

Revealing Histories: Both Living and Hidden Witnessing Whiteness Chapter 3 Workshop 3

Dear Facilitator(s),

This workshop series was carefully crafted, reviewed (by a multiracial team), and revised with several important issues in mind.

The series is intended to...

1. **Offer an 11 part, sequential process that corresponds to the reading of the book, Witnessing Whiteness, 2nd Edition.** Understandably, facilitators, for various reasons, might decide to use one or more of the workshops as stand alone events without sufficient time for participants to a) read the corresponding book chapters or b) move through the entire series. Yet, please understand that **moving through these workshops without having read the corresponding book chapter will markedly reduce its effectiveness. It will make moving through the workshop more challenging and is NOT recommended.** Understandings gained from one workshop are also important for subsequent workshops.
2. **Respond to particular group needs.** Recognizing that some groups may not be able to implement each workshop for the entire time suggested, some approved modifications can be found at the end of each workshop agenda. Only modify these workshops when absolutely required.
3. **Create a welcoming, inviting space where participants feel free to speak the truth of their experience without fear of shaming or reprisal.** It is essential for facilitators to understand that even when participants hold views that are counter to the themes in the book/series, a hallmark of both the book and the series is that people should be gently led into a new way of seeing.
4. **Follow logical threads of understanding related to each theme.** The language provided in the “scripts” that both precede and follow each section of the workshops are very important. Deviating from the essential themes and tone in those statements may create confusion and undercut the building nature of each individual workshop.
5. **Enhance leadership capacity within the community.** Detailed facilitator notes are provided for each activity so that one or more members of the group can practice their facilitation while leading this workshop series. A few notes of caution: a) the same facilitation team should run the entire series, b) the team should read the entire book in advance of leading any of the workshops, and c) sufficient debrief opportunities should be created to discuss how each workshop went so that facilitators’ skills can be developed.
6. **Provide community building opportunities for either racially caucused white groups OR multiracial groups.** Although still focused on whiteness in general, the series seeks to frame activities and questions in ways that allow people of color to benefit from the experience.

Best wishes,
Shelly Tochluk

Revealing Histories: Both Living and Hidden

Witnessing Whiteness Chapter 3 Workshop 3

Goals:

- Explore how the history of whiteness lives on in our contemporary lives
- Investigate the benefits of knowing the hidden history of white antiracism

Materials:

- Discussion Guidelines
- Butcher Paper, Markers, and Pens
- Living Histories, half completed (Handout 3.1a)
- Living Histories, (facilitator notes) (Sheet 3.1b)
- Living Histories, blank (Handout 3.2)
- Butcher Paper timeline
- Antiracist stories
 - Prudence Crandall (Handout 3.3)
 - John Brown (Handout 3.4)
 - Anne Braden (Handout 3.5)
 - Robert F. Kennedy (Handout 3.6)
 - Jerry Mitchell (Handout 3.7)
- List of Terms/Context (Handout 3.8) (distribute at facilitator's discretion)
- Resources (Handout 3.9) (distribute at facilitator's discretion)
- Lyrics for song, Anne Braden, by Flobots (Sheet 3.2) (extra resource tool, not part of workshop)

Book Anchor Quotes: (Can be read aloud or distributed to the group during opening if desired.)

If we believe that we have moved beyond our racial history, we remain ignorant of the ways the history of whiteness continues to affect our lives...The history of whiteness exists just under the surface of every debate concerning American values, multiculturalism, and diversity. Very often, resistance against the language of "American values" is quickly deemed unpatriotic. But knowing the history as just presented helps us to understand why the same person can value democracy and freedom and yet resist calling them "American values" at the same time.

Witnessing this history [of antiracism] is one of the first steps on the way toward doing *ally* work. The various avenues offered by antiracist activists can offer us models of what it can look like to become responsive to oppressive actions associated with whiteness. These guides can help us know how to act on new principles, principles that go beyond being "American," loving freedom and democracy, toward those that allow us to link those ideals with witnessing actions that truly build justice for all within our society...Enacting a search for guides can be a liberating undertaking...Finding people that show us a better way to deal with racism existing today, racism that has its origins in our history, can offer us a sense of direction.

SESSION 4 - REVEALING HISTORIES

2 hrs 45 min

Section I

(20 min)

Opening

Materials: Goals for day written out and communication guidelines posted ([download with discussion guide](#)) butcher paper and markers, Butcher paper across wall with timeline (dates from 1600 to present in increments of 50 years posted).

Purpose of piece:

To discuss communication guidelines and review the goals for the workshop

Instructions: Ask participants to read the discussion guidelines posted on the wall aloud (one after the other). Ask participants what questions they have. Invite participants to add to the list any additional discussion guidelines they think would be helpful. Write them on the piece of butcher paper. Use this modified list for all future workshops.

Facilitators introduce themselves, ask participants to take a marker and go up to the timeline on the wall and add one or two incidences of racism. When everyone has returned, ask participants to say their name and one sentence to describe one of the incidences of racism they posted on the timeline. Explain that the timeline creation is a way to get our brains working because we'll be asked to generate examples of racism in one of our exercises today.

Section II

(55 min)

A Living History

Materials: Living History half-completed sheets (Handout 3.1a), Living History KEY (Sheet 3.1b), Living History BLANK sheets (Handout 3.2), pens

Purpose of piece:

To explore how the history of whiteness lives on in our contemporary lives

Say to Group: From the timeline we can see that there are things we know about our country's racist history. And yet there is also so much more that we should know about. Although it's important to acknowledge what we don't know, this first exercise today is intended to help us make connections between what we DO know about our country's history of racism and how that history continues to affect our lives today.

- In small groups, work together to fill in a Living History handout. (*Distribute Handout 3.1a*)
 - This sheet has some past issues already written on it and we'd like you to make the connections complete.
 - With the past already offered, write in how the present is affected.
 - You'll have about **10 minutes** to complete that sheet.
- Then, we'll ask you to work together to brainstorm some of your own past-present connections and write those in on a blank sheet I'm about to pass out.
 - You'll have another **15 minutes** for that.
- After the groups finish brainstorming, we'll get together to talk about the connections we've made. Keep in mind that although we have some ideas about possible answers, we will not be correcting these. It is up to you to locate the connections that make sense to you.

Divide participants into several groups of 3-5 people.

Hand out the Living History sheets, both half completed and blank. In small groups, participants will fill in the empty boxes on the sheet. Then, they will create new examples on the blank sheet.

Now that you've worked on the past-present connections, as a large group let's talk about what we found.

Large group questions: (30 minutes)

****Post** the questions on Butcher Paper, or create small half-sheet handouts with the questions printed

1. Which connections from the half-completed page struck you most?
2. What is a connection you developed within your small group that you feel is really important to name?
3. How do these past-present connections affect your life?
4. Why do you think so many people say we are living in a "post-racial" society?

Wrap Up: This exercise was meant to offer us a chance to become clearer about how our history of racism continues to affect our daily lives. But, what we should also note is that these connections are not simply old patterns of racism that are now long gone but continue to have some effects...Instead, racism is continuing in ways that remain connected to our past. Until we're able to notice these connections, it will be hard for us to convince other people who tend toward a post-racial perspective that we still have more work to do.

BREAK 15 minutes

BREAK 15 minutes

BREAK 15 minutes

BREAK 15 min

Section III

(1 hr 10 min)

Uncovering a Healing History

Materials: Butcher paper for questions (or half sheets), White Antiracist Biographies (Handouts 3.3 – 3.7)

Purpose of piece:

To investigate the benefits of knowing the hidden history of white antiracism

Say to Group: In most schools the history of racism in the U.S. is treated in some fashion, but usually not explored in depth. A few abolitionists or Civil Rights activists, like Martin Luther King, Jr. might be studied, but again, there is often a fairly superficial approach. This leaves many of us fairly ignorant about both the extent of racism and white supremacy that's pervaded our country's history, but it has also left us with a real lack of knowledge regarding those who have fought racism and white privilege throughout our country's history.

One thing we must acknowledge is that people of color have been courageously doing this work for centuries and are some of our best models. But it is also helpful to pay attention to the way white people have played a role. This is important history for us to know because it gives white people a history they can stand on that shows that there is a history of white anti-racism that can be followed.

This next exercise asks us to divide up into five small groups. Each group is going to receive a different biography to read featuring an anti-racist activist. The job of the small group is to read the excerpt together and answer the following questions on butcher paper. In about 25 minutes you will be responsible for presenting what you learned to the other groups.

Facilitators can choose to make enough copies for all individuals to leave with all biographies, or make only enough copies for each small group to have the one they are reading. If funds permit, it is good to allow all participants to have access to all biographies.

Small group questions: (25 minutes) (post on butcher paper)

1. What important contributions did/does this person make to antiracism efforts?
2. What qualities did/does this person exemplify?
3. What lessons can we learn from this person's life?

25 minutes (5 minutes each) for presentations

Facilitator Notes: *There are five antiracist white people highlighted in this workshop. Here are a few things to recognize and be prepared to discuss:*

- **Historical time period:** *Two of the individuals lived during our country's earlier history (1800's), two are known for their work during the Civil Rights era, and one is a contemporary individual.*
- **Reactions:** *Both in the earlier history and Civil Rights era, the individuals experienced violence and/or threats.*
 - *Although two lost their lives, they have each ultimately been celebrated in some way.*
 - *Although the contemporary individual is being celebrated for his work, keep in mind that his actions are oriented toward past acts by individuals. How do you imagine our society would react if his work targeted inequity in current institutions, such as our justice system?*
- **Method/Approach:** *Pay attention to which individuals try or tried to make change while operating WITHIN our systems as well as those choosing to stay OUTSIDE the system. Both can inspire violent reactions when committed action begins to disrupt the status quo.*

Large group questions following presentations: (20 minutes)

1. What feelings arise as we learn about these stories?
 - a. Fear? Inspiration? Frustration? Confusion?
 - b. What triggers these feelings?
2. Why is it important for these stories to be known?
3. How can knowing about these individuals and their actions support a witnessing practice?
4. What is the harm in these stories remaining hidden in the shadows?
5. How and where can we share these stories of anti-racism?

Wrap Up: It is essential for us to learn about some of this hidden history. For white people especially, we need to see exemplars, people that can model for us how we might work against racism. Even if we don't choose to act exactly as others have done in the past (as each time period calls for its own types of responses), these examples can help us know that we're not alone.

Yet, these stories can also raise concerns. Are we able to truly dedicate ourselves as these people did? This is why we need to continue to come together in community so that we can feel supported as we develop our skills and take our next steps in this work. Since every new step feels risky, having a community behind us can make it that much more likely we'll keep moving forward.

Section IV

(5 min)

Closing

Materials: None

Purpose of piece:

To acknowledge what we did today, bridge to next workshop, and allow people to check out of the space

Instructions: *Ask participants to go around and say one thing that they are taking away from this workshop today that seems significant to them. Thank the participants for their presence and contributions.*

Wrap Up: We hope that as you leave this workshop today you will walk away with a sense of how connected our daily lives are with our past. With this knowledge we can do two things 1) be more motivated to learn about our past in order to continue to understand our present, and 2) help other people see that even if we don't realize it, our lives are connected to our country's history of racism in really disturbing ways. But, we can't stay mired in the distress that often comes with this realization. We also need to locate the history that can support us and motivate us. There is a long-standing tradition of standing up against racism in this country. It is often hidden, but we can do our part of learn about it and hopefully learn from it.

WORKSHOP 3 MODIFICATIONS

Suggested

If you are unable to complete the entire 2hr 45-minute workshop, here are some alterations that could satisfy some goals:

- **2 hour option**
 - Eliminate break (reduces by 15 minutes)
 - Eliminate section II personal connection handout, use only partially filled in past-present connections handout (reduces by 15 minutes)
 - Reduce small group discussion in section III to 20 minutes (reduces by 5 minutes)
 - Reduce presentation times in section III to 20 minutes (reduces by 5 minutes)
 - Reduce group questions in section III following presentations to 15 min (reduces 5 minutes)

- **1 hour 30 min option**
 - Open with no discussion guidelines except agreement around confidentiality only, no timeline activity (10 min)
 - Eliminate section II personal connection handout, use only partially filled in past-present connections handout. (10 minutes)
 - Reduce section II group discussion (20 minutes)
 - Reduce small group discussion in section III by 5 minutes (20 minutes)
 - Reduce presentation times in section III (15 minutes)
 - Section III group questions following presentations (reduce to 15 minutes)