

There is no question the Program on Intergroup Relations, Conflict, and Community, and its intergroup dialogue efforts, have been successful. Its success has largely been due to the high level of expertise and commitment evidenced by these peer facilitators. The program to train such facilitators often has permitted us as instructors to have access to the very "best and brightest" members of our academic and civic community. Moreover, we have been privileged to encounter and work with them at deep and meaningful levels of their own and our own learning about intergroup matters. In this sense it has called forth our own best efforts and afforded us some of our most exciting teaching-learning moments.

NOTE

1. This instrument was originally created by Mark Chesler, from a conceptual model developed by Bailey Jackson, and modified in a series of variations by Ximena Zúñiga, Todd Sevig, Ratnesh Nagda, Monita Thompson, and Mark Chesler.

REFERENCES

- Jackson, B. N.d. "PASK: Framework for Multicultural Competency." New Perspectives, Amherst, Mass. Mimeograph.
- Luft, J. 1970. *Group Processes: An Introduction to Group Dynamics*. 2d ed. Palo Alto, Calif.: National Press.
- McIntosh, P. 1989. "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack." *Peace and Freedom*, July–August, 10–12.
- Pfeiffer, J., and J. Jones. 1975. "Co-Facilitating." In *The 1975 Annual Handbook for Group Facilitation*, ed. J. Pfeiffer and J. Jones. San Diego: University Associates.
- Shirts, G. N.d. "Starpower: A Simulation Game." Mimeograph.
- Weber, R. 1982. "The Group: A Cycle from Birth to Death." In *Reading Book for Human Relations Training*, ed. L. Porter and B. Mohr. 7th ed. Washington, D.C.: NTL Institute.

Chapter 16

Embracing the Paradox: Dialogue That Incorporates Both Individual and Group Identities

Diana Kardia and Todd Sevig

Are we individuals or are we members of social/identity groups? This question inevitably arises during the course of an intergroup dialogue as participants work to understand themselves, other participants, and the issues raised by the dialogue itself. Grappling with this question, and the individual and group conflicts it can generate, is one of the defining dynamics of an intergroup dialogue. During the course of the dialogue, this conflict can feel as if it will make or break the group, catalyze or destroy the possibility for change. As facilitators, we approach such conflict cautiously, reading the group, continually updating our sense of how (or whether) we'll make it through, how far we can push, and what the propensities for backlash might be. In this role, we are ever in need of strategies and perspectives that help us to avoid becoming entrenched in the conflict ourselves.

This chapter reflects strategies and perspectives we, the authors, have learned while facilitating dialogues and training undergraduate and graduate students to become dialogue facilitators. The scenarios and quotations presented here represent composites of our experience and the experiences of students.

Dialogue Interlude

The group has been quiet until now as we've moved through some basic introductions and definitions. There's at least an illusion of willingness to participate—after all, they all signed up for this dialogue voluntarily. But the quiet is revealed as being more akin to compliance when Julia raises her hand after we offer a set of definitions related to social group memberships. By the set of her jaw, it's clear that the question or comment she is about to contribute has lived with her awhile, nurtured by a general frustration with the terms of the conversation as she has known it. The feel of the room is that of a Western saloon town, this moment a showdown. The image is helpful primarily as a warning:

reminding us that we are not sheriffs here, nor is she an outlaw. Our goal is not to be the first gun out of the holster. We let her shoot, demonstrating that her words need not be fatal to our endeavor and that no defenses are needed.

Am I an individual or am I a member of some social group? Intergroup dialogues work toward moving beyond this question into an understanding of how we as individuals affect and are affected by our group affiliations. However, it is most often in a polarized form that concerns about identity, membership, and connection are first brought into the dialogue by participants:

Being white isn't nearly as important as my personality.

My ethnic identity matters much more than my gender.

I'm tired of being blamed for racism. My family never owned slaves.

I'm not homophobic—my best friend is a lesbian.

Why can't we all just be friends?

These statements reflect the terms of the conversation in the world outside of an intergroup dialogue, where issues of identity and community are inevitably framed in dichotomies and battled with fervor across most of our social contexts. The job of an intergroup dialogue facilitator is to somehow bring these questions and concerns into the room and not allow ourselves or the group to be derailed by them—to honor this conflict for the reality it represents while also transforming the conflict into paradox.

Dialogue Interlude

When we don't rush into the void following Julia's words, Kyle steps in instead. He, like Julia, speaks from a place created by too many past frustrations. He hears her words as a siren, signaling that this conversation is likely to be just another dead end, another opportunity to be discounted and misrepresented. He is ready to pounce. Whether he will casually invalidate Julia's words, make an impassioned case for her to "wake up" to reality as he has experienced it, or angrily denounce her is not yet clear. The scene flashes to that of a courtroom, the prosecution poised to present closing arguments as if all evidence is in and the verdict is imminent. Again, this is a warning: do not accept the terms of the discussion as they currently stand. We are not judges here, and our goal is not to establish a single interpretation of truth—no single truth is possible in this discussion. But the burden of proof remains with us: to facilitate this dialogue so that multiple and conflicting truths can co-exist and be heard. In this way, we can begin to show that this conflict is why we are here, that in Julia and Kyle's exchange the dialogue has only just begun.

This chapter speaks to the strategies and skills that make it possible for a group to directly address and transform the conflict between individual and social identities into a paradox that is able to promote individual and group development. These strategies all incorporate one fundamental assumption about intergroup dialogue: any response or argument introduced into the dialogue needs and deserves attention. It is only by fully incorporating all aspects of the individual and group struggle that the paradox can be revealed. Otherwise, a polarized dichotomy necessarily remains in place as participants cling to a perspective that they feel deeply invested in having heard.

We start with a brief overview of the literature on identity development to provide a background for understanding the dynamics that emerge during the course of an intergroup dialogue. This is followed by an analysis of the specific ways in which participants revert to an over-individualized approach to dialogue. The subsequent section articulates a theoretical foundation for incorporating both individual and group identities into an intergroup dialogue. Finally, we share a set of basic guidelines and related strategies for responding to the individual and group dynamics associated with the individual/group identity conflict.

Identity Development as a Context for Intergroup Dialogues

Identity development, based on membership in certain racial, gender, or sexual orientation groups, can be an important variable in understanding intergroup dialogue process and content. Single group identity development models focus exclusively on one social identity group, and such models have been proposed for many diverse groups: Blacks or African Americans (Akbar 1989; Banks 1984; Cross 1971; Jackson 1975; Thomas 1971; Vontress 1971), Asian-Americans (Sue and Sue 1990), Latinos/Chicanos (Berry 1980; Keefe and Padilla 1987), White or European Americans (Carney and Kahn 1984; Hardiman 1982; Helms 1984, 1990; Ponterotto 1988; Terry 1977), women (Avery 1977; Downing and Roush 1985), and gay men and lesbians (Cass 1979; McCarn and Fassinger 1996). These models help elucidate the differential oppressive experiences of groups, different histories, different cultural traditions, and different cultural styles of these groups (Phinney 1992). Although unique terminology is used in the various models, the stages are noticeably similar (e.g., terms used to describe an "unawareness" first stage vary, yet all describe basically the same concept).

The "inclusive" models have incorporated these similarities across the identity development of minorities and oppressed people. The Minority Identity Development model (MID) of Atkinson, Morten, and Sue (1983), for instance, is applicable for different groups based on race, gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. Other examples of inclusive models include Banks 1984, with his work on racial/ethnic identity development among all oppressed racial groups, Sue and Sue 1990 in regard to cultural identity development for people of color, and Hardiman and Jackson 1992 in their description of racial identity development for Black and White people. These models have described a similar process across groups, although all have noted that the cultural context of the developmental processes obviously may differ. Finally, Myers et al. (1991) described a model applicable to all people in their Optimal Theory Applied to Identity Development (OTAIID) model. The main tenets of this model include incorporating multiple worldviews, integrating spirituality into identity development, and focusing on allowing people to self-define (vs. being categorized only by others). The model has received support in the literature and there is now an instrument to help people assess where they are in their development according to this model (Sevig, Highlen, and Adams 2000).

The above literature helps us understand the processes and conflicts that people experience either within themselves or with other people around issues of identity. While terminology and emphasis vary, all these models describe the following process in some fashion. In an early stage, a person is unaware of her or his own identity and/or the impact of this identity on who she or he is as "a person." At some point, the person moves into a new phase in which an identity or identities start becoming salient. The person then proceeds through a widening and deepening spiral of new experiences, new insights, and new encounters with others, all of which contribute to making this new identity part of who the person is. Most models then include a phase in which people are very comfortable with the identity; can see connections with other identities and other oppressions, and so forth. While most of the above references are for stage or phase models, it should be noted some more recent work emphasizes styles, or "state-dependent" thoughts, feelings, or behaviors, as opposed to a more static stage or phase framework.

This literature base can be very useful for developing an understanding of intergroup dialogue content and process, especially with respect to the conflict between individual and group identities: the capacity of a dialogue participant to see beyond his or her individual identity is, in part, determined by where the person is in an individual identity development

process. For example, a person who has not developed an extensive awareness of the various meanings and associations with an aspect of their identity will need to integrate a substantial amount of information before being able to effectively work with the paradox of identity. Such individuals might need more time, more reading, and more discussion with participants and facilitators than someone who has successfully proceeded through this work. In another example, someone newly integrating the reality of oppression related to the person's own group might have less capacity for a tolerant or compassionate response to someone else who is strongly emphasizing individual experience. We will refer more to ways in which this literature base can help later in this chapter.

We now focus on understanding why participants in an intergroup dialogue make the variety of claims and arguments that tend to be made during these discussions, and the responses we have found most useful for working through them.

Understanding the Conflict: The Tendency toward Individualism; or, "Why I Don't Want to Be Associated with 'My' Group"

The following set of responses represents a collection of typical statements made in intergroup dialogues as participants struggle with the role of social group identities in their lives. While these statements are separated into categories for the sake of discussion, these responses are actually overlapping and interconnected. It's important to note that the factors behind any participant's response are often complex and are typically intertwined with group and individual identity factors. The following explanations are intended to serve only as a reminder of the scope of possible underlying factors.

I've Never Been Oppressed/Been the Oppressor

I've never experienced sexism—it's never been a problem for me. I'm tired of being blamed for racism. My family never owned slaves.

Recognizing oppression is painful. One of the strongest forces behind the assertion of individual realities is a defense against this pain—a defense that may be strongly interwoven with a participant's psychological structure. Dissociating from pain and an emphasis on positive life experiences may serve as a survival mechanism for individuals who either don't have

or believe they don't have the resources to cope with pain directly. This is particularly true when facing destructive forces that permeate reality and cannot be easily changed. Refusing to acknowledge pain is characteristic of someone who has not done much thinking about what her or his identity means to them. Also, distancing from the pain of oppression may be a learned response. Key image makers, including parents, teachers, and the media, often buffer us from painful realities, even those realities associated with our specific individual experience. Without the skills to acknowledge and move through pain, denying or minimizing painful experiences is a common strategy utilized by many dialogue participants.

I've Never Been Oppressed/Been the Oppressor (Revisited)

I just demand respect, and then people don't mess with me.

I'm not homophobic—my best friend is a lesbian.

A resistance toward identifying oneself as an oppressor or as oppressed can also arise out of a resistance to or lack of experience with structural analysis. The emphasis in popular U.S. culture on "pulling oneself up by one's bootstraps" implies that individual experience is the strongest force in our lived reality; that we need not attend to what is going on around us as long as we ourselves are taking care of business. Again, as above, this way of experiencing the world can reflect a lack of thinking about the impact of group identity development, or a comfort with the status quo. Further, this emphasis on individualism is typically reinforced in the media and educational settings. Without an acknowledgement of the constraints and influences exerted by the institutions and systems in which we live, there is an automatic tendency to assume individual autonomy and to globalize individual experience.

I'm a Human and That's All That Matters

Being white isn't nearly as important as my personality.

I'm the same person I was before you found out that I'm gay.

Stereotypes can have a devastating affect on our lived experience. We know from elementary and high school that being associated with negatively stereotyped characteristics can lead to ostracism. We know from our own tendency to stereotype others that this process involves devaluing some characteristics while emphasizing others. Being associated with a group and related stereotypes also represents a lack of control over our lives. We resist being defined by others out of a fear that we are then

unable to define ourselves—if you see me first as white or gay, then I will never be able to show you who I really am. Furthermore, once constrained by categories, there is a sense that we cannot change our life circumstances. If being white is most important, and being white has negative associations, and I cannot change being white, then my back is against the wall. Without a sense that a locus of control can be found even within a fixed identity, the most effective response can be to distance oneself from that identity.

I'm Too Different to Be One of Them

My ethnic identity matters much more than my gender.

I'm not white, I'm Jewish.

Oppression is experienced differently depending on the intersection of multiple factors, and our experiences can be many painful worlds apart from each other. This is especially true when we are asked to identify with a privileged identity that is offset by a less privileged aspect of our identity. During the identity development process, some aspects of our identity naturally take priority over others, while at other times, we readily identify with more than one identity at a time (e.g., a lower-class White male; an African American middle-class straight woman; for a cogent discussion on multiple identities, see Reynolds and Pope 1991). One of the strengths of the OTAID model mentioned above is that it allows for the self-definition process to naturally occur (including multiple identities). This self-defining becomes integral to an intergroup dialogue in order for participants to see the heterogeneity within groups while also helping people grapple and, at times, come to terms with their own identity/ies.

Shared identities are often experienced quite differently due to personal opportunities, education, and other differences in individual experience—so much so that the differences seem to wipe out any similarities within a group. The creation of intergroup dialogues rests on the assumption that there is a scarcity of opportunities for these different realities to be expressed. It is understandable that participants coming to an intergroup dialogue will focus first on the need to express these differences, and these differences are crucial to a full understanding of the complexity and meanings of social groups.

An emphasis on the differences within a shared identity can also be a defense against the possibility of pain—we may not want to identify with members of our group when such an association may set us up for further oppression related to our other, less privileged, identities. Without a rea-

son to trust members of our own group, it is often safer to emphasize the differences between us.

If We Associate with Our Groups, Things Will Get Worse Instead of Better

Why can't we all just be friends?

I don't need to spend time with my own group—what really matters is us all talking together.

A fundamental motivation for the creation of intergroup dialogues is the understanding that few of us have learned the skills or frameworks for attending to our differences and the truths of our experience in a manner that facilitates connection across social identities. In fact, we often get stuck in our development process or cycle through issues multiple times in part because we need multiple opportunities to get exposure to an issue, to start to think it through, to talk about it with others, to incorporate the issue into our heart, and so forth. Without these skills, many of us have learned that drawing direct attention to our differences can be uncomfortable and even destructive. Furthermore, many of us lack the skills for working through conflict in an effective manner—and conflict inevitably arises as we work together to create a shared understanding and new viewing points on each other. It is not surprising, therefore, that one response to intergroup work is the concern that it will foster divisions among us. This concern is particularly strong in contexts where a cohesive group identity is important outside the dialogue (e.g., when facilitating a dialogue among people who work together on a daily basis).

Transforming Conflict into Paradox: The Importance of Both Individual and Group Identities

When entering a classroom, it is typical to inform students of the basic learning goals, to indicate what students will know and be able to do when successfully completing a course. A similar approach applies to an intergroup dialogue. When approaching the conflict between individual and group identity, it is useful to start with an overview of why multiple experiences of identity are important to the basic goals of intergroup dialogue. This overview can clarify the destination to which we are traveling, reminding the group that, while we may stop along the way to more fully understand single aspects of identity, the intended goal is to keep moving

until multiple experiences and facets of identity are integrated into the dialogue. From a facilitator perspective, the benefits associated with individual and group identity are multiple. It is important to include, address, and validate individual identities because

The individual is the primary locus for change—this is the place where social change agents are created. Journeying through the identity development process helps increase individual awareness and move us to a place of deeper and wider awareness of self, others, and the world around us. This journey can lead to a desire to participate in social change efforts that reflect the ongoing internal change being experienced.

The daily lives of individuals are the places where theory is understood and translated into practice. Participants need access to their individual experiences to fully test and understand the concepts discussed.

Discussion of identity groups often leads to hierarchical assumptions about the relative importance of various identities. It is only at the level of the individual where we can fully understand the complexity and the intersections of social group memberships. We may choose to focus on one group identity more than another in any discussion, but at any moment in time I am simultaneously all my identities—and being a White lesbian woman, for example, is similar to and different than being a White heterosexual man.

Attention to differences between groups can often be reductionistic, erasing or minimizing the differences within groups. The expression of individual voices moves the discussion beyond simplistic stereotypes and categorizations associated with any single social group.

Individual experience is the source of people's ability to engage in perspective taking and empathy that make an important contribution to intergroup dialogue. It is only through our multifaceted experience as individuals that we can begin to imagine what the experiences of others might be like.

For dominant group members who are grappling with the realities of oppression perpetrated by their group, individual identity may be the only obvious source of power, pride, or hope.

Focusing only on social group memberships circumscribes the discussion of community to the forms in which community historically has existed and been defined—which, in large part, has meant segregated communities, especially along racial/ethnic and class lines. Focusing on individual identity, choice, and agency is the means through which new visions of community and an integration of identities within such communities might be realized.

The group dynamics associated with an intergroup dialogue are strongly influenced by the particular life experiences and the identity developmental processes of individual participants. Providing opportunities for participants to represent themselves as individuals promotes self-reflection and can further the identity development process. It also provides information to facilitators about how to effectively design and facilitate the dialogue process so that it is responsive to the specific needs of those in the room.

It is important to include, address, and validate group identities because

Many social institutions were created to respond differently to specific social groups—a factor that has a significant impact on individual lives. By learning about the experiences associated with their own group, participants can often gain a better understanding of their own individual experience. By learning about the experiences associated with other groups, participants gain a framework for interpreting the perspectives and actions of individuals from these groups.

The history and resources associated with specific social groups are often radically different. In many instances we have been socialized to be unaware of these differences or to minimize them. Furthermore, the nature of individual experience, combined with social norms, myths, and the control of information, often obscures awareness of patterns occurring at group levels. This can perpetuate unrealistic expectations and inappropriate strategies and policies for social change. (The many ways in which affirmative action policies are represented and misunderstood are examples of this.) Providing information about social patterns and institutional influences makes it possible for individuals to make more informed decisions about how they live their lives and perceive and interact with others.

Membership in a social group is one of the places in which individuals get the support to take risks and make changes. In an intergroup dialogue, truth can be spoken across historic chasms of difference in large part because of the support provided by other members of one's own group in the room. Furthermore, in dialogues and in the larger world we often need the reinforcement provided by members of our own group to further the change process that can be initiated by an individual.

When intergroup dialogues occur in an academic context, the nonpersonalized aspects of the dialogue create much of the foundation for offering these dialogues for academic credit, including information on identity development theory and literature.

While a conscious awareness of these goals can benefit facilitators, it can also be useful to generate lists of this type with dialogue participants. Such a discussion might start with individual reflection on a sentence completion exercise: "Because I am an individual, I can contribute to this dialogue by . . ." and "Because I am a member of [social group], I can contribute to this dialogue by . . ." Based on this reflection, participants can work together to generate lists of benefits. Facilitators may elaborate on these lists based on some of the points articulated below, depending on the sophistication of the group.

Strategies for Embracing the Paradox

Understanding the tendency toward individualism and articulating the interlocking goals associated with individual and group identities provides a foundation for determining dialogue strategies. This section offers guidelines for the development of such strategies and describes a set of exercises that demonstrate these guidelines. These guidelines can also provide a framework for the ongoing development of new exercises and dialogue structures.

Intergroup dialogues are designed to provide new viewing points on previously entrenched ideas. The conflicts and concerns that participants bring to an intergroup dialogue are typically ones that have existed for years. Due to their longevity, these perspectives are quite practiced, often include distortions of information, and can seem overly polarized.

Ingrained dichotomies (such as the belief that we are either individuals or we are social group members) can be opened up through analogy or other strategies that cast the conflict in a new light.

Strategy: Normalizing the Individual/Group Split

Through writing or discussion, ask students to reflect on how they are both an individual in their family and how their family membership has relevance to their interactions both in and outside of their family. (This can also be applied to other group memberships—Girl Scouts, fraternities, etc.)

Behind every contribution to the dialogue, there is important information about participants and the current needs and potential of the group. Listen for this information and, when it is not immediately evident, provide additional opportunity for this information to become clear.

Strategy: Minute Papers

Many important concerns and perspectives will not be voiced during the course of the dialogue due to time, group dynamics, safety issues, and other factors. A basic classroom assessment technique called the "Minute Paper" (Angelo and Cross 1993) can provide an opportunity to gain insight into group and individual concerns that may not be readily apparent. At the end of a dialogue session, ask participants to respond in writing to a single question such as, "What is your biggest concern about this dialogue at this moment?" or "What is one important thing about your individual experience or perspective that is not currently being addressed in this dialogue?" These papers can be collected and read by the facilitators. The concerns communicated by participants can then be incorporated into subsequent planning or may be reported back to the group (either as a summary or in a manner that represents each contribution specifically).

Participants need to maintain a sense of control over their own actions and identity. The structure and facilitation of the dialogue need to promote willing participation, including a willingness to be uncomfortable, try new things, hear hard truths, and even be defined by others at some points during the course of the dialogue. This occurs by creating structures that promote safety, clearly expressing the intended goals of an exercise, being responsive to concerns as they arise, and providing a sufficient amount of integration and reflection time after each exercise and throughout the dialogue as a whole. In this process, it is useful to emphasize and define the difference between safety and comfort to indicate to students that having a sense of control is not the same as liking what is going on at all times in the dialogue.

It is also important to note that having a sense of individual control is not the same as controlling the dialogue itself. While it is sometimes appropriate to incorporate participants' ideas about modifying dialogue exercises or structure, an individual's effort to change the dynamics at the group level is often indicative of her or his need to reclaim an inner sense of control. Providing individuals with opportunities to express concerns and then regain a sense of agency (e.g., modifying their own participation or working through the basic assumptions related to an exercise using their own terminology) can often effectively address initial resistance to participation.

Strategy: Going to the Second Moment

Early in the course of a dialogue it is important to provide a general understanding of what it means to be in dialogue. "Going to the second moment" is a phrase useful for describing one of the basic dynamics involved in dialogue. In the course of a group interaction, there are a variety of moments when conflict breaks through to the surface. The first moment that conflict appears can often be volatile, filled with the classic fight or flight mechanisms, and can include feelings and actions that we feel we cannot get beyond (either as participants or as facilitators). During these "first moments" we may feel that it is impossible to be understood and that we have no interest in staying in the conversation any longer. These feelings may be very familiar from our interactions across social group identities outside of the dialogue structure. "Going to the second moment" (and third and fourth) is what dialogues are all about. Through facilitation, group exercises, and the intention and commitment of participants, intergroup dialogues help make it possible to create the follow-through with each other even during first moments that may seem insurmountable.

"Going to the second moment" can be specifically applied to the conflict between individual and social group identities. Any single moment may require that we focus more on one aspect of our identity than another. The principle of the "second moment" helps remind us of the continuity of time and the fact that no single moment need stand alone: I can represent an aspect of my experience that I share in common with others in my group in one moment and, in the next moment, make a contribution that speaks fully to the uniqueness of my individual experience. Sharing this principle with dialogue participants is a way to encourage us all to remember that we do not have to fear the single moment—the dialogue process is designed to help us all realize that ourselves and "the other" are more than what we seem at any one point in time.

Participants may enter a dialogue with a variety of reasons to avoid owning specific aspects of their identity, including pain, guilt, lack of information, fear, and the complexities associated with multiple group identities. The dialogue structure must take this into account while also facilitating a

process in which these identities might be better understood and even claimed.

Strategy: The "Fishbowl" Exercise

The "Fishbowl" exercise is an extremely powerful and versatile tool that simultaneously demonstrates group differences, group similarities, and the differences within groups. Its structure promotes crucial listening skills and encourages a discovery approach to the dialogue. (See the description in Schoem, Zúñiga, and Nagda 1993, 326.)

Both the tone and the structure of the dialogue need to normalize conflict and pain, making room for these to be the beginning of a connection between us rather than an end. This can be accomplished by welcoming conflict and discussing its benefits with participants. It can also be useful to discuss the various responses individuals have to conflict and pain and the ways in which each of these responses can be appropriate in a specific context. This discussion demonstrates that responding to conflict is a skill, not a hardwired reaction, and that it can be useful to develop multiple kinds of responses in order to broaden one's choices in a conflict situation.

Strategy: "Multiple Roles and Multiple Choice" Exercise

This exercise helps participants to reflect on their own roles and styles while placing themselves in a larger context of roles, styles, and choices. (See the full description in Zúñiga and Myers 1993, 316.)

Trust between participants is a necessary, difficult, yet simple component of an intergroup dialogue. Participants will enter with many reasons not to trust each other—those imagined and those that are very real. Yet trust can enter surprisingly easily (even while it still remains fragile) as participants discover elements of their common humanity. The structure of the dialogue must direct participants toward this discovery. In doing so, it is helpful to think of trust as fluid and as welcome in any quantity.

Strategy: The "Four Corners of Oppression" Exercise

This exercise is designed to help participants realize that everyone participates in oppression in one form or another and that everyone is also affected by oppression.¹ It is effective at breaking through feelings of discomfort and shame associated with our own actions and for realizing the complexity and integrity of other participants. This exercise introduces pain and conflict into the discussion without polarization on the issues, training participants to listen

well to the experiences of others and to combine stories across differences to discover common themes. It is ideally suited to a group of sixteen to twenty participants but can be adapted for larger groups.

Allow seventy-five minutes for the "Four Corners" exercise. To set up the exercise, put the following four questions on newsprint that will then be tacked in the four corners of the room (one question per corner):

- Describe a time when oppressive comments or actions were directed toward you (based on any aspect of your identity).
- Describe a time when you were the perpetrator of an oppressive act or comments.
- Describe a time when you witnessed an act of oppression and did nothing about it.
- Describe a time when you witnessed an act of oppression and intervened.

As a facilitator, prepare your own answers to each of these questions to be shared as you introduce the exercise. Choose answers that demonstrate that this exercise incorporates a range of identities. Since this exercise asks participants to be vulnerable with each other, also be aware of how your own examples model risk taking.

1. Arrange participants into groups of four or five with one group situated in each corner of the room (for larger groups, assign two small groups to a corner rather than increasing the size of the small group). Each group will rotate to all four corners but will start by sharing their answers to the question associated with their corner.
2. After introducing the exercise and sharing your own examples, each group spends ten minutes per corner with the facilitator acting as the overall timekeeper. Groups should also be instructed to monitor time internally so that all participants are able to respond to each question.
3. Debrief by asking participants what they learned as they considered and shared their own responses and what they learned from listening to each other.

While dialogue cannot happen without individuals bringing the specifics of their lives into the dialogue, it is not enough to build a dialogue on the foundation of individual experience. The structure of the dialogue must provide models for structural analysis—opportunities to understand the

constraints and influences exerted by institutions and systems. If the facilitators and the dialogue structure do not provide this framework, entrenched conflict will erupt between participants as they pit individual experience against individual experience without a means for identifying the mechanisms that lie at the root of their different experiences.

Strategy: Guided Fantasies

Guided fantasies can help participants see institutionalized aspects of society by momentarily changing the terms of individual experience. See "Guided Fantasies: Exploring Issues of Homophobia and Heterosexism" (Lesbian-Gay Male Programs Office 1993, 329), as an example.

Conclusion

The conflict between individual and group identities arises in intergroup dialogues through many avenues: a refusal to participate in group activities, reticence expressed during the course of full participation in the dialogue, and reflections shared by participants as they integrate their dialogue experience. However this conflict arises, the answer is the same: we are individuals *and* we are members of a social group, many social groups. Intergroup dialogues operate on the basic assumption that our social group memberships cannot be ignored or denied. Yet a dialogue cannot occur without individuals who show up in all the uniqueness and complexity of their individual experience. Furthermore, dialogic interactions stem from "where people are at" in their own individual identity development process: how much they have thought about their membership in certain social groups (i.e., groups based on race, gender, sexual orientation, etc.) affects their views of themselves, of others, and of the sociological environment. All of these truths shape and inform what knowledge, assumptions, and gifts we bring to the discussion, what we need and desire from this interaction, and what choices we will make when presented with opportunities to stretch and grow. The great potential for intergroup dialogue lies in our ability to embrace the paradox of our separate, varied, continually evolving, and always connected identities.

As we have facilitated intergroup dialogues, we have developed effective responses to the many ways in which the individual/group identity conflict can arise by relying on the framework of "knowledge, skills, awareness, passion, and action" originally articulated by Bailey Jackson and Mark Chesler, and further described in Fukuyama and Sevig 1999.

What this framework and the preceding responses all stress is that an interest in, or commitment to, intergroup dialogue (passion) is not enough, nor is it sufficient to attend only to an informational level (knowledge) about social and group identities, nor is it enough to be an expert facilitator with all the right skills. As with any learning endeavor, intergroup dialogues must be structured to account for the specific skill and awareness strengths, deficiencies, and "everything in between" that participants bring to any dialogue. It is a skill to find ways to trust others when there are valid reasons for withholding such trust. It is a skill to articulate the specifics of one's own experience while also listening well to the experiences of others. And it is a skill to respond to pain, either within ourselves or in others, in a way that promotes healing rather than additional injury.

As we develop our awareness of ourselves and the world around us, these are skills that dialogue facilitators and participants can learn. As facilitators, we can encourage the development of participants' awareness and skills only if we normalize and understand that there are not yet nearly enough true experiences of intergroup dialogue in our society for us to assume that participants have these skills well in hand when they enter our dialogue. Therefore, we must be compassionately prepared for the various ways in which participants enter a dialogue and proactively create opportunities for individuals to learn new ways of interacting with themselves and each other.

NOTE

1. This exercise was first described to the authors and their colleagues by Mark Chesler at the University of Michigan and was based on a training experience that he had observed.

REFERENCES

- Akbar, N. 1989. "Nigrescence and Identity: Some Limitations." *Counseling Psychologist* 17:258-63.
- Angelo, Thomas A., and K. Patricia Cross. 1993. *Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Atkinson, D. R., G. Morten, and D. W. Sue. 1983. *Counseling American Minorities: A Cross-Cultural Perspective*. 2d ed. Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown.
- Avery, D. M. 1977. "The Psychological Stages of Liberation." *Illinois Personnel and Guidance Association Quarterly* 63:36-42.
- Banks, J. A. 1984. *Teaching Strategies for Ethnic Studies*. 3d ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

- Berry, J. W. 1980. "Acculturation as Varieties of Adaptation." In *Acculturation Theory, Models, and Some New Findings*, ed. A. M. Padilla. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press.
- Carney, C. G., and K. B. Kahn. 1984. "Building Competencies for Effective Cross-Cultural Counseling: A Development View." *Counseling Psychologist* 12:111-19.
- Cass, V. C. 1979. "Homosexual Identity Formation: A Theoretical Model." *Journal of Homosexuality* 4:219-35.
- Cross, W. E. 1971. "The Negro-to-Black Conversion Experience." *Black World* 7:13-27.
- Downing, N. E., and K. L. Roush. 1985. "From Passive Acceptance to Active Commitment: A Model of Feminist Identity Development of Women." *Counseling Psychologist* 13:695-705.
- Fukuyama, M. A. and T. D. Sewig. 1999. *Integrating Spirituality into Multicultural Counseling*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications.
- Hardiman, R. 1982. "White Identity Development: A Process Oriented Model for Describing the Racial Consciousness of White Americans." Dissertation Abstracts International, 43:104A. University Microfilms No. 82-10330.
- Hardiman, R., and B. W. Jackson. 1992. "Racial Identity Development: Understanding Racial Dynamics in College Classrooms and on Campus." *New Directions for Teaching and Learning* 52:21-37.
- Helms, J. E. 1984. "Toward a Theoretical Explanation of the Effects of Race on Counseling: A Black and White Model." *Counseling Psychologist* 12:153-65.
- . 1990. *Black and White Racial Identity: Theory, Research, and Practice*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press.
- Jackson, B. W. 1975. "Black Identity Development." *Journal of Educational Diversity* 2:19-25.
- Keefe, S. F., and A. M. Padilla. 1987. *Chicano Ethnicity*. Albuquerque, N. Mex.: University of New Mexico Press.
- Lesbian-Gay Male Programs Office, University of Michigan, 1993. "Guided Fantasies: Exploring Issues of Homophobia and Heterosexism." In *Multicultural Teaching in the University*, ed. D. Schoem, L. Frankel, X. Zúñiga, and E. Lewis, 329-30. Westport, Conn.: Praeger.
- McCaun, S. R., and R. E. Fassinger. 1996. "Revisiting Sexual Minority Identity Formation: A New Model of Lesbian Identity and Its Implications for Counseling and Research." *Counseling Psychologist* 24 no. 3:508-34.
- Myers, L. J., S. L. Speight, P. S. Highlen, C. I. Cox, A. L. Reynolds, E. M. Adams, and C. P. Hanley. 1991. "Identity Development and Worldview: Toward an Optimal Conceptualization." *Journal of Counseling and Development* 70:54-63.

- Phinney, J. S. 1992. "The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure: A New Scale for Use with Diverse Groups." *Journal of Adolescent Research* 7:156-71.
- Ponterotto, J. G. 1988. "Racial Consciousness Development among White Counselor Trainees: A Stage Model." *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development* 16:146-56.
- Reynolds, A. L., and R. L. Pope. 1991. "The Complexities of Diversity: Exploring Multiple Oppressions." *Journal of Counseling and Development* 70:174-80.
- Rowe, W., S. K. Bennett, and D. R. Atkinson. 1994. "White Racial Identity Models: A Critique and Alternative Proposal." *Counseling Psychologist* 22:129-46.
- Schoem, D., X. Zúñiga, and B. A. Nagda. 1993. "Exploring One's Group Background: The Fishbowl Exercise." In *Multicultural Teaching in the University*, ed. D. Schoem, L. Frankel, X. Zúñiga, and E. Lewis, 326-27. Westport, Conn.: Praeger.
- Sewig, T. D., P. S. Highlen, and E. M. Adams. 2000. "Development and Validation of the Self-Identity Inventory SII: A Multicultural Identity Development Instrument." *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology* 6, no. 2: 168-82.
- Stone, W. O. 1984. "Multicultural Perspective of Career Development." In *Career Development Interventions*, ed. H. D. Bruck and R. C. Reardon. Springfield, Ill.: Charles C. Thomas.
- Sue, D. W., and D. Sue. 1990. *Counseling the Culturally Different: Theory and Practice*. 2d ed. New York, N.Y.: John Wiley and Sons Inc.
- Terry, R. 1977. *For Whites Only*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans.
- Thomas, C. 1971. *Boys No More*. Beverly Hills, Calif.: Glencoe Press.
- Vontress, C. E. 1971. "Racial Differences: Impediments to Rapport." *Journal of Counseling Psychology* 18:7-13.
- Zúñiga, X., and P. Myers. 1993. "Multiple Roles and Multiple Choice Exercise." In *Multicultural Teaching in the University*, ed. D. Schoem, L. Frankel, X. Zúñiga, and E. Lewis, 316-18. Westport, Conn.: Praeger.