

EYE OPENER (2003, Elliott's Eyes, Inc.)

EYE OPENER Facilitator's Guide

Introduction

It was the assassination of the black civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King in the United States in 1968 that prompted Jane Elliott, the internationally acclaimed diversity champion, to develop the eye color exercise in valuing diversity. Discrimination is deliberately introduced by dividing participants on the basis not of skin color but of eye color. She believes her exercise proves that racism is a learned response and, therefore, insists that education and awareness are the solutions to racism.

Jane has conducted the exercise in many parts of the world. Most of the videos about it were filmed in the USA. However, here in the UK some people dismiss the important messages the videos contain because “that was America, it couldn't happen here” or “that was thirty years ago, it wouldn't happen now”. On this occasion, filmed in Glasgow in September 2003, the 35 participants are from throughout the UK. You may find it is a bit of an ‘Eye Opener’.

Many of the participants in the blue-eyed group were shocked at their own reactions to what for many of them was the new experience of being powerless. Despite volunteering to be there and knowing that it was only an exercise that would soon end, they at times felt frustration, anger and a sense of inferiority. Many of the brown-eyed participants were shocked at how easy they found it to go along with what was happening even though they knew it was wrong. They all now have a clear understanding of the systematic nature of racism as well as the awareness of how their actions – or inaction – can reinforce and perpetuate it.

‘Eye Opener’ shows this exercise is as relevant and necessary in the UK today as it was in Riceville, Iowa more than thirty years ago.

Using this Guide

‘Eye Opener’ is a very powerful tool in helping people to understand the impact power inequalities have on us all, the systematic way racism operates in society and to consider ways to challenge it. Facilitating training sessions about racism and other equity issues can be very challenging as participants come with a range of views and may have strong emotions about the topics raised. Others may have personal experience of being discriminated against or treated unfairly and seeing ‘Eye Opener’ may remind them of a painful past.

These guide notes will help you ensure that your participants understand the important messages ‘Eye Opener’ contains including their own responsibility to challenge racism and all discriminatory treatment. The copyright of this facilitator's guide belongs to Gillian Neish and the moral rights of the copyright holder are hereby asserted. Before your session please make sure you view ‘Eye Opener’ several times to familiarize

yourself with its content and, if you are working within an organisation, find out about current policies and procedures as well as the relevant legislation.

Please note I have used the term ‘black people’ in its positive, political sense (except when quoting Jane Elliott who uses ‘people of color’ as agreed more recently in the United States by people within this group). The term ‘black people’ as used in the UK was borrowed from the US where it had originally been chosen and adopted by people involved in the American Civil Rights Movement. It is still often used here to refer to people who experience racism in this society because they are visibly different from people in the majority ethnic group. It is not a descriptive term just as white is not a descriptive term. It is a political term signifying a common fight against the daily realities of racism. When used in this political context, the term includes people from a wide range of communities with huge cultural, social, linguistic, religious and political differences as well as their decedents ie. Africa, Central and South America and the Caribbean as well as Asia, which includes China as well as the Indian sub-continent, etc.

Sometimes ‘black and ethnic minority people’ is used instead because some black people dislike the term as it is reductionist and prefer to describe themselves in other ways, for example in relation to geographical or religious origins. ‘Black and ethnic minority people’ is at times also used to include white people who experience racial discrimination such as Irish and Jewish people.

Increasingly this is being changed to ‘black and minority ethnic people’ in recognition that everyone belongs to an ethnic group, black and white people, but that in the UK black people are in the minority.

It is, therefore, good practice when working with individuals or groups of people to ask how they refer to themselves and to use their term.

If you will be co-facilitating, find out who you will be working with so that you can arrange to meet up in advance to discuss and agree how you will work together. This is important as you will not only be talking about equity but also modelling it for your participants.

If you need any additional information please do not hesitate to get in touch. We welcome feedback so if you have ideas or suggestions to improve this guide please let us know. We’re also open to constructive criticism so if you notice any errors or have any questions or queries we’d also like to hear from you.

Finally, don’t be put off, though challenging, this is a very rewarding area of work to be involved in. You may not always enjoy it but you will be making a difference!

Gillian Neish – March 2004

Facilitators' notes for 'Eye Opener'

- First**
- Introduce yourself and welcome participants
 - Set the context and explain the objectives
 - Ask the participants to introduce themselves to the group
 - Establish groundrules to create a supportive learning environment

Introduce, show and debrief 'Eye Opener'

Materials:

Copy of 'Eye Opener' (either the 33 minute or 50 minute version)

Method:

Short introduction (input by facilitator)	2 mins
Large group viewing	33 mins
Small group work (optional depending on time available)	20 mins
Large group discussion	45 mins plus

Objectives:

after watching the video and discussing its content the participants will:

- recognize racism and the systematic way it operates by drawing parallels between the racist behaviors based on eye-color in 'Eye Opener' with the racist behaviors based on skin color (and with discriminatory treatment because of other 'isms') because of power inequalities in society;
- recognize the effects discriminatory treatment has on those who discriminate as well as those who are discriminated against;
- acknowledge their own responsibilities in challenging racism and all discriminatory treatment.

Short Introduction to 'Eye Opener'

" Today we're going to expose these people to what they have allowed people of color to be exposed to in your country as long as people of color have been here. We're not going to physically injure anyone, we're not going to threaten anyone with physical danger, we are simply going to apply all the negative stereotypes to these blue eyed folks they've applied to people of color ... for as long as they have lived because it has been alright for them to do that" – **Jane Elliott**

'Eye Opener' shows Jane Elliott conducting an exercise that gives the non-brown-eyed white people who participate the opportunity to find out how it feels to be discriminated against in this society on the basis of a characteristic over which they have no control – not skin color but eye color. At the same time, it gives people in the brown-eyed group the chance to recognize the invisible privileges of being in the 'superior' group and how the desire to keep them can lead them to collude with discriminatory treatment. It gives them all a clear understanding of the systematic way in which racism works so that they

will recognize it and be motivated to challenge it and discriminatory behavior because of other 'isms' in the future. The participants are from across the UK. Some of them knew about the exercise. Others did not. They are not actors - they have all volunteered to take part because they want to make a difference.

Throughout you will hear Jane Elliott use 'people of color' as agreed in the United States by people within this group. In the UK other terms are more commonly used. 'Black people' is used as a positive political term for people from a wide range of communities who experience the daily realities of racism because of being visibly different. The terms 'black and Asian' and 'people from black and minority ethnic groups' are also used.

Watching 'Eye Opener' is not the same as participating in the eye color exercise, however, it will encourage those who see it to actively challenge racist, sexist, homophobic, ageist and other discriminatory behavior whenever they encounter it.

Ask participants to focus, whilst watching 'Eye Opener', on the following so that they can contribute to the discussion afterwards:

- a) the body language, behavior and reflections of the people in the blue-eyed group who are discriminated against;
- b) the body language, behavior and reflections of the participants in the brown-eyed group;
- c) Jane Elliott's role as the authority figure throughout the exercise.

Show the video

After the showing of the video

Small group work - Optional

Divide the participants into small groups to discuss points a, b and c above and to be prepared to share the main points of their discussion in the large group.

Large group discussion

Open a general discussion in the large group focussing on points a, b and c.

- a) **The 'Blue-eyed' group
(this group included anyone who was 'non-brown' e.g. green-eyed people)**
 - During the exercise Jane creates a microcosm of Western society where people who experience racism on the basis of skin color are in the minority. To replicate that relationship, three green-eyed people are brought from the blue-eyed group to join the brown-eyed group.
 - Claire wasn't comfortable with what was happening. However, during the debrief she admits she "... didn't want to be on the floor with the rest of the guys..." and that she "... wasn't big enough to stand up and protect them ..."

- She keeps quiet, passively supporting Jane's position.
- The third to enter, Anne, is told to sit on a seat in the middle of a row. She hesitates then decides to take the slightly longer route which would mean walking in front of two black people rather than the shorter route in front of two white people. Although Anne explains that her decision was because the white woman was writing, that is not how it looks. It looked as though she was choosing who to inconvenience by walking in front of them – and as Jane says “Perception is Everything”.
- Because he was made to feel powerless - an unusual experience for him - Paul did what Jane told him to do even though he did not like doing it and knew it was wrong. He leaves his colleague in the ‘hot seat’ her so that Jane will get off his back (see Áine and Paul below).
- There were not enough chairs for the people in the blue-eyed group. Some of them went straight to the chairs in their section, others seemed intimidated by the situation and huddled together at the back, as if waiting to be directed.

Áine

- **Áine left the blue-eyed group's waiting area after about 20 minutes because “... I objected to being kept in an airless room with nowhere to sit for an indefinite period” and later admits to being “... less tolerant of being treated badly than some of the other people in the room”.**
- **When Áine returns, Jane points out that by leaving she has been able to exercise a freedom that black people don't have ie. the freedom to walk away from an environment that discriminates against her because of a characteristic over which she has no control – eye color. Áine argues that “... the situation is a bit more complicated than that”. She is referring to the fact that there are other ‘isms’ e.g. sectarianism, homophobia. However, whilst not underestimating the effect of discrimination on an individual on any grounds, the issue of visibility adds to the complexity of the relationship between the ‘isms’. It is possible to hide your religion or sexual orientation; or to make the choice to move to a new area and not reveal your religion or sexual orientation. You cannot hide the visible difference in skin color that can trigger racist behavior e.g. the murder of Stephen Lawrence an eighteen year old black student who was confronted and viciously assaulted by a gang of white youths in an unprovoked attack in London on 22nd April 1993. In America, Matthew Shepard, a twenty-one year old University of Wyoming student, chose not to hide his sexual orientation and lived openly as a gay man. On 6th October 1998, he was savagely attacked, burned, beaten, and tortured so badly that passersby thought the body they saw, strung up on a wooden fence in a crucifix position for more than twelve hours in thirty degree fahrenheit weather, was a scarecrow.**
- **Jane says Áine can stay if she apologizes to the black people in the room for exercising a freedom they don't have i.e. the power to walk away from an environment in which she was treated unfairly and felt uncomfortable**

and powerless simply because she had the wrong color eyes. When Áine says “I’m very happy to apologize to the people of color in this room for the discrimination they suffer at the hands of white people” Jane interrupts because although Áine is apologizing for institutional racism, she is not taking responsibility for her own action. By walking away she is not challenging racism but colluding with it and, therefore, contributing to a racist environment. Áine understands Jane’s point, wants to stay and, after apologizing, is allowed to – on the condition that she rejoins the blue-eyed group.

- **From this encounter Áine knows that she has no power and no support from her group. She decides to change her behavior and becomes subdued as she tries to avoid drawing attention to herself - ‘go along to get along’.**
- **Later, when she failed to practice the first listening skill and was therefore, caught writing the second before Jane had finished saying it, Áine blames Jane for tricking her - though it was no trick - but is resigned to the fact that her view of the situation will not be taken seriously.**

Susan and David

- The people in the blue-eyed group have been told to take turns to read aloud the statements on the wall charts. Although they are not sure who should go next, Susan and David agree that she will. They are wrong. Whilst Jane belittles Susan, David remains silent letting Susan take all the blame for their error. He takes no responsibility for his part in the decision that she stand first. David knows he should take responsibility for his own actions but admits he does not like the learning environment and that feeling powerless in that environment had an impact on his behavior.
- Susan admits she may not have stood up had another woman asked her to. So being powerless had an impact on her behavior, too. In the debrief (in the 50 minute version) Susan says she felt “...very very inferior – and I didn’t like it at all ... and I knew it was only 2 hours – I don’t think I’ve experienced that – ever”.
- They lost confidence, did not support each other and behaved uncharacteristically because their power had been stripped away from them in a short exercise.
- Later David admits to not liking being powerless. For some people powerlessness is a common experience. Consider the effect on health (stress, high blood pressure, ulcers etc.), self-esteem (confidence, assertiveness etc.) and the wider consequences and costs for individuals, organisations and society.

Jenny

- Jenny writes the words ‘number one’ instead of using the symbol, 1, because Jane ‘...did say it’. Jane accuses her of trying to be ‘clever’ and ‘cute’ at the expense of accuracy and advises her to stop because “You’re going to be cute

until you're about 45 and then you aren't going to be cute anymore".

- Playing 'cute' or 'the clown' may be strategies that some people adopt but if they are then perceived as only 'cute' or 'the clown' they are less likely to be taken seriously and may be offered fewer opportunities that would allow them to fulfill their potential. What are the longer term implications?

Jackie

- **Jane offers Jackie the chance to join the brown-eyed group because she's behaving like a 'good one'.**
- **Jackie accepts as she has a sore knee and would like a seat but she has not thought through all the consequences, e.g.:**
 - **some of the brown-eyed group do not want her to join them because "...she's trying to pass – just pretending to be one of us – she'll just bring us down";**
 - **some of the brown-eyed group will never trust her if she will leave her own group just for her own comfort;**
 - **to stay in the brown eyed group she will have to agree "... to go along with everything they do and say about blue eyed people";**
 - **some of the blue-eyed group will never trust her if she will leave her own group just to improve her own circumstances without attempting to improve the circumstances for the rest of the blue-eyed group.**

Having been given a chance to think about it, Jackie says she would prefer a seat in the 'blue section'. However, Derek is reluctant to give up his seat!

Compare Jackie's experience with that of black people who may be accused of 'acting white', women of 'behaving like men', working class people whose success affords them a middle class lifestyle of 'getting above themselves' etc. What are the implications for individuals and their relationships with their 'own' and 'other' groups?

Orla

- **In the Listening Skills Test Orla got all four correct but, in the debrief (in the 50 minute version) she says she felt like she was back at school and under pressure to get everything right which meant, therefore, that it had been a long time since she had experienced "...that sort of inferiority complex".**

Many of the black people present had had such an experience very recently and, as Jane said "... they know that when they go home, if they turn on the television, they're going to have it again today, tomorrow and as long as we let it continue".

Áine and Paul

- **Paul checked Áine's paper and gave her two correct sentences out of four. However, he had marked one right in error. He changed his mark for the second one to 'wrong' - even though he knew it was correct - when Jane told**

him to (because she could not read the writing).

- Paul knew that what he did was wrong and admits that he did not like doing it. However, because he felt powerless in relation to Jane he did not even attempt to refuse or challenge her. He felt that “...there was nowhere else to go...” and just wanted to get her off his back so that he felt more comfortable regardless of the consequences for Áine.
- Jane asks us to consider whether we “... do ugly things to people of color then say: I’m doing this for your own good” and expect them to be grateful.
- Because she has decided to ‘go along to get along’, Áine initially says that she appreciates the fact that Paul has amended her test score to make her a better writer but then admits what was obvious i.e. that she was lying because she did not want to end up on the ‘hot seat’ again. Consider the position for people from less powerful groups – as Jane comments “...people of color have to do it everyday...” Áine clearly felt frustration and resentment towards Jane. Consider, too, what it must be like for black people, women, etc whose positions in organisations mean they are responsible for managing staff who do not have to respect them.

- The people in the blue-eyed group did not support each other, even when one of them was being treated unfairly, or defend themselves. Nor did they challenge Jane.

During the debrief in the 50 minute version, Jenny says “I was just wondering how long it would go on before anyone would actually defend someone one or would actually stop it ...” But nobody did.

Doreen adds “I didn’t like myself because I wouldn’t stick up for another colleague”.

Lindsay comments “... I didn’t stand up and say, this is enough, I just accepted it”.

Why not?:

- because of the advantage to themselves?
- they did not want to draw attention to themselves?
- they feared they would be treated more harshly as a consequence?
- they believed they were powerless to change the situation and that to challenge was, therefore, pointless.

What are the implications for challenging discriminatory treatment?

- Towards the end of the exercise, Jane asked all the participants to write three adjectives to describe how they felt and another three to describe how the people in the other group looked.

People in the blue-eyed group said they felt apprehensive, powerless, inferior, uncomfortable, stupid. That is exactly how they were described by people in the brown-eyed group. Being powerless for just two hours turned confident blue-eyed men and women into people who looked intimidated, scared, submissive, uncomfortable and powerless. People who feel like that are unlikely to be able to operate at their best or maximise their potential at work. Creating an environment

free from discrimination where individuals can fulfill their potential for the benefit of themselves and their organisations makes good business sense. Consider the implications for organisations.

b) **The Brown eyed Group**

- Jane Elliott briefed and gained the co-operation of the people in the brown-eyed group before their peers in the blue-eyed group were allowed to enter the room. This is because “...In society, the skin color exercise won’t work unless the majority of white folks co-operate with it and the majority of white folks worldwide co-operate...” She did not tell the people in the brown-eyed group specifically what to do or say. They were simply told “...act white”

Why did they co-operate? Was it:

- for the sake of the exercise, to gain a better understanding of the systematic nature of racism and to help their peers in the blue-eyed group understand that for many black people such treatment, and far worse, is part of their everyday experience? eg.
Lorna “I found the exercise initially really really uncomfortable ... but then after a while, I started to enjoy being in that position of power ... It feels good”.
Jane “You’d better believe it feels good ... and we [white people] get positively reinforced for doing it every single day”.
During the debrief in the 50 minute version, Lorna says “... basically I’m in that position on a dally basis... I mean, that’s mild in comparison to what usually happens to me as a black woman”.
Sazi (originally from South Africa) reflects on his past experience “I grew up without the freedom to leave or exercise choice – these people, sitting on the floor ... what was happening here today was nothing, [compared to] what some of us have been through through racism”.
- because of the advantage to themselves and to avoid any negative consequences? eg.
Michelle “... how easy it was for me ... to side with the group that you were in if you were on top”.
Paul “... because in this environment there was no other route to go”. Jane “So you went along in order to shut me up?” Paul “Eventually, yes”.
- they believed they were powerless to change the situation and that to challenge was, therefore, pointless.
Clair “...lucky... that I was in this group”
- they were doing what they were told to do.
During the debrief in the 50 minute version, Paula says “I wanted to stick up for those people but because I was in that role ... I found that difficult, not being able to stick up for them ...”

Mandeep "... people in power, when they abuse it, they get so comfortable they don't care what happens to anyone else".

- No-one in the brown eyed group challenged Jane. Certainly they had agreed to cooperate with the exercise but there were times when some of their colleagues in the blue-eyed group were marginalised, isolated and humiliated (Áine, for example) but they remained silent and let it happen. When Áine attempted to challenge "... it's a bit more complicated than that..." everyone was silent and silence can be interpreted as collusion. They chose to 'carpet gaze' to avoid drawing attention to themselves and the risk of being associated with 'trouble'. Edmund Burke said that "the only thing necessary for the perpetuation of evil is for good people to do nothing". And on this occasion, good people did nothing. Wallace "... so even though she was the one who was doing the discrimination, I was just as bad because I was doing nothing to stop it." During the debrief in the 50 minute version, Michelle and Jane (a participant in the brown-eyed group, made the following comments:
Michelle "... scared because it was so easy to sit here and judge other people"
Jane "... frightened ... how easy it is..."
Challenging is everyone's responsibility – when just one person challenges it can be difficult to be heard or taken seriously. What are the implications? Working together and making links, including across 'isms', can make it easier to challenge effectively.
- Don't assume that all black people understand the systematic nature of racism just because they are black (just as not all women understand feminism). Though some of the black participants discussed personal experiences of racism they did not always recognize them as racist, e.g.:
 - During the debrief in the 50 minute version, Monique says "I've never been aware of racism but after today, I've just picked up how you can get racism ... just discreet words and things like that"
 - Ying Lei "... when someone says I'm going to buy a chinky...is that racist?" Other people, black and white, in the room say that they think it is and Jane's response is "Yes, and what you need to say is 'absolutely it's racist and I hope you never say it in my presence again and I hope you never say it anywhere else again'".
- **When Roger came under Jane's critical eye for failing to stand to read his wall sign, as those who read before him had done, it was Paula, not one of his blue-eyed colleagues, who quietly pointed out his error. Jane suggested she did this because "... people of color, particularly blacks, are accustomed to taking care of white folks". Lorna agreed with this point (in the post-exercise comments at the end of 'Eye Opener'). Others did not. In any group, there will be a range of responses.**
- Even though some of the people in the brown eyed group may not have been conscious of 'a system' beforehand, when Jane told them to "act white" they knew

exactly how they were expected to behave and colluded with Jane as she treated the people in the blue-eyed group as though they were inferior.

Kay realised that the power relationship established during the exercise gave her (and everyone else in the brown eyed group) an automatic advantage that she did not have to 'earn', 'prove' or justify. During the debrief she said "I've never felt powerful before but I realised If I make other people feel powerless then I am powerful, so I need to be aware of what that difference is and try to even it out a bit".

- Towards the end of the exercise, Jane asked all the participants to write three adjectives to describe how they felt and another three to describe how the people in the other group looked. To people in the blue-eyed group, their brown-eyed colleagues looked stern, smug, confident, arrogant, superior – and that is how some of them described themselves. However, they also felt uncomfortable, sympathetic and empathetic. This is an important point because the blue-eyed people made judgements about their brown-eyed colleagues based on their visible behavior – which was, in the main, passive, silently accepting the 'superior' status assigned to them - not their invisible feelings or intentions. What are the implications for the relationships between people from different black and white communities? Jane questions whether, in reality, most people feel uncomfortable, sympathetic and empathetic about racism. She comments that if they did they'd do something to stop it! She says that "...they feel powerful, comfortable, at ease, lucky, grateful and they enjoy it". That is what their behavior suggests although, as the brown-eyed participants in 'Eye-Opener' say, that is not how they felt! And we often make judgements based on how people behave because very few people are telepathic and know what others are thinking! It is important, therefore, to be anti-racist, anti-discriminatory and to actively challenge e.g. by challenging racist remarks and promoting good practice rather than non-raacist, non-discriminatory which often means remaining silent which can be interpreted as supporting power inequalities and collusion with the status quo.

c) **Jane Elliott's Role**

- Jane Elliott clearly operated a system.
 1. She identified a group of people by a characteristic over which they had no control – eye color;
 2. discriminated against them and lowered her expectations of them;
 3. forced them, by her discriminatory treatment, to look and act inferior;
 4. when they responded negatively to the discriminatory treatment she blamed their poor behavior on the characteristic over which they have no control not on the discriminatory treatment she had meted out;
 5. despite the fact that the majority of the people in the blue-eyed group were passive throughout the exercise, **she used the few examples of negative behavior to stereotype the 'group' and justify further discriminatory treatment.**

- Jane frequently highlighted the negative actions or characteristics of people in the blue-eyed group in line with the inferior status she had assigned, inferring that they indicated a broad generalization throughout that ‘group’ e.g.:
 6. Roger was only the second person (the first was Susan) to be chewing gum. However, when he suggests swallowing it Jane said “You too? You people don’t know any better than to swallow your gum.”
 7. Having established that Liz, Colin and Ian had no writing materials, Jane encourages the brown-eyed people to stereotype all blue-eyed people saying “Are these people all alike? Are they all dysfunctional in the same way?”
- **Jane used the statements on the wall signs to make additional points, e.g.:**
- **‘If blueys don’t like it here why don’t they go back where they came from?’**
People had heard that said many times – but not so politely!
 - **‘I’m not prejudiced some of best friends are blue-eyed’**
 Mandeep “They’re trying to say that they’re not racist and that they’ve got black friends.”
- Jane used language to reinforce the power difference. She referred to the people in the blue-eyed group as ‘them’ and ‘Bluey’ is used as a derogatory term in the statements on the walls. Compare with terms used to refer to black people, women, disabled people, lesbians and gay men etc.
- Who or what plays that ‘Jane Elliott’ role in society? Explore specific examples in education, the media, religion, government policy etc.

Summarize

- ‘Eye Opener’ has shown that discriminatory treatment, whether intentional or not, and loss of power cause people to respond in many different ways. A few people will respond in ways that are considered by those in more powerful groups to be negative. **The negative behaviors are not the result of a genetic predisposition. They are a response to the discriminatory treatment.** These specific ‘negative’ examples may then be used stereotypically to characterise a whole ‘group’ of people be they black people, women, gay men and lesbians, etc. **It is discrimination that prompts the negative responses that re-inforce prejudice.** The negative responses are then cited as justification for further discriminatory treatment.
- Racism (and other ‘isms’) works in the same systematic way. **People are not born racist – it is a learned response.** In this society, white people and black people are conditioned to the myth of white superiority and, by definition, to the myth of the inferiority of those who are other than white. Jane introduced herself

as “...a white female from the United States of America and I know exactly how to be a racist. I was trained in racism from the moment of my birth and if you’re white and live in the UK you too know how to be racist”. Ask participants to consider how and what they first learned about people from black communities? It is not surprising some people hold certain views about racism and black people (and other ‘isms’) when you consider the limited, selective and sometimes subjective way they received their information from, for example, their parents, their education, films, stories, newspapers, television programmes etc. because as an African proverb says, ‘Until the lions have their historians, tales of hunting will always glorify the hunter’.

- How ‘good’ or ‘intelligent’ people are has nothing to do with eye color – or skin color. **There are as many differences in any group as there are in any other group, including your own, however you choose to define your group.** However, it is easier to recognize stereotypes about our own group as stereotypes because we are fully aware of the true breadth of diversity within it. Where we have little personal experience or knowledge of a particular group that may not be the case and therefore our views are more likely to be influenced by specific experiences from which we may make broad generalizations inappropriately or information from other sources i.e. history taught at school, media etc. which may be selective and/or subjective.
- The power inequalities that create the climate in which racism and other ‘isms’ flourish, have an impact not only on people who are discriminated against but also on those in the position to discriminate. As ‘Eye Opener’ shows, during the exercise many of the people in the ‘inferior’, blue-eyed group lost confidence and motivation. Under the pressure of the exercise, they were focussing on Jane and avoiding drawing attention to themselves rather than being able to concentrate on the task they were given i.e. to write correctly four simple sentences which had been repeated several times. Only Orla got them all right and she admitted to feeling the inferiority complex of her school days. Most of the group scored zero. However, people in the ‘superior’, brown-eyed group were affected, too. Many of them also focussed their attention on Jane and on avoiding drawing attention to themselves leaving them little energy for their own productive, constructive thoughts and/or actions.
There are, then, advantages for everyone, individuals and society as a whole, of creating an ‘ism’-free environment where each one of us is more likely to be able to fulfill our potential.
- People don’t all want to be the same. However, everyone wants - and should expect - to be accepted, appreciated, recognized and cherished as they are i.e. regardless of skin color, gender, sexual orientation, disability etc. and to receive equitable treatment under the law.
- Together, the participants in the exercise could have spoken up, supported each

other, challenged Jane and made a difference – but they didn't. During the debrief in the 50 minute version, Jane asked that "... every white person in this room who wants to be treated the way we treat our citizens of color, please stand up." No one stood. The 'Eye Opener' participants were, therefore, admitting that they know that racism exists and that they would not like to be treated like that themselves. As 'Eye Opener' clearly shows the systematic nature of racism, those who view it can no longer deny the existence of racism. Quoting Edmund Burke, Jane said, "**The only thing necessary for the perpetuation of evil is for good people to do nothing.** I want the people who are exposed to me to be determined to do something."

Encourage your participants to network with and support each other. It is everyone's responsibility to challenge racism (and discriminatory treatment because of other 'isms'). Attending a training/briefing session is not as important as what happens afterwards! Remind them that legislation and equal opportunities policies support anti-racist action. What will they **do** to make a difference? Implementing organisational policies is a good place to start!

- Still in large group, ask for and answer any questions
- Ask participants to think about what they can do to challenge racism and all discriminatory treatment. Encourage them to commit to at least one action point to make a positive difference.
Share a few examples (depending on time available) in the large group.
- Training sessions usually raise more questions than they answer. Encourage participants to raise further questions and queries back at their workplaces and to continue the discussion about the practical strategies they can adopt to implement policy and ensure they work in anti-racist, good practice ways.
- Thank participants for attending.
- Close
- Debrief with your co-facilitator or another member of your support network
- Treat yourself!

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