

Processing “The Boat Exercise”

After the entire community is divided into 4 smaller community groups:

[] Post all boats together, side by side, in front of group

[] Questions to consider in processing the exercise

Check-in:

How is everyone doing?

How did you feel doing the exercise? (have people share one word that describes how they felt during the exercise)

Was it difficult? What made it difficult?

Did your decision-making process work? Why or why not?

Did everyone listen to each other? (Crisis causes hearing loss...so does bias/discrimination)

Compare Boats

Before having each group to share their specific solution, ask everyone to look at all the boats and make observations of what they as a community have come up with...

What are the similarities? differences?

Was there anyone who everyone threw off the boat? Who was the person or people who all the boats threw off?

What was that about? What is it about this person/these people that caused everyone to leave them off? (have people name the bias/discrimination and think about where this discrimination comes from)

Sharing of Solutions

Have each group present their boat (which people were in or out), reasons for their decisions, and an overall solution if they arrived at one. [*where time is limited have each successive group reporting talk about what they did differently from the previous groups*]

Ask each group to talk about the process they went through before arriving at their final decision (e.g. kicking people off first before later deciding that everyone should be saved).

Open up floor for discussing the implications of their solutions.

Who came up with the solution that makes the most sense?

The Ideal Solution

What would end up being the best solution to solving the problem?

Encourage people to talk about solution that save everyone.

ONE GROUP'S SOLUTION:

- [] 330lb in the middle of boat – to stabilize boat
 - [] people with health issues inside the boat around the 330lb person – pregnant Black woman, epileptic, hiv+ person, person disfigured by fire
 - [] 4 people with strengths hanging onto the side of boat and paired off with 4 other people inside, along the edge of the boat, so they can rotate off and on with 4 people hanging on the side
 - [] if waters are too cold...they rotate every few mins...
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Three Ways We Discriminate (that keeps discrimination in place)

- [1] **The Label** – the stereotypes we have about a person with a label
- [2] **Assuming only One of a kind** (*how many hiv+ people were there?*)
- [3] **Genderize** – assuming the sex of the person based on prejudice/bias

Defining terms...e.g. illegal alien → illegal = criminal alien = someone from outer space

Identifying issues and assumptions made.....HIV+ = unprotected sex

How many HIV+ people were on the roof of the building?

Describe what the 330lb person looks like.

Pointing at the “person with life savings”, how much money does this person have?

The person on welfare for 15 years, who are they? Describe them....age – middle aged;...sex – female;...race – black or Latina; [largest number of welfare recipients are poor white women...not people of color!~] [Fact 1: \$109 every 2 weeks for a mom and child...\$68.50 for a single person – hasn't changed in 11 years...Fact 2: People on welfare who get a college degree go onto get \$24,000/year and never go back on welfare BUT because of WEP (work experience program) people on welfare can't go to school...they have to work...Fact 3: Only 2cents out of every tax dollar goes to welfare – welfare is only 1% of the federal budget]

In fact, large corporations are the ones who really benefit from welfare because they get tax breaks and loopholes so they never pay their share of taxes...they could instead give jobs to poor Americans and still

make a profit....they refuse to pay union works adequate pay and then close down factories and move to Third World countries where they can pay low wages for cheap labor....corporate welfare – when the US government give them tax breaks (money back in their pockets...money that should be paid in taxes to support social services....unfortunately most go to the military and defense budget which they gets paid back to corporations who build the military planes, ships, weapons...and make super profits.

Who is the illegal alien?

[] take index card and cover alien...talk about the word “*illegal*”...what does it really mean: against the law, criminal, etc....now cover up illegal...talk about the word “*alien*”....what does it mean: foreigner, stranger, from outer space!

[] what’s wrong with being “illegal”? – taking jobs away from Americans, invading and crossing out borders, making our country over populated....

[] what group do people immediately think of - Mexicans

[] discuss:

1) if these people are illegal, what about the bosses who hire them and pay the low wages? How come the bosses never face punishment or deportation?

2) what kind of jobs to they really have? Are they the jobs that Americans want? (bus boys, farm work, manual labor, maids, etc.)

3) whose borders are they really crossing? US? Whose border was it a long time ago...before the *Louisiana Purchase...1/3 of the western US was Mexico...we stole it from the mexican people...many Mexican people are actually also Native/Indigenous Peoples....*

Think about what the “illegal alien” and the “welfare recipient” have in common....underpaid, benefiting big business/corporations who not only exploit them here but also abandon US workers to get cheap labor and exploit people in other countries....Mexico, South Korea, Philipines, etc.

How many people’s sex do we actually know? *Only 2, the pregnant Black woman; drag queen*

What are the assumptions we made for most of the people?

We don’t know the number of each identity...how many Korean market owners were there? How many welfare recipients?

Who did you identify with on the roof?

- who did you want to save because your felt some connection to the person on the roof?
 - Who on the roof represented you or people you are close to or know?
 - Who did you personally want to save because they were important to you in your life?
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Who am I on the roof?

- LOOK AT ME...who do you think I am?
- Who am i?
- If you didn’t know me, what would you believe about me?

I am the _____

(talk personally about how assumptions and discrimination affected you and what damage it does to all of us as well as those in our families; e.g. *affect on my daughter not being able to talk about my being gay and living with AIDS.*)

[] Discrimination forces people to be silenced and keep secrets...

[] How many of you have been silenced or “keep secrets” because you don’t want to be judged or laughed at?

[] Secrets is unhealthy for people and creates unsafe communities...is that what we want for ourselves and our community?

By fighting against discrimination, we create safer communities and promote real equality and fairness.

The ideal solution : TO SAVE EVERYONE!!

Why do you think we ask you to do this exercise?

What is do you think is the point of this workshop?

What does this exercise have to do with youth organizing?

Move discussion into talking about biases, attitudes and stereotyping that occurred in the small and large groups...are used by the media...our government in international policies/practices.

Who are the illegal aliens now? Who are being incarcerated today?

Indigenous peoples →Illegal aliens→USA Patriot Act→War in Afghanistan→Israeli/Palestinian War→nuclear threats against people of color nations (China, Iran, Iraq, Somalia, etc).

What were terrorists called before this time period? Communists...labor organizers...??

The more adamant and passionate we are about fighting discrimination, the more likely we are to find a solution to saving everyone....when we are less committed, people will be sacrificed.