

2019 People of Color Conference -- Seattle, WA

We're Still Here

— Facilitating Difficult Dialogues —
That Include First
Nations/Indigenous/Native Folx

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Agenda

- Acknowledgements
 - Land
 - Self
 - Group
- The Work
- Working with Triggers
- Path Forward

This workshop is intended to be a space where Native/Indigenous/First Nations folx doing this work feel seen, heard, and validated, and have the opportunity to acknowledge what within us we bring to this work and how best to face and process experiences that trigger parts of our identities.

Land Acknowledgement

— Where are we? —



<https://native-land.ca>
Native Land app

Territories Languages Treaties

Search your address, or toggle switches above to add shapes. Click around! [Think critically about this map](#)

Washington State Convention Cer

Territories

Languages

Treaties

Puget Sound Salish
Duwamish

Export Map Colors Labels

Land acknowledgements are a vital first step in facing the irreparable harm done to Indigenous Peoples at the hands of colonizers and settlers.

These acknowledgements, when done correctly, are a gesture of respect to both the land itself and to the Indigenous communities it was stolen from, and serve as a stepping stone to further action.

It is imperative that we acknowledge that we are on the traditional and sacred land of the first people of Seattle, the Duwamish People past and present, and honor with gratitude the land itself and the Duwamish Tribe.

We must also acknowledge that this land was forcefully taken from its original inhabitants and that there are no plans to return or relinquish said land.

Furthermore, due to the mass genocide and forced assimilation of Indigenous Peoples, we often cannot accurately account for all of the original inhabitants of the land in this country, so we acknowledge all those who go unrecognized as a result of this violent colonization.

Self Acknowledgement

— Who are we? —

Who am I, Lizz Albany?

I am...

a coach

Mohawk

middle class

an athlete

biracial

a sister

WHITE-PRESENTING

Highly
educated

cisgender

a teacher

a daughter

an aunt

overweight

straight/heterosexual

female

Irish
Catholic

Someone with
mental illness

able-bodied

Who am I, Shanelle Henry?

I am...

Black

BROOKLYN

JAMAICAN /
DOMINICAN

Social
Justice
Educator

DARK-
SKINNED

WOMAN

a daughter

Highly-
educated

a sister

a parent

middle-class

heterosexual

cisgender

Spiritual

Temporarily
able-bodied

female

OVER 40

Group Acknowledgment

— Who are you? —



The Work

— How do Native/Indigenous/First Nation folx show up to the conversations? —

The Challenges

- Often, even in spaces built for people of color, we are the *only* in the room.
- As peoples from geographically disparate places, each of us often have very different lived experiences from other Native folx, though we are often lumped together as one and the same.
- Some of us are very connected to our ancestry, while others, due to forced assimilation, are not, leaving us to grapple with a wide range of emotions.
- Many of our deeply held beliefs are directly counter-cultural to the beliefs of modern society.
- We are generally spoken about as if we only exist in the past.

What is a
TRIGGER?

A **trigger** is something that an individual says or does, or a school policy or practice, that makes us, as members of social groups, feel diminished, offended, threatened, stereotyped, marginalized, discounted, micro-aggressed, devalued or attacked.

*adapted from Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice, Second Edition,
Routledge, 2007*

Triggering Statements

- What's the big deal? It's just a mascot...
- What's the big deal? It's just a holiday...
- What's the big deal? It's just a costume...
- Oh, you're native? My grandma is 1/16 Cherokee!
- America is a nation of immigrants.
- These girls are my tribe.
- [Insert cute animal here] is my spirit animal!
- Wait, so do you live on a reservation? In a teepee?
- But you don't *look* Native...But you're not *dressed* like a Native...
- So...and..so...went on the war path.
- Lowest man on the Totem pole.
- Ohh...so that's why you got that scholarship/admittance letter.
- Let's have a pow wow about this.
- Any version of: "You're so articulate" or "You're so well-spoken" or "You speak so well."
- You're so exotic looking!
- Can I touch your hair?

Triggers do not
necessarily threaten our
physical safety --
we often feel
psychologically
threatened.

Triggers cause an emotional response.

Hurt

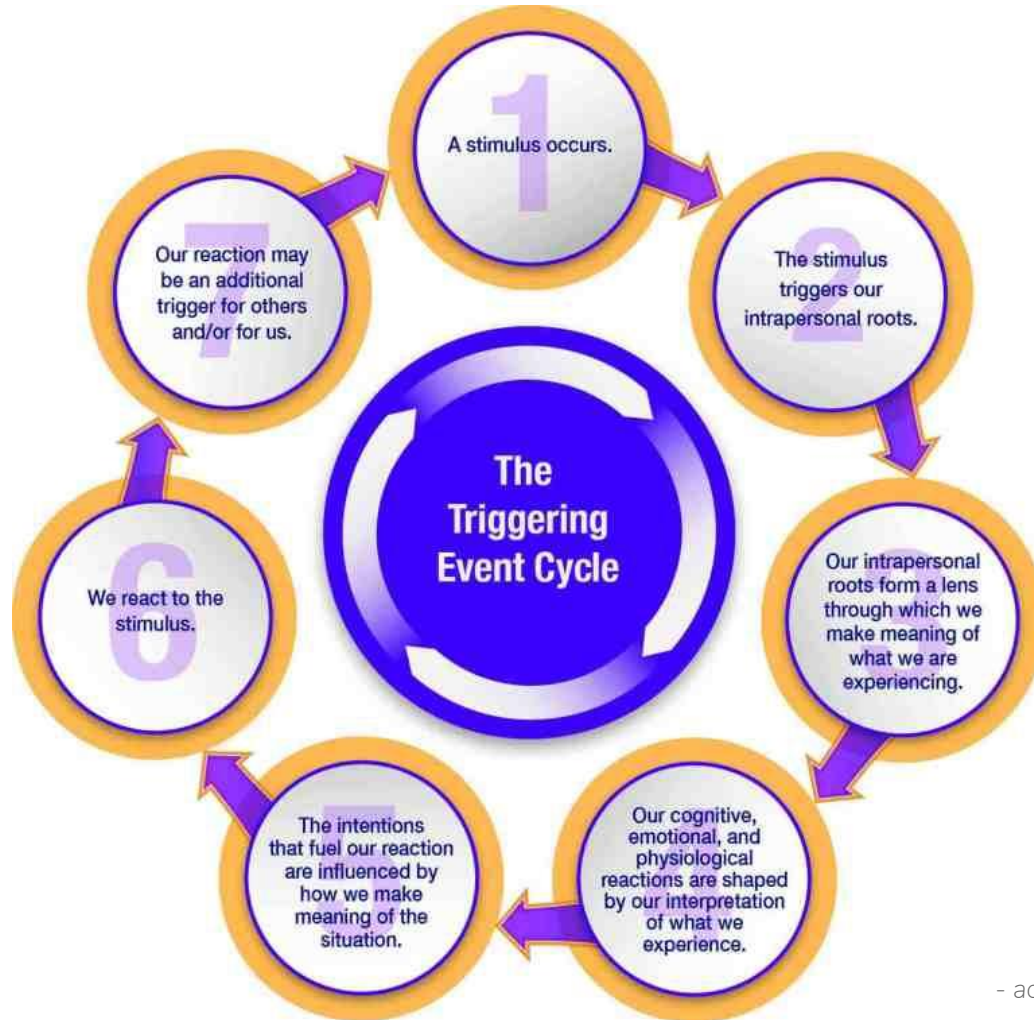
Fear

Confusion

Surprise

Anger

Embarrassment



Responses to Triggers

Leave

We physically remove ourselves from the triggering situation.

Avoidance

We avoid future encounters with and withdraw emotionally from that trigger us.

Silence

We do not respond to the triggering situation though we feel upset by it.

We endure the situation without doing or saying anything.

Responses to Triggers

Release

We notice the trigger, but do not take it in. We choose to let it go.

We do not feel the need to respond.

Attack

We respond with an intention to hurt or offend whoever has triggered us (retaliation).

Internalization

We internalize the trigger. We believe it to be true.

Responses to Triggers

Rationalization

We convince ourselves that we misinterpreted the trigger, that the intention was not to hurt us, or that we are overreacting so we can avoid saying anything about the trigger.

Confusion

We feel upset but we are not clear about why we feel that way. We know that we feel angry, hurt, or offended, we just don't know what to say or do about it.

Shock

We are caught off guard, unprepared to be triggered by this person or situation, therefore we have a difficult time responding.

Responses to Triggers

Name

We identify what is upsetting us to the triggering person or organization/group.

Discuss

We name the trigger and invite discussion about it with the triggering person or organization/group.

Confront

We name the trigger and demand that the offending behavior or policy be changed.

Responses to Triggers

Surprise

We respond to the trigger in an unexpected way. For example, we may respond with constructive humor that names the trigger, but also makes people laugh.

Strategize

We work with others to develop a programmatic or political intervention to address the trigger in a larger systemic context.

Discretion

Due to the dynamics in a situation (e.g. power differential, risk of retribution or physical violence), we decide it is not in our best interest to respond at that time, but choose to address the trigger in another way at another time.

Turn and Talk

1. Which responses are most typical for you when you are triggered?
2. What blocks you from responding to triggers in ways that feel more effective?
3. Which responses would you like to add to your repertoire? What can you do to add them?

Responses to Triggers

Leave

Avoidance

Silence

Release

Attack

Internalization

Rationalization

Confusion

Shock

Name

Discuss

Confront

Surprise

Strategize

Discretion

Path Forward

— What happens next? —

Persisting through the Challenges

- Knowing how difficult this work is, and how present triggers can be in our daily lives, we have to take practical steps to sustain ourselves.
 - Seek out allies, both allies of color and white allies.
 - Practice articulating your needs. Build time and space for yourself to meet your needs.
 - Anticipate triggers and decide what response works for you in certain situations - do you let it go, confront it, find support, circle back later?

Native perspectives are **valuable** and **indispensable**, so we need to find ways to keep **speaking up** and **amplifying** our voices.

How do we bring this work forward?

- What do we need, personally, to sustain ourselves in this work?
- What do we need from allies, whether they be white allies, or allies of color, to help sustain us in this work?

Reflect on these two questions using the chart paper provided to your group, then quietly circulate the room for a gallery walk before returning to your seats.

We exist. We resist. We rise.

START, STOP, CHANGE, CONTINUE

—— Personal Commitment: What are ——
you willing to do?

Questions?

— We thank you for attending! —

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