



## **Witnessing Whiteness: The Need to Talk About Race and How to Do It**

### **Workshop Series Design and Overview**

#### **How should I use this workshop series?**

This series is intended as a companion to reading the book, *Witnessing Whiteness 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*.

- Facilitators should read the book in its entirety before attempting to lead a group through any of the workshops.
- Facilitators should read and consider the *Group Structure, Process, and Communication Guidelines*.
- Groups should be structured so participants read book chapters **prior** to experiencing corresponding workshops.
- Groups should know that the book has been carefully constructed as a personal journey. Skipping chapters is **not** recommended. Making use of isolated chapters may lead to a very poor outcome involving misunderstanding and communication breakdown.
- Recognize that the workshop series is a living set of documents that will be modified and improved by the author over time. Feedback regarding the usefulness of the workshops will be appreciated. Email [stochluk@msmc.la.edu](mailto:stochluk@msmc.la.edu) with suggestions or comments.

#### **What does the workshop series include, and why are the book chapters so important?**

- Workshop 1.1 - Chapter 1 - Why Pay Attention to Race?
  - The book chapter offers a thorough discussion of various approaches that lead people to avoid issues of race. These include colorblindness, transcending race, focusing on ethnicity over race, the belief that race is not real, and the idea that racism is over because discrimination is against the law. The chapter supports workshop participants in developing a collective understanding of the benefits and/or costs of the various positions.
- Workshop 1.2 - Chapter 1 - Culture, Tradition, and Appropriation
  - The book chapter introduces the concept of cultural loss and how the assimilation process can have unintended consequences for white Americans. The chapter supports workshop participants by providing an examination of how a sense of personal loss in conjunction with an unconscious use of privilege can lead to cultural appropriation.
- Workshop 2 - Chapter 2 - Authentic Interactions
  - The book chapter outlines the consequences of people engaging in community work without a solid sense of racial identity. Patterns discussed include savior and superiority complexes and the role that pity can play in people's attitudes and behaviors. The chapter supports workshop participants to recognize the need for honest dialogue and deep listening in order to work effectively across race.
- Workshop 3 - Chapter 3 - Revealing Histories: Both Living and Hidden
  - The book chapter reveals the political, economic, socio/cultural, philosophical, and legal roots of whiteness and important links between that history and our contemporary society. The chapter supports participants' ability to complete workshop exercises that depend upon brainstorming and the creation of historical and contemporary links regarding racism.

- Workshop 4 - Chapter 4 - My Racial Identity
  - The book chapter explores life experiences that prompt the construction of a person's racial identity. The chapter supports participants by providing a varying set of examples illustrating multiple pathways toward racial identity development.
- Workshop 5 - Chapter 5 - Positions of Privilege
  - The book chapter invites a multiracial set of voices to identify what whiteness means to them. The chapter supports participants by providing a comprehensive, common framework upon which the workshop builds.
- Workshop 6 - Chapter 6 - Reciprocal and Transformative Relationships
  - The book chapter explores common conflict situations that can arise when issues of race and privilege are unacknowledged. Three illustrative stories reveal essential keys for how to create deep, long lasting cross race relationships. This chapter supports participants as it offers concrete examples from which to draw insight during workshop activities.
- Workshop 7 - Chapter 7 - Racial Scripts
  - The book chapter highlights various ways people struggle to rid themselves of the internalized effects of living within a society marked by racism. Both whites and people of color discuss their years' long journeys to find healing practices and supportive communities wherein they detoxify their psyches. This chapter supports participants by offering examples of common racial scripts and strategies to lessen their effects.
- Workshop 8 - Chapter 8 - Self-Evaluation and Action Planning
  - The book chapter outlines and thoroughly discusses four main areas of work necessary to create a practice allowing individuals to effectively disrupt racism and enactments of privilege. The chapter offers detailed, prerequisite information needed in order to effectively complete the self-evaluation and planning required within the workshop.
- Workshop 9.1 - Chapter 9 - Creating Culture
  - The book chapter discusses some of the values necessary for creating a witnessing culture. The chapter supports participants as it provides an inspiring look at various movements that are coming together to support change efforts.
- Workshop 9.2 - Chapter 9 - Group Action Planning
  - This workshop is tied to Chapter 9 only to the degree that the workshop should be completed as a culminating experience, after the Chapter 8 workshop. Should facilitators pressed for time wish to forego workshop 9.1 in favor of completing 9.2, there would likely be no harm in that decision.

### **What is the motivation that prompted the creation of this workshop series?**

The motivation to develop this workshop series arose from two sources.

- I heard people wishing they could have a more collective, guided process to explore the issues raised with the book, but they didn't have the resources to hire consultants to do that sustained work.
- It became clear that the open-ended dialogue questions offered for less structured book groups do not necessarily lead participants to stay focused on the most essential issues.

## What underlying approach or set of assumptions guided the development of the series?

- **People will benefit from an integrated, comprehensive, guided experience.** The 11-part, sequential process aligns with the reading of *Witnessing Whiteness*, 2nd edition so that groups can fully explore the essential issues raised in the book.
- **A dialogue-based, experiential approach is helpful when tackling issues of race and privilege.** Workshop agendas allow groups of 5 to 25 people to explore how issues discussed in *Witnessing Whiteness* relate to personal lives and communities in 2 1/2 to 3 hr sessions. Although the book information can prompt deep thinking about oneself, discussing and exploring those topics with others in a workshop setting enhances the experience and often leads to additional insights.
- **Community, organizational, and institutional change can be enhanced by a grassroots philosophy that supports leadership rising from within a group.** This series is based upon the assumption that people can learn by doing, and groups need to organize themselves to develop skills and capacities that bring needed change to their organizations, institutions, and communities.
- **Programs and activities intended to disrupt racism and dismantle privilege should be accessible and sustainable.** The reason that the workshop agendas and facilitator's notes offer detailed instructions is so that groups can avoid hiring an expensive consultant. Consulting with mentors will remain an important component of a group's growth. However, the model of hiring an "expert" to drop in for a large fee, impart some knowledge, and then leave town does not offer sufficient opportunity for a group to develop the capacity to make use of whatever knowledge is conveyed.
- **It is essential that we approach this work with a supportive intention.** The discussion guidelines support the creation of a welcoming, inviting space where participants feel free to speak the truth of their experience without fear of shame or reprisal.

## How was the workshop series developed?

- **Multiracial review teams.** Many thanks go to various colleagues and mentors who made up the multiracial review teams that offered critical feedback on early workshop drafts. The detailed written notes and conference calls were invaluable in crafting this series. Special acknowledgments go to the teams at the YWCA in Tulsa, Oklahoma and Wildwood School in Los Angeles, California.
- **Continual revisions.** As groups use the series and offer feedback regarding sections that could use tweaking or updates, there will be ongoing revisions to documents. Each workshop agenda has a revision date in the bottom footer so that facilitators can ensure they are using the most up to date documents. At the start, all agendas have a rev. date of 12/09.
- **Feedback requested.** If you use the series and would like to recommend potential changes or offer feedback about your group's experience, please email [stochluk@msmc.la.edu](mailto:stochluk@msmc.la.edu). All information regarding how the series works for your group is appreciated.