

The Race

Benefits and Facilitation Options

Benefits: The purpose of this exercise is to increase participant's awareness of inequality in their immediate community. This exercise arouses awareness to the meaning to an advantaged lifestyle.

Space Needed: Large area. Preferably outside.

Ideal Group Size: At least 10 participants are necessary for this exercise to be effective.

Materials: Directions, large area, a few dollar bills

Key Instructions

1. Mark a start line and a finish line approximately 50 yards apart. Ask participants to stand on the start line side-by-side and hold hands with one another.
2. The facilitator, who will stand in front of the participants, reads the instructions/ statements out loud.
3. The facilitator should tell the participants to pay attention to who is next to them and who is separated from them.
4. If a participant is unsure about which group they belong to, they shall decide themselves where they should go.

The Race- Script

1. If you feel that your primary ethnic identity is "American" move one pace forward.
2. If you are male, move two paces forward.
3. If you are heterosexual move two paces forward.
4. If you are sometimes called names or ridiculed because of your race, ethnicity or class background move two paces backward.
5. If you are unable to discuss your same sex partner at work or in class because you fear for your job or your safety move one pace backward.

-- Please take a look around you and notice where people are standing in relation to you.

6. If you have ever had to use a back or side entrance to a building, or been banned from an event because the main entrance was physically inaccessible to you move one pace backward.
 7. If your parents do or did employ extra help such as servants, maids, gardeners, or nannies move two paces forward.
 8. If you are or were ever embarrassed or ashamed of your clothes, your house, or your family car move one pace backwards.
 9. If you have an immediate family member who is a doctor, lawyer, or other professional move one pace forward.
 10. If prostitution, drugs, or other illegal activities are prevalent where you live move two paces backward.
- Please take a look around you and notice where people are standing in relation to you.
11. If any woman in your family, including yourself if you are female, were ever physically or sexually assaulted move one pace backward.
 12. If you studied the history and culture of your ethnic ancestors in school move one pace forward.
 13. If you started school speaking a language other than English move two paces backward.
 14. If you are afraid to be a big sister/ big brother, mentor, scout leader or coach because of your sexual orientation move one pace backward.
 15. If you have ever refrained from participating in a class project or discussion because the environment did not support your learning style move one pace backward.
- Please take a look around you and notice where people are standing in relation to you.
16. If you ever skipped a meal or went away from a meal hungry because there wasn't enough money to buy food move one pace backward.
 17. If you were taken to art galleries, museums or plays by your parents move one pace forward.
 18. If you ever attended a private school move two paces forward.

19. If you have ever attended a summer camp move one pace forward.
20. If you received less encouragement in academics or sports from your family or from teachers because of your gender move two paces backward.
- Please take a look around you and notice where people are standing in relation to you.
21. If your parents have told you that you are beautiful, smart, and capable of achieving your dreams move two paces forward.
22. If you were ever discouraged or prevented from pursuing your goals or tracked into a lower level because of your race or ethnicity move two paces backward.
23. If your parents are encouraging you to go to college move two paces forward.
24. If you grew up in a single parent household move one pace backward.
25. If you have traveled to another country move one pace forward.
- Please take a look around you and notice where people are standing in relation to you.
26. If you have a parent that did not complete high school move one pace backward.
27. If you can express affection for your partner physically or verbally while in public without fear of any violence from others as a result move one pace forward.
28. If you commonly see people of your race, ethnicity, sex, or ability portrayed negatively or representing degrading roles in the media move one pace backward.
29. If you have ever gotten a job or promotion through the help of a friend or family member move one pace forward.
30. If you did not have regular access to a physician as a child move one pace backward.
31. If you had to interpret at a medical exam for a mother, father, or another family member move one pace backward.
- Please take a look around you and notice where people are standing in relation to you.

32. If you generally think of the police as people that you can call on for help move one pace forward.

33. If you have ever been stopped by the police because of your race, ethnicity or class move one pace backward.

34. If you or a close family member has ever been a victim of violence because of your race or ethnicity move one pace backward.

35. If you had a grocery store in you neighborhood that sold fresh fruit and vegetables move one pace forward.

36. If you or your parents are immigrants move two paces backward.

-- Please take a look around you and notice where people are standing in relation to you.

37. If you have never entered a public place and been avoided because of your physical ability move one pace forward.

38. If your family had more than fifty books in the house when you were growing up move one pace forward.

39. If one of your parents was ever laid off, unemployed, or underemployed not by choice move one pace backward.

40. If you had regular dental care as a child move two paces forward.

-- Please take a look around you and notice where people are standing in relation to you.

After the statements have been read, the participants will be various distances from the finish line. At this point the facilitator will explain there is a cash prize for the first person to reach the finish line. Starting from where they stand, the participants will race to the finish line (or dollar bill) when the facilitator shouts go.

Large-group debrief questions

1. What did it feel like to be further from the finish line? What did it feel like to be closer?
2. What surprised you about the advantages you had, or others had?
3. When did you stop holding hands?

4. Given where you ended up after the statements were read, how did that effect how hard you ran towards the finish line?
5. How does this exercise relate to real life?
6. Do the people who got the dollar bill, the wealthier classes in society, have an obligation to share the money they have because they started with an unfair advantage? Or how much should they share?