

Workshop 2a: Interpersonal Building & Transformation for Working Cooperatively

Session A: Radically (re)Defining Oppression

Learning Objectives/Desired Outcomes:

Participants will leave these 4 sessions with...

- Interpersonal connections, relationships, & trust
- Increased ability to bridge the personal and the political
- Increased ability to radically (re)define oppression
- Beginning to uncover the root causes of horizontal hostility and strategies /practices for building solidarity
- Understanding how we hold power and oppression over others and we we use privilege over others and vice versa
- Understand systems of oppression that shape our worldviews

Materials

- Flip chart paper
- Markers (one color for each participant)
- Post-its
- Large strips with the names of the forms of oppression written on this (so you can distribute 1-3 terms to each group for the Radically (re)Defining Oppression exercise)
- Handout of the definition of terms of the Systems of Oppression

Preparation

- Create a poster with the goals for the session and the agenda overview
- Create a poster with the Working Agreements
- Prepare posters with the Conocimiento questions and enough space under each question for each participant to write an answer
- Practice delivering the talking points for Vehicles of Oppression talk, and come up with some relevant examples so you can speak authentically about it
- Prepare a poster with a triple venn diagram of these three terms: Stereotypes, Prejudice, and Discrimination to use for note taking during your talk on the Vehicles of Oppression
- Prepare a poster with the title, "Why it's important to understand Oppression to increase our capacity to work cooperatively"

1. OPENING CIRCLE (Seeds) = personal connections

<p>Introduction and Guidelines</p>	<p>Time: 10</p>
<p><i>Instructions:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Facilitators introduce themselves 2. Provide a brief outline of the agenda 3. Share the overarching goals of the next few sessions: <p><i>During the next few sessions we will explore the nature of oppression, how it affects us on a personal level and impacts our communities. Most of today will involve interactive exercises interspersed with theory.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Ask the group, <i>Why is this exploration of oppression so key to developing a solidarity economy?</i> Take answers and add them as goals for the sessions. 5. To transition into the working agreements, say something like... <p><i>These are powerful goals. What are some agreements we can make that will help us accomplish these goals.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Take answers and make sure the following agreements are articulated and written up: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>Confidentiality</i> b. <i>One Mic (don't interrupt each other)</i> c. <i>Right to Pass</i> d. <i>Trust the Process</i> e. <i>Mutual Respect</i> f. <i>Take Care of Yourself (if you need to step out for a moment, get water, food or take care of any other physical/emotional needs, please do so).</i> 7. Ask: <i>What might be difficult about exploring oppression together?</i> Take answers and build on what people say to articulate the following points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>We are not the experts – our role is to facilitate your personal reflection on identity and oppression.</i> ● <i>Exercises are meant to challenge you to look at the nuances of identity.</i> ● <i>Feelings will arise and that is completely expected.</i> ● <i>Many of the exercises can bring up feelings of anger, irritability, and defensiveness. However know this is a non-judgmental space. There will be time for you to share</i> 	<p><i>Purpose:</i></p> <p>To establish a safe container for exploring oppression together</p> <p><i>Facilitator's Notes:</i></p> <p>As expressed in the talking points under instruction #7, you are not expected to be the expert on oppression in the room. In fact, it's perhaps more powerful for you to approach this work with a spirit of inquiry, learning more about how oppression shows up in our lives and our power to interrupt it, each time to you facilitate workshops like these.</p>

<p><i>your thoughts/feelings.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Note about feelings of guilt that might arise around discussions in which you perceive or identify ways in which you feel privileged. Guilt is a normal and natural feeling that arises during anti-oppression work and it is important to acknowledge and name this feeling, but not to get stuck feeling guilty. An empowered approach would involve recognizing and owning privilege and then leveraging power to create social change and interrupt oppressive dynamics when they occur.</i> 	
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2. FIREBUILDER (Preparing the soil) = relationship and trust building

CONOCIMIENTO	Time: 40 min
<p><i>Instructions:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Post newsprint with questions for participants to respond to. 2. Provide background surrounding this exercise: <i>Before you can engage in community mobilization and action it is critical to know your comrades; please select one marker to write your responses to each question on the newsprint; if you need help to write your answers, we can assist; after everyone has written their responses, we will ask each person to present their responses.</i> 3. Each participant picks one color marker and uses that color to write their answers to each question on the posted newsprint. 4. Facilitators can make themselves available to write responses for individuals who may have a challenge writing their answers themselves. 5. Once participants have written their responses to the questions invite each individual to tell the group what color they wrote their responses in and present his/her responses. It is ideal if each person presents their responses to every question, but if the group is very large and time is an issue the facilitators may ask participants to select a few responses to present (i.e. <i>Please select 5 of your favorite responses and share them with the group...</i>). 6. After each participant shares their responses, raise the following questions for discussion with the full group: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>What did you learn about the group?</i> b. <i>What does the group share in common?</i> c. <i>How are you all different?</i> 	<p><i>Purpose:</i></p> <p>To build interpersonal connections, relationships, & trust.</p> <p><i>Facilitator Notes:</i></p> <p>NOTE: Each individual is linked to a particular color and it is possible to chart all their personal responses to the questions by color.</p> <p>Conocimiento Questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is your full name? 2. Where do you call home? 3. How many siblings do you have? What are their ages? 4. Do you have children? If so, how many? What are their ages? 5. What is your favorite food?

<p>d. <i>What did you learn about yourself from this exercise?</i></p> <p>e. <i>How might what you have learned through this exercise foster group cooperation?</i></p> <p>f. <i>Is there anything else you all would like to share about this exercise?</i></p> <p>Variation:</p> <p>You can debrief this exercise in small groups instead of whole group.</p> <p>Emphasize maintaining confidentiality within dyads and small groups.</p> <p>Some people may feel comfortable sharing something with one other person but not with the large group, so when you open the conversation to large group discussion, be sure to ask participants to share about their own thoughts, feelings and insights</p>	<p>6. What do you like to do in your free time?</p> <p>7. Name the different places you have lived through your life.</p> <p>8. How do you deal with stress?</p> <p>9. What brings you joy?</p> <p>10. Do you have a favorite saying from your parents, elders, children, or peers? If so, what is it?</p>
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3. BRIDGE EXERCISE (Planting seeds) = relationship and trust building

<p>RADICALLY (RE) DEFINING OPPRESSION¹</p>	<p>Time: (55 min)</p>
<p><i>Instructions:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Break up large group into small groups consisting of 3-4 people and provide each group with 1-3 of the following terms: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Racism b. Classism c. Sexism d. Machismo e. Transphobia f. Stereotype g. Heterosexism h. Discrimination i. Ableism 2. Ask the groups to come up with a working definition for their term(s) and discuss if and how these terms show up in their 	<p><i>Purpose:</i></p> <p>To develop collaborative definitions of the systems of oppression</p> <p><i>Facilitator Notes:</i></p> <p>Post: Keep their definitions on butcher paper up on the walls for the remainder and all future trainings to remind participants how to name oppressive behavior.</p>

¹ From the SFWAR anti-oppression curriculum; From Janelle White's CALCASA article on rape as a tool/weapon of oppression

<p>lives and communities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Give each group a large piece of newsprint and markers to write their definitions 4. After each group has had time to discuss and record their ideas, have each group present their definitions to the large group 5. Allow for questions from the group 6. Then, ask: Is there anything anyone thinks is missing or something someone wants to add? 7. Add any critical information contributed by the larger group 8. Reads the definition to the group after each term is brainstormed 	
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4. BIG PICTURE CONTENT (Water and Sun) = Nurturing New Learning

<p>Vehicles of Oppression: Stereotypes, Prejudice, & Discrimination</p>	<p>Time: 10 min</p>
<p><i>Instructions:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Build on the collaborative definitions of the different forms of oppression to provide the following talking points: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. <i>Oppression</i> is the systematic and pervasive mistreatment of individuals on the basis of their membership in a disadvantaged group. b. Institutional and interpersonal imbalances in power contribute to this mistreatment. c. Oppression involves the systematic use of power to marginalize, exploit, silence, discriminate against, invalidate, deny, dismiss, and/or not recognize the complete humanness of those who are members of a disadvantaged group. d. In the United States, there are systems of oppression based on race, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ability, age, body size, and citizenship. Privilege is given to those who are white, male, middle-class or “well-off” economically, heterosexual, Protestant, able-bodied and of able mind, middle-aged, thin, and a U.S. citizen. This means that some groups of people are oppressed, and some are not. For example, men, as a group, are not oppressed. Men do 	<p><i>Purpose:</i></p> <p>It will be important that participants understand the italicized concepts before introducing the “3 I’s of Oppression”</p> <p><i>Facilitator’s Notes:</i></p> <p>Visual aid: Use a triple venn diagram poster to take notes on during this lecture. Label the circles: Stereotypes, Prejudice, Discrimination. You can write key words and phrases within each circle and overlapping space to help participants see the differences and commonalities between of these vehicles of oppression.</p> <p>Make sure to emphasize that:</p>

<p>not face systematic and pervasive mistreatment because they are male. An individual man may face oppression based on another identity characteristic, such as race or disability.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> e. We all have multiple identities, because we all have a gender, race, class, and so on. This means we can be privileged because of one identity while at the same time facing oppression because of another. f. <i>Stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination</i> support oppression and keep it going. g. Stereotypes are generalizations about groups of people. They do not take into account the difference within groups. h. Like stereotypes, prejudice is based on incomplete or inaccurate information. i. Prejudice is a preference or bias toward or against a group. Both stereotypes and prejudice have negative or detrimental effects. They assert that groups of individuals are all the same (that is, “Those people are...,” “That group can’t...,” “They all act...”). They fail to recognize uniqueness, which is an important part of every person’s humanity. j. It is true that prejudice and stereotypes are only attitudes, but these destructive attitudes, opinions, feelings, and ideas shape our actions and contribute to discrimination. k. Discrimination is active; it is preferential or biased treatment based on stereotypes, prejudice, and/or historical practices. It results in unequal access and/or representation. l. Oppressive systems and ideologies—such as racism and white supremacy, sexism and male supremacy, and classism and capitalism—are maintained through discrimination. m. Discrimination can take many forms, including unfair hiring practices, white flight and residential segregation, the educational “tracking” of students, and even violence. n. In fact, many people refer to violence (and the threat of violence) as a weapon of oppression because it protects oppression. 	<p>Oppression is an abuse of power by a dominant group. Other interactions among people may be hurtful or unfair, but not oppression.</p> <p>Oppression, a political term often used in the anti-rape movement and other progressive U.S. social movements, must maintain its sharpness, its clarity; otherwise, it will be stretched to meaninglessness (that is, everyone calling themselves oppressed, regardless of their actual positions of privilege).</p>
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5. CREATING CONTENT (Harvest)

Real Life Examples	10 min
<p><i>Instructions:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In groups of three, invite participants to share real life examples of stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination 2. Provide post-its so people can write their examples and then stick them up on posters, labeled “Stereotypes,” “Prejudice,” and “Discrimination” 3. Once all the post-its are up, let people know that we will be working with some of these examples during the next session, where we will practice interrupting oppression 	<p><i>Purpose:</i></p> <p>To connect the personal to the political</p> <p><i>Facilitator’s Notes:</i></p>

6. CLOSING CIRCLE (Saving Seeds) = Reflection

Reflection: Connection to Cooperation	Time: 15 min
<p><i>Instructions:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In groups of 3 ask everyone to reflect on the following question: Why is understanding oppression key to building our capacity to work cooperatively? 2. In the whole group, ask each group to share out one thing they came up with. Once everyone has shared do a second round to catch any other thoughts that hadn’t be shared yet. Scribe the ideas up on a poster 3. Honor the ideas that have been shared and build on them to set the stage for the next two sessions: Next week we will take a deeper look at how oppressions shows up in our lives and how we can start interrupting oppression to create the conditions for cooperation 	<p><i>Purpose:</i></p> <p>To make the connection between interrupting oppression and building our capacity to work more cooperatively</p> <p>To set the stage for next week’s session</p> <p><i>Facilitator Notes:</i></p> <p>There are no wrong answers’ validate anything anyone shares...</p>