

National Coalition Building Institute

"You don't change people's minds, you change their hearts. And you change their hearts through stories."

I. Setting the Scene:

On a bright Saturday afternoon, 25 people are gathered in what otherwise might be an official-looking conference room at the Baltimore Hilton. The tables have been pushed back against the walls and the participants - a kaleidoscope of color, age, and gender - are sitting in a semi-circle, eyes intent on the female participant and trainer who stand facing each other, hands locked together at the front of the room. This group of local community leaders, church ministers, social workers, teachers, NGO leaders and others from the Washington D.C. -Baltimore area are gathered for a two-day prejudice reduction workshop offered by the National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI).

Now, at the end of the first day, a volunteer participant stands with the trainer in front of the group to demonstrate a "Speak Out" - an exercise about the healing power of personal stories of oppression. She tells a moving story about overhearing a conversation between her boss and co-worker in which she was racially stereotyped and falsely accused. When the trainer encourages her to vent and say the least polite thing that comes to mind - something she really would have liked to say to her boss and co-worker- the tears and anger in her voice are mirrored by the furrowed brows and nodding heads of the other participants in the room who are watching her. They are with her, supporting her, as she recalls this incident and is encouraged by the trainer to say anything else she wants in order to feel proud about sharing this experience with the group. They applaud her courage in sharing this story and raise their hands as one when

the trainer asks who among the participants will make a commitment to fight against racial oppression in the workplace. Then several participants from the group share what the story brought up for them from their own lives, and the room begins to feel smaller, the group more intimate, then it did 15 minutes before.

“The most horrible part of oppression”, explains the trainer, “is that it silences our voices.” This exercise is one of many NCBI uses to give voice to those who feel that they are least, lost, left out, discounted, disrespected, or dismissed. “Sharing and hearing stories of oppression,” the trainer suggests, “helps heal personal wounds and open others’ hearts to a place where compassion lives.” This exercise may offer a new and different experience for each of the participants in the workshop, but it is a typical part of the many Prejudice Reduction and Leadership trainings that NCBI conducts within communities across the U.S.

II. Context of the Work:

A. Organizational Context:

NCBI, a non-profit organization with a mission to, “...*end the mistreatment of every group whether it stems from nationality, race, class, gender, religion, sexual orientation, age, physical ability, job, or life circumstance*”, was founded in 1984 by Cherie Brown. It currently includes over 50 community-based chapters, 30 non-profit and corporate affiliates, and more than 40 college campus chapters. Most of its work is conducted in the U.S., however NCBI also has chapters in Canada and Europe and has offered workshops around the world.

NCBI's initial work focused largely on reducing prejudice and building alliances between African American and Jewish community members, however it quickly expanded to include many other groups. NCBI has a diverse Board, yet the structured pedagogy, focus on emotions, and directive approach that characterizes most trainings still seem particularly attractive to and resonant with the culture of many Black and Jewish participants.

NCBI traces its theoretical roots to re-evaluation/ co-counseling and psychoanalytic, abreactive theories. Re-evaluation counseling theory assumes that people are born with tremendous potential for cooperation, intelligence, lovingness and vitality, however these qualities become blocked and obscured in adults because of distressing childhood experiences. Processes of emotional discharge (crying, raging, laughing, etc.) provide catharsis that helps free people from rigid patterns of thought and behavior. They become more aware of themselves, more trusting of others, more flexible in their responses to situations, and better able to act successfully against injustices. With some basic training in communication and cooperation skills and an attitude of loving attention, peers rather than professional experts are the most suitable support partners for doing this work (Jackins, 1982).

NCBI offers one-, two-, and three-day Prejudice Reduction and Conflict Resolution workshops, a five-day Leadership Training Institute, and ongoing consultation or technical assistance where requested. The three and five day training programs also serve as capacity building training-of-trainers programs where participants learn how to conduct NCBI workshops. Because NCBI requires all participants using their methods and materials to become affiliated with and pay fees to the organization, its human and

financial base has expanded exponentially in a relatively short time. This innovative infrastructure has been an effective model for creating strong organizational capacity and sustainability. In addition, it has required NCBI to develop highly structured training models and clearly articulated and detailed materials so that new trainers can learn the organization's theory and methods in a relatively short time.

B. Practitioner Context:

D.C. Chapter Director, Larry Bell, came to NCBI through his career in Christian ministry and has found the prejudice reduction work consonant with his spiritual and healing values.

"I found it [the NCBI workshop model] to be a more effective tool for my ministry than bible study or worship exercises and things like that. This was a true way for a Christian community to work on things that interfered with them being the best Christians they could be. I've prayed some powerful prayers and preached some powerful sermons, but none worked in a way that this workshop and the tools that NCBI uses does. I was able to build powerful and dynamic interracial relationships with people not only in that community, but all around the city, and become a force for change in addressing the issues of polarization in this city."

Bell suggests that the people who have most influenced his perspective and personal theory-of-practice for prejudice reduction work have been Cherie Brown, founder and director of NCBI, Martin Luther King Jr. and Ghandi. Yet, like many of the practitioners interviewed in this study, his personal experiences and observations have been the most powerful forces shaping his current work in this field. In both interviews and observations, his theory-of-practice was closely aligned, in fact almost indistinguishable, from NCBI's theory and practice models and suggested a consistency in philosophy across the organization.

C. Types of Conflicts and Participants:

NCBI focuses on diffuse racial and ethnic tensions such as individual-level prejudices, inter-group alliance and coalition building, and controversial public issues. Trainings usually take place in situations with low levels of escalation and no direct violence. The organization does a lot of preventive and proactive work with youth in educational settings and occasionally intervenes in post-crisis phases of a conflict. For example, trainers mentioned workshops they conducted for youth and school administrators in districts facing increased hate crime activity, and training of community leaders, police officers and human relations officials in L.A. after the Rodney King beating as examples of intervention situations.

While racial and ethnic prejudice and oppression are an important focus of the trainings, NCBI recognizes the problems of many different "Isms" (e.g. ageism, sexism, classism) and does not suggest any hierarchy of oppression. NCBI offers training and consultation to a broad range of groups including community organizations and leaders, women's organizations, educators and students, law enforcement groups, unions, disabled people's organizations, and corporations. Trainings are open to all levels of leadership but usually focus at the grassroots level. This corresponds with the bottom layer of Lederach's (1997) intervention triangle. NCBI works primarily with general, mixed groups or with groups from one particular profession or sector (e.g. police officers; university students). The trainings do not usually include parallel sessions or bring together two or more parties from directly conflicting groups.

III. Frame Analysis:

A. Framing the Problem

NCBI has a strong, psychological approach that focuses primarily on the individual level of analysis and secondarily on intergroup relations. The training model looks at personal wounds and hurts; internalized oppression; inflexible, habituated patterns of thought and behavior; and group polarization as primary causes of prejudice and oppression.

Personal Wounding: The NCBI model holds that people are inherently intelligent, courageous, loving, etc., but that “bad” (i.e. oppressive, hateful, etc.) behavior results from the distress patterns we develop because of early wounding experiences to the Self and unhealed hurts. “One of the things that renders us ineffective, powerless, and hopeless is the way that we have been hurt and convinced, that we don’t have the power, that our opinions don’t matter, and we are insignificant and that kind of a thing. And believing that makes couch potatoes of us all and not want to take the chances... We think, ‘what’s the use?’”

A basic assumption of this work is that people are hurt or systematically mistreated and that this causes them to hurt others or perpetuate the mistreatment: because people are victims, they unconsciously victimize others. This framing draws heavily from psychoanalytic theory where early, traumatic experiences and messages in individuals create unconscious and uncontrolled patterns of behavior in later life. One NCBI trainer described the process as a form of “sympathetic magic” where people

recreate the trauma they've experienced (i.e. oppress others as they were oppressed) in a primitive attempt to heal themselves.

Prejudice and intergroup oppression: Another important component of NCBI's problem-setting is the role of stereotypes, negative prejudicial attitudes and discrimination against particular groups. The model holds that humans inherently store and catalogue simplistic generalizations about particular groups in order to make sense of the vast amount of information in the surrounding environment. Negative prejudices arise as people literally record or learn misinformation about particularly groups from family members, friends, media, etc. These recordings exert a powerful, often unconscious influence on people's thoughts and actions and often result in discrimination and oppression of individuals belonging to these groups.

Internalized oppression: Beyond this concern with stereotypes and prejudice, NCBI focuses on the internalization of negative messages about one's own racial or ethnic group. People often unconsciously translate the external stereotypes and negative messages about their group (e.g. nappy hair is ugly; Jews are greedy) into a constant internal critique that makes them ashamed, hurt, and afraid about their own group identity. By identifying and verbalizing what people hate about their own group, they can recognize the scars that their group carries from being mistreated and oppressed.

Habituated Patterns: NCBI also frames the problem of racial and ethnic tension or conflicts as resulting from inflexible patterns of thought, behavior, and interaction. "So often we are not really responding to what is happening in the moment but to what we are reminded of, and that leaves us ineffective in figuring out creative ways to get the most out of the moment."

“ The human family is dysfunctional in the way that we cut ourselves off from each other... because out of that polarization we are set up to hate one another, to be intolerant, to mistreat, to be violent. Now I’m not saying that it’s evil motives that have separated people or groups. But evil can develop in that separation and perpetuate it. What happens is that we are all scared and that in the place where we are all afraid, we get comfortable in the things that are familiar to us. So when it comes to connecting with people, when we find ourselves in a place where there are other people - like walking into a room filled with people - we have this amazing scanning device- data input system- so we are able to scan a room, we are able to determine everything we need to know about a person who looks a certain way. Because we are trying to determine, “who here is just like me? And that is not evil. That just says I want to hook up with somebody and I believe that I can. That’s healthy herd instinct, but what NCBI tries to work with is the “who is like me” part.

This aspect of NCBI’s model refers indirectly to contact theories, to suggest that separation or lack of contact and interaction among individuals and groups perpetuates prejudice, oppression and conflict and that new networks and alliances among diverse groups are needed.

These are the primary causal assumptions about prejudice, oppression and racial and ethnic conflict that NCBI draws upon in developing their intervention model. This framing outlines the features of the problem that practitioners attend to and suggests both the kinds of changes needed and methods for achieving such change.

B. Framing the Intervention:

The NCBI training model suggests that the best way to address these problems is to foster awareness of people’s stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination. This requires identifying stereotypes people have learned and internalized about their own and others’ groups, telling stories of personal experiences both of being a victim and of oppressing

others, learning skills that empower people and give them options to habituated patterns, and building alliances across both individuals and groups.

As in psychotherapeutic interventions, the NCBI theory of practice seeks to surface and explore unconscious issues around prejudice and oppression and foster emotional discharge or cathartic experiences. As Larry Bell described it,

“Discharge is the natural way that human beings heal... like crying, sweating, shivering, yelling, non-repetitive narratives (storytelling) are ways to heal. Discharging is a way that the body and the brain naturally have for unraveling. Because the hurts that happen are kind of jumbled up in the brain and in the compartments where it stores information, so the hurts cause the information not to get placed in its right compartment. Discharge helps to un-clump it and gives us the place where we can access creative and new responses and evaluations of what is actually happening. Because if we were able to be in that state – the present - all of the time. We would be more at peace, creative, and able to love one another. So that’s what people get to experience in the workshop”

The interventions also focus on providing new skills to help empower participants, release them from destructive, habituated patterns of thought and behavior, and build coalitions or bridges between individuals and groups.

“Since prejudice is something that everybody has, in doing the prejudice reduction work we give everybody a chance to go through that critical hole on the inside that is filled with guilt and shame and “less than”. And we begin to work on that spot to try and trace our earliest messages and to look at where our power is stripped. Because that’s what it is: a stripping of power where we felt hopeless and helpless.... The primary goal of oppression is to train people about their insignificance, their powerlessness. It demoralizes and robs them of their spirits. That’s what oppression does. If we get people to see their significance, that they can break the chains already... then they can say, “I do matter” and “yes, I can”, knowing that they are not alone. This workshop is to help people broaden their horizons by expanding the “we” factor.”

While NCBI trainings include important methods for fostering alliances within and between groups, the focus remains on addressing individual-level and psychological

dimensions of prejudice as the antidote to racial and ethnic conflict. "When you work on prejudice, you are working on the core causes of hate and violence. Not everyone with prejudice goes out and hates and kills. But everyone who goes out and hates and kills has prejudice."

IV. Process Design and Methods:

A Intervention Goals:

NCBI has clearly stated, internal goals for their intervention model that include:

1. Identifying the information and misinformation people have learned about other groups
2. Identifying & expressing pride in group(s) to which people belong
3. Learning how other groups have experienced mistreatment
4. Learning the personal impact of specific incidents of discrimination, and
5. Learning how to interrupt prejudicial jokes, remarks and slurs

These goals include cognitive (i.e. new information and learning); affective (i.e. expressing feelings) and behavioral (i.e. new skills) dimensions and are focused on micro-level (i.e. intra- and inter-personal), internal (i.e. for participants within the intervention) change. Other implicit goals include: healing, rehumanizing, appreciating differences, building connections with Self and others, empowering individuals, and developing leadership for continued work. NCBI is one of the few programs examined in this study that also talks about ending leadership oppression as an important component of coalition building. Though not the center of their work, the NCBI models tries to foster compassionate and supportive attitudes toward community leaders and break old patterns of criticizing and attacking those who are trying to organize and promote community change.

B. Principles for Resolution:

Several principles for resolution emerged from discussions with trainers, observation of interventions, and a review of materials. These include:

- 1) ***Consciousness or Awareness:*** In keeping with psychoanalytic and psychotherapeutic intervention models, NCBI work is founded on the principle that once something is noticed, it is changed forever. Surfacing unconscious beliefs and internal records about one's own and others' groups is an important part of personal growth and change.
- 2) ***"Guilt is the Glue that Holds Prejudice in Place":*** The NCBI model holds that prejudice reduction programs that are based on guilt, moralizing or condemnation often rigidify prejudicial attitudes. The judgment inherent in such programs shuts down compassion and stalls the rehumanizing and healing process. In contrast, NCBI's training model is optimistic about the possibilities of changing individual attitudes and suggests that programs are most effective when conducted in a hopeful, upbeat, sometimes even raucous tone.
- 3) ***"Ouch/ Ouch":*** The model works from the belief that healing can't take place when both parties are feeling victims or experiencing hurts (i.e. "ouches") at the same time. In doing prejudice reduction work, individuals must put aside their own hurt for a while in order to help someone else.
- 4) ***Working with emotions:*** NCBI places an important emphasis on working with emotions in order to make cognitive and behavioral change and build

relationships between people. The model identifies and addresses a number of myths our society holds about emotions including; 1) *emotions are dangerous* – NCBI suggests instead that it is unexpressed emotions that are dangerous because they manifest themselves destructively (e.g. disease); 2) *Its better to forget the past* – the NCBI model stresses that the past shapes people and that looking at it can help people heal; and 3) *People need graduate training or degrees to work with others on emotions* – the NCBI model focuses on peer leadership and believes that being attentive, compassionate, and loving with each other is the primary requirement for emotion work.

- 5) ***No hierarchy of Oppression:*** Unlike other programs examined in this study, NCBI focuses on a common dynamic of oppression that affects many target groups (e.g. women, gays and lesbians, People of color, poor, etc.). The model suggests that welcoming diversity must include all visible and invisible differences and that racism should not be considered more important than other “Isms” such as classism, sexism, anti-semitism, etc.
- 6) ***Skill training leads to empowerment:*** NCBI is one of the few programs examined that teaches specific skills for addressing racial jokes, comments, and slurs. The skills training is focused on individual-level manifestations of prejudice and racism and the model suggests that providing participants with practical skills can help unfreeze the sense of powerlessness that may paralyze them during such encounters. NCBI also teaches basic conflict resolution skills for addressing controversial public issues that polarize groups and communities

such as affirmative action, immigration, welfare, abortion, death penalty, prayer in school, etc.

- 7) ***Proactive training programs:*** The NCBI model advocates preventive and proactive interventions and suggests that training young people and intervening in low escalation situations is more effective than reactive programs that respond to specific incidents of racism or crisis. This is congruent with the literature on conflict prevention (cite) which describes the benefits (e.g. saving lives, reduced trauma, reduced costs of intervention) of preventive rather than reactive measures to conflict interventions.
- 8) ***Train trainers:*** – Training teams of peer leaders is an important principle of the NCBI model. Trainers believe that such training is the most effective way to empower people to take leadership in reducing racism. They also indicate that learning is more rapid and profound when participants know they will have to lead trainings.
- 9) ***Walking the Talk:*** Finally, trainers stressed the importance of living the theory and skills that the model teaches both personally and within the organization. Larry Bell quoted Ghandi's famous saying, "we must be the change we seek in others." In addition, he commented:

"When it comes to welcoming diversity and prejudice reduction, its so important that we use the stuff that we teach within NCBI to develop our leadership and teams - on a personal, national and international level. NCBI trainers come together three times a year at the leadership institutes to continue this healing work. To clean our lenses off, shake the dust off our feet and heal the wounds. People who do this work have developed their compassion muscle and allow it to be used – to suffer with participants - let our hearts break with the suffering. That's part of this work: teaching people how to let their hearts break and be vulnerable. Like I said before,

to let each other into one another's kitchens. We all have to do the healing because we are going to be hurt by the things that we hear too."

These principles help guide the overall design of NCBI trainings and the development of specific exercises and methods.

C. Training Methods:

The following section briefly outlines some of the methods and exercises that are a typical part of the NCBI's training model. The model and materials have detailed explanations both of exercises and the theory behind them. Trainings are based on a standard, "off the shelf" model and rarely vary from the prescribed format.

The trainings begin with introductions of trainers and participants, a review of groundrules with an emphasis on confidentiality, and an overview of the agenda. The trainings are highly structured and include a variety of didactic methods including mini-lectures, discussion (large group, dyads, and caucuses), and experiential exercises. Trainers generally take on the roles of guide and expert. One trainer described his role as that of a bridge builder and a witness. "I saw the need for a bridge builder in my community to come in and help people from all sides of the issue to see the good in each other. So I see myself as being an individual who comes on the scene, who stands up and stands in the gap for the humanity of all parties present, and gives people permission to love one another. I see myself as a witness to the humanity of all present."

Initial exercises (e.g. "up/downs" and "pairs") focus on identifying and appreciating the diversity in the training group and recognizing and challenging

people's tendency to make connections with those who are similar or familiar rather than those who are different from them. Debriefing segways into a review of NCBI theory about prejudice reduction, empowerment and leadership. The next exercises ("first thoughts" and "internalized oppression") begin by brainstorming word associations about particular groups to get at both unconscious and conscious stereotypes we have internalized about our own and others' groups. The exercises normalize the positive and negative messages we have received about such groups and discourage blame and judgment about knowing these stereotypes. As one trainer commented, "we are all like Swiss Cheese – the holes in the cheese are like the places inside where we don't feel good about ourselves." Additional work in pairs encourages participants to look at things about their own group about which they feel: 1) ashamed or negative; and 2) proud or positive. This section generally ends on an upbeat note where participants express pride about their own group and the underlying lesson emphasized is that, "pride welcomes diversity."

The training model also works with group caucuses to identify and share what group members never want people to say, think, or do toward their group. This group work becomes preparation for "speak outs" or personal stories of oppression that are designed to help individuals' discharge painful or angry emotions and build compassion and support among participants for fighting different forms of oppression (see above, I. Setting the Scene).

The final part of the training focuses on developing and practicing skills (i.e. through mini-lectures and role-plays) for interrupting prejudicial comments, slurs or jokes and resolving interpersonal conflicts. The emphasis of such work is on

identifying underlying hurts, fears, concerns and needs that motivate people to make prejudicial remarks or take a particular position on a controversial issue. Participants are taught to be allies in shifting attitudes or finding common ground by encouraging people to “tell their story” about why they believe or do what they do and listening attentively and compassionately. The models suggests that treating others with respect and decreasing defensiveness when confronted with prejudice or conflict can lead to productive conversations about learned attitudes and can foster either attitude change or recognition of options for resolving conflicts.

V. Intended Effects:

In reviewing the goals outlined above, the NCBI model clearly focuses primarily on micro- or individual level change in both attitudes and behaviors and secondarily on meso- or intergroup level change in expanding alliances and networks of inclusion. The focus is internal (i.e. on participants within the training) and because there is a strong leadership and training-of-trainers component, it is also oriented toward long-term change. As Larry Bell commented, “In a six months period, I expect people to have taken steps to starting their own initiatives or trainings. I would say that things don’t go so well when you can see that not much has happened after you’ve gone. So maybe people will have a juicy experience in the workshop and not much gets done because the main reason they’re there is not impacted.”

Beyond these general goals, the trainers interviewed indicated that it was difficult to identify specific intended effects because of the diversity of participants.

“You take each group where they are and the goal is some breakthrough. Everyone doesn’t get to the same place. It’s the nature of diversity, the diversity of the human family and where we are at different times of our

lives. Some groups can be propelled immediately to go out and change the world, and work for this or that.... And others will just have a different perspective on their own place in the world and begin to feel better about themselves.... It's a workshop on welcoming diversity, ... and you can't even begin to tell people where they are going to go with it, because everybody is not going to go to the same place."

NCBI conducts informal, verbal evaluations at the beginning of second through fifth training days where participants are asked questions such as: What did you learn? How did you feel after yesterday's workshop? Did you have a dream? Do you notice anything different about yourself? How are you going to stretch today? In 1984, NCBI also participated in an external evaluation by Boston University's Department of Applied Social Research. The evaluation involved pre- and post-tests of participants (both directly after the training and six months later) and noted a marked shift in participants' ability to interrupt oppressive remarks and slurs, and increased ability to eradicate interpersonal racism. They also suggested that the skills learned in the training gave participants some sense of control over their environment (Sales, 1984).

While not discussed explicitly, NCBI trainers indirectly talked about how change happens. Individual level change comes through self-awareness or consciousness, emotional discharge, and skills practice in a supportive environment. In addition, practitioners talked about the importance of personal insight or the "aha" experience. "When we see that people are having "aha" moments and epiphanies, we know the veil is coming off their eyes. You actually see people's expressions change in the way their backs straighten up, they lose limbs and aren't hunched over and all of that." Interpersonal and intergroup change occurs through telling personal stories, rehumanizing the "other", fostering compassion, and building inclusive networks and alliances.

Macro- or institutional and system level change are rarely discussed directly in the NCBI model. There is an implicit understanding that social institutions and systems are created and run by individuals and small groups and that change must take place one person at a time. As a trainer commented, the NCBI model, "...allows people to see the importance of their individual initiative in bringing about institutional or societal change." Leadership development is the primary method by which the NCBI model hopes to impact macro-level changes.

VI. Strengths and Challenges

The NCBI model has a number of strengths and challenges and seems to elicit strong responses from participants. Depending on their expectations, the congruence with their own theories about prejudice and prejudice reduction work, and their comfort level with expressed emotions, structured learning and directive methods, participants seem to either love or hate the model.

The model has strengths in its focus on the cognitive, affective and behavioral dimensions of individual-level change. Where most programs promote cognitive and some behavioral change, NCBI integrates emotional work and takes a holistic view of personal change and development. As a trainer explained it, "I think one thing that sets the NCBI model apart from others is that we believe that a house built on a weak foundation will not stand and we want to firm up the foundation by going in and excavating the stuff that's going on in the emotional dregs. We look the dragon in the eye - the fear, the rage, disappointment, hurt and anxiety. The guilt, the shame....all of

that stuff. Where people have been set up to think of themselves as less than human and to think of others as less than human. We take a look at that.”

The program also has very strong congruence between its espoused theory and theory-in-use. The theory of practice is well thought through, detailed and clearly structured in materials so that new trainers can easily follow the connections between theory and practice and maintain a consistent standard of implementation.

In addition, NCBI has a very strong model for building organizational capacity and sustainability. The program has a well developed infrastructure to support new trainers including incentives and opportunities for increased responsibility. This strength has allowed the organization to grow exponentially and expand into new areas of work. NCBI's growth may also have been facilitated by its theory-of-practice, which is congruent with many of the values of the dominant U.S. culture (e.g. individual-level analysis, focus on prejudice, healing orientation).

The model also faces a number of challenges. For example, trainers suggested that participants must be emotionally mature or at least receptive to the emotional dimension of this work for the program to be effective or appropriate.

“I was doing a violence prevention workshop with them - inner city, Black kids who had very little education – young adults, many were victims of abuse and neglect. I mean in an extreme sort of way. And I found that arrested emotional development was inherent in this group. It was part of the fabric and fiber of those who were caught up in this situation. It seemed to be the thing bonding them together. I had to make a decision that as a group, they needed other preliminary emotional development work, kind of a retooling,... Because there is a certain amount of education and awareness - and I don't mean necessarily book learning, I'll just call it maturity - a certain level of willingness to mature emotionally needed. There were things that I'd be able to do with them one on one, but there was too much group intimidation.

And we also worked with a group that had been diagnosed as bi-polar. It was difficult in that their emotional responses to the stories – well, they were afraid to cry because it was an indication that they needed medication or hospitalization or isolation.”

Individuals who do not feel safe or comfortable expressing emotions or disclosing personal issues among peers or in a group setting may not like the model. Some participants have also criticized NCBI's approach indicating that, despite efforts to enforce groundrules and create a safe, positive, and appreciative atmosphere, some trainers do not provide sufficient time or have adequate skills for effectively dealing with participants' emotions and expressed vulnerabilities. The process, they suggest, does not necessarily protect participants or bring closure to the difficult issues it explores. In addition, the process of emotional discharge or catharsis remains controversial even in psychological literature and is considered of limited use for personal healing by cognitive, behavioral and psychodynamic schools of therapy.

Critics have also suggested that the inclusion of many different forms of oppression “flatten” or equalize the difference between “hurts” and neglect the structural aspects of racism. For example, some have taken offense that no distinctions are made between those who are discriminated against because they are overweight or wear glasses and those who have been systematically oppressed because of racism. These critics do not see individual and small group analysis as an effective means for addressing institutionalized or structural forms of racism. They challenge the NCBI model to differentiate more clearly between individual and systemic forms of oppression, to acknowledge the historical and institutional primacy of racial oppression in the U.S., and to confront the status quo by recognizing power imbalances in inter-group relations.

Like the critiques leveled at each of the programs in this study, however, the challenges to NCBI's model are not unique to the organization. Instead they reflect a much larger controversy over understandings of prejudice, racism and racial conflict and theories and methods for effectively addressing it. For example, the prevalent split between psychological and sociological theory and research is mirrored in these critiques of application. In fact, there are many competing theories, and decades of scholarly research on prejudice, oppression, racism and racial conflict have provided no conclusive evidence pointing to one "right way" to address these deep-rooted social problems. Programs such as NCBI and others in this study provide an important learning laboratory. Lessons from their experience can help inform both theory development and practical applications and point to ways in which different interventions can be complimentary. NCBI's clear articulation and integration of theory and practice and its positive impact on participants across the U.S. are its strongest assets in responding to the challenges outlined above.

VII. Theory of Practice and Change:

The following flowchart summarizes the underlying theory of practice and change in the NCBI model. It tries to visually link problem-setting, intervention goals, methods, theory of change, and intended effects of this program in a preliminary outline. While no outline can adequately capture the richness and depth of this or other programs' efforts, the flowchart highlights the web of understandings shaping NCBI's theory of practice and change.

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University of Hawaii at Mānoa
National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI)
Strengthening Communities By Supporting Diversity

RA IS 311 Class 3:00pm-4:15pm, Kuykendall 213

Tuesday, April 8, 2004

Rouel Velasco

Ian Custino

Agenda

3:00 - 3:10 Brief Overview

- Intro Rouel
- Summary of what we did last time
- What we are going to do today

3:10 - 3:30 Intro Internalized Oppression (group you are a part of) *Demonstrate

- What I don't like about my group is...

3:30 - 3:35 Pride (same pairs) * Demonstrate

- What I love about my group is...

3:35 - 4:00 Intro Role Plays *Demonstrate

3:45 - 4:05 Role Plays *Demonstrate

- Pairs: Think about specific comments/prejudicial jokes on campus
- Chart Paper: put up ideas from their pairs
- Choose 1-2 comments to role play

DEMONSTRATION:

- First: Say the comment
- Second: Ineffective Response
- Third: Effective Response

PARTICIPANT ROLE PLAY:

- Volunteer 1: Ineffective Response (from your gut)
- Volunteer 2: Effective Response (right way)

*same volunteer have a chance to do both

4:05 - 4:10 Pairs (debrief with each other)

- Think of times where these types of things have happened
- How and where you might use this information

4:10 - 4:15 Closing

- Questions and Larger group debrief
- What came up for you?
- Any questions

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National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI)
Strengthening Communities By Supporting Diversity

RA IS 311 Class 3:00pm-4:15pm, Kuykendall 213

Tuesday, April 6, 2004

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Agenda

3:00 - 3:10 Introduction

- Who are we and what is NCBI?
- Brief overview of the two day
- Share for yourself, "stays in this room"

3:10 - 3:30 Intro Up/Down

- Birth Order/Place of Birth/Ethnicity/ Gender/
— Religion/Class/Age/Disability/Sexual Orientation/Private Identity

3:30 - 3:35 Pairs (Introduce self and w/identities) * Demonstrate

3:35 - 3:45 Basic Theory

3:45 - 4:00 First Thoughts (group you aren't apart of) *Demonstrate

- Workshop Agreements
- Confidentiality

4:00 - 4:05 Pairs (debrief with each other)

- What are your personal stories about your first thoughts?

4:05 - 4:15 Closing

- Be back on Thursday
- What came up for you?
- Any questions