Indiana's Best Practices

Celebrating Diversity

Many Communities...One Indiana

A Resource Manual of Diversity Programs & Activities

1999 EDITION

Provided By

Indiana Civil Rights Commission

Indiana's Best Practices Celebrating Diversity
Many Communities...One Indiana

Editor, Writer, Layout and Design
Judy Kochanczyk

Computer and Graphics Consultant
Will Bray

Technical Consultants
Burnetta Sloss-Tanner
Eddie McLaurin
Pamela Messer

Research Assistants
Denidra Carter
Ronnie Formyduval
Michael C. Healy
Dennis Jones
Susan Malasics
Stephen M. Tilden
Daniel Vega

Cover Design
Ronald E. Deane; Aesop's Press, Inc.

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Indiana Civil Rights Commission

Sandra D. Leek, Executive Director
100 N. Senate Avenue, Room N103
Indianapolis, IN 46204
Office: (317) 232-2600
Toll Free: (800) 628-2909
Hearing Impaired: (800) 743-3333
Fax: (317) 232-6580
Web Site: http://www.state.in.us/icrc

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA 46204-2797

FRANK O'BANNON
GOVERNOR

My Fellow Hoosiers,

I constantly receive letters from Hoosiers of all ages and backgrounds, asking what they can do to overcome the racial barriers that divide us.

That's why I asked the Indiana Civil Rights Commission to compile a resource book of successful race relations programs here in our state. With this collection of "best practices," individuals, organizations and communities can share ideas that work, then implement the activities that seem to fit best for them.

This book, the first of its kind, is being distributed to schools, libraries, mayors and other government officials, law enforcement agencies, churches, service organizations and businesses throughout Indiana. You can also find it on the Internet at www.state.in.us.icrc where we will keep updating it.

Incidentally, from President Clinton's national Initiative on Race, there is a list of community race relations programs and dialogues from all across the nation at www.whitehouse.gov/initiatives/one america. Known as "Promising Practices," this, too, can help communities start their own efforts to promote racial diversity.

Amid the Hoosier traditions of hospitality and good will, there simply is no place for prejudice. As Governor, I ask every Hoosier to help knock down the walls of prejudice. Prejudice harms our people and divides our state. It deprives those who hate - as well as those who are hated - of the opportunities to realize their full potential.

I present this book, *Indiana's Best Practices Celebrating Diversity: Many Communities...One Indiana*, in hope that it will increase mutual understanding and respect, and help us treasure our differences rather than let those differences come between us.

Sincerely,

Frank O'Bannon

INDIANA
CIVIL
RIGHTS
COMMISSION

FRANK O'BANNON, Governor

Sandra D. Leek, Executive Director
Indiana Governement Center North
100 N. Senate Avenue, Room N103
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

Office: (317) 232-2600
Toll Free: (800) 628-2909
Hearing Impaired: (800) 743-3333
FAX (317) 232-6580

Dear Friends,

As the Executive Director of the Indiana Civil Rights Commission (ICRC), I am pleased that our agency was chosen to produce a resource manual of racial diversity programs and activities currently in progress throughout the State of Indiana.

Indiana's Best Practices Celebrating Diversity: Many Communities...One Indiana is by no means inclusive of all available resources or diversity activities occurring in our state. Nor does the ICRC endorse one resource or activity over another. Instead, we encourage you to pick and choose from these ideas and materials to create a program which meets the specific needs of your community or organization.

Initially, we have identified 160 activities intended to improve race relations in 46 communities from throughout the state. Many of these events began with the simple desire to celebrate the achievements of minority populations. Sometimes the community was motivated to action in response to a proposed march by the Ku Klux Klan at the local court house. Frequently, employers acted pro-actively to prepare their work forces for successful competition in the expanding global economy. Many of these projects are based upon religious and moral convictions that we are "our brothers keepers." Despite the varied motivations for beginning the myriad of projects presented in this manual, a singular truth predominates: the success of these activities lies in their attendant processes of collaboration, sharing, out reach, and leadership.

I invite you to share this book with friends and colleagues and to contribute information about other activities you are currently aware of and as they may develop in the future. It is my hope that this manual stimulates a synergy that indeed binds us as One Indiana.

Very truly,

Sandra D. Leek
Executive Director

PREFACE

The compilation of this book turned out, to use a Hoosier analogy, to be much like searching for the coveted little morel mushrooms on a warm spring Indiana morning.

Being a very methodical person, I marched determinedly into the woods armed with a knapsack and a poking stick with every intention of turning over every leaf and finding every mushroom in the forest. I hadn't gone far before I realized that this was an impossible task. First of all, there were entirely too many leaves to look under; not to mention, there were new mushrooms constantly popping up where I'd already been! And so, as time grew short, I left with what I'd found and decided to go back another time for more.

Thus it was with *Indiana's Best Practices Celebrating Diversity*. Every diversity activity that I found led me to others. I also talked with dozens of people who were still in the preliminary stages of putting together new programs for their community or organization.

I hope that as you read through *Indiana's Best Practices Celebrating Diversity*: *Many Communities . . . One Indiana* its cause will get under your skin and into your heart the way it did mine. There are hundreds of Hoosiers, young and old; rich and poor; black, yellow, brown, red, and white who are doing something to make a difference, and the good news is, it's working.

Examine the resources in this book, and then bend them, turn them, mold them to fit your community's or organization's needs, and what ever it turns out to be will be better than what you had before you started.

Sincerely,

Judy Kochanczyk
Editor

New Best Practices

will be updated periodically on the IndianaCivilRight'sCommission's web site: http://www.state.in.us/icrc

Hard copy updates

will be mailed semi-annually. To receive a hard copy, call or fax mailing information to the ICRC.

To submit new Best Practices

use the form on the following page or call ICRC to request a form.

Office: (317) 232-2600
Toll Free: (800) 628-2909
Hearing Impaired: (800) 743-3333
Fax: (317) 232-6580

Indiana's Best Practices Celebrating Diversity

Racial/Ethnic Diversity Programs and Activities

Program/Event Title:_____

Sponsoring Organization:_____

Address:_____
Street City State ZipCode

_____
Telephone Fax E-mail Web Site

Contact Person:_____
Last Name First Name

Address:_____
Street City State ZipCode

_____
Telephone Fax E-mail

Additional Contact Person:_____
Last Name First Name

Address:_____
Street City State ZipCode

_____
Telephone Fax E-mail

To include your diversity program/activity in periodic updates of *Indiana's Best Practices Celebrating Diversity* return this form to:

Indiana Civil Rights Commission
Indiana's Best Practices
Judy Kochanczyk
100 N. Senate Avenue, Rm: N103
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Office: (317) 232-2600
Toll Free: (800) 628-2909
Hearing Impaired: (800) 743-3333

Fax: (317) 232-6580
Web Site: http://www.ai.org/icrc/

Turn to back side...

Where/when do events/programs/services take place:_____

Purpose/Mission:_____

_____

Description of event:_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

It would be helpful to include any informational attachments: announcement of event flier, copy of program or agenda, newspaper articles concerning event, logo, etc.

Name of those people/organizations who helped organize/co-sponsor the activity: _____

_____

_____

Funding/Donation sources:_____

_____

_____

Size of audience/audience feedback from activity:_____

_____

_____

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_____

_____

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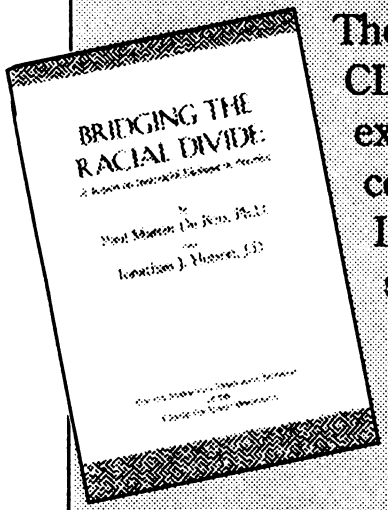
BENEFITS OF A DIALOGUE ON RACE

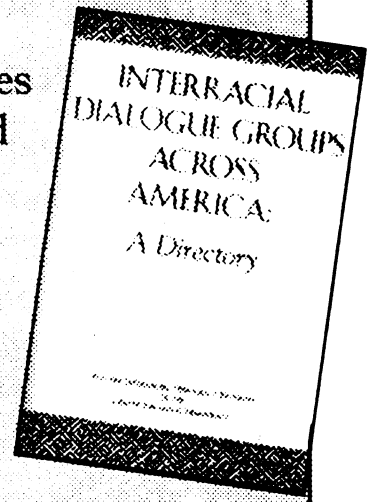
- **Helps people of all races learn more about one another**
- **Promotes communication between the races**
- **Makes communication more effective**
- **Helps us become aware of how we think and feel about people of different races**
- **Helps us to question and evaluate assumptions about people of other races**
- **Explores how perceptions, assumptions and stereotypes impact race relations**
- **Helps develop a sense of awareness and understanding of differences and similarities among people of different races.**
- **Puts us in a better position to manage any conflict which may result from differences**
- **Promotes contact with individuals of other races.**
- **Helps us understand that respect is key to good race relations**

Bridging the Racial Divide: A Report on Interracial Dialogue in America



The compilation of findings from CLD's year-long research into the extent of interracial dialogue in communities across the nation. Introduces the best practices of sixty groups from around the country that model sustained, community-based interracial dialogue. Eleven major findings, success stories, contact information on many interracial dialogue groups and a recommended reading list.
By Paul Martin DuBois and Jonathan Hutson. 74 pages. (Center for Living Democracy, 1997)

Interracial Dialogue Groups Across America: A Directory



A companion to *Bridging the Racial Divide,* the directory gives detailed contact information and a description of the work of 60 dialogue groups across America. An excellent resource for anyone interested in the dialogue movement or interracial work in general.
Edited by Mary Ann Statham. 100 pages. (Center for Living Democracy, 1997)

To acquire these publications, see *Center for Living Democracy* order form in "Supplemental Materials Appendix."

INTRODUCTION

An urgent need for democratic dialogue on race in our country and our communities

Race is a central issue in our nation and our communities. Even when we don't give voice to it, it is present — critical, but unspoken.

When we do talk about it, it is often at times of crisis, when racial divisions become apparent or racial tensions turn to violence. There are times of national awareness — the violence in Los Angeles in 1992, or the tensions following the O.J. Simpson verdict — when the country's problems with race transfix all of us. But when the tensions fade from view, our public recognition of race seems to go back into hiding, and we wonder if anything has changed at all.

A growing number of national and community leaders are starting to change that reality. They are calling for a dialogue about race that will help everyday people openly examine racism and race relations, and work together to make progress on this critical issue.

Those leaders realize that questions of racism and race relations touch us every day, in personal ways. Race affects where we live, where we walk, where we shop, the jobs we hold, and how we are educated. In workplaces, schools, and houses of worship, racial and ethnic divisions persist. Misperceptions, stereotyping, fear, and distrust exist in every ethnic group toward members of other ethnic groups.

Race also has a great impact on our public life. In our communities, racial and ethnic divisions prevent us from working together on pressing common concerns such as education, jobs, and crime. In our national public life, there is a longstanding stalemate on those policy issues that are directly related to our country's history of race relations. And, racial and ethnic concerns and conflicts underlie many other public issues.

Given our country's history, it is no wonder that race is so important today. Racism has played a key role for hundreds of years, clashing with our founding principles of equality and justice. The wars against Native American tribes and later discrimination against native peoples; the enslavement of Africans brought to this country and the oppression of African-Americans after they were freed; the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II; and discrimination against immigrants — all of these and more have been based on the belief that some people are inferior due to the color of their skin.

The struggle for racial equality has also played a key role in our history. In the civil rights movement, many Americans fought for racial justice. Attitudes and situations that were once the norm — racist statements by political officials, separate and inferior public institutions for blacks, the legal refusal to serve blacks in restaurants or to accommodate them in hotels — began to change as the result of heroic individual and collective struggles.

What about today? While almost everyone acknowledges that we have moved forward as a

result of the civil rights movement, many people are concerned that progress has stalled. Others fear that we are actually losing ground.

Though our perspectives vary, problems with race relations still loom large for our country. These problems are complex, defying simple definitions or quick solutions. All of us — from every ethnic and racial background — have had experiences that give us unique understandings of race and its impact on our personal and public lives. As an example, many whites believe that we have made a lot of progress on racial issues, that we are "almost there." At the same time, many people of color believe that we still have a long way to go.

On such a complex issue, with so many different experiences and understandings, how can we as a society make meaningful progress?

In a democracy, progress on race relations can happen when every person takes part in defining the problems and finding ways to work with others to solve them. At the heart of that participation is democratic dialogue, where people of all racial and ethnic backgrounds sit down together and have opportunities to:

- respectfully hear each other's experiences and concerns. In this way, people can come to better understand and appreciate others, rethink stereotypes and misperceptions, and build relationships.

- consider a wide variety of views. In this way, people can grapple with the many sides of public problems, come to a more complete understanding of the issues, explore disagreements, and search for common concerns. This openness lays a strong foundation for multifaceted community collaboration and problem solving.

- devise practical actions and strategies for addressing racism and race relations. Through the dialogue, people develop new community networks and new ideas for action at every level. In this way, they have the opportunity to fulfill the potential of their deliberation by working with others to make a difference.

A growing number of communities are creating and sustaining this kind of opportunity for democratic dialogue and action on race. They are finding ways to involve people from all races and ethnicities, all political beliefs, all faiths, all education levels, and all walks of life. They are also finding ways to help community members carry their dialogue forward from meaningful personal change into collective action. As more and more communities move ahead in this challenging work, our country will make the kind of progress on race relations that many of us have dreamed of for so long.

ONE AMERICA

In The 21st Century:

The President's Initiative on Race

ONE AMERICA DIALOGUE GUIDE

Conducting a Discussion on Race

March 1998

We encourage you to duplicate this guide

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

March 13, 1998

Dear Friend:

Our nation was founded on the principle that we are all created equal. We haven't always lived up to that ideal, but it has guided our way for more than two centuries. As we enter the 21st century, we know that one of the greatest challenges we still face is learning how we can come together as One America.

Over the coming decades, our country's ethnic and racial diversity will continue to expand dramatically. Will those differences divide us, or will they be our greatest strength? The answer depends upon what we are willing to do together. While we confront our differences in honest dialogue, we must also talk about the common dreams and the values we share. We must fight discrimination in our communities and in our hearts. And we must close the opportunity gaps that deprive too many Americans of the chance to realize their full potential.

I hope that you find the information contained in this kit helpful for conducting dialogues in your neighborhoods, your schools, and your places of worship. Your views and ideas are very important to me, and I urge you to help me continue the national dialogue on race by taking a leadership role in your community. Together, we can build a stronger America for the 21st century.

Thank you for helping us to meet this most important challenge.

Sincerely,

Bill Clinton

Foreword

The President has asked Americans to join in open and honest discussions about race. People from all across America have responded to the President's call and are talking about race more than ever. While these discussions may not be easy, they are necessary if we are to better understand each other, live together, and build united communities.

The attached One America Dialogue Guide will help you conduct a discussion on race. Whether you are a school teacher, police officer, student, businessperson, elected official, community leader, PTA member, or a concerned citizen, this guide is designed for you.

This manual was developed through a collaborative process led by the President's Initiative on Race and the Community Relations Service, U.S. Department of Justice, which consulted with national organizations that specialize in race dialogues. The result is a manual which represents a consolidation of thinking and practice from around the country on community dialogues on race.

We cannot underestimate the power of dialogues. When people can explore perspectives and ideas, they discover how much they share in common and learn to appreciate their differences. Dialogue is an opportunity for growth and change. Dialogue can help open our minds. Dialogue can help each of us listen better. And dialogue can bring us closer together.

Thank you for your interest in conducting a community dialogue. We hope you find our guide useful and instructive.

Sincerely,

Judith A. Winston, Executive Director
President's Initiative on Race

Rose M. Ochi, Director
Community Relations Service
U.S. Department of Justice

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1. Characteristics of Community Dialogues on Race

What do we mean by dialogue?

A dialogue is a forum that draws participants from as many parts of the community as possible to exchange information face-to-face, share personal stories and experiences, honestly express perspectives, clarify viewpoints, and develop solutions to community concerns.

Unlike debate, dialogue emphasizes listening to deepen understanding (see Appendix A, "The Difference Between Debate and and Dialogue"). Dialogue invites discovery. It develops common values and allows participants to express their own interests. It expects that participants will grow in understanding and may decide to act together with common goals. In dialogue, participants can question and re-evaluate their assumptions. Through this process, people are learning to work together to improve race relations.

What makes for successful interracial dialogue?

The nature of the dialogue process can motivate people to work towards change (see Appendix A, "Examples of Race Reconciliation from Across the Nation"). Effective dialogues do the following:

- ***Move towards solutions rather than continue to express or analyze the problem.*** An emphasis on personal responsibility moves the discussion away from finger-pointing or naming enemies and towards constructive common action.

- ***Reach beyond the usual boundaries.*** When fully developed, dialogues can involve the entire community, offering opportunities for new, unexpected partnerships. New partnerships can develop when participants listen carefully and respectfully to each other. A search for solutions focuses on the common good as participants are encouraged to broaden their horizons and build relationships outside their comfort zones.

- ***Unite divided communities through a respectful, informed sharing of local racial history and its consequences for different people in today's society.*** The experience of "walking through history" together can lead to healing.

- ***Aim for a change of heart, not just a change of mind.*** Dialogues go beyond sharing and understanding to transforming participants. While the process begins with the individual, it eventually involves groups and institutions. Ultimately, dialogues can affect how policies are made.

2. Getting Started—Steps in Organizing a Dialogue

Below are some basic questions and possible answers to help you think about organizing a dialogue on race. They are meant to be a starting place. Answering these questions will help you better understand the purpose and potential of your effort. You may wish to use the worksheet following these lists to sketch a profile of your own community. More detailed steps follow these "brainstorming" questions.

Think about your community.

What's going on in our community that a dialogue on race could address?

Some possibilities—

- ☐ There are people of different racial groups in my neighborhood that I would like to know better.
- ☐ There is a race-related issue in my community that people need to talk about.
- ☐ People of different races live and work on opposite sides of town.
- ☐ There are young people from diverse racial and ethnic groups who could benefit from sharing their experiences.
- ☐ I would like to get the community to come together to tackle a common problem.
- ☐ The time is ripe for change-people are ready to do something positive.
- ☐ The "face" of the community is changing, and people need to acknowledge and understand the changes in a more constructive light.

Think about your goals.

If there were a dialogue on race here, what would be its goals?

Some possibilities—

- ☐ To improve our neighborhood by building bridges across racial lines.
- ☐ To build new relationships.
- ☐ To bring people together who do not typically talk to one another.
- ☐ To bring our kids together to reduce the chance of violence.
- ☐ To influence attitudes of local law enforcement.
- ☐ To better understand other cultures.
- ☐ To open up new economic possibilities.
- ☐ To create bonds between organizations that do not usually work together.
- ☐ To work on a community project together, such as building a playground.
- ☐ To build partnerships across jurisdictional lines.

Think about who should be included.

Who should be in the dialogue?

Some possibilities—

- ☐ My neighbors.
- ☐ Members of my and other religious communities.
- ☐ The school community-parents, teachers, administrators, and students.
- ☐ Police and community members.
- ☐ Business owners.
- ☐ Elected officials and community leaders.

Think about what format to use.

What type of discussion should we have?

Some possibilities—

- ☐ A few small groups meeting once or twice.
- ☐ A large public meeting with panelists and questions from the audience.
- ☐ A series of small groups from across the community meeting for six weeks or more, concluding with a large meeting.
- ☐ A year-long commitment among a group of key community leaders to study, reflect on, and discuss race relations.
- ☐ School projects aimed at understanding cultural differences, concluding with a multicultural potluck dinner.
- ☐ Study groups meeting from racially diverse congregations, concluding with a joint worship service.

Worksheet to Create Your Own Community Profile

1. What's going on in our community that a dialogue on race would address?

2. If there were a dialogue on race here, what would be its goals?

3. Who should be in the dialogue?

4. What format should we use?

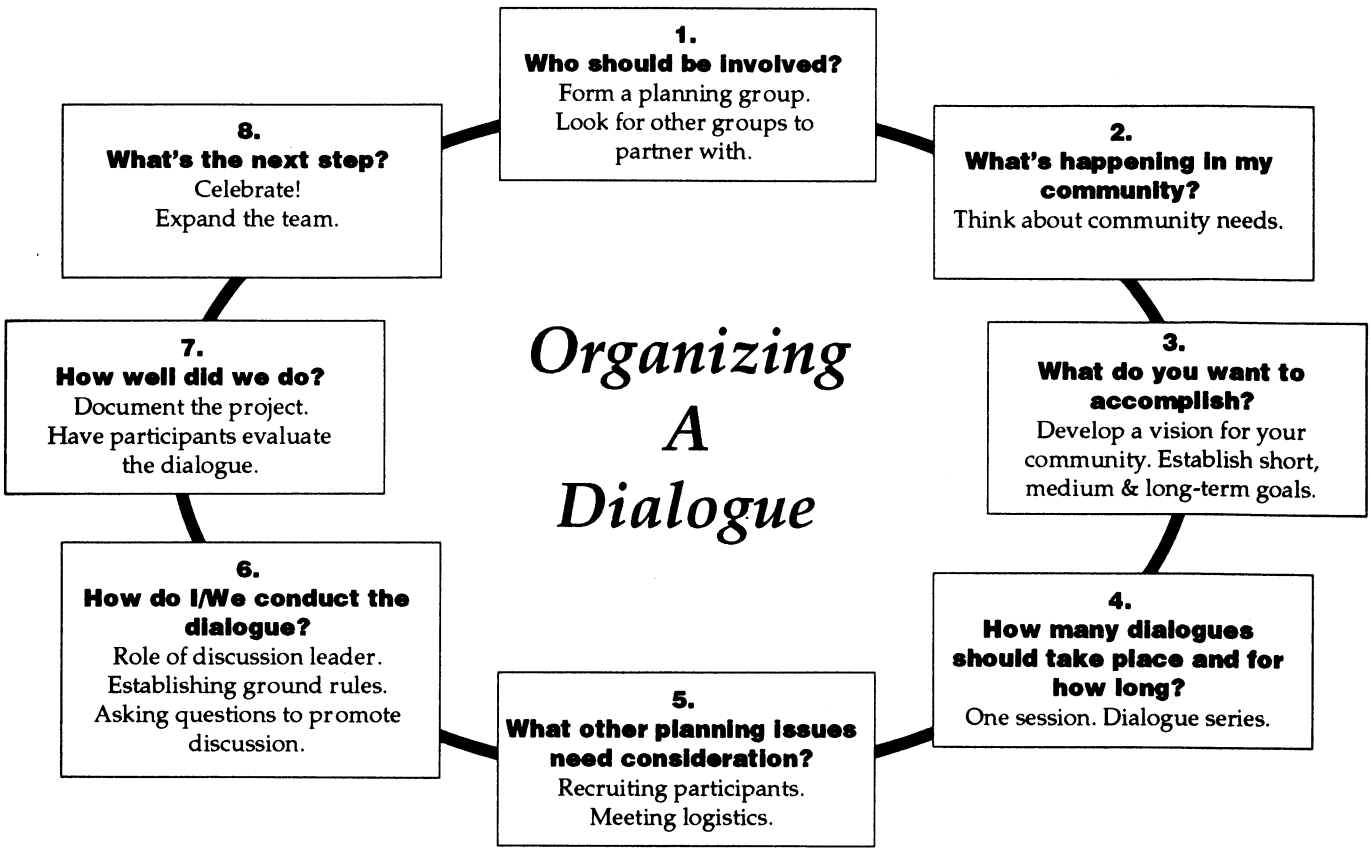
Now make some choices.

You don't have to be an expert to have an honest conversation about race. But as someone who is considering organizing a dialogue, you do have several choices ranging from the very simple to the somewhat complex. At the simple end, you can gather together a small group of friends, neighbors, or schoolmates to talk informally about race. This approach can be a constructive beginning, but will likely not produce much long-term community or institutional change. Another option is to pair existing community groups for a dialogue on race. This approach can have a larger effect on the community, depending on the groups involved. You could also create new groups from your community and bring them together for conversations on race aimed at community change. Whatever your approach, for a lasting impact on the larger community, it is a good idea to think about how you will sustain the project before you begin.

Dialogue may start at many levels and in many ways. While the guidance provided below can be adapted for the small "ad-hoc" gathering, it is generally intended for a larger effort (see figure below). The resource directory in Appendix C is a good place to locate help in organizing a dialogue on race. You should now be ready to tackle the following questions.

1. Who should be involved?

Form a planning group. If you are organizing an informal dialogue with friends, neighbors, or co-workers, for example, then the



Eight Steps for Beginning and Sustaining a Race Dialogue

planning group may consist of just you and one or two others. However, if you are planning a more ambitious effort, then you will want to have a planning group of six or eight people who represent different backgrounds, professions, and viewpoints. Once you've assembled the group together, discuss your approach. You will need to spend enough time together to build a level of trust. This group will be the nucleus that drives the process and should "model" the kind of relationships and openness that you hope to see in the overall effort. Meeting in each other's homes can be a great way to get to know one another.

Look for other groups with which to partner. Having good partners is important for long-term success. Look for people who are already working to improve race relations and who have experiences to share. Good partners may be able to provide useful information and organizational resources. You will greatly increase your outreach to the community as well. Groups from different racial, ethnic, or religious communities can make good partners and offer networking possibilities. Such groups may include religious leaders, law enforcement, small business owners, elected officials, and various nonprofit organizations.

2. What's Happening in My Community?

Think about the needs of your community. Take an inventory. What problems do you see in the community that are related to race and ethnicity? What are the critical issues? If things are really going to change, who needs to be part of the dialogue? Who are the individuals or groups not talking to each other? What role do language barriers play in groups not talking to each other? Are there people who should be allies, who may be doing similar work, but who are competing rather than working together? What are some of the consequences of racial divisions?

3. What do you want to accomplish?

Develop a vision for your community. What is special about your community? What do the different neighborhoods or groups offer that is unique? Are there particular issues that need to be heard? Remember, difficulties faced honestly can become assets. And the most unlikely people may hold the key to far-reaching success.

Establish short-, medium-, and long-term goals. Racial reconciliation may not happen overnight, but it is important to set some attainable goals that the group can work towards together. Look for "hinge issues" around which coalitions may form-education, housing, public transportation, and safety, for example. Where possible, create task forces to study specific needs and to work on concrete action plans. This approach will keep key business and civic leaders at the table.

4. How many dialogues should take place and for how long?

Again, the answer to this question depends on what you want to accomplish. Dialogues can go from one session of two hours to a series of sessions lasting indefinitely. For example, if your goal is simply to get people you know to come together and have a conversation about race, you may only want to do one session, perhaps in your home following a social event or community function. At the other end of the spectrum, if your goal is to create institutional change in your community, you may want to launch a series of dialogues involving broad community representation. Such an effort will require partnering with other groups in the community and seeking out support services.

5. What additional planning issues might you consider?

Recruit participants. To ensure the right balance for your group(s), you may need to consider the following: First, "Which voices need to be included?" Answering that question will ensure the racial, ethnic, and religious diversity necessary for successful dialogues. Then, "Who is missing?" That answer will steer you towards others who need to be involved. Other people to contact are those in uninvolved or unaffiliated groups who, while a visible part of the community, may be harder to reach through traditional means. Generate interest by doing the following:

- ask civic leaders and other influential members of the community to help rally the public;
- identify the appropriate media for the audience you are trying to reach-consider placing an announcement in a small local weekly or monthly newspaper, on a community bulletin board, or even on an electronic community bulletin board;
- use bilingual communications;
- post an announcement in grocery stores in the community;
- invite yourself to various group meetings in the community to get the word out; and
- approach local chapters of national organizations.

Consider logistics issues. These may include:

- where to have the dialogue;
- whether any funds need to be raised; and
- mailing lists-often obtainable from other groups.

6. How do I/we conduct the dialogue?

The critical components include welcoming participants and having them introduce themselves; setting out the dialogue's purpose; establishing ground rules; promoting discussion through thoughtful questions, visual media, or other materials; and periodically summarizing and evaluating the dialogue (see Section 3, "Conducting an Effective Community Dialogue on Race").

7. How well did we do?

Document and evaluate the project. Keep a record of the individuals and groups who take part in the dialogues and of how well the discussions go. Include such things as number of participants, group composition (multiracial, youth, church, community, etc.), main topics discussed, how productive the discussions were, how they might have been improved, and other thoughts. This will allow you to see how attitudes and perceptions have changed and whether changes need to be made in the dialogue format. Emphasize that what participants share during the dialogue will not be attributed to them in any official record or document.

Have participants evaluate the dialogue. Depending on their goals, each group will evaluate the dialogue, whether a single session or a series, after it is over. Evaluations can be written and/or expressed verbally. You may wish to distribute a short evaluation form to elicit participant feedback and to measure the impact of the dialogue. Such a form might include questions such as the following:

- Why did you join the group?
- What were your expectations?
- Were you comfortable participating in the discussion?
- Did the dialogue give you new insights about how to improve race relations?
- Was the dialogue climate positive and respectful?
- Did you find the dialogue to be a valuable experience overall?
- How might it have been improved?

- Would you like to participate in a future session?
- Did the experience motivate you to act differently?
- What additional comments do you have?

8. What's the next step?

Hold an annual public event to celebrate achievements, evaluate effectiveness, and invite new participants.

Expand the team. As the dialogues develop, include representatives of all major areas (politics, different faiths, education, business, media, etc.). With them, you may want to create a statement about your community, its history, the challenges it faces today, and your collective vision for the future.

3. Conducting an Effective Community Dialogue on Race

The racial dialogue has four phases.

The dialogue design presented here contains four phases that have proven useful in moving participants through a natural process-from sharing individual experiences to gaining a deeper understanding of those experiences to committing to collective action. Whether meeting for one dialogue session or a series of sessions, participants move through all four phases, exploring and building on shared experiences. The first phase sets the tone and explores the question ***Who Are We?*** through the sharing of personal stories. The second phase helps participants understand ***Where Are We?*** through a deeper exploration of personal and shared racial history in the community. During the third phase, participants develop a vision for the community, in response to the question ***Where Do We Want To Be?*** In the fourth phase, participants answer the question, ***What Will We Do As Individuals and With Others To Make A Difference?*** Often, they discover shared interests and start working together on specific projects.

> **Note:** Throughout this section, a sample script for the dialogue leader is noted in *italics*. A one-page overview of a sample small group dialogue is offered in Appendix A. Many dialogue leaders will want to read through the suggested questions in this section, then develop questions tailored to the needs of their particular groups. If your group is composed of people who are experienced discussing complex racial issues with each other, the quotes in Appendix A may be useful to quickly articulate a range of perspectives about race and to stimulate discussion. A set of additional questions for each of the four dialogue phases can be found in Appendix B.

You are ready to begin the dialogue.

Phase I: Who Are We?

This phase sets the tone and context for the dialogue, which begins with the sharing of personal stories and experiences. In addition to serving an ice-breaking function, this kind of personal sharing helps to level the playing field among participants and improve their understanding by hearing each others' experiences.

Welcome, Introduction and Overview
(Suggested time—15 minutes)

It's not always easy to talk about race relations. A commitment to the dialogue process—open, thoughtful, focused—will help us make progress. Your presence here shows you want to help improve race relations in this community, and just being here is an important step.

- Explain the purpose of the dialogue and the several phases involved.
- Discuss, clarify, and set ground rules (see page 15).
- Ask people to briefly introduce themselves.
- Give an overview of the session.
- Describe your role as dialogue leader (see page 15).

Starting the Dialogue

Often the most difficult part of talking about race is getting started. People may feel uncomfortable at first and hesitant about expressing their personal beliefs. To get people talking, it may help to relate personal stories or anecdotes, or to bring up a race-related incident that has occurred within the community.

Let's begin by looking at the first question: ***Who Are We?*** *By listening to one another's personal stories, we can gain insights into our own beliefs and those of others, and come to new understandings of the issues we face. By sharing our personal experiences, we can learn more about each other as individuals and about how we have been influenced by our racial and/or ethnic origins. We can also shed light on our different perceptions and understandings of race relations.*

- Begin with questions that allow people to talk about their own lives and what is important to them. Don't focus on race at first. Give people a chance just to get to know each other as individuals and to find out what they have in common. Examples of questions to use include-
  - How long have you lived in this community?
  - Where did you live before moving here?
  - What are some of your personal interests?
  - What things in life are most important to you?

Note to dialogue leader: For groups of 15 people or fewer, keep everyone together. Groups of more than 15 people should be separated into smaller groups (3 to 5 people) for a few minutes, then brought back together.

- Explore how race affects us on a day-to-day basis. Examples of questions to use include—
  - What is your racial, ethnic and/or cultural background?
  - Did you grow up mostly around people similar to you?
  - What are some of your earliest memories of coming in contact with people different from you?

- Summarize the session at meeting's end.

- Evaluate the meeting. Ask such questions as—
  - How did you feel about this meeting?
  - Is there anything you would like to change?

- Bring the meeting to an end and defuse any tensions. You might say, Th*ank you for coming. Any final thoughts? Next week, we will...*

Transition to Phase II: In preparation for the next meeting, think about the following questions: When it comes to race, what problems are we facing? What are the most serious challenges facing our community, and what are the community's greatest strengths for dealing with those challenges?

Phase II: Where Are We?

This phase explores questions that highlight our different experiences and different perceptions about the kinds of problems our society is facing with regard to race. This phase is about people expressing their different understandings about race, then exploring the underlying conditions producing them. It centers on the idea that it makes sense to talk about what we are facing before we talk about solutions. By the end of this phase, participants should have identified the themes, issues, and problems in their community.

Let's turn now to our second question: ***Where Are We?*** *The purpose of this section is to look at our current experiences of race and ethnicity and to discuss the state of race relations in our community. Since this is the part where we really get down to business as far as identifying the underlying causes of any racial issues in our community, the discussion may get a little heated at times. It is okay to feel uncomfortable, as that is part of the difficult process of making change.*

- Begin with questions that get people to talk about their current experiences with race relations. Examples include—
  - How much and what type of contact do you have with people of other races or groups?
  - Is it easier or harder than it was a few years ago to make friends of other races? Why is that so?

Note to dialogue leader: Be prepared for the level of the conversation to intensify during this phase. Remember to reassure participants that it is okay to feel agitated or uncomfortable, reminding them of the ground rules when necessary (see Section 4, "The Role of the Dialogue Leader," for more tips).

- Focus the dialogue on the state of race relations in the community. Questions to help get started include—
  - How would you describe the overall state of race relations in our community?
  - What are some of the underlying conditions affecting race relations in our community?
  - In what ways do we agree and/or disagree about the nature of our racial problems, what caused them, and how serious they are?

- Summarize the session, evaluate it, and bring the meeting to an end.

Transition to Phase III: In preparation for the next session, think about the following questions: What can we do to make progress in our community? When it comes to strategies to improve race relations and to eliminate racism, what sorts of proposals do you know about? Try to identify a broad range of possibilities. What are the pros and cons of the various approaches? When it comes to race, what direction should our public policies take? What goals and values should shape our policies?

Phase III: Where Do We Want To Go?

The goal of this phase is to move away from the "me" and get people to think and talk about possible directions for change. In this segment, participants begin to build their collective vision. They first identify what would be a part of that vision and then "brainstorm" about how they could all help to build it (suggest "we" statements be used). By the end of this session, participants should have identified accomplishments, barriers to overcome, and opportunities for further action.

Let's turn our attention to the question, ***Where Do We Want To Go?*** *We share a common desire to improve race relations so let's talk about what we mean by that and explore specific things we might do to achieve that goal.*

- Have participants talk about their vision of what they would like to see in the community. You could ask questions such as-
  - How would you answer the question of where we want to go in race relations?
  - If we had excellent race relations, what kinds of things would we see in the community? Hear in the community? Feel?

- Help participants to build their future vision. Ask questions like-
  - What are the main changes that need to happen to increase understanding and cooperative action across racial lines?
  - What are some of the helping/hindering forces in our community?

Note to dialogue leader: The heart of the session is generating a range of viewpoints on how our society and community might address and make progress on race relations. As you sift through the views, remember to give a fair hearing to the ideas that come up.

- Turn the dialogue to the question of what individuals can do towards improving race relations. Ask questions like-
  - What things have you seen that give you hope for improved race relations?
  - What are some steps we could take to improve race relations in our neighborhood? In our workplace? In our organizations? In our schools? In our community?

- Explore the roles that the community's institutions and government play in helping race relations. How could they do a better job?

- Summarize the session, evaluate it, and bring the meeting to an end.

Transition to Phase IV: I hope that you all have begun to have a vision of what this community could look like if the positive changes we've discussed were to actually take place. When we come back together next session, we will be talking about what we can do as individuals and with others to really make a difference. For the next session, think about these questions: What kinds of concrete steps can you take in your everyday life-by yourself and with others-to improve race relations in the community? What do you think is most needed in this community?

Phase IV: What Will We Do, As Individuals and With Others, To Make a Difference?

The purpose of this session is to begin a productive conversation on specific actions that individuals will take, by themselves or with others, to make a difference in their communities. This session presents a range of concrete actions for change.

While the racial issues we are facing in our communities sometimes seem overwhelming, it is possible to make a difference. By participating in this dialogue, you have already crossed the racial divide looking for better understanding and strategies that work. The purpose of this session is to draw out ideas for steps we can take-as individuals, in groups, and as a whole community-to face the challenge of race-related issues.

- Try to get participants to move from words to actions. Ask questions like—
  - What is each of us personally willing to do to make a difference?
  - How can you connect with others who share your concerns?
  - Should we continue and expand this dialogue, get more people involved? How could we do that?
  - Are there other issues and concerns that we should address using dialogues?
  - What will we do to ensure follow-up?

- Brainstorm action ideas with participants, recording their responses on a flip chart. Share any follow-up plans.

- Summarize the session, evaluate it, and bring the meeting to an end.

- Pass out an evaluation form (see Section 2, page 9, for possible questions).

4. The Role of the Dialogue Leader

The dialogue leader's role is an important one that requires especially good listening skills and knowledge of when not to talk. The dialogue leader must also help set and follow ground rules for participation in the dialogue. Establishing rules helps to create a safe environment for openness and sharing. The dialogue leader's basic responsibility is to the group as a whole, while also considering each person's individuality and level of comfort.

Leading a dialogue is an intensive activity requiring a high level of alertness and awareness. That is why dialogues are often conducted by two or more leaders. It may be particularly valuable to have co-leaders who are of a different race or ethnic background and gender. Co-leadership can help to balance the dialogue and "model" the type of collaboration you hope to encourage.

Discussion leaders are critical to making the dialogue work.

While the leader of a dialogue does not need to be an "expert" or even the most knowledgeable person in the group on the topic being discussed, he or she should be the best prepared for the discussion. It is up to the dialogue leader to keep the group moving forward, using phrases that enhance conversations and encourage discussion. This means understanding the goals of the dialogue, thinking ahead of time about the directions in which the discussion might go, and preparing questions to help the group tackle their subject. The dialogue leader guides the process to ensure that it stays on track and avoids obstacles that could derail it. While the discussion leader guides the dialogue, he or she is also impartial in it, that is, not favoring one person or point of view and not adding personal opinion. The dialogue leader lets the participants dictate the flow of the discussion. Solid preparation will enable you to give your full attention to how the participants are relating to each other and to what they are saying.

The dialogue leader plays several roles.

At the start of the session, remind everyone that the purpose is to have an open, honest, and cooperative dialogue, and that your role as leader is to remain neutral, keep the discussion focused, and follow the ground rules. Before the discussion begins, help the participants establish ground rules and ensure that all participants are willing to follow them. Ground rules must emphasize respect, listening, honesty, and the importance of sharing time equitably. Stress the importance of respecting different opinions and perspectives. You might post the following sample ground rules on a flip chart, or give one sample ground rule and ask the group to come up

Suggested Basic Ground Rules for Dialogues

Some basic ground rules for dialogues might include the following:

- We will respect confidentiality.
- We will share time equitably to ensure the participation of all.
- We will listen carefully and not interrupt.
- We will keep an open mind and be open to learning.
- We will not be disrespectful of the speaker even when we do not respect the views.

with more. You could then ask, "Are there any questions about these ground rules? Can we all agree to them before we continue?

The following tips describe what a good dialogue leader should strive to do:

- ***Set a relaxed and open tone.*** Welcome everyone and create a friendly and relaxed atmosphere. Well-placed humor is usually appreciated.

- ***Stay neutral.*** This may be the most important point to remember as the leader of a dialogue. You should not share your personal views or try to advance your agenda on the issue. You are there to serve the discussion, not to join it.

- ***Stress the importance of confidentiality.*** Make sure participants understand that what they say during the dialogue session is to be kept completely confidential. Define for them what confidential means. For instance, it is not all right to speak outside of the dialogue about what someone else said or did. It is all right to share one's own personal insights about the issue of race and racism as a result of the process.

- ***Encourage openness about language.*** Dialogue leaders should encourage participants to offer preferred terms if a biased or offensive word or phrase should come up during the dialogue.

- ***Provide bilingual translation, if necessary.*** Also, ensure that provided material is translated into the participant's first language, or recruit bilingual discussion leaders.

- ***Keep track of who is contributing and who is not.*** Always use your "third eye." You are not only helping to keep the group focused on the content of the discussion, but you are monitoring how well the participants are communicating with each other-who has spoken, who has not, and whose points have not yet received a fair hearing. A dialogue leader must constantly weigh group needs against the requirements of individual members.

- ***Follow and focus the conversation flow.*** A dialogue leader who listens carefully will select topics raised in the initial sharing. To help keep the group on the topic, it is helpful to occasionally restate the key question or insight under discussion. It is important to guide gently, yet persistently. You might ask, *"How does your point relate to the topic?"* or state, *"That's an interesting point, but let's return to the central issue."* Keep careful track of time.

- ***Do not fear silence.*** It is all right if people are quiet for a while. When deciding when to intervene, err on the side of non-intervention. The group will work its way out of a difficult situation. Sometimes group members only need more time to think through alternatives or to consider what has just been said.

- ***Accept and summarize expressed opinions.*** "Accepting" shows respect for each participant in the group. It is important for the dialogue leader to make it clear that dialogue discussions involve no right or wrong responses. One way to show acceptance and respect is to briefly summarize what is heard and to convey the feeling with which it was shared. Reflecting both the content and the feeling lets the person know that she or he has been heard. For example, you might say: *"It sounds like you felt hurt when you were slighted by someone of a different race."* Once in a while, ask participants to sum up the most important points that have come out

in the discussion. This gives the group a sense of accomplishment and a point of reference for more sharing.

- *Anticipate conflict and tend to the ground rules.* When conflict arises, explain that disagreement over ideas is to be expected. Remind participants that conflict must stay on the issue. Do not allow it to become personal. Appeal to the group to help resolve the conflict and abide by the ground rules. You may have to stop and reference the ground rules several times throughout the discussion.

- *Close the dialogue.* Give participants a chance to talk about the most important thing they gained from the discussion. You may ask them to share any new ideas or thoughts they've had as a result of the discussion. Ask them to think about what worked and what didn't. You may want to encourage the group to design a closing activity for use at each session. Provide some time for the group to evaluate the process in writing. A brief evaluation allows participants the chance to comment on the process and to give feedback to the dialogue leader. Remember to thank everyone for their participation.

Here's how to handle some challenging situations.

The best method for handling challenging situations is to anticipate them and be prepared. Each interracial dialogue is a unique experience, providing new opportunities for the discussion leader. Even those who have been facilitators for many years are often faced with new problems requiring on-the-spot creative action. There are no certain answers; sometimes groups just do not go well, and other times all participants seem engaged and satisfied. The following scenarios present some possible challenges to the dialogue leader and offer some guidelines for handling them.

THE CHALLENGE

The group is slow to respond to the process.

How to Handle It: Check to determine whether your directions have been understood. You may need to restate the purpose of the process and how it should be carried out. You may also have people who resist participating because of "power" issues in the group. If so, invite them to participate to the degree they feel comfortable. Assure them that the purpose of the process is to share different insights, experiences, and personal reflections on the topic. However the members choose to participate is valuable. It is also important to make sure members are physically comfortable.

THE CHALLENGE

One or a few members dominate the dialogue.

How to Handle It: The instructions you give to participants about respecting time limits are helpful. Invite participants to be conscious of each person having time to share his or her reflections, ideas, and insights. It may be helpful to invoke the ground rule "It is important to share time equitably" when a few individuals dominate the discussion. Another solution is to tell the group you want to hear from those who have not said much. Participants will look to you to restrain domineering members. Sometimes, this situation happens when those dominating the dialogue feel they have not been heard. Restating the essence of what they've expressed can show that you have understood their point of view.

THE CHALLENGE

The dialogue leader feels strongly about an issue and has trouble staying unbiased.

How to Handle It: The dialogue leader needs to remain on task, which is to guide the process and to elicit and respect all members' thoughts. If leaders really respect the views of others, show interest and curiosity for other experiences and viewpoints, it will not be difficult to keep personal ideas from over-influencing the dialogue. This is not to say that the dialogue leader never shares with the members in the process. However, you must guard against moving from a discussion leader into a "teacher/lecturer" mode.

THE CHALLENGE

A participant walks out of a group following a heated conflict.

How to Handle It: Sometimes the conversation may become heated. Other times, people may seem to be on the verge of fighting; and sometimes they may even walk out. The best way to deal with conflict is to confront it directly. Remind participants that they were told initially to expect conflict but that they agreed to respond to differences respectfully. The dialogue leader should always stop name-calling, personal attacks, and threats. This is one situation where you should readily appeal to the group for support. If they accepted the ground rules, they will support you.

Appendices

Appendices

A. Additional Resources
   1. A Sample Small Group Dialogue
   2. The Difference Between Debate and Dialogue
   3. Examples of Racial Reconciliation from Across the Nation

B. Additional Questions for the Four Phases of Dialogue

Appendix A1.
A Sample Small Group Dialogue

The following is an overview of a generic small group dialogue. This format is based on a group of 8 to 15 participants, guided by an impartial leader using discussion materials or questions. As a rule, adults meet for two hours at a time; young people for an hour to an hour and a half.

1. Introductions, roles, and intentions of the dialogue. The session begins with group members briefly introducing themselves after the dialogue leader has welcomed everyone. The dialogue leader explains his or her role as "neutral," one of guiding the discussion without adding personal opinions. It is important to include an overview of the dialogue effort, the number of meetings planned, the organizers, the goals of the program, and any other relevant information.

2. Ground rules. Central to the opening dialogue is establishing ground rules for the group's behavior and discussion. Start with a basic list and add any others the group wants to include. Post the ground rules where everyone can see them, and remember that you can add more to the list as needed. The group should be sure to discuss how to handle conflict and disagreement, as well as the need for confidentiality.

3. Discussion. Begin by asking participants what attracted them to this dialogue, perhaps asking, "Why are you concerned about issues of race?" or "How have your experiences or concerns influenced your opinions about race?" The heart of the discussion follows. Members can answer a series of questions, use prepared discussion materials with various viewpoints, read newspaper articles or editorials, look at television clips, or review information on the state of race relations in their community. Whatever method is selected, it is important to structure the discussion so that it goes somewhere, is grounded in concrete examples, and offers participants a chance to take action on the issues. Dialogue participants may get frustrated if they feel the conversation is too abstract, too vague, or "going around in circles."

The dialogue leader will keep track of how the discussion is going. Is it time for a clarifying question or a summary of key points? Are all members fully engaged, or are some people dominating? Is the discussion wandering and calling for a change in direction? The participants can summarize the most important results of their discussion and consider what action they might take individually or together.

4. Evaluation and conclusion. In the final minutes, participants can offer their thoughts on the experience. If meeting again, this is the time to look ahead to the next meeting. If this is the last dialogue, thank the participants and ask for any final thoughts for staying involved in the effort. Participant evaluations of the dialogue can be expressed verbally and/or in writing. It may also be helpful for dialogues to be loosely recorded, if possible. Such documentation could help to measure the success of the dialogue and identify any needed improvements.

Appendix A2.
The Difference Between Debate and Dialogue

Debate...	Dialogue...
is oppositional: two sides oppose each other and attempt to prove each other wrong.	is collaborative: two or more sides work together towards common understanding.
has winning as the goal.	has finding common ground as the goal.
lets one side listen to the other side in order to find flaws and to counter its arguments.	lets one side listen to the other side in order to understand.
defends assumptions as the truth.	reveals assumptions for reevaluation.
causes critique of the other position.	causes introspection of one's own position.
defends one's own positions as the best solution and excludes other solutions.	opens the possibility of reaching a better solution than any of the original solutions.
creates a closed-minded attitude, a determination to be right.	creates an open-minded attitude, an openness to being wrong and an openness to change.
prompts a search for glaring differences.	prompts a search for basic agreements.
involves a countering of the other position without focusing on feelings or relationship and often belittles or deprecates the other person.	involves a real concern for the other person and does not seek to alienate or offend.

Appendix B.
Additional Questions for the Four Dialogue Phases

The following questions may be used to guide participants through each phase of a dialogue. Whether meeting for one session or a series of sessions, participants should progress through all four dialogue phases. The questions are organized under each phase according to how many sessions are planned. For each dialogue phase, select the question set(s) to fit your format.

Phase I —Who Are We?

For 1 Session:

- What are your first memories of learning that there was something called race?
- Have you ever felt different because of your race. If so, what was your first experience of feeling different?
- How much contact do you have now with people from other races? What type of contact is that?

For 2-3 Sessions (consider these):

- What was your first exposure to messages that concern racial stereotypes? Who told you about them?
- When did you first discover that some people thought about race very differently than you?
- What experiences have shaped your feelings and attitudes about race and ethnicity?

For 4 or More Sessions (consider these):

- What did you believe about race relations in your community growing up?
- What is your family history concerning race? Did racial issues affect your parents and grandparents?
- What early experiences have shaped your feelings and attitudes about race?

Phase II—Where Are We?

For 1 Session:

- What experience have you had in the past year that made you feel differently about race relations?
- If you had such an experience, what are the conditions that made that experience possible? If you did not have an experience, what makes such experiences rare? What do we make of our answers?
- Is race something you think about daily?
- How much contact do you have now with people from other races? What type of contact is that?
- What are the underlying conditions that influence the quality and quantity of our contact with people from other races?

For 2-3 Sessions (consider these):

- Can you think of a recent experience when you benefited or suffered from people having a stereotype about you?
- What are the underlying conditions that create the various ways we answer that question?
- Can you think of a recent time when someone's understanding of race made your action or statement have a different impact than you intended?
- Can you think of a time when you wondered whether your behavior towards others was affected by a racial stereotype, or by other racial issues?

For 4 or More Sessions (consider these):

- How would you describe the overall state of race relations in our community?
- What do you tell young people about the racial situation in our community?

- Is it important to share our perspective, or let them find out for themselves?
- What are the underlying conditions or barriers that hinder better race relations?
- In what ways do we agree or disagree about the nature of racial problems, what caused them, and how serious they are?
- What are the underlying conditions that might make us have different approaches to talking to youth about race?
- Which is the bigger problem in people understanding today's community challenges: people overemphasizing race or under-emphasizing race?
- Is it a little easier to relate to people from your same race than to relate to people from other races? Why?
- What are the barriers (in you, others, or in society) that sometimes make it difficult to relate to people of other races and cultures?

Phase III—Where Do We Want To Go?

For 1 Session:

- What needs to happen for people to have more positive experiences with race relations?
- What would have to happen so that people were not made to feel different because of race?
- What would have to happen for people to have more frequent and more meaningful contact with people from other races?

For 2-3 Sessions (consider these):

- What would have to happen for our society to have fewer racial stereotypes?
- What would have to happen so that people from different backgrounds could more easily work through their understandings of how race affects day-to-day situations?
- What are we, either independently or with others, willing to do so that we have more interactions that contribute to better race relations?

For 4 or More Sessions (consider these):

- In what specific ways do you wish race relations were different in our community? What would have to happen so that race relations would improve?
- What would have to happen so that youth had an informed and optimistic understanding of race relations?
- What can we agree needs to happen to improve race relations, even if we have different ways of understanding history?

Phase IV—What Will We Do, As Individuals and With Others, To Make A Difference?

For 1 Session:

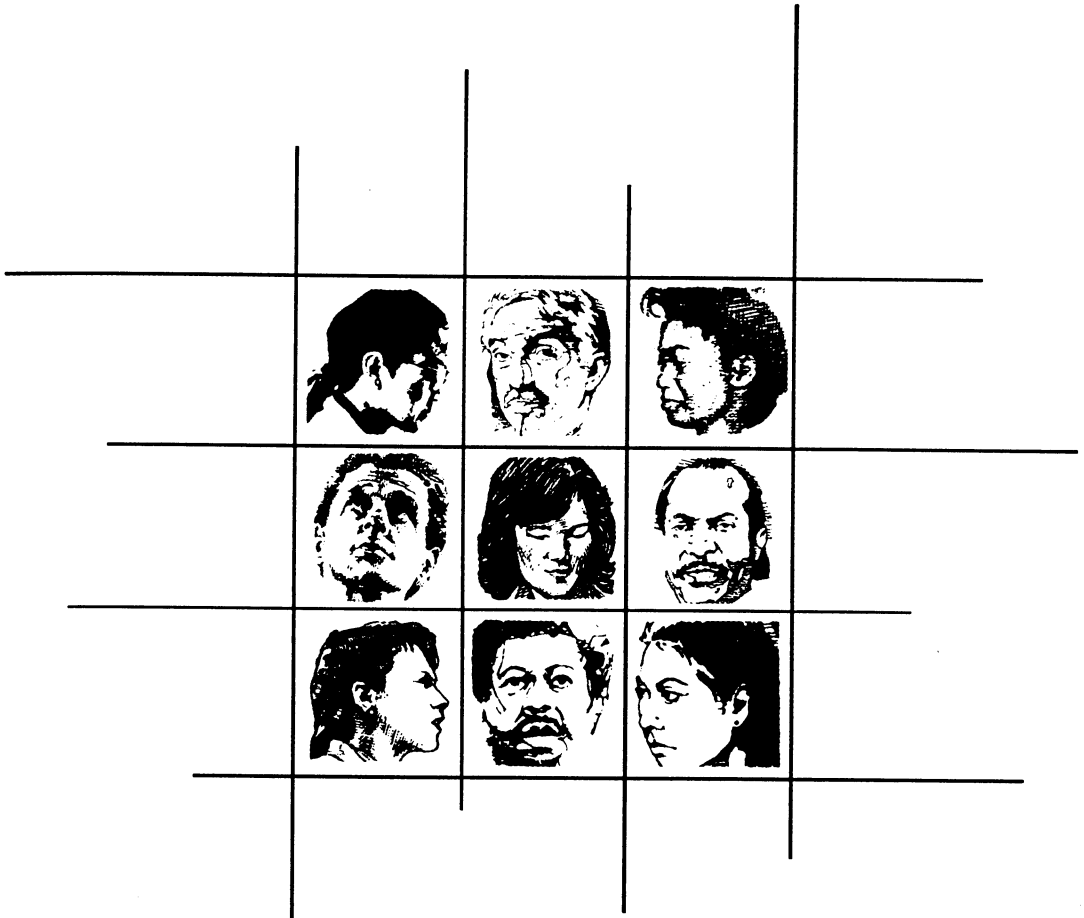
- What are we, either independently or with others, willing to do so that we have more interactions that contribute to better race relations?
- What are we, either independently or with others, willing to do so that people have more frequent and meaningful contact with people from other races?
- What are some actions we might encourage community, business, or government organizations to take?

For 2-3 Sessions (consider these):

- What are we, either independently or with others, willing to do to reduce the affect of racial stereotypes in our lives and community?
- What are we, either independently or with others, willing to do to lessen misunderstandings about race?

For 4 or More Sessions (consider these):

- What are we, either individually or in groups, willing to do to improve race relations?
- What are we going to do, either independently or with others, to make it easier for people to relate to those in other groups?



Facing the Challenge of Racism and Race Relations:

Democratic Dialogue and Action for Stronger Communities

✻ **The Study Circles Resource Center offers eight discussion guides on various topics. *Facing the Challenge of Racism and Race Relations: Democratic Dialogue and Action for Stronger Communities* is one of those eight. For the complete list of discussion guides, see the order form which follows.**

STUDY CIRCLES
RESOURCE CENTER

Basic information about the Study Circles Resource Center

What is a study circle?
The study circle is a simple process for small-group deliberation. There are just a few defining characteristics:

- A study circle is comprised of 8-12 people who meet regularly over a period of weeks or months to address a critical public issue in a democratic and collaborative way.
- A study circle is facilitated by an impartial person who is there not to act as an expert on the issue, but to serve the group by keeping the discussion focused, helping the group consider a variety of views, and asking difficult questions.
- A study circle looks at an issue from many points of view. Study circle facilitators and discussion materials give everyone "a home in the conversation," and help the group explore areas of common ground.
- A study circle progresses from a session on personal experience ("how does the issue affect me?") to sessions providing a broader perspective ("what are others saying about the issue?") to a session on action ("what can we do about the issue here?").

What is the Study Circles Resource Center (SCRC)?
SCRC was established in 1990 to promote the use of study circles on critical social and political issues. It is a project of the Topsfield Foundation, a private, nonprofit, nonpartisan foundation whose mission is to advance deliberative democracy and improve the quality of public life in the United States. SCRC operates by creating study circle organizing and discussion materials, distributing those materials free of charge to organizers of large study circle programs, and providing free technical assistance to organizers.

What is a community-wide study circle program?
Study circles can take place within organizations, such as schools, unions, or government agencies. They have their greatest reach and impact, however, when organizations across a community work together to create large-scale programs. These community-wide programs engage large numbers of citizens – in some cases thousands – in study circles on a public issue such as race relations, crime and violence, or education. Broad sponsoring coalitions create strong, diverse community participation. Participants in study circles have an opportunity to make an impact on an issue they care about.

How do community-wide study circle programs come into being?
Typically, a single organization such as a mayor's office, a school board, or a human relations commission spearheads and staffs the project. In most communities, an initiating organization takes the first step by approaching other key organizations to build a sponsoring coalition. Most community-wide programs have 10-30 organizations as sponsors or endorsers. Grass-roots organizations such as churches, neighborhood associations, businesses, schools, and clubs often take part.

Basic steps in organizing a community-wide program

Study circle programs that create opportunities for dialogue across an entire community require a strong organizing effort. To ensure broad community involvement, consider these basic steps:

1. Find an ally or two.
2. Build a coalition of community leaders from various organizations and agencies that represent many segments of the community. Think about partnering with organizations that you don't always work with. Be sure to include organizations that have the staff, resources, and media clout to pull the program together, along with other organizations whose main resources are potential study circle leaders and participants (for example, churches, Chambers of Commerce, local governments, education institutions, and neighborhood associations). In particular, reach out to organizations and people who don't normally get involved in community activities. Ask yourself who is missing from the group, and then invite them to get involved .
3. Hold a pilot study circle with this core group of people. As this group expands, continue to use pilot study circles to give the new recruits an understanding of the process and the ability to talk about it from personal experience.
4. Decide how your coalition will handle the overall coordination of the program. The coalition will need to:
   a. Find a coordinator or coordinators, either paid staff or volunteer.
   b. Find, recruit, and train facilitators. These might be members of co-sponsoring organizations, people who have been trained in mediation or conflict resolution, or members of local leadership development programs. The continuing education department of a nearby university, or the local community education association, may be willing to organize the training.
   c. Set the timeline. The study circles should meet within a two or three-month period so that all of the study circles are going on around the same time.
   d. Think about logistics. This includes such things as suitable sites with convenient parking (often found in churches, libraries, schools, union halls), food, child care, transportation, wheelchair accessibility, flip charts or tablets, and other supplies.
   e. Begin working with the media. Explore ways to involve local media in a variety of ways including publicity, news, editorials, public service announcements, etc. Newspapers or television stations might consider joining the coalition as full partners.
   f. Make arrangements for an evaluation effort. Look to universities or other organizations who might be willing to help you assess your program.
   g. Plan the kickoff event. This will be an opportunity for the coalition to broadcast the call for dialogue to potential study circle participants, generating media coverage and greater community visibility.
   h. Start thinking about an action forum. Set a date early, and let the people who are involved in the program know about your plans so they can save the date.
5. Recruit participants from a broad cross section of the community. This is easier, of course, if your working group is representative of the community and can recruit from its ranks.
6. Hold the kickoff event. This event gives you an opportunity to let participants know that they are part of something big. Include high-profile speakers, an explanation of what study circles are, testimonials from pilot study circle participants, and breakout study circle sessions.

— STUDY CIRCLES BEGIN ALL OVER THE COMMUNITY —

7. Coordinate and support the study circles. Work to achieve diversity in each circle. Bring the facilitators together periodically to debrief and share successes and challenges. (Instead of allowing people to join circles that have already formed, collect names of latecomers to form new groups.)
8. Plan an action forum. This should be a large meeting where study circle participants report to the larger group on their action ideas, have a chance to sign up for task forces where they can work on implementing those ideas, and celebrate their experience.

— STUDY CIRCLES CONCLUDE —

9. Hold an action forum. As the task forces take on action projects, find ways to publicize and strengthen their efforts.

See next page for description of
Planning Community-Wide Study Circle Programs: A Step-by-Step Guide.

"How do we make a community-wide study circle program happen in our community?"

Planning Community-wide Study Circle Programs: A Step-by-Step Guide has the answers.

Study circles – small, democratic, highly participatory discussions – provide ways for people to build community and resolve public problems. In communities across the country, thousands of everyday people are meeting in study circles and making real progress on some of the most difficult issues of our time.

Planning Community-wide Study Circle Programs: A Step-by-Step Guide reflects what SCRC has learned from working with organizers of large-scale study circle programs. In addition to stories of successful programs, it includes sample documents and how-to advice on:

- ✓ building strong sponsoring coalitions
- ✓ selecting or writing discussion materials
- ✓ recruiting and training facilitators
- ✓ coordinating sites, schedules, and budgets
- ✓ recruiting broadly from the community to involve large numbers of people
- ✓ organizing kickoffs and action forums
- ✓ working with the media
- ✓ creating structures to foster ongoing citizen involvement

What do study circle programs accomplish? By participating in study circles, everyday people gain "ownership" of the issues, and begin thinking of themselves as members of a community capable of solving its problems. They gain deeper understanding of others' perspectives and concerns. They discover common ground and a greater desire and ability to work together – as individuals, as members of small groups, as members of large organizations in the community, and as voters.

How does SCRC support community-wide study circle programs? At no charge, SCRC staff members work with community leaders at every stage of creating a community-wide study circle program: putting organizers from different communities in touch with one another; advising on organizing and coalition building; consulting on material development; and writing letters of support for funding proposals. SCRC also provides free discussion materials for carefully designed, community-wide study circle programs. Study circle discussion materials are available on many of today's critical issues, including education, crime and violence, diversity, youth, immigration and race relations.

Planning Community-Wide Study Circle Programs: A Step-by-Step Guide

Can be ordered from the Study Circles Resource Center order form on page A-41

Facing the Challenge of Racism and Race Relations: Democratic Dialogue and Action for Stronger Communities

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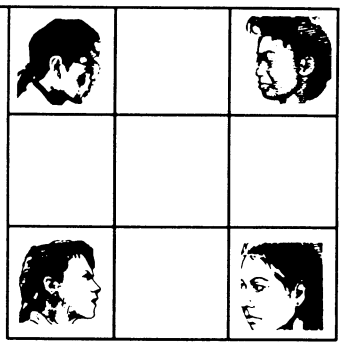
SESSION ONE

Race relations and racism: Experiences, perceptions, and beliefs

1



The purpose of this session is to share some personal experiences, stories, and perspectives about race relations, and to think about how race affects us on a day-to-day basis. It's not always easy to talk about race relations. A commitment to the study circle process — open, thoughtful, focused discussion — will help you make progress. By listening to one another's stories, we can gain insights into our own beliefs and those of others, and come to new understandings of the issues we face.

A note to the facilitator:

To manage time efficiently, many groups find that breaking this session into two parts is a useful strategy. Using a handful of questions selected from the list below, you might spend the first hour talking about personal experiences. In the second hour, ask the group to discuss the cases (see "Looking at the Cases"), which are concrete examples of everyday encounters where race may be at play. They are designed to help participants build a bridge between their own experiences and those of others.

Beginning the discussion

1. **Talk for a few minutes about your racial, ethnic, or cultural background.**
2. **Relate a story or give an example to illustrate how your background or experiences have contributed to your attitudes about race relations.**
3. **Have you experienced racism personally? Have you seen it in practice? How has it affected you or people you know?**
4. **In what ways do your attitudes toward persons of other racial or ethnic groups differ from those of your parents?**
5. **You probably have heard expressions of prejudice from family members, friends, co-workers, or neighbors. How do you think they learned their prejudice? How do you feel when you hear these expressions? How do you react?**
6. **How often do you have contact with people of other races or ethnic groups? under what circumstances — at work, at social events, in stores, in other places?**
7. **Do you have friends of other races? If not, why? If so, how did you get to know them?**
8. **How do you help your children deal with racism? How do you help them understand race relations?**

Looking at the cases

Read over the list of cases below. Choose a few to discuss. The following questions may be useful for your discussion:

9. **What is your first response to each of these cases?**
10. **What, if anything, do you think the people described in each case should do?**
11. **What, if anything, do you think organizations — such as businesses, congregations, and civic groups — should do?**
12. **What, if anything, do you think the government should do?**
13. **What, if anything, would you do if you were the person involved? if you were looking on?**
14. **Tell a story about something that has happened to you or a member of your family. Why is it important to you? Is it an example of a common experience, or not?**

Case 1:
A Latina woman does not get a job as a receptionist because she speaks English with an accent.

Case 2:
A white man who wants to be on the police force is not hired, while several minority applicants with equal scores on the qualifying test are hired.

Case 3:
A black couple tells their children to be extra careful at the shopping mall. The parents remind the children to stay together, and they also advise the children to keep receipts for everything they buy.

Case 4:
A recent newspaper article made public charges of discrimination that were raised against a local bank. An investigation of mortgage loan approvals revealed that rejection rates were higher for blacks and for biracial families, despite solid credit histories.

Case 5:
An environmental survey of a small city shows that poor minority neighborhoods have much higher levels of the kinds of pollution which cause health problems and birth defects.

Case 6:
An African-American woman who works at a mostly white corporation notes that some of her white co-workers are more likely to find fault with her when she wears braids in her hair and dresses in African fashions.

Case 7:
A group of African-American college students starts a new fraternity on campus. They hold parties and other events, and invite only other African-Americans.

Case 8:
An Hispanic man who works as a middle manager in a company is fired because his boss says he doesn't produce results. He claims the color of his skin was an important factor in this decision. He says he has always felt that he was being treated differently by his co-workers, but he has been afraid to speak out until now.

Case 9:
An Asian American woman has cosmetic surgery on her eyes so that they'll have a more "Anglo" look, feeling that she'll be more attractive this way.

Case 10:
A state university decides that it will no longer take a student's race into consideration when making admissions decisions. The next year, the number of nonwhite students entering the school drops sharply.

Case 11:
You and your date are walking to your car after seeing a late movie. You see a group of young black men coming toward you. They are wearing baggy clothes and talking loudly. Fearing a confrontation, you cross the street.

Case 12:
After a terrorist incident is featured in the news, a man who is from the Middle East feels that people are suspicious of him.

Case 13:
A Mexican American family tries to rent an apartment in a part of town that is mostly white. When they arrive to see the place, the landlord tells them he rented the apartment that morning. The family has doubts.

Case 14:
A white couple is looking for a house. Their real estate agent steers them toward houses in white neighborhoods, never showing them houses available in other sections of town.

Wrap-up questions

1. **Why did you decide to take part in this study circle program?**
2. **What would it take for these discussions to be meaningful to you?**

In preparation for the next meeting, think about the following questions:

When it comes to race, what problems are we facing?
What are the most serious challenges facing our community, and what are the community's greatest strengths for dealing with those challenges?

Don't Fight
Talk it out

STUDY CIRCLES
RESOURCE CENTER

Topical Discussion Guides and Other Resources

Publications of the Study Circles Resource Center (SCRC) include topical discussion guides and how-to material for study circle organizers, facilitators, and trainers.

	Price	Quan.	Amt.
Comprehensive Discussion Guides See corresponding Busy Citizen's discussion guides below			
Education: How Can Schools and Communities Work Together to Meet the Challenge? — A multiple-session discussion guide examining the challenges schools face and the ways in which citizens and educators can improve education; 1995	**5.00**		
Building Strong Neighborhoods: A Guide for Public Dialogue and Problem Solving — Offers sessions on many important neighborhood issues including: Race and other kinds of differences, Young people and families, Safety and community-police relations, Homes, housing and beautification, Jobs and neighborhood economy, and Schools, 1998	**5.00**		
Confronting Violence in Our Communities: A Guide for Involving Citizens in Public Dialogue and Problem Solving — A four-session discussion guide examining how violence affects our lives, what causes violence, and what can be done in neighborhoods and in schools; 1994 (note: there is no Busy Citizen available with this guide)	**5.00**		
Facing the Challenge of Racism and Race Relations: Democratic Dialogue and Action for Stronger Communities — A five-session discussion guide including recommendations for tailoring the discussions to a particular community or organization's concerns; 3rd ed. 1997	**5.00**		
Youth Issues, Youth Voices: A Guide for Engaging Young People and Adults in Public Dialogue and Problem Solving — A multiple-session discussion guide to help young people and adults address the community issues which involve and impact them; 1996	**5.00**		
Changing Faces, Changing Communities: Immigration & race relations, education, language differences, and job opportunities — A six-session discussion guide designed to help communities face the challenges and meet the opportunities raised by the arrival of newcomers; includes pointers on how to involve public officials; 1998	**5.00**		
Smart Talk For Growing Communities: Meeting the Challenges of Growth and Development — A five-session guide for public dialogue and problem-solving; includes tips on involving public officials; 1998	**5.00**		
Toward a More Perfect Union in an Age of Diversity: A Guide for Building Stronger Communities through Public Dialogue — A four-session guide examining ideas about unity, diversity, and pluralism, and how they affect us as members of our communities and our country; 1997	**5.00**		
The Busy Citizen's Discussion Guides Compact and concise; the Busy Citizen's guides on education, violence, race, growing communities, youth, immigration, growth and urban sprawl, and pluralism correspond to the comprehensive guides listed above			
The Busy Citizen's Discussion Guide: Education in Our Communities (1995)	**1.00**		
The Busy Citizen's Discussion Guide: Violence in Our Communities (1994)	**1.00**		
The Busy Citizen's Discussion Guide: Facing the Challenge of Racism and Race Relations 3rd ed. (1997)	**1.00**		
The Busy Citizen's Discussion Guide: Youth Issues, Youth Voices (1996)	**1.00**		
Guía de discusión para el ciudadano activo — Spanish translation of Busy Citizen's booklet on violence (1995)	**1.00**		
The Busy Citizen's Discussion Guide: Toward a More Perfect Union in an Age of Diversity (1997)	**1.00**		
Changing Faces, Changing Communities: Immigration & race relations, education, language differences, and job opportunities 2nd ed. (1998)	**1.00**		
Smart Talk For Growing Communities: Meeting the Challenges of Growth and Development (1998)	**1.00**		
Balancing Justice: Setting Citizen Priorities for the Corrections System (1996)	**1.00**		
The Busy Citizen's Discussion Guide: Sexual Harassment (1992)	**1.00**		
The Busy Citizen's Discussion Guide: Civil Rights for Gays and Lesbians (1993)	**1.00**		

continued on back

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Phone (860) 928-2616 • Fax (860) 928- 3713 • E-mail <scrc@neca.com>

	Price	Quan.	Amt.
"How-to" Guides			
Planning Community-wide Study Circle Programs: A Step-by-Step Guide	***15.00***		
A Guide to Training Study Circle Facilitators	***15.00***		
Guidelines for Creating Effective Study Circle Material	***2.00***		
Study Circles in Paired Congregations: Enriching Your Community Through Shared Dialogue on Vital Issues	***2.00***		
Videos			
Story of a People — A 17-minute video that documents Lima, OH community-wide study circle program that addressed race relations. Highlights organizers, community leaders and participants.	***5.00***		
Act Against Violence: A Maine Study Circle Program — A 30-minute broadcast produced by Maine Public Television documenting the final forum in the Act Against Violence Campaign. Highlights program outcomes the various communities developed.	***5.00***		
SCRC provides assistance and advice **free of charge,** to organizers of large-scale study circle programs. Call for more information.		**Shipping**	**2.00**
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SCRC's quarterly newsletter,
Focus on Study Circles,
is free

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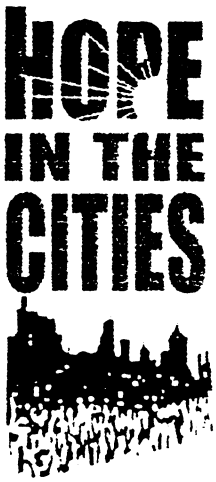

A Call to Community

An honest conversation on race, reconciliation, & responsibility

DIALOGUE GUIDE AND WORKBOOK
INCLUDING FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

Hope in the Cities
1103 Sunset Ave.
Richmond, VA 23221
Tel: (804) 358-1764
Fax: (804) 358-1769
E-mail: hopecities@aol.com
Web Page address is www.hopeinthecities.org

A Call To Community

America is at a crossroads. One road leads to community; the other to the chaos of competing identities and interests. We have all hurt one another, often unconsciously, in ways we would never intend. We need each other. We need to eradicate the scourge of racial division. We must demonstrate that our diversity is our greatest strength and that out of this diversity is rising a new American community. We can offer hope to a world torn by divisions of every kind.

We invite everyone to join us in a renewed commitment to an American community based on justice, reconciliation and excellence. The original promise of this country, that out of a rich diversity of peoples a great nation would rise, has only partially been fulfilled. This unique experiment remains incomplete because the promise of equal opportunity and dignity for all has not been fully realized. Much of the distrust, resentment and fear in America today is rooted in our unacknowledged and unhealed racial history.

For many of us, race determines where we live, where we send our children to school and where we worship. Because racism is deeply embedded in the institutions of our society, individuals are often insulated from making personal decisions based on conscious racial feelings and do not experience the daily burden that their brothers and sisters of color have to carry. We must change the structures which perpetuate economic and racial separation. But no unseen hand can wipe prejudice away. The ultimate answer to the racial problem lies in our willingness to obey the unenforceable.

The new American community will flow from a spirit of giving freely without demanding anything in return. In the new American community, when any one individual is injured, exploited or demeaned, all of us will feel the pain and be diminished. It will be a place where hearts can put down roots and where each feels accepted and at home. Some painful memories cannot be erased. But forgiving is not forgetting; it is letting go of the hurt.

To build this new American community, we must empower individuals to take charge of their lives and take care of their communities. In cities across America, bold experiments are taking place. Citizens have initiated honest conversations - between people of all backgrounds - on matters of race, reconciliation and responsibility. They have chosen to move beyond blame and guilt, beyond hatred and fear, deciding to face the past with courage and honesty. They are demonstrating that through honesty, a willingness to embrace each other's painful experiences, and with God's power to change us, the wounds of the past can be healed and our nation become one community.

This approach calls us to a new concept of partnership and responsibility. It means:

- *Listening carefully and respectfully to each other and to the whole community.*
- *Bringing people together, not in confrontation but in trust, to tackle the most urgent needs of the community.*
- *Searching for solutions, focusing on what is right rather than who is right.*
- *Building lasting relationships outside our comfort zone.*
- *Honoring each person, appealing to the best qualities in everyone, and refusing to stereotype the other group.*
- *Holding ourselves, communities and institutions accountable in areas where change is needed.*
- *Recognizing that the energy for fundamental change requires a moral and spiritual transformation in the human spirit.*

Together we will share our lives and the resources God has given us to make America a community of hope, security and opportunity for all.

Hope in the Cities' A Call to Community Discussion Guide and Workbook including a Facilitator's Guide

This six-session workbook provides a framework for weekly discussions and homework, as well as an opportunity to make a three-step personal commitment to racial reconciliation, which participants determine for themselves after taking part in the dialogue.

Sessions:
1 - Beginning the Conversation
2 - Our Experience of Race & Community
3 - Our Experience of Diversity, Division, & History
4 - Our Experience of Racial Separation & Forgiveness
5 - Building Hope for the Future
6 - Looking Within

The Facilitator's Guide provides direction on the facilitator's role, orienting group discussion and orienting group members.

Karen Donegan Salter, a facilitator trainer with the National Coalition Building Institute, trains Richmonders to facilitate Hope in the Cities' fostered dialogues. Salter has seen something emerge from sustained dialogue that often doesn't come from more informal discussion, especially in Richmond. "There had been years of gathering people in various ways, but there's now critical mass awareness of Hope in the Cities and people are committed to these issues and are ready for an action step in terms of racial reconciliation," says Salter. "We know we have to do two things — talk about it openly and honestly and then do something. One key is that Hope in the Cities doesn't have an agenda, but rather leads participants through conversation and then supports them in finding the next step for themselves."

Hope in the Cities can provide facilitator training either on site in your community or at its facilities in Richmond. Contact the Richmond office for further details.

To request facilitator training and/or a copy of the workbook contact Hope in the Cities at the address below.

"Hope in the Cities doesn't throw issues out on the table. You help people develop trust before you have to deal with the tough stuff. I've spent a lot of time looking at programs and when I saw your Guide and Workbook and other material, I thought, 'These people understand us.' Race is a four letter word here and while it's a factor in other issues, we've never been able to get to talking about race on its own."

Steve Skardon, Director of the Palmetto Project,

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Hope in the Cities wishes to thank
Michael Stone, Office of Justice and Peace, Catholic Diocese of Richmond
and Karen Donnegan Salter.

Hope in the Cities acknowledges the skills of facilitators who have had special training in diversity sensitivity. However, Hope in the Cities endorses only those facilitators who have been trained through the Hope in the Cities training, National Coalition Building Institute, Crossroads Ministries and/or Study Circles Resource Center training as facilitators for this specific DIALOGUE GUIDE AND WORKBOOK *series.*

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February 1998

Participant's Handout

SESSION ONE

Beginning the Conversation: WHY ARE WE HERE?

It is important to create a safe, comfortable space in which the conversations take place. All participants share the responsibility of creating that atmosphere.

1. Introduce yourself. Take time to mention why you were interested in participating in this dialogue. Be sure to include one or two brief vignettes about the way you first became aware of racial differences and separation. ***THERE ARE NO ENEMIES HERE***. It is important to remember that everyone has come to the table to learn, grow and share.

2. Create ground rules for the sessions. It is an important part of creating a safe environment that all participants agree to a set of ground rules. Your facilitator will lead this part of the dialogue.

3. What are your highest hopes for the outcome of this dialogue? What are your most realistic expectations?

IF there is time during the first session:

Watch the video, ***Healing the Heart of America: A Unity Walk***. The viewing time is 28 minutes. Discuss your reactions to the video. Do you relate to any of the things said by Unity Walk participants? What was significant to you?

Homework

- Reflect on the following section from "***A Call to Community***":

  America is at a crossroads. One road leads to community; the other to the chaos of competing identities and interests. We have all hurt one another, often unconsciously, in ways we would never intend. We need each other. We need to eradicate the scourge of racial division. We must demonstrate that our diversity is our greatest strength and that out of this diversity is rising a new American community. We can offer hope to a world torn by divisions of every kind.

- ***Be prepared to discuss the questions for session two.***

Healing the Heart of America℠

Video Tape and Resource Guide

Healing the Heart of America, an award winning 27 minute documentary, tells the story of Richmond, VA, and the way in which residents have set out to address the unfinished business of racial healing. With leadership from Hope in the Cities, residents of this former capital of the Confederacy, from the city and suburbs, both black and white, have engaged in a dialogue over several years. The documentary captures historical reenactments and interviews during the Richmond Unity Walk held during the Healing the Heart of America conference in June 1993. The video can be used as a "conversation starter" along with its accompanying resource guide, which includes study questions prepared by leaders of the business, educational, urban development and faith communities.

The video is presented in a broad context so that it is not seen simply as Richmond's story, but with lessons and inspiration for all cities. It has had a great effect on audiences around the United States and overseas in areas of conflict, such as South Africa, India and throughout Europe.

- A Chicago councilman bought 50 copies of the tape for the mayor and his fellow council members, beliving that Chicago had something to learn from Richmond's example.

- A woman in Boston in her late nineties invites small inter-racial groups to her home for viewings and discussion.

- A family in South Africa has found the tape useful in generating conversation about the need to heal the history of their own country.

Healing the Heart of America℠

Qty.		Total
☐	*Healing the Heart of America* Video(s) $29.95/£18.00	$/£_____
☐	Resource Guide(s) $ 9.95/£ 5.00	$/£_____
☐	*I'll Start With My Heart* Audio Cassette(s) $ 5.00/£ 3.00	$/£_____
	Total Cost	**$/£**_____

Name

Organization

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Intended audience use for video & resource guide

Please return order form to applicable address below

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