

Northwest District Pastors

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<https://belonging-inc.org>

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WHAT IS THE GOAL?

DEBATE

- Succeed or win
- Look for weaknesses
- Emphasize disagreement
- Judge other's views
- Listen to respond/counter
- Disregard relationships

Worldview: binary
(right/wrong)

DISCUSSION

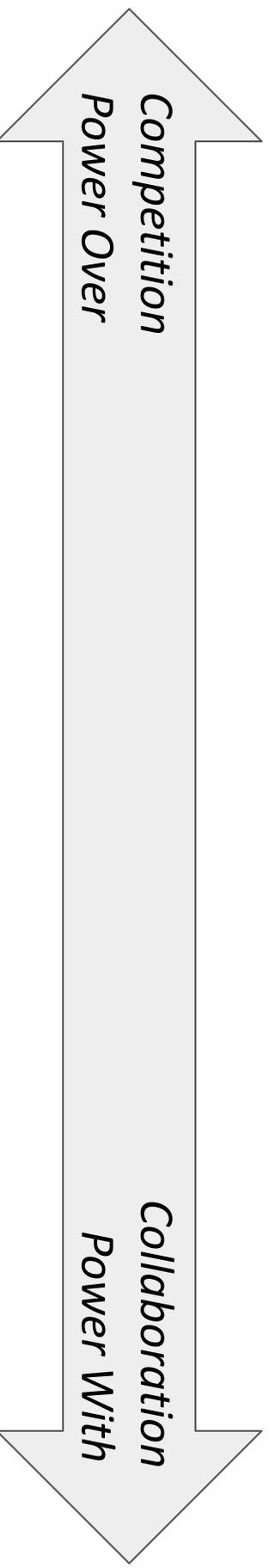
- Present ideas
- Seek answers and solutions
- Persuade others
- Achieve preset goals
- Listen for disagreement
- Retain relationships

Worldview: neutrality is possible

DIALOGUE

- Broaden our perspective
- Look for shared meaning
- Find places of agreement
- Challenge our preconceptions
- Listen to understand
- Build relationships

Worldview: not binary
(both/and)



adapted by VISIONS, Inc from Nagda, Gurin, Rodriguez & Maxwell, "What is your intent?"

Guidelines For Effective Cross-Cultural Dialogue

- ◆ “Try on”
- ◆ It’s okay to disagree
- ◆ It is not okay to blame, shame, or attack, self or others
- ◆ Practice “self-focus”
- ◆ Practice “both/and” thinking
- ◆ Notice both process and content
- ◆ Be aware of intent and impact
- ◆ Confidentiality

Guidelines Activity

3

- ◆ Which guideline comes easiest for you?
(You practice it already)
- ◆ Which guideline feels like more of a challenge or stretch you?
- ◆ In what way could these guidelines be useful for you
3 in your context/workplace/Church?

Guidelines for Effective Cross-Cultural Dialogue

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Explanations by Rev. David Williamson www.belonging-inc.org

These guidelines created by VISIONS, Inc. provide a set of principles/behaviors designed to create the environment where differences of all kinds (age, race, class, religion, gender, sexual orientation, etc.) can be recognized, understood, appreciated and utilized as strengths. The Guidelines can also serve as a diagnostic tool to gauge how you and your organization are integrating the frameworks that make authentic communities of belonging possible. “Try these on” in all your interactions at home, work, church, etc. not only in your discussion group or book study. Consider how they apply at the four levels (personal, interpersonal, institutional and cultural) as well.

Try on

This is an invitation to be open to “trying on” new ideas, behaviors and feelings. It is willingness and openness to move into someone else’s world, into cultures that don’t feel like home for you. It is practicing child-like curiosity. It is noticing when you think, “I’ve never done it this way before,” and then lean into it to see what connections, learning and un-learning opportunities come up for you. “Try on” can deepen your appreciation for someone else’s experience of the world.

Consider all the different ways you can practice “try on.” Listen to a different type of music than you normally would. If you normally stay quiet in groups, try on speaking up. If you normally speak up, try on making space for others to speak. Try on sitting in a different place when you go to worship. Try on learning a new language, cooking and eating a different kind of food, spending time with someone who is a different religion, race, age, class, nationality or sexual orientation. Try on appreciating differences as well as similarities. Notice when you are uncomfortable with feelings of anger, sadness or fear. Try on being present to those feelings to see what they have to say to you.

Theologically: The incarnation of God is an example of “try on.” John 1:14 (MSG) says, “The Word became flesh and blood and moved into the neighborhood.” The apostle Paul said, “Love does not insist on its own way.” (1Corinthians 13:5) In other words, love is willing to “try on” someone else’s ideas and experience. When Jesus says, “Come and see” and “come follow me” he is inviting people to try on another way of life in the world. (John 1:43, 46)

It is ok to disagree. Not ok to attack, shame, blame yourself or others.

It is ok to say "No," to set boundaries, and to remain in a human connection to those you disagree with. This guideline is different from "cancel culture" which cuts people off, shames them, disowns them and says, "you are dead to me." This guideline practices disagreement while respecting our own humanity and that of others.

As a white man born and raised in the southern United States, I have ancestors who both enslaved African people and fought for the Confederacy. I can disagree with that behavior and the ideas that supported those policies and systems. I can even advocate for the relocation of Confederate symbols from public to private property, AND at the same time not disowning, or canceling my ancestors or myself for having been born and raised in a culture that oppressed people of color and privileged white people. I think about this guideline as "permission to tell my story truthfully, and to evolve in God's grace."

This guideline acts as a guard for human dignity. It is a reminder to reject the messages that discount our being, whether they come from someone else or our own self-talk. This guideline is an invitation to disagree with and not offer attacks on someone's being by using words such as "loser, failure, idiot, worthless, scum, n-word, etc."

Theologically: Jesus' proximity with people was not the same as agreement with all they were doing. Jesus modeled setting boundaries without dehumanizing people. Notice the ways Jesus disagreed with people and remained in relationship with them. Confession is an act of disagreement with the effects of sin and a process through which our humanity is restored. The church is invited to confess our sin (disagree with it) with the confidence of deeply loved children of God, not with an attitude of hopelessness and self hatred.

Practice Self Focus

This is an invitation to self examination, not self centeredness. This is the recognition that my greatest power for change in the world is my decision to "be the change I want to see in the world." It is a recognition that I have 100% responsibility to ask for and make personal changes to get what I need and want.

This is an invitation to speak from your place of greatest strength by using "I" instead of "you" and "we" when talking.

This is an invitation to notice what is going on in my body - what am I feeling - and taking care to attend to the messages those feelings are sending me. (Spend time with the feelings wheel). When I am feeling sad, mad or scared I can choose to act in ways that will help me move through to joyful, powerful and peaceful.

This is about self care. The work of resisting evil, injustice and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves is not easy work. AND God has promised freedom and power for you to do this work. Practicing self focus is asking the question: “What do I need to keep on keeping on in this liberating, healing work of building communities of belonging?”

Theologically: (Matthew 7:1-5) Practicing self focus is attending to “the log in my own eye before being concerned with the speck in someone else’s eye.” It is also a way to step into your power by telling your experience/story instead of assuming everyone shares your experience/story.

Practice Both/And thinking

Practically, this is an invitation to try on using the word “And” instead of “But.” Just notice when you are saying “but” and try on using “and” to see what that feels like.

This is a helpful guideline to practice when people are at an impasse. This guideline honors the complexity and mystery of our human experience. It invites cultural humility and a recognition of abundance rather than scarcity. Both/And rather than Either/Or. For example, BOTH hard work and personal responsibility AND addressing and changing the policies, procedures, biases and culture that prioritize access and opportunity for some groups over others are necessary for growing healthy and just communities of belonging.

Theologically: The saving work of God through Jesus is both deeply personal and communal (personal and social holiness). Disciples of Jesus also recognize that the realities of heaven are both already on earth and yet to come in fullness. The Church has both been a source of liberation, blessing and beauty in the world AND complicit with creating and maintaining white supremacy culture.

Notice Process and Content

Noticing process will illuminate how we arrived at our content (i.e. who is in the room and who is not? Who is involved in setting policy and who is not? Who do we say are welcome and who actually feels welcome?). When we become aware of this, we can make new choices about how to move forward. It is an invitation to notice, address and transform power differences that leave groups of people excluded, silenced, oppressed.

Sometimes this guideline is described as “Take space and make space.” That is, “take space for yourself and make space for others.”

Noticing process and content often involves a pause to ask, “What just happened and what was that like for you?” . . . taking time to hear from people about their different experiences and appreciate how that can inform the way people move forward together.

This guideline is helpful for appreciating the stories and experiences of people who get excluded intentionally or unintentionally by the dominant culture. Some questions to consider: Am I asking people to “come visit us” more than I “go visit others?” Do I notice who is depicted in the artwork (and who is not) in my church building or business where I say “everyone is welcome?” In what place and with whom do I feel most free to be “me?” In what place and with whom does it feel most risky to be “me?” What options come to mind for different thinking and action that would change this reality for me?

Theologically: There are many gifts and the same Spirit at work in us all. In 1 Corinthians 12 the Apostle Paul encourages the recognition of cultural differences that carry a “less than” message. Notice the way God values those things we might think are less valuable. Jesus makes space for historically excluded groups like children, women, Gentiles and those with leprosy to be seen and heard - valued voices in the community.

Notice Intent and Impact

This guideline is helpful for addressing, healing and releasing resentments and hurt. It is not a matter of “if” you will have or experience a negative impact in the work of building communities of belonging, it is a matter of “when you do, what will you do?” That is when this guideline is particularly helpful.

There is often a difference between someone’s intent and the impact of their behavior. The invitation is to share about the impact of words and actions using self-focus while asking about intent. If you are hurt, consider the intent of the person who hurt you. If you hurt someone, consider how what you said/did impacted them. Try on accounting for the impact of your actions without attack, shame, blame for yourself. We encourage you to share about the impact, ask about the intent and account for the impact of your actions. You may not have intended to step on someone’s foot, and the impact is that it still hurts. Unacknowledged hurt never heals.

There will be times when the impact of your actions (or inaction) calls for making amends or apology and mutually deciding on a way forward together. There will be other times when you realize your impact causes discomfort, AND you have no reason to apologize. Sometimes setting boundaries and telling our stories truthfully can impact others as discomfort. They may feel embarrassed. This discomfort is not a discount of that person’s whole being, AND nonetheless, that person has experienced an uncomfortable impact. In order to maintain a connection in this case, you may consider simply acknowledging the hard impact and ask if the person would like to share about their experience with you. This could potentially open up a deeper dialogue for healing and change going forward.

Intent is usually what I'm aware of. Impact happens outside of my awareness. I cannot control the impact. I have an intent. I have an impact. They are often not the same.

This guideline invites us to ask about the impact (or share about the impact with self focus).

Seek first to understand before being understood. In other words, resist saying, "But you know that wasn't my intent." Or "You are taking it the wrong way." Simply acknowledge the impact without trying to explain your intent.

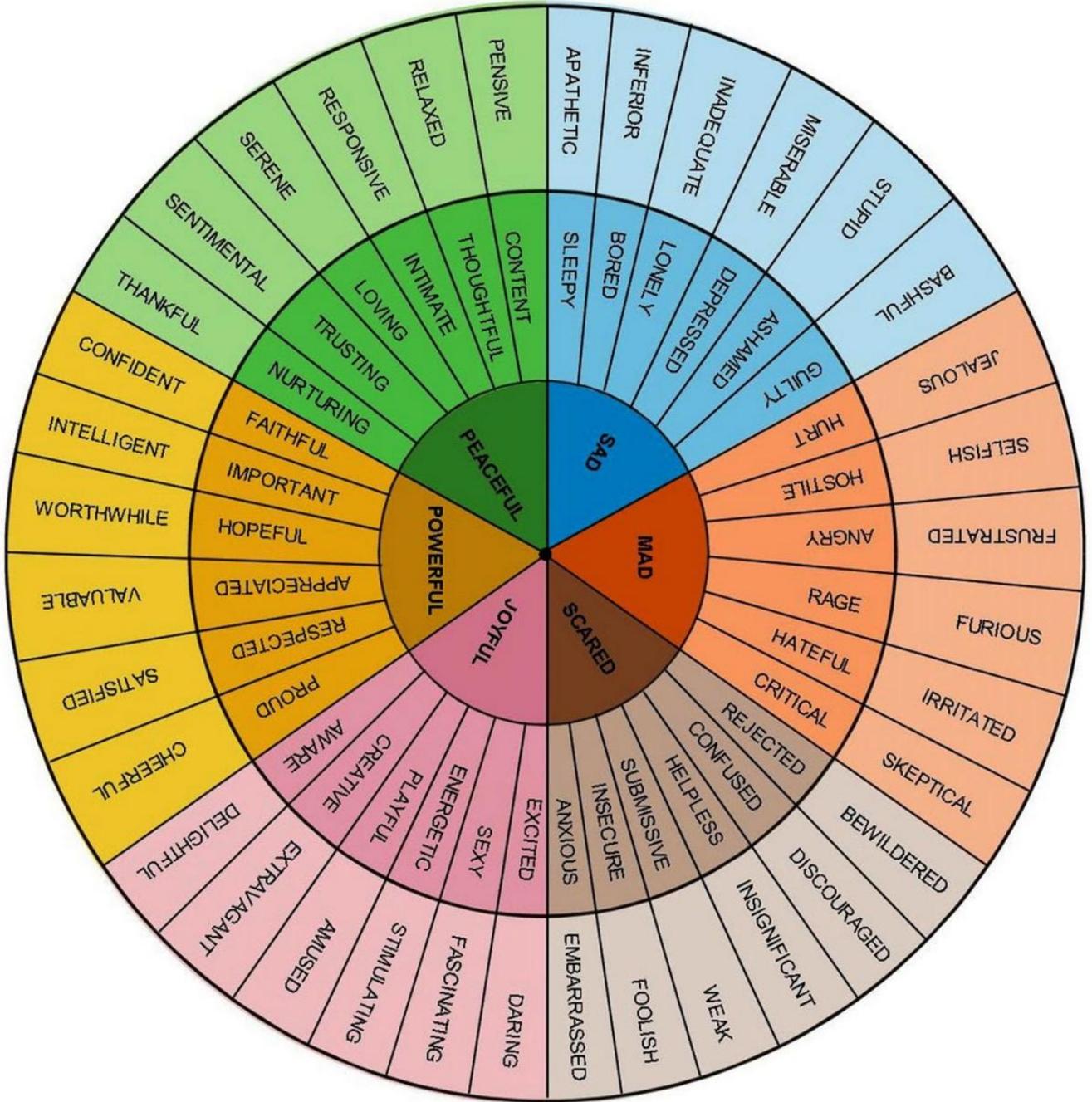
Ask about intent from the person/organization that negatively impacted you. Does it help to know intent was not intentional/malicious/conscious? I recognize that something can be done with well meaning intent AND have a negative impact. Noticing both can lead to understanding, healing and new options for moving forward.

Theologically: There are multiple examples in the New Testament when the law of God is interpreted with good intent AND with a harmful impact. (Acts 9) Saul/Paul intended to be faithful to the law of God only to realize he was doing harm to the life of God revealed in Jesus. (Acts 10) Peter intended to be faithful to the law of God by avoiding contact with Gentiles only to learn that the impact of his avoidance was missing out on the joy of seeing God's Spirit at work in the lives of Gentiles.

Confidentiality

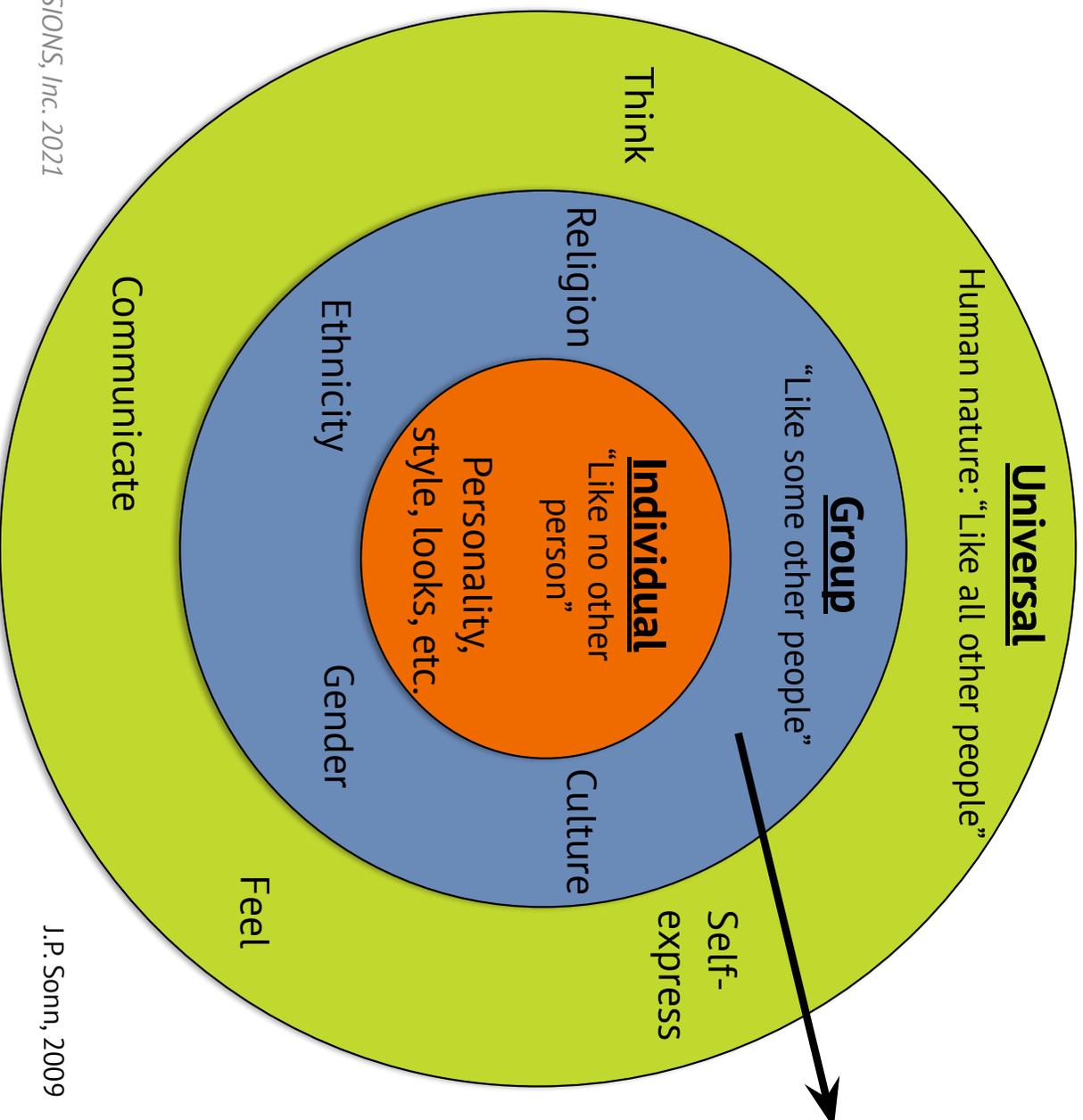
Keeping confidentiality means "I honor your story as yours to tell, unless you give me permission to tell it." This builds trust in community. Someone else's story does not belong to me, and so I honor another person's dignity and humanity by asking their permission to share their story before doing so.

Theologically: This is a way that we honor one another. "Love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor." Romans 12:11



Feeling	Stimulus	Message	Response
Powerful	“I accomplished that”	I’m awesome.	Keep on!
Joyful	Gratitude, awe, wonder.	I’m happy, excited.	Keep on!
Peaceful	I am connected in healthy relationship.	I’m centered.	Keep on!
Mad	Real or perceived violation.	My boundaries have been crossed.	I need to set limits, re-establish boundaries.
Sad	Real or perceived loss.	I’m experiencing or anticipating loss.	I need comfort, space, support to grieve.
Scared	Real or perceived danger.	I’m threatened or in peril.	I need protection, support, reassurance.

Multiple Identities



The primary basis for inclusion and exclusion.

Inherited and learned (caught and taught).

- Privilege
- "Unearned" privileges
- Oppression, as flip side
- All "isms"
- Power: systems and structures that keep above in place
- Liberatory approach – making justice, freedom, equality, fairness realities

Defining Historical Exclusion:

The process through which -- historically, over time, and on-going -- a group is seen as less than, treated as less than, and offered less access to society's benefits and resources.

A Working Conceptualization of Historically Excluded (Target) and Historically Included (Non-Target) Groups

Types of Oppression	Variable	Historically Included/ Non-Target Groups	Historically Excluded/ Target Groups
Racism	Race/Color/Ethnicity	White	{African, Asian, Pacific Islander, Indigenous, Latino/a Americans, Multiracial}
Classism	Socio-Economic Status	Middle, Upper Class	Poor, Working Class
Elitism	Education Level Place in Hierarchy	Formally Educated Managers, Exempt, Faculty	Informally Educated Clerical, Non-Exempt, Students
Sexism	Gender	Men	Women, Intersex
Cissexism/ Transphobia	Gender Identity/ Gender Expression	Cisgender; Appearance and behaviors are congruent with the Gender Binary System	People who are Transgender, Gender Non-conforming, Genderqueer, Non Binary, Agender
Herosexism	Sexual Orientation	Heterosexuals	Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Pansexual, Asexual, Queer, Questioning People
Religious Oppression	Religion	Christians/Protestant	Muslim, Jewish, Catholic, Agnostic, Hindu, Atheist, Buddhist, Spiritual, LDS, Jehovah's Witness, Pagan...
Anti-Semitism	Religion and Culture	Non-Jewish people	Jews
Islamophobia	Religion and Culture	Non-Muslims	Muslims
Militarism	Military Status	World War I & II, Gulf War Veterans	Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan Veterans, Pacifists
Ageism Adultism	Age	Young Adults Adults	Elders (40+ by law) Children
Ableism	Physical, Mental, Emotional, Learning Ability	Currently Able-bodied, Neurotypical	People with a physical, mental, emotional and/or learning disability
Xenophobia	Immigrant Status	US Born	Immigrant
Linguistic Oppression	Language	English	English as a Second Language, Primary Languages Other than English

* Please note that this chart is not presented as definitive, authoritative or “the right or only way”, but rather as a meaningful starting point and reference point for a common language and approach to dialogue.

Your Historically Excluded (Target Group) Identities An Activity

Of which historically excluded groups are you or have you been a member?

Check all that apply.

- People of Color
- Poor/Working Class
- Informally Educated
- Clerical, Non-exempt, Student
- Women, Intersex
- Transgender, Gender Non-conforming, Gender Queer, Androgynous
- Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Pansexual, Asexual, Queer, Questioning
- Muslim, Jewish, Catholic, Agnostic, Hindu, Atheist, Buddhist, Spiritual, LDS, Jehovah's Witness, Pagan/Others
- Vietnam/Iraq/Afghanistan Veterans; Pacifist
- Elders, Children
- People with disabilities
- Immigrant
- People with English as a second language, deaf people

- What are some strengths that come from your experience(s) as a member of one of the groups you circled? Write down the words that come to mind to describe these strengths.

- Now, think about a time you were treated as "less than" because of your membership in one of the groups you circled. Write down the words that come to mind to describe being treated as "less than".

Your Historically Included (Non-Target Group) Identities

An Activity

15

Of which historically included groups are you or have you been a member?

Check all that apply.

- White/Caucasian
- Middle/Upper Class
- Formally Educated
- Manager, Exempt, Faculty
- Men
- Cisgender-Congruent with Gender Binary System
- Heterosexuals
- Christians/Protestant
- WW I & II, Korean, Gulf War
- Young Adults, Adults
- Currently" able-bodied"
- U. S. born
- People with English as a first/ dominant language

What are some strengths that come from your experiences as a member of one of the groups you circled? Write down the words that come to mind to describe these strengths.

Now, think about a time you were treated as "better than" because of your membership in one of the groups you've circled. Write down the words that come to mind to describe being treated as "better than".

OR, a time when you found yourself treating a person in a target group as "less than" (may have been intentional or unintentional, conscious or unconscious).

Introduction to Bias and Historically Included and Excluded Identities

This module will follow the Three Dimensions of Change and Feelings as Messengers

We have already learned Guidelines for Cross Cultural Dialogue, Culture definition. We have talked about how culture is like an iceberg with some parts visible and a lot that is below the surface outside of awareness, and we practiced sharing some of our cultural story - recognizing there are some parts we like and other parts we don't. We recognized the four levels (neighborhoods) at which we both experience and offer hospitality (or inhospitality/exclusion). And we just finished recognizing the importance of Three Dimensions important for lasting change (adding that the Spiritual Dimension weaves through them all) with a particular focus on the emotional/feelings dimension since this one is often the one that will most quickly lead to burnout and inauthentic engagement at home, work and in relationships cross culturally.

Do you remember earlier when we talked about how human beings have multiple identities. This was in the context of our learning about culture and telling our cultural story. There are some ways we are like everyone else, some ways we are like no one else and some ways that we are like some and not like others. That is, we belong to groups. It is in these groups where the "better than/less than" thinking, behaving and feeling shows up.

These better than/less than dynamics can be both conscious and outside of consciousness. It is kind of like that iceberg illustration, but inside our head. (See the Unconscious/Implicit Bias slide) The question to consider is this: What am I aware of when it comes to my thinking as a result of what I was taught and what I caught about myself and the groups I belong to and others and the groups they belong to? We all have both conscious and unconscious bias. That's a part of being a culturally formed human being. The invitation in this exercise is to bring the unconscious parts into our awareness so that we can then decide if we want to hang on to those assumptions or if we want to unlearn some things, choose new behaviors and move toward new feelings.

Laverne has a great story about recognizing her bias against and fear of dogs because of an experience she had growing up.

David has a story about recognizing his bias against asking for help when feeling overwhelmed, being afraid success and failure is all up to him. Unlearning solo, heroic leadership and trying on collective wisdom and leadership.

Definition of Oppression (Inclusion and Exclusion) 10 min)

We teach this definition of Oppression to provide clarity about what we mean when we talk our “historically excluded” group identities. Oppression is not the same as experiencing being left out on occasion or the experience of not being in the majority. It is possible to be in a minority group and still maintain power and control over others in an ongoing way. This definition invites

Definition of Oppression, Historically Included & Excluded Identities are property of VISIONS, Inc.

dialogue about the experiences of groups of people who have historically, overtime and in an ongoing way been seen as less than, treated as less than and offered less access to society’s benefits and resources.

So, can we have a volunteer to read this definition of oppression?

The process through which - historically, overtime and ongoing -- a group is seen as less than, treated as less than, and offered less access to society’s benefits and resources.

- Ask what you are hearing and noticing?

Emphasize: historically; not just present day issue. All human societies have patterns of oppression usually presented in what is ‘normal’ and ‘not normal’

We invite you to keep this definition in mind as we move into this next section where we will learn about our Historically Included and Historically Excluded Identities.

Historically Excluded/ Historically Included Chart (20 min)

- Define terms: HE & HI
- Focus on excluded identities then answer questions.
- Focus on included identities then answer questions.

Invite participants to complete this exercise:

(2-3 minutes) Individually reflect on their experience belonging to a Historically Excluded group. Check all the boxes that have ever applied to you. Answer the questions on the right side of the page.

After completing the HE assignment individually . , .

(2-3 minutes) Individually reflect on their experience belonging to a Historically Included group. Check all the boxes that have ever applied to you. Answer the questions on the right side of the page.

After both HE and HI assignments are completed, divide up the large group into small groups of 3 for sharing with one another.

21 minutes

Debrief

What was this experience like for you? What feelings came up for you? What learning or re-learning came up for you? How does this inform the way you communicate and offer hospitality to someone with both historically included and excluded identities?

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Cross-Cultural Hospitality and the Wesleyan Way of Salvation

Rev. David Williamson

What comes up for you when you hear the phrase “Cross-Cultural Hospitality”?

The different ideas about what this means, the different actions it involves, and the different feelings that arise will depend on who you are.

For the purposes of this reflection, I am inviting United Methodist followers of Jesus to consider what cross-cultural hospitality means, what actions it involves, and what feelings arise in the process. I’m suggesting here that practicing the habits of cross-cultural hospitality is an essential way to experience God’s saving work through Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit.

While United Methodists have some common cultural roots and theological grounding in how we read and interpret Scripture through the lenses of tradition, reason, and experience, we also have a great diversity of interpretation—since *whose* tradition, reason, and experience we draw upon makes a difference in our understanding.

This reality both complicates our life together and makes it more beautiful.

It complicates things because when more than one way of seeing and interpreting Scripture arises, we have a choice to make: whether to make space for culturally non-dominant voices to be recognized, understood, appreciated, and included—or to require their assimilation.

It makes things beautiful because, for United Methodists, salvation has always been about more than making a one-time decision to get to heaven when we die. Salvation is more than a trajectory for religious supremacy culture (or any other version of supremacy culture) to thrive.

Salvation has been God’s gracious, persistent invitation to belong (prevenient grace); God’s gracious celebration of our awakening to our own and others’ inclusion at the table of the Lord (justifying grace); and God’s gracious, ongoing freeing and healing work in us, between us, and among all creation (sanctifying grace).

These are the movements of God's saving grace that John Wesley proclaimed in his sermon *The Scripture Way of Salvation*. In Wesley's theology, salvation refers to more than simply justification by faith. Salvation includes holiness by definition, as a restoration of the *Imago Dei* (image of God) of holiness in us.

That "*Imago Dei* of holiness in us" is both deeply personal and profoundly collective. In our baptism, we receive the gift of being claimed as a beloved child of God, *and* we find ourselves connected interdependently to everyone else God loves too.

My friend Derrick Scott III (lay leader in the Florida Conference UMC) has invited me to think about the forgiveness of sin that Jesus offers as "closing the distance" —the distance in us, between us, and between us and God. Derrick points out that effects of sin (of all the "-isms")

are distance, fracture, and "better-than/less-than" dynamics that lead to death. Jesus came to forgive sin—to close the distance.

As we come to know Jesus and his gift of salvation, we learn that we are forgiven, *and* we keep on forgiving. That is, we hold the tension that the reality of heaven—in which all distance is closed—is *already here* and also *yet to come*.

The vision of cross-cultural hospitality is already here with Jesus, *and* it requires our ongoing work. Perhaps this is what the apostle Paul meant when he wrote to the church at Philippi: "Beloved... work out your salvation with fear and trembling." Philippians 2:12

Practicing cross-cultural hospitality is the work of salvation because it reflects the heart of God to forgive sin—to close the distance that all the "-isms" cause within and among us.

This is not easy work, but rest assured: Jesus has already moved into these broken places in our lives—these "neighborhoods"—with the truth, grace, and power to heal.

The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood. —John 1:14 (The Message)

Remember that *sozo* is the Greek word for salvation, and it carries the idea of being physically healed of diseases, being made whole, restored, and delivered from one's enemies.

Just think of all the ways Jesus addressed and changed “-isms” that kept people at a distance from their true selves and from belonging in an interdependent community where they both received and gave good gifts:

- Mary, a young, poor, unmarried pregnant woman.
- Peter, James, and John—fishermen whose industry was controlled by Rome.
- Zacchaeus and Matthew—tax collectors surviving and taking advantage of others.
- People isolated from community by feared skin diseases.
- A Samaritan woman trying to survive.
- A man living in isolation in a cemetery.

These are just a few examples of Jesus practicing cross-cultural hospitality that led to the closing of distance, restoration to community, wholeness, and deliverance from enemies.

The way of salvation that United Methodists get to experience and offer others is the good news that Jesus is already present, persisting with an invitation to deeper belonging—even before our conscious awareness (prevenient grace).

So, if you ever feel a little overwhelmed by what you *don't know* in the work of cross-cultural hospitality, then great! Lean into that *not knowing* with all the cultural humility you can muster, because Jesus is with you—especially in the midst of your child-like openness to learning new things.

The experience of “ah-ha!” is bound to come. That is the good news of Jesus’ awakening grace (justifying grace)—often feeling like seeing something for the first time (when it had been there the whole time!). This can be a little scary, overwhelming, or even isolating—as much as it is joyful and powerful. Not everyone will want to hear about your “ah-ha!” So, find a supportive group to celebrate these insights and victories, and keep on keeping on.

The journey of cross-cultural hospitality never ends. The ongoing growth of God’s sanctifying grace continues as you practice the tools and strategies for recognizing, understanding, appreciating, and utilizing cultural differences as a strength for God’s mission in the world.

As you do this good work—and as it is done *in* you—remember that you are always part of a big and beautiful story that began before you, will continue after you, and is destined for success. It is the way of God’s salvation!