



Reading to End Racism of Boulder Personal Experience Panel

Adapted by Daniel Escalante from the works of
The National Coalition for Equity in Education 12/2/05

Objectives:

- Provide opportunity for students to share personal experiences that will help participants understand the affects of discrimination (racism).
- Provide opportunity for participants to make a human connection with each other, enhance group support, and identify "ally actions".

Set-up:

- Timer (each individual will get 2 minutes)
- Chime, bell or other
- Tissue paper

Description:

- With help from the group, define discrimination.
- Ask group "How many of you have ever experienced [racial] discrimination?"
- Ask for four volunteers who would like to share an experience about a time when they experienced racial discrimination (or just discrimination if group is not ethnically diverse)
- Explain that each person will have 2 minutes to respond to a focus question.
- Review the PEP Guidelines (see below).

Encourage panelists to talk openly and honestly about a real experience that had an emotional impact on them. Thank them in advance for their willingness to share their stories with us.

Begin with a volunteer and then move in a clockwise direction.

Focus Question 1: "When did you experience discrimination (racism)? Please tell us about that story.

Focus Question 2: "What would you have wanted from an ally?"

After each person has shared, remind the audience of the guidelines (no bringing up topics that were shared) and ask them to join you in thanking them with applause and/or hugs.

Debrief in large group:

1. What feelings did this activity bring up for you?
2. What is the key knowledge that you gained from this activity?
3. How will this change the way you behave with others?

Closing comments

1. Now that we understand more about how discrimination (racism) affects people, we have the responsibility to do something about it when we see it happen.
2. An important way to support people who have experienced discrimination (racism) is to simply listen to them express their thoughts and feelings. This provides the opportunity for them to heal from hurts and mistreatments.

Personal Experience Panel and Dyad Guidelines

- Each person is given equal time to talk. Everyone deserves to be heard.
- Just listen! The listener does not interpret, paraphrase, analyze, give advice or break in with a personal story.
- People are capable of problem solving on their own.
- Confidentiality is maintained.
- A person needs to be assured of confidentiality to be authentic. One's feelings at one particular time are representative of one's thinking from one moment to the other. Also, do not bring up the discussion at a future date.
- The talker is not to criticize or complain about the listener or mutual acquaintances in his/her turn. This is time to talk about self in relation to the questions to reflect on. This process is to support the individual thinking.