

Ethnocentrism: Exploring Your National Identity

Overview:

This training is to help participants identify ethnocentrism in their everyday lives and how it may (negatively) affect communication between people. It is intended to help participants build perspective about culture and beliefs, supporting the development of international perspective. Through critical thinking, participants develop more awareness of where they may be unfairly generalizing, stereotyping, or not exploring new perspectives.

Category:

International perspective, diversity; interpersonal development; relationship building; reflection; communication

Level:

Intermediate to Advanced

Recommended

Bonner Sequence:

This training is most recommended for Bonner students during the sophomore or junior year, or in conjunction with a focus on diversity awareness. It is a suitable activity for a retreat.

expectation	explore	experience	example	expertise
		♥	♥	♥
VALUES: international perspective, community building, diversity				

Type:

Structured activity suitable for medium to large groups

Goals of this Guide:

- To engage participants in meaningful dialogue concerning ethnocentrism
- To examine ethnocentrism and its negative effects
- To have participants put into a situation where they have to experience ethnocentrism in order to remove it from their thoughts and feelings

Materials:

- Note Cards
- Butcher Paper
- Markers

- TV- DVD or VHS Player
- Movie that shows ethnocentrism- ex. “My Big Fat Greek Wedding” – or search from some clips from a TV show or film on YouTube

How to Prepare:

As the facilitator, it will be your job to keep the discussion and dialogue focused. To do this, prepare by doing your own research on ethnocentrism. If possible, go through the workshop prior to facilitating it and see how what you reveal about your own thinking and experiences. Also prepare all materials and have them ready for easy distribution for exercises.

How to Do/Brief Outline:

This is a very loose outline. Adjust the time allotted to each part as you find most effective.

This 3.5 – 4 hour workshop has the following parts:

1) Guidelines and Instruction for role play	suggested time 10 minutes
2) Role Play	suggested time 15 minutes
3) Define Ethnocentrism	suggested time 10 minutes
4) Debrief from Role Play	suggested time 30 minutes
5) Examples of Ethnocentrism- Movie	suggested time 20 minutes
6) How to Avoid Ethnocentrism	suggested time 20 minutes
7) Distribute Resources	suggested time 10 minutes
8) Closing	suggested time 10 minutes

Part 1) The Guidelines and Instruction for the Role Play **Suggested time: 10 minutes**

Begin the workshop by introducing yourself, role, and hopes for the session. Set a tone that is warm, relaxed, and also serious.

Then, set some Ground Rules for the session. Ask participants to offer some ground rules. Get a group consensus before writing them as official group guidelines. The final guidelines should have, at least, the following basic guidelines:

- Respect each view, opinion, and experience offered by any participant
- Use “I” statements/speak for yourself/no generalized comments
- What is disclosed in the workshop stays in the workshop
- Any one who feels it necessary may excuse themselves from the group for whatever reason

Role Play:

The role play is set up with half of the participants from the United States and the other half of the participants are from a foreign country that is trying to get aid from the US to help their flooded country. (Fictional countries work well for this activity.) This role-play should last no longer than 10 minutes. The objective is for the participants to use the custom throughout their role-play.

- 1) Have everyone pick a partner for this activity
- 2) Have one of the partners follow the facilitator to another room or area. There you will explain to them that they will be playing a delegate from a foreign country trying to access aid from the US for their country. While they are trying to access this aid they will be responsible to play out a custom. These customs can be anything. Remember that the students are from fictional countries and the customs can be whatever you would like. Some examples of these customs could be: not making eye contact with the other person, speaking loudly, crossing eyes, and so on. Distribute one of the customs or characteristics to each of the students.
- 3) While half of the students are receiving their cards and being briefed the other half of the students must be briefed as well. This half of students are delegates from the United States and are there to give aid to these countries that are need but they also can't give any amount they want. Tell them they need to be very stingy.

Part 2) Role-Play

Suggested time 20 min

Bring the groups back together and have them start the role-play right away. Leave 10 minutes for the partners to be interactive then wrap up the role-play activity.

Part 3) Define Ethnocentrism-

Suggested time 10 minutes

Define ethnocentrism for the group and give examples of ethnocentric thinking in everyday thinking. Explain the difference in ethnocentrism and pride for ones own country or culture. You may want to allow people to discuss this and give examples of each. Allow for some disagreement if necessary. But definitely have group define examples of ethnocentric thinking and actions during the exercise. Please see attached handout.

Part 4) Debrief from Role-Play

Suggested time 25-30 minutes

- 1) Have each pair group up with three other pairs (total of 8 people).
- 2) Give each group a piece of butcher paper and a few markers.

- 3) On one side of the paper have the people who are in the role-play as the US diplomats compile a list of their feelings when faced with the new culture and the custom that was used by this culture. (7 min)
- 4) On the other sides of the paper have those who in the role-play were the diplomats from the other countries complete a list of their feelings when faced with an American culture. (7 min)
- 5) With the last 10-15 minutes have two people from each group share their the feelings that their group felt during the exercise.

Part 5) Examples of Ethnocentrism- Movie

Suggested time 20 minutes

Play a section of a movie or some film clips from YouTube that show ethnocentrism. A selection from the movie *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* may work well for this section of the exercise (while overall the movie is about Greeks celebrating their cultural heritages, there are a few good examples of ethnocentric thinking in the movie). Quotes from this movie that you could focus on include:

- “There are two kinds of people - Greeks, and everyone else who wish they was Greek.”
- “Give me a word, any word, and I show you that the root of that word is Greek”

Part 6) How to avoid ethnocentrism

Suggested time 20 minutes

- 1) Break back into groups of about 4-6
- 2) Distribute another piece of butcher paper
- 3) Give the students 10 minutes to discuss possible ways of avoiding ethnocentric thinking in their everyday lives
- 4) With the last 10 minutes have them share their answers with the group

Part 7) Distribute Resources

Suggested time 10 minutes

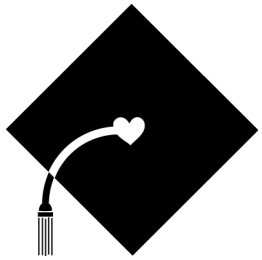
Part 8) Closing

Suggested time 10 minutes

Now, ask each participant to take the next 5-7 minutes jotting down notes to the following questions:

- What is something new you’ve learned in this workshop?
- How will you take this information back to your campus, community, or organization to address issues stemming from racism?

Finally have participants present their answers and adjourn.



Bonner Curriculum

Ethnocentrism: What is It?

What is ethnocentrism?

Ethnocentrism is defined on dictionary.com as “the belief in the superiority of one’s own ethnic group.” Also believing that one’s own Culture, country or race is superior to another can be considered ethnocentric.

What is the difference between having pride for one’s own culture and ethnocentrism?

Having pride in one’s country is different than ethnocentrism in the degree of that pride. An example of ethnocentric thinking is when a person believes that his or her country does everything right and everyone else’s country does everything (or most things) wrong. Pride in one’s own country is having a high opinion of that country but also believing that other countries also do things well even though it might be done in a dissimilar way. In the United States of America, for example, Fourth of July parades give people a chance to show pride in the American culture. By contrast, ethnocentric thinking may be characterized by an unwillingness to learn about or identify the strengths in other cultural or national points of view.

Examples of Ethnocentrism in American Culture:

- Those who drive on the left side of the road is “the wrong side of the road”
- Those who speak differently “have an accent”
- People from “such and such” place are always “blank” (e.g., rude, arrogant, racist, etc.)

Resources:

Answers.com

<http://www.answers.com/topic/ethnocentrism>

Resources for understanding and correcting ethnocentric behavior

<http://home.snu.edu/~hculbert/ethno.htm>

Dog sled race illustrating ethnocentrism - IUPUI at Indianapolis

<http://www.iupui.edu/~anthkb/ethnocen.htm>

Race and Culture: Ethnocentrism- The University of Vermont

http://www.uvm.edu/~culture/site/frameset/frameset_ethnocentrism.html

The Evolution of Ethnocentrism-The Brookings Institute

http://www.brookings.edu/es/dynamics/seminars/css_20041209.htm

Reduction of Ethnocentrism and Promotion of Cultural Relativism

<http://www.uwec.edu/minkushk/Anth161%20ETHNOCENTRISM%20.htm>