noted Dr. Joaquin Nuñez, a pediatrician at Central Hospital, is a five-fold increase in rat bites. He added, "The irony is that Michael lives within walking distance of some of the world's best medical centers."

Questions about Version 3:

1. In this version, how is the problem defined?

2. What solutions are suggested?

3. What has happened to the individual, Angie Burns, featured in Version One?

4. What about the tenants versus the landlord described in version 2?

5. What title would you give this story?

One Story, Three Frames (Domestic Violence Homicide)
Please read each version of the story and answer the questions about each.

Version One

Two funeral services will be held on Friday for a couple that was allegedly involved in a crime of passion. Police found the bodies of the couple inside their condo on Divine Drive earlier this week. Maurice Reynolds, 65 years old, beat to death Virginia Carter; 36, his wife of five years; then, hanged himself. The couple was well-known in the community and Reynolds had received recognition for his leadership in the Rotary Club. A neighbor, who asked that his name be withheld, stated that is was well-known in the neighborhood that Carter was having an affair, which may have spurred the crime. The pair's deaths have left many in the community devastated and outraged.

Questions about Version One:

1. What is the problem?

2. What is the solution?

3. What is the cause?

4. What title would you give this story?

Version Two

An area woman was killed in a domestic incident on Tuesday. Maurice Reynolds killed Virginia Carter during a jealousy episode and then committed suicide. A neighbor said that shouting and fighting could often be heard from the victim's apartment and that police had shown up a number of times in the last month or so. Police and court records confirm that officers had been called to the residence six times in the past five weeks, and that Reynolds had been charged once with disorderly conduct but had been released.

Questions about Version Two:

1. Does your thinking about the causes and solutions shift after reading this version?

2. What solution(s) are suggested in this version?

3. Would you give this story a different title?

Version Three

"Virginia was somebody's mother, somebody's friend, many people's friend, a volunteer, and employee. She was an important person in our community and a victim of domestic violence", said Jillian Amsterdam, Chief of Police, about Virginia Carter who was killed by her husband, Maurice Reynolds. This is the fifth domestic violence homicide for the county this year. An official from the Public Health Department explained that federal and state cutbacks have reduced a number of safety nets for women and others living with violence, such as Medicaid, transitional housing, job training and placement among others. The official noted "while the number of deaths due to domestic violence have surpassed deaths due to motor vehicle incidents and all other types of homicide, the community has failed to address this violence as the epidemic it is."

Questions about Version 3:

1. In this version, how is the problem defined?

2. What solutions are suggested?

3. What title would you give this story

Crossing The Powerline

The goal of this exercise is to look at how societal inequalities have an impact on barriers to safety for women living with domestic violence. The exercise encourages us to look beyond stereotypes and how those stereotypes can create barriers for survivors. It is a flexible exercise that can be used as a quick warm-up to another, longer exercise or discussion. It can also be used as to generate fairly lengthy discussion in its own right. Another adaptation exists that examines the social inequalities and stereotypes that are unique to the Deaf community.

Preparation

To run this exercise, you will need the following:
- Masking tape to make a line in the middle of the room. This will be the power line.
- Two small posters with the statements -- "Most Power" and "Least Power".
- Ten sets of two cards describing the characteristics of the different people standing on the power line. (see below)

Before you begin the exercise, create ten sets of two cards, one for each of the people standing on the power line. The descriptions are below:

Level 1 A)	Level 2 (B)
1. Married to wealthy judge	No Access to money
2. Lesbian	Congresswoman
3. Earns more than $150,000	HIV Positive
4. Disability (M.S.)	Wealthy and supportive family
5. Disability (M.S.)	Lives alone in a rural community. Medicaid
6. Immigrant	English speaking. From Paris
7. Immigrant	Non English speaking. Hmong
8. Single. Custody of grandchild	Native American on reservation
9. African American	Self employed (owns own business)
10. White	Sex worker

Set Up

Put a long piece of masking tape on the floor. If possible, put it in the middle of the room. If not possible, find a place that has a large space on both sides of the line. (Think of this line as running east to west.) On the north side of the room place the label "most power" and the south side of the room should be labeled "least power". (Don't worry if it in not really east, west, north and south…just make sure that the "most power" and "least power" is not actually on each end of the power line.)

Start the exercise by asking for ten volunteers. Let the volunteers know that the exercise takes a relatively short period of time, but they will be standing. You may need to make accommodations for people who use mobility devices or who may not be comfortable standing for a period of time.

Directions

Explain to the audience that this interactive exercise will help us begin to look at how societal inequalities have an impact on barriers to safety to survivors of domestic abuse. This exercise will specifically get us to look beyond stereotypes and how those stereotypes also create barriers for survivors.

Ask the ten volunteers to come stand on the power line. Each volunteer will be given two cards: A and B.

Describing the exercise to the group

Each person standing on the power line is a 61-year-old woman. Each volunteer will be given two cards: 1A and 1B; 2A and 2B; 3A and 3B; etc. Each card has an additional characteristic of this woman.

Ask the volunteers to take a minute to think about being a 61-year-old woman and what they are feeling about themselves as this woman. Being a 61-year-old woman may be very close to whom they are or very far from whom they are, so these feelings will vary among the volunteers. Volunteers should not share their thoughts with the group at this point.

The line they are standing on is the power line. They are all at the same place on the power line at this point, since all we know about them is that they are each a 61-year-old woman.

The facilitator will ask each person in turn to read the characteristic on card A out loud to the group and then take a step forward or backward depending on whether that characteristic gives the 61-year-old woman more or less power. Participants should not look at card B until the entire part A of the exercise has been completed. Repeat the whole process for card B.

Important for the facilitator to ask people to be thoughtful of the size step they take forward and backward and to think about their height and the length of their step. Do they mean to move just a little bit above or below the line? Do they mean to move as far from the center as they can?

Starting the Exercise

Once the volunteers are lined up on the power line, give them each their two cards. One at a time each volunteer should announce to the group what their characteristic is on card A and then decide how far they want to step off the line and in what direction. They should each decide if that characteristic gives them more power or less power and walk toward the appropriate side of the room based on that decision. Repeat for card B. When participants read their card B out loud, they should first reread their card A to remind others of why they moved to where they are.

Processing the Exercise

This exercise can be a quick warm-up for another exercise, or can be a much longer exercise, with more time for processing.

Points to bring out if the group does not:

• One goal is to show the importance of looking at the complexity of each domestic violence survivor that you work with. It is critical to move beyond stereotypes of individual survivors.

•What are your own personal A and B's? What characteristics do you have that give you privilege and open doors? What characteristics do you have that lead you to encounter barriers and closed doors?

• Our work as domestic violence service providers is about opening doors. How can we best do this?

• Sexism and ageism have an impact on everyone to some degree…but within those categories individuals are treated very differently by society…and the options widely differ.

Crossing The Powerline

Advocate Version

Preparation

The goal of this exercise is to look at how societal inequalities have an impact on us all, even in our role as domestic abuse advocates. The exercise encourages us to look beyond stereotypes and to reflect on how those stereotypes can create barriers for the success of advocates. It is a flexible exercise that can be used as a quick warm-up to another, longer exercise or discussion. It can also be used as to generate fairly lengthy discussion in its own right.

To run this exercise, you will need the following:

• Masking tape to make a line in the middle of the room (This will be the power line.)

• Two small posters with the statements -- "Most power" and "Least power"

• Ten sets of two cards describing the characteristics of the different people standing on the power line. (see below)

Before you begin the exercise, create ten sets of two cards, one for each of the people standing on the power line. The descriptions are below:

Level 1 (A)	Level 2 (B)
Age 22	Single mother of 3
Bilingual, working at a culturally specific non-shelter program	White
15 years of experience in a DV Program	African-American now working in a rural shelter in northern Wisconsin
Master of Science in Social Work (MSW)	Disability-blind
Bilingual, bicultural advocate at a culturally specific non-shelter program	Lives with family who are undocumented, hold traditional values, and are non-English speaking
Experienced advocate of color	64 years old
Native American advocate	Has a history of AODA problem
Recent graduate with DV volunteer experience	Male
Bilingual advocate	Deaf; uses American Sign Language
Formerly Battered Woman	Out of relationship 6 months
Children's advocate	Lesbian

Set Up

Put a long piece of masking tape on the floor. If possible put it in the middle of the room. If not possible, find a place that has a large space on both sides of the line. (Think of this line as running east to west.) On the north side of the room place the label "most power" and the south side of the room should be labeled "least power". (Don't worry if it in not really east, west, north and south…just make sure that the "most power" and "least power" is not actually on each end of the power line.)

Start the exercise by asking for ten volunteers. Let the volunteers know that the exercise will take no more then ten minutes, but people may need to stand for that period of time. Participants who use a wheelchair (or have access to another movable chair) can easily participate.

Directions

Explain to the audience that this interactive exercise will help us begin to look at how societal inequalities that impact our perception of and create barriers for DV advocates. This exercise will specifically get us to look beyond stereotypes and how those stereotypes also create barriers for advocates and the battered women they serve.

Ask the ten volunteers to come stand on the power line. Each volunteer will be given two cards: A and B.

Each person standing on the power line is a New Advocate at a Wisconsin DV Program (either just hired or job applicant). Each volunteer will be given two cards: 1A and 1B; 2A and 2B; 3A and 3B; etc. Each

card has an additional characteristic of this woman.

The line they are standing on is the power line. They are all at the same place on the power line at this point since all we know about them is that they are each a New Advocate at a Wisconsin DV Program.

The facilitator will ask each person in turn to read the characteristic on card A out loud to the group and then take a step forward or backward depending on whether that characteristic gives the advocate more or less power. Repeat this whole process for card B.

Important for the facilitator to ask people to be thoughtful of the size step they take forward and backward and to think about their height and the length of their step. Do they mean to move just a little bit above or below the line? Do they mean to move as far from the center as they can?

Starting the Exercise

Once the volunteers are lined up on the power line give them each their two cards. One at a time each volunteer should announce to the group what their characteristic is on card A and then decide how far they want to step off the line and in what direction. They should each decide if that characteristic gives them more power or less power and walk toward the appropriate side of the room based on that decision.

Repeat for card B.

Questions for processing/discussion:

What emotions did you have moving back and forth?

Where did you feel most challenged?

Where did you feel most surprised?

What was most important in making your decision?

Think about what your own "A's", "B's", "C's" and "D's" are:
- What stood out?
- What characteristics give you privilege / opened doors?
- Which ones were barriers/ closed doors?

Are the characteristics that give a DV advocate more or less power in a DV program the same that give and individual more or less power in our society? How might they differ?

What does "power" mean for DV advocates, both in programs and in communities? How is it related to the empowerment of survivors?

How can DV programs "open doors" for DV advocates to give them power within the program and the movement?

How can we support programs to analyze power differences among advocates?

How can programs move towards greater equalization of power among advocates?

Crossing The Powerline

(version adapted for use with Deaf community)

Training Goals/Objectives

- To show the importance of looking at the complexity of each domestic violence victim with whom you work.

- To understand the characteristics that give a person privilege and open doors and those that put up barriers and close doors.

- To gain a deeper understanding of power dynamics that are unique to the Deaf community.

Important point: It is OK (even expected) for people to leave with more questions than they came with. This is the natural evolution when we start to look at the complexities in our work.

Target Audience

Advocates, potential advocates, and interested community members, both Deaf and hearing. This exercise may be used with a group of Deaf and hearing participants together, or it may be used with a group of Deaf persons only. The exercise is not appropriate for a hearing-only audience, as most hearing participants will not understand the significance of all the Deaf-specific categories and gain their greatest benefit only through the dialogue with Deaf participants.

Material/Preparation

- Masking tape to make a line in the middle of the room (this will be the power line.)

- Two small posters with the statements -- "Most power" and "Least power"

- Ten sets of two cards for Round One describing the characteristics of the different people standing on the power line.

- Ten sets of two cards for Round Two describing the characteristics of the different people standing on the power line.

Level 1 A)

1. Married to wealthy judge
2. Lesbian
3. Earns more than $150,000
4. Disability (M.S.)
5. Disability (M.S.)
6. Immigrant
7. Immigrant
8. Single. Custody of grandchild
9. African American
10. White

Level 2 (B)

No Access to money
Congresswoman
HIV Positive
Wealthy and supportive family
Lives alone in a rural community. Medicaid
English speaking. From Paris
Non English speaking. Hmong
Native American on reservation
Self employed (owns own business)
Sex worker

Round Two

Level 1 A)

1. Lesbian
2. Earns more than $100,000
3. Disability (M.S)
4. Immigrant
5. Immigrant

6. Single. Custody of grandchild
7. African American
8. White
9. Attorney
10. Native American

Level 2 (B)

Deaf School teacher
Oral Deaf
Wealthy and supportive family
Late Deafened
No formal language base, does not use American Sign Language
Deaf child of Deaf parents
Self-employed (owns own business)
Sex worker
Married to hearing person
Attended residential Deaf School

Arranging the Room

Put a long piece of masking tape on the floor. If possible put it in the middle of the room. If not possible, find a place that has a large space on both sides of the line. (Think of this line as running east to west.) On the north side of the room place the label "most power" and the south side of the room should be labeled "least power".   (Don't worry if it's not really east, west, north and south…just make sure that the "most power" and "least power" is not actually on each end of the power line.)

Starting the Exercise

Start the exercise by asking for ten volunteers. Let the volunteers know that the exercise may take 30 minutes or longer and that they will be standing for much of this time. A person in a wheelchair or scooter that can move the chair/scooter forward and back can participate. Participants with difficulty standing for long periods of time may also bring easily-movable chairs to the power line.

Explain to the audience that this interactive exercise will help us begin to look at how societal inequalities have an impact on barriers to safety to battered women. This exercise will specifically get us to look beyond stereotypes and how those stereotypes also create barriers for battered women.

Ask the ten volunteers to come stand on the power line. Each volunteer will be given two cards: A and B.

Each person standing on the power line is a 61-year-old woman. Each volunteer will be given two cards: 1A

and 1B; 2A and 2B; 3A and 3B; etc. Each card has an additional characteristic of this woman.

In the first round, ask the volunteers to take a minute to think about being a 61-year-old woman and what they are feeling as this woman. Being a 61-year-old woman may be very close to who they are or very far from who they are, so these feelings will vary among the volunteers. They should not share their thoughts with the group at this point.

The line they are standing on is the power line. They are all at the same place on the power line at this point since all we know about them is that they are each a 61-year-old woman.

The facilitator will ask each person in turn to read the characteristic on card A out loud to the group and then take a step forward or backward depending on whether that characteristic gives the 61 year old woman more or less power. Repeat this whole process for card B.

It's important for the facilitator to ask people to be thoughtful of the size step they take forward and backward and to think about their height and the length of their step. Do they mean to move just a little bit above or below the line? Do they mean to move as far from the center as they can?

Once the volunteers are lined up on the power line give them each their two cards. One at a time, each volunteer should announce to the group what their characteristic is on card A and then decide how far they want to step off the line and in what direction. They should each decide if that characteristic gives them

more power or less power and walk/move toward the appropriate side of the room based on that decision.

Spend some time discussing/processing the first round of the exercise before moving on to the second round. See "Processing the Exercise" below for suggested questions.

In the second round, the person on the power line is a Deaf woman. Give the ten volunteers a new set of two cards each. Repeat the process of having each person read the characteristic on card A out loud and taking a step forward or backwards depending on whether that characteristic gives a Deaf woman more or less power. Repeat with card B. Hearing participants may not be familiar with all the categories in this round, but are asked to take a step based on their perceptions or assumptions. After all participants made their second move on the power line, ask them to consider the additional characteristic of being a battered woman. Continue to discuss and process the exercise as in the first round.

Processing the Exercise

Ask participants to discuss why they chose to move from the power line in each category and how they made the decision about the size and direction of their steps. Ask them to think about the barriers to accessing services that persons in their categories might face and if their program is equipped to address and break down those barriers. For those not currently affiliated with domestic violence program, ask them to think about any barriers they or others may have faced with local services.

Points to bring out if the group does not:

• One goal of this exercise is to show the importance of looking at the complexity of each domestic violence victim that you work with. It is critical to move beyond stereotypes of individual domestic violence victims.

• Our work as domestic violence service providers is about opening doors. How can we open doors to all victims on the power line?

• Sexism, ageism and ableism have an impact on everyone to some degree…but within those categories individuals are treated very differently by society…and the options widely differ.

• Within Deaf culture, some categories will have different meanings and present different options than within mainstream society. What gives an individual power and status in the Deaf community may not confer status in the hearing world.

The Danger of a Single Story

In this 18-minute video, Nigerian-born novelist Chimamanda Adichie tells the story of how she found her authentic cultural voice - and warns that if we hear only a single story about another person or country, we risk a critical misunderstanding.

She writes,

"The consequence of the single story is this: It robs people of dignity . . . It emphasizes how we are different rather than how we are similar.

If I had not grown up in Nigeria, and if all I knew about Africa were from popular images, I too would think that Africa was a place of beautiful landscapes, beautiful animals, and incomprehensible people, fighting senseless wars, dying of poverty and AIDS, unable to speak for themselves and waiting to be saved by a kind, white foreigner.

It is impossible to talk about the single story without talking about power. There is a word, an Igbo word, that I think about whenever I think about the power structures of the world, and it is "nkali." It's a noun that loosely translates to "to be greater than another." Like our economic and political worlds, stories too are defined by the principle of nkali: How they are told, who tells them, when they're told, how many stories are told, are really dependent on power.

Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign, but stories can also be used to empower and to humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a people, but stories can also repair that broken dignity.

The video can be viewed at:
http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story.html

Questions for Discussion

What *is* the danger of a single story? What are some examples that are relevant to you?

Whom might we hold single stories about and what is the single story? What might we be missing and why?

Has anyone ever written a "single story" about your life? How did you feel?

Can you think of some examples of how a single story has been written for domestic violence or sexual assault victims?

What can we do to avoid a "single story" in our programs, in our communities, and in the anti-domestic violence/sexual assault movement?

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And finally, a big thank you to all of you who have picked up this resource and are considering using it. Please do!