

# Module 2: Interpersonal Building and Transformation for Working Cooperatively

## Session C: Trust Your Struggle

### Learning Objectives/Desired Outcomes:

*Participants will leave this workshop with...*

- Increased skill and confidence in interrupting oppression
- Investment in a personal healing process around issues of oppression
- Understanding of the key roles within systems of oppression: Oppressor, Target, Bystander, Ally
- Understanding of how oppression is maintained in our daily realities

### Materials

- Chart, [“Transforming Oppression”](#)

### Preparation

- Make copies of the different handouts, “What Maintains Oppression”
- Read through the instructions several times to make sure you are confident with them. NOTE: this workshop draws on the skills of Forum Theater from the Theater of the Oppressed arsenal. Any reading or training in forum theater will be helpful (but not essential)

### 1. OPENING CIRCLE (Seeds) = personal connections

<p><b>Trust your instinct/Trust your Struggle/You are the expert in your survival</b></p>	<p><b>Time: 10min</b></p>
<p><i>Instructions:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Form a circle and ask the group, “What would you say is the number one thing that gets in the way of our goals and visions for change?”</li> <li>2. Take answers. And then share:</li> <li>3. Fear, whether real or perceived, stands in the way of many of our goals and objectives and visions for a better family and community.</li> </ol>	<p><i>Purpose:</i></p> <p><i>To recognize that courage is within us and we can draw on it any time</i></p> <p><i>To prepare participants to step up and try on different scenarios to practice interrupting oppression (i.e. trying on being an Ally</i></p>

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. Ask, what is the opposite of fear? Take answers, then share:</li> <li>5. Part of our work together is to cultivate courage - knowing we are in this together is part of what makes us able to push through any fears that might get in the way.</li> <li>6. Invite everyone to go around and share an animal (or any living thing other than a human) that symbolizes courage for you, and why</li> <li>7. In this session we will be asking you to find that same courage within to challenge your internal fears around personal growth, transformative healing and movement building. Remember that courage is always within you. It is part of your instinct and you can draw on it anytime.</li> </ol>	<p>and/or an engaged Bystander) on various levels (i.e. institutional, interpersonal, and internalized).</p> <p><i>Facilitator's Notes:</i></p>
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## 2. FIREBUILDER (Preparing the soil) = relationship and trust building

<p><b>Team Building</b></p>	<p><b>Time: 10 min</b></p>
<p><i>Instructions:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Break the group up into 5 teams</li> <li>2. Give the teams 5 minutes to come up with a team name and a team cheer (sound and movement) that symbolizes courage</li> <li>3. Give each team a chance to share their team name and cheer. Clap for each team</li> </ol>	<p><i>Purpose:</i></p> <p>To break the ice and form team bonds</p> <p><i>Facilitator Notes:</i></p> <p>Just have fun with it :)</p>

## 3. BRIDGE EXERCISE (Planting the seeds) = connecting personal experiences to the big picture

<p><b>Preparing to Interrupt Oppression</b></p>	<p><b>Time: 10 min</b></p>
<p><i>Instructions:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Distribute the handout, "What Maintains Oppression and How Can We Interrupt It?"</li> <li>2. Remind the group that last week we looked at the different forms of oppression (the three "I's"). Ask people to name them: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Interpersonal</li> <li>○ Institutionalized</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<p><i>Purpose:</i></p> <p>To prepare to create short role plays</p> <p>To understand the processes that help sustain systems of oppression, so participants can identify them and work collectively to challenge/stop</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Internalized</li> </ul> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Today we are going to look at some different ways people play a part in maintaining those forms of oppression, and then we'll try out different strategies and tactics for interrupting oppression. If you look at your handout you will see the different ways oppression is maintained between different groups</li> <li>4. Let people know that each team will be assigned one of the following <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Stereotypes</li> <li>○ Prejudice</li> <li>○ Discrimination</li> <li>○ Horizontal Hostility</li> <li>○ Violence (and the threat of violence)</li> </ul> </li> <li>5. Each group will create a short realistic scene that shows us what that way of maintaining oppression can look like in the workplace</li> <li>6. There should be three characters in your scene: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>The Target</b> - the person who is experiencing the oppression</li> <li>○ <b>The Oppressor(s)</b> - the person or people who are maintaining the oppression against the target</li> <li>○ <b>The Bystander</b> - someone who witnesses the situation</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	<p>them.</p> <p>It can be painful to look at how we abuse power and how we have been abused.</p>
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#### 4. BIG PICTURE LEARNING (Sun and Water) = New learning/big picture content

<p><b>Transforming Oppression</b></p>	<p><b>Time: 1 hour, 40 min</b></p>
<p><i>Instructions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Form 4 groups and assign a way of maintaining oppression to each of them: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Stereotypes</li> <li>○ Prejudice</li> <li>○ Discrimination</li> <li>○ Horizontal Hostility</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Purpose:</p> <p><i>Facilitator Notes:</i></p> <p>If you have groups with more than 3 people, the groups can have more than 1 target or more than 1 bystander</p> <p>If you have groups with only 2 people, they should create a</p>

- Let them know they have 30 minutes to create their scene. In that time they should:
  - Read the description
  - Discuss how they have seen it play out in real life
  - Choose a context
  - Identify the characters
  - Come up with a 3-5 minute scene between the characters that demonstrates that way of maintaining oppression
  - Do not include a solution or a conclusion! It will be up to the audience to decide how the scene ends by coming up with strategies for interrupting the oppression
- Walk around and support the teams while they are creating their scenes. Make sure everyone has a title for their scene.
- Once the 30 minutes is up, call everyone together to share their scenes.
- Each group will have 5 minutes (or less) to share their scene and then the audience will have 7+ minutes to try out transforming the bystander into an ally (12 minutes total per topic)
- Before starting, clarify: **What is an ally?**
  - An ally is someone who actively works to interrupt oppression in partnership with the target of oppression
  - The ally can be a member of the target group or not. The ally thinks about what the target of oppression needs to feel his or her own power
  - Being an ally can take many forms. Sometimes an ally intervenes in the moment the oppression is happening and sometimes they find ways to address it after the fact
- Introduce each group by their name and the title of their scene.
- After each performance, facilitate some reflection on the what people saw in the scene
- Then, ask for volunteers to replace the bystander and show how the bystander can become an ally by interrupting the oppression.
- After each intervention, you can ask the target and/or the oppressor how they were impacted by that intervention. This will help people understand how effective their actions were.
- Scribe the strategies people use to interrupt the oppression as well as any lessons learned. Some strategies won't work - and this a good thing! This exercise is about rehearsing for real life

scene between the oppressor and the target. The audience members can serve as the bystanders.

Some examples of possible scenes:

Scapegoating: A candidate for office runs on an anti-immigrant platform, saying immigrants are taking jobs and causing the economic crisis

Tokenization:

The impact an ally who is a member of the oppressing group can have on transforming a situation can be far greater than if the ally is a member of the oppressed group.

Remember to take care of yourself first. Being an ally is usually not comfortable or easy, but it is important to honor your own needs as well.

***“In the end we will not remember the actions of our enemies, but the silence of our friends.” Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.***

NOTE: it is also good for people to replace the target and practice interrupting oppression from the position of the target

so its a great place to try out things that don't work and learn from that.	
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## 5. CREATING CONTENT (Harvest): Analysis and/or action steps

<b>Analysis of Strategies</b>	<b>Time: 10min</b>
<p><i>Instructions:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Once all the performance and interventions are complete, gather the group around the list of strategies for interrupting oppression that they developed, and ask them to reflect:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. What do you think of this list?</li> <li>b. What's missing?</li> <li>c. Which of these could you see yourself using?</li> <li>d. Add any notes to the list</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<p><i>Purpose:</i></p> <p>To internalize the list of strategies</p> <p>To see this list is a work-in-progress that we can keep adding to as we try out strategies for interrupting oppression</p> <p><i>Facilitator Notes:</i></p> <p>Optional: you could show the chart, "<a href="#">Transforming Oppression.</a>"</p>

## 6. CLOSING CIRCLE (Saving Seeds) = Reflection

<b>Naming the Qualities of an Ally</b>	<b>Time: 5 min</b>
<p><i>Instructions:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Invite everyone into a closing circle</li> <li>2. Honor the group for their work today and the courage it takes to try out new things, especially when it comes to oppression.</li> <li>3. Acknowledge that we are forever learning in "movimiento" movement and acknowledging that to ourselves breaks down the mental barriers we put on ourselves that prevent us from opening up to new ideas, new possibilities, new dreams.</li> <li>4. Invite everyone to close out by sharing one quality you think is important for allies to possess</li> </ol>	<p><i>Purpose:</i></p> <p>To acknowledge the qualities we are learning to embody as we interrupt oppression</p> <p><i>Facilitator Notes:</i></p>

# “What Maintains Oppression” Handouts

*(cut and paste each one of these on separate sheet - make 2-5 copies of each so that each group receives a different topic)*

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## Stereotypes

Stereotypes are generalizations and assumptions about groups of people. They do not take into account the difference within groups. Stereotypes can be used to justify oppression and keep certain groups relegated to specific social spaces. For example, a stereotype of women is that they are too emotional (and therefore not suited to be leaders).

- Read the description above.
  - Discuss how they have seen it play out in real life
  - Choose a context
  - Identify the characters
    - **The Target** - the person who is experiencing the oppression
    - **The Oppressor(s)** - the person or people who are maintaining the oppression against the target
    - **The Bystander** - someone who witnesses the situation
  - Come up with a 3-5 minute scene between the characters that demonstrates that way of maintaining oppression
  - Do not include a solution or a conclusion! It will be up to the audience to decide how the scene ends by coming up with strategies for interrupting the oppression
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## Prejudice

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. For example, when an adult shopkeeper assumes all youth are irresponsible and can’t be trusted, and therefore does not like youth coming into his store.

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### **Discrimination**

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. For example, when a person of color is denied a job interview simply because of his or her perceived race.

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### **Horizontal Hostility:**

When two (or more) oppressed groups who are oppressed for similar reasons (i.e. because of their race, immigration status, etc.) consider each other enemies and in conflict with one another (e.g. in LA there has been a long history of conflict between Koreans and Blacks).

Are there other examples of horizontal hostility you can give? How does horizontal hostility sustain white supremacy or other forms of oppression?

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- Discuss how they have seen it play out in real life

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### **Violence (& the threat thereof):**

Rape, genocide, lynching, boarding schools, slavery (at CA Missions, in the US South, etc.) all have been used to reinforce white supremacist capitalist patriarchal imperialism.

Are there other examples of how violence and its threat have been used to reinforce oppression?

- Read the description above.
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