



REMOVING RACIAL RESIDUE

The Workshop

Our innovative "Removing Racial Residue" workshop, created in 2007 and refined over more than a decade, is strengthening interactions among people of different ethnic groups in organizations all across the metro Milwaukee area. It is laying a foundation to help build more equitable environments – where people of color can be safe, feel comfortable and thrive, and where people across the spectrum can contribute to open and honest relationships and experience the benefits of diversity.

The need for this training has been evident in America since long before the civil war in the 1860s, and is still evident now, long after the civil rights movement of the 1960s and the many legislative reforms that followed – none of which have succeeded in fully removing racism and its damaging effects from our society. Countless incidents and reports during the decades since then – ranging from the 2004 Northwestern University study of widespread employment discrimination in Milwaukee, and the 2014 Annie E. Casey Foundation report of the widening gap between black children and those of other races at all levels of education, to incarceration disparities, police involved shootings and the resulting protests in Milwaukee and now across the country in the wake of George Floyd's tragic death – all make it painfully evident that we need to work not only at legislative and institutional levels, but also at individual and heart levels, to rid our society of this persistent scourge.

The Purpose

Our training focuses on three levels of what we call "racial residue" – in the white community where white privilege and blinders prevail; and in communities of color where anger, fear and distrust continue to grow – that are hindering community-wide peace and collective action to remove racism from our institutions and societal structures. The workshop combines a visual metaphor, a presentation of the racial residue concept and levels, and personal stories told by black, white, Latino, Native American and/or Asian trainers about the impact of racism and its residue in their lives. It teaches practical steps that each of us can take to remove the racial residue we identify in ourselves and in others.

Feedback in recent years has been moving and positive, as we have brought this transforming experience to a wide range of nonprofit, medical, educational, youth-serving, and faith-based organizations across the metro Milwaukee area, training more than 5,000 participants.

Methodology for "Removing Racial Residue"

- We use a visually engaging metaphor of the impact of racism and the residue it leaves in a racialized society like America.
- We expose people of multiple ethnicities to the deep and pervasive damage done in a society where race matters in ways that harm people of color.
- Our trainers, who are black, white, Latino, Native American and Asian, model for audiences how to discuss racial issues with honesty, transparency, emotion, and even humor.
- Each trainer shares compelling experiences of racism, identifying the internal residue produced.
- We then engage participants in small group exercises to process the concept of racial residue, responding to video clips and identifying residue in the short stories of other people's experiences.
- Next we teach participants practical ways to remove racial residue at each of three levels within themselves, and to assist others in removing their residue.
- Finally we allow time for large group discussion and Q & A with the trainers – always a powerful time of learning about the impact of racism, and ways to heal the divisions among us.

Contact for more information or to schedule a workshop: Diane De La Santos, Executive Director, ddelasantos@cityonahillmilwaukee.org, (414) 931-6670.