

## **Part I. Foundation Unit**

### **1. Introduction**

This session presents an overview of the course, establishes ground rules/agreements on how to discuss the isms, and enables students to begin to introduce themselves to each other and practice the agreements

### **2. Starting with the Heart**

Using the “Heart” exercise, students learn a model of human development, particularly processes of hurtful social conditioning and resilience against such conditioning.

### **3. Differences**

As a follow-up to the Heart, students explore how identity is formed, and begin to look at differences of gender, race &c. among them.

### **4. Power**

Students develop the concepts of power, power-over and power-with.

### **Option A: sessions A5-A7**

#### **A5. Studying isms**

Presents the concept of oppression: how an “ism” works.

#### **A6. Resistance: Undoing the Isms for Targets**

Examines how oppression affects oppressed peoples and how they resist.

#### **A7 The Ally: Undoing the Ism for Nontargets**

Students identify their roles as “allies,” noticing what they have done as allies already and what they can do to build justice, as a preparation for particular units in Part II.

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### **Option B: sessions B5-B6**

#### **B5. Studying isms**

Presents the concept of oppression: how an “ism” works, and its negative effects on both the victims and agents of the ism

#### **B6. Resistance and Alliance**

Students identify how they can resist oppression and act as allies to each other

### **Preparation for the unit**

Review overall unit to decide on option A or B for the concluding sessions.

Option A is one session longer, with more extended discussion of underlying concepts of the alliance-building model. In particular, option A devotes separate sessions to the experience of people victimized by oppression and people put in the position of being agents of oppression. A class of students with already-existing friendships and some shared experience as a class may be better able to undertake this option.

Option B concentrates on basic exercises of the alliance-building model to prepare for particular units in Part II. This option focuses less on what may separate students and more on experiences they have in common, and may be preferable, aside from other considerations about time, for a class in which students don't know each other very well.

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## Session 1. Introduction

### Aims

- To introduce the Building Justice course
- To create of a set of agreements for providing emotional safety within the group

### Skills

Students will:

- Identify what safety means to them and what the relationship is between safety and respect
- Negotiate a set of agreements or ground rules to guide individual and group interaction

### Preparation

You will need copies of the handouts of agreements

### Session Description

This session presents an overview of the course, establishes ground rules/agreements on how to discuss the ism, and enables students to begin to introduce themselves to each other and practice the guidelines. Students learn a model of human development and conditioning.

### Session Outline

1. To Begin	10 minutes
2. Introductions	15 minutes
3. Beginning with Respect	10 minutes
4. Agreements	15 minutes
5. Conclusion	5 minutes

### Agenda

#### 1. Building Justice

10 minutes

Welcome students to the course. Write the phrase “why can’t we all get along?” on the board.

Explain that the phrase was first uttered by an African-American man, Rodney King, in 1992 in Los Angeles. He had been badly beaten by police; videotape had shown that as many as 27 policemen participated in the beating; and when an all-white jury acquitted the police who were prosecuted there were citywide angry demonstrations against the verdict.

Questions:

- When you think of the United States, and all of the people who live in it: are we all getting along?
- What recent examples show we are getting along?
- What recent examples show we are not getting along?

Explain that one statement made again and again by demonstrators against the verdict was “no justice, no peace.” For the first two following questions, write the words “peace” and “justice” on the board and circle them. Create “word webs” for each by writing student responses on the board, circling them, and drawing lines to connect them to the appropriate term.

Questions:

- What does it mean to have peace?
- What does it mean to have justice?
- What does “no justice, no peace” mean?

Sum up responses and state that the phrase means that each of us should be able to expect to be treated fairly and equally and protected from mistreatment—justice—, and that we will not be able to “all get along”—live in peace—unless we have justice.

Explain that the United States is one of the most diverse countries in the world. At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it is an exciting and important time for us to look at how we can live together in all of our diversity. Justice is something that people have to agree and make an ongoing commitment to. Justice is something to be built. In this course students will look at how to *build justice*:

- to examine face to face how people come to be separated from each other and treated unequally depending on skin color, ethnic background, economic background, gender, age, sexual orientation, and a variety of other differences; and
- to learn how we can be allies to each other to resist these separations and make the peace.

## **2. Introductions**

**15 minutes**

Have students take a moment to look around the room at other students. Explain that in this course the class will be looking at specific differences between people by race, gender, age, appearance, and other differences. Some of these differences are in this classroom, among students and with teachers, while others are with people outside the classroom. Some of these differences are easy to see, while others are more hidden. Justice should mean, among other things, that all parts of each of us are accepted by all of us: that our differences from each other, as well as our similarities, should be welcomed and respected.

### **a. Hand Signal**

Introduce the “hand signal” tool by explaining that throughout the course you will have students talking to each other in a variety of ways: in pairs, small and large groups. There will be times (as in the next exercise, the “dyad”) when a number of people will be talking at the same time in different parts of the room.

Explain that when it is time for everyone to stop talking and move to the next exercise, you will raise your hand (demonstrate). That will be the signal to stop talking. When any student sees your hand raised, she/he is to do two things:

1. stop talking and
2. raise her/his hand as well

This is a quick way, without having to yell or speak loudly, to bring silence back in the room.

Do a quick practice of the hand signal by having everyone just start saying their names over and over. As they begin to do so, you may encourage them several times to become louder

Raise your hand. When everyone raises their hand and silence is back in the room, thank students and continue with the next exercise.

## **b. The Dyad**

Explain that students will begin this process by introducing themselves to each other in a “dyad”: two people taking turns talking and listening to each other. Note that students will use the “dyad” exercise a number of times throughout the course in order to give every person a chance to talk, be listened to, and listen to others.

Explain that this is an “active listening” exercise, making the following points:

- Many of us are not used to listening, having been schooled to get our own thoughts and words out, rather than listening to understand. Partly this happens because each of us has had plenty of experiences of not being listened to, and we learn to talk whenever we get a chance!
- Most of us are also not used to silence, and many of us have learned to fill such “voids” in conversations by speaking ourselves.
- But silence can mean many different things: someone may be thinking about what s/he has just heard or about how best to communicate something to another, one might have been startled or upset or simply speechless about the subject being discussed, etc.
- In this course, we will be working together to explore ways to build justice. Listening to each other will become an important part of that work.

*Optionally, you may take several moments to have two students volunteer to demonstrate, purposely and for comic affect, how not to listen well, by having one of them start talking about how her/his day is going, while the other demonstrates several forms of “not listening” (e.g. ignoring the speaker, glancing at her watch, cutting in on the speaker’s remarks to talk about the listener’s own day, waving to someone else in the classroom, etc.) Close by having both volunteers give examples of good, effective active listening (e.g. eye contact, body language, not talking, etc.) Have remaining students add any other examples.*

Have students pair up; invite them to pick dyad partners they don’t know that well. (If you have an odd number of students, make one dyad into a triad.)

Instructions for the dyad:

- You will give them a topic to discuss
- They will decide who talks first
- The person who talks will have a fixed period of time to use as she wishes, to say whatever she wants to say or to be silent
- The person who is listening will just listen, without responding or commenting or interrupting.
- When you give the hand signal, raising your hand, the person who is talking will finish their thought and stop.
- When all hands are raised, you will have students lower their hands and switch roles: it will be the turn of the listener to speak, and the speaker to listen
- The new speaker speaks to the same topic, but doesn’t refer or respond to what the first person said.

Present the dyad topic, listing the following on the board:

- my full name
- where I got my name
- what my name, or part of my name, means to me
- the name I like to be called

Explain that for today’s dyad, each person will have one minute to speak to the topic.

Have dyads begin with first speakers talking. After one minute, raise your hand, instructing speakers to finish their thoughts. When all hands are raised, have them lower their hands, and remind them to switch roles so that the speaker becomes the listener and the listener becomes the speaker. (Invite them to resist any urge to have the person who was the first speaker take more time.) Give the remaining speaker one more minute.

Close the second minute with the hand signal, and have students in their dyads take one additional minute to talk together about how it was for them to do the exercise—easy, hard, interesting, and so forth— before concluding the exercise. (If you have a triad, this will be the time for the third member of the triad to take her turn talking.)

Close the dyad, reassemble students, and take a few moments to allow students to say how the exercise was for them; invite them to speak for themselves using “I” statements. Instruct them, as part of the exercise, not to speak for their partners or report what their partners said. Make sure to discuss the challenges of listening without interrupting to ask questions, to share one’s own experiences, etc. Discuss which roles were most challenging: the role of speaker or the role of listener.

*Optionally, you may then have each dyad pair introduce one another to the class—after having students, back in their dyads, check with their partner about anything shared which the student would prefer not being shared with the class as a whole. If you were not a member of a dyad yourself, you should take a turn to should share information about your name.*

### **3. Beginning with Respect<sup>1</sup>**

**10 minutes**

Ask students to call out words that mean the same as “respect” for them. After a few responses, conduct the following visualizaton:

Ask students to sit comfortably in their seats and take a few deep breaths to slow their breathing. Invite them to close their eyes or look down at the floor, to help them focus on building a picture in their minds. Explain that for the following, students will not have to share the thoughts they have with anyone unless they want to; they have the “right to pass.” Slowly recite the following questions, allowing them time to “visualize” responses internally.

- *Think of a time that you felt completely accepted and respected—a time and a place where you could be completely yourself, without being criticized or yelled at or worried, where every part of you was welcomed and you could just kick back. For some of you, this might have been in your home, or even in front of the TV or a videogame; for others, it might not*

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<sup>1</sup> Vasquez, Myhand, Creighton, *Making Allies, Making Friends* 2001.

*have been home at all, but at church or temple, or at school, or on the playground, or some place else, with other people. For some of you, it could even have been a place in your mind, just a place you go to be completely yourself.*

- *Visualize:*
- *Where was it?*
- *Who was there?*
- *What was happening?*
- *How did you feel?*

After a few moments of silence bring students back from visualization; ask a few volunteers to say what came up for them—what they thought of, or how they felt—as they listened to your questions. Alternatively, return students to dyads (having them pick new partners), 1 minute each way, to discuss the same topic.

#### **4. Agreements**

**15 minutes**

Have students imagine, for a few moments, what it would be like to bring their personal experiences of being completely accepted and respected into this classroom.

Explain that for students to bring all parts of themselves into the room, including all of their differences, you and students will have to have agreements about how to recognize, welcome, and respect those differences. Ask:

- *What is an agreement?* (a promise, two or more people committing to something together)
- *What happens when an agreement is broken?* (people feel let down, betrayed, or less safe)
- *What agreements would you like to have with everyone else here to allow each of us to be able to participate?*

Use agreements you have selected from “Sample Agreements,” or facilitate a consensus building process with the students to determine “agreements” you and students will pledge to each other in order to build justice. Make sure that among the agreements are

- Confidentiality, with exceptions to confidentiality outlined in the sample agreements
- Respect, and
- Right to pass.

Have each student silently pick an agreement that she/he might have the hardest time keeping, picking the one that most immediately “jumps out” at her/him.

Have students pick new dyad partners. Have students take turns, one minute each, speaking to the following topic (written on the board). Remind them to practice not referring to what their dyad partners say when it is their turn to talk.

Dyad topic:

- Which agreement will be hardest for me to keep, or that isn’t completely clear to me
- Why this agreement seems hard or unclear for me
- What I can do to make sure I keep this agreement/what help I could use from others to keep this agreement

Close the dyad. Take a few moments for students to ask for clarity about any of the agreements. Then ask every one in the room to indicate her/his agreement to the agreements by nodding, raising hands or calling out consent.

Post the final agreements, as a poster for the whole class, in a conspicuous place, where they will remain for the balance of the course. Point out that the agreements are negotiable and can be revisited at any time to amend the list.

### **5. Conclusion**

**5 minutes**

Have students imagine, for a few moments, a world in which everyone agreed to the agreements, and everyone agreed to keep them. What would be some of the features of that world?

Close by appreciating students for beginning this process of “building justice.”



# **SAMPLE AGREEMENTS<sup>2</sup>**

## **1. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Each person agrees to keep what comes up in the class confidential, in the class, unless it is dangerous to do so--that is, unless a situation described in the class really requires us to get some outside help. This means a) that I don't repeat what someone else says in class outside the classroom without getting permission from that person; and b) that I don't get to talk to that person outside the class about what s/he said in the class without first getting her/his permission. This also means each person is not to feel pressured or obligated to grant such permission. The exceptions to confidentiality, in which the facilitator will get outside help, are:

- If someone in class reports that they are being hurt;
- If someone reports that they are hurting someone else; or
- If someone reports that they are hurting or want to hurt themselves.

## **2. AMNESTY**

As a companion to confidentiality, everyone agrees not to treat others differently, blame them, or hold or use what they say in class against them after class ends, including the teacher. This is particularly crucial where students have relationships outside the class, such as teacher/student, boyfriend/girlfriend.

## **3. PUT-UPS, NOT PUT-DOWNS**

Everyone agrees not to put down, make fun of, minimize, or attack other people OR themselves in class. (Putting myself down happens, for example, when I begin my statements by saying things like "Well, this probably isn't important, but..." or "This may sound stupid, but...").

## **4. RIGHT TO PASS/TRY IT ON**

Each person has the right not to talk in the class when s/he doesn't want to. We encourage everyone to agree to try on the process, the program, the activities, and the discussions, and to see what happens for them.

## **5. RESPECT/LISTENING**

Each person agrees to listen to others in the class, and to expect that the class will listen to them. This almost always also means that one person talks at a time.

## **6. SHARE THE MIKE**

As an additional part of respect, each person agrees to monitor the amount of her/his talking in the class to ensure that there is space for all class members to talk. This almost always means allowing for moments of silence in the class, leaving room and time for voices of those that speak less often.

## **7. LET IT STAND**

Each person has a chance to say what she or he wants without having it debated or denied or attacked, OR agreed with or supported. It gets to stand on its own, without being taken over by

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<sup>2</sup> Adapted from Kivel and Creighton, *Making the Peace*

someone else, either by crosstalk (debating, denying) or piggybacking (agreeing with, supporting).

### **8. FEELINGS ARE OK HERE**

Everyone in the class will sometimes experience feelings of hurt, sadness, boredom or anger. (That expression of feeling is part of the healing process). Each person agrees to respect and allow expression of those feelings, INCLUDING their own.

### **9. SPEAK FOR MYSELF, USING “I-STATEMENTS”**

Each person agrees to speak for her/himself and her/his own experiences when talking, and not to speak for others unless asked to. This means using the word "I" in place of the words "you," "we," or "they." This is a VERY difficult agreement to keep, but a crucial one. It helps us to speak about what is true for us, and keep close to how each of us feels. Much of what we have to unlearn, after all, is misinformation each of us has learned about "them," "you," and "us."

### **10. ACCESS**

In order for everyone to participate as fully as possible, the class must be accessible to all. Ask class members to offer any particular needs they have that, if met, will help secure accessibility for them. For example, is anyone's hearing or vision limited, or anyone's mobility? Ask them to specify what will help secure access for them. Then have class members all agree to take responsibility for providing this access--for example by speaking slowly or loudly or distinctly, or gently reminding others to.

### **11. OTHER AGREEMENTS**

## Session 2. Starting with the Heart

### Aims

- To provide a model for understanding human development

### Skills

Students will:

- Understand a particular model of hurtful social conditioning
- Identify personal strengths
- Identify personal experiences of hurtful social conditioning and successful resistance to conditioning

### Preparation

You will need the agreements from the first session and art materials for the “heart art” exercise; you may wish to have quiet, meditative music as background for the exercise. Pre-select a wall space on which to post the group mural.

### Session Description

Using the “Heart” exercise, students learn a model of human development, particularly processes of hurtful social conditioning and resilience against such conditioning.

### Session Outline

1. To Begin	5 minutes
2. Keeping the agreements	5 minutes
3. Heart Exercise	15 minutes
4. Heart Art	15 minutes
5. Who We Are	10 minutes
6. Conclusion	5 minutes

### Agenda

#### 1. To begin 5 minutes

Welcome students back to the course, reviewing the overall goal of “building justice.” Have volunteers review what happened in the last session.

#### 2. Keeping the agreements 5 minutes

Turning to the agreements poster, have students take turns volunteering to review and explain the agreements.

At the close of the review, allow a few moments for students to ask for clarity for any agreement they may still have questions about. Have students volunteer which agreements they may be struggling with. Then ask for a recommitment to the agreements by a show of hands. Appreciate their commitments try on the process and keep to the agreements

#### 3. Heart Exercise 15 minutes

Return to the discussion at the end of the last session about a world in which everyone is respected, and all parts of them are accepted and welcomed. Ask:

- Is that the world we live in now? What features of the world show that there is some acceptance and some respect? What features show that acceptance and respect are limited?
- If it were true that we were all part of such a world, what would have had to happen to separate us?

Explain that you are going to present a model of who we are as human beings and how we develop as babies, young people and adults—a model for them to “try on.”

### **a. the Heart**

Ask people to imagine they are holding a newborn child, and think silently of responses to the following direction:

- Sit for a few moments, and think as you gaze into its face--what words or phrases come up for you?

Write responses on the board, inviting students to translate more obviously negative words, like “selfish,” into more positive ones, like “powerful,” “assertive,” “not hesitant.”

Draw a heart shape around the words. Explain: *All of us come here as “hearts”--beautiful, smart, strong, expecting to be loved, &c And we “bruise” or “scar” really easily; but we are also very resilient and strong, and we do our best to recover from the bruises*

Ask people to call out words that get said by adults to infants, toddlers, young children that may not be so great to hear. For each word or phrase, draw a slash through the heart.

### **b. Hurts**

You might go on to ask: what hurtful things get said to you as a child if you were born with a big body? If as a child in the United States you speak a language other than “basic English”? If your skin color is darker than white people’s? What hurtful things get said to you about people with darker skin if you are a white child? What gets said to you if your parents don’t have a lot of money? If you are a Jewish child? A Muslim child? What gets said to girls? What gets said to boys? For each of the words or phrases, draw a slash.

Ask students what they notice about the heart as it stands now. Obviously, the qualities within the heart are covered up by the scars, so many that it’s hard or impossible to read the words. This is a picture of how everyone undergoes hurt.

### **c. Shields**

But one of the ways we cope with mistreatment is to build up shields--ways of coping or protecting ourselves. For example, what might someone learn to do to cope when he’s being called stupid? (Learn to withdraw, to act stupid, to drop out, be mad.) For each response, draw a semicircle over the top of the heart.

What might someone learn to do when they call her “ugly”? When they call him not good enough? When they say she’s weak? For each response, draw another “shield.”

#### **d. Two Hearts**

Draw another heart with hurts and shields next to the one already on the board. Point out that you now have a heart encumbered with many scars and many shields, making it very difficult for two hearts, when they are in the same vicinity, to communicate with each other. A person of a different color, gender, age, &c, from me says something to me, and their words have to negotiate through all their scars and shields, then mine. Anything I say back has the same difficult journey. So our work, in building safety with each other, is to learn how slowly and carefully to lower our shields with each other, and reach through the scars to find each other.

#### **e. Heart Strengths**

Draw one final heart. Point out that hearts are strong, powerful muscles--that we have always resisted this mistreatment: all of us resist the hurts, holding on to some of our heart traits regardless of the messages or hurts we received. Have students call out some positive traits they recognize that young people their age still hold on to, writing these in to the final, “unmarked” heart.

#### **4. Heart Art**

**15 minutes**

Distribute paper and art materials. Have students move to desks or writing surfaces around the room, taking materials with them, and prepare for the following art exercise. They can sit with friends, or by themselves, as they wish.

Explain that they will have 6-7 minutes to complete “Heart Art”: a drawing, design or words that answer or illustrate answers to the following questions. Students can draw three hearts, or one heart, or any other images that stand for who they are; or they can write a poem, rap, song, journal writing or anything else that expresses their responses to the questions. Encourage them to be as inventive or free as they can: there are no wrong answers or “bad” drawings.” Students can interact or discuss the work quietly with friends or you to help them along; otherwise, ask students to complete art silently.

Questions (write these on the board):

- 1) qualities I think or imagine I was born with
- 2) ways I was limited or scarred or my qualities covered up, or any shields I developed
- 3) ways I resisted the limits and held on to my qualities, and people who helped me hold on to my qualities

You may wish to play meditative music as a background for the exercise while students are working. After the exercise begins, circulate quietly to check in with how students are doing. After 10 minutes, give students a 1-2 minute notice that the time is almost up.

Close the exercise, and have students do either of the following:

*Option a:*

Everyone turn to a new dyad partner, and take a few moments each to describe your “heart art.”

*Option b:*

Break students into groups of four. In their group, each student will have several minutes to introduce her/himself by displaying and talking about their heart art.

Remind students of agreements: that they agree to listen to each other, they have the right to pass, and they are invited to try on the questions.

### **5. Who We Are**

**10 minutes**

Allowing for the right to pass, have students post heart art as a group mural: a picture of all the people who are in the room. After all segments are mounted, have them spend a few moments standing before the mural and examining it.

Return students to their seats. Have students share brief impressions of or reactions to the mural without commenting on particular “heart arts”. Ask for a few students to report on how it felt to talk about themselves and hear others in their groups, without reporting what other people in their group or dyad said (keeping the agreement of confidentiality).

### **6. Conclusion**

**5 minutes**

Close by having students respond to the third part of the heart art, speaking either for themselves, using I-statements, or speaking of young people generally:

- some of the ways (I/young people) have resisted the scars and held on to (my/their) qualities are\_\_\_\_
- some people who have backed (me/young people) up in holding onto (my/their) qualities are\_\_\_\_\_.

## Session 3. Differences

### Aims

- To explore what count as “differences” among people
- To identify and notice differences among students

### Skills: Students will

- Learn a working definition of “differences”
- Identify and appreciate personal “differences” they and other students have
- Identify feelings associated with disclosing and witnessing disclosure of differences among students

### Preparation

Review and practice the shuffle exercise in advance.

### Session Description

As a follow-up to the Heart, students explore how identity is formed, and begin to look at differences of gender, race &c. among them.

### Session Outline

1. To Begin	5 minutes
2. Differences	15 minutes
3. The Shuffle	20 minutes
4. From Differences to Separations	10 minutes
5. Conclusion	5 minutes

### Agenda

#### 1. To Begin 5 minutes

Review agreements with students, asking for responses to the assignment: what agreements might be hard to keep? How can students help each other—respectfully—to keep agreements? Introduce today’s session on looking at differences, how we get “separated” from each other and treated unequally based upon how we are identified.

#### 2. Differences 15 minutes

##### a. Community

Reminding students of the heart exercise, draw a heart on the board (without “scars” or “shields”). Ask students to say what they remember about the heart exercise.

Draw 4-5 additional hearts on the board and surround them with a circle.

Explain:

- this is a picture of people, “hearts,” in a community.
- Every community includes people who have some things in common and some things that make them different.
- “Differences” here means all the different things that identify each of us and where we come from: the categories we learn to use to identify and understand ourselves and each other—like what age we are, what neighborhoods we come from, what we look like,

what languages we speak, what ethnicities and races our ancestors have, what gender each of us is, who we choose to love, whether we come from two-parent or single-parent or foster families, our sizes and shapes, our many different kinds of intelligences, and so forth.

- These differences are great, wonderful strengths that help define who we are, and help our hearts become more visible.
- Some we may be born with, some we grow into, others we grow out of, and others we always have.
- Each of us is more than any particular difference: I have a gender AND a race AND an age AND a size and shape AND a particular kind of family background and...and...and

Ask student to call out kinds of differences, including the above. Write these differences in a column on the board.

Differences

Age

Race

Religion

Family

Gender

Language

Neighborhood

Economic background

Sexual orientation

Body shape and size

Physical and mental abilities

...and many more

**b. My differences**

Adapting the dyad instructions to accommodate 3 participants per group, have students form triads. In their triads, have students take turns describing themselves by identifying their age, ancestry, gender, racial/ethnic background or other qualifiers, completing the following statements. Allow students to name only the categories that easily come to mind and that they're willing to share. Each speaker will have 3 minutes to discuss the 3 topics; explain that you will keep time and use the hand signal to let them know when to switch. Before beginning the exercise, ask students to pay attention to and honor any silences that may occur.

Write the 3 topics for the dyad on the board.:

- Some of my differences are (gender/race/age/neighborhood, &c)
- Some parts of my differences that I really like or am proud of
- What I like about being around people who are different from me

Conduct the triad. After the triad is completed, give students 1-2 minutes to talk together in their triads about how it was to talk about their own differences. Remind students not to comment on what their triad partners said (the confidentiality agreement).



Reassemble students to debrief. During this debrief, have students discuss the any moments of silence they experienced, and which of the three topics were most difficult/easiest to talk about.

### 3. The Shuffle<sup>3</sup>

20 minutes

Explain that the class will conduct an exercise to help us think about how people have differences, and how we may get separated from one another based upon differences. If there is not enough room for a full “shuffle,” do a “hand-up” exercise with the same categories.

#### *Specific instructions for shuffle:*

Have students stand, push chairs and desks back, and form a line along one wall.

- The facilitator will call out the following categories. For each category, students for whom the category fits, and who are willing to acknowledge it are asked to talk across the room, stop, turn, and face the first group. After a pause, the facilitator will invite students to return; then the next category is called.

Continue with general instructions below.

#### *Specific instructions for hand-up:*

Have students in the room form a large circle or, if space is limited, a concentric circles of chairs so that everyone is able as much as possible to see and make eye contact with everyone else.

Introduce the “hand-up” exercise:

- The facilitator will call out the following categories. For each category, students for whom the category fits, and who are willing to acknowledge it are asked to raise their hands. After a pause, the facilitator will invite students to lower their hands; then the next category is called.

Continue with general instructions below.

#### General instructions:

- The exercise is to be done in silence, without comments or side talk.
- The categories refer to some of the differences listed above. Some of the categories may be intimate or difficult to acknowledge, and the facilitator will use the phrase “someone in your family or a close friend” to make it easier for students to acknowledge.
- Remind students of the agreements:
  - everyone has the right to pass, and can stand in place (or keep hands lowered) if they choose;
  - all that they are really asked to do, whether participating or passing, is to notice what feelings come up as categories are called
  - confidentiality here means that no one is to report outside class how anyone else chose to participate, and no one is to ask anyone else in class about the latter’s participation without getting permission from that person
- If students are unsure whether a category applies to them, they are to decide for themselves whether they fit.
- For this exercise, there is no middle ground. Students are simply to decide whether they are in one group or the other.

Call out categories one by one, in the following order, for each category.

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<sup>3</sup> adapted from Creighton and Kivel, *Helping Teens Stop Violence*

If you are \_\_\_\_\_, please move across the room/raise your hand. (pause for movement)  
 Notice who is standing next to you/whose hands are raised. (pause)  
 Notice who is standing across from you/whose hands are not raised. (pause)  
 [If no one is standing across from the students—they are all on one side of the room or the other— or all hands are raised, or no hands are raised, add the instruction:] Notice how it feels to have no one from the other group in the room.  
 Notice how it feels to be separated. (pause)  
 Please return/lower your hands.

## CATEGORIES

- 1) You are 18 years old or younger
- 2) Female, young woman
- 3) Arab or Middle Eastern descent
- 4) African-American, Black, Afro-Caribbean or of African descent
- 5) Asian, South Asian, Southeast Asian, Asian-American
- 6) Latino/a, Chicano/a, Mexican-American, Puerto Rican, Cuban or Hispanic
- 7) Native American Indian, or at least one of your parents or grandparents is full-blooded Native American Indian
- 8) Filipino/a, Pacific Islander
- 9) your original parents are from different races, and at least one of your parents is a person of color
- 10) Jewish heritage
- 11) 45 or older
- 12) you or a close friend is raised poor, or if people who raised you or your friend don't have a lot of money or do manual labor to make a living
- 13) someone in your family or a close friend has a visible or hidden physical disability or impairment or "handicap"
- 14) immigrant or refugee to this country
- 15) your first language is other than English
- 16) raised in or are now part of a religious community that is other than Christian
- 17) someone in your family or a close friend is lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender
- 18) if you have a job, on your job you have a boss, and you don't boss anyone else
- 19) someone in your family or a close friend has ever been labeled mentally ill
- 20) someone in your family or a close friend has ever been to jail or been in the juvenile justice system
- 21) someone in your family or a close friend has ever been called fat in public [NOT: if you've ever felt fat]
- 22) ever been put down or teased because of the way you look
- 23) student
- 24) ever been a young person

Have students return to starting positions, and then form triads, pulling chairs together or standing, to talk about how it felt to do the exercise. Keep time, allowing students in each triad 1-2 minutes to speak. Remind all students to preserve confidentiality, not referring to individual students beside themselves.

### **3. From Differences to Separations**

**10 minutes**

Bring students back into the group to respond to the following questions:

- How did it feel to participate?
- How did it feel when you walked across the room?
- How did it feel when you didn't walk across the room/raise your hand, but saw others you know walking across/raising their hands?
- How does separation affect people who walked across/raised their hands: what does it cost them?
- How does separation affect people who stay in place: what does it cost them?
- What did you notice about the kinds of groups that were called out? The kinds of group that "stayed in place"?

Make the following points about the activity:

- No one chose his/her side to be on—each category was something we were born into or grew into without asking to
- Everyone belonged to at least one category of people who moved and one category of the people who didn't have to move
- This exercise is not about our differences, although we noticed some differences during the exercise; it was about how differences are used to divide us from others (and each other)
- The purpose of our work together here is to notice and bring all of our differences—all of our hearts—into the room and welcome them together.

### **4. Conclusion**

**5 minutes**

Remind students of confidentiality: not to talk about how students may have identified themselves in the exercise, and not to bring it up to these students themselves without getting their permission. Take some moments to appreciate students for their courage in taking part, and allow students to volunteer appreciations for the students as a whole or particular students.

## Session 4. POWER

### Aims

- To introduce the concepts of power, power-over, and power-with
- To introduce the concepts of groups with power-over and groups denied power

### Skills

Students will:

- Be enabled to distinguish three kinds of power
- Identify and use a working definition of “power-over” for following sessions
- Identify differences between groups of people who have “power-over” in society and those that are denied power

### Preparation

Decide whether to use paper and markers or the board to construct a “power chart” to be used in future sessions.

### Session Description

Presents the concepts of power, power-over, and power-with.

### Session Outline

1. To Begin	5 minutes
2. Power	20 minutes
3. Power/nonpower	10 minutes
4. The Power Chart	15 minutes
5. Conclusion	5 minutes

### Agenda

#### 1. To Begin 5 minutes

Have students review last session: how people—“hearts”—get separated from each other based on certain categories. In this session students will look at how “power” is involved in these separations and how power sometimes works to separate the different groups from the “shuffle.”

#### 2. Power 20 minutes

##### a. Reality-Island <sup>4</sup>

Have students stand and push chairs back against the walls. Place 4 chairs in the center of the room, facing outward, back to back, 3 or 4 feet apart. Four volunteers sit, back to back, and link elbows, facing outward. All others form a circle around them, beginning several steps away. You should have an inner seated circle facing out, and an outer standing circle facing in.

Alternatively, you might divide class into three groups, create three different circles in different corners of the room, with 2 chairs back to back in each, with two seated students and others standing around them. If there is not enough room for either alternative in your classroom, set up

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<sup>4</sup> Adapted from Amen and Creighton, *Power 'N' Me*, California Community College Foundation, 1998, and from Vasquez, “Save Our Ship,” 2001.

the circle of students in front of the room and have one student at a time come up and represent an “outer” student.

Explain that this is a reality-TV episode called “Reality Island.” Describe the positions as follows:

- **Inner Circle:**

People who have “the American Dream”: wealth, status, and prestige—what everybody wants. They live on the island.

- **Outer Circle:**

People who have only a little or none. They are on the beach, and the tide is coming in!

The object of the game is for outer students, singly or in pairs or trios, and without any physical contact, to try to persuade seated students to let them “in,” trade places, give up their seats...and for inner students to keep their seats, and persuade outer people why they should accept things the way they are.

Explain that all the “contestants” are people who were simply born into these positions--they didn't ask for them, or create them.

Explain to the inner students, once they are seated, that for the purposes of the game they are “born into” these seats, they believe they are entitled to them, and that they can say anything they want to justify keeping their seats. They are allowed to decide to give the seats up, but the instant they do they must become the outer people, who in turn are trying to make their way “in” to the inner circle.

Explain to the outer students that they are “born into” their standing outside the inner circle, and that they can say anything they want to justify their right to be given a seat by one of the inner circle. But anyone who gets a seat immediately becomes one of the inner circle, holding the other inner people's hands, and has to begin to defend his/her right to stay seated.

Conduct the exercise. After 5 minutes, end the exercise and break students into 2-minute dyads to discuss the follow questions:

- 1) What did you notice that happened in the exercise?
- 2) How you felt being where you were.

### **b. Group Discussion**

Discuss 1 and 2 as a class. Additionally:

- 3) What reasons did outer people give for why they should get in? What reasons did inner people give for why they should stay where they are?
- 4) Why do people on the outside want to get in? How does it feel to be on the outside? How do people on the outside feel about inside people? How might they feel about themselves?
- 5) How does it feel for people to be on the inside? How do they feel toward the people on the outside? How might they feel about themselves?

6) Is there peace on the island? Is there justice? Can you suggest any other way for people to live together on the island?

**c. Power brainstorm<sup>5</sup>**

Write the word “Power” on the board. Ask students to call out words or phrases that mean the same as “power.” Write up all responses. Responses can include words for what someone has when she/he has power.

POWER  
strong  
tells you what to do  
can hold you down  
takes things from you  
control  
inner power  
controls you  
makes the laws  
brave  
money

Then remind students of the heart exercise. Ask them to review the list to pick out words that can stand for a heart’s being personally powerful. What kinds of power are “heart strengths”? Underline the terms they pick.

**b. Power-over**

Explain the concept of power-over, writing up the boldface terms:

- When a person or a group of people has power over another person or group, the person or group with power-over can **control** or make the other group do something, whether that group wants to or not  
(*E.g. in a society where slavery is allowed, the masters have control over the slaves.*)
- When a person or group of people has power over another person or group, they have more **privilege**—status, social recognition, and freedom to do what they want than the other group  
(*E.g. in a society based on wealth, wealthier people have higher status and more freedom to do what they want than poorer people*)
- When one group has power over another group, they have **more resources** or wealth and receive better treatment than the other group  
(*E.g. in a society based on wealth, richer people have more resources, support, property, security, &c. than poor people*)
- When a person or group of people has power over another person or group, the person or group with power-over has the authority to **define or describe** the other group.  
(*E.g. in a society in which one race or gender or age of people is in charge of the media, the news, how history is recorded, &c, that group is in a position to define, picture,*

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<sup>5</sup> Adapted from Vasquez, Myhand, and Creighton, *Making Allies, Making Friends*, 2001.

*“study,” assign value to or stereotype who the people of the other group are, without the latter having the same power to define themselves or the people in charge.*

Returning to the brainstorm list, have students pick out words or phrases on the list that could be the kind of “power-over” you explained, where one person or group has power over another person or group, control over them, more resources than them, or the ability to define or describe them. Circle the words they identify.

c. Power-with

Ask students to define what “power-with” could mean: when one person or group shares power equally with another person or group. Make an entirely new list for this kind of “power”

**3. Power/nonpower**

**10 minutes**

For the following process, you will be constructing a “power chart” to be used regularly in future sessions; you may wish to use easel or butcher paper, or a separate place on the board.

a. Invite students to “try on” the following model; they don’t have to agree with it, but simply to understand it, as a way of beginning to grapple with how to build justice.

Explain that in this class, you will use the term “group denied power” to mean a group which is mistreated or controlled by—targeted by—another person or group, who has “power-over” them. “Group having power-over” will be the term for people who use power over another person or group—who are “denied power”—not allowed to have the control, privileges, or resources that the former have. In the reality TV episode, people having power-over sat in the circle of chairs, while people denied power were outside the circle

b. Write “groups denied power” and “groups having power-over” on the board as column headings. Referring to the reality-TV game, explain:

When we're born, we are born into groups, some of which already are on the inside of power, some of whom are on the outside; some people have a lot, and get put in charge, and others don't have a lot, and are not in charge. Our “hearts” become separated from each other, with some—the groups denied power—being placed in positions of being controlled by or having less than groups who are not targeted in this way, based on their age, race, gender, economic background, and so on. The others—the “groups having power-over”—are also placed in positions of having more than the target groups, often without choosing or even being aware of it.

Remind students of the definition of “power-over”: the people on the inside of power—the “inside people” in the reality-TV game”—have control, resources and privilege. Write “rich” under “groups having power-over” and “poor” under “groups denied power.” Ask students to explain how they know that people with wealth have more power—control, resources and privilege—than people without wealth in the United States.

Write “adult” and “youth” on the board, under “groups having power-over” and “groups denied power” respectively. Remind students of the “heart” exercise: how children or babies are

sometimes “bruised” or “scarred” or limited by adults. Looking back at the list of “power-over” terms they circled, have students discuss

- how adults sometimes have “power-over” over children
- how children might be controlled by, or made to have less resources than, adults

Ask:

- Do children have the same power-over over adults?
- Why are adults *not* targeted in the same way?

**Groups having power-over**

adult

**Groups denied power**

youth

Add the terms “rich” and “poor” under “groups having power-over” and “groups denied power” respectively. Ask students:

- how people who are rich have “power-over” over people who are poor
- how poor people might be controlled by, or made to have less resources than, rich people
- if poor people have the same power-over over rich people
- why rich people are *not* targeted in the same way?

**Groups having power-over**

adult

rich

**Groups denied power**

youth

poor

**4. The Power Chart**

**15 minutes**

Finally, have students remember some of the categories called out in the power shuffle in the last session: the categories for people who were asked to walk across or raise their hands (e.g., “women”) and the unspoken categories for the people who stayed in place (e.g., “men”). Ask them to list the categories they can remember being called out under the “groups denied power,” while listing the opposite unnamed groups under “groups having power-over.”

To assist them, remind them of the “reality-island” game about who is an insider and who is an outsider on the island. In listing the categories, having students place “outsiders” and “insiders” in the “groups denied power” and “groups having power-over” respectively. Invite them to think less about individual people, and more about broad social categories of people in the United States--who, statistically, has more access to power.

For this process, encourage them to “try on” listing the categories this way, acknowledging that for some of the categories they may not agree, or not be sure, or strongly disagree that they fit within these columns.

When you have completed the list with as many categories as students remember, write the words “Power Chart” across the top of the columns.

**Power Chart**

**Groups having power-over**

adult

**Groups denied power**

youth



rich  
men  
adults  
white people  
heterosexual  
etc.

poor  
women  
elders  
people of color  
lesbian/gay/bisexual  
etc.

Have students sit silently for a few moments and review the lists. Then ask the following questions. (You may wish to conduct a brief dyad, 1 minute each way, having students discuss the following questions before having a general discussion.)

- What feelings do you have--how does it feel--to look at these words ? (Concentrate on feelings, not analysis or thoughts.)
- If you had to say what this chart was about in 1 or 2 sentences, what would you say?
- Where do you find yourself on this chart? (Acknowledge that students have slots on both sides.) What do you think about where you fit?
- Whether you agree with the way people were separated or not, why is it important to look at these differences?

## **5. Conclusion**

**5 minutes**

Close by asking students to venture any connections they can make between the “shuffle” exercise in the last lesson, the “reality-TV” game they played in this one, and the power chart they just made.

- What role(s) does power-over play in each of these activities?
- What would be different if “power-over” were replaced with “power-with”?

## Option A: sessions 5-7

### Session A5. Studying “Isms”

#### Aims

- To introduce the concepts of “target” and nontarget” groups
- To introduce the concept of oppression: the “ism ”

#### Skills

Students will:

- Identify the kinds of mistreatment or power imbalance that happen to particular target groups
- Understand the concept of institutional oppression
- Understand and identify personal experiences of the concepts of internalized oppression and resistance

#### Preparation

You will need the power chart from the last session.

#### Session Description

Presents the concept of institutionalized power—how an “ism” works, from the standpoint of the targets of oppression: oppression, internalized oppression, and resistance.

#### Session Outline

1. To Begin	5 minutes
2. Target and Non-Target	15 minutes
3. Definition of an “ism”	15 minutes
4. Target/Nontarget	15 minutes
5. Conclusion	5 minutes

#### Agenda

##### 1. To begin

**5 minutes**

Review agreements. Review power/power-over/power-with distinctions from the last session, posting the power chart. Explain that for today’s session the class will look at the experience of people who are “targeted”—who are mistreated, discriminated against or otherwise denied power, examining:

- how they are targeted: “oppression”
- how they might “internalize” the targeting: “internalized oppression”

##### 2. Target and Non-Target

**15 minutes**

Turn students’ attention to the chart, briefly reviewing the categories they produced in the last session. Add any pairs of categories from the following that are not already included.

## POWER CHART<sup>6</sup>

### Groups having power-over

#### Non-target

rich  
adult  
adult  
men  
white people  
heterosexual  
able-bodied  
labeled “normal”  
Christians/Gentiles  
English as a first language  
Labeled as “normal” body image

### Groups denied power

#### Target

poor  
youth  
elders  
women  
people of color  
lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender  
living with disability  
labeled as “mentally ill”  
Jews  
first language other than English  
labeled “fat,” “skinny,” &c

Explain that these categories from the chart address some of the major groups of people that become separated from each other; these particular groups are the ones addressed specifically in the *Building Justice* curriculum. (You may remind them that they may not agree with some of the category choices or where they fit; you are just having them “try on” the chart, and will make time for students later to discuss and work through agreements or disagreements.)

- a. Add the word “nontarget” under the word “groups with power-over” and “target” under the word “groups denied power” on the power chart. Explain that you will use “target” to refer to groups of people on the “denied-power” side: they are “targeted for certain kinds of mistreatment or discrimination. “Non-target” will refer to the opposite groups, across the chart, who on each particular issue (such as age, gender, race, and so forth) is not targeted for mistreatment or discrimination, at least in the same way.
- b. Expect some disagreements about who's "target" and who's "nontarget," and allow some time for discussion. It may be helpful to have statistics about which groups are more represented among higher-paying jobs, among government officials and leaders, &c., and which are more likely to undergo discrimination or violence in areas of jobs, housing, &c.)
- c. Remind them that all of us are on both sides of the chart. We all have at least one the experience of being in “target” groups, and all of us have at least one experience of being in a “non-target” group. We also have experiences, for some categories, of being part of that category our whole lives, and for others, e.g. age, moving into and out of categories.
- d. Point out that no particular category stands by itself for a whole person; each of us belongs to numerous categories. And for some “lines” on the chart, it is unclear where we fit (e.g., young people moving into young adulthood are often discriminated against as youth but receive some benefits of being adults).
- e. Explain that what we learn in society about our side and about the people across from us serves to keep this chart in place, that is, the divisions between us are made possible by what

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<sup>6</sup> Adapted from Creighton with Kivel, *Helping Teens Stop Violence*

we learn about our group and the others. Explain that if we are going to succeed in eliminating this chart, eliminating divisions, we have to understand what we have learned about others, understand how this system negatively impacts all of us, and find ways to erase the line by building alliances with each other. In the next several sessions students will take turns looking at what happens for people on the “target side” of the chart and people who are on the “nontarget side,” and what can be done to bring them together.

Re-invite students to “try on” these concepts, without being required to agree with them. Conduct a brief dyad, 1-2 minutes each way, giving students a chance to take turns summarizing what they have heard and questions they may have.

### 3. Definition of an “ism”

15 minutes

Explain that you call the “power-over” discussed in the last session—the power-over that one group uses against another—**oppression**. Another word you will use for oppression is “**ism**,” as in “racism,” “sexism,” or “adulthoodism” (the word you will use for discrimination against young people by adults). Oppression, or “ism,” is a name for how a nontarget group has power over a target group, and uses that power to control them—hurt them, make them feel bad, or get something from them—or receive better treatment and more resources than them.

Ask:

- Is it possible for a member of a target group to mistreat a member of a nontarget group?
- If so, is there any difference between how a target person is affected by mistreatment and how a nontarget person is affected by mistreatment? What might be the same? What might be different?

Explain that of course each group can hurt or mistreat the other. Each group can be **prejudiced** about the other, making stereotypical assumptions about each other. What makes mistreatment into oppression is **prejudice + power**.

#### a. Prejudice

Start with a discussion about prejudice. Write the word “prejudice” on the board and ask:

- What does “prejudice” mean? (write answers on the board)
- Who has prejudice? Can anyone be prejudiced against someone else?
- Are we born prejudiced? Do we learn it? If so, how do we learn it?
- What are some examples of prejudice?
- Can there be prejudice against children? Adults? Girls? Boys? Latinos? Poor people? Rich people? Disabled people? &c. Can members of nontarget groups be prejudiced about members of target groups? Give some examples.
- Can members of target groups be prejudiced against members of nontarget groups? Give some examples

Make the following points about prejudice, write on the board:

- everyone—anyone—can have prejudices
- prejudice is learned, we are not born with it
- prejudice means we think someone else is “less” than us

## **b. Plus Power Over**

Now write the word “power over” on the board. Remind them of the definition of power-over (the words circled on the “power” list) from the last session: when people on the inside of power, the inside people in the reality TV game, have control, resources, and privilege over people on the outside.

Put students into triads with butcher paper and marker, and assign to each triad one of the above target/nontarget pairs. Have each group write the name of its target/nontarget pair at the top of its page.

As a brainstorm exercise, ask them to write down quickly, without debate, every way they can think of that the people of this target group are controlled, hurt, made to feel bad, discriminated against or denied power in their lives.

After 6-7 minutes, halt the exercise and have students put up their posters in a central place near the power chart.

Take some moments for students to review each other’s posters. Then reassemble the class and ask students for any details that speak out to them from the posters. Additionally, ask:

- how do you know that these target groups are mistreated in our larger society, or made to be “less-than”?

## **c. Equals an “ism”**

Explain that what we mean by an “ism” is when “prejudice” is combined with “power over.” Write the following formula on the board:

$$\text{Prejudice} + \text{Power Over} = \text{Ism}$$

Point out that of course people on both sides of the chart can learn to be prejudiced about people on the other side; what makes this into an “ism” is when people on one side are enabled to have more power than the people on the other side.

Referring to lines on the chart, give some examples of isms:

- Prejudice against young people + power over = Adulthood  
Belief that young people are likely to steal (prejudice)  
+ ability of store owner (power) to:
  - have security guards limit how many young people can enter a store and follow the ones who enter**= Adulthood**
- Prejudice against people of color + power over = Racism  
Belief that people of color are less intelligent (prejudice)  
+ ability of school system (power) to:
  - track them into lower-achieving classes,
  - provide fewer teaching resources to them,
  - not expect them to succeed

- so they “drop out”/are pushed out of school  
= **Racism**

- Prejudice towards women/girls + power over = Sexism  
Belief that women are not good leaders (prejudice)  
+ decision-making ability to:  
keep them out of top jobs by not hiring them (power)  
= **Sexism**

Take a few moments for students to ask questions about or discuss the formula in order to be clear about what it means (without having to agree with it).

#### 4. Target/Nontarget

**15 minutes**

Remind students of their “heart art.” Explain that you are now going to have them look, privately, at their own experiences of targeting and nontargeting, and how these might have affected them.

- a. Have students take out journal materials. At the top of the page, each person should draw a heart, or a quick version of the heart art they produced. The first task is to pick a target group from the chart that he/she is now a member of. Students should pick the first category from the target side that “jumps out” at them. Without writing the category down, have them write responses below the heart to the following. (Explain that they will not be asked to share anything they wrote.)
  - what messages did you get about what it means to be a member of that group?
  - what stereotypes exist about your group?
  - how have some people’s hearts in this group been negatively affected or hurt?
  - what messages did you get about the people in the other group (across the chart from you)?
  - how were you taught these messages (media, family, religion, etc.)?

After 5 minutes, have them finish their thoughts. Bring attention back to the classroom and ask a few people to share, using feeling words and without disclosing what they wrote, what feelings came up as they wrote.

Summarize by having students respond briefly to the following questions:

- What do target people learn about who they are or about their group?
  - What messages are given to targets about their own people (we are lazy)?
  - What do target people learn about non-targets, those who are across the chart?
- b. Going back into writing, each person is now to turn the page over, draw another picture of their “heart,” and pick a non-target group that he/she is a member of, again the first one that comes to mind. If students cannot find a category that seems to fit, ask them to think about themselves in relation to students from lower grades, or younger brothers or sisters. Have them discuss the following questions from the non-target perspective.
    - what messages did you get about what it means to be a member of that group?
    - what are the earliest messages you got that in any way suggested that the target group across from you was “less-than”?

- how might that message have negatively affected or hurt *your* heart?
- how were you taught those messages (media, family, religion, etc.)?
- what are any ways you can think of that you said no to or resisted those negative messages about the target group, even if you only said no to the messages in your mind?

After a few minutes, bring attention back to the classroom and ask a few people to share feelings that came up as they wrote. Summarize by asking: “

- What do nontargets learn about who they are?
- What messages are given to nontargets about their own people?
- What do nontargets learn about the targets, those who are across the chart?
- What messages are given to nontargets about those in the target group?”

Finally, ask for volunteers to share any part of what they wrote.

## **5. Conclusion**

**5 minutes**

Conclude this session by appreciating students for their work, and have them continue writing with their responses to the day’s session, especially to their reading of the triads’ posters. If necessary, students should complete their journals for homework.

## Session A6: Resistance: Undoing the isms for targets

### Aims

- To explore the effects of oppression on target groups
- To introduce the concept of resistance to oppression

### Skills

Students will:

- Identify three facets of oppression: stereotypes, violence and institutionalized oppression
- Understand the concept of internalized oppression as an effect of oppression
- Identify target groups' resistance to oppression

### Session Description

Examines how oppression affects oppressed peoples and how they resist.

### Preparation

You will need the power chart mounted so that you can write additional words along the left and right exterior. Review and practice the “internalized oppression” visualization, deciding which phrase you will use.

### Session Outline

1. To Begin	5 minutes
2. Oppression and its effects	25 minutes
3. Internalized Oppression	10 minutes
4. Resistance	5 minutes
5. Conclusion	10 minutes

### Agenda

#### 1. To Begin 5 minutes

Have students review agreements and volunteer any reflections about the effects of “isms” in their lives that may have come up since the last session. Continue with a “check-in” with students re: their understanding of target/nontarget groups, and invite them to state any questions or concerns they have about target/non-target groups, etc. You might wish to have them write their thoughts/questions on post-it notes to stick onto a piece of butcher paper posted for this purpose onto the front of a cupboard—the “parking lot” for questions that ultimately need to be addressed—, promising to address these at the end of this session. Students should have the option to sign their post-it notes or leave them unsigned, but remind them to use I-statements.

Explain that for this session the class will look at the experience of people who are “targeted,” examining:

- how they are targeted: “**oppression**”
- how they might “internalize” the targeting: “**internalized oppression**”
- how they have resisted the oppression: “**resistance**”

#### 2. Oppression and its effects

**25 minutes**



Using the posted power chart, review the concept of oppression from the last session: oppression is a name for how a nontarget group has power over a target group, and uses that power to control them—hurt them, make them feel bad, or get something from them—or receive better treatment and more resources than them. Repeat that of course members of target groups can mistreat or hurt members of nontarget groups. But oppression refers to “power-over”: that the nontarget group has more **control, privileges, resources and power to define**.

How does “oppression” work? Explain that you are going to talk about three ways oppression can happen:

- a) *stereotypes* about the target group,
- b) outright *violence* that happens to target group members, and
- c) the larger, more longer-term (and sometimes more invisible) ways target-group people can be discriminated against by institutions: *institutional violence*.

**a. Stereotypes<sup>7</sup>** (5 minutes)

For the following questions, use the power chart poster, writing student responses clustered along the appropriate outer sides of the chart, whether on the board or additional poster paper.

Questions:

- What are positive traits or qualities that get assigned or applied to, or are stereotypes about, the people as a group on the nontarget side?
- What are negative traits or qualities that get assigned or applied to, or are stereotypes about, the people as a group on the target side?

**POWER CHART**

Positive traits	Nontargets	Targets	Negative traits
believable			suspicious
trustworthy			lazy
good			worthless
smart			criminal
normal			ugly
law-abiding			cheap

Stop and have the class simply look at the words in the columns.

Questions:

- What happens to people in the target groups when they are stereotyped? How might they be made to feel about themselves? About members of other target groups? How might they feel about people in the nontarget group?
- What do people in nontarget groups learn or get taught about people in the target groups? About themselves?

<sup>7</sup> Vasquez, Myhand and Creighton, *Making Allies, Making Friends*

- Can stereotypes go both ways? If so, is there any difference you can see between the effect on a target group when it is stereotyped and the effect on a nontarget group when it is stereotyped?

**b. Violence**

(5 minutes)

Cite Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s definition of violence: “violence is anything that denies human integrity, and leads to hopelessness or helplessness.”

For the following questions, list student responses on the board in a new column, next to the above, under the heading “Violence,”

- What is violence? What kinds of things do people do to each other that “denies human integrity”?
- What counts as physical violence? Sexual violence? Emotional violence (hurting people’s feelings or making them feel bad)?
- What kinds of violence happen to target groups?
- Can members of target groups also be physically violent toward nontarget groups?
- Suppose a nontarget person hurts a target person and gets caught, and a target person hurts a nontarget and gets caught. Will they receive exactly the same punishment? Is one more likely to be punished than the other? Why or why not?

**c. Institutional Violence**

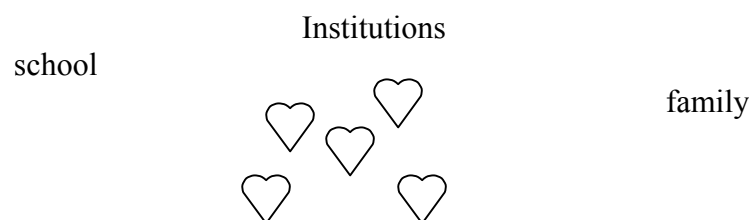
(10 minutes)

Explain that institutional violence is the hardest to identify: it is the kind of oppression that is the most systematic and routine, most part of the everyday experience of large groups of people. With name-calling and immediate violence it’s easy to see mistreatment, and easy to see someone mistreating someone else. It also looks like the kind of mistreatment that goes both ways. When mistreatment is systematic and routine, it may be so much a part of “the way things are” that we may not see how it works.

Remind students of the community exercise from the opening of the third session, drawing hearts on the board and a large circle around them, labeling the large circle as the “community” they live in. Write the word “institutions” on the board above the circle.

Explain that an “institution” is something that is made/built by people, that stays or persists beyond the everyday, that shapes how people live, grow, and learn, and shapes and keeps a community going. For example, a school is an institution. Write “school” outside the circle. Ask: how does a school keep a community going?

Write “family” outside the circle; family structure, or raising children in families, is another example of an institution. How does “family” keep a community going?



Continue the exercise by writing the names of the following institutions around the circle, repeating the question for each and soliciting brief, 1-2 word responses.:

- Religion
- Real estate/housing
- Business/jobs
- police/prison/courts
- sports
- military
- banks
- health/medical
- media (TV, Internet, music, books, video games, magazines, etc.)
- government/laws
- history books

Explain:

- Each of these “institutions” represent one of the structures that keep society going. Each of the institutions is a way that different “hearts” interact with each other. Institutions can help people come together. But they can also work to separate people, or keep them separate, where one people or group has power-over another people or group.

Referring to the list of institutions, ask students to suggest ways that institutional mistreatment of target groups can happen in the different institutions, writing their responses in a new column (next to the stereotype/powerchart list and “violence” column) on the board.

Finally, stop the entire process by having students look silently at the three sets of words they have produced for these 3 facets of oppression.

Stereotypes	Violence	Institutional violence
Suspicious lazy worthless criminal ugly stupid ignorant	name calling yelling lying sexual harassment hit attacked abused raped ignored	arrested more underrepresented worse-paying jobs no positive TV roles can't get loans segregated neighborhoods

Break students into dyads, allowing 1 minute each way, to talk about what they have heard so far and what they are feeling or thinking.

Take a few moments at the close for students to report feelings or thoughts without commenting on them.

Explain that the class will now look at two of the ways targeted people can and do respond to oppression, through **internalized oppression and resistance**.

### 3. Internalized Oppression

10 minutes

a. Have students close their eyes for the following visualization. Explain that you will be saying a phrase to them over and over again. Their task is just to listen to your voice and notice what the phrase makes them think of.

In an “adult” voice, slowly repeat the phrase “You’re stupid” four or five times, following with a few moments of silence.

*Optionally you may wish to use the phrase “you’re just a kid,” as it is used in the unit on adultism. The term “stupid,” especially in a school environment in which students are subject to grading and other forms of evaluation, may be too upsetting for them to experience in a visualization.*

Then, resuming with a normal voice, ask students to open their eyes and take a moment to look around the room.

Questions:

- How did you feel in your body when you heard this phrase?
- How did it make you feel about yourself?
- What “message” were you learning about yourself? About other people who might be identified as the same as you?
- When someone tells you over and over, in this tone of voice, “you’re stupid (*you’re just a kid*),” what you start to believe about yourself? What might you start thinking, negatively, about other people like you?

b. Have students think about target groups in general. Write brief responses to the following questions on the board.

Questions:

- What happens to a member of a target group if she/he is mistreated? How might she/he react? How might she/he feel about her/himself?
- What if the mistreatment goes on for a long time? How might she/he begin to think about herself/himself?
- How might they begin to feel and interact with other members of this group?
- Label these responses “Internalized Oppression”: the violence that target group members may learn to do to themselves, or each other.

c. Draw an arch<sup>8</sup> on the board across the top of the power chart, supported by a pillar on the right and a pillar on the left of the chart. Explain that the two “pillars” that hold up the “isms” are the pillar on the left (next to the nontarget groups)—*oppression*—and the pillar on the right—*internalized oppression*. If either of these pillars is knocked down, the arch can fall. Now

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<sup>8</sup> Adapted from an exercise by Lakota Harden

students will consider how target groups knock down the pillars by *resistance*. In the next session they will look at how nontarget groups knock down the pillars by *alliance*.

#### 4. Resistance

10 minutes

a. Have students think back to the heart art each of them produced. Remind them of the third question in the heart art exercise:

*the ways I resisted the limits or scars to my heart and held on to my heart qualities*

Have students call out the kinds or resistances they included in their own heart art or remember from other people's heart art. Write responses on the board. As they respond, have them begin to consider ways they know or have heard that people in target groups have resisted mistreatment individually and currently or in larger groups at different times in history, adding these responses to the list, e.g.:

- labor strikes against working children 12 hours a day
- Rosa Parks and the Montgomery bus boycott
- slaves sewed messages into quilts showing the way to the “underground railroad.”

Explain that we use the word “resistance” to stand for the ways people have used to resist or fight back against oppression and internalized oppression.

b. Turning back to the resistance list, brainstorm the items on the list that involve violence or mistreatment of the nontarget group. Draw an x next to each of these terms. Ask: What is the ultimate result of using these forms of resistance?

Then explain that the form of resistance you mean is the kind that does not try to use power abusively over the nontarget group. Resistance does not mean, here, getting revenge or taking power over another or using violence against the other in order to discriminate against or exploit them—“denying human integrity.” And it may sometimes mean force in the sense of actions people take to protect or defend themselves, or civil disobedience—protesting laws or ordinances you perceive to be unjust or unfair by deciding nonviolently to disobey them.

c. Have students scan the list one more time. What positive forms of resistance are most effective—most likely to protect, defend and nurture “hearts” and a community of “hearts”?

#### 5. Conclusion

5 minutes

Take a few moments to review any student post-it note comment/question with the class. Discuss any which still need discussion. Throw out those which the class agrees have been adequately addressed/resolved. Keep others posted for future conversations. You might wish to use this post-it note “Parking Lot” strategy throughout the course as another way to honor all voices/all subjects in your class discussions.

As a final discussion question, have students take a few moments to write silently (or think quietly) and then discuss what it would be like to be in a world in which there were no “targets” and “nontargets”—where people were not separated into the categories of who has more and who has less, but all have equally.

## Session A7: Alliance: Undoing the ism for nontargets<sup>9</sup>

### Aims

- To examine how nontargets are given misinformation about target groups
- To define the concept of being an ally
- To begin a commitment from each student to become an ally

### Skills

Students will:

- Define what being an ally means
- Make a commitment to being an ally

### Preparation

You will need the power chart and a small backpack, along with writing materials for students. Review section B.2 in the Facilitator’s Guide and practice conducting the visualization.

### Session Description

Students identify their roles as “allies,” noticing what they have done as allies already and what they can do to promote equality, as a preparation for part II.

### Session Outline

1. To Begin	5 minutes
2. You can’t play with them	10 minutes
3. How nontargets are “conditioned”	15 minutes
4. Benefits in “the backpack”	10 minutes
5. Being an Ally	10 minutes
5. Conclusion	5 minutes

### Agenda

#### 1. To Begin

5 minutes

Review agreements. Remind students that the last session focused on what violence happens to people in target groups, and how they have resisted this violence and can continue to resist. In this session, the class will turn to look at people in nontarget groups:

- how people in nontarget groups get **conditioned** and receive **benefits** or **privilege** to use power over target group people
- how they **resist** this training, and
- how they can “unlearn” the training and become **allies**.

#### 2. You can’t play with them

10 minutes

a. Remind students of the “you’re stupid”/“you’re just a kid” visualization from the last session, about how target group people internalize mistreatment. Explain that you’re now going to conduct a visualization about painful experiences nontarget people can have of being separated from target people. Have students close their eyes for the following visualization. Have them imagine they are much younger, at ages four or five. Explain that you will pretend to be an adult

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<sup>9</sup> Adapted from Vasquez, Myhand and Creighton, *Making Allies, Making Friends*

in their lives at that time, and that you will say several phrases to them. Their task is just to listen to your voice and notice what the phrase makes them think of-what messages they are getting about other young people their age.

In an “adult” voice, repeat each of the following phrases, following it with a moment of silence:

Phrases:

- You throw like a girl.
- You can’t play with them. They’re not like us.
- Those people talk funny. They can’t even speak English.
- I don’t want you associating with those kids. They don’t know how to act.
- You never know about those people. They don’t come from good families like you.

Follow with a few moments of silence. Then, resuming with a normal voice, ask students to open their eyes and take a moment to look around the room.

b. Questions:

- How did you feel in your body when you heard this phrase?
- How did it make you feel about yourself?
- What “message” were you learning about those “other” people? About them being “less than” “your” people?
- What’s an early experience you can remember of hearing that other ethnic groups, or girls, or poor people, or others were less important or of less value than white people, or boys, or wealthier people, and so forth?

### 3. How nontargets are “conditioned”

15 minutes

Referring to the Power Chart, ask what messages young people in each of the nontarget groups (besides “Adults”) have been “taught” about corresponding target group people. Who, for the most part, gives these messages to nontarget youth? Where do these messages come from? Finally, explain that people in all nontarget groups get **conditioning** or (mis)education or stereotypes about members in the target group. We almost always get these messages from people from our nontarget group, or from the “institutions” in our community like TV, etc.

Questions:

- If someone were to tell you something that was not true, or they lied to you, how would that make you feel?
- If you were told lots of lies, or partial lies, or no information at all about other people, do you think you would know how you’re supposed to act toward them? Would you know who they were really, or how to become friends with them?

Explain:

- This is part of how nontargets themselves get hurt by separation from targets. We learn stereotypes; we learn the wrong things, so we don’t learn how to relate to people in targeted groups; and sometimes we learn to be afraid or resentful of these people. Part of stopping abusive “power-over” for nontargets is to unlearn the misinformation they have received.

Have students break into triads. For the following discussion, each is to pick a nontarget group that he/she is a member of. If they can't find one on the board, they can think of themselves in relation to younger people and children. For the discussion, they are to think of what they were told about the target group corresponding to their nontarget group. For example, if they picked "men" as their nontarget group, they are to think about early messages they received about "women."

In triads, have each student take two to three minutes thinking and speaking aloud, with other two students listening. Write the following questions on the board for them to discuss:

#### Questions

- What is an early experience you have had of being told that someone in a target group across the line from you was "less-than" people in your group?
- Think about who told you, and say how did it felt to get this "information."
- What message might you have been getting about how people in your group were supposed to act that show that they were different from the "target group?"
- How did you resist or say no to this message, even if you only questioned it in your mind?

At the close of the triad allow for several minutes of discussion within each triad, before regrouping the class as a whole to discuss these questions together.

#### 4. Benefits in "the backpack"<sup>10</sup>

10 minutes

Explain that besides conditioning, nontarget people also receive rewards or benefits from being part of nontarget groups: **privileges**. Being placed on the "upside" of oppression, or being an "insider" on "Reality Island," means you have certain benefits, sometimes without even being aware of it.

To think about what privileges are, have students take out writing materials. Invite each of them to:

- a) pick a group on the nontarget side of the chart that she/he is a member of (it may or may not be the group they thought about during the triad), or
- b) look at the list of nontarget groups more generally.

Have them brainstorm on paper, without identifying the group(s) they picked, any privileges or benefits that members of the nontarget group(s) have, and that members of the target group(s) in general are likely not to have.

For example, you as an adult teacher can vote, and can vote on laws affecting youth under age 18, whereas students under 18 cannot. Wealthy people charged with crimes can afford good legal representation that poor people cannot.

Encourage students to write their first thoughts, quickly.

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<sup>10</sup> Concept of the "backpack" from Peggy McIntosh, "Unpacking the Knapsack of White Privilege"



After two minutes, stop the writing. Produce a small, student-size backpack, and have students come forward and put their pieces of paper in a small backpack.

Have a two or three students volunteer to hold and put on the backpack. How heavy is it? How easy is it to carry? If you wore it all day long, every day, would you continue to notice that you were wearing it, or would it begin to be “just part of you”?

Explain that this is how privilege works: most privileges are good things, the kind of thing everyone in the world ought to have. When you have it, especially if you have it for a long time, you might begin to take it for granted and not realize that you have it and other people may not.

Have the volunteers take pieces of paper from the backpack and read them aloud, without guessing or trying to guess who the writers are or what nontarget groups are being written about.

### **5. Being an Ally**

**5 minutes**

Write the word “Ally” on the board. Ask students what this word means to them.

Explain that you use the term “Ally” to stand for anyone who stands up for a target group to stop violence against that target group and support it. “Ally” can stand for anyone in the nontarget group; it can also stand for members of other target groups who decide to stand up for this target group.

Ask students to visualize an adult who has been an ally to them—someone who has stood up for them or listened to them or intervened against mistreatment or supported their leadership.

Brainstorm a list of what an ally does. Brainstorm another list of what is not helpful from an ally, or what a real ally doesn’t do.

What an ally does

What is not helpful from an ally

### **5. Conclusion**

**10 minutes**

Close the session by appreciating students. Explain that you have been discussing very painful separations and hurts that happen among “hearts” in society, and how people have resisted and been allies. As you turn now to look at particular “isms,” you will be using photographs and stories of oppression, resistance and alliance that will enable us to make alliances with each other across the separations and take the next steps in building justice.

Ask students who volunteer to complete the sentence (or complete as a journal exercise):

One way I am an ally is \_\_\_\_\_.

Distribute handout on scenarios of oppression, resistance and alliance for students to do as practice for identifying target/nontarget situations for upcoming units on the isms. In groups of

three or larger, students should meet to pick a story, work out answers to the questions, and develop a resistance/alliance roleplay.

## Handout

### STORIES<sup>11</sup>

Directions:

Pick one of the following stories. For the story you pick, answer the following questions:

- Who is the target-group, and who is the nontarget group? Why?
- In this story, what is the mistreatment of the target group?
- Is this a story about the target group resisting mistreatment? If so, describe the resistance.
- Is this a story about the nontarget group supporting the target group? If so, describe what that support is.
- What could you do to support the resistance of the target group or / and support alliance from the non-target group?

Practice the intervention – one person acts as the “problem person” and everyone else works together to effectively intervene.

#### 1. Convenience Store:

For the last few years, the convenience store next to school has had a sign in the window: only two students at a time. Students like to go to the store for lunch; there’s more of a selection than at school. But there is only a half-hour for lunch; that’s all the time the school allows, and the administration won’t change the period. Students decide to talk to the storeowner and to the principal.

**2. Give me the money:** You are at a family gathering; you witness your brother in law strong-arming your sister into giving him some money. Other family members are present, but don’t seem to intervene or know what to do. Your sister is refusing to give in, but is trying to hide or downplay the conflict.

**3. Suspension:** A mother is concerned about her son getting suspended over and over again: he tells her the teachers have it in for him—he’s always getting blamed. He is Latino. When the mother looks at the school records, she finds out that in the previous year 3 times as many Latino youth have been suspended as white youth.

**4. You’re so gay:** Mark and Troy are good football players and best friends. Troy has recently confided in Mark that he is gay, and after a lot of talking through it Mark committed to being an ally to Troy. Troy is not “out” to the team because of all the anti-gay jokes, especially those by the coach. But Mark can see it’s really getting to Troy.

**5. Over here, please:** You are standing in line at an airport, and you notice that people who have “darker skin” are being “randomly” checked. You want to say something about it.

**6. I’m sorry but:** Marie and her best friend Shelley are equally good dancers in dance class and want to train to become part of a ballet/modern dance troupe. Both are strong and athletic. The troupe director agrees to admit Shelley but tells Marie, who has a larger body, that she weighs

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<sup>11</sup> Adapted from Vasquez, Myhand and Creighton, *Making Allies, Making Friends* and from Shirley Yee

too much and can't be admitted. Marie feels strongly that large-bodied women and men should be visible and choreographed for in modern dance.

**7. It can't happen here:** One morning at a Jewish temple near the school people discover swastikas spray-painted across the front doors. The students are talking about it: some of the loudest speakers are students who are downplaying the incident, saying it's just kid stuff. There are two Jewish students present and they are becoming very quiet as the discussion continues; other students don't necessarily know that they are Jewish. Finally one of the Jewish students decides that she has to speak out.

## Option B: sessions 5-6

### Session B5: Studying “Isms”

#### Aims

- To introduce the concepts of “target” and nontarget” groups
- To introduce the concept of oppression: the “ism ”

#### Skills

Students will:

- Identify the kinds of mistreatment or power imbalance that happen to particular target groups
- Identify personal experiences of being a member of a target group and being a member of a nontarget group

#### Preparation

You will need the posted “power chart” constructed in session 4.

#### Session Description

Presents the concept of oppression: how an “ism” works, and its negative effects on both the victims and agents of the ism

#### Session Outline

1. To Begin	5 minutes
2. What is an “ism”?	10 minutes
3. Definition of an “ism”	10 minutes
4. Understanding our places on the power chart	20 minutes
5. What we “learn”	5 minutes
6. Conclusion	5 minutes

#### Agenda

##### 1. To begin

**5 minutes**

Review agreements and power/power-over/power-with distinctions from session 4, posting the power chart. Explain that for today’s session the class will look at the experience of people who have “power-over” and people who are “denied power”—“nontarget” and “target” groups.

##### 2. What is an “ism”?

**10 minutes**

Write the suffix “ism” on the board, to stand for racism, sexism, and the other kinds of “isms” in which one group of people is set apart from another group of people. Explain that the class will begin by coming up with a definition—a formula—for an “ism.”

##### a. Prejudice

Start with a discussion about prejudice. Write the word on the board and ask:

- What does “prejudice” mean? (Write answers on the board.)
- Who has prejudice?
- Does everyone have it?

- Are people—”hearts”—born prejudiced? When you think about the original “heart” exercise, was “prejudice” one of the qualities of the heart?
- If not, do we learn prejudice? If so, how do we learn it?

Ask for examples of prejudice. If there is hesitation, ask about the following categories, and ask for appropriate examples of prejudice about each category:

- Is there prejudice against children?
- Girls?
- Boys?
- Latin-Americans/Latinos?
- Poor people?
- Disabled people?

Summarize the discussion with the following points:

- “Prejudice” applies, among other things, to when we think someone else is “less” than us
- Everyone has prejudices
- Prejudice is learned; we are not born with it—it isn’t part of being a “heart.”

**b. Plus Power Over**

Writing the word “POWER” on the board, remind students of the discussion of “power” from the last session. Add the phrase “Power Over,” reminding students that “power over” is when people on the inside of power, the inside people in the reality TV game, have control, resources, privilege, and the power to define the outside people. Ask:

- What does it mean when we said that some groups have more power than others?
- What are some of the examples discussed in the last session of groups that have more power than other groups?

As they give examples, post the “power chart” on the board:

**Power Chart**

**Groups having power over**

rich  
 adult  
 adult  
 men  
 white people  
 heterosexual  
 able-bodied  
 labeled “normal”  
 Christians/Gentiles  
 English as a first language  
 Labeled as “normal” body image

**Groups denied power**

poor  
 youth  
 elders  
 women  
 people of color  
 lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender  
 living with disability  
 labeled as “mentally ill”  
 Jews  
 first language other than English  
 labeled “fat,” “skinny,” &c

Explain that these categories from the chart address some of the major groups of people that become separated from each other (these particular groups are the ones addressed specifically in this curriculum). You may remind them that they may not agree with some of the category

choices or where they fit; you are just having them “try on” the chart, and will make time for students later to discuss and work through agreements or disagreements.

Direct attention to the “rich” category under “having power over” on the chart and the “poor” category under the “denied power” side. Ask:

- How do people with wealth have more power – control, resources, privilege and ability to define – than people without wealth in the United States?

Now look at the categories “adult” and “youth” on the chart under “holding power” and “denied power” respectively. Ask:

- How do adults have power over children?
- Do children have power over adults?

Repeat questions for pairs you select from the chart, asking students for examples of groups on the power side having power over (more control, resources, privilege and/or ability to define) the group on the other side.

### 3. Definition of an “ism”

10 minutes

Explain that what we mean by an “ism” is when prejudice is combined with power over. Write on the board the following formula:

$$\text{Prejudice} + \text{Power Over} = \text{Ism}$$

Use the formula to give examples of various isms:

Example #1:

**Prejudice** against (Latinos, Asians, etc.) + **Power Over** = **Racism**

Belief that Latinos are stupid (*prejudice*)  
+ power of a teacher to make them feel stupid, not provide good teaching to them,  
not expect them to succeed, so they drop out of school (*power-over*)  
= Racism.

Example #2:

**Prejudice** towards women/girls + **Power Over** = **Sexism**

Belief that women are not good leaders (*prejudice*)  
+ power to keep them out of top jobs by not hiring them (*power-over*)  
= Sexism.

c. What is the difference between prejudice, by itself, and a full-blown “ism”? Lead a discussion about the difference between prejudice and an ism. Ask students to suggest examples of prejudices that might flow from either side of the chart to the other, and of “isms” that flow in one direction.

### 4. Understanding our places on the power chart

20 minutes

a. Target/Nontarget

Now add the word “nontarget” under the phrase “power-over” and “target” under the word “denied power” on the power chart.

<b>Power Chart</b>	
<b>Groups having power over</b>	<b>Groups denied power</b>
<b><u>Nontarget</u></b>	<b><u>Target</u></b>

Remind them that “non-target” refers to those situations where we are on the power-over side of the chart and “not the target” of that particular ism. “Target” refers to those situations where we are on the denied-power side and are “the target” of that ism.

b. Being targeted/being nontargeted

Remind students that all of us are on both sides of the chart. We all have the experience of being the “target” and of being the “non-target.” Explain that what we learn in society about our side and about the people across from us serves to keep this chart in place; that is, the divisions between us are made possible by what we learn about our group and the others.

Explain that if we are going to succeed in eliminating this chart, eliminating divisions, we have to understand what we have learned about others, understand how this system hurts all of us, and find ways to erase the line by building alliances with each other.

c. Target Triads

Have students break into triads. Each person is to pick a target group that he/she is a member of. Explain that they do not have to disclose which group they picked if they don’t wish to. Each student will have two minutes to talk while the others listen; you will keep time and tell them when to switch. Remind them about the agreement of confidentiality:

- 1) not to disclose to others what they heard in the triad, and
- 2) not to talk to a speaker afterwards about what she said without getting her permission to bring it up
- 3) not to use their speaking time in the triad to refer to or reply to what someone else in the triad said

Present the topics for the triad, writing them on the board for students’ reference:

- What messages did you get about what it means to be a member of that group?
- What stereotypes exist about your group?
- How have some people’s hearts in this group been negatively affected or hurt?
- What messages did you get about the people in the other group (across the chart from you)?
- Where did you get these different messages (media, family, religion, etc.)?

Conduct the triad; at the close, bring attention back to the classroom and ask a few people to share what they discussed.

d. Nontarget triads



Going back into the same triad, each person is now to pick a non-target group that he/she is a member of. Have them discuss the same questions as above, but this time from the non-target perspective.

After a few minutes, bring attention back to the classroom and ask a few people to share what they discussed.

### **5. What we “learn”**

**5 minutes**

Summarize the target/nontarget discussion by asking:

- What do “non-targets” learn about who they are? What messages are given to non-targets about their own people? (Answer: *we are normal*)
- What do non-targets learn about the “targets,” those who are across the chart? What messages are given to non-targets about those in the target group?
- What do target people learn about who they are or about their group? What messages are given to targets about their own people? (Answer: *we are lazy*)
- What do target people learn about non-targets, those who are across the chart?

### **6. Conclusion**

**5 minutes**

Close by having students volunteer either of these one-sentence reflections:

one thing I learned from this session is \_\_\_\_  
one thing I’m thinking about from this session is \_\_\_\_

## Session B6: Resistance and Alliance

### Aims

- To understand how everyone resists mistreatment
- To define the concept of being an ally
- For each student to learn what it means to be an ally

### Skills

Students will:

- Identify where and how they have resisted mistreatment and discrimination
- Identify what they can personally do to be allies

### Session Description

Students identify how they can resist oppression and act as allies to each other

### Session Outline

1. To Begin	5 minutes
2. The good news...resistance	5 minutes
3. Our Stories	10 minutes
4. Alliances	5 minutes
5. A time you felt different	15 minutes
6. Interventions as an ally	10 minutes
7. Conclusion	5 minutes

### Agenda

#### 1. To Begin

**5 minutes**

Have students volunteer briefly to summarize the previous session on their experiences of being members of nontarget and target groups. Add or accentuate that:

- We are all negatively affected by divisions of race, gender, and the other social divisions.
- We didn't create these divisions

#### 2. The good news...resistance

**5 minutes**

Explain that everyone at one time or another *resists* the societal conditioning that pits one group against another. You will use the word “resistance” to stand for

- the ways people, whether as targets or nontargets, have resisted or fought back against oppression of targeted groups, and
- the ways people, whether as targets or nontargets, have fought back against being conditioned to see others (in target groups) or themselves (as members of target groups) as “less than”

Ask students to call out examples of resistance to oppression of target groups and write responses on board. Examples may involve personal experiences, or examples from U.S. history. As the examples are given, add in the following:

- Labor strikes against child labor and for the 8-hour day (against adultism (the oppression of children) and “classism” (the oppression of poor/working people))
- Rosa Parks and the Montgomery bus boycott (against racism)

- African-American slaves before the U.S. Civil War sewed messages into quilts showing the way to the “underground railroad” (against racism)
- Gay Pride marches (against “heterosexism,” the oppression of lesbian and gay people)
- Hip-hop music and culture (against racism and adultism)

### 3. Our Stories

**10 minutes**

Have students form new triads (different from those formed in the last session). Have the triads sit silently for a few moments, asking each student to remember a personal experience of resisting oppression, whether she was a member of a target group being oppressed or, as a member of a nontarget group, saw or witnessed someone from a target group being mistreated. As in the last-session triad, each student will have two minutes to talk while the others listen, simply telling their own story of resistance.

You will keep time and tell them when to switch. Remind them about the agreement of confidentiality:

- a) not to disclose to others what they heard in the triad, and
- b) not to talk to a speaker afterwards about what she said without getting her permission to bring it up
- c) not to use their speaking time in the triad to refer to or reply to what someone else in the triad said

When you close the triad, reconvene the class and take a few moments to have students volunteer how it felt to tell their stories (without referring to what their triad partners said).

### 4. Alliances

**5 minutes**

Turn the discussion to the concept of alliance, writing the word “alliance” on the board. Explain:

- In addition to resisting mistreatment, as a people we also have a history of forming alliances with others to fight oppression of any kind. We will now look at how we can become powerful, strong allies to others.

Read the following statement, explaining that the writer was a European pastor writing about the Nazi government’s takeover of Germany in the 1930’s, leading up to World War II and the oppression, in imprisonment and killing, of the groups he names:

*First they came for the Communists, but I was not a Communist so I did not speak out.  
Then they came for the Socialists and the Trade Unionists, but I was neither, so I did not speak out.  
Then they came for the Jews, but I was not a Jew so I did not speak out.  
And when they came for me, there was no one left to speak out for me.*

Rev. Martin Niemoller, 1945

Questions:

- What is the statement about?
- Who are named as the people who are being oppressed?
- What is Rev. Niemoller saying about the importance of speaking out? Why would he say it was important for him to act as an ally to these groups of people?

After the discussion, explain that you use the term *ally* to stand for anyone who stands up for a targeted group to stop mistreatment of that group. Write this term on the board and, referring to the power chart, explain that *anyone can be an ally*—

- someone from a nontarget group that interrupts mistreatment of a target group  
(e.g., *an adult stopping another adult from hitting a child*)
- someone from a nontarget group that interrupts hurtful conditioning or miseducation of other members of a nontarget group  
(e.g., *a white person helps another white person stop believing stereotypes about people of color; a heterosexual parent talking to her/his heterosexual children about respecting and supporting lesbian/gay youth*)
- someone from a target group that interrupts mistreatment of other target groups  
(e.g., *a young person protests poor conditions in senior housing; Jewish people get involved in civil rights struggles on behalf of people of color; English-speaking people fight for bilingual education, &c.*)

### **5. A time you felt different**

**15 minutes**

Distribute handout 1, “A Time I Was Made to Feel Different.” Make the following two points:

- Everyone has felt different at one time or another. People feel different for many reasons: sometimes it is because of skin color; sometimes because of gender, body size, the way we speak, accents, where we live, the part of the country we come from, physical abilities, or what we are interested in (like sports, computers, etc.).
- It is important for everyone to remember what happens when we feel different so that we can learn what to do to help insure someone’s difference is not used to hurt him or her.

Read each instruction on the handout making sure everyone understands each question. Then have each student silently answer the questions in writing, or by drawing and writing.

After they have completed the writing, ask them to turn to a partner and share their story. Then bring their attention back and ask for a few volunteers to share a little about why they felt different. Then ask for 3 or 4 students to share what someone did to intervene, or what they wished someone would have done.

Explain that the last question is about being an ally. Ask students to think about what someone did to intervene when they felt different and use that information to brainstorm a list of what an ally does. Write their answers on the board. Brainstorm another list of what is NOT helpful from an ally.

### **6. Interventions as an ally**

**10 minutes**

a. Explain that an ally can expect some hard things and some good things to come their way.

Write the following on the board and ask students to complete the sentences aloud:

- What can happen to someone who is an ally is...
- The potential costs of being an ally are...
- The potential benefits of being an ally are...

b. Present the following as if they were headlines in newspaper clips. Ask students:

- what they could do as allies to people being targeted in each situation,
- what might get in the way of being an ally in this situation, and
- what would help them to be the ally they want to be.

Clip #1: “Mosque Vandalized”

Clip #2: “Lesbians Not Allowed At Prom”

Clip #3: “*Bell Curve* [a book purporting to be a scientific study] Shows People Of Color Less Intelligent”

c. Allies beyond the classroom

Distribute handout 2 on scenarios of oppression, resistance and alliance for students to do as practice for identifying target/nontarget situations for upcoming units on the isms. In groups of three or larger, students should meet to pick a story, work out answers to the questions, and develop a resistance/alliance roleplay. Alternatively, ask them to meet as groups outside of class to identify situations they witness where an ally is needed, discuss what they could do, and develop a role play to practice being an ally.

**7. Conclusion**

**5 minutes**

Close the session by appreciating the students and asking them to write down one thing they will do in the next week to be a better ally to someone else. Ask for a few students to share their answers.

Explain that the next part of the curriculum looks at particular “isms.” As you do so, you will be using photographs of oppression, resistance and alliance that will enable us to learn how to heal from hurt, make alliances with each other, and take the next steps to building justice.

## **Handout 1**

### **A Time I Was Made to Feel Different**

1. Think of a time you felt different for any reason. Describe, or draw a picture of, why you were feeling different.
2. Describe, or add to your picture, where you were, who was with you, how old you were.
3. What was happening to you, or around you, that was making you feel different? What was being said? What was being done?
4. How were you feeling in that situation?
5. If there was someone there who was helping you, someone who was trying to make you feel all right, someone who was intervening to stop what was going on that was making you feel different...describe or draw this person and what this person did for you.
6. If there wasn't anyone there to help you, what do you wish someone would have done to help you. If you could have had someone there to help you in that situation, what would you have wanted her/him to do or say?

## Handout 2

### STORIES<sup>12</sup>

Directions:

Pick one of the following stories. For the story you pick, answer the following questions:

- Who is the target-group, and who is the nontarget group? Why?
- In this story, what is the mistreatment of the target group?
- Is this a story about the target group resisting mistreatment? If so, describe the resistance.
- Is this a story about the nontarget group supporting the target group? If so, describe what that support is.
- What could you do to support the resistance of the target group or / and support alliance from the non-target group?

Practice the intervention – one person acts as the “problem person” and everyone else works together to effectively intervene.

#### 1. Convenience Store:

For the last few years, the convenience store next to school has had a sign in the window: only two students at a time. Students like to go to the store for lunch; there’s more of a selection than at school. But there is only a half-hour for lunch; that’s all the time the school allows, and the administration won’t change the period. Students decide to talk to the storeowner and to the principal.

**2. Give me the money:** You are at a family gathering; you witness your brother in law strong-arming your sister into giving him some money. Other family members are present, but don’t seem to intervene or know what to do. Your sister is refusing to give in, but is trying to hide or downplay the conflict.

**3. Suspension:** A mother is concerned about her son getting suspended over and over again: he tells her the teachers have it in for him—he’s always getting blamed. He is Latino. When the mother looks at the school records, she finds out that in the previous year 3 times as many Latino youth have been suspended as white youth.

**4. You’re so gay:** Mark and Troy are good football players and best friends. Troy has recently confided in Mark that he is gay, and after a lot of talking through it Mark committed to being an ally to Troy. Troy is not “out” to the team because of all the anti-gay jokes, especially those by the coach. But Mark can see it’s really getting to Troy.

**5. Over here, please:** You are standing in line at an airport, and you notice that people who have “darker skin” are being “randomly” checked. You want to say something about it.

**6. I’m sorry but:** Marie and her best friend Shelley are equally good dancers in dance class and want to train to become part of a ballet/modern dance troupe. Both are strong and athletic. The troupe director agrees to admit Shelley but tells Marie, who has a larger body, that she weighs

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<sup>12</sup> Adapted from Vasquez, Myhand and Creighton, *Making Allies, Making Friends* and from Shirley Yee

too much and can't be admitted. Marie feels strongly that large-bodied women and men should be visible and choreographed for in modern dance.

**7. It can't happen here:** One morning at a Jewish temple near the school people discover swastikas spray-painted across the front doors. The students are talking about it: some of the loudest speakers are students who are downplaying the incident, saying it's just kid stuff. There are two Jewish students present and they are becoming very quiet as the discussion continues; other students don't necessarily know that they are Jewish. Finally one of the Jewish students decides that she has to speak out.