

Understanding Privilege and Oppression

Some things were missing in presentations

- ▶ High level Analysis
- ▶ An understanding of “Root Causes” and Systemic Oppression.

Building Blocks

- ▶ Suspension of judgment
- ▶ Listening
- ▶ Identifying one’s assumptions
- ▶ Inquiry and reflection

Social Identities

Dominant group:

- ▶ Access to power
- ▶ Provide standards, "norms"

Subordinate, "target" group:

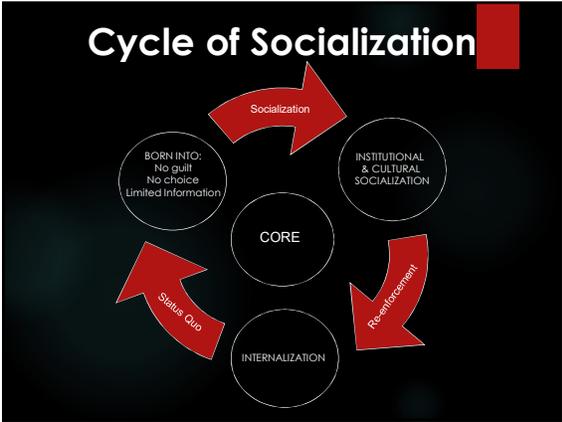
- ▶ Categorized
- ▶ Differential treatment

Dominant group has the power to determine:

- ▶ who holds the power,
- ▶ who gets the best jobs,
- ▶ whose history will be taught in school,
- ▶ whose relationships will be validated in society.

Think about your school experience:

- ▶ Who were children that got teased in school?
- ▶ How were they treated? What names were they called?
- ▶ What made the above acceptable?
- ▶ How did these children often respond to how they were viewed and treated?



Race

How do we define race?

“An arbitrary classification created by Europeans during the time of world wide colonial expansion to assign human worth and social status, using themselves as the model of humanity, for the purpose of legitimizing white power and privilege.”

— Dr. M. Krenga

Personal Reflection

- ▶ How was this process for you?
- ▶ Did you notice anything new?
- ▶ What were the similarities or differences?

TECHNIQUES of DOMINANCE:

1. Stereotypes

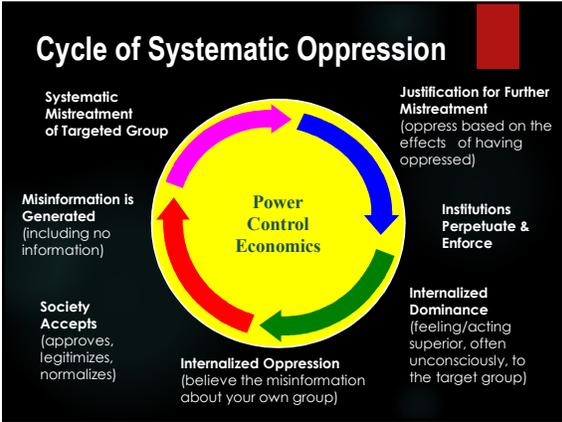
- ▶ Mental images that are overly simplistic and exaggerated generalizations about social groups;
- ▶ Selective generalizations that attribute specific traits to groups – not necessarily true;
- ▶ May be used to spread misinformation and stigmatize a subordinate group

2. Prejudice

- ▶ Arbitrary attitudes or beliefs and unfair bias towards or against a person/group.
- ▶ Based on little or no experience and projected onto entire group.
- ▶ Prejudice is an individual's *internal* perspective

3. Discrimination

- ▶ Action based on prejudice. Excluding, ignoring, avoiding, threatening, ridiculing, jokes, slurs, violence, unfair treatment.
- ▶ Discrimination is an individual's *external* behavior



- ## 5 Faces of Oppression
- ▶ Exploitation
 - ▶ Marginalization
 - ▶ Powerlessness
 - ▶ Cultural Imperialism
 - ▶ Violence

Internalized Oppression

Incorporation and acceptance by people within a target group of the prejudices against them.

*"We hate ourselves because
We grew up
And live in a society that hates us"*

— Michael Denny

Privilege

"...unearned assets that I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was 'meant' to remain oblivious... like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools and blank checks."

-- Peggy McIntosh

What do we mean by "Privilege"?

- ▶ Members of the "privileged" group gain benefits simply by their affiliation with the dominant side of the power system.
- ▶ We take them for granted – because we don't see them!
- ▶ They are often presented as being based on "merit" rather than simple affiliation.

Privilege allows us to:

- ▶ Feel at home in the world
- ▶ Escape dangers that others may suffer
- ▶ Choose whether or not to address certain issues of oppression or injustice
- ▶ Not have to hide parts of our identity or lifestyle

Questions to answer regarding your topic

- ▶ Which of the techniques of dominance used to create or worsen your community problem?
- ▶ How is the cycle of systemic oppression seen in your communities problem?
- ▶ Which of the 5 faces of oppression are visible in your communities problem?
- ▶ How has privilege or lack of impacted your community?

Answer the following

- ▶ When you work on big projects do you plan things out or just "wing it"?
- ▶ How often do you plan things out?

Things to get out

- ▶ Something to write with
- ▶ A highlighter
- ▶ Your Phone! (just for this section)
