

## Identity, Privilege, and Marginalization

Individuals with the privilege of not being marginalized are seldom motivated to understand identity, privilege, and marginalization. This guide gives you resources to begin the discussion in your community. It is important to start by defining terms such as identity, marginalization, intersectionality, and privilege.

- **Identity:** The distinguishing character or personality of an individual (Merriam-Webster). An individual has many aspects of identity, some common ones are race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, religious or non-religious affiliation, ability or disability, and so on. This [link](#) will give you access to a resource that was put together by the Inclusion, Diversity, & Equity Office at the University of Missouri. (Please note that there are more aspects of identity that are not included in the list).
- **Marginalize:** To assign to a place of insignificance or of oblivion/put out of sight or mind to an unimportant or powerless position within a society or group (Merriam-Webster). There are different aspects of identity that are marginalized by society. Some examples are: being a person of color, LGBTQ+2S identities, and so on.
- **Intersectionality:** The complex, cumulative way in which the effects of multiple forms of discrimination (such as racism, sexism, and classism) combine, overlap, or intersect especially in the experiences of marginalized individuals or groups. (Merriam-Webster).

*This term was coined by Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw (born 1959) a black American civil rights advocate and a leading scholar of critical race theory.*

- **Privilege:** The ability to be able to remove yourself/ignore/live a life without ever knowing/caring for the problems that others face. (Source: UWSP Diversity and College Access “2018 Diversity and Inclusivity Training”). Some examples are the privilege of being a cis-gendered individual, the privilege of being anglo Saxon, the privilege of being temporarily able, and so on.

Once those terms have been explained and your audience has a basic understanding, the next step will be to show them how marginalization affects individuals. One way to do this would be to use examples of hate crimes and systematic oppression that is prevalent in our society. Examples of police violence against the black community, massacres that targeted individuals due to their religious beliefs, acts of violence on people due to their gender or sexuality can be

used to do this. Some examples that we have used for this discussion at Difficult-Discussions are:

- The shooting of Terrence Crutcher, Tony Robinson, Philando Castile, and Walter Scott by police officers and the consequences (or lack thereof) faced by the killers.
- We also use statistics from the Centers for Disease Control and the National Sexual Violence Resource Center. To highlight the violence faced by women, gay men, lesbian women, and the transgender community.
- To address religious marginalization we use the Synagogue Massacre in Pittsburg, the 2015 shooting at a Historic Black Church in South Carolina, the 2012 shooting at the Sikh temple in Oak Creek, Wisconsin.
- The FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program is a great tool that compiles data on hate crimes in the United States (<https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime>).

The images below will show you case by case examples of hate crimes and the lack of justice that these victims get by the judicial system.

#### TERRENCE CRUTCHER (SEPT. 16, 2016, IN TULSA)

- Betty Shelby, a white Tulsa police officer, called the unarmed Crutcher a "bad dude" before fatally shooting him with his hands up as he stood near his vehicle in a street.
- The conclusion: A jury acquitted her of first-degree manslaughter in 2017, and Shelby later resigned from the department. Then she began working as a reserve deputy for the Rogers County Sheriff's Office (about 30 miles from Tulsa).



Image Source:  
ebony.com

## TONY ROBINSON (MARCH 6, 2015, IN MADISON, WIS.)

- Officer Matt Kenny responded to a complaint of a person jumping in front of cars and attacking people. He pursued Robinson to an apartment, heard commotion inside and entered. There, police said, Kenny shot Robinson in the head, torso and arm seven times after the unarmed 19-year-old attacked him. The killing of Robinson, who was biracial, by Kenny, who was white, inspired a wave of non-violent protests.
- The conclusion: A district attorney declared two months later that Kenny would face no charges.



Image Source: cnn.com

## PHILANDO CASTILE (JULY 6, 2016, IN FALCON HEIGHTS, MINN.)

- Officer Jeronimo Yanez claimed he pulled over Philando Castile for a broken tail light, though radio calls later showed the officer thought Castile resembled a robbery suspect. Shortly after Castile informed Yanez he had a gun in the car (for which Castile had a permit), Yanez shot Castile twice in the heart. Other bullets came within inches of Castile's girlfriend, who livestreamed the killing's aftermath on Facebook.
- The conclusion: Yanez was found not guilty of manslaughter in 2017.



Image Source: nbcnews.com

## WALTER SCOTT (APRIL 4, 2015, IN NORTH CHARLESTON, S.C.)

- A video captured police officer Michael Slager shooting Walter Scott in the back five times as he fled. Scott was unarmed. A broken tail light initiated the encounter in which Slager, who is white, wrestled with Scott on the ground after an initial attempt to flee. Slager placed a taser next to Scott's body and later claimed Scott had tried to tase him.
- The conclusion: A federal judge sentenced Slager to 20 years in prison.
- But... the sentence is being served at Federal Correctional Institution Englewood, that Forbes magazine once named "Best Places to Go To Prison...Prisoners at Englewood can blow off steam by playing pool, ping-pong or even foosball".



Walter Lamar Scott  
Image Source: blackpast.org

## GENDER, SEXUALITY AND TRAUMA

- One in four women has experienced domestic violence.
- In addition, one in five women and one in 71 men have experienced rape at some point in their lives — 12% of these women and 30% of these men were younger than 10 years old when they were raped.
- Almost half (49.5%) of multiracial women and over 45% of Native American/Alaska Native women were subjected to some form of contact sexual violence in their lifetime.
  - Source Centers for Disease Control and National Sexual Violence Resource Center.

## GENDER, SEXUALITY AND TRAUMA

- 64% of transgender individuals are sexually abused or assaulted at some point in their lives.
- 40 % of gay men and 47% of bisexual men have experienced sexual violence other than rape.
- 46% of bisexual women have experienced rape in their lifetime.
- 1 in 8 lesbian women have experienced rape in their lifetime.
- These statistics increase when we look at intersectionality between gender, sexuality, and race!
  - Source Centers for Disease Control and National Sexual Violence Resource Center.

### PULSE NIGHT CLUB SHOOTING, FLORIDA

- An American-born man who'd pledged allegiance to ISIS gunned down 49 people at a gay nightclub in Orlando.
- Homophobic past: "Shooters parents said he'd expressed outrage after seeing two men kiss in Miami."
- Source: <https://www.cnn.com/2016/06/12/us/orlando-nightclub-shooting/index.html>



Image source: [www.orlandosentinel.com](http://www.orlandosentinel.com)

### SYNAGOGUE MASSACRE, PITTSBURG

- 11 people were killed and six others were injured.
- A man shouting anti-Semitic slurs opened fire inside a Pittsburgh synagogue where three congregations worshiped.

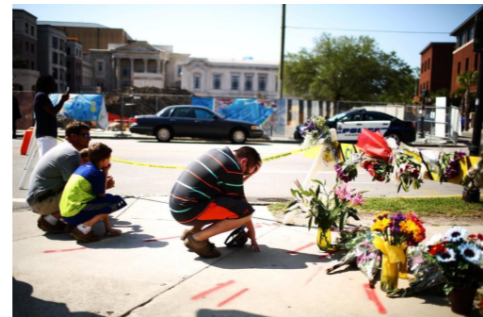


A vigil was held on Saturday after a shooting at the Tree of Life synagogue in the Squirrel Hill neighborhood of Pittsburgh left 11 dead. Source-

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/27/us/mass-shootings-church-synagogue-temple.html>

### HISTORIC BLACK CHURCH IN SOUTH CAROLINA

- In 2015, a white gunman killed nine black parishioners at a historic black church in downtown Charleston, S.C.
- Dylann S. Roof, a self-radicalized white supremacist, confessed to the killings. Mr. Roof kept firing, striking the victims at least 60 times.
- Source-  
<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/27/us/mass-shootings-church-synagogue-temple.html>



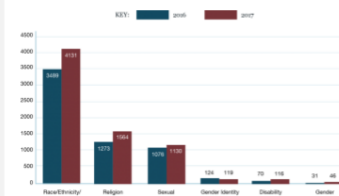
## SIKH TEMPLE IN OAK CREEK, WIS.

- Six people were killed at a Sikh temple in Wisconsin in 2012 and 3 were wounded.
- The gunman, Wade M. Page, an Army veteran with ties to white supremacist groups, killed himself.
- Source- <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/27/us/mass-shootings-church-synagogue-temple.html>



## PREVALENCE OF HATE AND BIAS

- Hate and Bias is prevalent in our society, the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program took reports submitted by 16,149 law enforcement agencies and of these agencies, 2040 reported 7175 hate crime incidents involving 8437 incidences in 2017 alone! A 17% increase from 2016. NOTE THESE ARE THE ONES THAT WERE REPORTED!! A LOT OF HATE CRIMES GO UNREPORTED.
- Source: <https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2017>





## BREAKDOWN OF HATE AND BIAS INCIDENTS

- Source: <https://ucr.fbi.gov/hate-crime/2017>

| Category                | Percent Breakdown |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Race/Ethnicity/Ancestry | 58.1%             |
| Religion                | 22%               |
| Sexual Orientation      | 15.9%             |
| Gender Identity         | 1.7%              |
| Disability              | 1.6%              |
| Gender                  | 0.6%              |

These examples can be used to help the audience understand that hate crimes and marginalization are fatal dangers that are faced by many communities. People who are marginalized have to not only deal with the pressures faced by all people during their day to day life but also have to worry about the dangers associated with hate and bias that is directed towards their identity. From when they leave their house and even when they go to social or religious spaces that are supposed to be safe they are constantly under stress and on guard.

When wrapping up your discussion about this topic, it is important to leave your audience with action items/suggestions on how they can help. If your audience was receptive they will most likely feel motivated to do something about the issue at hand. We usually end with the section “How can you end this cycle?”:

- Check your conscious and unconscious biases.
- Understand and accept the privilege that you possess. Possessing privilege is something that most people have in their life in some form or another, but being able to use that privilege in a productive manner to help create a more inclusive and equitable community is important.
- If you make a mistake, acknowledge it, apologize for it, and take steps to not make that mistake again.
- Educate yourself on the history and issues of marginalized communities and.



- Learn how to be an ally and hopefully a leader in moving towards an anti-racist community. We even have a concise [handout](#) put together to get you started. [How To Be An Ally To Marginalized Communities Handout](#).

You can access these handouts and more information on marginalization by visiting <https://difficult-discussions.com/free-resources>

---

**Follow us:**

**Facebook-** @difficultdiscussions

**Instagram-** @difficult\_discussions

**Linkedin-** [www.linkedin.com/company/difficult-discussions](http://www.linkedin.com/company/difficult-discussions)

