**Creating Working Definitions: Race/Racism Activity**

**Medium stress**

**In-person & online**

Suggested use:

This activity would be used as a “middle activity.” Participants have been introduced to the conversation and are ready to get their hands dirty. Having a PowerPoint presentation to guide the activity is also very helpful.

Suggested instructions:

In-person:

1. Pass out a copy of the activity to participants.
2. Read the instructions together.
3. Divide participants into groups of five.
4. Participants should be given an allotted time (10 minutes) to define racism individually, and then share and derive a definition as a group.
5. When time is up, invite groups to share their answers with the whole group.
6. Hand out a copy of the formal definitions. Have participants read the definitions independently.
7. Compare and contrast participants definitions with the formal definition. Ask the whole group:
   1. Share your and your groups process at arriving at your definition. How did you get there?
   2. How is your definition different from the formal definition? How is your definition similar?
   3. Did you find any part of the formal definition surprising? Why or why not?

Online:

1. Provide the handout in advance via email to participants.
2. Instruct participants to open the activity document.
3. Read the instructions together.
4. Place participants in breakout rooms (groups of five).
5. Participants should be given an allotted time (10 minutes) to define racism individually, and then share and derive a definition as a group.
6. Return to the whole group, invite groups to share their answers with the whole group.
7. Instruct participants to open the formal definitions document. Have participants read the definitions independently.
8. Invite participants to share their answers with the whole group.
9. Compare and contrast participants definitions with the formal definition. Ask the whole group:
   1. Share your and your groups process at arriving at your definition. How did you get there?
   2. How is your definition different from the formal definition? How is your definition similar?
   3. Did you find any part of the formal definition surprising? Why or why not?

See attached handouts: (1) Activity worksheet (2) Definitions handout (2 pgs)

**Creating Working Definitions: Race/Racism**

*Directions: Individually, then as a group, define the term racism.*

**Individually, define the term racism.**

**As a group, define the term racism.**

**Race/Racism Reference Definitions**

**Race**

Race, as a social construct, is often thought of as a group of people who share similar and distinct physical characteristics.

Race is a faulty system of classification – with no biological basis – that utilizes specific physical

characteristics to categorize humans into supposedly distinct groups.

**Racism**

Racism is any action or attitude that subordinates an individual or group based on skin color or race. It can be enacted internally, individually, or institutionally.

“…contemporary forms of racism are different from the old racism of slavery, segregation,

apartheid, lynching, and systematic discrimination, of white superiority feelings, and of explicit

derogation in public discourse and everyday conversation. The New Racism, wants to be democratic and respectable, and hence first off denies that it is racism”.

New Racism does not claim that minorities are biologically inferior. New Racism defines minorities as different from a dominant perspective, stressing deficiencies, such as single-parent families, drug abuse, lacking achievement values, and dependence on welfare and affirmative action as “pathologies” that need to be corrected.

**Structural racism**

* Refers to a system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing ways to perpetuate racial group inequity.
* It identifies dimensions of our history and culture that have allowed privileges associated with “whiteness” and disadvantages associated with “color” to endure and adapt over time.
* Touches and implicates everyone in our society—whites, blacks, Latinos, Asians, and Native Americans is a system for allocating social privilege.

**Institutional racism**

* Occurs within institutions and systems of power.
* It is the unfair policies and discriminatory practices of particular institutions (schools, workplaces, etc.) that routinely produce racially inequitable outcomes for people of color and advantages for white people.

**Interpersonal Racism**

* Occurs between individuals.
* These are biases that occur when individuals interact with others and their private
* racial beliefs affect their public interactions.
* Examples include racial slurs, bigotry, hate crimes, and racial violence.

Internalized Racism

* The ideas, beliefs, actions and behaviors that support and/or reinforce racism.
* These are our personal beliefs and biases about race and racism, influenced by our culture.
* How it shows up:
  + people of color accepting negative messages about their own abilities and
  + intrinsic worth
  + internalized privilege, beliefs about the superiority or entitlement of white people
  + a belief that you or others are more or less intelligent, or beautiful, because of your race