If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time. If you have come here because your liberation is bound up with mine, then stay and we can work together.

Lila Watson, Aboriginal Educator/Activist
Creating Diverse Communities: Religion and Power

Kathy Castania
Opening Doors Diversity Project
Workshop Objectives

• To develop a common language for talking about power, privilege and difference.

• To examine the impact of Christian hegemony on social, political, and economic power in the U.S.

• To develop a vision for what spiritual diversity within a community would require.

• To collectively develop strategies for increasing spiritual acceptance and religious equity on campus.
Working Agreements:

- Confidentiality
- Listen for understanding
- Respect for others and multiple perspectives
- Open, honest dialogue with no repercussions
INTRODUCTION TO THE WORKSHOP

WE ARE MEMBERS OF GROUPS

SOCIAL SYSTEMS ASSIGN STATUS TO GROUPS
Group Identity: Spiritual Beliefs

Up - Down Activity
How do we identify spiritually?
DOMINATOR MODEL

“Power over”

Dominant    Excluded
DOMINATOR MODEL

“Power over”

Dominant Roles

Agent → Ally

Excluded

Victim → Empowere
d

Christian

All other spiritual beliefs
PARTNERSHIP MODEL

“Power with”
PARTNERSHIP MODEL: Spirituality

Creating “Power With” Dynamics

Identify any values, behaviors, attitudes, skills and conditions that would support movement to a Partnership Model in your community on spiritual beliefs.
Partnership dynamics:

Behaviors: Assertive

Values:
- Cooperation
- Respect and Dignity
- Different Treatment = Equivalent Outcome

Skills:
- How to negotiate common ground
- How to speak the language of diversity change
- How to transform agent and victim roles
Intersectionality of our religious identity with other group identities
Roles

Dominant
Agent ➔ Ally

Christian
Adults (working age)
White People
Men
Owning Class
“Standard” English
Temporarily-abled
Heterosexual
Formally Educated
Magazine look
Citizen
“Traditional” Family
Early immigrants

Excluded
Victim ➔ Empowered

All other spiritual beliefs
Young People, Elders
People of Color
Women, Transgender
Working Class, Working Poor, Poor
English as 2nd, 3rd..., no English
Differently-abled
Gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, questioning...
Educated by life
Everybody else
Temporary resident, undocumented..
All other family forms
Current and forced immigrants
What Dominator Model dynamics are preventing movement to partnership?

Based on your personal experience as a Christian (dominant) or Other Spiritual Beliefs (excluded) identify what gets in the way of creating partnerships that can lead to healthy diverse religious communities?
Overcoming Dominator Model Barriers:

Using the list of Dominator Model barriers, identify strategies for overcoming them within society and within your spiritual community.
CLOSING:
You are invited to share an appreciation for a thought, an idea, yourself or another participant.