

## USG Facing Racism Together SGM ~ Pluralsim ~ May , 2024

drawn from Soul Matters materials, see the full packet for more of all of these elements

[www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com](http://www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com)



### Session Plan

**Chalice Lighting** Inclusivity is not ‘how do we make you a part of what we are?’ but ‘how do we become more of what you are?’ [angel Kyodo williams Sensei](#)

**Check-in** *Share recent experiences facing racism in ourselves or others.*

### Quotes for Inspiration/Readings

There are many ways to kneel and kiss the ground. – Rumi

Diversity is being invited to the party; inclusion is being asked to dance. - Verna Myers

Diversity is not just about the differences you like. - Eboo Patel

If I had access to people who looked like me growing up, my life would have been so much easier. The suicide rates for trans and non-binary youth, especially trans and non-binary youth of color, are astronomical. And the reason they're so high is because when you tell us we don't exist, at some point we begin to believe you. And media representation is actually a visual argument to the world, [saying], “We’re here. We’re queer. We’re trans. We’re people of color. We’re gender non-conforming. Our lives matter. We're going and navigating through things that are simultaneously extremely similar to you and extremely different for you, and you cannot erase us!” - [Alok Vaid-Menon](#)

The first thing I am is a person... But people either relate to you as an Indian or as a woman. They relate to you as a category. - [Winona LaDuke](#)

Ask yourself, “What kinds of people do I talk about but never talk with?” Whoever is underrepresented in your life, will be overrepresented in your imagination!... This is the truth of our divided landscape. - [Mónica Guzman](#)

Our [many] identities... should be praised, celebrated and paraded in the streets. They are Mardi gras and gumbo pots... refusing to be boxed in. - [Lana LosAngeles](#)

The religious community is essential, for alone our vision is too narrow to see all that must be seen, and our strength too limited to do all that must be done. Together, our vision widens.  
- Rev. Dr. Mark Morrison-Reed

When you’re standing, beholding the presence of God, at that point you’re not going to be turning around and asking to yourself, ‘How did you get here? Which path did you follow to get to this point?’ No, you’re just going to be absorbed in the presence of God. And so is the person to your left. And so is the person to your right. - [Dr. Omid Safi](#)

Why be a star when you can make a constellation? - Mariam Kaba

## Questions

*This list of questions is an aid for deep reflection. They are not meant to be answered as much as to take you on a journey. Read through the questions 2-3 times until one question sticks out for you and captures your attention. Writing out your thoughts often enables you to go deeper.*

1. What were you taught in your family of origin about pluralism and welcoming difference? How does that still impact you today?
2. Has an experience of being included permanently left a mark on you?
3. Whose refusal to conform made it possible for you to add your uniqueness to the diversity of the world?
4. If you could go back and change a moment of being excluded or excluding someone else, what would it be?
5. Have you ever been treated like [a category](#) rather than a person?
6. If you weren't afraid of being judged or rejected, what part of your diverse self would you let out into the world?
7. What part of your pluralistic self do you have the hardest time acknowledging or embracing with compassion? Your judgmental self? Your lazy self? Your vulnerable self? Your bitter self? Your easily frightened self? Your quick-to-anger self? Your jealous self? Your petty self? Your selfish self?
8. What aspect of your life partner, child or close friend do you need to do a better job of embracing and welcoming in?
9. When it comes to age, our society is not as pluralistic as it thinks. Have you been ignored or cast out because of your age? Was it more emotionally challenging to accept than you expected?
10. Is it possible that the aspect that so annoys you about that other person [echoes a similar part of yourself](#) you deny?
11. It's said that [we exile the parts of ourselves](#) that were once humiliated in our past. Which tender part of your younger self is whispering, "[Please let me back in.](#)"
12. It's said "[Whoever is underrepresented in your life, will be overrepresented in your imagination.](#)" So who is underrepresented in your life? Are they overrepresented in your imagination?
13. Most on-going disagreements are sources of pain, division and discomfort. But ironically some disagreements feel "[fruitful](#)"; They somehow enrich us and our relationships. How has a precious "fruitful disagreement" changed you? Is there wisdom from this fruitful disagreement that could be applied to other areas of your life?
14. Our friends and family each carry/believe/tell a different story about who we are. Whose version of you most closely matches your authentic self? Whose version do you disagree with most strongly? Whose version challenges you to be your best self? Whose do you hope to someday become?

## Three Deep Breaths

**Sharing/Deep Listening** *Respond with your thoughts and experiences with the topic. We create a safe space by listening deeply and not responding. When sharing, connect with what is true for you. When listening, give the speaker your full attention rather than thinking about what you will share.*

**Reflection and Gratitude** *This is a time to reflect briefly on something another person said or to relate additional thoughts that may have occurred as others shared. Consider lifting up one comment or experience for which you are particularly grateful.*

### **Song**

We Are Family, Sister Sledge [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oMVe\\_HcyP9Y](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oMVe_HcyP9Y) (1979!)

Respect, Aretha Franklin [https://youtu.be/zv\\_Zoa-j2Q](https://youtu.be/zv_Zoa-j2Q)

Everybody be Yoself, Keb' Mo' <https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=167400281690187>

### **Extinguishing the Chalice**

To be free, you must embrace  
the breadth of your own existence  
without apology...

But to actually be free, you must  
know and you must fight for the entire

Universes inside of everyone else. [Julián Jamaica Soto](#)