

ZEIDLER COMMUNITY CONVERSATION:

WHITENESS & privilege DIALOGUE REPORT

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Introduction

The following report documents participant responses to a public discussion hosted by the Zeidler Center for Public Discussion as part of our Zeidler Community Conversations Series. The dialogue topic was “Whiteness & Privilege.” Participants were asked the following two questions before open dialogue:

1. “To help people understand where you’re coming from . . . tell a story of a specific, personal experience you had that taught you something about whiteness & privilege. What was the experience and what did you learn”?
2. “What is at the heart of the matter for you in discussing, responding to, or confronting whiteness and privilege. What’s an important action step for you”?

During the small groups, Zeidler Center facilitators recorded participant responses anonymously and non-attributably to the best of their ability. Their responses have been gathered into major themes which emerged during the dialogue. Participants also completed feedback forms—data recorded at the end of this report.

Before and after the small groups, Ex Fabula fellows presented personal stories to the whole group. The dialogue took place at Workshop Architects. The Zeidler Center is grateful for these partnerships and for the opportunity to serve the public through facilitated dialogue, and would welcome future collaboration and continued dialogues on this and other issues with community partners.

To participate in an upcoming Zeidler Community Conversation, please visit us online at www.zeidlercenter.org. Questions about the Zeidler Center’s facilitation and writing of this report should be directed to:

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Facilitation Method

The dialogue on was facilitated using the Reflective Structured Dialogue method, which invites small circles of diverse individuals (5-7 people) to discuss personal experiences, values, and uncertainties in structured and facilitated conversations. The specific focus of this method is to encourage greater trust, and create a platform for mutual understanding and less demonization and polarization across difference. Participants experience both structured and unstructured portions of dialogue.

During the structured portion, each participant is given the same amount of time to speak, without interruption. After each speaker, there is a short pause of silence so that all may reflect upon the speaker's response. The following communication agreements were used to facilitate the small group discussion:

Proposed Agreements for Communication:

1. We will speak for ourselves, from our personal experiences. We won't try to represent a whole group, and we won't ask someone else to represent, explain, or defend a whole group
2. We will refrain from criticizing others or attempting to persuade them to adopt our own views
3. We will share airtime and participate within the suggested timeframes
4. We will not interrupt except to indicate that we cannot or did not hear a speaker
5. We will "pass" or "pass for now" if we're not ready to respond to a question
6. When we discuss our experience in the dialogue with others, we will not attach names or other identifying information to particular comments unless we have permission to do so

Question Number One:

"To help people understand where you're coming from . . . tell a story of a specific, personal experience you had that taught you something about whiteness & privilege. What was the experience and what did you learn?"

Theme: Experiencing & Grappling with "White Fragility," Fear, and Discomfort

- In a Human Relations course in college I found myself arguing about racial profiling and prejudice with people from a different place. I likened women being afraid of me (hulky, bearded, rugged looks) to the African American male experience of profiling. I see now I had "white fragility."
- Not everyone knows what to do with their privilege once they have unpacked it.
- People to talk about race they thought it struck by white fragility and their desire to avoid any discussion.
- There is quite a bit of fear amongst my family and friends.
- Family is from suburbs and when they were at the participant's house in River West, they felt in danger
- Moving from a small rural college town to Milwaukee-I was on my "high horse" because I learned about the "social justice" lingo during my undergraduate years, however moving to Milwaukee, I still felt uncomfortable; I was never in the "minority", but found myself in that position living in my apartment building. Everyone was nice, but I still have to question why I was so uncomfortable. Had to recognize the ingrained prejudices I adopted of black people: they equaled fear-still grappling with this
- Fear getting into the discussions.
- The 'uprising that is taking place...people are dying...White people need to get on board!" We (whites) don't want to talk about it (race)
- I live in a world surrounded by whiteness job, hobbies, activities and I m still not comfortable as an introvert reaching out to difference and I do shutdown.
- The need to challenge myself by asking "What are you afraid of?????" I can never fully understand someone else's experiences. I have to get over my fear of speaking openly without fear of attack.
- The young woman that said her dad & brothers 'don't get it', stated that they don't want to talk about race, and she feels that there is some white privilege, and she knows it.
- I feel that a vast majority of "People of White" are totally unaware and are extremely fearful of even broaching the subject.
- People don't know how to think about it, how to talk about segregation
- Conducted a workshop with an interfaith group about why is so hard for white people to know how to think about it, how to talk about segregation
- Generally feeling guilty and not knowing how to feel or what to do when special treatment is received just for being white.

- Some of participant's wife's family went to Marquette; regarding speaking up: "I keep my mouth shut when I shouldn't."
- How do you challenge a racist grandfather's dug in positions?
- How do we get people who are resistant to acknowledging a conversation about race to come to a conversation about race? One participant asked a lot of friends but they said, "no." How do you widen the circle?
- At the heart of the matter is "fear and denial." People don't want to talk about racism because it's intimidating. Complacency because the challenges are hard. Many choose not to acknowledge the history without interpretation. Many white people think, "I'm not racist so I don't have any responsibility."
- This conversation is very scary to me as a White person.
- I feel that evoking white privilege in social, work, and interpersonal relationships is morally wrong
- There is a "Great Divide" in American society with respect to white privilege. "Most people of white do not have a clue."
- Awareness and a sense of morality and taking responsibility, that is why I am here this evening.
- Take a step back, make an attempt to be subjective, even though that is quite difficult, to see the "others humanity"
- Between the personal and historical, "Leaning into" personal responsibility for awareness.
- Fear and misunderstanding; lack of awareness when trying to talk about whiteness and privilege; don't know how to talk about it
- Fear is key player and lack of education, especially in small [white] towns
- People don't know how to think about it, how to talk about segregation
- I see the injustice at my workplace and think it's not a question of equal rights... but I feel it's PC to take actions to lift Blacks above my place as a way of addressing reparations. I attend protests but as much as I feel the need to speak out, it's not my place to use privilege... I stay in the back and allow others to talk. I'm there to physically represent, but not to speak for the group.
- My biggest challenge is well meaning white people. What do I about that? People say you need a lot of people to effect change-white people can't be excluded from the conversation, but they can't speak for communities of color either-but then what? After you get pass the guilt, apathy, then what? How do we include critical white people in the conversation-how do we get through this maze?
- I have opinions, and knowledge, but don't want to rock the boat! I want to avoid conflict.
- First, woman asked about 'Dismantling my Whiteness' & what that meant? She was a little emotional trying to describe how she felt that whiteness is automatic...you don't need to think about it...being white.
- White women told of an uncomfortable situation that came up in a work environment and needed to speak up about something but opted to stay silent instead of speaking

out. Stated that she needs to learn to be more brave. She still feels bad about the situation.

- For People of white, I do not understand, "Why privilege does not strike a moral cord within them?"
- There is quite a bit of "cognitive dissonance" occurring.
- Latency [regarding racism and privilege] is scariest because I don't know how to confront it.
- Micro-aggressions was brought up & definition was read. The Syrian refugees not coming over was talked about as being paranoia, fear hype, and insensitivity.
- I need to learn how to negotiate impassioned people... whether to call out for their white privilege or reeling in for parroting talking points.

Theme: Coming to Realize One's Own Whiteness and/or Privilege:

- I live in Tomah, Wisconsin, which is way up north, and I work at the VA there. Tomah is predominantly all White. Rarely do we see persons of color other than those who are White. One of my co-workers with whom I have become friends, and I, both arrived in Tomah at the same time. We figured out how to navigate town together, and often did a lot of stuff together. She is African-American. On a trip to Walmart the cashier asked her, "Where do you work?" Thinking this an odd question to ask someone you don't know, when we left the store I asked my co-worker why the cashier asked her where she works. She explained, "In her mind I don't belong here because of the color of my skin. She knows I must work for one of the two government entities that are here, or I'm just passing through town. She wanted to know which it is. For the first time ever I realized that I am privileged because of my skin color. People cannot simply look at me and know that I am not from the area, or make other judgments about me.
- Family worked overseas as a child; me being white and living in a privileged environment (my family worked for the government, so I had access to a lot of great things other people did not have on top of me being white). This has greatly shaped my own views. My whiteness is steadily in my face and I think about it constantly.
- I got pulled over by a police officer for a headlight that was out. I received no ticket and was told to make sure I drive safe and have a good evening. A day or two later, my black co-worker got pulled over and was harassed by the police officer. It was then I started to realize my own privilege.
- White woman from Waukesha went to UWM and became a Child Welfare Worker... was shadowing with a coworker on first weeks of work. One morning, in a rough neighborhood as the two approached a house, a neighboring house had a crowd of black men gathered on porch. Her mentor, a black man, told her he was uneasy in these situations. She was concerned but he assured her she had nothing to worry about... when she asked why he worried, he said it was likely a drug house with morning transactions and that a black man walking about in that neighborhood could be seen as a threat and attacked... but a white woman would never be touched

because they know it would cause a media and police frenzy... white lives matter more than blacks.

- While in college did an Internship in South Africa-whiteness is praised and Americans are associated with giving. Was approached by a pastor who knew nothing of my background, but because I was white, wanted me to encourage the youth of his church
- Female white UW _____ student from Milwaukee's south side, says she read Malcolm X biography prior to arrival to UW college up north & was shocked at the way her white peers treated blacks. By reading the book she was more prepared for the prejudice she encountered.
- Feeling of growing up in all white environment creates baggage with racial over tones; how does that affect thinking?
- I do not have to worry about money, living, and just doing day to day activities.
- I was always around other whites throughout school, the school only had 1 or 2 blacks. I would sometimes take the bus and the bus would pass by a Milwaukee Public School, that was either very diverse or almost 100% African Americans, I would see much more people of color there. I wanted to be more involved.
- I grew up in Wauwatosa, I was taking violin lessons in Elm Grove when I was younger, about 16. I had just got my license and was able to drive. I had a friend at the time who was a person of color. She rode with me on this day, on the way there we were pulled over. To my surprise the cop addressed my friend first and asked her, "What are you doing here in Elm Grove?" Then he asked me what am I doing here with her? It was then at that point I realized we were living in a different world.
- In the past I didn't feel "privileged". I had a hard time of things. I'm starting to see some things now in hindsight as being white privilege. When Marquette University was buying up properties in their "Avenues West" project, I didn't see anything wrong with it. I thought it was helping the community by making it safer. Now I see what some people were saying at the time, that it was pushing out Hmong, Laotians, and Blacks.
- I lived on the South Side growing up. I choose to go to Rufus King and was bused. What a culture shock it was. I thought about how Blacks have to adjust so often. I went to a private college that was predominately white. It was strange going back to a white school. I thought, "What's wrong with people? Acting so prim and proper." I thought about privilege and the differences between the white and the black school.
- Experience in graduate school-professor saying to the students how privileged they were to be in the program; very defensive attitude not being aware of the choices I could make without a second thought (i.e. not worrying about money or getting in college)
- Participant has been in Milwaukee since 2013; concerned about WI and its small segregated population of people of color; concerned that most Wisconsinites think they can't relate to people of color because most are white
- Grew up in farm town with no people of color and went to Madison, where there is a small pocket of people of color; lived in Milwaukee, but now lives in Delafield
- [An African-American woman in the group related] I work in home health care. I was told to go on a home visit in a challenged area of the city with a White co-worker. I was

surprised to be asked. My immediate thought was, "I didn't grow up over there, or in that kind of neighborhood either. Why am I being asked to go with you? We usually don't team up to do home visits." It occurred to me that I had been told I had to go with her to offer HER protection. The message I received from that incidence was that they believed that my life was less important than hers.

- I was not raised with racism. I grew up two hours north of here. When I was a teenager, and I started dating, the one Black boy in town asked me out on a date. Thinking nothing of it, I agreed. I didn't think to tell my parents he is Black. When he came to pick me up, they were unbothered by his skin color. The next day they asked me how my date went, and I said fine. That was the end of it; nothing negative was ever said. Years later, my sister married a farmer who is a staunch racist [She elaborated]. Where does that mindset come from????? I just don't get it... I mean, really, where does that mindset come from???????
- As a white social worker in the central city, found as she informed black families of departments and agencies with programs that could help them, they were often were often not given service by these agencies... so she would call and as a white woman, and her requests were serviced immediately.
- Pulled into a gas station in Midwest. Mixed race couple pulls up too, white woman leaves car to go inside while husband fills car. Participant fills car and while waiting in line inside to pay. Sees the attendant drop everything and race out from behind the glass to chase down the husband, who once he finished filling, was moving the car out the way of the pumps... attendant runs up to car and stops black driver saying "hey no driving off without paying"... Wife is standing in line waiting to pay as this happens... no apology... Likely would not have happened were it the other way around or both white.
- Whites in the group shared that they first had experienced being aware of whiteness and privilege in their late teens. While the people of color in the group shared experiences of whiteness and privilege that happened to them from very early in their lives, most were early elementary school age.
- My granddaughters are mixed and they live in Milwaukee. When they come out to the suburbs to visit my husband and I, they always comment on our peach skin.
- I grew up in Shorewood and there would be buses of students sometimes that would come to Shorewood from the inner city public schools. White people eventually made a big deal about it. They eventually started to ask "why all these black kids would want to come to our neighborhood." I get emotional because I found out that they would come to Shorewood because we had better textbooks and programs. I had so many questions as to why there were no resources in the Milwaukee Public School District.
- I was one of the 220 kids getting bussed to Rufus King. I loved it. I was in the school choir, and I thought, wow, I finally found my tribe! We were so creative and rigorous. One day I got off the bus at UW Madison and I said, "Where are the black people?" Then it struck me, Oh, "this place is not for everybody."
- I was in a car accident and it was my fault. A white police officer came to the scene and gave me a wink once he saw that the other people involved were black implying he

could make it look like it was they were to blame. I saw first-hand, not from TV, how racism happens.

- Black participant first aware of white privilege at predominantly white college; case of vandalism, participant was questioned and wondered why, [but white friends were not]
- Grew up in small town and went to college where the only people of color [in the program] were foreigners; later in life realized that the university was in a city where the grad program did not reflect the city's population.
- When her daughter was in college, she went to a white privilege conference with her. She thought she made a connection with a woman of color, but later learned she felt she was being presumptuous. After the fact, felt like she had been a "stupid white person" because she wholeheartedly wanted to learn, but maybe was asking too much of a person that she designated as a teacher.

Theme: The Extent of Discrimination/Stereotyping/Injustice in Schools, Institutions, & Workplaces

- Affirmative Action/EEO issues: experienced comments by white students when accepted into college/received a scholarship
- Another thing I see now is the way people make judgments about job applicants based solely on name. I found out a year into my new job, that I almost didn't get it because of my name. I have an odd last name with several consonants strung together uninterrupted. The person doing the hiring passed it over because she assumed I had misspelled it. Her administrative assistant thought to "google it" and found that it was correct as written. I was a bit unnerved by this when I found out. It seemed presumptuous and unfair. I wouldn't have even known, and that made me feel significantly more powerless than I had felt before.
- Black presenter at a conference ran on treadmill inside hotel in New Orleans because he was afraid of running on the streets; white participant ran outside
- Public transportation: I have no access to parts of the suburbs
- This white gentleman expressed his frustration he experienced working for a foreign exchange student program and the difficulty he had & roadblocks & barriers that were placed on some of the students based of their backgrounds.
- In high school environment being part of discussions where the phrase "why are you acting white" and people of white and Asian students considered "smarter than black students".
- A Black single-mom who was unfairly treated by supervisor who was trying to go to school was mentioned...One woman was still angry about the comment made by boss, putting her down...'Really with 5 kids?' Disgusted her.
- Recipient of threatening phones calls in the work place from an outside caller (bill collector using "micro aggressions" on the voicemail.
- Students of color punished for infractions white students got away with
- Middle aged African American woman who got a good job when she was young. When she experienced discrimination at the office and advocated for herself, others at the job

responded with, "You should be thankful!" which was extremely frustrating for her. She didn't know what to do or say, because she didn't want to seem ungrateful for what she had but also wanted fair treatment.

- I give people the benefit of the doubt. The children and their family were recently not served in a restaurant they felt due to their race. I feel I must do everything I can to level the playing field for them because they will not be afforded the same privileges as my other grandchildren.
- Walking with a white male friend in Wauwatosa, he saw a Caribbean restaurant and said "now the property values will go down."
- I [an African-American woman] was given the cold shoulder when asking for help from Whites at a place where I had recently been hired. I began reaching out to the only other African-American woman in the department, because I noticed that she helped others regardless of color, and without attitude. When it was time for my review, I was told that the White women in the department complained (the actual names of the employees were given to our participant in that setting) that I only go to the Black woman for help, not any of the White women. I explained that when I did seek them out they gave me the cold shoulder/major attitude, so I went where I felt most comfortable getting help. My manager said that she had noticed the attitude from the White women toward me when I asked for help. I asked, "Then why are we having this conversation? I did what most other logically-thinking persons would have done given this situation." To me, this was a clear case of White role reversal.
- UWEC College Diversity Course, Black woman Instructor was challenged by students arguing they were "lucky or blessed" with their ability to attend school.... challenging her notion of white privilege.
- Young woman works in animal welfare, which tends to be a field with a lot of white, female, middle class people working in it. When conversing with superiors, she found their ability to think about outreach in communities of color extremely limited. They saw efforts to increase diversity and inclusion to have "value without impact." This hurt her. She felt a majority white organization can make those choice to address their limitations or continue perpetuating bad racial practices, but aren't forced to deal with injustice.
- I moved into mgt in a good company where the company has/had strong commitment to social programming. I personally contributed by participating in the youth mentoring program. During an internal strategic planning session a co-worker brought a video that depicted African Americans in demeaning stereotypical roles, it was played and enjoyed during the retreat. I went to HR.
- My [African-American] co worker's hair was straight when she interviewed. She has worn it natural ever since, from her first day on the job. Our boss says her hair is unprofessional, and wants her to wear it straight. [Our group member is White.] She said, "My hair is straight. It's my hair's natural state, even though I don't do anything with it. I just let it hang, and he considers this to be professional. Natural for my co-worker looks completely different than my hair because of the coarseness and texture of her hair...but that doesn't make her hair any less professional, in my opinion. My boss just needs to get over himself."

- I heard stories of projecting the landscape for safety and survival. I had the privilege of not losing my job for some petty crap!
- Taught from young age that whites are elite and you can never catch up
- Surprise that he is "articulate"
- An Indian woman shared a story about her 4 year old child who is half white and half Indian. This child was darker skinned than his sibling. The child did not want to visit grandparents in India because in the child's words he had worked hard to become white and did not want to be brown again. No one taught that to the child. It seemed a bit jarring to the mother.
- White female high school basketball coach. Team played game against kids "from other side of town", and was thrown aback by the difference in how the 'girls' were treated by the referees, and the parents of her own players & the hatred directed towards the young black ballplayers. She became emotional & you can see that she really felt bad for how her parents & peers treated the black girls. (I wanted to ask if she felt the girls were used to being treated differently.)
- For a black woman, it was too hard to say it was "a blessing" every single time something good happens. Sometimes, she just wants credit for being good.
- Living in the world without schizophrenia, moving around without letting "isms" take you down
- Try to exist, figure out who to be loving, forgiving and at the same time respect yourself, stand up for yourself
- Struggle with traveling, feeling safe. Driving is scary.
- Not feeling safe in the world, feeling tense, fear
- Can't get away from it, it's everywhere: for example, health care systems are not built with people of color in mind
- Invisibility for Asians, in an integrated town everyone is everyone
- Work twice as hard to be equal

Theme: Experiences with the Police

- Recent police arrest of BLM protesters at Red Arrow Park. Christmas tree lighting event scheduled and the Dontre Hamilton Family began a demonstration during this holiday event. A black musician friend, not normally involved in such protests, was asked by another friend (white woman) to participate. He brought his drum and inadvertently was performing with the carolers first... (music is very important to him) Then he joined the protesters in a chant and within minutes, the MPD stormed in and apprehended - only the black protesters - not the rest of us white folk there too... they did not read rights, did not give warning, gave no notice. Just put them into a paddy wagon. Police Chief said "enough is enough" had them taken away. Wow... not only get your brother killed by a cop but not one "Christian" celebrating Jesus's birth acknowledge you, and the police take just the blacks away.
- Black male tries to keep a positive attitude & has been stopped by cops on several occasions, but not bitter.

- Some don't believe that white privilege exists, but I've gotten away with a lot of tickets.
- One night I was talking on the phone with a friend who was black who worked in Brookfield, but lived in New Berlin. While on the phone, my friend got pulled over. He left the phone on for me to hear. The cop asked a whole bunch of questions, then made him get out of the car. Comes to find out the cop pulled him over for driving too slow.
- Police: killing men of color, feeling like black lives don't matter and aren't valued
- Driving home after night out in Port Washington, with food and drink, she made a u-turn on a state highway, which she knew was illegal. The police saw her and pulled her over. She was a little nervous because she had wine for dinner and friends in the car had too much too drink. The officer asked her if she knew why she'd been pulled over and eventually let her off even though she thought it was clear they'd been drinking. She felt privileged to be able to walk away without more serious consequences. She felt like she was "profiled in a positive way," which was a contradiction that made her uncomfortable.
- Not driving in certain parts of the city because you get tickets for "driving while black" in that part of town
- When her son was in 8th grade, he had a medical emergency and was in the hospital for 9 days. When he came home, they were going to get medicine and a shake to cheer up her son. They driving in a suburb and were stopped by a police officer. She started crying uncontrollably because it was such an emotional time for her. She was let off with a warning when the officer saw her crying. Months later, a colleague had been stopped — an African American woman — with all her kids. They had to go to the bathroom and the police wouldn't let them go. One of the children ended up having an accident and she was struck by how differently she was treated.
- White participant was in Ferguson making video about Mothers' voices; in car with some black colleagues and was told to duck down so police would not think she was buying drugs because she was with Black friends
- Participant's Black personal trainer cut session short to get tail light fixed; was afraid of being stopped by police; realization of participant's privilege
- A black man and his brown skinned wife could not call the police on a white woman who was harassing them because they police would have given the black man and his wife a citation even though they did nothing wrong.

Theme: Race & Power relations

- I loved my grandfather, and enjoyed spending every possible moment with him I could. He once took me to the barber shop. There was an African-American man who worked there. My grandfather made it a point to speak to him, and to have me SEE that this African-American man did not LOOK at my grandfather when he spoke to him, or to any off the other White men in the barber shop. It was the expectation that this African-American man conduct himself in this manner, and this made my grandfather beam that he had this kind of power over this man. My grandfather had learned to expect

deference from Black men, and he was attempting to teach it to me. [This participant went on to note in the second round that he has now been married to an African-American woman for many years, thus he did not adopt his grandfather's values concerning race.]

- To discuss the real problems at hand with a group of people who recognize that it is a real issue. The majority has the power to make change. I'm hoping to see what starts here move on. Those who are not in power are not given the credibility to advance these issues, so it has to come from those who have the power and credibility.
- I was aware of white privilege young between 10-15. I grew up in a different culture, raised by my grandmother who was a head housekeeper for a wealthy politician/official who was white. As a head housekeeper, my grandmother was powerful herself, having a staff of butlers and servants, and managing this with only an 8 grade education. She was an amazing woman and my role model. But I was very aware how the official had different access to power and privilege than my grandmother.
- Passionate and hopeful about a future where people can be aware of their privilege and use that power for good.
- White female grew up in Oakland around blacks. Moved to MKE in high school where lunch room was separated into groups (race) eating together, she sat at table with the black kids. There was some type of "extreme reaction" by the white kids. Later on in school when there was some type of "race" issue...they would naturally come to her (liaison) between the black students. She took advantage of situation, "My white skin gives me Power to create the story!" She's now a 'BLACK LIVES MATTER' movement protester!!
- When she got her first job after college in the 70s, she was excited. She started immediately and got "trained" by her superior, a white woman. After weeks on the job, shadowing, her boss quit. She then realized that she never learned anything while under that supervisor. It felt like she was being held down. She wasn't 100% the root of her supervisors actions was race, because that supervisor was a bad mentor to everyone she managed, but it was hard not to think it had a role in it.
- In her social circle (what she considered close friends, often reminded that "you are not white, to us."
- For me white privilege was really new. I was sheltered. I never really paid attention to it. I tend to get defensive about it. Sometimes I feel accused for something I didn't even know was there before
- American culture fails to recognize all people as full human beings. The images in media are so light. We see a movie and everyone is white, even if it's set in a place that isn't all white like Manhattan. In fact, a majority of people in the world are people of color. Other places around the world have less Euro-centric cultures. Most people living in US have so much comfort in their life but are greedy. They exploit! We say "do unto others," but don't actually want to do it. She's an optimist but still thinks we're headed for disaster.
- I arrived early at a food pantry in a neighborhood that was not mine own. I had donations to drop off and I was going to assist with the setup since I was there. There

was an African American family there who was volunteering at the pantry. All were female except for one son in his early 20s. I made a joke about how he could be “our strong back.” He became angry. I realized upon reflection that I had the ability to be familiar with him. I didn’t know him. I knew his mother. I felt empowered when I didn’t have the power. I asserted myself like I had a leadership role when I didn’t. It wasn’t my community. I wasn’t assigned there. Now I don’t assert myself right away. I wait and assess the situation longer.

Theme: Feelings of Isolation based on race

- During the post-apartheid era in Azania (South Africa) experienced being the object of “overt shunning and avoidance. (no persons of color wanted to sit next to her on public transport)
- I was adopted into a white family, but I am Colombian. I found my parents later but growing up I was colored but didn’t know that I was living in white privilege. It’s hard to answer this question.
- During summer months spent in South Georgia grandmother did not want her to engage in conversation with young African American teen girl.
- The only “Person of White” in work space environment being called a pejorative name initially, however; spoke directly to person later in the break room and discovered that nothing was meant to hurt her feelings, statement uttered: “ What is this skinny white girl doing here”?
- Being the only person in a province in China and being referred to as a “white devil” openly.
- There were only two black kids in my school. In second grade white students joked that God left us in the oven too long. That’s when I knew there was something really different about us.
- Feeling guilty about being uncomfortable with bringing the only non-white person to an otherwise all white event.
- There were only two black kids in my school. In second grade white students joked that God left us in the oven too long. That’s when I knew there was something really different about us.
- This white lady works in the stock market, several years ago there was a black man that was hired and he was NOT welcomed by the close nit group of employees who had been there about 15yrs together. And then she and her sister went to India to a wedding of 500 people & were the only whites there, “all eyes were on them.” When she returned to the job the black man asked her about trip and she knew how he felt, isolated with “all eyes on him.”

General Comments:

- Heroin has become a problem that gets attention after it entered white communities. It took white girls getting addicted to get treatment provided. Racism has been institutionalized through housing and the War on Drugs.
- We need to be historically accurate — there is a lot of problematic racism in our past as Americans. How do we address historical racists who have been held up as heroes?
- There's this huge, problem [in the state]; how do we get through it?
- Religion: is it a crutch or a way to galvanize?

Question Number Two:

"What is at the heart of the matter for you in discussing, responding to, or confronting whiteness and privilege. What's an important action step for you?"

Theme: Interrupting Racism (In Self, Family, & Community)

- Everyone in this group realizes there is a problem. If I don't respond to racism they won't learn a lesson. We have to stop it [racism] in its tracks.
- Finding the personal courage to call out racism when I see it. As a woman of color, I am reluctant to call it out
- I'm in a group that meets about once a month and I feel like I have a good handle on my own privilege but what's emerging for me is how we interact and use coded language to convey our privilege to each other. We need to learn ways to neutrally interact.
- If I see something I will confront it and deal with it to correct. Be honest and not politically correct.
- Young white woman wears a big BLM button to bring that message to her social circles. She likes to challenge people to think and even respond. But she also notices there are times when she purposely removes the button because of the friction it will cause. She sees it as a visceral example of her white privilege.
- This person almost broke down trying to describe how hard it is to love the (3) most important people in her life, and be angry at them at the same time. Because they just don't get it.
- In my community I am surrounded by people who don't see the problem. I am titled, "liberal" in my family in a demeaning way. I want to speak up and make a difference. I can respectfully speak up so I don't tune them out. I want to live by example. There is a need to have the White community SEE how privileged they are.
- I don't know how racism got in my head but I just have to keep working on ridding myself of racism
- I love my grandchildren and I don't want to be racist.
- I think it may have something to do with being raised in a religion that taught me from an early age that I was good and safe because I believed something and other people are bad and written off.
- Lately, I do address racism when people (especially young white males) avoid making eye contact with me when I'm next in line, etc. I nicely say Excuse me, I don't think you saw me standing here.
- Watching the way the media lacks empathy; Made sign in gallery that reads "White Media is killing us": a way for a person to look and internalize questions
- She's Jewish and her parents are holocaust survivors, so speaking up against any injustice can terrify her. When she speaks up against racism, it requires her to swallow a lot of personal history.

- My next action step is challenging the preconceived notions of people that I have before I speak to them. Treating people with the general respect and being proactive about not coming or meeting people with my preconceived notions.
- Finding ways to better recognize when privilege is there; asking questions like-“why is that?” (for example, then people of color are not represented in an organization-“why is that?”) Asking starts the conversations. Also, how to have conversations in a productive way? How do you deal with people on the defensive that are full of hate?
- Learned at a Synod meeting on Anti-racism... when invited to speak on systemic racism. It can get very emotional as people realize privilege and oppression in their own daily lives... they get defensive. have had to reel-in relatives on Facebook especially vocally charged tea party cousins... opinionated without boundaries.
- I feel my “blessed and lucky” white privilege and can share it with like-minded friends, but challenged to call it out when I see it in others. Still struggle to find ways to bring attention to WP with friends and strangers. Tread lightly when calling out friends. Small steps are victories... cannot change a belief in one conversation.
- Try to activate people to question authority rather than just obey. Book clubs good but exclude those who don’t read the entire book. Started a Movie Series... critical films and discussions... but still polarizing. Found another way, one that I was impassioned about.. that was neutral yet questioning... bees... everyone wants to protect bees and as we explore what harms them, we learn to question our own world. be the change!

Theme: Learning & Raising Awareness

- The discussion, listening, understanding and increasing my own awareness. Responding to micro-aggressions. I want to learn other peoples’ cultures/experiences. I don’t understand racism. I want to use my sphere of experience to love others. I want to speak up; be the change.
- Make a conscience choice every day to be aware of my white privilege. It’s so easy to not be aware of it.
- I want to have hyper-awareness, no level of tolerance, courage to speak up and confront for a level of respect
- As a pastor, what’s important is how you can involve this method and interaction into your church. But you can’t force it. Our staff at our church is more involved in these activated than I am, having only pastor of this church for a month. The positive is that we are so inclusive, we invite all nationalities, sexual identities creeds and races into our community. And our staff is inclusive with our congregants. It’s about making each person comfortable. However, we do face that Sunday morning is the most segregated hour. The church hour is defined by our skin color.
- White privilege this is new to me. Never knew about till I volunteered. Seeing now not everyone has it the same attitude and worldview. Didn't know it was even an issue before. Difficult to talk about. Try to confront and pay better attention.

- Her heart is changing and evolving all the time. She read an article about White Fragility that really changed things. Starting to think about systemic vs. individual racism. She finds it's important to keep listening, reflecting, learning.
- Family NOT interested in changing, but 'I'm interested in Dismantling my Whiteness'
- Read an article about unpacking white privilege that was insightful.
- Learn more about my white fragility.
- An important action step for her — advocate not just in her small area, but finding ways to spread it
- It's better to be uncomfortable than comfortable.
- Fighting off intellectualizing the oppression
- self-awareness, for some education is needed, sees bad facebook posts - if they could just learn
- At the heart of the matter, its white privilege that's at the heart. And the hurt that someone feels. Seeing that it has become a concern for me. I felt an obligation to follow through on action. I ask what it is I can do on a greater scale?
- White privilege this is new to me. Never knew about till I volunteered. Seeing now not everyone has it the same attitude and worldview. Didn't know it was even an issue before. Difficult to talk about. Try to confront and pay better attention.
- 3 things. Challenged to recognize my privilege. Someone on my shoulder to pinch me. Safe place to process it when pinched. How do I learn and get better. I want to be educated and coached for good in the world. White privilege is not ok and not ok to do nothing. How do I make amends.
- I feel like groups like this are important. To move forward, you need groups like this. The topic is so blinding in the other communities, like Shorewood, Whitish Bay, Brookfield, etc. It won't be a big thing to open up as some might feel it is.
- Willingness to be wrong is at the heart of it. As you get older, you're expected to be more "learned"; learn to understand and to listen; how do I do this productively?
- Create spaces for true conversations to happen (they don't yet)
- Fostering community to educate people
- In grad school in San Francisco and worked with cross-cultural counseling; was awakened to the role of whites in communication styles and how it dominates in many arenas
- Frustrated that our racial issues aren't "heard" more often. She likes the idea of "dialogue is an action." We need "to do something," but many people don't acknowledge we even have an issue. There are issues that white women face, but they don't stack up to other kinds of discrimination. Her boyfriend has a hard time acknowledging the barriers faced by other people because of hardships he's experienced.
- Talk to people who do Sociocultural Programming and get beyond "the fear."
- This white woman shared her experience (very difficult) of how she went to a city on the east coast a few yrs. ago and participated in an Americor (teachers age 18-24) "Privilege" training exercise where they stepped forward on some questions...and stepped back on others. At the end of the exercise she looked around and all the

young white girls were standing in the front of the room and the young black girls were standing in the rear...years later it was still an overwhelming, powerful memory when talking about it!

- Wauwatosa born and bred, never noticed white privilege. Produces a WPR Talk Show (Kathleen Dunn), wants to find topics, guests and subjects that address division and privilege in hopes it will help.
- Using education to help people (specially students) recognize these issues and bring awareness, but the way forward is not so clear.
- Build children up to be who they are without teaching them to feel shame due to their skin color.

Theme: The Importance of Facilitated Dialogue

- Conversations like this one.
- The stories shared brought the conversation home My Sisters Keeper was my first interaction with this type of conversation. I loved it I'm not ignoring it anymore, I'm wanting to bring it out into the open.
- Sharing stories like this is a way of talking in realness
- I want to face new experiences. Welcome them. Share feelings and discuss them. I'm moving past my shame and embarrassment of my own cluelessness. Looking back at my willingness to confront these feelings in a group and discuss them has helped me arrive here. I want to keep going.
- There are good white people. It would be great if more non-whites could connect with whites like the ones at this conversation
- Make a conscience choice every day to be aware of my white privilege. It's so easy to not be aware of it.
- Bigotry is becoming more acceptable, especially directed towards 'anyone not like you.' There needs to be more discussions like this, we need to start treating each other with respect.
- Groups like this are very important. Privilege and racism are hard to discuss. To move further you need places like this to discuss and learn. Pastor serves all white congregation and it is very blinding. Dialogues into a congregation is hard to bring conversations in and it is huge. Easy to not address and look the other way because you are busy with work etc.
- To be able to discuss without judgment in open dialogue and settings. Keep asking questions.
- I want to be challenges to recognize my privilege. I also need a safe method and a safe space to be able to process it in a healthy way. It would be like getting pinched when I deal with it. I want to be leveraged and anchored on what to do, how to make amends for my error. Its about how do I poke the bear of white privilege for those who don't have it.

- There needs to be steps towards action. Willingness to listen & dialogue...it's easy to make judgments about people, need to find out who the person is & MOVE beyond the CONFLICT!
- When I come I bring my assumptions and need to step back and listen to what is needed
- Share stories, share space and make it safe
- Invisibility of racism - like fish in water, it's the way its structured. American list of things that white people don't think about, action is to talk in a polarized society
- Need for spaces where people can respect each other but "get it out."
- Facilitated dialogues is helpful because there are rules
- This work is important.
- Have to come together with energy and balance
- Be intentional about creating these conversations
- Rules open people up; they clam up without them

Theme: Becoming a Co-conspirator/Ally

- Need white allies with acceptance and realizations
- Middle aged white suburban empty Nester, has sons off to college, wants to engage in social change. Came tonight to seek ways to help understand white privilege and be a change.
- Heart of the matter white privilege is suffering from someone else's misery and alienation, marginalization. Seeing first hand as a child this is an important topic and need to be confronted head on. Some coded language and overtly racist some people and I will call them out on it. Segregation is big in Milwaukee. Daunting here. It is policy or something greater then I but I'm here to help.
- Stop trying to be nice or good people, instead try to be real. Being nice stops the conversation at "I'm not a racist because I'm nice"
- Don't be pushed into agreement, but engage
- Movement can be unsafe without white allies because people of color can't be safe moving in white spaces
- People need to organize their own communities around tough moments like these
- Address your own bias, whatever you are intellectualizing
- Desire to develop more interracial friendships

Theme: Actions In the Workplace; Job Creation

- Everything is at the heart of the matter for me: the fear, the obligation. In my work, I have the opportunity to change the dynamics of this environment, to help re-tell histories and stories but all of this is emotionally exhausting
- Exposed to a book club that meets in an ethnic restaurant... noticed how the patrons there were so much happier, with laughter and merriment... sense of community and

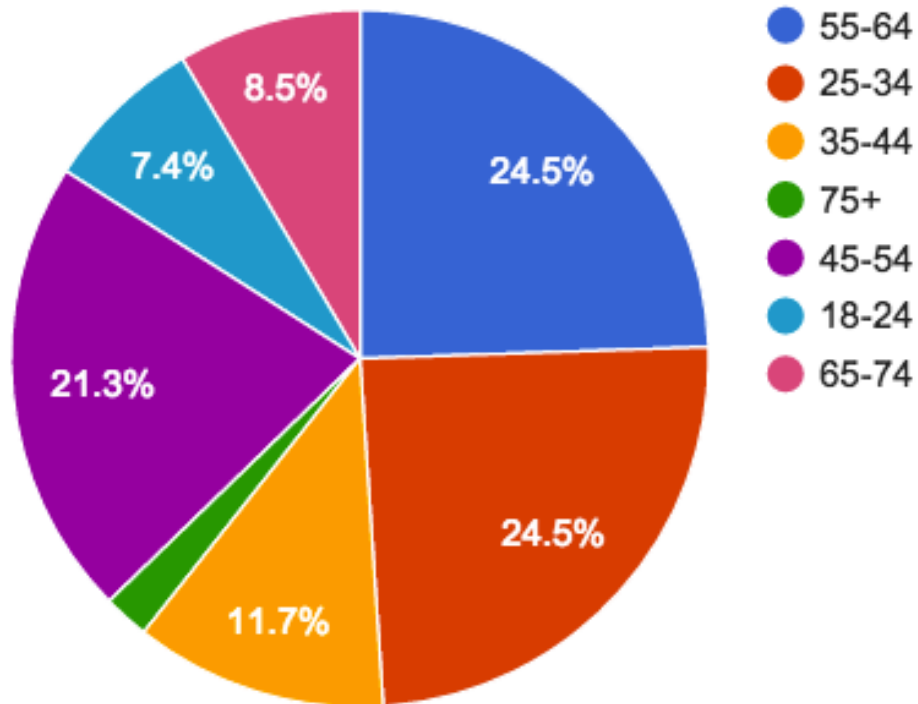
positivity... Guess I want to take baby steps and make changes to mostly white gathering places that I frequent.

- Looking squarely at issues as they arise and engaging other white people in conversation whether in the work place, social interaction or interpersonal challenges.
- I hear "African Americans" need to stop being lazy. Pull themselves up. In the 80s, education wasn't always available unless the family was wealthy. Parents had 6th grade educations. We need a push. So many suffer without diplomas. It's important to help people push forward. After trickle down economics have reshaped our system, it's hard to do it though. Positions African Americans have are ones that white people don't want. People have low status jobs with low wages, and it's even hard to get those.
- This white woman in HR service dept. mentioned her difficulty in trying to hire & diversify employees at her company. Often has to stand up to management to defend her hires.
- In the workplace, one can be complacent, not thinking of micro-agressions, awareness is needed because we are at the forefront

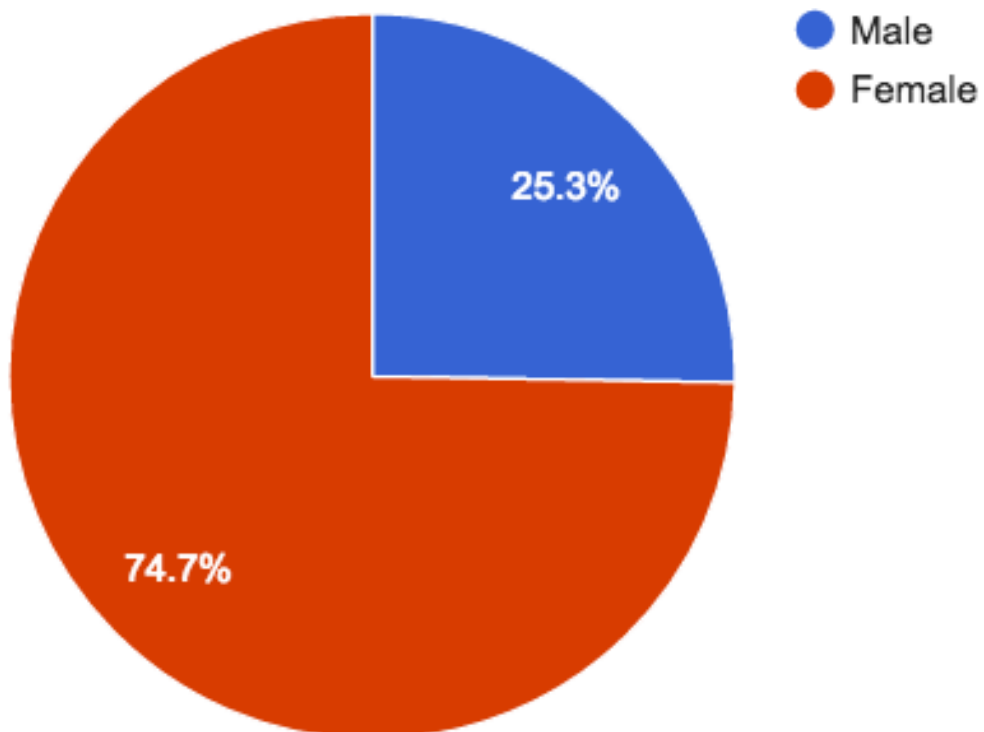
PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK & DEMOGRAPHICS
(SELF-REPORTED ON ANONYMOUS FEEDBACK FORMS)

NUMBER OF ZIP CODES REPRESENTED: 32

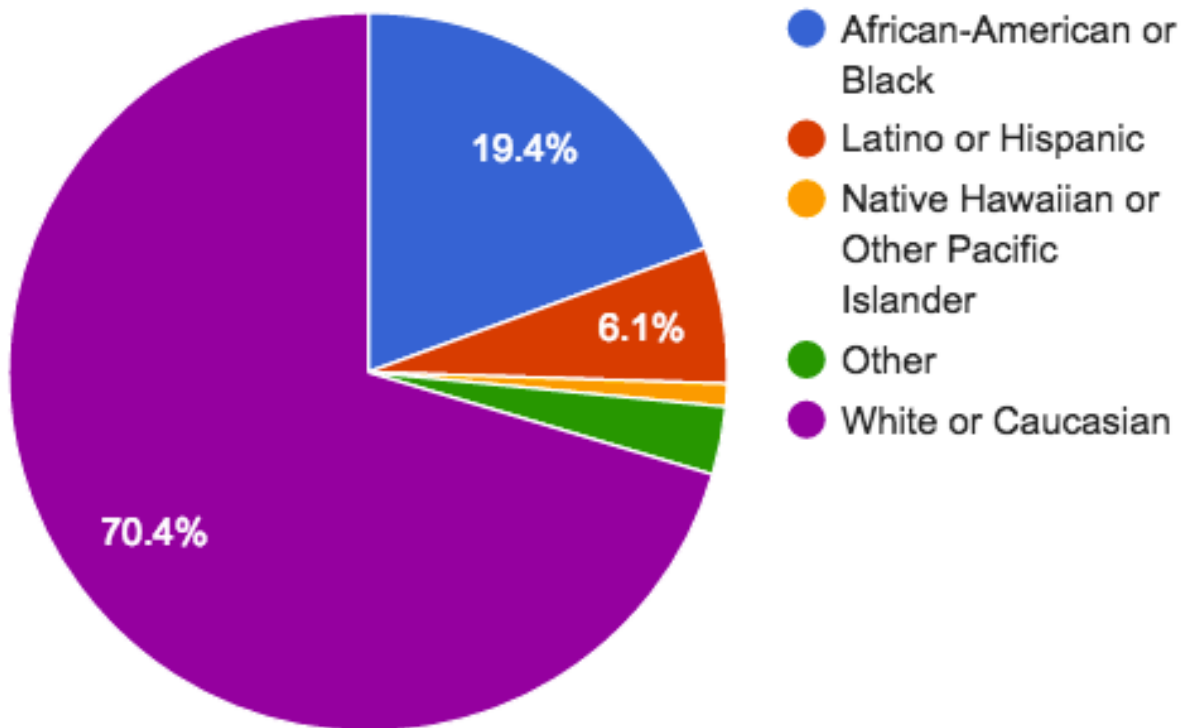
AGE RANGE



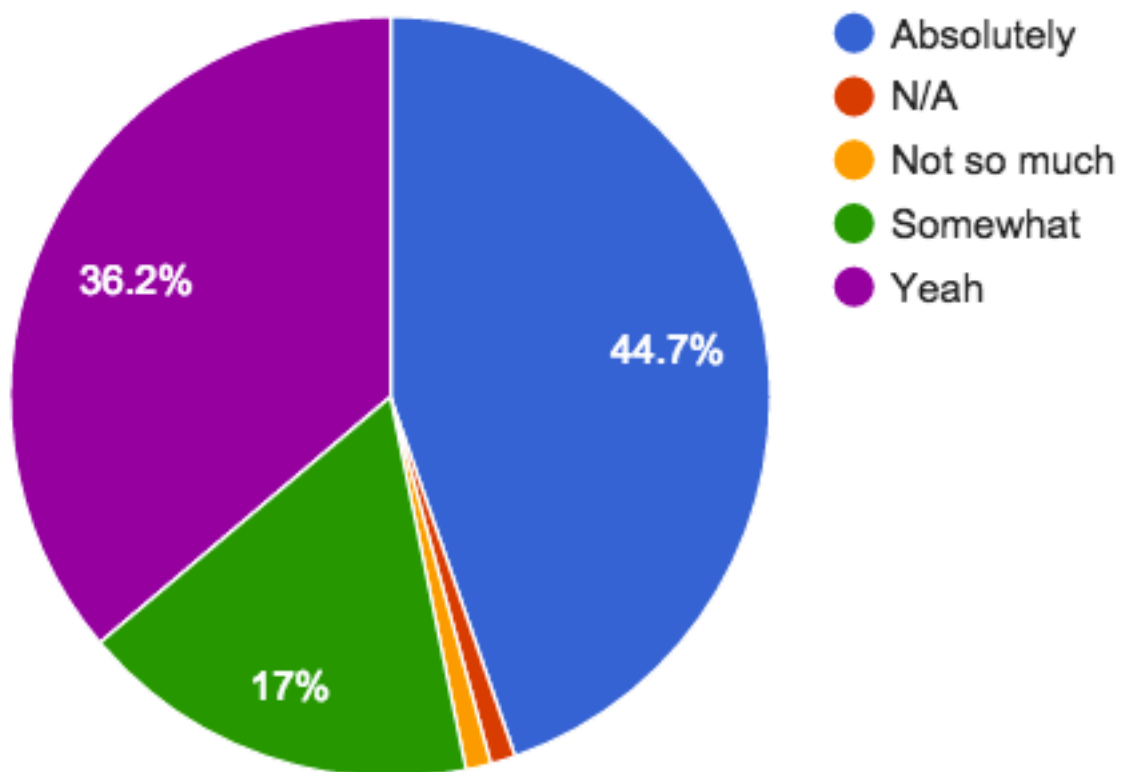
GENDER



RACE & ETHNICITY



DID THIS EXPERIENCE ACHIEVE THE ESTABLISHED GOALS?



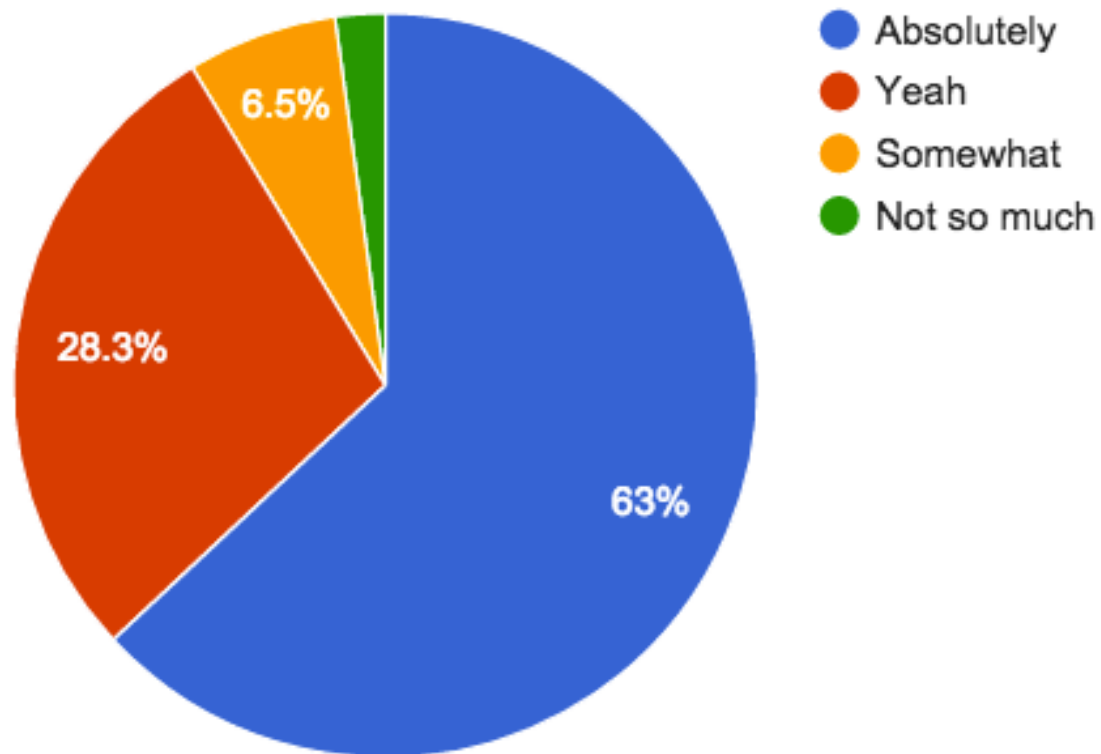
Why or why not?

- Awareness of self - surprised @ how little I've thought of white privilege & how to change it.
- Because I got a lot of information and conversation not of the dialogue tonight.
- Create a platform for good conversation.
- Excellent dialogue, and excellent Speakers
- Gathering conversations close to the ground is so much more fruitful than media/traditional informational gathering methods. To the extent the dialogue is shared it will be successful.
- Goals, why or why not?
- Good sharing + exchange of experiences
- Great & unexpected experience to discuss important topics
- Great dialogue!
- Great to hear others stories
- Having these small group discussions helped me to learn more about people experiences and perceptions. I was afraid of opening up in the beginning but I'm so happy now about participating.
- I came to one of these conversations in the past and I enjoyed longer times for conversations- this was a bit shorter
- I didn't know what I signed up for so I had no goals/ expectations but it was amazing
- I don't understand the question, whose goals
- I expected the opportunity to have a facilitated dialogue on white privilege + whiteness and that is what happened.
- I feel like personal goals were achieved as in learning others opinions/sharing my own, although I am not sure of what the established goals were for the agency so I cannot speak to that.
- I had hoped for something a little more moving - I shared, but didn't necessarily feel validated or supported in my answers. Good discussion though!
- I learned so much and have opened further as a result of the listening to other stories here.
- I listened. I talked more than I wanted.
- I think so My goals or the program's goals?
- I thought the questions followed the theme really well
- I was skeptical about "structured dialogue" but I am less so now. It was interesting and I don't think (or am not aware of) any different way to get there.
- Immediate sharing
- It brought like-minded People together
- It made me really think... Put words to my feelings + share as well as listen very carefully
- It opened my mind up to everything going on in the world with race and how it personally affects people.
- Made me feel more open talking about race, whiteness, how I feel, etc.
- More time & it would be an absolutely! Enlightening convo
- Most of the questions and answers were fairly predictable and not confrontational

enough. Too short to develop relationships.

- My fellow participant expressed most of the same issues I've been concerned about + more
- My group was all people of color. It would have been helpful to hear from a person that identify as white to more the discussion
- Not in-depth conversations, surface
- Not sure yet - looking Forward to talking to others afterward as well!
- Open, honest conversation
- Our awesome facilitator Avery!! Great job! & Authentic conversation
- People have to make struts to action not just talk or listen.
- Provided space to talk about race + privilege. A rare opportunity.
- Really wanted to know more about structured dialogue
- Safe space created, people said what's on their minds.
- Sharing personal experiences, networking.
- So happy to hear other people's experiences, their awareness, and willingness to take action.
- Started to dig in. It's a great Start
- The circles were critical. Getting to hear from others their diverse backgrounds + experience was amazing.
- The goals were established, and everyone abided by them.
- The group was slow to open, but got better.
- The opportunity to listen & Learn From others.
- The structured "rounds" created an atmosphere of relationship/ connection by taking the dialogue beneath the surface
- Was there an established goal stated? If there was it's not indicated in my notes or materials. Yes, the discussion was good but the goal to me is to lessen racial impacts on individual lives - this is a
- We discussed reasons why we feel white privilege
- We have all experienced a way to have a deeper conversation.

Do you believe this experience strengthens community bonds?

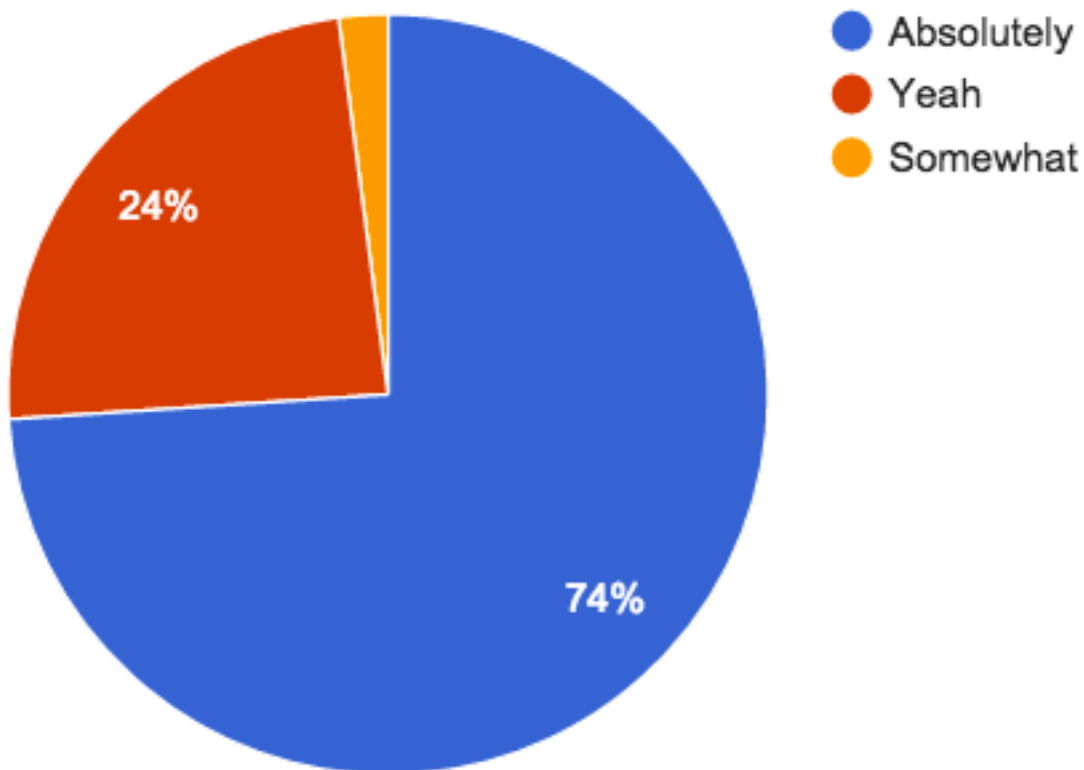


Why or why not?

- Dialogue opens Hearts
- This was a great way to build safety amongst participants in discussing a sensitive subject.
- I would love to have more of these events
- Lots of different people
- Truly hearing fosters connection. I'm glad we identified our neighbor hoods at the beginning
- Small group experiences: opportunity to state our experiences hear other reflect
- Yes, allows for community building.
- Would love to see this practice applied in schools, churches, workplaces
- Anything you are sitting with strangers who are there with same purpose you will strength bonds
- It strengthens bonds within the people who chose to attend. The next question is the whole community
- It's so good to see others in the community engage in dialogue about these issues.
- It gets people talking & thinking.
- Crazy how bonds form so quickly amongst strangers
- This was a well-guided and safe place to express a story.
- Brings people together
- One more person understanding another person of different race, the hope is that people share with another unaware person

- Yes more questions & able to facilitate more information for people to share.
- It brings it to the table-out of the shadow-brings about important issues/topics.
- Getting people talking who may not have the opportunity otherwise
- Relationship building, networking, action steps
- We got to know each other
- Raising consciousness seems ok the first step to change
- Format allows for vulnerability, introspection, compassion
- Keeps the dialogue together & moving
- Most especially if the groups are diverse
- But it doesn't reach the people who need it the most non-like minded people
- Yes - hearing others stories is always helpful
- Meeting people who are concerned
- Bringing people together is always a plus!
- How do we continue the dialogue and include the entire community and world?
- Cross pollinating the grass roots
- Because it brings conversation in a positive way to multiple views and lifestyles/ beliefs
- Importance of cross race/culture religion
- This needs to happen more. Just having different people together speaking openly is a feat
- Communicate with strangers
- Strategy for safe conversation around critical concept.
- This structure allows everyone to participate and be able to connect with others in the group.
- Sharing personal experiences in a safe space
- People want to know action steps
- We need to listen to each other to begin changing.
- Helps people recognize others and themselves
- It strengthens certain segments of the community, but not all segments are well represented
- You get to know people quickly & relatively intimately
- We listened.
- Conversation amongst people always will help strengthen bonds & understanding.
- I have been to several discussions and each time I feel more connected with people in the community and empowered to further building up Milwaukee & the bonds I have w/ people in this city.
- Loved the storytelling - a great way to hear how others are impacted by racism and privilege
- Facing issues we need to face to strengthen our community in a structured way.
- We need to continue with calls to action so these conversations are productive
- Gives opportunity to hear other's experiences, empathize, and try to understand. Connect with others to promote change. Also, very valuable to have groups approved her working on racial justice.
- We all had different stories and telling them helped bring us closer.

Are you likely to recommend this experience to others?



Why or why not?

- Again, a rare opportunity to have conversations we don't otherwise have.
- Because the group was fluent, competent and permissive.
- Better for beginners than seasoned advocates I think. I wanted a bit more.
- Definitely- to folks I trust
- Dialogue is extremely important especially in an environment that welcomes people of color and white people.
- Dialogue.
- Encourage more diverse perspectives.
- Great learning experience!
- I always invite friends to discussions. I think the awareness it creates is beneficial to the growth and development of a person and this city. Removing ignorance is the first step to change.
- I appreciate the phone call provided before the event & the email with the questions pre-event.
- I believe it is important to further the conversations in communities, especially amongst white people.
- I believe that everyone should come to this to be able to open their minds as well.
- I believe this is a community dialogue and deserves more members from the community.
- I loved the structure

- Important topics to talk about.
- It reminds people to listen and hopefully empathize with a perspective they haven't heard before.
- It was a good experience.
- It's a start- I hope it continues for decades
- It's an interesting opportunity to mingle with others who find learning, storytelling & listening interesting.
- It's nice to talk openly & hear other's ideas.
- Lots of need to talk of whiteness.
- More people need to be a part of these conversations - make them ongoing.
- Needs to become an ongoing structure.
- Not only does it sensitize us to the feelings and experiences of others, but enables us to see our own experiences and lives in a new way. Everyone should give it a try!
- Real conversation, love the format
- Should be mandatory!
- Structured dialogue engendered so much respect for speaker.
- The sense of community that has been established was safe, warm and welcoming.
- There's no way you could not learn something!
- This experience really makes you dig deeper into the conversation.
- This was eye opening and I got so much more than I expected.
- To force a change in oppression and privilege.
- To keep the dialogue going
- Unique- Empowering excellently done
- Very well done and thought provoking.
- Want my whole white family & friends to participate.
- We all need to get together more I fair over the difficult things that find I
- We, white people, need to know and talk about race & white privilege
- Yes!!

Suggestions for upcoming dialogues? Themes you would like to discuss?

- Would it be possible to send discussion questions in advance?
Themes: diverse experience of Milwaukee building healthy communities supporting education in Milwaukee
- Urban renewal/gentrification
- The real stories are a great way to break the ice into our own conversations
- The power of service in social justice; how service (AmeriCorps, Peace Corps, etc.) has changed our lives. I'll be in touch!
- That people will be moved to action
- Term: black vs. African American
- Take away- how do I move forward? What do I do now? Segregation
- Suggestions, issues, themes
- Soft bigotry
- Smaller groups - or more time...
The dialogues fabulous - were great!
- Separate us
- Resource information is very helpful-
- Only 1 - and it's minor - have the group # printed large/bold on 8 1/2 x 11 that facilitator can hold up on their clipboard to make it easier to find your group.
- Not sure where your going - or when subject not worn out - either @ all levels of the community or other topics work
- Not so much info at beginning.
- More time would deepen dialogue
- More stories
- More racism & privileges
- More discussion time, more intimate setting
- More conversation & questions.
- Make sure groups are more interracial- diverse dialog
- Make a comment on how another's story reflects your personal life. Other issues: being afraid of standing w/out
- Longer sessions. If that is possible. Ability to break up questions - this was in tow so but great
- LONGER discussions
- Keep the stories & dialogues coming
- Keep the diversity (age, race)
- Keep small group discussions â†’ encourage all ages.
- Keep it cool.
- Keep doing what you are doing.
- Just do it exactly as you did. Great mix of story, instruction, and participatory discussion and also the perfect duration
- It might help to share the questions in written format to participants - they were not overly difficult to understand but the words on paper could help with brainstorming + listening.

- Interrupting racism
- Institutionalized racism and action steps that are possible to take.
- I would love more time in small groups
- I would like to discuss more ways we can be active beyond discussing.
- I would like more of the same - this was a great start for me, but could do a lot more of this. Would also like to get better at talking/listening to white people who would never dream of coming to
- I really liked the ex fabula story telling incorporated. I am open to any issue/theme.
- How to change the system - what's doable?
- How the diversity of our city could be good to everyone's gain
- Highlight the spots where participants should go in advance (numbered signs that are visible).
- Hear from Muslim/Islamic stories/experience in our city
- Have this again w/ deeper questions.
- Great themes these need to be discussed.
- Get the word out these are great.
- Gender, LGBTQT issues
- Gender issues
- Equal integrity at another event
- Ensure the groups are diverse. Maybe a survey w/ the registration for demographics
- Engaging those who might not normally attend. Sharing at corporate organizations.
- Education yourself about race, & speak truth & walk your truths.
- Do this more often & in places where might not ordinarily happen
- Discussion on poverty
- Discussing entrepreneurs and how self built businesses can change the future
- Disabled politics poverty art and literature education employment
- Cuban issues. Israeli Palestinian issues
- Continue on this path.
- Continue more of these. I would suggest we jump right into the facilitated discussions vs. Spending time up front hearing the stories. (The stories were great, but the discussion was too short, respectfully!)
- Ask do you know what systemic racism is?
- A conversation on death & dying would be interesting or having a conversation about being inter generational. As there begins to be more older adults, we need to take care of our older adults
- 3 questions instead of 2
- 2 hour small group discussion more direct speech to each other an what people need to know
- It's hard to hear... (maybe I'm old)