

Working Together to Remove Racial and Ethnic Barriers to Student Achievement



Facilitator Discussion Guide

DRAFT
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MCPS Study Circles Program

What are Study Circles?

Study Circles are a way to help parents, students, and staff address the racial and ethnic achievement gap in our schools. Study Circles are more than just a dialogue. They connect community organizing with dialogue and action.

Why Study Circles in Montgomery County Public Schools?

MCPS has found many schools experience the following challenges:

- Poor communication between parents and staff from different backgrounds
- Changing demographics of students
- School and parent leaders struggle to get participation from parents of all racial and ethnic backgrounds
- Students self segregate by racial and ethnic groups
- Many parents do not feel comfortable at the school
- Many African American and Latino students are not doing as well academically as white and Asian students

Vision of MCPS Study Circles

A school system where all students succeed regardless of racial or ethnic background.

Goal of the MCPS Study Circles Program:

To remove racial and ethnic barriers to student achievement and parent involvement in Montgomery County Public Schools, and to increase parent involvement.

The Study Circle Process

While some schools work with the Study Circles Office during only one study circle, many are discovering the value of a longer term process. A school may begin with one general study circle, followed by study circles focused on particular populations of parents, students, or staff. Following a study circle, the process may continue with the implementation of some of the actions that emerged from it. The Study Circles Office can provide facilitation assistance and support throughout this process.

Types of Study Circles

This guide is focused on preparing facilitators to lead a 6-week study circle with parents, staff, and sometimes students. Material can be adapted for use in shorter follow-up study circles with specific purposes or populations. In addition to 6-week study circles for parents and teachers, the Study Circles Office organizes study circles with staff only, staff with students and for parents and staff in Spanish.

Parent and Staff

Objectives for a Typical 6-week Study Circle:

- To build a unified group of diverse parents, teachers, and students that understand the challenges and benefits of a diverse school.
- To create personal and group action steps that address racial and ethnic barriers to student achievement.
- To encourage an environment in which racial and ethnic issues are talked about openly and productively.

Spanish Language (6 weeks, once a week and facilitated in Spanish)

Objective:

- To create a partnership among Latino parents and school staff to improve student achievement and parent involvement for Latino students and families.

Students (2 or 3 half days with middle and high school students)

Objective:

- To understand the students' experiences and perceptions on race and how race impacts their education.

School or Central Services Staff (Retreats or weekly sessions)

Objectives:

- To create a team that has the trust and skills to address institutional barriers to success.
- To provide an opportunity for staff at all levels to voice their concerns and experiences.
- To develop action steps based on common ground.

Students and Staff (2 or 3 half days with middle and high school students)

Objective:

- To provide an opportunity for students and staff to discuss racial barriers in a productive dialogue.

Understanding the Sessions and Activities

This facilitator guide is organized to assist facilitators in helping participants:

- Build lasting relationships among diverse stakeholders
- Become more aware of the issues, their own beliefs, and the perspectives of people who are from different backgrounds
- Develop action plans that will address racial and ethnic barriers to student achievement and parent involvement.

Each session, and each activity, is designed specifically to meet these goals. As a facilitator, you need to pay attention to all three of these goals throughout the study circle. Study Circle groups however, are always different. They won't respond the same way to all activities. You may need to adapt the sessions or activities to meet the specific needs of your group. To do this successfully, you must understand the goals of the activities, how they fit in with one another, and how they fit into the overall design of the study circle.

- Sessions One and Two are designed to develop trusting relationships. ***The facilitator's role is to help people feel comfortable, get to know each other, and share personal stories.***

- Sessions Three and Four are designed to have honest and challenging conversations about race and the impact of race on student achievement and parent involvement. ***Your role as a facilitator is to ask probing questions and challenge the participants to react to one another.***

- Sessions Five and Six are meant to develop action steps that will address the racial and ethnic barriers. ***In these sessions, you have a more directive role as you push the participants to reach the goal of developing action steps, and encourage them to take ownership of their plan.***



SESSION 1

Session One is designed to get participants ready for future sessions. They will not talk much about school. They get to know each other, develop ground rules, and begin to become a cohesive group. The trust being created is vital to insure the group is able to talk honestly in Sessions Three and Four. The session begins with the facilitator explaining the process and where it will lead. After setting ground rules, participants engage in small group activities that help them feel comfortable, get to know each other, and begin building trust. Activities include:

- Welcome, Introductions, and Logistics
- Establishing Ground Rules
- Getting to Know Each Other
- Speed Meeting

SESSION 2

Trust building continues, as participants learn about each other's cultures. The opportunity to tell and hear their stories allows individuals to share the aspects of themselves that are more complex than what can be immediately seen about them or their position in the community. By the end of the session, most participants feel like they have gotten to know their fellow participants in a personal and deep level. Your role as a facilitator is to create an atmosphere where everyone feels comfortable to participate and to share personal stories. Activities include:

- Hello Circle
- Cultural Bingo
- Cultural Timeline

SESSION 3

The focus and tone of the study circle changes in Session Three. The activities are meant to get participants to discuss and challenge each other about racial issues. The activities begin with a light conversation about the homework and get increasingly provocative. The facilitator's job in Sessions Three and Four is to probe and push participants. Expect many of the participants to be uncomfortable and frustrated. Activities include:

- Reviewing the Homework (looking at their school and home through a racial lens)
- Stereotypes
- Does Skin Color make a Difference in Communities and Schools?

SESSION 4

This session builds on Session Three by asking participants to discuss how racial issues impact the school. By the end of the session, the group should have identified and prioritized specific racial and ethnic issues to student achievement and parent involvement that they want to address. Facilitators can change/adapt the statements in *Where Do You Stand* to make them more relevant to that specific school. Activities include:

- Looking at School Data
- Where Do You Stand? Does Race Affect Student Achievement in This School?
- What are the Racial and Ethnic issues/problems related to Student Achievement and Parent Involvement?

SESSION 5

Prior to Session 5, facilitators assess the group and decide between several options for this session. The facilitator becomes more directive, to help the participants do action planning. In Session Five, participants discuss barriers or causes to the issues before moving to action. The chart on page 62. illustrates this progression. Depending on the options chosen for Session 5, activities may include:

- Experience Issues Through the Reader's Theatre
- Structural Racism
- Brainstorm Action Ideas

SESSION 6

By the end of Session Six, the study circle should have an action plan, or plans, and specific next steps that insure the actions will be implemented. Make sure you have discussed specific next steps before you conclude.

- Prioritize Action
- Complete Action Worksheets
- Next Steps for the group and personal action
- Closing

Preparing for the Study Circle

A bit of preparation will go a long way in making sure the Study Circle will be a success. Here are a few suggestions from the Study Circle Office and experienced study circle facilitators to help you get off to a good start.

Coordination with the Study Circle Office

The Study Circle Office is responsible for coordinating with the school and managing logistics. SC staff will schedule the Information Meeting, coordinate with the school regarding who will be participating, send out reminders, and provide all materials.

It might be helpful for you to:

- Check with the office to see whether this is the first study circle to be held at this school and if there is any other relevant background information.
- Obtain notes or otherwise learn what transpired at the Information Meeting (if you weren't present). And learn about the background information regarding why the school has chosen to hold a study circle at this time.
- Confirm the exact times, dates, and room the SC will be meeting in.
- Find out whether the SC will be in English only or bilingual. Ask who the interpreter will be (if applicable) and obtain contact information.
- Obtain your co-facilitator's contact information.
- Contact SC staff if you and your co-facilitator need additional materials provided.
- Communicate with SC staff in each week's Facilitator Notes any additions in weekly reminder emails to participants
- Clarify whether you or the SC Office will be available to support the participants after the SC has concluded with action planning and implementation

Clarify Background for this Study Circle

Clarify with the SC Office what the priority should be for this study circle? Is it the first one for the school? If so, is the goal primarily to build relationships and get comfortable talking about race? Is it a 2nd or 3rd study circle with a primary goal of action and implementation? This will help you select alternative exercises in Session 5. However, most of the decision will hinge upon the group itself.

Coordination with your Co-Facilitator

It is important for co-facilitators to meet prior to beginning a study circle. During this meeting, the co-facilitators should:

- Get to know each other informally. Take the time to chat and learn a little about each other so that you can begin to build a rapport.
- Discuss your facilitation and communication styles, preferences, concerns, and pet peeves.
- Review the outline for Session One, decide who will lead each part and who will scribe where appropriate. Decide who will model where it is needed, and share what you will model.
- Make a plan for who will write up, review, and submit Facilitator Notes each week to SC staff.
- One or both co-Facilitators should contact the interpreter to briefly get to know him/her and discuss how you will work together.
- Prior to each session, it is helpful to review the questions in the facilitator session notes to know what you will need to report on, review the attendance sheet to see who may have missed and needs to be caught up or reminded.
- Prior to each session, review the goal of the session and activities, agenda, and “Facilitator Preparation” and “Challenges and Consideration” section.

Review Facilitation Strategies

Each Study Circle will have unique opportunities and challenges. To help prepare you for the possibilities, see **Annex C: Tips for Facilitators** for specific advice on working with different populations and situations. The tips include:

- Facilitation Skills and Strategies
- Working with Cultural Differences
- Working with Groups where Literacy is a Concern
- Working with Interpreters
- Working with Students
- Responses to Typical Challenges

Using this Discussion Guide


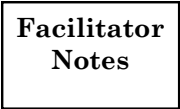

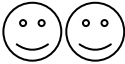
This guide was designed to assist facilitators leading 6-week study circles with parents, staff, and students. The sections provide **scripts** (sample language) that facilitators can adapt to their own speaking style. Each session is organized into 4 main sections:

- **Session Guide**: A quick overview of how the session fits in with others and describes the goals for the activities in the session. It also includes the agenda, materials needed, set-up directions, what the facilitator needs prepare, and what to do after the Study Circle session.
- **Challenges & Considerations**: This section provides facilitators with the challenges that may come up during the session as well as considerations to remember for the session.
- **Detailed Directions**: This section contains the detailed directions and the script for how to lead the activity. The sections also contain facilitator notes that provide tips for the activities.
- **Alternative Activities**: This section provides activities that can be used instead of the regular activity. Guidelines are also provided to help you determine the best option.

In some sessions, there will be an additional section:

- **Translated Materials**: This section contains activities that have already been translated.

Key

M	= Model the exercise
	= Keep notes on chart paper OR prepare a chart ahead of time
	= Directions on how to lead the activity are located in the boxes. Tips on how to handle situations that may come up in the activity are also included.
	= Places where the facilitator can shorten or extend time as needed.
A	= Alternative exercise that can be used
	= Exercise can be done in pairs or small groups

Using this Discussion Guide (continued)

Definitions

It is hard to find a shared definition for terms such as race, ethnicity, culture and racism. The challenge is even greater when participants come from so many different countries and have different levels of education.

After a great deal of discussion, the writers of this guide decided not to offer definitions. If participants ask about definitions, have the group brainstorm the terms together.

When asking questions, facilitators should use the terms race and ethnicity together and let participants self define their racial/ethnic group.

Since MCPS uses the terms African American and Hispanic to describe those races, facilitators will generally use those terms, particularly when discussing the data in Session 4. Participants can be encouraged to use the terms of their choice, i.e. Black, Latino, white, Asian, etc.

Session One: Getting to Know Each Other

HOW THIS SESSION FITS IN WITH OTHERS

Session One is designed to get participants ready for future sessions. They will not talk much about school. They get to know each other, develop ground rules, and begin to become a cohesive group. The trust being created is vital to insure the group is able to talk honestly in Sessions Three and Four.

The session begins with the facilitator explaining the process and where it will lead. After setting ground rules, participants engage in small group activities that help them feel comfortable, get to know each other, and begin building trust.

GOALS FOR ACTIVITIES IN THIS SESSION

Ground rules: To help make the dialogue safe & productive; giving ownership to the participants.

Getting to Know Each Other: To get people talking with each other and help them get people over their nervousness and begin feeling comfortable in the group.

Speed Meeting: To begin building relationships and practice talking about race and ethnicity. To capture what the participants would like to get out of the study circle.

AGENDA

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Program Overview
3. Explain Facilitator's role
4. Hello Circle
5. Explain journals
6. Point out and explain Posters for: Action Ideas, Things We Are Already Doing, Issues, and Parking Lot
7. Ground rules
8. Commonalities and Differences
9. Speed Meeting
10. Homework

Session One: Getting to Know Each Other

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Door signs
- Nametags
- Markers
- Pens
- Sign-in sheet
- Chart paper & tape
- Photo release forms
- Journals
- Snack sign up sheet

FACILITATOR PREPARATION

- Facilitators should talk prior to Session 1 about their Commonalities and Differences so they can model this in Part 5 & model in Part 6
- Pre-chart the posters: Action Ideas, Things We Are Already Doing, Issues, and Parking Lot
- Facilitators should talk prior to the session about modeling the timeline events.

SET UP

1. Arrive 30 minutes early.
2. Make sure correct number of chairs are in circle.
3. Make sure everyone has a journal and a photo release form on their chair.
4. Hang signs on front door and in hallways as needed.
5. Set up table near door with nametags and attendance sheet.
6. Hang posters on a wall. If it is a bilingual study circle, make sure posters are in both languages.
7. Find out where bathrooms are and where child care will be.
8. Introduce yourself and welcome people as they arrive.

AFTER THE STUDY CIRCLE

- Don't forget to fill out your facilitator notes!
- Make sure you let the Study Circle staff know if someone did not attend the session.
- If you are conducting a bilingual study circle, make sure the interpreter translates the ground rules and expectations before the next session.

Challenges & Considerations

- Throughout session 1, the facilitator should help everyone understand why the group is here and where the Study Circle program is going.
- The facilitators should work to make everyone feel comfortable and want to come back for session 2.
- If the study circle is bilingual, make sure directions are not only clear but short and easy for the interpreter to follow along.
- Start to get a sense of the participants' education and English-speaking level
- Begin noting the group's dynamic
 - ◊ Who will you need to encourage to speak out and bring out in the next session?
 - ◊ Who are the participants that might be the more vocal?
- When explaining the "Posters," keep in mind, there are some posters that may be used more often than others. The most commonly used is the "Issue" poster. This will serve as a visual and will be referred back to in later sessions.
 - ◊ A lot of time does not need to be spent on explaining the "Posters."
- When modeling, remember that the deeper you go as you model an answer the deeper your participants will go. Try to find a balance between keeping your modeling brief (to show participants how long you want them to speak for) and disclosing something personal about yourself and your experiences.

**PART 1:
WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND LOGISTICS
(10—20 Minutes)**

Background for Facilitators:

As the facilitator, you will set the tone for the first meeting. It is important to keep your language consistent with the goal of each session.

GOAL: To help the group feel comfortable by explaining why we're here and where we're going.

Welcome

Welcome! Thank you for coming to the first session of our 6-week study circle at _____ school. Today we're going to go over some logistics, establish ground rules for our work together, and start getting to know each other. Before we begin, a few details—bathrooms are _____ and child care is _____.

Goal of Study Circle Program

Many of you attended the information meeting on _____. We are so glad you decided to commit to the full six sessions. In case you missed the information meeting, the goal of SC is to remove racial and ethnic barriers to student achievement in Montgomery County Public Schools, and to increase parent involvement.

Introductions

Let's introduce ourselves, and then we'll talk about how we're going to work together to move closer to that goal. Please tell the group your name and your connection to the school. If you have a child in this school, please tell us his or her name.

Working with an Interpreter (optional)

1. Earlier we introduced _____, he/she is interpreting for XXX. Sometimes it is challenging to have multiple languages in a study circle, we'll have to go a little slower or pause sometimes. But through the many study circles we've conducted we've found it to be well worth it to enable the participation of a diverse group of parents in the circle. And it gets easier! Like the facilitators, the interpreter will not share his/her own views, he/she will simply translate.
2. When we speak to _____ (person being interpreted for), please look at him/her directly, not at the interpreter.

Why Schools Have Study Circles

In your packet, you have a number of materials we will use each week. Please write your name on it. On page 3, there are some statements which describe why other schools have wanted to have a study circle.

- Poor communication between parents and staff from different backgrounds
- School and parent leaders struggle to get participation from parents all racial and ethnic backgrounds
- Many parents do not feel comfortable at the school
- Many African American and Latino students are not doing as well as white and Asian students

Facilitator Notes

It might be helpful to write the objectives on a flipchart to be posted each week, or bring back again in Session 6.

Study Circle Objectives

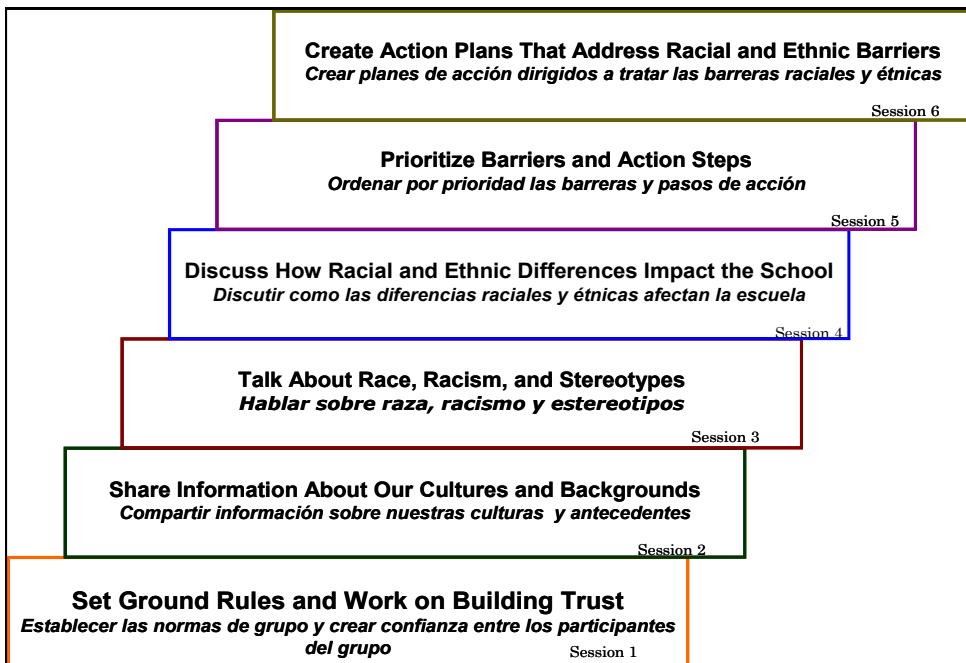
At your school, your administrators asked the SC Office to work with the school community because of: _____

Our Objectives for this study circle are to

- a) build a unified group of diverse parents, teachers, and students that understands the challenges and the benefits of a diverse school;
- b) to encourage an environment in which racial and ethnic issues are talked about openly and productively; and
- c) to create personal and group action steps that address the racial and ethnic barriers to student achievement and parent involvement

How We Will Work Together

- When we do a study circle, we follow a process that’s been used in many Montgomery County schools and in other settings around the country to help people get to know each other and develop solutions. If you take a look at page 4 in your packet, you’ll find a model of our process for the next six weeks.



- Right now, we're here in the lowest box. Tonight, we're going to set ground rules and start to get to know each other. We will begin building trust. With each week, we'll be getting to know each other better and gaining more trust to prepare us to address the nature of the challenges in this school, and in Sessions Five and Six, we'll talk about what we can do to address those challenges.
- By the last session we'll have developed an **action worksheet** like the one on page 23 of your packet. You can see that this group identified a problem at their school related to racial and ethnic barriers to student achievement, and then developed some action ideas to address the problem. We will do this together, addressing the issues that impact your school.
- At the end of the study circle, the participants often present their accomplishments to the School Leadership Team, and continue working together to implement one or more of the actions.
- We facilitators and the Study Circles Office will support you during and after the study circle has concluded.
- Are there any questions so far?

Role of Facilitators

Our role as facilitators is to help create a space for your discussion. We will not be sharing our own views. We've been trained by the Study Circles Office in how to guide you through the process. Sometimes we will need to move you forward or help you stay on track, and we'll do our best to make sure everyone can be heard. Sometimes you might see us taking notes, this is to help us remember important points that should be brought back again later.

Today we're talking a lot to explain how we're going to work together, but normally you will do all the talking!

Journals

1. In your packets, you have some blank pages at the end that you can use as a journal. These are yours to keep and no one but you will see what you have written. As we go through these next six weeks together, you can use these journals as you please.
2. Some of the conversations we have in this study circle will be hard. They may bring up feelings or ideas that you do not want to talk about it. You can use the journals to write these feelings down.

Posters (Put the posters up in all the languages of your participants)

1. You'll notice that around the room we have hung up some pieces of paper. Let me take a minute to explain these. The *Action Ideas* Sheet: as we begin discussing things, ideas may come up about possible actions we can take. If we're not in Session 5 or 6, we'll want to hold onto that idea and come back and discuss it again when it's the right time for it. So, if someone comes up with an idea for action, anyone can write that idea on the *Action Ideas* sheet and we'll talk about it later.
2. The *Things We Are Already Doing* sheet is related. If someone comes up with an action idea, but someone else in the group knows that the school is already working on that idea, we can put that information up on the *Things We're Already Doing* Sheet.
3. In Session 4, you will work together to identify issues that you want to address at your school. The *Issues* sheet will help us keep track of concerns that come up each week.
4. Finally, there's the *Parking Lot*. Sometimes, we'll begin a discussion which is important, but we might not have time to go into it right then and there. If we have time later in that session or another session we'll return to it. Other times, the discussion may be a bit of a tangent. So, if that happens, we can write the idea on the *Parking Lot* sheet and return to it at another time.

<p>Facilitator Notes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is helpful to use the "Issues" poster each week to keep track of issues that have come up during discussion• You do not need to consult the group before adding things you have heard to the poster

**PART 2: HELLO CIRCLE
(5 minutes)**

GOAL: *To give people a break from sitting and listening, relax, loosen up, start to get to know each other.*

Every week when we come in, we will spend 5 minutes in a Hello Circle to get us ready. When I say "Go", everyone will get up and greet one another by saying hello or greeting in whatever way you want to greet. When we have finished, we'll stand in a circle and see if we missed anyone.

PART 3: RACIAL HEALING
(5 minutes)

GOAL: To clarify the goal of the study circle and challenge participants to allow themselves to become vulnerable.

1. Now let's return to our seats. I'd like to read a quote (or ask someone to read it) that describes what we hope we can all keep in mind over the next six weeks. You can follow along on page 3 of your packet.

"We have run away from race for far too long. We are so afraid of inflaming the wound that we fail to deal with what remains America's central social problem. We will never achieve racial healing if we do not confront each other, take risks, make ourselves vulnerable, put pride aside, say all the things we are not supposed to say in mixed company – in short, put on the table our fears, trepidations, wishes, and hopes"

Harlan L. Dalton, author of Racial Healing

2. *Pause for reflection.*
3. We want to highlight from this quote that these six weeks provide an opportunity for us to come together and talk about issues we might have been afraid to talk about before. We want to create a space to talk about race in a respectful and productive way.
4. This is what we hope we can all do here over the next six weeks. Any thoughts or comments?


PART 4: ESTABLISHING GROUND RULES
(15 Minutes)

GOAL: To begin to create a safe environment for sharing deeply and working effectively together.

1. Thinking about the quote we just heard, let's think about what would help us do what the author suggests. Ground rules will help us confront each other and make ourselves vulnerable, in a safe environment. Ground rules are meant to help us have a productive and honest conversation as a group.
2. Please tell us your ideas and we will capture them on this chart, which we will post each week.
3. What would make you feel safe to share personal experiences and views or allow you to go beyond your usual comfort zone, recognizing you might not always feel comfortable? What would get in the way of being honest and productive?

Facilitator Notes

- The ground rules are very important to the discussion, especially as the sessions become more challenging. Take the time to explain the purpose of ground rules and to develop a list that the participants really own.
- Ask the group to come up with the ground rules. You can use the ones here to make suggestions if the group doesn't suggest them or to ask questions, i.e. "what about confidentiality?"
 - ◇ *Listen and treat one another with respect.*
 - ◇ *Each person gets a chance to talk.*
 - ◇ *One person talks at a time. Do not cut people off.*
 - ◇ *Speak for yourself. Don't try to speak for "your group".*
 - ◇ *If you feel hurt by what someone says, say so, and say why. ("Ouch")*
 - ◇ *It's okay to disagree.*
 - ◇ *Some of the things we will say in the study circle will be private (personal). We will not tell these stories to other people, unless we all say it is OK.*
 - ◇ *Everyone is willing to be open and honest.*
 - ◇ *Cell phones on vibrate.*
 - ◇ *Start and end on time.*

 Make sure everyone understands the suggestion and buys into it before listing it on the chart paper.

PART 5: COMMONALITIES AND DIFFERENCES

(15-20 Minutes)



GOAL: *To begin to build relationships, in a neutral way.*

1. Now we're going to start our "getting to know each other" exercise. In a moment, we will divide into small groups of 3 or 4 by counting off. We might need to move some people around, since we want people to get to know someone new.
2. We'll give each group a sheet of chart paper and markers. We would like you to talk together and discover 3 things you all have in common and 3 things that make you different from one another. Make sure each group records their answers on chart paper, then we will share some of what you learned.
3. For example, my co-facilitator and I discovered _____, _____, _____.
4. Please count off by 3s (or 4s). Now you can start talking! Please choose one person to write down your answers on the chart paper we're giving you. We'll give you about 10 minutes to talk, and then we'll share with the group. We'll let you know when to stop.
5. Debrief as a large group: go around the room and have some of the groups answer.

PART 6: SPEED MEETING

(30 –40 Minutes)



GOAL: *To begin to build relationships and practice talking about race and ethnicity.*

1. On page 7, you will find *Speed Meeting*. This is another fun way to get to know each other.
2. When I say go, find an appointment for 3:00, 6:00, 9:00 and 12:00. Pick people you do not know well. Write the person's name on the line. Your 3:00 has to be the same as your partner's 3:00.
3. Once you have found 4 appointments, come back to the circle and we'll give you the next instruction.

Facilitator Notes

M Facilitators should complete your own answers prior to session so you can model the exercise to encourage participants to share.

- Make sure the groups are mixed by roles: parents, teachers, and students, as well as by race or ethnicity.


M Facilitators can take turns modeling the answers to 3:00, 6:00, and 9:00 at the appropriate times.


A See Alternative Activities for additional speed meeting questions

Personal Notes

4. You will have about 4 minutes for each question. After you discuss the question with your partner, we'll ask some of you to share with the whole group something that stood out from your conversation. Then we'll tell you to find your next date. At the end, we'll ask you each to share your answers to the 12:00 question.
5. First, we'll model our own answers to the 3:00 question to help you understand what we're after. My partner said _____.
6. Now please find your 3:00 appointment!
7. *After 3:00:* "let's stay where we are and share with the group what stood out about your conversation?" (*same for 6:00 and 9:00*).
8. Now let's go around the circle and share what you said for the 12:00 question. I'll capture your answers on a chart and we'll review it again later in the process.
9. Why do you think we did this activity? What did you get out of participating in this activity?

Questions	
3:00	— What is your racial, ethnic, and/or cultural background? Talk a little about your background.
6:00	— Describe the community in which you grew up. What were the racial and ethnic makeup of your neighbors?
9:00	— Think about your own school when you were a child. What role did your parents or other adults play in your education? What were parents expected to do?
12:00	— What do you want to accomplish through participation in this study circle? What are your hopes and expectations for this study

 **If you're ahead of schedule allow more discussion of 12:00 question.**

Facilitator Notes	
•	Remember to save about 15 minutes at the end for debriefing as a whole group.
•	Debrief after each question. During the debrief, you don't need to hear from everyone. Ask anything that stood out for them.
•	Have everyone read their answers to their 12:00 date.
	<i>Chart the answers from the 12:00 date. Issues should also be captured on the Issues poster.</i>

Personal Notes

PART 7: GIVE HOMEWORK FOR NEXT SESSION
(5 Minutes)

GOAL: *This homework will prepare participants for the cultural timeline activity next week. It will help the group continue deepening the trust and understanding among participants. The questions help participants think about the experiences that have shaped them and help the group build a new sense of connection.*

1. Next week, we are going to continue deepening the trust and understanding within the group. We have some homework that will help move the conversation along next session.
2. We all have events that have impacted our lives in some way. In preparation for next week, we want you to think about (or write down) some of these events.
3. Think about events in three categories:
 - ◇ What are the important ***national or global*** events that you lived through (for example: the Assassination of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., or war breaking out in your country of origin)?
 - ◇ What are the important ***personal*** events (for example: parents divorcing, your marrying, or moving to a new place)?
 - ◇ Think about an event or experience that impacted the way you think about ***racial/ethnic differences***.

PART 8: CLOSING
(10 Minutes)

GOAL: *To cover logistics and enable participants to provide concrete input as well as share their feelings about the session.*

We've covered a lot today! Now we just have some brief logistics and we'll wrap up.

Snacks

The principal provided the food for tonight, but the school can't do it for each session. Many study circles create a list and different people bring in snacks each week. Do you want to take turns bringing in snacks and drinks? We will pass around a sign up sheet.

Positives and Changes

1. Don't forget that our next session will be at the same time next week. We'll meet right here in the _____. Please try to be on time.
2. Each week we will end the session by asking you what went well and what should be changed for next time. This is important. If you don't tell us what was good and what needs improvement, we're going to do everything the same next time.
 - ◇ What went well today? What could have been better? OR What should we do differently next time?

One Word Closing


- ◇ We're going to do one last closing before we leave.
- ◇ Please stand up.
- ◇ Let's go around the circle and say just one word about how you are feeling about the study circle.

Conclude

Facilitator Notes

M After giving the directions, model this exercise. The more personal you are in your modeling the more the participants will open up. This is one of the times for the facilitators to take risks and be personal. Don't forget to explain how the event impacted you.

- If you and your co-facilitator feel the group would benefit more from doing Cultural Sharing, refer to page 31 for the Cultural Sharing homework assignment.
- If you do not have time to model the cultural timeline don't worry about. It can be modeled in session 2.

 **Positives and Changes:** Put a line down the middle of a piece of chart paper. On the top left write *Positives (+)*. On the top right, write *Changes (Δ)*.

- Fill out the facilitator notes as soon as possible after each session.
- Make sure you let the SC office know if someone did not attend the session.

Alternative Activities

ADDITIONAL SPEED MEETING QUESTIONS (Part 6)

From Staff Study Circles (make sure to adjust homework if using these)

- What are the racial/ethnic backgrounds of
 - ◊ the friends you normally have over at your house?
 - ◊ the friends you socialize with outside the house?
 - ◊ your current neighbors?
 - ◊ the main characters of the last two movies you have seen and/or your favorite TV show?
- How does your racial and/or ethnic background impact your decisions as a leader in MCPS? How does your racial or ethnic background impact the way your colleagues view you?

If there are students involved, below are alternative questions to ask:

- Tell your partner two things about you that are true and one thing that is a lie. Ask them to guess which one is the lie.
- What is your favorite food to eat? What do you hate to eat? Are there certain foods your family eats on special occasions? Are there foods that come from your racial/ethnic/cultural background that you think the other students may not know about?
- What do you know about your name? Where did it come from? Does it relate to your background? Also, tell your partner your racial, ethnic, or cultural background and something you know about your background.

Translated Materials

SPEED MEETING QUESTIONS

3:00 — What is your racial, ethnic, and/or cultural background? Talk a little about your background.

(¿Cuál es su grupo racial, étnico o cultural? Hable un poco acerca de su origen?)

6:00 — Describe the community in which you grew up. What were the racial and ethnic makeup of your neighbors?

(Describa la comunidad en la que creció. ¿A qué grupos raciales o étnicos pertenecían sus vecinos?)

9:00 — Think about your own school when you were a child. What role did your parents or other adults play in your education? What were parents expected to do.

(Piense acerca de la escuela a la que pertenecía cuando usted era un niño/a/ ¿Qué papel jugaron sus padres y otros adultos en su educación? ¿Qué se esperaba que hicieran sus padres?)

12:00 — What do you want to accomplish through participation in this study circle? What are your hopes and expectations for this study circle?

(¿Qué usted quiere lograr con la participación en este Círculo de Estudio? Cuáles son sus deseos y expectativas para éste Círculo de Estudio?)

Session Two: Sharing Our Cultures

HOW THIS SESSION FITS IN WITH OTHERS

In **Session Two**, trust building continues, as participants learn about each other's cultures. The opportunity to share their stories allows individuals to reveal the aspects of themselves that are more complex than what can be immediately seen about them or their position in the community.

By the end of the session, most participants feel like they have gotten to know their fellow participants in a personal and deep level. Your role as a facilitator is to create an atmosphere where everyone feels comfortable to participate and to share personal stories.

GOALS FOR ACTIVITIES IN THIS SESSION

Cultural Bingo: The main goal of this activity is to give the participants a fun way to work together on something. It will help them build trust. We also, want them to think about the diversity of the county.

Cultural Timeline: This activity continues to deepen the trust and understanding within the group by helping participants think about the experiences that have shaped them. The goal is to help the group build a new sense of connection to one another.

AGENDA

1. Welcome Back
2. Hello Circle (*OR* Alternative Icebreaker)
3. Cultural Bingo
4. Cultural Timeline
5. Homework
6. Closing

Session Two: Getting to Know Each Other

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Door signs
- Nametags
- Markers
- Pens
- Sign-in sheet
- Chart paper & tape
- Extra photo release forms
- Extra journals
- Cultural Bingo
- Cultural Timeline
- Ground Rules
- Snack sign up Sheet

FACILITATOR PREPARATION

- Facilitators should make sure they have the Cultural Timeline before attending the session or that it will be brought to the location by a Study Circles staff member.
- Facilitators should review the answers to the Cultural Bingo so that the answers are fresh in mind.

SET UP

1. Arrive 30 minutes early.
2. Make sure correct number of chairs are in the room and arrange in small groups of 4 or 5.
3. Hang directional signs as needed
4. Set up table near door with nametags, etc.
5. Hang Ground Rules and posters.
6. Prepare cultural timeline.
7. Identify space to hang up cultural timeline where people can gather for discussion.
8. If anyone missed the previous week, try to sit down with them and review what we did, show them the packet, explain the posters and ground rules. Note that no one can join the group after this week.

AFTER THE STUDY CIRCLE

- Don't forget to fill out your facilitator notes!
- Make sure you let the Study Circle staff know if someone did not attend the session.
- Receive data from Study Circle office and go over the data with the principal at Session 3.

Challenges & Considerations

- The Cultural Bingo activity is used as a way for participants to engage and work together in small groups. This bingo activity also represents the breadth of diversity in Montgomery County and someone from every culture in the bingo has been a participant of a Study Circle. For many participants, it is an exciting opportunity to see themselves and their culture/traditions/holidays represented in an activity.
 - ◊ The Cultural Bingo however is not meant to be a class. *Learning every detail is not necessary.* Keep in mind that bingo is not a test and participants don't need to walk away knowing everything.
- When going over the Bingo answers, it is not necessary to explain each box in detail. It should be a quick review.
 - ◊ The study circles office has a PowerPoint with photos that provide the answers. Let us know if you have a computer, LCD projector or promethean board in the room where you do the circles.
 - ◊ A helpful tip for setting up the bingo: Set up the room so that chairs are arranged in small groups of 4 or 5. When participants start coming, have them fill up a small group before starting a new small group. Make sure the staff is spread out among the groups.
 - ◊ And at the normal start time of the study circle. Explain the directions of the bingo activity and have the group start even if not all the participants are there. This will allow participants who are running a little late to trickle in without missing anything. Have participants who come in later join an existing small group.
- The Cultural Timeline gives participants the chance to share about themselves and their experiences, as it relates to race, ethnicity and culture, and time may be an issue. It is important that each person is given adequate time to share.
 - ◊ A helpful tip for setting up the timeline: Have a break planned in so that participants can put up their 3 events on the timeline during the break time. That gives participants an opportunity to think about their events if they forgot to do it for homework and time is not wasted.
 - ◊ Be sure to manage your time carefully. The Cultural Timeline tends to take up a significant amount of time, depending on the group. Make sure to watch the time to ensure that you have enough time for everyone to share.
 - ◊ One suggestion is to "Pass the Watch". Decide on how long each person gets to share. Everyone will help keep time for the person to their right. So, if one person volunteers to share, the participant to his/her left will be the timekeeper.
- If the study circle is bilingual, make sure directions are not only clear but short and easy for the interpreter to follow along
- Your role as a facilitator is to create an atmosphere in which the participants feel comfortable to participate and to share their personal stories.
- The trust building will continue throughout this session as participants continue to learn more about each other's cultures.
 - ◊ The opportunity to share their stories allows individuals to reveal aspects of themselves that are more complex than can be immediately seen about them or by the role at the school/in the community.
- There may be some participants who are more vocal while others who seem to remain quiet. Make observations of these group dynamics. Also, be transparent to the participants, letting them know that you may have to ask people to give other participants the opportunity to share.

PART 1: WELCOME BACK
(10 minutes)

Goal: To help people feel comfortable and review what we did last week.

1. Last week we started to get to know each other. Could someone please sum up what we did?
2. Our goals for today are to learn about different cultures and to continue creating trust among group members.
3. On our agenda is our Cultural Bingo, which is a fun activity where we will learn about the different cultures that make up Montgomery County. Then we will do an exercise called the Cultural Timeline, which is a way for us to learn more about each other. Finally we will give you some homework for next week, and do our closing.
4. Let's briefly review the ground rules we made last week. Does anything need to be added or changed?

PART 2: CULTURAL BINGO
(20 Minutes)

Goal: To give people the opportunity to work together in a fun and informal way. To get people thinking about how diverse the county is and have people see themselves in an activity.

1. Today we are going to start off with an activity that will get us thinking.
2. You will work together in groups.
3. Each group will have about 10 minutes to try and complete as many squares as possible. Work together. Remember, no smart phones allowed.
4. At the end of the 10 minutes we will go over the answers and see which team got the most answers correct.

After the reviewing the answers, ask, why do you think we did this activity?

Facilitator Notes

- Make sure everyone signs the attendance sheet.
- If there is a new participant who missed the last week, you could repeat the introductions.
- Set Up: Arrange the chairs so that they are in groups of 4 or 5. Have participants fill in each small group as they arrive, making sure they are as diverse as possible. Start this activity when the study circle is suppose to start so that there is enough time for the cultural timeline.
- The cultural bingo answer review should take no more than 10 minutes. It should be quick and details don't need to be emphasized.

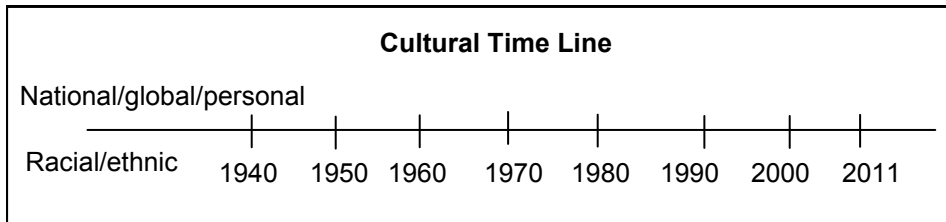
Personal Notes

PART 3: CULTURAL TIMELINE
(40—50 Minutes)

GOAL: *This activity builds on the speed meeting and cultural bingo to continue deepening the trust and understanding within the group. The questions help participants think about the experiences that have shaped them, and help the group build a new sense of connection.*

Instructions

1. This exercise will help us to learn more about one another. The goals are to help us share our personal stories and understand the experiences that have influenced who we are today.
2. We're going to think of important events in our lives, write them on the time line, and then share them with the group.
3. First, take a few minutes to think about memorable events or turning points in your life. In your journals write down events in these three categories:
 - ◇ What are the important ***national or global*** events that you lived through (for example: the Assassination of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., or war breaking out in your country of origin)?
 - ◇ What are the important ***personal*** events (for example: parents divorcing, your marrying, or moving to a new place)?
 - ◇ Think about an event or experience that impacted the way you think about ***racial/ethnic differences***.



4. After you have written in your journal, write one example for each category on the timeline. Several people can be writing on the chart at once.
5. Now that everyone has written, let's gather around the timeline and see the experiences that have shaped each of us.
6. I'd like to ask each of you to share one of your stories and tell is how it impacted you. If we have time, you might be able to share two stories. Who would like to begin?

Personal Notes

Facilitator Notes

- Having participants share is the most important part of this exercise. Make sure you leave time for story telling.
- Tape together a few pieces of chart paper on the wall. Put a line across the middle, with each decade listed sequentially. Adjust the years and spacing according to the ages of the participants.
- Use a table if there is no wall space. Groups often show the timeline in their presentations after the study circle, so please keep the timeline.

M After giving the directions, model this exercise. The more personal you are in your modeling the more the participants will open up. This is one of the times for the facilitators to take risks and be personal. Don't forget to explain how the event impacted you.

- Ask people to identify *one* item that is really important to them and to explain why. Try to encourage participants to share the racial/ethnic event.
- If you have time after everyone has shared, ask if anyone thought of similar stories after hearing someone else's.

A Alternative or additional category: Share a school experience from your own or your child's life. (from Spanish language study circle guide)

**PART 4: GIVE HOMEWORK FOR NEXT SESSION
(5 Minutes)**

Goal: To encourage introspection about the impact of race on participants' personal lives and the school community. For parents, it invites dialogue with children about race at school.

1. Next week we really begin talking about our experiences and opinions on racism and cultural misunderstandings. The homework for next session will help us prepare for the conversation.
2. Think about and write down answers to the following questions regarding this school and your home. (Parents can ask their children for help with the school questions). The questions are on page 9 of your packet.

School:

- ◇ How does the racial/ethnic make up of the staff compare to the racial/ethnic make up of the students?
- ◇ Do kids from different racial and ethnic groups sit and play together at lunch, recess, on the bus, etc.?
- ◇ Are the individual classes as diverse as the total school?
- ◇ Do parents of different backgrounds talk and have relationships with each other?

Home:

What are the racial/ethnic backgrounds of:

- ◇ The friends you usually have at your house?
- ◇ Most of the customers who shop at your grocery store?
- ◇ The main characters in the last two or three movies you have seen and of your favorite television program?

**PART 5: CLOSING
(10 Minutes)**

Goal: To encourage participants' introspection about what they have learned, and gain their insights into the experience thus far.

1. Remember to write a journal entry reflecting on today's meeting. Note the racial/cultural relations taking place within the group so far. This is an activity which you can do at the end of each session, but you should be thinking about it throughout each session.
2. Let's do Positives and Changes.
3. One word about how you are feeling.
4. Don't forget next week we'll be meeting same place same time.

Facilitator Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fill out the facilitator notes as soon as possible after each session. • Make sure you let the SC office know if someone did not attend the session.

Personal Notes

Alternative Activities

CULTURAL SHARING (Part 2)

Homework for Session 2:

Bring an item to share with the group. It should be something that tells us about your racial or ethnic background. It may be a picture, a drawing, an object, a poem, food, music, or whatever you like. For example, my background is _____. I brought this _____, which is _____. It is important to me because of _____.

M At least one of the facilitators should bring in an item to model this activity. Select something meaningful and explain why it's important.

Goal: This activity gives people a chance to share something about their culture, reveal their pride and what is important to them about their culture. Often this activity also reveals similarities across cultures and helps participants learn about different cultures that are represented in the school.

Directions:

1. Remember last week we asked you to bring in an item from your culture? Describe what you brought and say why you chose it. What does it say about your background and who you are today?
2. We want to hear from everyone, so please remember that there are many of us here and we all want to have a chance to talk.
3. If you forgot to bring something, tell us a story that describes something about your culture or describe what you had planned to bring.

Cultural Bingo

<p>What is injera?</p> <p>A spongy, pancake-like Ethiopian flat bread. The bread serves as plate, utensils, and food.</p>	<p>What is Kwanzaa?</p> <p>A week-long holiday honoring African heritage. It is observed from December 26 to January 1 each year and highlights 1 principle per day.</p>	<p>What is a Bar or Bat Mitzvah?</p> <p>The initiation ceremony which occurs when a Jewish boy (Bar Mitzvah) or Girl (Bat Mitzvah) takes on adult responsibilities in Judaism.</p>	<p>What is a quinceañera?</p> <p>A coming-of-age celebration that is held on the fifteenth birthday of a young Hispanic woman.</p>
<p>What is Ramadan?</p> <p>Muslim holiday in the ninth month of the Islamic calendar</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considered one of the five “pillars” of Islam • Muslims who are physically able are required to fast each day of the entire month, from sunrise to sunset 	<p>Name a culture in which young people call most adults Uncle or Aunt as a sign of respect?</p> <p>African-American Somali Hispanic Asian</p>	<p>What is the holiday Carnival? Name some countries or regions this is celebrated.</p> <p>A celebration that takes place in mid-February, before Lent, in which people feast, hold parades, and dress in costume. It is celebrated in Brazil, Venice, Trinidad and Tobago and New Orleans (Mardi Gras).</p>	<p>What is a Step Team?</p> <p>A group of individuals who “step”—a unique dance tradition created by African American college students that involves using the body as an instrument to create rhythms and sounds through a combination of footsteps, claps and spoken word.</p>
<p>What is the Blarney Stone?</p> <p>It is a stone located in Cork, Ireland. People come to kiss the stone in hopes of gaining more eloquent speech. It is for good luck.</p>	<p>What is a samosa?</p> <p>A deep-fried South Asian pastry stuffed with spiced vegetables or meat, usually triangular in shape.</p>	<p>Why do people eat black eyed peas for New Years?</p> <p>For good luck</p>	<p>Name two cultures that celebrate the New Year other than January 1st?</p> <p>Chinese, Persian, Vietnamese, Thai, Cambodian, Tibetan, Laotian, Sinhalese, Bengali, Ethiopian, Jewish</p>
<p>In which religion do most adult men keep their heads covered?</p> <p>Sikh</p> <p>(Followers of this religion, which is based in India, wear a turban to cover their uncut hair)</p>	<p>What is a pupusa? Where does it come from?</p> <p>Pupusas are thick corn tortillas stuffed with cheese, beans or meat. The pupusa originated in El Salvador.</p>	<p>What is Lumpia? Where does it come from?</p> <p>A type of eggroll that comes from The Philippines and Indonesia</p>	<p>What is a hijab?</p> <p>The head covering worn by Muslim women, meant to show modesty.</p>

Session Three: Talk About Race, Racism & Stereotypes

HOW THIS SESSION FITS IN WITH OTHERS

In **Session Three**, the focus and tone changes. Participants are getting more connected to each other and ready to take on more difficult issues and challenge one another. Having spoken about their individual experiences, participants will now begin to discuss racism/stereotypes and how these issues have impacted their lives.

This session is meant to help prepare them to go deeper and explore how stereotypes/race affect student achievement and parent involvement at the school.

GOALS FOR ACTIVITIES IN THIS SESSION

Racial/Environmental Scan (Reviewing the Homework): Encourages participants to look at their school and home environments in a way some may not have thought about previously.

Stereotypes: This is a very important part. Examining how stereotypes affect participants' lives, the way they view themselves, and how they think others view them.

Skin Color: The activity will highlight the different experiences participants have had based on the color of their skin/appearance.

AGENDA

1. Welcome Back
2. Review the Homework (School & Home)
3. Comedians Video (OPTIONAL)
4. Stereotypes Activity (Post-Its or Groupings)
5. Stereotypes At Our School (OPTIONAL—if there is enough time)
6. Does Skin Color Make a Difference in Communities and Schools?
7. Debrief of the Skin Color Activity
8. “Bring Us Back to Together” Circle Activity
9. Homework
10. Closing

Session Three: Talk About Race, Racism & Stereotypes

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Nametags
- Markers
- Pens
- Sign-in sheet
- Chart paper & tape
- Journals
- Post-Its
- Posters & Ground Rules from Session 1
- Skin color survey (OPTIONAL)

FACILITATOR PREPARATION

- Facilitators should talk prior to Session 3 to decide which version of the activities you will do. (Stereotypes: Post-Its *or* Groupings) (Skin Color: Step Forward *or* Survey). Call the office if you are unsure.
- If you chose to do the skin color survey, obtain surveys from Study Circle office.
- Set time aside after the session to talk to the principal about the data handout.

SET UP

1. Arrive 30 minutes early.
2. Make sure the correct number of chairs are in circle.
3. Set up table near door with nametags and sign-in sheet.
4. Hang posters & Ground Rules on a wall.
5. Prepare and hang the chart for Stereotypes.
6. Decide with your co-facilitator whether participants will review homework in pairs or small groups, if the latter, what the size will be. Consider differences in personality, language, role, etc.
7. Decide with co-facilitator who will model for Stereotypes and what (s)he will say.
8. If doing the “Step Forward” Skin Color activity, decide where you will have them stand in line. Make sure everyone has room to stand side by side and move forward.
9. Write homework questions on chart paper, if desired.

AFTER THE SESSION

- Don't forget to fill out your facilitator notes!
- Make sure you let the Study Circle staff know if someone did not attend the session.
- Prepare list of issues that have emerged. Refer to facilitator notes, expectations list (from Speed Meeting 12:00), the Issues poster, and stereotypes activity. See Sample on page 55.

Challenges & Considerations

- Throughout session 3, the activities begin with a somewhat light conversation while reviewing the homework and get increasingly provocative.
- The facilitator's job in Session Three (as well as Four) is to probe and push participants.
- Expect for many of the participants to be uncomfortable and frustrated.
- Make sure you manage your time well during the session. Some difficult issues may arise, and it is very important that you have enough time to fully debrief Part 5: the Skin Color Activity.

Stereotypes Activity—

- In the Stereotypes Activity, participants may be reluctant to categorize themselves. Assure them that they may define themselves however they would like/is most comfortable for them, just keep in mind it should be along racial, ethnic or cultural lines.
- People from dominant racial/ethnic groups often have difficulty with the Stereotypes Activity. For example: Some White participants are not accustomed to thinking of themselves as a racial/ethnic group and what characteristics that group shares. Try to push them to do the exercise even if they find it difficult.
- The Groupings version of the Stereotypes activity occurs when participants are divided according to "MCPS Race Codes". It is used mainly with students. If you think you want to use the Groupings version for the Stereotypes activity, **call the Study Circles office.**
- Participants may bring up stereotypes with positive connotations. For example, "Asians are smart". IF this comes up, ask the participants if they think stereotypes can be positive.

Skin Color Activity—

- Some participants may think they are being set up or that the activity is contrived. Remind participants, one of the goals of this study circle is to put on the table issues that some people in your school are thinking about and facing.
- Facilitators need to be able to read your participants. Each group is going to react differently. If there are lots of emotions or if you sense feelings of frustration or anger, there are additional questions on page 40 (question #7) that may the participants air out their feelings.
- Some participants may try to answer the question based on other factors, saying that they have experience discrimination or have had obstacles that are not based on race or skin color. Remind participants that this activity is **NOT** about age, ethnicity, culture, gender, religion, accents, or what you wear. It's only about the physical attributes, skin color, and how you look to others.
- Remember, this is not diversity training. We are **NOT** saying there is white privilege and we are not trying to make anyone feel guilty. We are trying to get the participants to talk about what they noticed and try to see others' perspectives. The activity raises awareness of what some people believe and others have never thought about.
- There are two options for this activity. One is the step forward activity and the other is the skin color survey. If you have a group that has a high proficiency in reading, you can choose to use the skin color survey. **Call the Study Circles office,** before you move forward with this alternative activity. The office will have to provide you copies of the survey.

PART 1: WELCOME BACK
(10 minutes)

Goal: to review past work and prepare them for challenges ahead.

1. Over the past two weeks, we have talked about what we wanted to accomplish by participating in this study circle. We began learning about each other’s cultures, and worked on developing trusting relationships. Tonight, we will build on the trust we have developed to challenge each other.
2. Today we’re going to participate in some activities that will help us talk about our experiences and opinions related to race, racism, and cultural misunderstanding. Some of these conversations might be difficult. However, getting these things on the table is the only way to make it possible for us to work together to address the problems at _____ school. And that’s why we’re here.
3. (*OPTIONAL*: Remember the quote we read on the first day...)

“We have run away from race for far too long. We are so afraid of inflaming the wound that we fail to deal with what remains America’s central social problem. We will never achieve racial healing if we do not confront each other, take risks, make ourselves vulnerable, put pride aside, say all the things we are not supposed to say in mixed company – in short, put on the table our fears, trepidations, wishes, and hopes”

4. Let’s briefly review the ground rules. Given that we are going to work on some challenging topics today, our ground rules are all the more important. Does anything need to be added or changed? Let’s take another look.
5. Let’s do our Hello Circle. (*Or Where the Wind Blows*)

Facilitator Notes

- Consider repeating the Harlan Dalton quote if the group is not going deep.

A You can also use *Where the Wind Blows* to lighten the mood if needed. See “Alternative Ice-breakers” on page 101,

Personal Notes

PART 2: REVIEWING THE HOMEWORK
(10 –15 Minutes)



Goal: *Enable participants to share their observations and experiences of race and racism related to school and home. Focus discussions squarely on race and racism and begin to look at society through a racial lens.*

Last week we asked you to think about or write down answers to the following questions about this school and your home. Now we'd like to talk about you learned. Please count off by 3s (*or other*). We'll give you about 10 minutes to talk to each other about the questions, and then we'll have about 5 minutes to report some of your observations to the whole group.

School:

- ◇ How does the racial/ethnic make up of the staff compare to the racial/ethnic makeup of the students?
- ◇ Do kids from different racial and ethnic groups sit and play together at lunch, on the bus, etc.?
- ◇ Are the individual classes as diverse as the school?
- ◇ Do parents of different backgrounds talk and have relationships with each other?

Home:

What are the racial/ethnic backgrounds of:

- ◇ The friends you usually have at your house?
- ◇ Most of the customers who shop at your grocery store?
- ◇ The main characters in the last two or three movies you have seen and of your favorite television program?

Personal Notes

Facilitator Notes

- They can do this in small groups (or pairs). Smaller groups are better than larger as they give people more of a chance to talk. Make sure groups are diverse re: race and connection to school.



Questions can be recorded on chart paper before the session (*OPTIONAL*)

- After the small groups, debrief as a large group for a few minutes. You do not need to hear from everyone. Possible questions:
 - ◇ Did anything strike you when you were doing the homework or participating in the discussion? If so, what?
 - ◇ Did any of the answers surprise you? If so, what?
 - ◇ Had you thought of this before?
 - ◇ What do you think this means?
 - ◇ What bothers you or concerns you?



It is helpful to record issues relating to the school on the Issues poster from Session 1.

- Remember to take notes of stories and anecdotes for the session notes.

**PART 3: STEREOTYPES WE LIVE WITH
(20 Minutes)**

Facilitator Notes

- This is an important activity. Stereotypes will come up throughout the Study Circle.

M After explaining the directions, model the exercise for the participants before you ask them to do it.

- Encourage participants to speak to each other, not to you, when responding to debrief questions.

A See Alternative Activities for the Stereotypes Groupings Activity, instead of the “Post-It” version in Part 3.

Goal: Enable participants to self-identify racially/ethnically/culturally, and reflect on how stereotypes affect them and others. This is an introductory activity about race that leads to deeper and more uncomfortable conversations later.

1. Now we’re going to do an exercise to help us understand how stereotypes affect people. But first, we should make sure we all understand what stereotypes are. What comes to your mind when you hear the word stereotype? What does it mean? Anyone else?
2. We have a definition that we work with. It’s in your packet on page 11. Would anyone like to read it?

Stereotypes are images, beliefs, or assumptions about a group of people without taking into consideration a person’s individual differences.

3. You each have two post-its, and there are pens here.
 - ◇ Write your racial, ethnic, or cultural group on the top of each of your post-it. For example, I wrote _____.
 - ◇ On one post-it, *list three words that you* believe describe the racial/ethnic/cultural group you *identify with*. I wrote ____, ____, and _____.
 - ◇ Now on another post-it, *list three words that you* believe *others might use to stereotype your group*. I wrote _____, _____, and _____.
5. When everyone is finished, we’ll go around the room and share what we wrote. Then we’ll ask you to come up and put your post-its on the chart.
6. How did it make you feel to answer the questions and listen to others? Was it difficult? Why?

Personal Notes

PART 4: STEREOTYPES AT OUR SCHOOL

(15 Minutes) 

Goal: *To bring the focus on stereotypes from the individual level to the school level.*

We've talked about how stereotypes influence how we see ourselves and others. Now let's take the discussion to the school level. How do stereotypes affect students, parents, teachers, administrators? Their relationships? Achievement? Participation?

1. Find a partner who you don't know well, from a different background (if possible). Talk for about 5 minutes about how stereotypes impact the school.
2. Now, as a group, let's brainstorm a list on how stereotypes impact this school. We'll just quickly write everything down without discussion. We'll be using this list later.
3. Do any issues stand out? Would anyone like to share a personal example?

PART 5: DOES SKIN COLOR MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN COMMUNITIES AND SCHOOLS?

(50 Minutes Total)

Goal: *To put a difficult issue on the table. The exercise is meant to highlight the different experiences participants have had based on the color of their skin and encourage discussion. The concept of white privilege will emerge and result in uncomfortable but necessary conversations. In the debriefing, the questions help participants face the clear disparity, move from thinking to feeling, and finally to come together.*

Instructions (5 minutes)

1. Our next activity is meant to help us go deeper in our discussion about race. It may make some of you uncomfortable. And, some of you might think that the activity is contrived. Remember, one of the goals of this study circle is to put on the table issues that some people in your school are thinking about.
2. After the activity we will discuss your reactions, thoughts on the issue, and how it impacts your school.
3. Please get up and stand in a line side by side.
4. In the last part, we asked you to self identify. In this exercise, you should only respond to the questions based on your skin color. This activity is NOT about ethnicity, culture, gender, religion, accents, your name, or what you wear. It is about how you are perceived based on your skin color.

Facilitator Notes

- Have them pair up to tell each other examples/stories of how stereotypes impact the school. Bring back together and brainstorm as a group.



Capture on chart paper. Make check marks if some issues come up repeatedly, rather than writing them again.

- If a few issues stand out after brainstorming, ask if some of the participants would share specific examples.

A See Alternative Activities for use of the Skin Color Survey instead of the "Step Up" Version of Part 5.

Statements and Discussion (25 minutes)

1. We will take turns reading different statements.
2. Take a step forward if the statement is TRUE for you. Then look around to see who has stepped forward and who has remained in place.
3. We will do this and talk briefly after.

- ◇ If a police officer stops me on the street, I can be sure I haven't been singled out because of my skin color.
- ◇ I can easily buy posters, postcards, picture books, greeting cards, dolls, toys, and children's magazines featuring people that look like me (or have my skin color).
- ◇ I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people that look like me widely represented, and represented positively.
- ◇ I can go shopping knowing that I will not be followed or harassed in the store.
- ◇ I can be pretty sure that if I ask to talk to "the person in charge," I will be facing a person whose skin is the same color as mine.
- ◇ Most of the teachers in this school are the same skin color as I am.
- ◇ Schools that have large numbers of students who look like me are usually considered good schools.

Facilitator Notes

A See Skin Color Survey under Alternative Activities.

1. With each statement, participants will begin to separate, and by the last question there will be significant differences, with darker skinned participants standing to the rear. This will be upsetting.
 2. After the exercise, keep people where they are for the follow up questions. Ask people in front to turn around. Make sure you ask people at the front, middle, and back for their reactions.
- Facilitators: you should place yourselves strategically. Make sure you don't leave people standing alone. One facilitator could be in front, the other in the back.

Personal Notes

**DEBRIEFING SKIN COLOR EXERCISE
(20 MINUTES)**

Facilitator Notes

- Start the debriefing while everyone is standing in place.
- Make sure to encourage significant discussion, use the additional questions listed to continue to push the group and provoke discussion.
- During the debrief, participants in the front, middle, and back should be given an opportunity to speak. Make sure perspectives are given from people standing in different places.

1. Please stay where you are and look around.
2. What do you notice about where people are standing?
3. Did you expect this? What surprises you? How did it feel doing this activity? Why do you think this happened? Can you say more? (encourage/provoke discussion here)

Additional Questions include:

- How does this make you feel?
- What experiences have you had with this?
- Do you agree with that? Why?
- What do other people think of this idea?
- Could you help us understand the reasons behind your opinion?
- What do you think is really going on here? Why is that important?
- How might others see this issue?
- Do you think others in the group see this the way you do? Why?
- What seems to be the key point here?
- What would be a strong case against what you just said?

Questions to Use When There is Disagreement:

- What do you think he is saying?
- What don't you agree with?
- What bothers you most about this?
- What is at the heart of the disagreement?
- What do you think is really important to people who hold that opinion?
- What is blocking the discussion?
- What do you find most convincing about that point of view?
- Could you say more about what you think?
- What makes this so hard?
- What have we missed that we need to talk about?

Personal Notes

4. Please listen to this statement, and then we'll talk about it.

Some people believe that in this society, people with light skin have advantages-or privilege-over people whose skin is darker. This advantage is often invisible and people who benefit from it often do not see it.

5. What do you think of this idea? Is it true in your experience? What do you think of what she/he said?

6. What are you feeling right now? (*pause for reflection*)

7. There were lots of feelings of frustration, sadness, and anger today but, I want to remind you that the study circle is a process. It will all come together by session six. Now to get some of the feelings out into the open, I will read some words that express the feelings that other study circle participants have told us. After each word, raise your hand if the word is how you are feeling right now. You can raise your hand for every word that relates to your feelings (OPTIONAL: We will ask you why you feel this way?):

- Frustrated
- Hopeless
- Embarrassed
- Guilty
- Empowered
- Victimized
- Vindicated
- Validated
- Angry

**Regrouping Activity (OPTIONAL)
(2 minutes)**

Goal: To bring the group back together emotionally and physically, since they will be stepping toward each other.

1. Now could everyone please stand in a big circle.
2. I will read a series of statements. After each statement, step forward if the statement is true for you.
 - I have spoken up to defend people who are not from my own racial or ethnic background
 - I live in a racially or ethnically diverse community
 - I have access to opportunities that were not available to my parents
 - I have adopted, married, or provided care for others who are not from my own racial or ethnic background
 - I have participated in programs or activities that deal with issues of racism or inequities
 - I want all of our students to succeed

Facilitator Notes

- For question 5, get different reactions. Ask people to react to what people say. **Do not take silence as agreement.**
- Question 6 is meant to switch the conversation from *What People Think* to *How Do They Feel*. Ask people how they are feeling. Give some people time to answer and react to each other.
- Try to pull out quiet people when going through the feelings.

A The regrouping activity is helpful if you sense a lot of emotion or discomfort among the participants. It is very brief, only about 2 minutes. However, it is not essential, especially if productive conversations are occurring.

PART 6: HOMEWORK
(5 Minutes)

1. If the group did the Step Forward version of the Skin Color activity, give the following homework: Observe your surroundings this week and think about the issues that we have discussed today. Do these issues impact our school community? How?
2. If the group used the Skin Color Survey, for homework ask the participants to find a “partner”: a colleague, friend or family member who is not participating in this group and is a different race or ethnicity from you. Have the partner complete the survey and discuss any similarities and/or differences in your responses and score.

PART 7: CLOSING
(5 Minutes)

1. Let’s all have a seat back in the circle. You probably all experienced a lot of different emotions today. This is to be expected since we are discussing topics we normally don’t talk about. Although it’s difficult, experiencing these feelings is important to helping you develop meaningful action steps that will help your school.
2. If you like, take a few minutes to think or write in your journals about the feelings you are having right now.
3. Next week we will talk about how these issues impact our school.
4. Let’s do positives and changes.
5. Please share one word about how you are feeling now.

Facilitator Notes

- Talk to principal about data handout.
- Fill out the facilitator notes as soon as possible after each session.
- Make sure you let the SC office know if someone did not attend the session.

Alternative Activities

STEREOTYPES—GROUPINGS

1. The goal of the activity is to get people seeing differences in an informal way. This activity will be the beginning of the process for identifying issues/problems.
2. Participants will be given different groupings. They will go to the group they most closely identify with.
3. Each group will be asked:
 - What are the common characteristics of your group?
 - What are you proud of about your group?
 - What do you never want to hear about your group?
4. Participants will be asked to separate into categories. You and your co-facilitator may choose the categories according to the dynamics or make-up of the group, but be sure to include the last category (Race) :
 - A. Birth order (oldest, middle, youngest, only)
 - B. Region where you grew up (eg. North, South, DC Metro Area, etc.)
 - C. Gender
 - D. Ethnicity/culture/country of origin (Allow participants to self-define)
 - E. Race by MCPS categories (American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, White, Two or More Races/Multiracial)

SKIN COLOR SURVEY

Facilitator Notes:

1. Chairs should be arranged in a circle, as they normally are for the study circle sessions.
2. The survey should be used only if you and your co-facilitator are confident in the literacy skills of the participants and believe that each person in the group can successfully complete the activity.
3. Rather than trying to prove white privilege, this activity (similar to the other Skin Color Step Forward Option) is designed to illustrate the different experiences participants may have based on the color of their skin. The activity is also designed to highlight the differences in how participants think about the concept of white privilege (although we never actually refer to “White Privilege”).
4. **Consideration:** This may be more challenging if there is a lack of diversity in the group.

Instructions:

1. Our next activity is meant to help us go deeper in our discussion about race. It may make some of you uncomfortable. And, some of you might think that the activity is contrived. Remember, one of the goals of this study circle is to put on the table issues that some people in your school are thinking about. After the activity, we will discuss your reactions, thoughts on the issue, and how it impacts your school.
2. Fill out all of the questions in the Survey. They should answer according to skin color/appearance ONLY. This exercise is not about ethnicity, social status, gender or sexual orientation. It is solely about how one is perceived based on his or her skin color.
3. Write down a “T” for “True” for any statement that is **USUALLY** true for you, or if you have never thought about it before. Write down “F” for “False” for any statement that is **RARELY** true for you.
4. After completing the Survey, add up the total amounts of “True” statements that you have. Write down the total score in the “Total Points” box.
5. Please stand up and get into numerical order from highest to lowest based on just your number of TRUE’S.
6. Debrief the skin color survey using the questions on pg. 39.

Does Skin Color Matter in Montgomery County?

Directions:

1. Read each statement.
2. Write **True** in the box if the statement:
 - a. if it is **USUALLY** true for you, or
 - b. if you have never thought about the statement before.
3. Write **False** in the box if the statement is **RARELY** true for you.
4. At the end of the list, add up how many statements you wrote **True**.

	Your Score	Your Partner's Score
1. I can be around people with my skin color most of the time.		
2. If I go shopping, I never think that a sales person or security guard will follow me around because of my skin color.		
3. I can turn on the television or open the front page of the newspaper and see many people who look like me shown in a positive way.		
4. School curricula and books frequently show people with my skin color.		
5. I can use checks or credit cards and not worry that my skin color will make someone think that I don't have the money.		
6. I can swear or be rude without worrying that people will think it's because people with my skin color have bad morals.		
7. I rarely talk (or think about talking) to my child about how they might be perceived because of their skin color.		
8. I rarely feel like I am being asked to speak for all people with my skin color.		
9. Schools that have large numbers of students who look like me are considered "good" schools.		
10. I can be pretty sure that if I ask to talk to "the person in charge", I will be facing a person with my skin color.		
11. If a police officer pulls me over (or if school security stops me in the hall), I can be sure that I haven't been targeted because of my skin color.		
12. I can <i>easily</i> buy posters, postcards, picture books, greeting cards, and children's magazines featuring who look like me.		

13. American history books show many people who look like me.		
14. I can get a job <i>without</i> worrying that people will think I got it because of Affirmative Action.		
15. I never worry that my skin color will impact the way I am treated by a doctor or nurse.		
16. I can comfortably avoid, ignore, or minimize the impact of racism on my life.		
17. I can sign up for most clubs, activities, or organizations without worrying that I will be one of the few people with my skin color.		
18. If I have a bad experience, I rarely ask myself if it had anything to do with my skin color.		
19. Most of the teachers in this school have my skin color.		
20. I can wear casual clothes to most parent meetings without worrying that my skin color will make people think that I am poor or uneducated.		

Session Four: How Racial and Ethnic Differences Impact the School

HOW THIS SESSION FITS IN WITH OTHERS

Session Four builds upon Session Three by asking participants to discuss how racial and ethnic issues impact the school. Having spoken about their individual experiences, participants will now hopefully begin to understand why others would share different views of what is happening in the school.

Looking at the data helps the group to develop a common understanding of the problems. *Where Do You Stand* statements can be changed/adapted to make them more relevant to the school/group. Your role in this session is to probe and push participants to react to one another.

GOALS FOR ACTIVITIES IN THIS SESSION

Data: To provide a brief snapshot of the achievement gap at their school and get the participants' emotional reaction to what they've read/learned.

Where Do You Stand: To go a step further past examining issues related to race and ethnicity that impact student achievement at the school, allowing participants to challenge and question one another and engage in dialogue.

Prioritizing Issues: To prioritize down to two or three issues that can be worked on in sessions 5 and 6.

AGENDA

1. Welcome Back
2. Agenda and Goals/Context
3. "A Girl Like Me" Video (OPTIONAL)
4. Review Homework from Session Three (Skin Color Follow-Up)
5. The Achievement Gap at Our School (Looking at the Data)
6. Where Do You Stand?
7. Where Did We Agree? Where Did We Disagree?
8. Homework
9. Closing

Session Four: How Racial and Ethnic Differences Impact the School

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Nametags
- Markers
- Pens
- Sign-in sheet
- Chart paper
- Tape
- Index cards
- Ground Rules & Other Chart Paper
- Data Handouts
- Strongly Agree/Strongly Disagree Signs
- Dots

FACILITATOR PREPARATION

- Facilitators should have talked to the Study Circles staff about which “Where Do You Stand” statements to use to address this particular’s school’s issues.
- Review your facilitator notes from last session to prepare for “Where Do You Stand” activity
- Pre-chart the Listening Activity (Homework): 3 min, 2 min, and 1 min.
- Chart consolidated issues list on chart paper for priority voting.
- Print out consolidated issues list for participants and translate if possible.

SET UP

1. Arrive 30 minutes early.
2. Make sure correct number of chairs are in circle.
3. Set up table near door with the sign-in sheet.
4. Hang Ground Rules and posters.
5. Set up the line of tape that will be used for “Where Do You Stand.” Make sure everyone has room to stand side by side and move forward and backwards. Decide where to hang the “Strongly Agree/Strongly Disagree” signs in the room.
6. After having discussed this with the Study Circles staff, decide with your co-facilitator which “Where Do You Stand” statements you will ask the group.

AFTER THE STUDY CIRCLE

- Don’t forget to fill out your facilitator notes as soon as possible!
- Make sure you let the Study Circle staff know if someone did not attend the session.
- Review the Challenges and Considerations of Session 5. Set up a time to either have a phone conference or in-person meeting with the Study Circles Office Staff prior to Session 5.

Challenges & Considerations

Time is the biggest challenge in this session. Do not get caught up in the homework and data. You need to get to Where Do You Stand and prioritizing issues.

Looking at the Data—

- There will be different levels of understanding the data review amongst participants. Some people may look at data in their profession, while this might be other people's first time looking at a data chart. Be careful to use simple terms that are easy to understand.
- Some participants may want to analyze the data, focus on the accuracy of the data or the lack thereof. Some may also want to immediately share the reasons they believe it looks the way it does. However, that is not the purpose of this activity. This data is a mere snapshot of the school and how the students are doing. Be sure to share these objectives with the participants.
- Many participants will also want to spend more than the allotted 10-15 minutes discussing the data, make sure you manage your time here. Reemphasize the goal of this activity, we are showing the data because we want to take a quick look at how the students are doing.

Where Do You Stand—

- Some of the terms and issues included in the list of statements may not have been addressed within your group. Only use statements that you and your co-facilitator believe apply to this group (after consulting with the Study Circle Office Staff for guidance).
- It is important to give ample time to this activity. This is an activity that is used as a tool for creating dialogue. As the facilitator, you will engage the participants in dialogue by probing and pushing the group to react to each other. This activity is NOT to be debriefed "popcorn" style (each person gives his/her answer one after the other), instead have the participants respond to each other's view points. This activity is designed so the group can work through differences in opinion, use the follow up questions on page 53 to debrief.

Brainstorm Issues—

- Participants will often suggest issues not focused on race and ethnicity. Bring the focus back by reminding the group we are here to discuss how race impacts student achievement at the school.
- Some participants will start trying to move to action. Remind them to focus on barriers/causes and that we will get to the actions/solutions later. Add their suggestions to the "Action Ideas" chart paper.
- Sometimes participants forget about the conversations we have had. Remind them of the issues that have come up so that the group is going deep enough and raising crucial issues.
- If it is difficult to organize the issues, one option is to do so by relationship—i.e. student to student, student to staff, staff to student, parent to staff, etc.

PART 1: WELCOME BACK (5 minutes)

Goal: *To review last week’s activities and this week’s agenda.*

1. Last week we talked about our experiences with and opinions about racism, stereotypes and cultural misunderstandings. In this session we are going to discuss how these issues impact student achievement at this school.
2. After our first activity, we will spend a little time reflecting on our feelings about last week. Then we will review some of the assessment data at your school, and look at how race and ethnicity impact student achievement here. We will use this information to identify barriers to student achievement. This will prepare us for the creation of action steps next week.
3. *Optional:* Next week, we will begin creating a work sheet for next steps. A sample is in your packet. Let’s go over it so you can see where we are going.
4. Let’s review our homework from last week.

PART 2: REVIEWING HOMEWORK SESSION 3 (15 minutes) 😊😊

Goal: *To get residual feelings out on the table and to give participants the opportunity to practice listening to each other without responding.*

1. Last week, we asked you to observe your surroundings this week and think about the issues that we have discussed today. Do these issues impact our school community? How?
2. In order to share what we observed, we will do a brief listening activity.
3. The person whose birthday is closest to today’s date will be Partner A, and the other person, Partner B.
4. Partner A will have 3 minutes to share with his/her partner what they found out from their discussion for homework. For 2 minutes, Partner B will then say what they thought they heard their partner saying. Partner A will then have 1 minute to say whether they were heard correctly.
5. Partner A will then repeat this process with Partner B sharing what he/she learned doing their homework.

Personal Notes

Facilitator Notes

- If you have time, remind the participants of what the action worksheet will look like at the end of Session 6. They should all have a sample in their packet. It is helpful that they know what to expect. If you can’t fit it in now, you can assign it for homework.



Chart the directions to the listening activity: 3 minutes, 2 minutes, and 1 minute.

A Another option is to have them discuss how racial and ethnic barriers impact relationships between:

- Students
- Teachers and students
- Parents and teachers

- If the group did the skin color survey, the listening activity should be based around the homework: ask the participants to share similarities and/or differences in the responses and score of their partner.

- If someone did not have the chance to talk with someone outside the group for homework, please have them talk to their partner about any reflections they had after last week’s session. Discuss any feelings you felt.

**PART 3: THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP AT OUR SCHOOL:
LOOKING AT THE DATA (10-15 Minutes)**

Goal: To provide a brief snapshot of the achievement gap at their school and get the participants' emotional reactions to what they've learned. Later in the next activity, we take them from the numbers to the people behind them, giving participants the opportunity to express their opinions about what is happening at the school, and why.

This study circle is about how race and ethnicity can impact student achievement. Let's see how the students at your school are performing in several areas.

1. We are going to spend just a few minutes looking at some data that show how students are doing from this school. The goal of this part is simply to understand the data. We will talk about our opinions about the data in the next section.
2. We are not going to spend a lot of time on the data. If people want more data, we can give you suggestions for finding it after the session ends tonight.
3. Staff and teachers often spend a significant amount of time looking at and analyzing data. That is not why we are here today. This is just a snapshot of our school and what exists here.
4. We will be looking at each chart one by one.
5. After each chart we will ask the following questions:
 - What do you see?
 - What factual statements can you make based on the data?
6. When we are done looking at all the charts, we will ask you: how do you feel? What surprised you? What encouraged or discouraged you?

Personal Notes

**Facilitator Notes
For Part 3**

- You should have received the data after Session 2 and discussed it with the principal before today's Session 4.
- When reviewing the data, start with the first chart and describe it. Check to see if everyone understands it. Then move on to the next chart.
- Go chart-by-chart, and encourage participants to stay focused on the chart at hand and not jump to the next one.
- Sometimes there is frustration among the participants with the data itself and with the short amount of time spent on discussing it. Remind them that this is a brief look at the school's data and is not the focus on today's session.
- When debriefing the data, help the group focus on sharing their feelings and what they felt when looking at the data.

Facilitator Notes

The statements listed to the right are just examples. You can change them to be more applicable to your study circle using the additional questions on page 53. Call the Study Circles office to help you revise the statements.

- Preparation: Use masking tape to put a line down the middle of the room. Put a sign on one side of the room that says **STRONGLY AGREE**. On the other side, put a sign that says **STRONGLY DISAGREE**.
- Read the statements slowly, you may need to repeat if participants cannot hear you. You and co-facilitator should be standing at opposite ends.
- You do not need to read all of the statements, only the ones you think will create productive dialogue. However, make sure to balance the statements so they do not focus overly on parents, staff, or students.
- After everyone moves to a spot, ask at least one person why they are standing where they are.
- Make sure to get responses from participants along all spectrums on the line.
- If no one on the other side of the line has spoken up/ responded, be sure to ask one of them about why they are standing there.

**PART 4: WHERE DO YOU STAND: DOES RACE IMPACT STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT AT THIS SCHOOL?
(30 to 40 Minutes)**

Goal: To get participants to hear each other’s perspectives AND challenge each other on the issues specific to that school.

1. Please stand up and line up on the tape behind each other. This exercise is called *Where Do You Stand?*
2. I will read a series of views that participants in past Study Circles have given regarding how they believe race affects student achievement and parent involvement in their school.
3. After each statement, move to the part of the floor that best reflects your level of agreement or disagreement with the statement.
4. For example, if you totally disagree with the statement, you should move as far towards the **STRONGLY DISAGREE** sign as possible. If you totally agree with the statement move as far towards the **STRONGLY AGREE** sign as possible.
5. You can also stand anywhere in between the signs. The closer you are to the sign, the more sure you are about your answer.
6. The center line means that you are completely neutral.
7. I will then ask someone to share the reason they are standing where they are. We will then engage in a dialogue, with all of you responding to one another starting with the question, “Does anyone have a response to what was just said?”

Personal Notes

Parent Involvement Statements

- ◇ Too few parents at this school participate in their children’s education.
- ◇ Parents and staff (and students) at this school often don’t communicate well due to cultural misunderstanding.
- ◇ Some groups do not feel welcome at this school.
- ◇ Active parents at this school sometimes make it harder for other families to get what they need.
- ◇ Some parents at this school do not value their children’s education.

Student Achievement Statements

- ◇ Many students here do not value education.
- ◇ Because of stereotypes and white privilege, some students at this school have easier access to good programs than others.
- ◇ Some teachers and staff members here do not know how to work with such a diverse student body.
- ◇ Some students at this school get pressure not to succeed.
- ◇ Teachers here discipline African American and Latino students more than White or Asian students for the same offense.
- ◇ Some strategies to improve the data on this school put African American and Latino students in programs they’re not ready for.


Facilitator Notes

A Please refer to the Additional Statements on page 53 for statements that may be applicable to your group.

- Please tailor the statements to relate back to the issues that have come up so far.
- Remember to take note of which statements elicited more agreement, more disagreement, or where people changed their positions after the discussion.

Use Follow-Up Questions to Encourage Dialogue/Cross-Conversation

- Why do you think the other person is standing over there?
- Why would someone’s opinion be so different than yours?
- What do you think about what the other person said?
- How do racial and ethnic differences impact these issues we are discussing?

 **If you have time, give everyone a few minutes to think or write in their journal before continuing.**

Personal Notes

**PART 5: PRIORITIZE ISSUES & VOTING
(20 Minutes)**

Facilitator Notes

- Also during Part 5, remind participants of points made during the previous activity to focus the conversation.
- You should also refer to statements and stories participants shared if a participant contradicts themselves or loses sight of the conversation. (This is why reviewing your Facilitator Notes before each session is helpful.)
- If there is not enough time to do Part 5, the prioritizing of issues can be done in Session 5. However, this activity will help you prepare for Session 5.
- **AFTER the brainstorm, push the participants to challenge each other and go deeper.** They need to hash out the issues to make sure they are clearly understood.

Goal: To prioritize the issues.

1. We talked about different issues over the past few weeks. To make a real impact, we need to prioritize two or three issues that we think are most important to work on. Next week, we will talk about what we think is causing the issue and possible action steps to address the issues.
2. For now, we are going to brainstorm the issues. Look around the different charts to see the issues we have discussed in previous sessions. Also think about issues that came up in the Where Do You Stand activity.
3. We are going around the circle. Each person gets a chance to say one issue. We will write them on the chart paper. Don't repeat an issue. You can also pass if you do not have any issues to add.
4. Once we have a list of issues, we will get to vote on the two or three issues we would most like to address.
5. You each have three dots. When you are ready, come up and place your dots on the issues you think we should address. You can put all of your dots on one, or one dot on two different issues.
6. When everyone has voted, we will see which are our top priority issues. Don't worry, your school will still have this whole list, so work can continue on the other issues at a later date.

**PART 6: HOMEWORK
(5 Minutes)**

Goal: To begin thinking about the issues associated with race and ethnicity at the school level and what challenges contribute to that issue.

1. Think about the issues that were prioritized today (e.g. Lack of parent involvement among certain communities, Not enough Black and Latino students in higher level classes, etc.)
2. Discuss the issue(s) with another parent, staff member or teacher. Ask that person, "What challenges do you think parents/staff/teachers face when trying to address this issue? What might get in the way?"

**PART 7: CLOSING
(5 Minutes)**

Goal: Review today's session and look forward to next week.

1. Today, we shared some of our feelings about our study circle experience, learned about the data summarizing our students' performance, clarified our opinions about whether race impacts student achievement at our school.
2. In the next session, we will look at the issues more closely, identify the corresponding barriers, and begin to think about actions that would resolve the issue.
3. We're passing around index cards and pens. Please write down one "Aha" moment, or one frustration you experienced today.
4. Let's go around the room and share what we wrote.

Alternative Activities

Additional Statements for “Where Do You Stand?”

These are additional questions facilitators can choose from to tailor the exercise for their group. You can also come up with your own questions.

Ideas for Parent/Staff Circles:

- Even though the school is very diverse, the school still has a white culture.
- White privilege impacts teaching, learning, and parent involvement at this school.
- Some teachers have different expectations for African American and Latino students than they do for White and Asian students.
- Too many African American and Latino families do not value education.
- Teachers and parents should be “color blind” when working with students.

Ideas from Staff Study Circles:

- White privilege impacts achievement in MCPS and the decisions made in our school.
- Some staff members lack the commitment to effectively and consistently address racial barriers.
- It’s impossible to raise the bar AND eliminate racial disparities at the same time.
- The constant focus on highlighting racial data leads to stereotypes and internal racism.
- I understand the Equity Framework, where my work fits into it, and how to use it to make progress in my area of control.
- The frequent celebration of limited successes overshadows the real barriers.

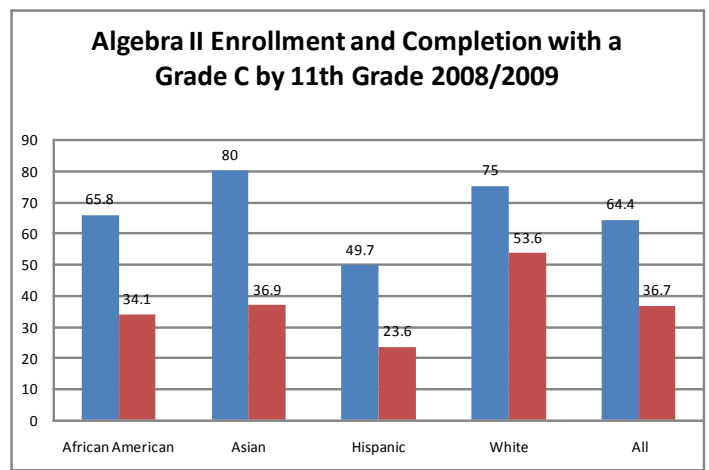
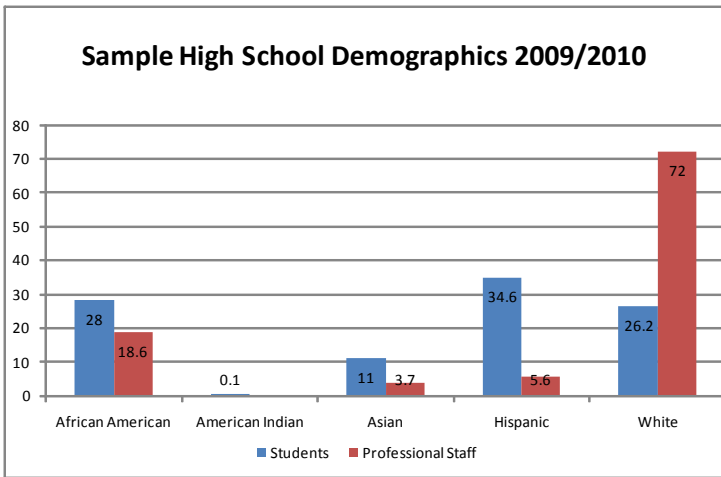
Ideas from Student Study Circles:

- Some students find it uncomfortable to hang out with students from a different racial/ethnic background or to sit with them in the lunch room.
- People from different backgrounds usually do not hang out together outside of school.
- Gifted and Talented classes or higher math and English classes usually have more White and Asian students than African American and Latino students
- Many students think that doing well in school means that you are “acting White”.
- African American and Latino students get disciplined by teachers more than White or Asian students do for the same offense.
- Some students get pressure not to do well in school
- Some teachers and staff members believe White and Asian students can do better in school than African American and Latino students

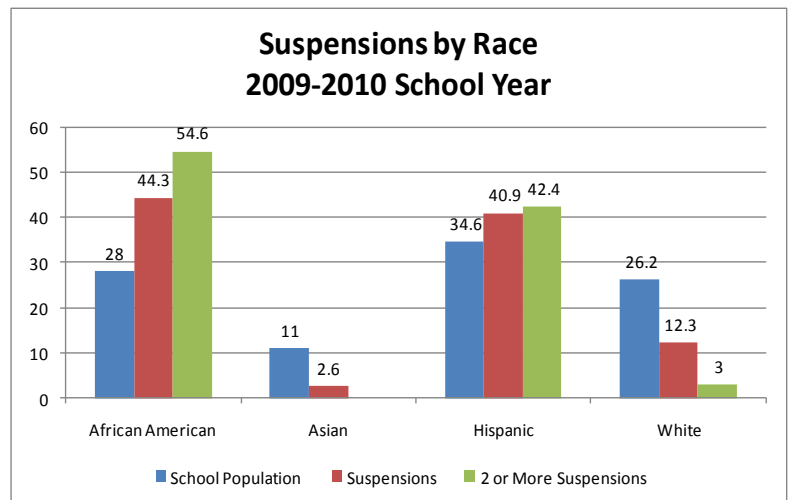
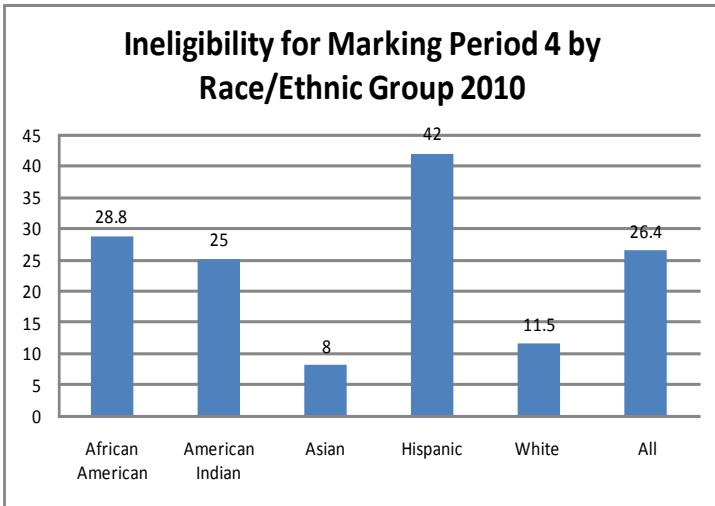
“A Girl Like Me” Video

Video can be viewed at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YWyl77Yh1Gg>

Sample Data Sheet



MCPS believes that students should pass Algebra 1 with a C or higher by the end of 8th grade to be on a path to college.

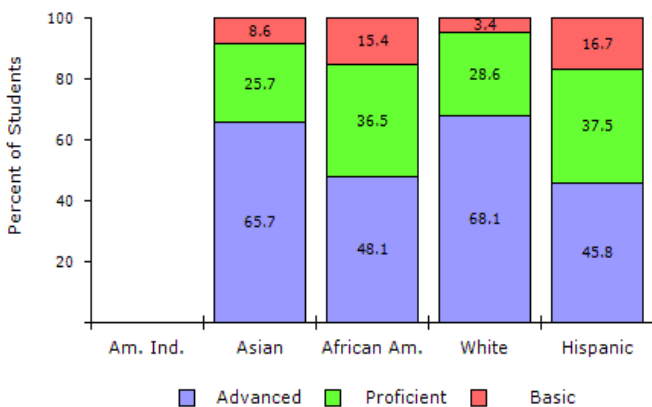


Maryland School Assessment (MSA) tests

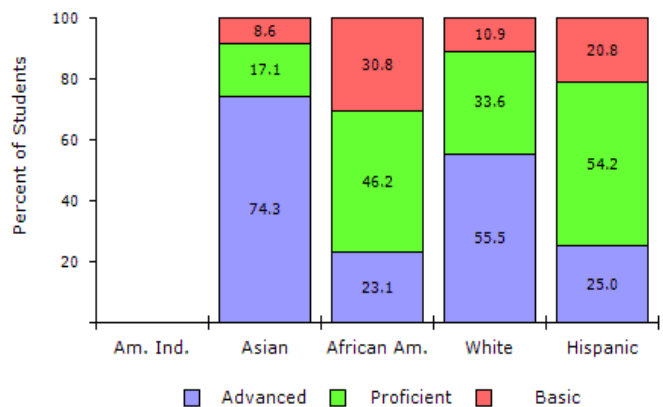
Every student must take the Maryland School Assessment (MSA) tests in grades 3 through 8 in math and reading.

- Advanced is above grade level, Proficient is grade level, Basic is below grade level
- MCPS believes that students should be Advanced to be on a path to college

2010 MSA Results for Race/Ethnicity and Gender
Grade 8 - Reading



2010 MSA Results for Race/Ethnicity and Gender
Grade 8 - Mathematics



Sample Consolidated List of Issues for Session 4

SAMPLE Middle School --- Preliminary Issues and Barriers emerging from discussion

STUDENTS

- Students view “education” differently than we do (generational differences).
- Students live in the “now” – not the future. They don’t understand the implications of poor academic performance.
- Students are self-selecting. They participate based on what their “groups” do.
- There is a lack of cultural awareness among students.
- Some students are not aware of how they are perceived.
- Some students act out stereotypes.
- Students of color may struggle with the lack of diversity among the staff.
- Too few African American and Hispanic students complete 8th grade algebra.

TEACHERS/ADMINISTRATORS

- Teachers don’t know the minds and hearts of African American students.
- Teachers may be prepared – but not accepting – of working with a diverse student body.
- Teachers do not have the skills, knowledge & ability to work with students having disciplinary issues.
- The school is trying to accommodate so many cultures that the expectations are unrealistic.
- There may be a carry-over of racist attitudes among teachers in the classroom.
- The lack of understanding about culture might manifest itself in disciplinary referrals for African American students.
- Given the higher participation rates of White and Asian students in Magnet Programs, teachers perhaps are not referring African American and Hispanic students.

PARENTS

- Parents of Hispanic students don’t participate because of language difficulties.
- Parents of students with disciplinary and performance problems need to become more involved.
- Hispanic parents work too much and they don’t realize their role in their children’s education due to cultural differences.

Session Five: Experience Issues and Begin Creating Action

HOW THIS SESSION FITS IN WITH OTHERS

In Session 4, the participants discussed and prioritized issues. Before moving to action, participants need to discuss the barriers and causes to the issue. **Session 5** offers three different ways to have the discussion. Read the Challenges and Considerations section, and talk with the Study Circles office to decide which option would be best for your study circle.

GOALS FOR ACTIVITIES IN THIS SESSION

Readers Theatre: To examine issues more deeply and from different racial/ethnic perspectives, giving participants the chance to “walk in someone else’s shoes”. This activity is particularly helpful for groups who are having trouble seeing other’s perspective or identifying the issues.

Structural Barriers: To go beyond personal attitudes so that participants can address the practices, procedures and policies that impact the issue.

From Issue to Action: To identify the root cause behind the identified issues, so that brainstormed actions can be both productive and effective.

Prioritize Action: To narrow down the action ideas to three, so that the participants have a better chance of success in implementing them.

AGENDA (VARIES)

OPTION A

1. Welcome Back
2. Hello Circle
3. Readers Theatre
4. Issue to Action
5. Vote for Highest Priority Barriers
6. Action Workgroups
7. Homework
8. Closing

OPTION B

1. Welcome Back
2. Hello Circle
3. Structural Barriers & Skits
4. Brainstorm Barriers
5. Vote for Highest Priority Barriers
6. Action Workgroups
7. Homework
8. Closing

OPTION C

1. Welcome Back
2. Hello Circle
3. From Issue to Action
4. Vote for Highest Priority Barriers
5. Action Workgroups
6. Prioritize Action
7. Action Worksheet
8. Homework
9. Closing

Session Five: Experience Issues and Begin Creating Action

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Nametags
- Markers
- Pens
- Sign-in sheet
- Chart paper
- Tape
- Posters & Ground Rules from Session 1
- Colored Dots
- Handouts (Readers Theatre, Structural Barriers, or Action Worksheets)

FACILITATOR PREPARATION

- Facilitators should have talked to the Study Circles staff about which option and direction to move forward with in Session 5.
- Contact Study Circles staff about which handouts you need, depending on what option you and your co-facilitator have chosen.
 - Readers Theatre
 - Structural Barriers and/or
 - Action Worksheets
- If you are choosing to use Option A: Readers Theatre and the one in the guide is not an issue applicable to your group, contact the office for additional Readers Theatres.

SET UP

1. Arrive 30 minutes early.
2. Make sure correct number of chairs are in circle
3. Set up table near door with nametags, etc.
4. Hang up Ground Rules and posters.
5. Try to talk with principal or assistant principal about potential dates the study circle participants can present to the school leadership team.
6. Decide where in the room the group of participants will work when they split up in the various activities.

AFTER THE SESSION

- Don't forget to fill out your facilitator notes!
- Make sure you let the Study Circle staff know if someone did not attend the session.

Challenges & Considerations

Before proceeding with Sessions 5 and 6, you and your co-facilitator must assess your group and decide which options are most appropriate. In order to do so, review your Facilitator notes and discuss the following questions. Please talk with the Study Circles Office to help you decide the best option.

Level of Engagement

- Is this the first study circle at the school or for these participants?
- Has the group gone deep or are they staying on the surface or skirting the race issue?
- Are they at an early stage of race and ethnicity or are they relatively comfortable talking openly?
- Do they tend to agree with each other or disagree?

Issues

- In your opinion, do the issues identified reflect an understanding of race/ethnicity and the achievement gap?
- Did they have trouble coming up with issues?
- Are the issues they identified focused on racial/ethnic barriers to student achievement?
- Does everyone understand the issues?

Readiness for Action

- How much action is this group ready to help implement?
- Are they eager to work on action ideas?
- Are there a number of participants who appear to have interest or capacity to lead?
- Do they appear to have a high level of commitment to continue working together on issues related to race and ethnicity?

After assessing the group, here are the three options:

- **Option A:** If the group would benefit from looking at one identified issue from a variety of perspectives before moving to action >>> Readers Theatre, Discuss Relevant Barriers seen in the scenario and Prioritize, then Move towards Action
- **Option B:** If the group would benefit from a discussion on structural barriers to the issues identified, it requires more sophistication/background knowledge than options A and B >>> Structural Barriers, Brainstorm and Prioritize Issues, then Move towards Action. We have different scenarios for different issues.
- **Option C:** If your group is at a more basic level of understanding and are at the early stages of awareness, but have perhaps come up with some ideas about what changes need to be made >>> Brainstorm Issues and Move towards Action Planning

Make sure you connect the activity to the chart on page 62.

Challenges & Considerations (continued)

From Issue to Action (Identify Causes) (OPTION A, B, & C)—

- This activity will help participants understand the “why” behind an issue. This activity is important in identifying the root cause so that a more productive and effective brainstorm can happen later in the session.
- Participants in other study circles have often missed the “cause” behind an issue and it often leads to an action that doesn’t address the actual issue they prioritized. Help the participants figure out the cause of their problem by reminding them of the activities we have done the past 4 weeks: Cultural Sharing/Timeline, Stereotypes, the Skin Color Activity, and Where Do You Stand. Ask and probe the group to answer the questions: “Why does this issue exist?” and “What is allowing this issue to be part of the problem?”
- For consistency and clarity, we will use the following: “issues/problems” >>> “barriers/causes” >>> “solutions/action.” See page 62 for examples.

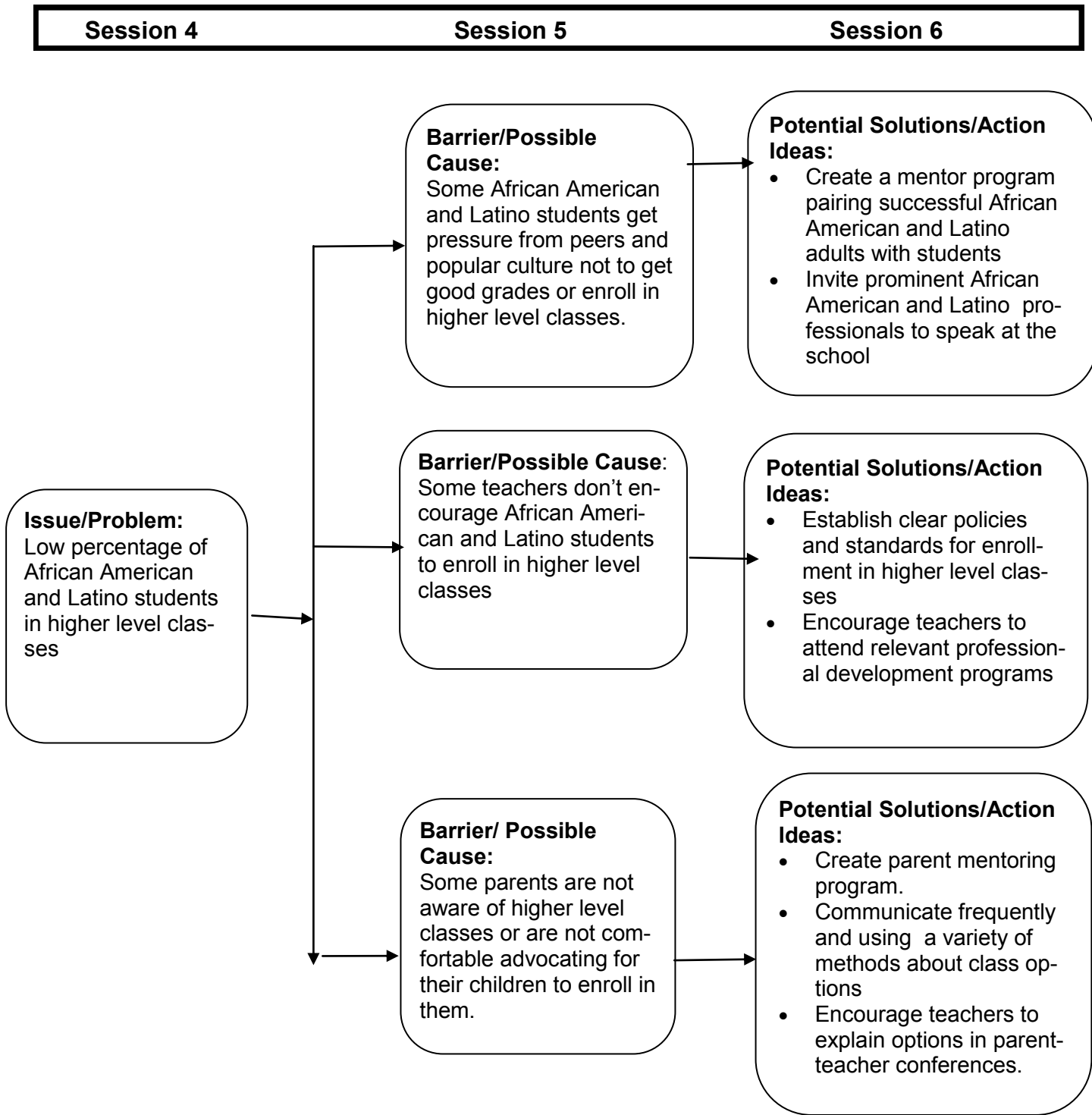
Readers Theatre (OPTION A)—

- Everybody may not feel comfortable reading a part, ask for volunteers first before volunteering anyone. Remember the scenario can be acted out and participants can get into character if they want to.
- As you debrief and chart the questions in the Readers Theatre activity, probe the group to think about barriers/causes to the issue highlighted in the activity.
- The goal is to see multiple perspectives.

Structural Barriers (OPTION B)—

- Trust the process. This activity works. Participants will push back on the idea of doing skits. But they usually like it after when its done.
- Go through the examples on the chart slowly. Show the connections.
- Don’t get caught up on making sure they completely understand the definitions before doing the skits. The skits will help them understand.
- After each skit, make sure you ask the group why (or why not) the skit was an example of the specific category.
- Structural Racism or Structural Barriers. Both terms have been used. Most facilitators prefer to use Structural Racism. However, use the term that would most meet the needs of your group.

Example: From Issue to Action Plan



OPTION A

PART 1: WELCOME BACK (5 Minutes)

Goal: To narrow our discussion on the issues that affect this school and set the stage for action.

1. Last week, we looked at data from this school and talked together about why we think the data looks that way. We ended by prioritizing 3 issues.
2. Tonight, we will explore these issues more deeply to see what is causing the issues.
3. This will get us ready for next week when we'll make an action plan for attacking the causes and barriers.
4. Let's take a look at page 17 in our packets, this diagram shows where we are. In Session 4, we prioritized 3 issues. Today we are going to look at the barriers and causes for those issues. Next week we will start working on our action plan.
5. Now let's go over today's agenda.
6. Hello Circle.

PART 2: EXPERIENCING OUR SCHOOL ISSUES THROUGH THE READERS THEATRE (50 Minutes total)

Goal: To examine the issues more deeply and from different racial/ethnic perspectives. Participants read a script to approximate a real-life experience and help participants "walk in each other's shoes." This activity is to help the group look at one identified issue from a variety of perspectives before moving to action.

Section A: Introduction (5 minutes)

1. We have incorporated some of the issues that have been prevalent here into a real-life "Readers Theatre" activity that incorporates a few of these important issues.
2. Through the Reader's Theatre, we'll take closer look at the issues, which will help us figure out solutions for them. By trying to understand the issues from different racial perspectives. We hope we'll get to the roots of the problems, which is essential to solving them.
3. We've passed out a script to everyone. We'll need several volunteers to read the different parts. After we read it, we'll talk as a full group about the issues and then break up into smaller groups.

Personal Notes

Section B: Reader's Theatre (20 minutes)

1. Now we will immerse ourselves in our story. As we read it, try to imagine that you are one of the people in the story—a staff member, parent, or student.
2. Who would like to read a part? We need 6 people.
3. Let's begin reading.

Sample Readers Theatre (to be tailored by SC Office for each Study Circle)

Narrator: Principal Smith had a regularly scheduled meeting with all her teachers to check in. Today is with Ms. Baker who is a third grade teacher.

Principal: I notice from the data that Mario Coston is not doing well. I see that you have a number of good interventions in place. Have you spoken to his parents?

Ms. Baker: I've left a couple of messages, but no one calls back. His parents also did not come to the parent/teacher conference.

Principal: Talk with Mr. Hunt, the guidance counselor. See if he can get the mom to come meet with you.

Narrator: Mr. Hunt got Mario's mom on her cell phone.

Mr. Hunt: Hi Mrs. Coston. I am calling to see if you can come in for a meeting with Ms. Baker about Mario. Don't worry, he is fine. We just want to talk with you to see if we can work together to make Mario's year more successful. Can you come in on Thursday right before or right after school?

Mrs. Coston: I leave for work at 3:30. It's tough during the day because I also have a 2-year-old daughter at home. I'll see if my neighbor can watch my daughter. Let's meet at 9 am before school starts.

Narrator: Mrs. Coston arrived at school 10 minutes late. Ms. Baker was frustrated because the students would be coming in shortly. She felt the meeting would need to be rushed.

Ms. Baker: Thank you for coming in. I think Mario is wonderful and very well behaved. But, I'm very concerned about his performance this year. He is below grade level in his reading and math. I have implemented 2 new interventions: he works in a small group for reading and he receives one-on-one support for math. However, I think you really need to work with him at home. You need to make sure he has time to do his homework and a quiet place to do it. He should spend 30 minutes on math and 15 minutes on reading homework every night. In addition, he should read an additional 15 minutes of a K level book every day. Also, I send home his data notebook every month. Please review it to see how he is doing. Do you have any questions?

Mrs. Coston: No, thank you for all your work.

Ms. Baker: Thank you for coming in. Please feel free to email me any time. I check my messages several times a day.

Narrator: Mrs. Coston left and went to pick up her daughter. She was very confused. She decided to talk to her neighbor about it.

Facilitator Notes

- We have different scenarios for different issues.
- The participants will read through a scenario together that illustrates the complexity of addressing the issue.
- The scenario is interactive as members are assigned roles to read.

Neighbor: Hi. How was the meeting?

Mrs. Coston: I was so surprised that the teacher has concerns about Mario. This is the first time I have heard anything. Plus, every month Mario shows me a binder with his work. He always points to all the good things he is doing. She even said he was well behaved so I'm not sure why she wanted to talk with me.

Neighbor: What did the teacher say?

Mrs. Coston: She said he wasn't doing well in reading and math. She mentioned something called interventions. Then she told me there were several things I am supposed to do at home. I don't understand. Isn't it the teacher's job to teach? I'm so frustrated. I don't know what I'm supposed to do to support Mario.

Narrator: Later that day, Ms. Baker went to speak with the principal.

Principal: How did the meeting go with Mrs. Coston?

Ms. Baker: It went okay. She is a lovely person. But, she didn't seem that engaged in our discussion. I gave her a chance to ask questions, but she didn't have any. I feel like the parents expect us to do everything.


Section C: Debrief
(25 minutes)


1. Let's thank our volunteers for helping us read our story. We are now going to take a few minutes to fill out the questions on your handout. Then we will debrief as a group.
2. Is this scenario realistic at this school? Why? What experiences have you had that relate to this scenario?
3. We are now going to chart some examples of miscommunication in this scenario. Where in this scenario do you see examples of miscommunication?
4. Now we are going to chart some of the teacher and parent expectations. What does the teacher think about the parent's role in education? What does the parent think about the teacher's role in education?

Personal Notes

Facilitator Notes

- After the reading, give participants time to answer the questions privately. Then, discuss as a group.
- Refer to the examples on page 68 for sample answers to questions #3 & #4.

 Capture the miscommunications on chart paper (Question #3).

 Capture Question #4 on chart paper. Draw a table with Teacher and Parent Expectations on each side.

PART 3: FROM ISSUE TO ACTION PLAN
(25 minutes)

1. From the Readers Theatre, we have examined the different perspectives of how an issue can effect our school. Let's turn to page 17 in our packets. We are now going to fill out this diagram based on the Readers Theatre activity.
2. The issue/problem is _____.
3. Now, let's fill in the barriers/causes boxes. We can add as many as we want. Based on our discussion from the Readers Theater, what are the barriers/possible causes to this issue/problem?
4. Before we start prioritizing the barriers we want to address, we would like to take an opportunity for you to make sure you understand the barrier and say how you feel about them and why, and to challenge each other.
5. Are there any we can combine or group?

PART 4: VOTING FOR THE HIGHEST PRIORITY BARRIERS/CAUSES
(5 minutes)

1. We have more barriers than we can realistically address right away. We'd like to identify the top three barriers/causes that we want to address.
2. We are going to vote. You each have three dots. When you are ready, come up and place your dots on the barriers you think we should address first as a group. You can put all of your dots on one, or one dot on three different barriers.
3. Remember, our goal is to address the racial achievement gap in our school.
4. When everyone has voted with their dots, we will see which are our top three priority barriers. Don't worry, your school will still have this whole list, so work can continue at a later date.

PART 5: BREAK INTO ACTION WORKGROUPS
(30-35 Minutes total)

Goal: *Develop a list of action ideas associated with each prioritized issue.*

Section A: Introduction (5 minutes)


1. We've gotten deeply into some of the problems at our school and we started talking about ideal outcomes. Many possible action ideas have already been shared.
2. Now we'd like to see what other action ideas we can come up with that can directly impact the barriers we prioritized.

An action idea is an activity, a program, a group, or any other action that the school community can take to address a racial and ethnic issue the school faces related to the achievement gap.

3. For example, there's a list of actions that other schools have taken on page 25 of your packet. These actions could be implemented by some of you in this room, working with other parents, staff, or students. As you think of ideas, it's great to think big, but also consider whether they are realistic.

Facilitator Notes

A Part 3 can be done in small groups and then debriefed as a large group.

 On chart paper, draw the diagram on page 62. The diagram will be filled out in Part 3.

Section B: Brainstorm (25-30 minutes)

1. Let's split into three groups. We are going to count off by 3's. Move to your group and begin brainstorming.
2. Each group will brainstorm (which means we'll get as many ideas as possible without discussion.)
3. Make sure that everyone has a chance to talk and have someone chart the group's ideas.
4. Once you have a good list, talk together to prioritize your list of action ideas and vote on the top 3 ideas.
5. Note that some action ideas might address more than one barrier. The rest of your issues, barriers, and action ideas will be captured and shared with your school Leadership Team for future work.
6. Think about which ones which will have the most impact and address the most barriers.
7. Next week, we will share out and prioritize our action ideas as a group.

**PART 7: HOMEWORK
(5 minutes)**

1. Remember who is in your action group and which action ideas you will be focusing on. Next week, we will map out the details for the action.
2. For homework, review the Suggestions for Action Steps and the Sample Action Worksheet in your packets, and think about your group's barrier and what the action idea will look like.
3. Think about what you would like to continue to work on after the Study Circle concludes, and if you have friends or colleagues who could join.
4. Bring your calendars to the next session in case you decide to meet again.

**PART 8: CLOSING
(5 Minutes)**

1. **Potluck?** Next week is our last session. Many study circles decide to have a potluck dinner, with individuals bringing food from their different cultures. Do you want to do this? If so, is it possible for you to come early so we can begin eating before the session begins. Make sure someone is bringing plates, napkins, silverware. (OPTIONAL: Pass around a piece of paper if they want to say what they want to bring)
2. Let's do positives and changes
3. One word about how you are feeling about the study circle.

Personal Notes

Facilitator Notes

- The goal of this activity is to create a list of "SMART" action ideas.
- Make sure they stay on track with action ideas related to the racial and ethnic achievement gap!
- Make sure the action workgroups are diverse, if they are not ask politely if they would like to move to the other group. Each group should have a staff member.
- When facilitating the small groups your role is to challenge the participants and have an in depth conversation on the issue. Make sure to get the participants to think about how the previous activities relate to the scenario (cultural timeline, stereotypes, skin color, and where do you stand).
- You need to be directive, and remind them the action ideas need to be realistic.
- **Take note of who is in which action workgroup.**
- Fill out the facilitator notes as soon as possible after each session.
- Make sure you let us know if someone did not attend the session.

Readers Theatre Examples

Question #3 in Section 3 of Readers Theatre Debrief:

Examples of Miscommunication

- Mrs. Coston was blindsided and didn't know why she was coming to the school
- One-way conversation between Ms. Baker and Mrs. Coston: Ms. Baker did not give opportunity for dialogue
- It was the first time Mrs. Coston had heard anything. She had only heard good things and not seen anything in the binder
- Ms. Baker assumed Mrs. Coston used email
- Mrs. Coston didn't understand "intervention" strategies
- Parent should have been involved from the beginning
- Assumed parent wasn't involved in Mario's homework

Question #4 in Section 3 of Readers Theatre Debrief:

Teacher Expectations	Parent Expectations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Checking to see if reading everyday– checking on homework• Reading notes and papers from school• Returning calls• Teacher believes that parent understands reading level and data notebook	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Teachers job to teach– all left up to teacher/ school• Parent expects school to communicate properly– still doesn't know

OPTION B

PART 1: WELCOME BACK (5 Minutes)

Goal: To set the stage for identifying issues, causes, and action.

1. Last week, we looked at data from this school and talked together about why we think the data looks that way. We ended by prioritizing 3 issues.
2. Tonight, we will explore these issues more deeply to see what is causing them.
3. This will get us ready for next week, when we'll make an action plan for attacking the causes and barriers.
4. Let's take a look at page 17 in our packets, this diagram shows where we are. In Session 4, we prioritized 3 issues. Today we are going to look at the barriers and causes for those issues. Next week we will start working on our action plan.
5. Now let's go over today's agenda.
6. Hello Circle.

PART 2: STRUCTURAL BARRIERS/Racism AND SKITS (Total: 45 Minutes total)

Goal: To allow participants with a deeper understanding and awareness of race and ethnicity to begin looking beyond personal attitudes to practices, procedures and policies on a structural level. After all the challenging and emotional discussions in the last few activities, this next activity builds on the sessions and helps to bring the participants back together as a group.

Section A: Introduction (5 minutes)

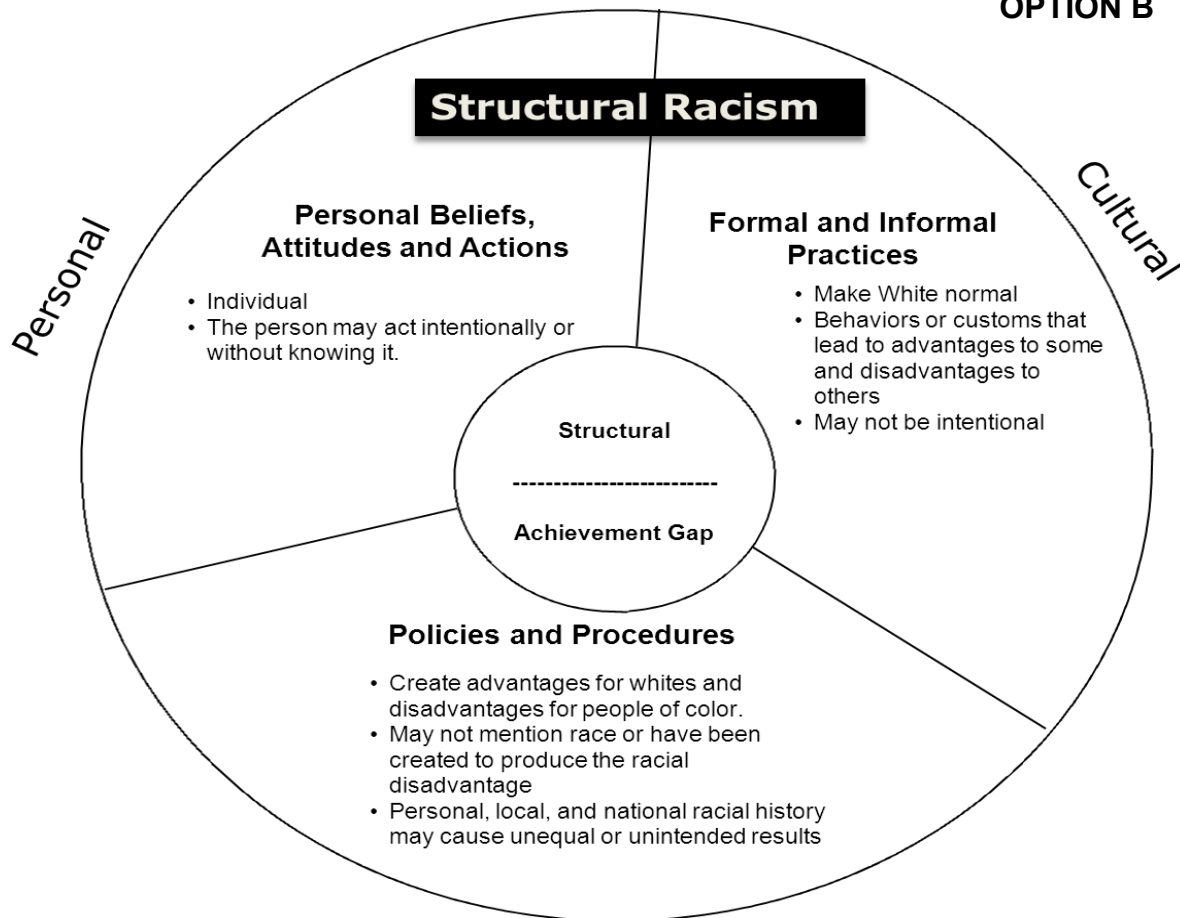
1. When we talk about race, we often focus on the individual. For example, we often talk about how to change the personal attitudes or behavior of the teacher, or parent, or student. But, changing the personal attitudes will only get us so far.
2. One of the issues we prioritized last week is _____. If we want to really make an impact on this issues, we also need to look at the practices, procedures, and policies that contribute to this issue.
3. I am handing out a chart. You can see that it is split into three areas: Personal Attitudes, Formal and Informal Practices, and Policies and Procedures.
4. We will be working together to create a 2 minute skit to illustrates an example of the three areas.

Personal Notes

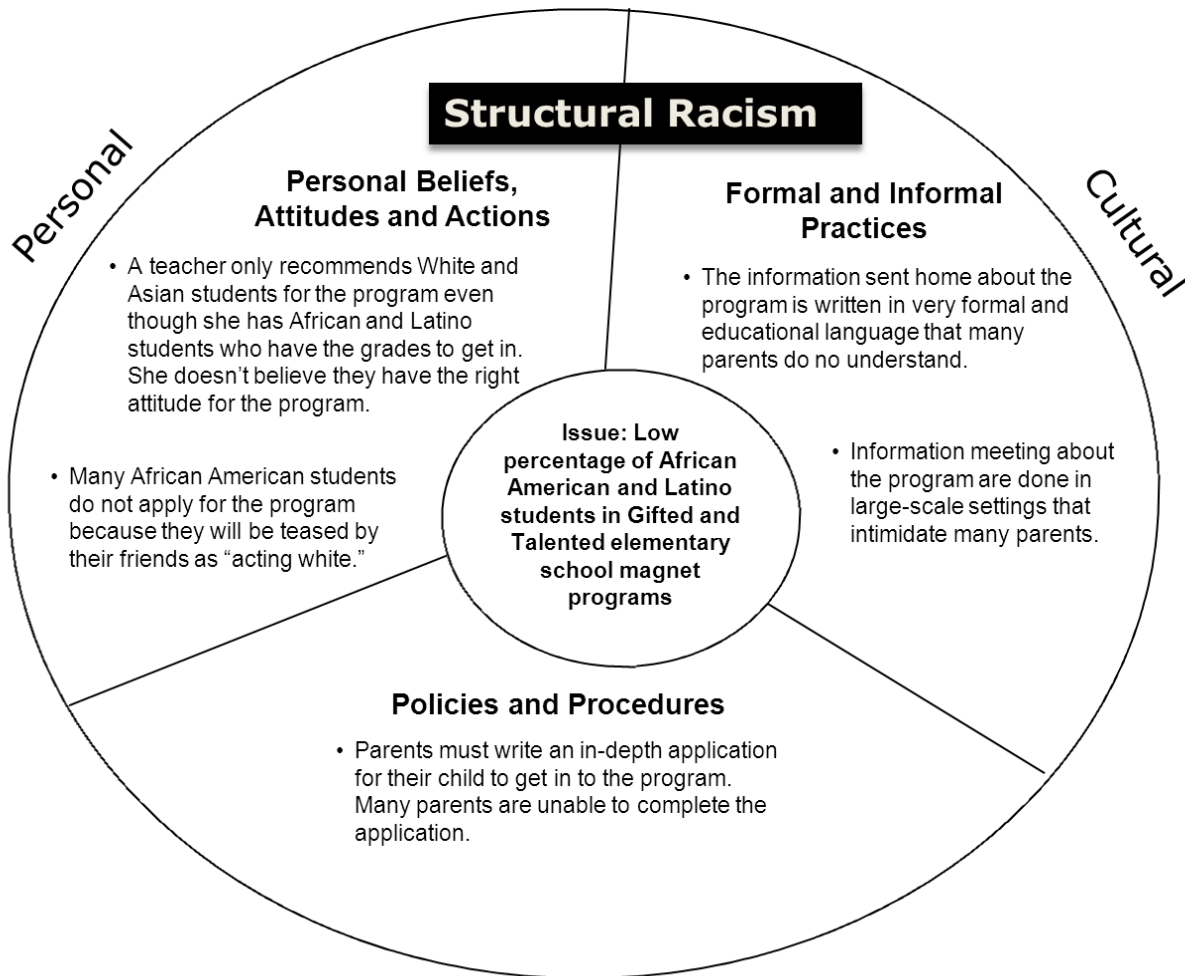
Section B: Structural Barriers/Racism (10 minutes)

1. Take a few minutes to look at the chart that you were just given. You will see three areas of structural barriers or structural racism: A) Personal Attitudes, B) Formal and Informal Practices, and C) Policies and Procedures.
2. Lets look at one issue as an example to illustrate this idea. The issue is that there is a low percentage of African American and Latino students in the Gifted and Talented elementary school magnet programs.
3. Here are some examples of possible causes in the three categories that may contribute to this issue:
 - Personal Attitudes
 - ◇ A teacher only recommends White and Asian students for the program even though she has African American and Latino students who have the grades to get in. She doesn't believe they have the right attitude for the program.
 - ◇ Many African American students do not apply for the program because they will be teased by their friends as "acting white."
 - Formal and Informal Practices
 - ◇ The information sent home about the program is written in very formal and educational language that many parents do not understand.
 - ◇ Information meetings about the program are done in large-scale settings that intimidate many parents.
 - Policies and Procedures
 - ◇ Parents must write an in-depth application for their child to get in to the program. Many parents are unable to complete the application.
4. Lets count off by 3 to split into three groups. Group 1 will be *Personal Attitudes*, Group 2 will be *Formal and Informal Practices*, and Group 3 will be *Policies and Procedures*.
5. Here is your assignment:
 - Talk together to think about the different causes of _____, the issue we prioritized last week. Come up with one example that is in the level you were assigned.
 - Once you have your example, create a 2 minute skit to illustrate the example within the school. One of us will come around to answer any questions.

Personal Notes



Institutional



Institutional

Section C: Skits (30 minutes)

1. Now we will go around and have each group perform their skit. The goal for doing this is to understand the different levels. After each skit, we will ask how the skit illustrated the specific level.
2. Let's start with the personal attitudes skit.
3. How does this first skit show one area of the structural barrier: personal attitudes?
4. Moving on to the second skit, formal and informal practices.
5. How does this first skit the show one area of the structural barrier: formal and informal practices?
6. Last but not least, the policies and procedures skit.
7. How does this first skit the show the structural barrier: policies and procedures?
8. We want to now have all 3 groups reenact their skits at the same time (*pause for 20 seconds*).
9. All together, simultaneously, these are the structural barriers. If one is taken out we still have two other aspects occurring at the same time. If we truly want to make change on this issue, we need to address all three levels.

Facilitator Notes

- Each facilitator will move from group to group, supporting the participants. Answer and clarify any questions the group has.

Personal Notes

PART 3: WHAT ARE BARRIERS WE WANT TO ADDRESS?
(35 Minutes total)



Goal: To brainstorm and prioritize the barriers.

Section A: Brainstorm Barriers & Share Out
(20 minutes)

1. From the Structural Barriers activity, we examined one of our prioritized issues and examined the issue from the 3 levels that make up structural barriers.
2. We are now going to move into brainstorming and prioritizing barriers that we would like to address as a group.

Brainstorm 1:

1. Now we want you to stay in your skit groups to do the brainstorm.
2. Each group should brainstorm barriers/causes to the issue in the three categories (Personal, Formal/Informal Practices, Policies and Procedures).
3. When you have a good list, talk together to prioritize your top 3. Pick one person to report out. The speaker should include the 3 priorities and a brief explanation. They can come from any level.
4. Let's have each group report out.

OR

Brainstorm 2:

1. Go back to your groups. We are now going to look at the 3 issues we prioritized in Session 4.
2. Group 1 will have (issue 1) _____, Group 2 will have (issue 2) _____, and Group 3 will have (issue 3) _____.
3. Each group should brainstorm barriers/causes to this issue in the three categories (Personal, Formal/Informal Practices, Policies and Procedures).
4. When you have a good list, talk together to prioritize your top 3. Pick one person to report out. The speaker should include 3 priorities and a brief explanation. They can come from any level.
5. Let's have each group report out.

Facilitator Notes

- If the issue in the Structural Barriers activity is the dominant one, proceed with Brainstorm 1. If there were other issues that participants feel are just as important, use Brainstorm 2.
- Make sure the action workgroups are diverse, if they are not ask politely if they would like to move to the other group. Each group should have a staff member.
- Facilitators should from group to group to help participants with any questions they have.
- Facilitators should suggest barriers that they heard in the conversations, but have not been raised in the brainstorm.

Personal Notes

**Section B: Discussion
(10 minutes)**

1. We have brainstormed and prioritized in our small groups as well as heard the prioritized barriers from each group.
2. We would like to take this opportunity for you to make sure you understand the barrier and say how you feel about them and why, and to challenge each other.
3. Are there any we can combine or group?

**Section C: Voting for the Highest Priority Barriers/Causes
(5 minutes)**

1. We have more barriers than we can realistically address right away. We'd like to identify the top three barriers/causes that we want to address.
2. We are going to vote. You each have three dots. When you are ready, come up and place your dots on the barriers you think we should address first as a group. You can put all of your dots on one, or one dot on three different barriers.
3. Remember, our goal is to address the racial achievement gap in our school.
4. When everyone has voted with their dots, we will see which are our top three priority barriers. Don't worry, your school will still have this whole list, so work can continue at a later date.

Facilitator Notes

- AFTER the brainstorm, push the participants to challenge each other and go deeper. They need to hash out the barriers to make sure they are clearly understood.
- The goal of this activity is to create a list of "SMART" action ideas.
- Make sure they stay on track with action ideas related to the racial and ethnic achievement gap!

**PART 4: BREAK INTO ACTION WORKGROUPS
(30-35 Minutes total)**

Goal: Develop a list of action ideas associated with each prioritized issue.

Section A: Introduction (5 minutes)

1. We've gotten deeply into some of the problems at our school and we started talking about ideal outcomes. Many possible action ideas have already been shared.
2. Now we'd like to see what other action ideas we can come up with that can directly impact the barriers we prioritized.

An action idea is an activity, a program, a group, or any other action that the school community can take to address a racial and ethnic issue the school faces related to the achievement gap.

3. For example, there's a list of actions that other schools have taken on page 25 of your packet. These actions could be implemented by some of you in this room, working with other parents, staff, or students. As you think of ideas, it's great to think big, but also consider whether they are realistic.

Personal Notes

Section B: Brainstorm (25-30 minutes)

1. Let's split into three groups. We are going to count off by 3's. Move to your group and begin brainstorming.
2. Each group will brainstorm (which means we'll get as many ideas as possible without discussion.)
3. Make sure that everyone has a chance to talk and have someone chart the group's ideas.
4. Once you have a good list, talk together to prioritize your list of action ideas and vote on the top 3 ideas.
5. Note that some action ideas might address more than one barrier. The rest of your issues, barriers, and action ideas will be captured and shared with your school Leadership Team for future work.
6. Think about which ones which will have the most impact and address the most barriers.
7. Next week, we will share out and prioritize our action ideas as a group.

**PART 5: HOMEWORK
(5 minutes)**

1. Remember who is in your action group and which action ideas you will be focusing on. Next week, we will map out the details for the action.
2. For homework, review the Suggestions for Action Steps and the Sample Action Worksheet in your packets, and think about your group's barrier and what the action idea will look like.
3. Think about what you would like to continue to work on after the Study Circle concludes, and if you have friends or colleagues who could join.
4. Bring your calendars to the next session in case you decide to meet again.

**PART 6: CLOSING
(5 Minutes)**

1. **Potluck?** Next week is our last session. Many study circles decide to have a potluck dinner, with individuals bringing food from their different cultures. Do you want to do this? If so, is it possible for you to come early so we can begin eating before the session begins. Make sure someone is bringing plates, napkins, silverware. (Pass around a piece of paper if they want to say what they want to bring—*optional*)
2. Let's do positives and changes
3. One word about how you are feeling about the study circle.

Facilitator Notes

- Make sure the action workgroups are diverse, if they are not ask politely if they would like to move to the other group. Each group should have a staff member.
- When facilitating the small groups your role is to challenge the participants and have an in depth conversation on the issue. Make sure to get the participants to think about how the previous activities relate to the scenario (cultural timeline, stereotypes, skin color, and where do you stand).
- You need to be directive, and remind them the action ideas need to be realistic.
- **Take note of who is in which action workgroup.**
- Fill out the facilitator notes as soon as possible after each session.
- Make sure you let us know if someone did not attend the session.

Personal Notes

OPTION C

PART 1: WELCOME BACK (5 Minutes)

Goal: To set the stage for identifying issues, causes, and action.

1. Last week, we looked at data from this school and talked together about why we think the data looks that way. We ended by prioritizing 3 issues.
2. Tonight, we will brainstorm and then narrow down action ideas or possible solutions to address those issues.
3. By the end of Session Six, you will have plans that you and your school can use to implement three of your action ideas. We will then help you get ready to make a presentation to the School Improvement Team (or Leadership Team).
4. Now let's go over today's agenda.
5. Hello Circle.

PART 2: FROM ISSUE TO ACTION PLAN (25 Minutes total)

Goal: To clarify the tasks ahead and understand the "why" behind an issue. This activity will help focus the group and dig deeper into the causes of the issues they prioritized.

1. We have brainstormed a number of issues and voted on the ones we feel are the highest priority for our school. We will now look behind the top priority issues to identify the possible causes.
2. Please take a look at the graphic on page 17 of your packet. This is one example of how the identified issue for one group has led to effective and productive actions at the school. Take some time right now to look over the diagram
3. Let's take a moment to review our top three issues from last week. Our prioritized issues are _____, _____, and _____. Is there anything that needs clarification?
4. With the top three issues in mind, we are now going to identify some of the possible causes as a group. Note that within our issues, there may be overlapping causes or barriers.
5. At this point, let's just put things up without discussion. We will have time to discuss in a few minutes.
6. Let's start now by brainstorming what is causing the first issue. The second. The third.

Facilitator Notes

- Identifying causes will help the group brainstorm action ideas that will impact the issue directly through a racial and ethnic lens.
- It is important to make sure everyone has a chance to speak in this part, and that the barriers/causes are focused on race and ethnicity.

Personal Notes

Discussion

1. We have brainstormed a list of barriers for our prioritized issues from last week.
2. We would like to take this opportunity for you to make sure you understand the barrier and say how you feel about them and why, and to challenge each other.
3. Are there any we can combine or group?

PART 3: VOTING FOR THE HIGHEST PRIORITY BARRIERS/CAUSES (10 minutes)

1. We will start to develop action ideas later tonight in order to address some of these barriers. However, we have more barriers than we can realistically address right away. So we'd like for you to vote, so that we can identify the top three barriers/causes that we want to address.
2. You each have three dots. When you are ready, come up and place your dots on the barriers you think we should address first as a group. You can put all of your dots on one, or one dot on three different barriers.
3. Remember, our goal is to address the racial achievement gap in our school.
4. When everyone has voted with their dots, we will see which are our top three priority barriers. Don't worry, your school will still have this whole list, so work can continue at a later date.

PART 4: BREAK INTO ACTION WORKGROUPS (30 Minutes total)



Goal: *Develop a list of action ideas associated with each prioritized issue.*

Section A: Introduction (5 minutes)

1. We've gotten deeply into some of the problems at our school and we started talking about ideal outcomes. Many possible action ideas have already been shared.
2. Now we'd like to see what other action ideas we can come up with that can directly impact the barriers we prioritized.
3. For example, there's a list of actions that other schools have taken on

An action idea is an activity, a program, a group, or any other action that the school community can take to address a racial and ethnic issue the school faces related to the achievement gap.

page 25 of your packet. These actions could be implemented by some of you in this room, working with other parents, staff, or students. As you think of ideas, it's great to think big, but also consider whether they are realistic.

Facilitator Notes

- AFTER the brainstorm, push the participants to challenge each other and go deeper. They need to hash out the barriers to make sure they are clearly understood.
- The goal of this activity is to create a list of "SMART" action ideas.
- Make sure they stay on track with action ideas related to the racial and ethnic achievement gap!

Personal Notes

Section B: Brainstorm (25 minutes)

1. Let's split into three groups. We are going to count off by 3's. Move to your group and begin brainstorming.
2. Each group will brainstorm (which means we'll get as many ideas as possible without discussion.)
3. Make sure that everyone has a chance to talk and have someone chart the group's ideas.
4. Once you have a good list, talk together to prioritize your list of action ideas and vote on the top 3 ideas.
5. Note that some action ideas might address more than one barrier. The rest of your issues, barriers, and action ideas will be captured and shared with your school Leadership Team for future work.
6. Think about which ones which will have the most impact and address the most barriers.
7. After each group is done prioritizing in their action workgroups, we will share out.

**PART 5: PRIORITIZE ACTION & VOTING
(15 Minutes total)**

Goal: To narrow down the action ideas to three, so that the participants have a better chance of success in implementing them.

**Section A: Share Out
(10 minutes)**

1. Now we are going to have each group share out their top three action ideas with everyone.
2. Are there any action ideas that need clarifying?
3. Can any ideas be combined or grouped?

**Section C: Voting on Top Action Ideas
(5 minutes)**

1. You each have three dots. When you are ready, come up and place your dots on the barriers you think we should address first as a group. You can put all of your dots on one, or one dot on three different barriers.
2. Remember, our goal is to address the racial achievement gap in our school.
3. When everyone has voted with their dots, we will see which are our top three priority barriers. Don't worry, your school will still have this whole list, so work can continue at a later date.

Facilitator Notes

- Make sure the action workgroups are diverse, if they are not ask politely if they would like to move to the other group. Each group should have a staff member.
- When facilitating the small groups your role is to challenge the participants and have an in depth conversation on the issue. Make sure to get the participants to think about how the previous activities relate to the scenario (cultural timeline, stereotypes, skin color, and where do you stand).
- You need to be directive, and remind them the action ideas need to be realistic.
- Take note of who is in which brainstorm action group.

Personal Notes

PART 6: COMPLETE THE ACTION WORKSHEET
(25 Minutes Total)

Goal: To work intensively on action planning so that they have a solid implementation plan to put into action after the study circle concludes.

Instructions (5 minutes)

1. Now in your action workgroups you will complete an Action Worksheet for each Action Idea. The Action Worksheet will serve a number of purposes. Of course, it will help you plan your action. But it will also be a valuable way to communicate to your school leaders and PTA what you did in the study circle, and move your ideas forward. It will also help you in recruiting more parents and staff to join your efforts.
2. Let's review the worksheet together to see if there are any questions. It is on page 27 of your packet, and we have extra copies.
3. Action Idea 1 will work over here, and Action Idea 2 will be over here. And Action Idea 3 will be here.
4. We will spend the remainder of this session working on the Action Worksheets. Next week, we'll come back to the full group and give everyone a chance to comment on what the groups have done.

Small Groups (20 minutes)



1. Who can take notes for the group? Please write your answers on chart paper.
2. You might want to start with question 2. I'll be here to help you stay on track.

PART 7: HOMEWORK
(5 minutes)

1. Remember who is in your action workgroup and which action idea you will be focusing on. Next week, we will map out the details for this action.
2. For homework, review the Suggestions for Action Steps and the Sample Action Worksheet in your packets, and think about your group's issue and how the action idea will look.
3. Think about what you would like to continue to work on after the Study Circle concludes, and if you have friends or colleagues who could join.
4. Bring your calendars to the next session in case you decide to meet again.

PART 8: CLOSING
(5 Minutes)

1. **Potluck?** Next week is our last session. Many study circles decide to have a potluck dinner, with individuals bringing food from their different cultures. Do you want to do this? If so, is it possible for you to come early so we can begin eating before the session begins. Make sure someone is bringing plates, napkins, silverware. (OPTIONAL: Pass around a piece of paper if they want to say what they want to bring)
2. Let's do positives and changes
3. One word about how you are feeling about the study circle.

Facilitator Notes

- Give each group plenty of chart paper, and ask them to answer the action worksheet questions on chart paper.
- Allow the groups to work independently, with active participation from the facilitator. The facilitators should challenge the group and help them stay focused on race/ethnicity. Remember they will need to work without a facilitator in the future. However, try to help them stay on track.
- Sample completed Action Worksheets start on page 21 of their packets.
- Fill out the facilitator notes as soon as possible after each session.
- Make sure you let us know if someone did not attend the session.

Sample List of Action Ideas

Issues	Action Ideas identified so far
<p>Feelings of Exclusion/Unwelcoming school environment for PARENTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · African American student’s concern that mom wouldn’t have anyone to talk to on field trip · cliques among parents – i.e. soccer – these lead to exclusion of kids in after school activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Teachers could pair up parents to help them to get to know each other · Explore ways to encourage more interaction among parents – structured activities to connect with more diverse parent groups – i.e. games, ice breakers · Parent buddies · In each class, every parent should know every child and their parents’ name
<p>Feelings of Exclusion/Unwelcoming school environment for CHILDREN</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · substitute asked Latino child “where are you from?” · feelings of exclusion or not being welcomed in after school activities such as girl scouts. · as children get older, they start noticing culture/ethnicity, who plays with who · do parents influence their children’s choice of friends? Does it affect the break into separate groups? · “that bus never has play dates” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · System for notifying principal regarding concerns about substitutes · Encourage interaction among kids – i.e. structured mix-it-up activities · Broaden outreach regarding after school activities · Create more opportunities for children to bond – this will help parents connect to the school · Create a school slogan such as “ where everyone knows your name”
<p>Lack of diversity in PTA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · participation at PTA – 85% are white Jewish moms – opportunity to involve more of the community · how to welcome parents to PTA – the invitation is out, but not well received · invitation to participate not perceived to be genuine – how to break through? · many single moms, 2nd jobs, many parents could come out, but many can’t. · attempts are made to get more African American parents involved, but they work more than 1 job, very late getting in. 	
<p>Not all staff are culturally aware, some have lower expectations of students of color</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · some teachers have lower expectations of African American students, more likely to assume they have learning disabilities · not all teachers are as culturally aware and accepting of differences, make assumptions regarding race and culture, or about children who might not succeed because they are “too quiet” · apathy/lack of interest among many staff regarding race and diversity – i.e. lack of teachers signing up to study circle and other diversity training · parents of AA children are viewed negatively by some teachers at IEP meetings and CAP · even though some assumptions are made, it is not accepted – principal makes sure it’s not policy/norm · don’t assume how far African American students can go academically · some teachers feel it’s the parents’ responsibility to bring child up if struggling 	

Session Six: Developing Action Plans

HOW THIS SESSION FITS IN WITH OTHERS

In **Session Six**, the facilitator's role changes as the goal moves from facilitating dialogue to helping the participants plan their actions. Facilitators need to be more directive. By the end of Session Six, the study circle should have two or three action plans and specific next steps that insure the actions will be implemented. Make sure you have discussed specific next steps before you conclude.

- Complete Action Worksheets
- Next Steps for the Group, and Personal Action
- Evaluation

GOALS FOR ACTIVITIES IN THIS SESSION

Action Worksheet: To work on action planning so that they have a solid implementation plan to put into action after the study circle.

Next Steps: To encourage participants to go public with their study circle experience and take the first step of becoming leaders within their school.

Personal Action: To encourage continued action.

Evaluation: To gather feedback on how we as a program can continue to improve.

AGENDA

OPTION A/B

1. Welcome Back
2. Hello Circle/Icebreaker
3. Prioritize Action
4. Action Worksheet
5. Next Steps
6. Personal Action
7. Evaluation
8. Closing

OPTION C

1. Welcome Back
2. Hello Circle/Icebreaker
3. Action Worksheet
4. Next Steps
5. Personal Action
6. Evaluation
7. Closing

Session Six: Developing Action Plans

MATERIALS NEEDED

- Nametags
- Markers
- Pens
- Sign-in sheet
- Chart paper & tape
- Posters & Ground Rules from Session 1
- Expectations Chart Paper from Speed Meeting
- Colored dots
- Envelopes
- Index cards
- Action Worksheets

FACILITATOR PREPARATION

- Copy Action Ideas onto chart paper for voting (not necessary if you voted last week)
- Consult with the Study Circles office to see if a facilitator can be made available to continue working with the group (if necessary).
- ***The Study Circle office will bring: camera, certificates, evaluations, and contact list.***

SET UP

1. Arrive 30 minutes early.
2. If there will be a potluck, make sure tables are set up for the food.
3. Make sure correct number of chairs are in circle
4. Set up table near door with nametags, etc.
5. Hang Ground Rules and posters.
6. Hang Expectations (from Session 1, Speed Meeting) but cover them.
7. Hang Objectives from Session 1 (if you prepared a poster in Session 1).
8. Confirm the date of the Leadership Team meeting.

AFTER THE SESSION

- Don't forget to fill out your facilitator notes!
- Make sure you let the Study Circle staff know if someone did not attend the session.

Challenges & Considerations

Completing Action Worksheet (OPTION A, B & C)—

- Before the groups start working on the action worksheet, make sure they are diverse, if they are not, ask politely if they would like to move to the other group.
 - Each group should have at least one staff member
- The facilitators should challenge the group and help them stay focused on race/ethnicity.

OPTION A/B

PART 1: WELCOME BACK (5 Minutes)

Goal: *Set stage for today's activities and remind them of the study circle objectives.*

1. This is our last session. We've come a long way, but we have a lot to do today! By the end of today, we will have created action plans, planned a presentation to the school, committed to personal action steps, and established a process for communicating with one another in the future.
2. Before we get started, we want to bring back our objectives that we talked about in Session 1. Though the study circle, we plan to:
 - a) build a unified group of diverse parents, teachers, and students that understands the challenges and the benefits of a diverse school;
 - b) encourage an environment in which racial and ethnic issues are talked about openly and productively.
 - c) create personal and group action steps that address the racial and ethnic barriers to student achievement
3. We've been working on objectives "a" and "b" throughout our 6 weeks. Today we will work on objective "c."
4. Just by learning to talk together about racial and ethnic issues in the study circle, you'll be able to make greater contributions to your school community. Creating and implementing action steps will make an even greater contribution to decreasing the achievement gap. We know how busy you all are with family, jobs, and other commitments, but we hope that you will be able to stay involved in some way. Even coming to one meeting or making a few phone calls makes a difference!

Facilitator Notes

- Our goal is to clarify. We do not want to go back and revisit the action issues.
- Post up the list of prioritized action ideas from session 5 for each action workgroup.

PART 2: REVIEW AND DISCUSS ACTION IDEAS FROM PREVIOUS WEEK (10 Minutes)

Goal: *to clarify the list of action ideas and discuss any remaining questions before voting.*

1. Let's get back into our action workgroups from last week. Together, review the prioritized action from Session 5 to make sure everyone understands the 3 top action ideas. Then, each group will share out.
2. We don't have time for discussion, just clarification.
3. Do you see anything we left out?

Personal Notes

PART 3: PRIORITIZE ACTION & VOTING
(20 Minutes)

Goal: To narrow down the action ideas to three, so that the participants have a better chance of success in implementing them.

Section A: Share Out
(10 minutes)

1. Now we are going to have each group share out their top three action ideas with everyone.
2. Are there any action ideas that need clarifying?
3. Can any ideas be combined or grouped?

Section C: Voting on Top Action Ideas
(5 minutes)

1. You each have three dots. When you are ready, come up and place your dots on the action ideas you think we should address first as a group. You can put all of your dots on one, or one dot on three different barriers.
2. Remember, our goal is to address the racial achievement gap in our school.
3. When everyone has voted with their dots, we will see which are our top three priority barriers. Don't worry, your school will still have this whole list, so work can continue at a later date.

PART 4: COMPLETE THE ACTION WORKSHEET
(60—80 Minutes Total)

Goal: To work intensively on action planning so that they have a solid implementation plan to put into action after the study circle concludes.

Instructions (5 minutes)

1. Now in your action workgroups you will complete an Action Worksheet for each Action Idea. The Action Worksheet will serve a number of purposes. Of course, it will help you plan your action. But it will also be a valuable way to communicate to your school leaders and PTA what you did in the study circle, and move your ideas forward. It will also help you in recruiting more parents and staff to join your efforts.
2. Let's review the worksheet together to see if there are any questions. It is on page 27 of your packet, and we have extra copies.
3. Action Idea 1 will work over here, and Action Idea 2 will be over here. And Action Idea 3 will be here.
4. We will spend the remainder of this session working on our Action Worksheets.

Personal Notes

Small Groups (30-40 minutes) 😊😊

1. Who can take notes for the group? Please write your answers on chart paper.
2. You might want to start with question 2. I'll be here to help you stay on track.

Full Group Discussion of Action Worksheets (25-35 minutes)

1. Let's bring our attention back to the full group, but you can stay with your small groups.
2. Group 1, can you tell us your action idea and walk us through the highlights of what you came up with? We'll have about 10 minutes discussion.
3. Any comments?
4. Group 2, can you tell us about your action idea and plan?
5. Comments from the group?

Personal Notes

Facilitator Notes

- Give each group plenty of chart paper, and ask them to answer the action worksheet questions on chart paper.
- If you are running short on time, have them focus on questions 2, 6, 7, 8, and 10 in the action worksheet. They need to have at least one meeting planned by the end of this session. They can complete the rest of the sheet at a later time.
- Allow the groups to work independently, with active participation from the facilitator. The facilitators should challenge the group and help them stay focused on race/ethnicity. Remember they will need to work without a facilitator in the future. However, try to help them stay on track.
- Sample completed Action Worksheets start on page 21 of their packets.

PART 5: NEXT STEPS
(15 Minutes)

Goal: Encourage participants to go public with their study circle experience and take the first step of becoming leaders within their school.

Preparing to present to the leadership team

1. As we've discussed, it's important to share your important work with the wider school community. Most study circles make a presentation to the School Leadership Team or School Improvement Team about what it was like to participate in a study circle, the issues and action ideas you developed, and how you would like to see the school move forward. You could also present to the PTA. We will give you the flipcharts and documents we developed together so you can use them in the presentation.
2. What do you think of this idea?
3. Your principal has identified the following date. Who is available to come to this meeting?
4. Let's review the sample agenda, on page 33 of your packet.
5. If it is difficult to find a date when everyone is available, would you like to videotape your comments to share at the meeting?

Communicating with the wider school community


1. It's also useful to share your presentation more widely with parents and staff—perhaps through other meetings, the website, listserv, a newsletter or flyers. This will help you recruit more parents to join your efforts.
2. What do you think of this? What would work well here?

Keeping up the momentum

1. In your action teams, you made plans to work together in the future and established some responsibilities.
2. You may also want to have meetings of the full group?
3. Would you like to set a time to meet with a facilitator to prepare for your presentation to the leadership team or other purpose?
4. What other next steps have you identified?

Personal Notes

Facilitator Notes

- **Facilitators *Must* Keep the Action Worksheets and all documentation.**
 - Return these to the Study Circles Staff **as soon as possible**. We will type up the sheets and get back to the schools and participants. When left with the schools, the action steps always get lost!
 - Your school should already have dates planned for a presentation to the school's Leadership Team, School Improvement Team, or other staff and parent group.
 - Review the dates with the participants.
 - Explain why the presentation is important and try to get participants to agree to attend.
 - Then, use the agenda on page 33 of their packet.
-  Make sure to chart a list of Next Steps including:
- Date for preparation meeting for leadership team presentation
 - Drafting newsletter article
 - Dates for next meetings of action teams
 - Date of videotaping session (if needed)
- Handout contact list

PART 6: PERSONAL ACTION
(5 minutes)

Goal: To encourage continued action.

1. Some people may not be able to participate in the action teams, but everyone can do something. Even small steps make a difference.
2. On the index cards write down 1 or 2 things you will do as a result of the study circle. No one will see this card except for you.
3. On the envelope, write your name and full address.
4. Put the card in the envelope and seal.
5. The Study Circles program will mail these back to you in a couple of weeks as a reminder.

PART 7: EVALUATION
(5 minutes)

Goal: To obtain feedback.

We're handing out evaluation sheets. Please provide your feedback so that we can improve our future study circles.

PART 8: CLOSING
(10 minutes)

Goal: To review their original expectations, and appreciate the people and experiences over the last six weeks.

1. Everyone please stand up.
2. Look at the expectations you wrote for this study circle in Session One. Did the study circle meet your expectations?
3. Look around the room at the people you have spent so much time with. Say one word about your experience in this study circle or about a person you've met here and appreciated and why.

Facilitator Notes

For Part 6

- A** Give everyone 2 index cards. On one, ask them to write down something they will do to make sure this work continues.
- On the other, write an "aha" moment or lesson learned.
 - Don't seal the envelope yet.

For Part 7

- Everyone needs to fill out an evaluation before closing the study circle.
- Return the evaluations to the Study Circles office

For Part 8

- If using the alternate for Part 7, ask them to share what they wrote on their cards, then seal in the envelope.
- Take a group picture and distribute certificates.
- Make sure to pass along all of the flipcharts to a Study Circle staff member

Personal Notes

OPTION C

PART 1: WELCOME BACK (5 Minutes)

Goal: Set stage for today's activities and remind them of the study circle objectives.

1. This is our last session. We've come a long way, but we have a lot to do today! By the end of today, we will have created action plans, planned a presentation to the school, committed to personal action steps, and established a process for communicating with one another in the future.
2. Before we get started, we want to bring back our objectives that we talked about in Session 1. Though the study circle, we plan to:
 - a) build a unified group of diverse parents, teachers, and students that understands the challenges and the benefits of a diverse school;
 - b) encourage an environment in which racial and ethnic issues are talked about openly and productively.
 - c) create personal and group action steps that address the racial and ethnic barriers to student achievement
3. We've been working on objectives "a" and "b" throughout our 6 weeks. Today we will work on objective "c." Just by learning to talk together about racial and ethnic issues in the study circle, you'll be able to make greater contributions to your school community. Creating and implementing action steps will make an even greater contribution to decreasing the achievement gap. We know how busy you all are with family, jobs, and other commitments, but we hope that you will be able to stay involved in some way. Even coming to one meeting or making a few phone calls makes a difference!

Facilitator Notes

- Our goal is to clarify. We do not want to go back and revisit the action issues.
- Post up the list of prioritized action ideas from session 5.

PART 2: CONTINUE TO COMPLETE ACTION WORKSHEET (50 Minutes total)

Goal: to continue working intensively on action planning so that the group has a solid plan to put into action after the study circle concludes.

Small Groups (15 minutes) 😊😊

1. Let's get back into our action workgroups and review the action worksheet you started on last week to make sure we understand everything that's there.
2. After each group is done completing the action worksheet, we will share out and discuss as a large group.
3. Ask yourself when reviewing your action worksheet, do you see anything that is left out?

Personal Notes

Full Group Discussion of Action Worksheets (25-35 minutes)

1. Let's bring our attention back to the full group, but you can stay with your small groups.
2. Group 1, can you tell us your action idea and walk us through the highlights of what you came up with? We'll have about 10 minutes discussion.
3. Any comments?
4. Group 2, can you tell us about your action idea and plan?
5. Comments from the group?

**PART 3: NEXT STEPS
(15 Minutes)**

Goal: Encourage participants to go public with their study circle experience and take the first step of becoming leaders within their school.

Preparing to present to the leadership team

1. As we've discussed, it's important to share your important work with the wider school community. Most study circles make a presentation to the School Leadership Team or School Improvement Team about what it was like to participate in a study circle, the issues and action ideas you developed, and how you would like to see the school move forward. You could also present to the PTA. We will give you the flipcharts and documents we developed together so you can use them in the presentation.
2. What do you think of this idea?
3. Your principal has identified the following date. Who is available to come to this meeting?
4. Let's review the sample agenda, on page 33 of your packet.
5. If it is difficult to find a date when everyone is available, would you like to videotape your comments to share at the meeting?


Communicating with the wider school community

1. It's also useful to share your presentation more widely with parents and staff—perhaps through other meetings, the website, listserv, a newsletter or flyers. This will help you recruit more parents to join your efforts.
2. What do you think of this? What would work well here?

Keeping up the momentum

1. In your action teams, you made plans to work together in the future and established some responsibilities.
2. You may also want to have meetings of the full group?
3. Would you like to set a time to meet with a facilitator to prepare for your presentation to the leadership team or other purpose?
4. What other next steps have you identified?

Facilitator Notes

- **Facilitators *Must* Keep the Action Worksheets and all documentation.**
 - Return these to the Study Circles Staff **as soon as possible**. We will type up the sheets and get back to the schools and participants. When left with the schools, the action steps always get lost!
 - Your school should already have dates planned for a presentation to the school's Leadership Team, School Improvement Team, or other staff and parent group.
 - Review the dates with the participants.
 - Explain why the presentation is important and try to get participants to agree to attend.
 - Then, use the agenda on page 33 of their packet.
-  Make sure to chart a list of Next Steps including:
- Date for preparation meeting for leadership team presentation
 - Drafting newsletter article
 - Dates for next meetings of action teams
 - Date of videotaping session (if needed)
 - Handout contact list

PART 4: PERSONAL ACTION
(5 minutes)

Goal: To encourage continued action.

1. Some people may not be able to participate in the action teams, but everyone can do something. Even small steps make a difference.
2. On the index cards write down 1 or 2 things you will do as a result of the study circle. No one will see this card except for you.
3. On the envelope, write your name and full address.
4. Put the card in the envelope and seal.
5. The Study Circles program will mail these back to you in a couple of weeks as a reminder.

PART 5: EVALUATION
(5 minutes)

Goal: To obtain feedback.

We're handing out evaluation sheets. Please provide your feedback so that we can improve our future study circles.

PART 6: CLOSING
(10 minutes)

Goal: To review their original expectations, and appreciate the people and experiences over the last six weeks.

1. Everyone please stand up.
2. Look at the expectations you wrote for this study circle in Session One. Did the study circle meet your expectations?
3. Look around the room at the people you have spent so much time with. Say one word about your experience in this study circle or about a person you've met here and appreciated and why.

Facilitator Notes

For Part 4

- A** Give everyone 2 index cards. On one, ask them to write down something they will do to make sure this work continues.
- On the other, write an "aha" moment or lesson learned.
 - Don't seal the envelope yet.

For Part 5

- Everyone needs to fill out an evaluation before closing the study circle.
- Return the evaluations to the Study Circles office

For Part 6

- If using the alternate for Part 7, ask them to share what they wrote on their cards, then seal in the envelope.
- Take a group picture and distribute certificates.
- Make sure to pass along all of the flipcharts to a Study Circle staff member

Personal Notes

Action Worksheet—SAMPLE 1

1. **Issue (Problem):** Few African-American students in advanced classes.
- Math teachers rarely give homework and only use report card as basis for recommending students for advanced classes, as opposed to test scores and other assessments.
 - Two parents tried to request that their children be placed in advanced math but teachers discouraged them.

2. **Action Idea (Potential Solution):**

Specific (who, what, where, and how)

Measurable (what numbers can be used to measure accomplishment?)

Agreed Upon (can parent volunteers, teachers, students, and administrators agree on it?)

Realistic (is it achievable with the human and financial resources available?)

Timely (what is the time frame?)

Form a math task force by inviting African American parents to join administrators in addressing the problem. The math task force can work together to hold a family math night once a month, a homework help line for math questions, and review school policies regarding advanced classes.

3. **Which Barriers (Causes of the Problem) discussed in the Study Circle does the Action Idea (Potential Solution) address? Give specific examples.**

African American parents do not know how to support their children with homework, which has led students to struggle and teachers to stop assigning homework. Parents aren't aware of the math class options, and of their rights to advocate for their children. Also, some school policies are not fair when it comes to advanced math courses.

4. **How does this Action Idea (Potential Solution) address the Barriers (Causes of the Problem) ?**

The homework club and help line will address the homework problem. The task force will review and work to adjust the policies.

5. **If this Action Idea (Potential Solution) is implemented, how will we know it is successful?**

It will take time, but we will know it's successful if students complete more homework (monitor teacher records), if the homework club and help line are used consistently during the year, and if there are more kids in advanced classes the following year.

6. **What specific next steps do we need to take to implement this Action Idea (Potential Solution)?**

- How will we get people involved in implementing?
 - Frequent communication and specific responsibilities
- How will we publicize it to encourage participation?
 - Flyers, phone calls, and emails
- How will we monitor its progress?
 - Monthly report on homework that is published in school newsletter.
- How will it be funded?
 - PTA will contribute snacks for math night. SSL middle school students to serve as tutors.
- Where will it happen?
 - Different locations in the school

7. Who needs to be involved in implementing the action idea (not necessarily only people in the Study Circle)? List specific names if possible.

Math teachers, Janie, Katrina, Joseph, Lily, principal.

8. What is the time frame for this plan?

Next meeting October 1

Other deadline _____

Other deadline _____

Launch date _____

9. How can we keep this going?

What might get in the way?

- Schedule conflicts, other commitments

How can we address these challenges?

- Assign one person to serve as coordinator and be responsible for scheduling and communication

10. Who will be responsible for the next steps?

Lead math teacher.

Action Worksheet—SAMPLE 2

1. **Issue (Problem):** Low level of parent involvement in the school.
 - Parents didn't come to information co-sponsored by the school and PTA despite bilingual communications via email, phone, and flyer.
 - Some parents feel unwelcome in the office, have been made to wait and there is no one that speaks Spanish.

2. **Action Idea (Potential Solution):**

Specific (who, what, where, and how)

Measurable (what numbers can be used to measure accomplishment?)

Agreed Upon (can parent volunteers, teachers, students, and administrators agree on it?)

Realistic (is it achievable with the human and financial resources available?)

Timely (what is the time frame?)

Form a group of parent leaders that consists of parents from all ethnic groups that meets one day a month at the school for coffee with the principal and a PTA leader. Goal is for each parent to bring a friend each month. At the coffee, there will be a brief topic presented and then open discussion, question and answers. A translator will be available. The initial group will consist of study circle participants and others by personal invitation. The first coffee will be in October.

3. **Which Barriers (Causes of the Problem) discussed in the Study Circle does the Action Idea (Potential Solution) address? Give specific examples.**

This idea addresses the barrier of parents feeling unwelcomed by inviting them personally for coffee. Cross-cultural communication, lack of relationships, and lack of parent leaders are other barriers. Through the coffees, the parents and staff will build a relationship and gain trust, which will help staff devise effective outreach strategies in the future. It will also build leadership skills among parents.

4. **How does this Action Idea (Potential Solution) address the Barriers (Causes of the Problem)?**

This idea will help parents become more comfortable at the school and help parents and staff build relationships with each other. Personal invitations are likely to be more successful than phone, email or flyers in bringing parents to the school.

5. **If this Action Idea (Potential Solution) is implemented, how will we know it is successful?**

We will be successful if the group continues or grows each month.

6. **What specific next steps do we need to take to implement this Action Idea (Potential Solution)?**

- How will we get people involved in implementing?
 - Each parent brings a friend to the coffee.
- How will we publicize it to encourage participation?
 - Personal communication.
- How will we monitor its progress?
 - Jackie will make sure there is a sign up sheet each month and collect phone numbers.
- How will it be funded?
 - No funding is needed. School will provide coffee, parents can bring food.
- Where will it happen?
 - In the APR

7. Who needs to be involved in implementing the action idea (not necessarily only people in the Study Circle)? List specific names if possible.

Principal, PTA president, Jackie, Susan, Tom, Juanita, Janice, Kyra, and Jose.

8. What is the time frame for this plan? First coffee on first Wednesday in October.

Next meeting first Wed in October, 9:15

Other deadline phone calls via phone tree on Sept 25

Other deadline reminder phone calls on Oct 1

Launch date October 5

9. How can we keep this going?

What might get in the way?

- Schedule conflicts, people forgetting, unavailability of working parents

How can we address these challenges?

- Set same day and time every month; regular phone calls; reminder in school newsletter

10. Who will be responsible for the next steps?

Jackie will initiate phone tree and reserve the APR. She'll also remind the secretary to make the coffee. Juanita will post reminder signs.

Sample Agenda For Reporting To the School Community

Several study circles have presented their actions to their community superintendent, school staff, or PTA.

<u>Item</u>	<u>Goal</u>	<u>Notes</u>
Welcome and Agenda		Set the tone for the meeting. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community feeling and productive • Individuals should introduce themselves – name and connection to the school
Overview of Study Circle	To explain the process and the questions discussed over the six weeks	Give a quick overview of sessions to show how the group arrived at the action steps.
Testimonies	To show that this was not just a traditional school meeting where a bunch of ideas were brainstormed	Two or three participants talk about what they personally got out of participating in the study circle. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was good about participating? • What was difficult?
Presentation of Action Ideas		The presentation should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barriers to be addressed. • A story from the SC that illustrates the barrier. • Specific recommendations or action steps for addressing the issue • Next steps • Need for additional people to help.
Dialogue		Hear from others.
Discussion of next steps		Discuss what will happen when we leave.
Closing		

Bring: cultural timeline and other posters, issues list, action ideas list, action worksheets.

Alternative Icebreakers

WHERE THE WIND BLOWS

1. This is a quick, fun game that gets participants moving around and feeling more comfortable to share.
2. The facilitator takes his or her chair out of the circle and stands in the middle.
3. Explain that the person in the middle says a statement regarding the interests of the people in the group that applies to them as well. They say: "The wind blows for anyone who _____ (likes country music, eats Thai food, plays basketball, etc)".
4. All those who do like country music or eat Thai food, etc. have to get up and find a new seat.
5. The person in the middle also finds a seat, making there one person left in the middle (a new person, presumably) and they make a new "the wind blows for anyone who _____" statement.

QUICK QUESTIONS

Below are some quick activator questions that can be used in sessions instead of Hello Circle.

- Share with us something good that happened to you this week.
- What's something that made you smile this week.

PASS THE DUCK

1. To do this activity, you will need a stuffed animal (or duck). Everyone will stand around in a circle. The first person that starts will pass the object to the person next to them.
2. Each pass has to be passed differently than the person before them. For example if someone passes the object with their left hand. The 2nd person cannot use their left hand to pass the object. They can instead use their right elbow. Remember, the type of pass cannot be repeated by anyone later in the circle.
3. The goal is to pass the object around the circle without dropping the object during the pass. If the object drops during a pass, the group will have to start over.

WHIZ BAM

1. Have the participants stand in a circle.
 - We will start with _____, you say "Whiz" as you make eye contact with the person on your right. That person will then turn to the person on their right say "Whiz" and so on. To change the direction of the circle, say "Bam".
 - As you say "Bam," you must turn to the person on your left. **That** person will then say "Whiz" as they turn to the person on their left and, so on... Until someone else says "Bam".

Directions:

2. We will start off slowly as a practice round. Then we will have to do it as fast as we can.
3. Once you are out, you can be a judge. You are out when you say the wrong word ("Bam" instead of "Whiz" and vice versa), when you stumble on your words or when you turn to the wrong side (left instead of right and vice versa).
4. When there are two people left, they are the winners.

Alternative Icebreakers

Student Study Circle Icebreakers/Energizers:

ZAP!

1. This is a quick, fun game that gets participants moving again.
2. Everyone will stand in a circle and the facilitator will ask for a volunteer. Have the volunteer stand in the middle of the circle.
3. The volunteer will have an imaginary wand (pointer finger) and spin around the circle and when they stop, they will “zap” a person in the circle.
4. Once the person is “zapped” they will have to duck. The two people beside the “zapped” person will have to “zap” each other. The last of those two to “zap” will be out of the circle.
5. If you don’t duck before you are “zapped,” you will also be out.
6. You continue this until there are only two people left. Then, the remaining two people stand back to back for a duel. The volunteer will pick a category (e.g. food, colors, names, US States, etc.) and call out things in the given category. Each time the volunteer names something in the designated category, the two people will take a step forward. When the volunteer names something not in the category, the two people will have to turn around and “zap” each other. The last person to “zap” will be out.

6 Week Study Circles Materials Checklist

The Bag

- 5 extra registration forms
- 1 Pack of nametags
- 2 Pack of markers
- 7 Door signs
- 1 sign-in sheet (from FileMaker)
- Masking tape
- Pens/Pencils
- 2 Facilitator Guides
- 25 Participant Notebooks
- 25 Photo Release Forms
- Snack Sign-Up Form
- 1 Pack of Index cards
- 25 Envelopes
- 1 Pack of Dots
- 1 Pack of Post-its
- 2 Strongly Agree/Strongly Disagree signs (Where Do You Stand?)
- 25 Action Worksheets
- Cultural Timeline
- Childcare/Interpreter Timesheets (if needed)

Other Materials to Bring

- Translation equipment
- Chart paper

Session 4:

Data Handouts

Session 6:

- Evaluations
- Certificates
- Camera
- Copies of the Contact list for everyone (from Filemaker)

Tips for Facilitators

From Study Circles Resource Center's *A Guide for Training Study Circle Facilitators (DRAFT)*

A study circle facilitator does not need to be an expert on the topic being discussed. The facilitator however, should be well prepared for the discussion. This means the facilitator:

- Understands the goals of the study circle.
- Is familiar with the subject.
- Thinks ahead of time about how the discussion might go.
- Prepares questions to help the group consider the subject.

A facilitator should be well prepared because it will make it easier for you to give your full attention to how the group is acting and interacting and to what participants in the group are saying.

Good Study Circle Facilitators:

- are neutral; the facilitator's opinions are not part of the discussion.
- help the group set its own ground rules.
- help the group grapple with the content by asking probing questions.
- help the group identify areas of agreement and disagreement.
- work to make room for all voices.
- help the members connect their deliberations with taking action on the issue.

AND

- are self-aware; they know their strengths, biases, and blind spots.
- are dedicated to serving the group.
- are knowledgeable and comfortable with all kinds of people.
- believe that people can relate across differences to work together for positive change.

In addition, facilitators:

Help the Group Do Its Work.

- Keep track of who has spoken, and who hasn't.
- Consider splitting up into smaller groups occasionally. This will help people feel more at ease.
- Enter the discussion only when necessary. When the conversation is going well, the facilitator isn't saying much.
- Don't allow the group to turn to you for the answers.
- Resist the urge to speak after each comment or answer every question. Let participants respond directly to each other.
- Once in a while, ask participants to sum up important points.
- Allow response time so individuals can think before they respond. Don't be afraid of silence! Try counting silently to ten before rephrasing a question. This will give people time to collect their thoughts.
- Try to involve everyone; don't let anyone take over the conversation.
- Remember that a study circle is not a debate with winners and losers. If participants forget this, don't hesitate to ask the group to help re-establish the discussion ground rules.
- Keep careful track of time.

Tips for Facilitators (cont'd)

Help the Group Look at Different Points of View.

- Good discussion materials present a wide range of views. Look at the pros and cons of each view-point. Ask participants to consider a point of view that hasn't come up in the discussion.
 - Ask participants to think about how their own values affect their opinions.
 - Don't allow the group to get stuck on a personal experience or anecdote.
- Help participants see the things they have in common.

Ask Open-ended Questions.

Open-ended questions can't be answered with a quick "yes" or "no." Open-ended questions can help people look for connections among different ideas.

General Questions:

- What seems to be the key point here?
- Do you agree with that? Why?
- What do other people think of this idea?
- What would be a strong case against what you just said?
- What experiences have you had with this?
- Could you help us understand the reasons behind your opinion?
- What do you think is really going on here? Why is that important?
- How might others see this issue?
- Do you think others in the group see this the way you do? Why?
- How does this make you feel?

Questions to Use When There is Disagreement:

- What do you think he is saying?
- What bothers you most about this?
- What is at the heart of the disagreement?
- How does this make you feel?
- What experiences or beliefs might lead a reasonable person to support that point of view?
- What do you think is really important to people who hold that opinion?
- What is blocking the discussion?
- What don't you agree with?
- What do you find most convincing about that point of view?
- What is it about that position that you just cannot live with?
- Could you say more about what you think?
- What makes this so hard?
- What have we missed that we need to talk about?

Questions to Use When People are Feeling Discouraged:

- How does that make you feel?
- What gives you hope?
- How can we make progress on these problems? What haven't we considered yet?

Closing Questions:

What are the key points of agreement and disagreement in today's session?

What have you heard today that has made you think or has touched you in some way?

Tips for Facilitators (cont'd)

Work Effectively with Cultural Differences

Awareness of cultural dynamics is important in a study circle setting. This is especially true when issues of race and ethnicity are a part of the conversation.

Even though some of the conversation may revolve around differences, set a tone of unity in the group. We may not agree on everything, but we have enough in common as human beings to allow us to talk together in a constructive way.

Sensitivity, empathy, and familiarity with people of different backgrounds are important qualities for the facilitator. If you have not had the opportunity to spend time with all kinds of people, get involved in a community program that gives you that opportunity and helps you understand cross-cultural dynamics.

Remind the group, if necessary, that no one can represent his or her entire culture. Each person's experiences, as an individual and as a member of a group, are unique and OK.

Encourage group members to think about their own experiences as they try to identify with people who have been victims of discrimination. Many people have had experiences that make this discussion a very personal issue. Others—particularly those who are usually in the majority—may not have thought as much about their own culture and its effects on their lives. It might help to encourage people to think about times in their own lives when they have been treated unfairly. Be careful not to equate the experiences. To support study circle participants who tell how they have been mistreated, be sure to explain that you respect their feelings and are trying to help all the members of the group understand. Remind people that no one can know exactly what it feels like to be in another person's shoes.

Encourage group members to talk about their own experiences and cultures, rather than other people's. This way, they will be less likely to make false generalizations about other cultures. Also, listening to others tell about their own experiences breaks down stereotypes and helps people understand one another.

Work Effectively With Groups Where Literacy is a Concern

At the start, give a simple explanation of how the study circle will work, and tell participants the goal of each session. Each time you meet, state the goal of the session.

- If the people in your group can't read, or have trouble reading, limit your use of the flip chart.
- If participants are required to fill out forms, assign someone to ask the questions and fill out the forms with/for them.
- Be prepared to read aloud to the group, if participants are uncomfortable doing that.
- Ask people to rephrase or summarize to make sure everyone understands.
- Avoid using jargon or acronyms. When these terms come up and people look puzzled, ask: "What does that mean?"
- In between sessions, check with participants to make sure they know that what they have shared is very important to the group.

Work Effectively With Interpreters

- Remind interpreters that their job is to translate accurately, not to add their own opinions.
- When you open the study circle, explain that this will be a bi-lingual study circle. Encourage everyone to help make the conversation productive and meaningful.

Tips for Facilitators (cont'd)

- Acknowledge that it may be awkward at first, but it will get easier as the sessions progress.
- Look at the participant—not the interpreter—when speaking
- Give interpreters written materials ahead of time, and go over the process with them.
- Make sure the interpreter is comfortable letting the facilitator know if s/he needs more time.
- Remind interpreters that their job is simply to translate accurately. Tell the interpreters to let the facilitators know if they need more time or if they need something explained.
- Speak in short sentences and keep ideas simple. (This gives the interpreter time to catch up.)
- Pay attention to the interpreter. Even if you don't speak the language, you can tell if s/he is translating everything, or not.
- After every session, ask interpreters to translate discussion guidelines and notes that were posted on newsprint.
- Sometimes participants who speak a different language are reluctant to talk because they are afraid of making a mistake. One way to address this is to give participants time to collect their thoughts before speaking.
- Consider putting people in small groups, but don't separate people by language groups.

Work Effectively With Students

- Keep the students moving as much as possible.
- The activities are designed to get students to talk. Several student study circles jumped into deep dialogue after the stereotypes activity so there was no need for the Skin Color and Where Do You Stand? Other circles needed these activities to get them talking.
- Try to get them to talk to each other. They are used to responding to the teacher. For example, stand behind the group during the report out of the Cultural Timeline. Ask students to respond to what someone else just said.
- Use the speed meeting pairs or other small groups to discuss questions before talking to the whole group. For example, after they have written on the timeline, have them tell their story to another participant before having them report out to the whole study circle. For stereotypes...after debriefing the impact of the activity, have them pair up to discuss how stereotypes impact the school.
- Use small words and think of different ways to explain things. The 7th and 8th graders will be able to understand the issues more than the 6th. For some 6th graders, they have not yet seen the distinctions in the higher level classes.
- *Be careful not to be the teacher!!!!* It's harder to control this feeling with students. Make sure the staff members are also not talking down to them.

Responses to Typical Facilitation Challenges

Most study circles go smoothly because participants are there voluntarily and care about the conversation. But there are challenges in any group process. Here are some common challenging situations, along with some possible ways to deal with them.

Situation: *Certain participants don't say anything, seem shy.*

Possible Responses: Try to draw out quiet participants, but don't put them on the spot. Make eye contact. It reminds them that you'd like to hear from them. Look for nonverbal cues that indicate

Tips for Facilitators (cont'd)

participants are ready to speak. Consider using more icebreakers and warm up exercises in pairs or small groups to help people feel more at ease.

Sometimes people feel more comfortable in later sessions of a study circle program and will begin to participate. When someone comes forward with a brief comment after staying in the background for most of the study circle, you can encourage them by showing interest and asking for more information. Make a point of talking informally with group members before and after sessions to help everyone feel more connected and at ease.

Situation: *An aggressive or talkative person dominates the discussion.*

Possible Responses: As the facilitator, it is your responsibility to handle domineering participants. Once it becomes clear what this person is doing, you must intervene and set limits. Start by limiting your eye contact with the speaker. Remind the group that everyone is invited to participate. Use the ground rules to reinforce the message. You might say, "Let's hear from some people who haven't had a chance to speak yet." If necessary, you can speak to the person by name. "Ed, we've heard from you; now let's hear what Barbara has to say."

Be careful to manage your comments and tone of voice. You are trying to make a point without offending the speaker. If necessary, you can speak to the person privately and ask them to make room for others to join the conversation.

You might also acknowledge what is happening, by saying, "I notice that some people are doing most of the talking. Do we need to modify our ground rules to make sure everyone has a chance?" Ultimately, your responsibility as facilitator is to the *whole* group, and if one or two people are taking over the group, you need to intervene and try to rebalance the conversation.

Situation: *Lack of focus, not moving forward, participants wander off the topic.*

Possible Responses: Responding to this takes judgment and intuition. It is the facilitator's role to help move the discussion along. But it is not always clear which way it is going. Keep an eye on the participants to see how engaged they are. If you are in doubt, check it out with the group. "We're a little off the topic right now. Would you like to stay with this, or move on to the next question?" If a participant goes into a lengthy digression, you may have to say: "We are wandering off the subject, and I'd like to invite others to speak."

Use the discussion materials with their suggested times to keep the conversation moving along. When a topic comes up that seems off the subject, write it down on a piece of newsprint marked "Parking Lot." You can explain to the group that you will "park" this idea, and suggest the group revisit the topic at a later time. Be sure to come back to it later.

Situation: *Someone puts forth information that you know to be false OR participants get hung up in a dispute about facts, but no one present knows the answer.*

Possible Responses: Ask, "Has anyone heard of other information about this?" If no one offers a correction, you might raise one. Be careful not to present the information in a way that makes it sound like your opinion.

If the point is not essential put it aside and move on. If the point is central to the discussion, encourage members to look up the information and bring it to the next meeting. Remind the group that experts often disagree.

Tips for Facilitators (cont'd)

Situation: *There is tension or open conflict in the group. Two participants lock horns and argue. Or, one participant gets angry and confronts another.*

Possible Responses: If there is tension, address it directly. Remind participants that airing different ideas is what a study circle is all about. Explain that, for conflict to be productive, it must be focused on the issue. It is OK to challenge someone's ideas, but attacking the person is *not* acceptable. You must interrupt personal attacks, name-calling, or put-downs as soon as they occur. You will be better able to do so if you have established ground rules that disallow such behaviors and encourage tolerance for all views.

Don't hesitate to appeal to the group for help; if group members have bought into the ground rules, they will support you. You might ask the group, "What seems to be the crux of this dispute?" This question shifts the focus from the people to their ideas. As a last resort, consider taking a break to change the energy in the room. You can take the opportunity to talk one-on-one with the participants in question.

Situation: *Participant is upset by the conversation. The person withdraws from the conversation or begins to cry.*

Possible Responses: The best approach is to talk about this possibility up front when you are developing the ground rules. Remind the group that some of these issues are difficult to talk about and people may become upset. Ask the group how it wants to handle such a situation, should it arise. Many groups use the ground rule, "If you are offended or upset, say so and say why."

If someone becomes emotional, it is important to acknowledge the situation, rather than ignoring it. Showing appreciation for someone's story, especially when it is difficult, can be affirming for the speaker and important for the other participants. In most cases, the group will offer support to anyone who is having difficulty.

Ask members if they would like to take a short break to allow everyone to regroup. Check in with the person privately. Ask them if they are ready to proceed. When the group reconvenes, it is usually a good idea to acknowledge publicly what has happened, and then the group will be better able to move on.

Situation: *Lack of interest, no excitement, no one wants to talk, only a few people participating.*

Possible Responses: This rarely happens in study circles, but it may occur if the facilitator talks too much or does not give participants enough time to respond to questions. People need time to think, reflect, and get ready to speak up. It may help to pose a question and go around the circle asking everyone to respond. Or, pair people up for a few minutes, and ask them to talk about a particular point. Then bring everyone together again.

Occasionally, you might have a lack of excitement in the discussion because the group seems to be in agreement and isn't coming to grips with the tensions inherent in the issue. In this case, your job is to try to bring other views into the discussion, especially if no one in the group holds them. Try something like, "Do you know people who hold other views? What would they say about our conversation?"

Experiences and Opinions From Other Study Circles

This annex serves as a resource for facilitators to bring up issues that have been discussed in other Study Circles.

Too many parents at this school do not participate in their children's education.

- ◇ I want to know how my child is doing in school, but it's frustrating to get a report card sent home and I cannot understand it. This is a very diverse community. I don't understand why there isn't more effort to have report cards and other school papers in languages other than English.
- ◇ I try so hard to communicate with my students' families. I don't think there is anything else I can do. I get so frustrated. Most never come to meetings or oversee their children's work at home.

Cultural misunderstanding gets in the way of good communication.

- ◇ I always believed that everyone was the same. Now I feel like my values are tested every day. When I'm teaching in a classroom, it takes everything I have to not look at African American boys as troublemakers. It's hard...I spend a lot of my time disciplining them.
- ◇ Every time I confront my son's teacher about a problem, he tells me to calm down. Rather than listening to me, I feel like he's stereotyping me as an angry black woman who is too emotional to understand the facts.

Too many students do not value education.

- ◇ There is plenty of help at school for anyone who wants it. Many students of color just don't want to work hard.
- ◇ I think that African American and Hispanic kids use racism as an excuse to why they don't perform well. Asians are also a minority and they usually perform as well, if not better, than white students.

Some groups do not feel part of the school.

- ◇ When I asked my daughter why she didn't participate in the school's dance club, she explained that the club was only for African American students.
- ◇ I feel really hurt that many of the friends I had in elementary and middle school no longer include me because I'm not from their culture.
- ◇ Our school is predominantly African American and Hispanic, yet there are only a handful of Hispanic teachers and they only teach ESOL classes.

Active parents sometimes make it harder for other families to get what they need.

- ◇ I get calls every summer from parents who want me to put their child with a specific teacher. Their neighbors had told the parents which teachers were best. I have to be concerned for all our students, not just the ones who come from vocal families.
- ◇ I always feel like the parents at PTA meetings already know everything. They don't seem very interested in what I have to say.

Some students get pressure not to succeed.

- ◇ Several students of color told me that they quit honors because the other students and some of the teachers make them feel like they do not belong.
- ◇ I sometimes get teased by my friends when they find out I do well in school. They say that I am acting "white."
- ◇ My calculus teacher told my mother that I would never do better than a C in her class and I should consider going into a lower level class.

Racism keeps some students from getting access to good programs, while making it easier for other students to get access.

- ◇ When I first became principal of the school, white children only made up 20% of the 5th grade population. However, ninety percent of the 5th graders recommended for the middle school Gifted and Talented classes were white. It turned out that there was no standard criterion for teachers to recommend the students. Teachers decided who would - and who would not - be recommended for Gifted and Talented. Working with the teachers, we created a set of criteria that all teachers would use. The teachers then went back and re-evaluated their recommendations. Fifty percent more students were recommended for Gifted and Talented using the more standardized criteria. Almost all the new students were African American and Hispanic. I asked a teacher why one of the students had not been recommended the first time, given that his grades and test scores were so high. The teacher responded that she thought the student had an attitude problem.
- ◇ I had straight A's in my old school. But when I moved here, my guidance counselor refused to let me sign up for honors classes.
- ◇ I was surprised when my 2nd grade daughter was put into a remedial reading class. The school never even tested her. I got angry when the teacher refused several requests for my daughter to be put in the more advanced classes. Because I'm also a teacher, I went to the principal who finally ordered a reading test for her. Even then, the teacher delayed the test for several months while my daughter sat in a class re-learning things she had known for a couple of years.

Some teachers and staff members are not adequately trained to work with such a diverse student body.

- ◇ As a staff development teacher, I often observe teachers who give African American and Latino students less time to answer when asked a question. These teachers are not doing this intentionally, and do not believe it until I show them my notes.
- ◇ On the day of my son's parent/teacher conference, my boss told me that I had to work late. When I arrived late to the conference, the teacher told me to come back another day.
- ◇ I had signed up for several classes for the next semester, but my counselor registered me for Art, which I did not sign up for. When I asked him why he had registered me for Art, he said that he thought that since I was Asian I would do well in Art class.
- ◇ My English-speaking parents get a call or a note every week letting them know how their child is doing. I do not communicate as much with parents who do not speak English. Our school has resources to help teachers, but it's a lot more work.

What Study Circles Are and Are Not: A Comparison

Study Circles Are:

- small-group discussions involving deliberation and problem solving, in which an issue is examined from many perspectives; they are enriched by the members' knowledge and experience, and often informed by expert information and discussion materials; study circles are aided by an impartial facilitator whose job is to keep the discussion on track.
- discussions where people talk productively about a public issue that concerns them; participants work together to find solutions that can lead to change in the community.

Study Circles Are NOT the Same as:

- *conflict resolution*—a set of principles and techniques used in resolving conflict between individuals or groups. (Study circle facilitators and participants sometimes use these techniques in study circles.)
- *mediation*—a process used to settle disputes that relies on an outside neutral person to help the disputing parties come to an agreement. (Mediators often make excellent study circle facilitators, and have many skills in common.)
- *focus groups*—small groups organized to gather or test information from the members. Participants (who are sometimes paid) are often recruited to represent a particular viewpoint or target audience.
- *traditional education*—usually classroom settings where a teacher instructs students.
- *facilitated meetings with a predetermined agenda*—such as a committee or board meeting with tasks established ahead of time.
- *town meetings*—large-group meetings where citizens make decisions on community policies.
- *public hearings*—large-group public meetings which allow concerns to be aired.

Comparison of Dialogue and Debate

<p>Dialogue is collaborative: two or more sides work together toward common understanding.</p> <p>In dialogue, finding common ground is the goal.</p> <p>In dialogue, one listens to the other side(s) in order to understand, find meaning, and find agreement.</p> <p>Dialogue enlarges and possibly changes a participant's point of view.</p> <p>Dialogue reveals assumptions for reevaluation.</p> <p>Dialogue causes introspection on one's own position.</p> <p>Dialogue opens the possibility of reaching a better solution than any of the original solutions.</p> <p>Dialogue creates an open-minded attitude: an openness to being wrong and an openness to change.</p> <p>In dialogue, one submits one's best thinking, knowing that other peoples' reflections will help improve it rather than destroy it.</p> <p>Dialogue calls for temporarily suspending one's beliefs.</p> <p>In dialogue, one searches for basic agreements.</p> <p>In dialogue, one searches for strengths in the other positions.</p> <p>Dialogue involves a real concern for the other person and seeks to not alienate or offend.</p> <p>Dialogue assumes that many people have pieces of the answer and that together they can put them into a workable solution.</p> <p>Dialogue remains open-ended.</p>	<p>Debate is oppositional: two sides oppose each other and attempt to prove each other wrong.</p> <p>In debate, winning is the goal.</p> <p>In debate, one listens to the other side in order to find flaws and to counter its arguments.</p> <p>Debate affirms a participant's own point of view.</p> <p>Debate defends assumptions as truth.</p> <p>Debate causes critique of the other position.</p> <p>Debate defends one's own positions as the best solution and excludes other solutions.</p> <p>Debate creates a closed-minded attitude, a determination to be right.</p> <p>In debate, one submits one's best thinking and defends it against challenge to show that it is right.</p> <p>Debate calls for investing wholeheartedly in one's beliefs.</p> <p>In debate, one searches for glaring differences.</p> <p>In debate, one searches for flaws and weaknesses in the other position.</p> <p>Debate involves a countering of the other position without focusing on feelings or relationship and often belittles or deprecates the other person.</p> <p>Debate assumes that there is a right answer and that someone has it.</p> <p>Debate implies a conclusion.</p>
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Adapted from a paper prepared by Shelley Berman, which was based on discussions of the Dialogue Group of the Boston Chapter of Educators for Social Responsibility (ESR). Other members included Lucile Burt, Dick Mayo-Smith, Lally Stowell, and Gene Thompson. For more information on ESR's programs and resources using dialogue as a tool for dealing with controversial issues, call the national ESR office at (617)492-1764.

Resources for Action

MCPS Resources

Study Circles Office

Parent Community Coordinators and ESOL Coordinators

MCPS Parent Academy (free workshops for parents) <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/parentacademy/>

Instructional TV for parents http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/itv/ITV_Programs_ForParents.shtm

Conquista Tus Sueños (Realize your Dreams) – parent education program <http://www.mcps.k12.md.us/departments/familycommunity/conquista.shtm>

Community Organizations

Impact Silver Spring – Impact in the Schools: <http://www.impactsilverspring.org/>

Maryland Parent Information Resource Center http://www.mdpirc.org/parent_home.html

Community Bridges (girls initiative) <http://www.communitybridges-md.org/index.html>

Identity, Inc. (Latino youth organization) <http://www.identity.ws/>

Parent Encouragement Program (workshops for parents) <http://www.parentencouragement.com/>

National Organizations

Teaching Tolerance, classroom ideas <http://www.tolerance.org/>

National PTA, Family-School Partnerships http://www.pta.org/family_school_partnerships.asp

Local Success Stories

After school homework program at Rachel Carson Elementary School http://www.gazette.net/stories/02032010/nortnew205021_32553.php

Family learning night at Viers Mill Elementary School http://www.gazette.net/stories/09302009/aspnew222337_32532.shtml



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