

Widening the Circle of Concern Hospitality & Inclusion Q&A

AUGUST 8, 2021

Highlights from COIC Report Hospitality & Inclusion Chapter

- ▶ “Though our predominantly white congregations and organizations may see themselves as welcoming, without particular practices, they continue to mirror the kinds of harms done to people of color and other marginalized groups in our larger society. (p. 57)
- ▶ “Engagement with a more diverse Unitarian Universalism does not need to mean marginalization for those who are older, white-identified, and economically secure. It does mean the willingness to question assumptions, learn a more inclusive version of history, and adopt new practices.” (p. 58)

Minister of Color Avatar

Doreanne Spotswood: Black, Disabled, Femme

- ▶ "... most of the harm done to me has been from UU ministers or seminarians..."
- ▶ "... I was called a quota filler..."
- ▶ "... listening to white colleagues compete with one another over the number of "African American" or Black members
- ▶ "... asked by a colleague during ministry days to park his car... even though I was wearing a GA badge..."
- ▶ "... I was asked ... if I were getting preliminary fellowship and one colleague loudly insisted I ... needed to gather with the ministers getting preliminary fellowship

Minister of Color Avatar, cont.

- ▶ "... colleagues ... know more about the experience of racism and oppression than I do as they marched with Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. ..."
- ▶ "Many of candidates for ministry used *black* and *dark* in negative ways... I pressed them about the impact this might have on members of their congregation who identified as Black or brown..."
- ▶ "The objectification of female candidates and colleagues... Male panel members would describe women as attractive and young..."

Questions to Consider...

- ▶ What thoughts or feelings came up for you as you listened to the reading about the Minister of Color Avatar?
- ▶ Have you heard of or witnessed similar scenarios involving ministers of color, female ministers, or LGBTQ+ ministers?

Microaggression

- ▶ A comment or behavior that “others” or demeans someone because of their different identity. It is based on stereotypes, it is not intentionally hurtful, but it can result in serious psychological & spiritual harm over time
- ▶ Examples of microaggression in UU circles:
 - ▶ You must be new to Unitarian Universalism
 - ▶ Welcome! Do you want to join the Racial Justice Team?
 - ▶ Ooh. I want to touch your child’s hair.
- ▶ Instead of making assumptions about a person’s experience, ask open-ended questions that invite people to talk about themselves & what is important to them

Dealing with Microaggression

Focus on the impact, rather than the intent, of the microaggression.

- ▶ “Ouch. Those words are really hurtful.”

Don't accuse the speaker of being a bad person; focus on behavior and why it was problematic.

- ▶ “I'm sure you didn't mean to cause harm, but your words are problematic.”

Don't forget to ask the target how they're doing and what they need.

- ▶ “That comment made me really uncomfortable. Are you okay, [to person being targeted]?”

Questions to consider...

- ▶ How do you think we should educate people in our congregation about microaggression: what it is & how to respond to it?
- ▶ If you observe a person saying or doing something that is a microaggression, how should you respond?
- ▶ If you say or do something that is a microaggression, how would you want an observer to respond to you?

WCC Recommendations & USG Goals

WCC Recommendation:

- ▶ New structures are needed to provide *leadership education* to UU leaders and should include multicultural hospitality practices as foundational.

USG Goal:

- ▶ Do basic hospitality role-playing and education each year for membership related functions, worship planning and the congregation.

WCC Recommendations & USG Goals

WCC Recommendation:

- ▶ Convening for volunteer leaders at the regional and cluster level should be emphasized to allow support for marginalized groups, including people of color

Proposed USG Goal:

- ▶ Develop identity-based caucuses for ongoing conversation and community
 - ▶ USG Action: Planning is underway for a white Anti-Racist Caucus in our USG congregation

WCC Recommendations & USG Goals

WCC Recommendation:

- ▶ It is essential to provide resources to promote *young adult and youth convenings* that include support and caucusing for those with marginalized leadership.

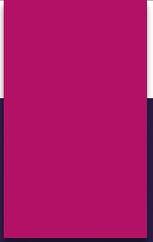
USG Goal:

- ▶ Have an active denominational affairs committee/point person that publicizes denomination offerings throughout the year and our connection to the UUA and region.

Is USG making changes due to WCC Report?

The answer is YES!

- ▶ The USG Board has appointed a committee to review & revise our Covenant of Right Relations
- ▶ The USG Board is planning a program on anti-oppression training for all leaders at USG to be held this fall.
- ▶ The USG Board has endorsed the creation of a white anti-racist caucus group & planning is underway.



How do you think
we are doing?