

Definitions Activity

In order to facilitate the dialogue process, we need to think carefully about how we frame the conversation about race. We begin with five basic definitions, spelled out on the “5 Definitions” Participant Worksheet D. The suggested procedure for introducing them entails 30-45 minutes:

- First, assure that participants are seated in small groups, preferably 4 – 6 in size.
- Give participants a sheet with the five definitions on them: prejudice, bigotry, discrimination, stereotyping, and scapegoating. Invite participants to say the definitions out loud and then discuss in the small groups any differences between the printed definitions and the ways they have previously used these words.
- Place a card or sheet with one of the five words on each table.
If there are fewer than five table groups, assign as many of the words as there are tables.
If there are six or more tables, give the same word to more than one table.
- The task for each table is to give two examples of their word: one from the perspective of a white person, and one from the perspective of a person of color. It is important that they not attempt to redefine the words, just give examples that they have heard or used. Have each small table share their word and sentences with the whole group.