

## DISCUSSION LEADER'S GUIDE

for

### Stereotyping and You: A Program for Awareness and Action

#### I. Before the Meeting

A. Make arrangements for a 16 mm sound projector and screen, and if possible, preview the film.

B. The following synopsis of the film was prepared by the producers:

In a makeup that is a cross between the mask of an African storyteller and a harlequin comic, Bill Cosby's bigot tears apart the human race. To him, old people "take up space." He resents Jews "bragging" about their holidays." His disgust with Blacks: "everyone of 'em's on welfare." His distaste for Southerners: "haven't seen one that wasn't ignorant yet." His disgust for Indians: "this is the survival of the fittest, an' the Indians wasn't fit." On women: "they was put here to have babies, wash dishes, that's all." Etc., etc., etc. And so it goes until when asked to describe himself, our arrogant bigot isolates himself from all humanity. Under Cosby's spoofing lies a serious comment that stimulates honest discussion of the problem of prejudice.

C. For your use, the kit includes Racism in America published by the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights and Human Relations Materials for the School, Church and Community - published by the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, in addition to the film and the discussion guide.

D. For distribution to the participants, the Vermont Advisory Committee prepared a brief discussion of stereotyping, a self-survey, and the State Department of Libraries prepared a bibliography."

Try to review these materials before the program.

#### II. At the Meeting

A. Introduce the film by pointing out that stereotyping is at the base of prejudice and discrimination in our society. This is still a very serious concern which needs continuous exploration, discussion, and action. The film we are about to see is aimed at starting this process for us. (1-2 minutes)

B. View the Film (25 minutes)

C. Discuss the Film by suggesting that we take a few minutes to think about what we have just seen. Then ask the following questions. (15-20 minutes)

1. What is stereotyping?
2. What are your reactions to the stereotypes brought out in the film?
3. Did you identify with any of the groups characterized? If so, what was your reaction?
4. What other stereotypes could have been included?
5. What stereotypes do people from other parts of the country have of Vermonters; of Franco-Americans? Are they true?
6. How does stereotyping work to the advantage of those who stereotype and to the disadvantage of those who are stereotyped?
7. Is stereotyping harmful to society? If so, how?

D. Conduct the self-survey by distributing copies to the participants. Explain that the self-survey is designed to stimulate thinking about stereotyping and activities that can be undertaken to help eradicate stereotyping and prejudice. (10-15 minutes)

E. Distribute the brochure "Stereotyping and You" and the bibliography "Overcoming Stereotypes: A Select List." Explain that these are additional materials discussing the nature and effects of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination, and a list of books and films available through the Vermont public libraries.

F. Conclude by expressing the hope that participating in this program has raised their awareness about these problems and will help them find a way to do something about stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination.

### III. After the Meeting

Return the film to the Vermont-National Education Association, Box 567, Montpelier, VT 05602.

Prepared by the Vermont Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.

September, 1982

## STEREOTYPING AND YOU

### A SELF-SURVEY

One way to understand stereotypes is to recognize them within ourselves. We all have a tendency, wittingly or unwittingly, to stereotype other people. The following exercises are designed to help you recognize your own tendencies to stereotype people who are different from you.

I. After each of the following groups is a list of four traits. Circle the two traits which tend to be associated with each group.

1. Blacks  
Efficient      Lazy      Musical      Tight-fisted
2. Franco-Americans  
Ambitious      Cruel      Docile      Religious
3. Japanese  
Athletic      Imitative      Industrious      Unconcerned
4. Jews  
Honest      Intelligent      Materialistic      Superstitious
5. Puerto Ricans  
Colorful      Industrious      Methodical      Violent
6. Southerners  
Creative      Hospitable      Slovenly      Superficial
7. Women  
Affectionate      Dependent      Hardworking      Quick-tempered

Chances are that some of these traits seemed to fit the groups more naturally than others. Perhaps this may be because you are aware of the common stereotypes. But if the "right" answers seemed obvious to you immediately, then you may have a tendency to think in terms of these stereotypes yourself.

II. Another way to understand our tendency to stereotype is to recognize our surprise when confronted by facts that contradict traditional stereotypes. Fill in the blanks, and then check if your answers were correct.

1. 52% of the nation's paid civilian workforce (as of June 1979) were \_\_\_\_\_.  
a. women      b. men
2. 2/3 of those who receive food stamps, medicaid, or public housing are \_\_\_\_\_.  
a. white      b. black
3. In 1973, 99.3% of the middle and senior management of America's 15 largest commercial banks were \_\_\_\_\_.  
a. Jewish      b. Christian      c. Neither
4. The average young woman today will spend \_\_\_\_\_ years in the paid workforce.  
a. 7-1/2      b. 15      c. 30
5. The ancestors of Chicanos settled in what is now New Mexico \_\_\_\_\_ the landing of the Pilgrims.  
a. before      b. after
6. Between 1969 and 1979, the number of poor blacks \_\_\_\_\_.  
a. rose      b. declined
7. During the same period, the number of poor whites \_\_\_\_\_.  
a. rose      b. declined

The correct answers to these questions are: 1-A; 2-A; 3-B; 4-C; 5-A; 6-A; and 7-A. If any of these facts surprise you a great deal, then you may be thinking about these groups in stereotypical terms.

III. Which of the following statements do you agree with, or do you think you would make?

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Old people would be better off in old age or nursing homes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. I would hesitate to have a black person as a close friend.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Women are not suited to work in the construction trades.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. I would be upset if my son/daughter married someone outside our group.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Badly handicapped people should not go out in public.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Young people today have no ambition or drive.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Ex-offenders can not be trusted.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Fewer non-European immigrants should be admitted to the United States.

Each of these statements involves judging an individual on the basis of the group to which he or she belongs. If you agree with any of these statements, you might want to ask yourself why. It could be that you tend to think of these groups in terms of stereotypes. Otherwise, you would probably wait until you meet the individual rather than make a judgment based on group membership alone.

#### IV. Commitment to Change

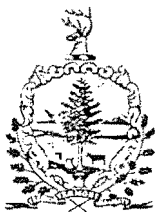
Hopefully, the exercises have helped us recognize tendencies to stereotype. The next step is to decide how to do away with this form of thinking. The following list of questions is designed to help you think about what you can do to eliminate stereotyping.

In which areas will you act?

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Will I aggressively seek out more information in an effort to enhance my own awareness and understanding of stereotyping (by talking with others, reading, listening)?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Will I spend some time thinking about my own attitudes and behavior to see if they contribute to or combat stereotyping?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Will I reevaluate my use of terms or phrases that may be perceived by others as degrading or hurtful?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Will I openly disagree with a stereotypical comment, joke, or action among those around me?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Will I be willing to take a stand, even if it involves some risk, to combat stereotyping?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Will I become more aware of stereotyping in the media? If I observe it, will I complain to those in charge?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Will I initiate discussions about stereotyping with my friends, at work, and within the groups in which I belong?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Will I contribute time and money to organizations that actively confront the problems of stereotyping?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Will I refuse to buy patronize companies whose products and advertising encourage stereotyping?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Will I work with my local schools to help them eliminate stereotyping from the curricula?

Prepared by the Vermont Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.

September, 1982



STATE OF VERMONT

802-828-3261

LOCATION:

111 STATE STREET

MAIL ADDRESS:

C/O STATE OFFICE BUILDING POST OFFICE

*Department of Libraries*

MONTPELIER, VERMONT 05602

OVERCOMING STEREOTYPES

A Select List

Books available through Vermont public libraries:

Adell, Judith, comp. A Guide to Non-Sexist Children's Books. Academy Press, 1976.

Bibliography of fiction and nonfiction divided by age groups.

Allport, Gordon W. The Nature of Prejudice. Addison-Wesley, 1979.

In this 25th anniversary edition, a social psychologist traces the roots and effects of prejudice.

Bettleheim, Bruno. Social Change and Prejudice. Free Press, 1964.

Systematic look at sociological and psychological aspects of prejudice.

Brooks-Gunn, Jeanne. He & She: How Children Develop Their Sex-Role Identity. Prentice-Hall, 1979.

Combines current research with anecdotes in a readable style.

Brown, Dee. Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee; an Indian History of the American West. Holt, 1970.

Presents the point of view of the Indians as victims of westward expansion.

Clark, Kenneth. Prejudice and Your Child. Beacon Press, 1963.

Cites psychological studies and offers ideas for schools and parents.

Coles, Robert. Children of Crisis. Little, 1967.

Eskimos, Chicanos, Indians. Little, 1977.

Migrants, Sharecroppers, Mountaineers. Little, 1971.

The Privileged Ones. Little, 1977.

The South Goes North. Little, 1972.

A five-volume series examining the diverse elements of American society from the perspective of its children.

Ellison, Ralph. Invisible Man. Random House, 1952.

Modern classic novel of young black man's progression to a sense of total rejection by society.

Fairbairn, Ann. Five Smooth Stones. Crown, 1966. Story of a black, born in poverty, his romance with a white girl, and his career as a lawyer and in the civil rights movement.

French, Marilyn. The Women's Room. Summit, 1977.

Novel explores women's places and relationships to men and each other in a shifting, complex world.

Friedan, Betty. The Feminine Mystique. Norton, 1963.

Now a classic, this examines the origins and consequences of traditional sexual stereotypes.

Gersoni-Starn, Diane. Sexism and Youth. Bowker, 1974.

Anthology of essays, personal reminiscences, community studies, government reports, and resource lists dealing with various aspects of sexism, including stereotyping of males.

Grau, Shirley Ann. The Keepers of the House. Knopf, 1964.

Powerful novel of the wife of an ambitious segregationist white politician who reveals her black roots, and encounters the absurdity and cruelty of prejudice.

Greenberg, Selma. Right From the Start; A Guide to Nonsexist Child Rearing. Houghton Mifflin, 1978.

Easy-going, practical advice for parents.

Gwaltney, John Langston. Dryslongso; a Self-Portrait of Black America. Random, 1980.

Realistic, broad study of middle-class black America today.

Hobson, Laura Z. Gentleman's Agreement. Simon & Schuster, 1947.

Novel of a journalist who poses as a Jew in order to explore anti-semitism.

Huggins, Nathan Irvin. Slave and Citizen; the Life of Frederick Douglass. Little, 1980.

The life of the pre-eminent black man of the 19th Century also introduces black life and the problems of race relations.

Jones, LeRoi. The Dutchman. Morrow, 1964.

A play which looks closely at black and white stereotypes.

Kleinfeld, Sonny. The Hidden Minority; a Profile of Handicapped Americans. Little, 1979.

Reviews recent federal laws and the problems of mainstreaming all ages.

LaFarge, Oliver. The Door in the Wall; Stories. Houghton Mifflin, 1965.

Reveals the pride of the Indian race and their integrity in the face of isolation.

Lee, Harper. To Kill a Mockingbird. Lippincott, 1960.

A novel of two white children who are introduced to racial prejudice when their father, a lawyer, defends a black falsely accused of rape.

Malamud, Bernard. The Fixer. F, S & G, 1966.

Powerful story of injustice and endurance when a Russian Jew is unjustly accused of murder.

Mather, Melissa. One Summer in Between. Harper, 1967.

Set in Vermont, a story of a young black Southern girl's experiences in a white Northern community.

Miller, Casey. The Handbook of Non-Sexist Writing. Lippincott, 1980.  
Common sense methods of using synonyms and alternative neutral terms.

Pogrebin, Letty C. Growing Up Free: Raising Your Kids in the '80's. McGraw, 1980.  
One of many current books on open-minded child raising.

Rushing, Jane Gilmore. Mary Dove; a Love Story. Doubleday, 1974.  
Raised in total isolation, a half black girl only learns about prejudice when she falls in love with a white cowboy.

Sarton, May. As We Are Now. Norton, 1973.  
Fictitious diary of a retired schoolteacher's struggle to maintain her dignity when she is forced into an old people's home.

Stalvey, Lois Mark. The Education of a WASP. Morrow, 1970.  
Personal experiences in Omaha in 1961 show the many racial and religious antagonisms dividing society.

Stowe, Harriet Beecher. Uncle Tom's Cabin. Jewett, 1852.  
This sentimental yet important novel did much to promote racial stereotypes.

Styron, William. The Confessions of Nat Turner. Random House, 1967.  
Through fiction, the author dramatically explores black militant hatred of whites.

Wallace, Michele. Black Macho and the Myth of the Super Woman. Dial Press, 1979.  
Examines the double burden of racism and sexual discrimination that black women have traditionally faced.

Wiesel, Elie. A Jew Today. Random, 1978.  
Essays, excerpts from diaries and letters present the author's evolutionary thinking of the Jew's place in history.

Wright, Richard. Native Son. Harper, 1940.  
Memorable story of a young black man painfully aware of his status in a white world.

Films available to community groups through the Department of Libraries Audio-Visual Services Unit, 828-3271:

The Fable of He and She. ICA, 1974. 12 min.  
Animated, gentle challenge to stereotypes and sexist thinking.

Free To Be ... You and Me. McGraw, 1974. 42 min.  
Series of three films looks at things both boys and girls can do.

It's Not Enough. National Film Board of Canada. 17 min.  
Working women discuss discrimination.

Men's Lives. New Day Films, 1974. 43 min.  
Examines the influences and changes in the image of American men.

Other Women, Other Work. Churchill, 1973. 20 min.  
Profiles of women in traditionally male fields.

The Speaker: a Film About Freedom. American Library Association, 1977. 42 min.  
Dramatizes questions of first amendment and individual/majority rights.

Walk Awhile in My Shoes. National Film Board of Canada, 1975. 28 min.  
Explores the problems of mobility and public attitudes toward the disabled.

We Are Woman. Motivational Media, 1975. 33 min.  
Looks at the origins of the traditional role of women.

What Do You Do When You See a Blind Person? American Foundation for the Blind,  
1971. 13 min.  
Proper techniques.

-- Marianne K. Cassell  
Development & Adult Services  
Consultant