

# The Dialogue Guide

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for National Service programs interested in  
fostering understanding, respect and teamwork  
among their diverse participants

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By Sandy Heierbacher  
National Service Fellow  
Corporation for National Service

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## Corporation for National Service

Created in 1993, the Corporation for National Service oversees three national service initiatives—AmeriCorps, which includes AmeriCorps\*VISTA, AmeriCorps\*National Civilian Community Corps, and hundreds of local and national nonprofits; Learn and Serve America, which provides models and assistance to help teachers integrate service and learning from kindergarten through college; and the National Senior Service Corps, which includes the Foster Grandparent Program, the Senior Companion Program, and the Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP).

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“Real change comes about when the hearts of people are changed.”  
-Michael Henderson, *The Forgiveness Factor*

## About This Project

In 1998 and 1999, I was privileged to serve as a Fellow for the Corporation for National Service. My proposed project—to find ways to partner the national service and interracial dialogue movements—was accepted along with the proposals of twelve other fellows. It is my hope that this guide and my project’s web site ([www.vermontel.net/~afluke](http://www.vermontel.net/~afluke)) will provide the foundation that is needed for AmeriCorps programs and dialogue programs to begin collaborating from the ground up. Each has the potential to greatly enhance the other, and I hope my efforts will foster not only that realization, but some concrete action.

Please note that while this guide primarily refers to AmeriCorps, it is intended for use by any national service program in which participants serve as a team and are involved in intensive service.

Thank you for your interest in dialogue!

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## **10 Reasons AmeriCorps Members Should Dialogue**

1. To improve teamwork.

Dialogue will help your participants become a more effective team. They will work better, more easily and more productively with one another.

2. To enhance the diversity training you are already doing.

Dialogue will not only help your other diversity trainings to sink in, it will make your members more interested them, and in learning about such important issues as conflict resolution, institutionalized discrimination, white privilege and internalized oppression.

3. To increase your members' impact in the communities in which they serve.

Whether or not we recognize them, this country still supports a lot of barriers to interracial understanding and relationship-building. Until we engage in honest dialogue about race and racism, as individuals, with people of other races, we will be blind to many of these barriers. And until we understand the effect these barriers have on the people in our communities, we will be ineffective when we try to break them down. In addition, dialogue improves our ability to work successfully in a variety of communities because it increases our understanding of people who are different from us racially, culturally, and in a number of other ways.

4. To develop and improve relationships among your participants.

Dialogue breaks down racial and other barriers that very few activities can. If your participants tended not to mix with each other socially beyond racial lines, you will probably find them feeling much more comfortable doing so. Dialogue will help develop the foundation for a lot of interracial friendships, and will help relationships between members of the same race become stronger, too. You will be left with a more cohesive group of people who are more considerate of each other's feelings and perspectives, and more aware of each other's experiences.

5. To improve your members' communication and interpersonal skills.

Along the same lines as #4, your participants will be more aware and considerate of the points of view and experiences of the people they come in contact with. They will be more aware that they don't know all the answers and that they can't necessarily assume anything about another person based on their race, class, gender, or any other characteristic that is used to put people into stereotypical boxes. When they leave stereotypes at the door and treat people as the unique individuals that they are, all worthy of respect and bearing useful information, your participants' ability to communicate with others effectively will multiply.

6. To maximize the benefits of your diversity.

AmeriCorps prides itself on reflecting the ‘face of America,’ and it succeeds at this much, much better than most organizations in the U.S. In order to utilize this unique asset, AmeriCorps programs should ensure that their members not only train together and work together, but also engage in dialogue together. Too often in groups, one or two ‘leaders’ make most of the decisions and do most of the talking. Dialogue ensures that every person is heard, regardless of their race, gender, or any other factor, and that every participant is equal. There are no leaders in a dialogue. Dialogue creates an atmosphere in which every group member is learning from every other group member—and about themselves in the process.

7. To prevent and reduce the frequency of conflicts among your members.

Dialogue is often used as a conflict resolution tool. When a U.S. community is struggling with interracial conflict, the U.S. Department of Justice’s Community Relations Service is often called in to organize community-wide dialogues on race. The Boston-based Public Conversations Project uses the dialogue process to develop common ground and understanding among people with different stances on divisive issues such as abortion and same-gender marriage.

Carefully organized dialogue can be a successful way to deal with conflict, but it is also successfully used to prevent conflict—or at least to make conflicts easier to deal with. Dialogue prevents many of the misunderstandings that can lead to racial conflict within groups, and the understanding that develops through dialogue helps group members deal with conflict much more successfully.

8. To enhance leadership development among your members.

It is clear that tomorrow’s leaders will need to be able to relate to, communicate with and work with a variety of racial groups. Since one of AmeriCorps’ goals is to prepare their members to be leaders in their communities, and since dialogue helps people develop some of the competencies that successful leaders need, dialogue seems like a logical addition to AmeriCorps training programs.

9. To take advantage of your members’ youth, idealism and open-mindedness.

Not all AmeriCorps members are young, but many are. They are at the point in their lives in which the things that they learn can actually change the entire course of their lives. Many people who experience dialogue regret having spent their lives fearful of or angry at members of other races. Why not take full advantage of your younger members’ stage in life by preventing years of misunderstanding about, miscommunication with and separation from other races?

10. To give AmeriCorps participants yet another powerful reason they’ll never forget—or want to forget—their national service experience.

Personally, I know that I will always treasure my AmeriCorps experience, and am always suggesting it as an option for people who are going through a transition in their lives. It was an experience that helped me develop into a more socially aware, risk-taking person, and gave me the opportunity to glimpse my own potential. AmeriCorps gives so much to

its participants—and so does dialogue. Why not provide your members with another unique, life-changing experience?

## **What is Dialogue?**

There is a quiet movement which has been steadily gaining impetus in the U.S.—a movement which has the potential to impact our society greatly. Individuals of every background are coming together in small groups in order to do the one thing that people of different races have never really been able to do in this country: talk to each other. I mean really talk. Talk about issues we usually don't bring up in 'mixed' company: racism, violence, interracial relationships, privilege, prejudice, discrimination. How we feel about these things, and how they have affected and continue to affect our lives and our communities.

Too often in this country we avoid the topic of race in mixed-race settings and, if we do address race or racism, we rarely speak from our own personal perspective. Instead, we tend to take a political or academic perspective (“Affirmative Action is wrong because...” or “the definition of institutional racism is...”), which leaves us in just about the same place we started.

The process which enables people from all walks of life to truly talk about some of the major issues and realities that divide them is known as **interracial or intergroup dialogue**. Dialogues are also called **Study Circles**, mainly because of the Study Circles Resource Center, a successful organization which promotes dialogue nationwide. A dialogue on race is a facilitated forum created for the face-to-face exchange of personal stories, values and perspectives regarding how one is affected and has been affected by race and racism.

Descriptions of dialogue tend to use the words ‘honest,’ ‘intimate’ and ‘serious.’ The Study Circles Resource Center says that, ideally, dialogues are honest, respectful and democratic. My favorite description of the kind of dialogue that is needed in our country, however, came from a columnist of the Detroit Free Press, who said that what is needed is “one-on-one, in-your-face, intimate, honest exchange.”

Dialogues are organized for a variety of reasons, and can be designed for small groups, entire communities, or any group in between. People engage in dialogue to educate themselves, to challenge themselves, to establish new relationships and new community networks, to find ways to change their own behavior, to work with others to solve community problems, and to help create much larger political change in their communities.

The importance and potential of dialogue was recognized and made more public in 1997 by the establishment of the **President's Initiative on Race**. A one-year project, the President's Initiative sought to begin a national conversation on race and reconciliation, encouraging all Americans to learn to deal openly and honestly with our racial differences. In addition to publishing several useful guides that address racial issues and

help communities organize dialogues, the Initiative and its Advisory Board on Race held a number of ‘town meetings’ and other events which brought more recognition to the dialogue concept. Through this initiative, Clinton persuaded many states to support their existing dialogue efforts, and to organize new ones.

Beyond promoting honest communication, cross-cultural learning and relationship-building, **intergroup dialogue has the potential to impact the future of our country** in a number of critical ways. According to the Study Circles Resource Center, people who participate in intergroup dialogues “discover common ground and a greater desire and ability to work collaboratively to solve local problems—as individuals, as members of small groups, and as members of large organizations in the community.”

**The dialogue process can empower** individuals of all racial, ethnic and economic backgrounds to make change happen in their communities. According to an Honest Conversations Project, “dialogue allows us to collectively look at some of the barriers to change, and to develop action steps to address the issues of prejudice, stereotyping and other discriminatory practices that block us from having a respectful, inclusive community.” Dialogue, in other words, encourages what some call living democracy, a way of life in which citizens learn to build partnerships with people of all backgrounds and increase their own skills in creating community change.

Until communities experience real communication—real dialogue—about racial issues, their biggest problems will remain unsolved. True collaboration and community-wide action is impossible if racial and ethnic groups remain as divided and foreign to each other as they are now.

## **What Does a Typical Dialogue Look Like?**

“Dialogue comes into existence during encounters where people meet on the basis of full equality, where each puts himself or herself in the shoes of the other, and where all work hard at understanding where they themselves and other participants are coming from.”  
Dan Yankelovich, The Magic of Dialogue (forthcoming book)

Dialogues are as diverse as the communities which utilize them. Everything varies from dialogue to dialogue: the number of participants, the purpose of the dialogue, the topics which are discussed, the ethnicity, age, gender... of its members, the length of each meeting, the number of sessions,...everything. But there are guidelines that most dialogue groups adhere to, or at least consider. **These guidelines are what makes a group activity a dialogue, and what makes a dialogue so powerful.**

### **ground rules**

Dialogue emphasizes listening, honesty and open-mindedness. In order to keep a dialogue from becoming an adversarial debate or non-personal discussion, ground rules must be established and agreed upon by the group. Generally, a list of ground rules are

given to the group, with the understanding that they may omit or add any rules as they see fit. Dialogue groups tend to keep basic ground rules such as those suggested below, and many groups add several of their own. It is important to review the ground rules at the beginning of each dialogue, and for the facilitator to intervene when ground rules are broken to the detriment of the group. Some common ground rules (from Public Conversations Project and the Study Circles Resource Center) are:

- Use 'I' statements instead of 'we,' 'you' or 'they' statements. Express concerns in a manner that invites others to hear, not in a manner that invites defensiveness.
- Listen actively. Try not to let your mind wander or think about what you're going to say while others are speaking. Avoid interrupting.
- Share air time. Try not to dominate the conversation.
- Use considerate language. Avoid using labels whenever possible.
- Feel free to 'pass' if you are not ready or willing to speak. Try not to pressure others to speak.
- Confront misperceptions and mistaken ideas without accusing others of being racist, white supremacist, etc. Instead, ask open-ended questions that gather more information without judging (i.e. What led you to think that?).
- When there is a disagreement, keep talking. Explore the disagreement and search for areas of agreement (common ground).
- Feel free to express your feelings when you have been offended or hurt.
- Inquire rather than assume you know. Ask clarifying questions when you are inclined to make assumptions; ask genuine questions when you are inclined to persuade or argue.
- Be open to changing your mind. This will help you really listen to others' views.
- Don't waste time arguing about points of fact.
- Respect confidentiality. If you talk about your dialogue experience to people outside of the group, refrain from using people's names or sharing their personal experiences.
- Make a good effort to attend all of the dialogue sessions.

### **the discussion**

Although some types of dialogue allow the discussion to go wherever the participants take it, dialogues which have a specific focus and distinct purpose (and a limited time frame) need a certain amount of structure in order to succeed. Different dialogue proponents recommend a variety of structures for dialogues on race, but many agree that a dialogue has several basic stages, beginning with individual experiences, moving on to community issues, continuing with discussion about the possibilities for community change, and often culminating with the planning of individual or group action.

Some typical questions to get people talking about **their own racial and cultural identity** are:

- Did you grow up mostly around people who were similar to you racially and culturally?
- What are some of your earliest memories of coming in contact with people who were different from you racially or culturally?

- Relate a personal story or give an example to illustrate how your background or experiences have contributed to your attitudes about race relations.
- What is your racial, ethnic or cultural background?
- Have you experienced racism personally? Have you seen it in practice? How has it affected you or people you know?
- In what ways do your attitudes toward people of other racial or ethnic groups differ from those of your parents and grandparents?

To spur conversation about **community issues**, the facilitator might pose one or more of these questions:

- How would you describe the overall state of race relations in the community in which you live or work?
- Do you find it easier or harder for you to make friends of other races than it was a few years ago? Why?
- What do you think some of the underlying conditions are which affect race relations in your community? In other words, what are some of the causes of racism and interracial conflict in your community?

To encourage the group to share a range of viewpoints on **how racism might be addressed**, the facilitator could ask the group to brainstorm on questions such as:

- The struggle to improve race relations has a long history in this country. How has change come about?
- What strategies and actions were most helpful in the past? What kinds of efforts are needed today? Why?
- What things need to be done locally before racism is eradicated and race relations are improved?
- What organizations are already working on this issue in the community, and what are they doing? How can these organizations' efforts be improved?
- What resources or tools which exist in the community could be better utilized to dismantle racism and improve race relations and equality?

If the group is interested in utilizing what they've learned from the dialogue process by **taking action**, either individually or collectively, some questions to ask are:

- What seemed to be the major themes in the previous dialogues? Were there a number of shared concerns?
- What are some concrete steps you can take—by yourself or with others—to address these concerns?
- What are some of the obstacles you can foresee for these efforts? How can you overcome these barriers?

Again, every dialogue is different, but these questions should give you a better idea of what actually happens during an intergroup dialogue on race. Read the following section,

A Sample Dialogue for AmeriCorps Programs, to get a better idea of what a dialogue tailored specifically for your program might look like.

### **the numbers**

Ideally, dialogue groups consist of between ten and fifteen people. If a group is smaller, it is difficult for the organizers to get a good diversity of perspectives and experiences. If a group is larger, participants may never feel that they have developed a strong, cohesive group through dialogue. If you need to break up your larger group in order to meet this specification, you may choose to eventually get the large group together to discuss their experiences, to select and break up into committees based on particular interests, or to do any number of activities that will bring the group back together to focus on racism and race relations.

Dialogue sessions tend to be two hours long, with one break. Dialogue is very participatory, but it is not physically active. If you think two hours of dialogue would be very challenging to your group, you may want to consider having 90-minute dialogue sessions. Refrain from shortening dialogue sessions further in order to alternate them with more physically active activities, for the benefits of dialogue would most likely be lost.

Typically, a dialogue group will meet between four to six times, usually once a week. Some dialogue groups decide to keep meeting indefinitely on, say, a monthly basis. Many others shift their focus from talk to community action during the third or fourth session. Since every group is different, it is difficult to prescribe a set number of meetings. If you have some freedom with your training schedule, you may want to decide after the second or third session whether or not the group needs to continue the dialogue. Also, no matter how many sessions are held, it is quite possible that your dialogue group, or a portion of the group, will want to continue the dialogue on their own time.

### **commitment**

It is very important that each dialogue group have the same participants during each session. Although a few participants may miss a session, there should be no new participants, guest participants or even guest observers after the first session. If someone misses the first session, they should join a group only with the group's permission, along with a synopsis of what happened during the session that was missed and an explanation of the ground rules.

In order for meaningful dialogue to take place, members of the group need to become comfortable enough within the group to take risks. Any group of people can talk about race and racism, but people need to feel safe enough to talk about these topics from their own perspectives and experiences. Talking about these issues at this depth—and listening to others who are also taking the risk to speak honestly about these issues—is

where the power lies in dialogue. It is this depth that induces personal transformation and the collective desire for action within dialogue groups.

For this reason, it is important for dialogue participants to be asked to commit to a specific number of dialogue sessions. Every participant should be aware before the first dialogue session that they are expected to commit to three sessions, for example, and that the group will decide whether or not it wants to continue beyond those three. The purpose of the dialogue and the fact that it takes more than one dialogue session to make the process worthwhile should be clear to the participants before they begin.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Do We Really Need a Facilitator?**

One of things I heard over and over while surveying dialogue leaders across the country was the importance of good facilitators. “The facilitator can make or break a dialogue group,” people told me. If you are interested in getting your participants to dialogue on race or any other subject, obtaining an experienced facilitator or training someone well to facilitate the dialogue is the most crucial step you need to take.

The rules of dialogue are very different from our normal rules of communication. In dialogue, you can not allow someone to dominate the conversation. You need to prevent people from debating facts or positions, and to quickly intervene when someone starts name-calling or accusing. The ground rules that are set before the dialogue begins must be internalized by the facilitator, almost to the point that a rule being broken is detected automatically, without thinking. Ground rules allow for the kind of communication that leads to real understanding and trust, and it is the facilitator’s job to enforce those rules.

In addition, facilitators need to be able to determine when it is necessary to intervene, and when it is best to let the group continue. They need to know when and how to clarify what is being said, summarize a discussion, shift the focus from one speaker or topic to another, and utilize silence. They need to be able to stay neutral—a skill that is more difficult than it sounds—and to use body language to communicate a variety of messages.

According to the Study Circles Resource Center, good dialogue facilitators:

- are neutral; the facilitator’s opinions are not part of the discussion
- help the group set its ground rules, and keep to them
- help group members grapple with the content by asking probing questions
- help group members identify areas of agreement and disagreement
- bring in points of view that haven’t been talked about
- create opportunities for everyone to participate
- focus and help to clarify the discussion
- summarize key points in the discussion, or ask others to do so
- are self-aware; good facilitators know their own strengths, weaknesses, biases and values

- are able to put the group first
- have a passion for the group process with its never-ending variety
- appreciate all kinds of people
- are committed to democratic principles

As you can see, there is a lot involved in facilitating a dialogue. If you prefer to have someone from your organization—yourself, an AmeriCorps leader, a staff member—facilitate the dialogue process, please be sure that they

1. read this manual,
2. attend at least one facilitator training session (find trainings by contacting the groups mentioned in the Organizations to Contact for Assistance section on page 19),
3. read at least two publications of the Study Circles Resource Center (I recommend the *Guide for Training Study Circle Facilitators* and *Facing the Challenge of Racism and Race Relations*), and
4. can be neutral with the participants in the dialogue and can be perceived as neutral by the participants.

An experienced outside facilitator is a good investment for your group to make, though you might find one in your community who will do it either **very cheaply or free of charge**. Finding a facilitator is a little tricky, though. You could try contacting the national organizations listed in the Organizations to Contact for Assistance section. I would recommend, however, that you utilize one of the two new on-line resources that provide information about dialogue and similar efforts across the country.

The Center for Living Democracy has produced an online map of intergroup dialogue efforts (and similar forms of interracial collaboration) organized by state. It includes a search feature that allows you to see a listing of organizations in your city, or that are affiliates of a larger organization, such as the YWCA. This map is located at [www.livingdemocracy.org](http://www.livingdemocracy.org).

The Western Justice Center also offers an excellent on-line resource. Its online database of organizations working to prevent violence, resolve conflicts and promote intergroup dialogue and cross-cultural collaboration is searchable by state and by a number of categories. The database is located at [www.westernjustice.org/orgs.cfm](http://www.westernjustice.org/orgs.cfm).

### **Why Race? (What about Gender, Ability, Age...?)**

Many dialogue participants admit that because so little meaningful communication occurs in the U.S. among members of different racial groups, their first session marks the first time they actually hear a person of another race speak candidly about a personal struggle they had as a result of racism. For whites, it may also be the first time they are exposed to such realities as subtle racism, institutional discrimination and internalized oppression—things that affect their non-white colleagues every day. Since, as a columnist from the Detroit Free Press wrote, “it is virtually impossible to have healthy relations with people you’ve stereotyped through a lifetime of bad information,” dialogue

opens the door to interracial relationships among people who have been unable to form them in the past.

Dialogue allows people to acknowledge personal feelings such as hurt, anger and guilt. As the former Mayor of Richmond, Virginia once remarked, “The mentality of victimhood or guilt-ridden shame anchors us in inaction and diverts time and energy from the search for solutions.” Dialogue allows these feelings to be brought out into a safe space, where they can be talked about and validated, and then carefully set aside. These feelings which served as barriers for years—barriers to communication, to self-love, to relationships—are finally able to be brought to the surface and then, slowly, surpassed. Dialogue allows people to move on—often to collaborative community action.

Sometimes, AmeriCorps programs with limited time for training will shy away from ‘diversity’ trainings that seem to only address one important area (race, in this instance, when there is also sexual orientation, ability, age, gender, nationality, and so on). It is important that you realize that **dialogues can be held on any of these issues** and, if your AmeriCorps participants are all-white, or if sexual orientation is an important issue within your group, it may be more effective for you to dialogue on something other than race. Since race and racism are such major issues in almost all parts of the country, however, and since real communication among different racial groups is so rare, I am only focusing on race.

No matter what you decide is right for your group, do not be tempted to organize a dialogue on ‘diversity’ and allow the discussion to span several of the topics mentioned above. **In order for real learning and real understanding to take place, one issue must be the primary focus.** Other forms of oppression are likely to come up in any dialogue on race, but the participants know that the focus of the dialogue is race. Besides, open, honest communication about race will naturally open up the door to open, honest communication about other important subjects.

Another important reason to engage in dialogues on race is that the racial climate in America is shifting at a rapid pace. According to the President’s Initiative on Race, the U.S. is currently 72.7 percent European American, 11 percent Latino, 12.1 percent African American, 3.6 percent Asian/Pacific Islander, and 0.7 percent American Indian. Statistics indicate, however, that in 2050, the population in the United States will be approximately 53 percent European American, 25 percent Latino, 14 percent African American, 8 percent Asian/Pacific Islander, and 1 percent American Indian.

Tomorrow’s leaders need to be able to relate to, communicate with and understand people from a variety of racial backgrounds. These kinds of interracial competencies, however, are rarely being developed in this country. Since AmeriCorps is more successful at reflecting the ‘face of America’ than most U.S. organizations, AmeriCorps programs should utilize this rare opportunity in order to develop important leadership skills and abilities within their members. AmeriCorps has the potential to show the rest of the country just how successful interracial groups can be when they put their heads and hands together.

## When Should Dialogue Be Used?

Dialogue is an ideal tool for small, multiracial groups. If the people in the group are expected to work as a team, dialogue can only help build a stronger, more effective team. Dialogue can be used effectively with groups of people who are strangers, or groups of people who have worked together for years. Dialogue can be used for groups which are conflicting about racial or other issues, and groups which are getting along fine together.

If one or more conflicts have occurred within your group that you believe may be race-related, it is even more important that your facilitator is well-trained—in conflict transformation as well as dialogue. The dialogue process can be a very effective way of addressing conflict among your members, but only if the facilitator can ensure that the participants interact according to the ground rules.

Very diverse groups can engage in rewarding, meaningful dialogue, but so can homogenous groups. If your AmeriCorps members are all white, for instance, a dialogue on race can still be a unique and unforgettable experience. Imagine a group of your white members sitting and talking about what race means to them—what being white means to them—and what it means in the communities they work in. White people are so rarely asked to see themselves in relation to race that just one *intra*racial dialogue on race can make them more understanding of other perspectives. Sometimes, too, people need to dialogue about race and race relations with members of their own race before they feel comfortable or confident enough to talk about those issues with others.

It is important to consider **racial identity stages** when discussing dialogue. Since most dialogue participants *elect* to participate in their dialogue, it is safe to say that most participants feel *ready* to engage in dialogue. They may feel ready for a dialogue experience because they have reached a particular stage in their racial identity. Some scholars believe that people tend to go through a number of racial identity stages, ranging from naive and acceptance stages to the internalization stage, during which whites no longer see members of their race as ‘normal’ and others as ‘different,’ and which People of Color recognize that although their racial identity is a critical part of them, it is not the only significant part of their identity.

Since all participants in a particular AmeriCorps program may be expected to participate in a dialogue on race, they may not all feel ‘ready’ for such an experience. Making the dialogue optional is one way to address this issue, but developing an understanding of racial identity stages is another. Educating your members on the stages is also an option.

Individuals who are at any stage in their racial identity can benefit from a dialogue on race. People who believe that since whites are more successful than people of other races, they must be superior (acceptance stage) will begin to realize through the dialogue that there are many other factors involved, such as discrimination and inequities in education. Similar changes will happen to people at other stages who participate in a

dialogue. People who are at later stages in their racial identity development may develop a better understanding of what their racial group membership means to them.

Accepting that the various stages of racial identity development are natural for people who grow up in this country to experience is the first step to full participation in the dialogue. Refraining from judging or labeling people based on the stage they are in and accepting that people can shift back and forward from stage to stage are the next steps.

Because each participant enters the dialogue process at a different place, expect them to each leave the dialogue at different places. Try not to be disappointed if certain individuals seem not to have been enlightened by the experience—they probably *were* effected quite a bit. Create opportunities for those involved to take action in different ways. One participant may want to start a new committee to recruit more diverse members, while another may just want to journal on their own.

### **What Kinds of Training Will Enhance the Dialogue?**

Dialogues are not intellectual discussions or debates, but the dialogue process can sometimes be improved when the participants all have knowledge of certain concepts. When all of your participants are equally aware of such concepts as institutional racism and white privilege when they begin the dialogue, there is less of a tendency for some dialogue participants to try to educate others about such intellectual (but very real) concepts. It is also less likely for some participants to feel left out of a dialogue that becomes too intellectual.

With a good facilitator, however, neither of those scenarios is likely to occur often enough to cause problems. Plus, some dialogue leaders say that it is best to just allow the participants to work with what they already know, and hope that they come up with some of the same realizations that you would have hoped for them to have if you had taught them about these concepts.

It seems both sides have merit. Regardless of whether they are introduced before or after the dialogue process, however, AmeriCorps members should be made aware of important realities such as white privilege, institutional racism, internalized oppression, and subtle racism. Whether you choose to make sure your participants have a shared vocabulary when they begin talking about race, or you choose to introduce those concepts after they have been discussed in generic or specific terms during the dialogue, these concepts should be introduced to your members.

If the issues surrounding racism and race relations are completely new to your participants, you will also need to make sure they go through a basic diversity training as well. Such a training will make sure they understand the concept of oppression, the existence of inequalities, and the definition of racism.

Training your participants in conflict resolution is another option which could be held either before or after the dialogue. Since dialogue is a form of conflict resolution, the

dialogue could follow a basic training in conflict resolution as a way to delve further into that important field. Alternatively, participants may be more receptive of the various methods of resolving and transforming conflict after they have participated in a dialogue. The two trainings will enhance each other considerably, regardless of which one is held first.

Another option for pre-dialogue training is to focus on communication. The dialogue process adopts a unique set of rules for communication. These rules prevent people from feeling threatened, encourage people to share personal things about themselves, strengthen relationships and build trust. Have your participants consider how this structured form of communication allows people to take risks and truly hear others. Following a training about such communication with a dialogue could be a fun and powerful learning experience, and the participants would be more likely to follow the ground rules.

After your participants have engaged in dialogue, they are likely to want to take action based on their experience. If they choose to take action as a group—or even just individually, providing training on such areas as community building, social change, policy advocacy and dialogue facilitation could be very impactful. Dialogue groups often fail when they try to transition from talk to community action. A lack of knowledge and training in such things as social change and policy advocacy may be one of the reasons they fail.

## **A Sample Dialogue for AmeriCorps Programs**

The dialogue outline that follows is based on a variety of successful dialogue models. It is geared specifically for AmeriCorps participants engaging in dialogue, but could easily be modified for other national service programs. It is meant to be what the title indicates—a sample. Every AmeriCorps program is different, as every community is different. Be sure to tailor this and other models to your specific needs—especially if you choose to open up your dialogue to community members, staff or any other group.

### **session one**

During the first phase, the facilitator introduces the dialogue concept and the purpose of the dialogue; expectations of the participants are made clear; ground rules are discussed and agreed upon; participants briefly introduce themselves; the agenda for the first session is reviewed; and the facilitator describes his or her role in the process. After all of these very important details are discussed, the dialogue begins.

The President's Initiative on Race suggests initiating the dialogue by asking questions that don't necessarily focus on race, but that help the participants feel more comfortable about opening up to each other in this setting. Here are some suggestions for AmeriCorps participants:

- What things in life are most important to you?
- What were you doing and where were you living before you joined AmeriCorps?
- Why did you join AmeriCorps?
- What are your first impressions of the community you are working in? (Or, if you're not new to the community, how do you feel about the community you're working in?)

Depending on your participants—how well they know each other, how comfortable they are opening up in groups, etc.—you may choose to start with race-oriented questions, or to just ask one ‘ice-breaking’ question. Some initial questions you may choose to ask are:

- Share 1) how you see yourself racially, 2) how you assume people see you racially, and 3) how you wish to be seen racially. Note how these things may be the same or different from how you might indicate your race on a form.
- Did you grow up mostly around people who were similar to you racially and culturally? (Elaborate—yes or no answers do not suffice.)
- What are some of your earliest memories of coming in contact with people who were different from you racially or culturally?
- Relate a story or give an example to illustrate how your background or experiences have contributed to your attitudes about race relations.
- Have you experienced racism personally? Have you seen it in practice? How has it affected you or people you know?
- In what ways do your attitudes toward people of other racial or ethnic groups differ from those of your parents?
- How often and under what circumstances (at work, socially, in stores, etc.) do you have contact with people of other races or ethnic groups? How has this changed since you joined AmeriCorps?

Wrap-up/Debriefing for this session:

- How did you feel about this session? What did you like or dislike about the discussion?
- How well did the ground rules work? How did you feel about the facilitation?
- Is there anything that seems ‘unfinished’ to you, that you think should probably be addressed next time?
- What would make these discussions more meaningful for you?

Depending on how many of these questions you choose to field, and how much progress you feel your group is making, you may choose to expand this self-exploratory stage to fill two sessions. If you decide that this is the right route for your group, the following activity could help to address some of your participants’ most pressing concerns.

Have each participant write down between one and three topics they would like the group to discuss. Read over the suggestions, having someone jot them down on a flipchart, and then ask the participants to each put a star after the three issues they are most interested in addressing. (To get more ideas flowing, have a list of some common race-related issues and concerns for the group to read over, such as “Why do racial groups often seem to

segregate themselves when they don't have to?" and "Should white people reject their unearned race-based privileges? In what ways?")

### **session two**

For the rest of the sessions, you should begin by reviewing what happened at the previous session, the ground rules, and the current agenda. The ground rules and current agenda should also be posted at each session for everyone to see.

The second session of the dialogue forces participants to go beyond the 'I.' Addressing such important questions as "What are the underlying causes of racism and poor race relations?" and "Where are we as a community in terms of racism and race relations?," participants will identify specific themes, issues and problems. All three of the following questions should be asked:

- How would you describe the overall state of race relations in the communities you work in?
- How would you describe the overall state of race relations within this AmeriCorps program?
- What do you think some of the underlying conditions are which affect race relations in the communities you are a part of (the community you work in, your AmeriCorps community, etc.)? • In other words, what are some of the causes of racism and interracial conflict in your communities?

End this session—and the remaining sessions—with the same wrap-up questions as the first.

### **session three**

During this dialogue session, your goal is to get your members to begin talking about how racial problems might be addressed. It is important to continue to encourage a wide variety of viewpoints during this session. It is not yet time for participants to begin narrowing down "what needs to be done." The group should still be exploring and learning from one another. In this session, two or three of the following questions could be asked:

- The struggle to improve race relations has a long history in this country. How has change come about? What strategies and actions were most helpful in the past? What kinds of efforts are needed today? Why?
- What experiences do you have in addressing racial problems? What did you see work, and what failed? Why?
- What things can be done to improve race relations within the group?
- What are some organizations doing to address this issue in the communities you work in? What do you think your AmeriCorps program could do to assist them?

- What existing resources or tools could be better utilized to dismantle racism and improve race relations and equality, either within your program, the greater community, or both?

#### **session four**

Most dialogue groups naturally want to take some sort of action based on what they've experienced. Although being a part of a dialogue group is a powerful kind of action in and of itself, in which each member has a positive effect on every other member, as well as oneself, it is common for many members of a dialogue group to exhibit a passionate need to *do something* about racism or race relations beyond engaging in dialogue.

Since AmeriCorps members are already spending most of their time and energy trying to change their communities and environments for the better, the need to move from talk to action must be addressed differently than for most dialogue groups. AmeriCorps members should be encouraged to observe and respond to race-related injustices within the work they are already doing *and* within their AmeriCorps community. The dialogue experience will enhance their efforts within the diverse communities in which they are placed, and could open their eyes to inequities within every community in which they are involved.

If AmeriCorps members who experience the dialogue process are determined to address racial problems in their communities, they should be encouraged and assisted in doing so. They should also be reminded that real change with such deep-rooted problems can take many years. Initiating a program that can last well after they are gone, and which leaves the long-term problem-solving to the community may be the most appropriate and effective action to take. They may choose to **help initiate community-wide dialogues**, for example—a decision that could empower local citizens and strengthen the community more than they can imagine.

AmeriCorps members have different specific strengths and weaknesses than typical dialogue groups. Since they are working directly with community problems, they may be more aware of important initiatives that are already taking place, specific barriers that may hinder their efforts, and various community assets that could prove to be useful. If they are new to the community they are working in, however, or if they are only involved in that community during their term of service, their efforts to make changes in their communities based on their dialogue experience may be less successful.

For these reasons, AmeriCorps participants who want to move from dialogue about racism and race relations to addressing these issues in the local community should seek out community members and organizations which are doing similar work. Such groups' and individuals' knowledge, experience and support will greatly enhance their efforts, and will increase the sustainability of their efforts after they are gone.

If the group is interested in utilizing what they've learned from the dialogue process by taking action either individually or collectively, some questions to ask are:

- What seemed to be the major themes in the previous dialogues? Were there a number of shared concerns? What were they?
- What are some concrete steps you can take—by yourself or with others—to address these concerns?
- What are some of the obstacles you can foresee for these efforts? How can you overcome these barriers?
- Who should be involved in the efforts you are discussing?
- What new insights or ideas have you gained from this discussion that might help you in the future?
- How do you think this dialogue experience can influence your work in the community?
- What goals can you set for yourself based on what you've discovered about yourself or learned about others during the dialogue?

If enough time remains, participants can begin to work on some action planning, either individually or as a group. Setting goals, establishing committees and delegating tasks are important steps for dialogue groups that are interested in taking action as a group. This is not a quick process, however, and the group may want to schedule at least one more meeting for action planning.

## **How National Service Can Help the Dialogue Movement**

During my National Service Fellowship, and in conjunction with the Center for Living Democracy, I surveyed 75 leaders of organizations that do intergroup dialogue. Through this research, I discovered that despite the fact that these leaders widely agreed that effective dialogue naturally leads to collaborative community action, many dialogue groups were having trouble making the move from talk to action effectively. More specifically, 69% of the respondents considered the transition from dialogue to action a positive move for a dialogue group to make, many noting that it was natural for the groups to want to take action based on their dialogue experience.

Unfortunately, many of the leaders admitted that their groups were just not having much success taking action in their communities, attributing this to such things as their lack of time or staff to devote to this step, or their lack of experience and knowledge in community action. The same percentage of my respondents that said that moving from talk to action was a positive step for a dialogue group to take admitted that moving to action becomes an *issue* for their dialogue groups. In other words, nearly 70% agreed that the fact that some of their dialogue participants begin wanting to move beyond dialogue into community action causes problems for their groups. An additional 16% said that this is an issue for some, but not all, of their dialogue groups.

Respondents told me repeatedly that African Americans especially want to move toward action. African Americans, who experience racism on a daily basis in this country, commonly find themselves ready to take action sooner than others in the dialogue group, and seem to be more easily frustrated when the move toward action is taken ineffectively

or too slowly. Again and again, I was told that African Americans often became frustrated with the dialogue process and would drop out when they felt that nothing was really going to come out of the dialogue.

AmeriCorps programs can help these dialogue groups in their transition from talk to community action. Who better to help community groups take action collectively than those who are already taking action—in every area and community imaginable, and in collaboration with every agency imaginable? AmeriCorps members could provide dialogue groups with powerful contacts in the community, let them know about various community resources, and so on.

AmeriCorps programs could also assist dialogue groups in another very simple but important way—by providing dialogue groups with community service projects. Dialogue groups which participate in a one-time community service project could benefit from the project in a number of ways. First of all, participation in a service project may temporarily satisfy the need for action that many dialogue participants are experiencing, thereby preventing people from dropping out of the process early. The activity would also force all of the group members to start thinking about the various possibilities for action they may want to take. The activity would give the group a common framework for approaching a discussion about action (“I had fun when we painted that community center, but I want to work on something that deals with the root of the problem...”). In addition, a service project would help develop stronger relationships within the dialogue group; specifically, it would build trust and teamwork—characteristics that are needed in a group that may eventually try to tackle major problems in their community together. And finally, such projects help increase dialogue groups’ visibility in the community and help the groups to develop potential community partners.

Participating in community service projects is not something that is commonly done by dialogue groups at this time. As a part of my fellowship, I am encouraging dialogue groups to experiment with service projects, and I have been getting a very positive response. My web site will link to contact information for AmeriCorps programs across the country, so that dialogue groups that want to do a service project will be able to find an AmeriCorps program near them which will have the resources to help them.

A final way that AmeriCorps programs can help the dialogue movement is by initiating dialogues within the communities they serve. AmeriCorps members may want to do this after they experience dialogue, and it certainly is a powerful way to assist the dialogue movement. AmeriCorps programs which are interested in initiating such efforts should work on building broad-based community support and consider contacting one of the organizations listed below for assistance.

## **Organizations to Contact for Resources or Assistance**

**Association of American Colleges and Universities**  
1818 R Street NW; Washington, DC 20009

Phone: 202-293-7070

[info@aacu.nw.dc.us](mailto:info@aacu.nw.dc.us); [www.aacu-edu.org/Initiatives/legacies.html](http://www.aacu-edu.org/Initiatives/legacies.html)

The Association of American Colleges & Universities initiated a program called Racial Legacies and Learning, which fosters campus/community dialogues that address issues of race and the vision to "Build One America." Sponsored by the Ford Foundation and designed to support the President's Initiative on Race, this project initially was to run from 1997 to 1998, but continues to be active. The Association of American Colleges & Universities also runs the DiversityWeb, which links Colleges and Universities that are working to engage the diversity of United States society in educational mission, campus climate, curriculum focus and connections with the larger society. The DiversityWeb can be found at [www.inform.umd.edu/DiversityWeb](http://www.inform.umd.edu/DiversityWeb).

### **Center for Living Democracy**

289 Fox Farm Rd.

Brattleboro, VT 05301

Phone: 802-254-1234; Fax: 802-254-1227

[www.livingdemocracy.org](http://www.livingdemocracy.org)

The Center for Living Democracy (CLD) inspires and prepares people to make democracy a rewarding, practical, everyday approach to solving society's problems. Their main program, the American News Service (ANS), researches and reports on innovative grassroots efforts in order to make solutions more accessible. ANS stories are used by hundreds of newspapers, magazine, television programs, individuals and organization. CLD offers a free online map of the U.S. which features organizations which do dialogue and similar forms of interracial collaboration. This map contains detailed contact information and descriptions of each organization. Utilize this map to find organizations that may be able to provide you with a facilitator, or to locate organizations near you which could use your help. CLD also serves as a clearinghouse for resources to help people create healthier communities. Order their Tool Box (resource catalog) by dialing extension 131.

### **Hope in the Cities**

1103 Sunset Avenue; Richmond, VA 23221

Phone: 804-358-1764; Fax: 804-358-1769

[hopecities@aol.com](mailto:hopecities@aol.com); [www.hopeinthecities.org](http://www.hopeinthecities.org)

In a number of communities across the country, Hope in the Cities initiated a process of healing which involves honest conversations on race, acceptance of responsibility and acts of reconciliation. Conversations are a significant step in the process, but they are only a step. Hope in the Cities encourages participants in conversations to go to the next steps of responsibility and reconciliation. Hope in the Cities offers its experience, resources and a process of community change.

### **National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ)**

Phone: 202-822-6110; Fax: 202-822-6114

[www.nccj.org](http://www.nccj.org)

The National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ) is a human relations organization dedicated to fighting bias, bigotry and racism in America. Its mission is to promote understanding and respect among all races, religions and cultures through education, advocacy and conflict resolution. NCCJ, founded in 1927 as the National Conference of Christians and Jews, has 65 offices across the U.S. It has developed a dialogic process for use in combating bias, bigotry and racism and promoting understanding and respect among all. NCCJ initiated the National Conversation on Race, Ethnicity and Culture, an ongoing series of local and national intergroup dialogues.

**National MultiCultural Institute**

3000 Connecticut Ave, NW, Suite 438; Washington, DC 20008-2556  
Phone: 202-483-0700; Fax: 202-483-5233  
[nmci@nmci.org](mailto:nmci@nmci.org); [www.nmci.org](http://www.nmci.org)

The National MultiCultural Institute (NMCI) is a national training and development organization which strives to increase communication and respect among people of different racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and to provide a forum for discussion of the critical issues of multiculturalism facing our society. NMCI is a private non-profit organization that holds diversity conferences, conducts trainings, develops educational resource materials and initiates special projects of interest to the field. Organizations and communities which contact NMCI can request many types of diversity trainings, including interracial dialogue.

**Study Circles Resource Center**

P.O. Box 203; Pomfret, CT 06258  
Phone: 860-928-2616; Fax: 860-928-3713  
[scrc@neca.com](mailto:scrc@neca.com)

The Study Circles Resource Center helps communities to organize study circles—small-group, democratic, highly participatory discussions that give everyday people the opportunity to make a difference in their communities. SCRC provides free and low-cost publications to communities across the country which are interested in establishing study circle programs, and SCRC staff members are willing to work with community leaders at every stage of study circle organizing. SCRC is a project of the Topsfield Foundation, Inc., a private, nonprofit, nonpartisan foundation which is dedicated to advancing deliberative democracy and improving the quality of public life in the United States.

**The Village Foundation**

66 Canal Center Plaza, Suite 501; Alexandria, VA 22314-1591  
Phone: 703-548-3200; Fax: 703-548-5296  
[www.villagefoundation.org](http://www.villagefoundation.org)

The mission of the Village Foundation is both deceptively simple and spectacularly ambitious: Repair the breach between African American men and boys and American

society. Founded in 1997, the Village Foundation is the first organization in the U.S. to develop and support programs that take a systematic, holistic approach toward solving the multi-dimensional problems destroying the future of African American males. One of its main efforts, the Race and Cultural Relations Institute, led by Dr. Paul Martin Du Bois, supports community and institutional intergroup dialogues to create greater tolerance towards African American men and boys in society.

### **YWCA (Young Women's Christian Association) of the USA**

350 Fifth Avenue, Suite 301; New York, NY 10118

Phone: 212-273-7800

[www.ywca.org/mission/racial\\_justice.html](http://www.ywca.org/mission/racial_justice.html)

The YWCA of the U.S.A. has been committed to racial justice and human rights since the start of the movement more than 130 years ago. The mission of the YWCA is to empower women and girls and to work to eliminate racism. Strengthened by diversity, the YWCA draws together members who strive to create opportunities for women's growth, leadership and power in order to attain a common vision of peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all people. Many YWCA's across the country have organized interracial dialogues for their community members.

### **Western Justice Center**

85 South Grand Avenue; Pasadena, California 91105

Phone: 626-584-7494; Fax: 626-568-8223

[info@westernjustice.org](mailto:info@westernjustice.org); [www.westernjustice.org](http://www.westernjustice.org)

The Western Justice Center is a non-profit research and development center which works collaboratively with other organizations to create, evaluate and replicate new ways to resolve conflicts and improve the quality of justice in the regional, national and international spheres. The Western Justice Center provides an online database to help people connect with organizations working to prevent violence, to resolve conflicts and to promote intergroup dialogue and cross-cultural collaboration. It is searchable by state and by a number of categories, including intergroup dialogue and mediation/conflict resolution. Utilize the database to find organizations that may be able to provide you with a facilitator, or to locate organizations near you which could use your help. The database is located at [www.westernjustice.org/orgs.cfm](http://www.westernjustice.org/orgs.cfm).

## **Further Resources**

There are many great resources that will help you organize and encourage dialogue within your programs. What follows are some of the most useful and popular resources. A more comprehensive list is available at the Dialogue to Action web site ([www.vermontel.net/~afluke](http://www.vermontel.net/~afluke)).

**videos that stimulate discussion and inspire action:**

**The Color of Fear.** 1994. Wah, Lee Mun. Oakland, CA: Stir-Fry Productions. This 90-minute film captures a multiracial group of eight men engaged in intense and riveting dialogue about racism. This powerful film makes clear why intergroup dialogue on racism can be difficult and why it is so necessary. A follow-up video entitled Color of Fear, Part II: Walking Each Other Home is also available. Contact Stir Fry Seminars at 1-800-370-STIR or Stirfry470@aol.com. Each video is \$460 for educational institutions and \$110 for individuals.

**Eyes on the Prize I and II.** 1986, 1990. Hampton, H. (Producer). Alexandria, VA: PBS Video. Eyes on the Prize I: America's Civil Rights Years (1959-1965) and Eyes on the Prize II: America at the Racial Crossroads (1965-1985). Combined, this 14-volume set of videos provides a comprehensive look at a critical 30-year period in the relations between African Americans and European Americans in the U.S. This stirring video series is both highly educational and highly motivational. Contact 1-800-645-4PBS or go to <http://shop2.pbs.org/pbsvideo>. \$250 and \$295.

**Free Indeed.** 1995. Mennonite Central Committee. This 23-minute video is designed to begin a discussion about white privilege. In a roughly-acted drama, four white middle-class young adults are required to be involved in a unique card game before they can do a service project for a black Baptist church. Their ensuing discussion addresses issues of accountability, unseen assumptions, success and how racism affects white people. Contact MCC at 717-859-1151. The video is \$20, but can be borrowed for the cost of shipping.

**Healing the Heart of America.** 1993. Hope in the Cities/MRA Inc. In June of 1993, hundreds of Richmond, Virginia citizens put on their walking shoes to experience a profoundly moving tour of the racial history of their city. This 27-minute video captures the event from the perspectives of both the organizers and participants, and provides clear direction and inspiration for those working to unite their community through dialogue. Contact 804-358-1764. \$25.

**Not in Our Town I and II.** California Working Group. Not in Our Town is a 27-minute video which chronicles the community-wide response to hate crimes in Billings, Montana, and clearly illustrates the power of working together. Not in Our Town II (1997) is an inspiring 58-minute video which shows citizens joining together to deal with discrimination, hate crimes and church burnings in their communities. Organized into seven stand-alone segments to allow for flexibility, this video is useful in schools and all types of community settings. Contact 510-547-8484. \$99 (NIOT II only) includes public performance rights.

**Skin Deep: College Students Confront Racism.** 1995. Reid, F. (Producer/Director). San Francisco, CA: Resolution/California Newsreel. This 53-minute video chronicles the journey of a multi-racial group of college students as they examine their own and confront each other's attitudes about race and ethnicity. This video vividly illustrates students of color and white students at different stages of racial

identity and demonstrates the possibility of growth as a result of dialogue. Contact The Media Library at 1-800-343-5540 to order. \$78 for educational institutions.

**True Colors.** 1991. Lucasiewicz, M. (Producer). Northbrook, IL: MTI Film & Video. ABC News correspondent Diane Sawyer follows two anonymous discrimination testers, one Black and one White, as they separately shop at the same stores and car dealership and seek employment and housing. This 19-minute video clearly and powerfully illustrates the reality of white privilege.

**books to help you get started:**

Some Study Circles Resource Center materials (in order of their relevance to national service):

- Facing the Challenge of Racism and Race Relations: Democratic Dialogue and Action for Stronger Communities, 3rd Edition (1997)
- The Busy Citizen's Discussion Guide: Facing the Challenge of Racism and Race Relations, 3rd Edition (1997)
- Planning Community-Wide Study Circle Programs: a Step-by-Step Guide (1996)
- A Guide for Training Study Circle Facilitators (1998)
- The Busy Citizen's Discussion Guide: Youth Issues, Youth Voices (1996)
- Toward a More Perfect Union in an Age of Diversity: A Guide for Building Stronger Communities through Public Dialogue (1997)
- Building Strong Neighborhoods: A Guide to Public Dialogue and Problem Solving (1998)

Fabick, Stephen Dillon. 1998. *Us and Them*. Michigan Chapter of Psychologists for Social Responsibility. *Us and Them* is a presenters' manual which is being used in communities throughout the country to promote intergroup dialogue. It was designed for use by psychologists and other professionals wanting to promote intergroup understanding, reconciliation and cooperation. Includes lecture formats, overheads, exercises and discussion guides in three-ring binder for easy duplication. \$30.

Hope in the Cities' Community Resource Manual. 1997. Richmond, VA: Hope in the Cities. This manual taps into the powerful grassroots movement to heal racial division through community-based dialogue. Focuses on a proven process emphasizing honest words and effective action by teams of people of all races, many faiths and diverse political views. Offers case studies and specific principles that can be adapted by dialogue organizers to meet local needs. \$30.

*One America Dialogue Guide: Conducting a Discussion on Race.* 1998. Washington, DC: One America In the 20<sup>th</sup> Century/The President's Initiative on Race. This guide provides a simple but effective model for dialogue and includes a good resource section. Download free at [www2.whitehouse.gov/initiatives/OneAmerica/america.html](http://www2.whitehouse.gov/initiatives/OneAmerica/america.html).

**books to help you learn more about the dialogue movement & process:**

Austin, Bobby William. 1996. *Repairing the Breach: Key Ways to Support Family Life, Reclaim Our Streets, and Rebuild Civil Society in America's Communities*, Report of the National Task Force on African-American Men and Boys. Dillon, CO: Alpine Guild, Inc.

Bohm, David (Lee Nichol, Editor). 1996. *On Dialogue*. Routledge: New York, NY.

Brown, Cherie R. and George J. Mazza. 1997. *Healing Into Action: A Leadership Guide for Creating Diverse Communities*. National Coalition Building Institute.

*Dialogues for Diversity: Community and Ethnicity on Campus*. 1994. The Project on Campus Community and Diversity of the Accrediting Commission for Senior Colleges and Universities of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges. Phoenix, AR: Oryx Press.

Ellinor, Linda and Glenna Gerard. 1998. *Dialogue: Rediscover the Transforming Power of Conversation*. New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Henderson, Michael. 1996. *The Forgiveness Factor: Stories of Hope in a World of Conflict*. Salem, OR: Grosvenor Books.

Lappe, Frances Moore and Paul Martin Du Bois. 1994. *The Quickening of America: Rebuilding our Nation, Remaking our Lives*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Inc. Publishers.

Schwartz, G. David. 1994. *A Jewish Appraisal of Dialogue: Between Talk and Theology*. University Press of America.

Senge, Peter. 1994. *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook*. Doubleday.

Tatum, Beverly Daniel, Ph.D. 1997. "Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?" *And Other Conversations About Race*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

Weisbord, Marvin R. and Sandra Janoff. 1995. *Future Search: An Action Guide to Finding Common Ground in Organizations and Communities*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

Winborne, Wayne and Renae Cohen, eds. 1998. *Intergroup Relations in the United States: Research Perspectives*. The National Conference of Community and Justice.

**books & articles to give you more training/discussion ideas:**

Bell, Derrick. 1992. *Faces at the Bottom of the Well: The Permanence of Racism*. New York, NY: Basic Books.

*Changing America: Indicators of Social and Economic Well-Being by Race and Hispanic Origin.* 1998. Washington, DC: The Council of Economic Advisors for the President's Initiative on Race. Find it at [www2.whitehouse.gov/initiatives/OneAmerica/america.html](http://www2.whitehouse.gov/initiatives/OneAmerica/america.html).

*Forging a New Future: The Advisory Board's Report to the President.* 1998. Washington, DC: One America In the 20<sup>th</sup> Century/The President's Initiative on Race. At [www2.whitehouse.gov/initiatives/OneAmerica/america.html](http://www2.whitehouse.gov/initiatives/OneAmerica/america.html).

Frankenberg, Ruth. 1993. *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness.* Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Hardiman, Rita and Bailey W. Jackson. 1992. "Racial Identity Development: Understanding Racial Dynamics in College Classrooms and on Campus," *Promoting Diversity in College Classrooms: Innovative Responses for the Curriculum, Faculty, and Institutions.*

Katz, Judy H. 1978. *White Awareness: Handbook for Anti-Racism Training.* Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press.

Kivel, Paul. 1996. *Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice.* Montpelier, VT: New Society Publishers.

Kochman, Thomas. 1981. *Black and White Styles in Conflict.* Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Kretzmann, John P and John L. McKnight. 1993. *Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets.* Evanston, IL: the Asset-Based Community Development Institute at Northwestern University's Institute for Policy Research.

Lerner, Michael and Cornel West. 1995. *Jews and Blacks: Let the Healing Begin.* New York, NY: G.P. Putnam's Sons.

Loewen, James. 1995. *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything your American History Textbook Got Wrong.* New York: Simon & Schuster.

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## **Getting Started Checklist**

- Read this manual!
- Determine if you have the resources (especially time) to organize a dialogue.
- Find a facilitator or have someone get trained to facilitate dialogue.
- Schedule the dialogue (at least three 2-hour sessions, preferably between a week and a month apart).
- Consider location and amenities.
  - Is the place private and free from distractions?

Is it accessible to everyone who's coming?

Do you want to provide refreshments or a light meal beforehand?

- Prepare your members for the experience (see training suggestions on page 13).
- Dialogue.
- Reflect about and evaluate the experience.
- Contact Sandy Heierbacher (writer of this Guide) and let her know how it went, what information was lacking, etc.
- Consider some of the post-dialogue training ideas.
- Talk to your members about how your program could assist local dialogue efforts.
- If your participants are interested in helping the dialogue movement, contact local dialogue groups.