

Telling Your Racial Identity Story

Goal: To introduce racial identity to other participants in confidence and without interruption or judgment.

Directions: Reflect on your process of racial identity development, then select no more than three (3) of the reflection questions to focus on for your story.

Reflection Questions

- When did you first come to know about your race?
- Describe your racial socialization process?
- What did your parents tell you about your race?
- What did you learn in school about your race?
- What did you learn from the media (TV, newspapers, social media, radio) about your race?
- With whom were you taught to associate?
- What did you learn about your race's intellectual capacity?
- What did you learn about your race's pugnaciousness (tendency to fight)?
- What value was placed on same-race accomplishments and achievements?
- What value was placed on same-race failures and embarrassments?
- What markers tell you about your membership in your race?
- Biological? (i.e., physical features)
- Cultural? (i.e., ways of expression, thinking and knowing; manner of dress; choice of social activities; language, humor, time orientation)
- Historical? (how American customs, norms and policies affect you)
- Physical environment/space? (décor, artwork)
- Describe the racial make-up of your family? Social group? Neighborhood? Political circle?
- Have you ever had the experience of racial stress? (e.g., being the only one of your racial identity in a group, being subject to bias based on your racial identity, experiencing stereotype threat)

Based on these questions, select the areas you wish to focus on for your story:

1. First awareness of your race
2. Parents
3. School
4. Media
5. Association with Others
6. Stereotypes
7. Same Race Accomplishments
8. Same Race Failures
9. Biological markers
10. Cultural markers
11. Historical markers
12. Physical Environment
13. Family Racial Make-Up
14. Racial Stress

Craft your racial identity story and come prepared to share your story in five minutes. Also come prepared to listen to other participants' stories.

Listening to Others' Racial Stories: Relational Listening

In our culture we are socialized to listen for answers, solving problems, identifying falsehoods in other's stories or ideas that resonate with our experience or that do not resonate with what we know and believe to be true. Turning us and them into we requires relational listening. Here are some ways to practice Relational Listening:

- Listen for understanding and not rebuttal. Do not interrupt with comments or questions.
- Stay present to what you are hearing by giving your full attention. Making eye contact with the speaker helps to staying engaged.
- Name the emotions you are experiencing without comparing yourself or others to what you are hearing.
- Reframe from diagnosing, judging, or interpreting motives about what is being said.
- Demonstrate racial stamina with an invitation to hear more, explore more, learn more.