

SELF-FACILITATED WORKSHOP

**Fostering Inclusion in Our Meetings and
in the New York Yearly Meeting**

Task Group on Racism in NYYM
Under the care of the Ministry Coordinating Committee
New York Yearly Meeting

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Introduction

Our tentative understanding of racism is that it is “a system that accords advantage and disadvantage based on racial identity.”

The goal of this self-facilitated workshop is to enable meetings within the NYYM to find ways to examine themselves and discover what they may not consciously know about racial privilege and racial pain, and what they can do to change these attitudes within their meetings and within the NYYM.

Suggested Format

There are six sessions each one posing a different query. There are three parts to each session starting with the selection of someone to conduct the exercise:

- 1) Worship share after the query is read.

- 2) Review and discuss the ideas listed in the appendix from the FGC leaflet “Seeking Racial & Ethnic Diversity: Welcoming People of Color”. So that your worship sharing experience may be more meaningful we recommend not reviewing the appendix beforehand.

- 3) Consider possible changes in your own Monthly Meeting, record these suggestions, and share them within your Meeting and with Task Group on Racism.

We suggest that one or just a few queries are explored at any single workshop to allow time for your discoveries to grow and to let the seed take hold. For the worship sharing portion of the workshop, it is more meaningful if personal experience is emphasized. Following this first part, articles and texts that you find meaningful along with the FGC leaflet can be introduced and discussed.

Suggested Worship Sharing Guidelines

- Take time to reflect deeply on the question posed.
- Speak about your own personal experience and feelings rather than ideas or theories.
- Speak out of the silence, leaving a space between speakers.
- Listen carefully and deeply to what is spoken.
- Do not respond to what anyone else has said, either to praise or to refute.
- Expect to speak only once.
- Respect the confidentiality of what is shared.

I Welcoming Seekers

Session 1

Are We Truly Welcoming to People into Our Meetings?

1. Worship sharing
2. Other experiences/resources. Refer to appendix for suggestions.
3. What we can do.

Notes

II Becoming Informed

Session 2

How can we learn more about the challenge of achieving racial and ethnic diversity among Friends?

1. Worship sharing

2. Other experiences/resources. Refer to appendix for suggestions.

3. What we can do.

Notes

III Becoming Active

Session 3

Do We Foster Unity And Focus Our Resources On Racial And Ethnic Diversity Concerns?

1. Worship sharing

2. Other experiences/resources. Refer to appendix for suggestions.

3. What we can do.

Notes

Session 4

Do we find ways for our Meeting to participate in activities with people of color?

1. Worship sharing
2. Other experiences/resources. Refer to appendix for suggestions.
3. What we can do.

Notes

Session 5

Do we find ways to publicize our meeting and its activities among people of color?

1. Worship sharing
2. Other experiences/resources. Refer to appendix for suggestions.
3. What we can do.

Notes

Session 6

Do we encourage each individual in our meeting to seek diversity in her or his own life? Do we use prayer and personal callings of the Holy Spirit to provide guidance?

1. Worship sharing
2. Other experiences/resources. Share life experiences which you have, and could not be put in an Appendix page for this Session.
3. What we can do.

Notes

Appendix

Session 1 - Are We Truly Welcoming To People Into Our Meetings?

- a. Review the meeting's procedures for greeting and orienting newcomers to insure that all visitors are welcomed equally warmly (neither coldly nor effusively) whatever their ethnic or racial background.
- b. Be sure that all greeters are aware of meetings desire to welcome people of color to worship with the meeting.
- c. Remind Friends to enter into worship always leaving room for newcomers to be seated easily.
- d. Caution all Friends in meeting to avoid excessive attention to people of color or approaches that might be seen as patronizing; simple respect is all that is necessary.
- e. Invite the person of color, as you would any newcomer, to return in the future to worship with Friends and to sign the guest book.
- f. Finally, encourage meeting members and attenders to invite people of color to attend your meeting. Research shows that most people who attend a new church or religious group for the first time do so because a Friend or acquaintance invited them. There is no better way to demonstrate that your meeting welcomes people of color.

Notes

Session 2 - How Can We Learn More About The Challenge Of Achieving Racial And Ethnic Diversity Among Friends?

- a. Remember that around the world about 70% of Friends are people of color. Also, be aware that while Friends have a history of supporting greater racial justice, there is also a history of discrimination within the religious Society of Friends that has left deep scars. While we have achieved diversity in other areas, full racial and ethnic diversity continues to elude us.
- b. Learn what Friends of color, past and present, have contributed to the religious Society of Friends.
- c. Keep in mind that the number of people of color in many unprogrammed meetings is beginning to grow.
- d. Remember that the people of color who are likely to be interested in your meeting are a lot like your current members in many respects.
- e. Learn more about the Fellowship of Friends of African Descent (FFAD) and other support groups; display the FFAD brochure on the literature rack in your meeting (see www.FFAD.org).
- f. Be sure your meeting library and your first day school resource shelf include books about Friends of color. Check the catalogue of Quaker Books of FGC (www.QuakerBooks.org) and the FFAD bibliography at www.ffad.quaker.org for ideas.

Notes

Session 3 - Do We Foster Unity And Focus Our Resources On Racial And Ethnic Diversity Concerns?

- a. Invite a knowledgeable, trained Friend to give a workshop on racism at your meeting. (For assistance in finding a workshop leader, check first with your yearly meeting. If the yearly meeting is unable to recommend workshop resources, contact FGC.)
- b. Organize worship sharing Parts around this concern.
- c. Ask committees to take racial and ethnic diversity into account in their membership and planning of meeting events and publicity.
- d. Use visuals that proclaim your meeting as welcoming to all people of color; use real life examples to reflect the racial and ethnic diversity of the Religious Society of Friends on meeting bulletin boards and in meeting publications.
- e. Establish a racial concerns committee to explore ways to help Friends of Color who are attending your meeting and may at times feel isolated if there are few other attenders of color; foster the establishment of a yearly meeting Racial Concerns Committee.
- f. Envision you meeting as a racially/ethnically diverse community and find ways to realize that vision.
- g. Be sensitive to language usage that may be offensive to members of particular racial/ethnic groups.
- h. Make racial/ethnic diversity a priority of you meeting's Membership or Outreach Committee.

Notes

Session 4 - Do We Find Ways For Our Meeting To Participate In Activities With People Of Color.

- a. Invite another house of worship for visits to meetings, including meeting for worship and potluck meals.
- b. Join a community service project or other community activities led by people of color. Attend events or lectures sponsored by organizations of color.
- c. Invite speakers of color to address the meeting on topics including those that may not be related to diversity.
- d. Organize programs or events on topics of mutual interest to Friends and communities of color and publicize widely. Attend similar programs organized by communities of color.
- e. Honor and possibly participate in Kwanzaa Ramadan and other festivals and holy days.
- f. Review your first day school curriculum. Incorporate lessons, images and activities throughout that support ethnic and racial diversity. Remember that diversity is not just a topic for study but a way of life.
- g. Read about the people and communities of color in your local area; read novels and other writings by and about people of color to get their perspective on issues; encourage meeting members to seek social opportunities to interact with people of color.

Notes

Session 5 - Do We Find Ways To Publicize Your Meeting And Its Activities Among People Of Color

- a. List your meeting for worship and advertize meeting events in newspapers circulated to communities of color.
- b. Post or distribute flyers announcing an upcoming meeting event in communities and organizations with racially and ethnically diverse membership.
- c. Include photos or sketches of people of color in meeting publicity, as appropriate, to send the message that you welcome people of color.
- d. Consider setting up a table at fairs or other events in communities of color.
- e. Stay abreast of programming for and by people of color on your local radio and cable television stations to see whether someone from your meeting might appropriately appear as guest on a public affairs forum.

Notes