

Workshops and Lectures on Social Justice Issues, Prejudice Reduction, and Diversity

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Higher education and American society is changing rapidly as our communities become more diverse, challenging historical practices and personal attitudes and behaviors. These lectures and workshops provide a critical analysis of contemporary social justice dilemmas, assume that most people want to do the “right” thing but need the skills and understanding to act on their values, and fosters the development of allies who can provide courageous leadership in taking on issues of their own and other groups.

Diversity: What Does it Really Mean? Celebrating our Differences and Creating Community.

How do our understandings of diversity and community effect our ability to create environments that are welcoming of all identities and backgrounds? What skills and understandings are needed by those who want to provide leadership on these issues? What are the characteristics of an environment that promotes inclusiveness and tolerance?

Reducing Prejudice on Campus – Components of Effective Diversity Training. What are the components of an effective effort to reduce prejudice and promote tolerance? How can individuals move beyond their individual concerns and identity issues to become strong allies for other groups and build effective coalitions? This session provides an overview of the components of an effective prejudice reduction/welcoming diversity effort including how individual, group and environmental interventions can be combined.

Working Together Across Differences. Can members of different groups find common ground in addressing today's campus problems? This workshop is designed for leaders from different constituencies to help us come together and understand each other's problems and perspectives, and to find ways to support each other's efforts. The workshop can be adapted for any particular group identities or be offered as a general “working together across differences” workshop.

Creating Healthy and Respectful Communities: The Role of Faculty, Staff and Student Leadership. How can we transform our campuses into healthy and respectful communities and promote the core values of our institution? In what ways may we unintentionally contribute to the problems we are trying to solve? Recent theory and research provide a framework for addressing health and social justice issues on campus and defines a role for faculty, staff and student leaders as positive change agents. Emphasis will be placed on examining how individuals who adopt the role of passive bystander can be encouraged to take active leadership in solving campus problems.

Understanding Issues of Race and Culture Within Individuals and Organizations. Recent theory and research on issues of race and identity have led to the development of new models for addressing diversity issues. In particular, racial identity theory and multicultural organizational development theory help us understand the stages an individual goes through in the development of a healthy cultural identity along with the stages an organization goes through as it becomes more multicultural and inclusive. This session provides an overview of these theories and discusses their implications for individuals interested in providing leadership on diversity issues.

The Social Norms Approach to Fostering Social Justice. The social norms approach has been successful in addressing a variety of health and violence issues in colleges and universities, communities, and high schools. How can social norms be adapted to address issues of prejudice such as racism, sexism and homophobia? Individual, group and community strategies for employing social norms to create tolerant and just communities are presented.

Strategies for Responding to Unwelcome Remarks. Often we find ourselves in situations where someone else's language or behavior makes us feel uncomfortable, yet we don't do anything. Most people are uncomfortable with prejudicial language about other groups, yet often we are silent. Why don't we act on our core values and ideals in these situations? This presentation provides a critical analysis of bystander behavior and offers skills for intervening in difficult situations, and can be offered as a brief overview or a longer training with skills practice.

Is Ethnic Identity for Whites Too? Institutions of higher education have devoted considerable attention to the experiences of ethnic and other underrepresented groups in order to improve access to and quality of education. Recent research and theory has extended work on racial identity to individuals from dominant groups and stressed the importance of developing a healthy ethnic identity that does not function to exclude others. This presentation reviews relevant theories of White Racial Identity and discusses their application to the professional growth of leaders and teachers and to the quality of the services we provide.

Diversity and Cultural Competency: Towards Inclusiveness in Ending Sexual Assault. Sexual violence affects individuals from every identity group. To be effective, all of our services and programs must therefore be culturally competent and inclusive. This workshop provides guidelines for achieving cultural competence and offers suggestions for creating inclusive services with respect to race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, and other identities.

Alan David Berkowitz is an independent consultant who helps colleges, universities, communities and the U.S. Military design programs that address health and social justice issues. He is well-known for his scholarship and innovative programming and has received five national awards for his work. Alan is a frequent keynote speaker at conferences and often serves as an expert advisor to organizations.

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