

Privileged Group Dynamics: Common Patterns of Whites

Adapted from the tool by: Kathy Obear, (413) 537- 8012, kathy@drkathyobear.com

www.drkathyobear.com

Directions:

- Read through and reflect upon the statements listed.
- Check the boxes (X) in the left column for those that apply to you.
- The columns include thinking “in my lifetime” and “during my time at USD”.
- You will not be asked to show your worksheet to others.

In my
lifetime...

During
my time
at USD...

Some/Many Whites Tend to (consciously and unconsciously):

- | | | |
|-------|-------|---|
| _____ | _____ | 1. believe they have “earned” what they have, rather than acknowledge the extensive white privilege and unearned advantages they receive; believe that if people of color just worked harder... |
| _____ | _____ | 2. not notice the daily indignities that people of color experience; deny them and rationalize them away with PLEs (perfectly logical explanations) |
| _____ | _____ | 3. work to maintain the status quo and protect the advantages and privileges they receive |
| _____ | _____ | 4. believe that white cultural norms, practices and values are superior and better |
| _____ | _____ | 5. internalize the negative stereotypes about people of color and believe that whites are smarter and superior to people of color |
| _____ | _____ | 6. want people of color to conform and assimilate to white cultural norms and practices |
| _____ | _____ | 7. accept and feel safer around people of color who have assimilated and are “closer to white” |
| _____ | _____ | 8. blame people of color for the barriers and challenges they experience; believe that if they “worked harder” they could “pull themselves up by their bootstraps” |
| _____ | _____ | 9. believe that people of color are not competent and are only hired/promoted to fill quotas |
| _____ | _____ | 10. interrupt and talk over people of color |
| _____ | _____ | 11. resent taking direction from a person of color |
| _____ | _____ | 12. dismiss and minimize frustrations of people of color and categorize the person raising issues as militant, angry, having an “attitude,” working their agenda, not a team player... |
| _____ | _____ | 13. focus on their “good intent” as whites, rather than on the negative impact of their behavior |

_____ 31. accuse people of color of "playing the race card" whenever they challenge racist policies and practices; instead of exploring the probability of negative differential impact based on race, or that racist attitudes and beliefs are operating

_____ 32. if confronted by a person of color, shut down and focus on what to avoid saying or doing in the future, rather than engaging and learning from the interaction

_____ 33. look to people of color for direction, education, coaching on how to act & what not to do

_____ 34. compete with other whites to be "the good white:" the best ally, the one people of color let into their circle, etc.

_____ 35. if a white person makes a racist comment or action, aggressively confront them and pile on the feedback to distance from them and prove who is a better ally

_____ 36. seek approval, validation, and recognition from people of color

_____ 37. if confronted by a person of color, view it as an "attack" and focus on and critique HOW they engaged me, not my original comments or behaviors

_____ 38. disengage if feel any anxiety or discomfort

_____ 39. avoid confronting other whites on their racist attitudes and behaviors

_____ 40. when trying to help people of color, feel angry if they don't enthusiastically appreciate the help

_____ 41. believe there is one "right" way, meaning "my way" or the "white way"

_____ 42. track patterns of differential treatment of people of color and intervene to stop inappropriate actions and educate others

_____ 43. continually learn more about the experiences of people of color and racism

_____ 44. recognize when people of color might be reacting out of cumulative impact, and offer space to talk about issues and their experiences

_____ 45. analyze policies and practices to assess any differential impact on people of color and intervene to create change

_____ 46. constantly track daily organizational activities to ensure fairness, respect, and inclusion for all people with respect to group dynamics, communication, task assignments, professional development opportunities, decision-making, conflict management, mentoring, networking, etc.