



Souls of Our Students:
Appreciating Differences
A Transgender Focus

Facilitator's Guide and DVD for
Community Audiences



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Souls of our Students-Appreciating Differences was a collaborative project of Mecklenburg Ministries, Charlotte Coalition for Social Justice, Temple Beth El and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. It was made possible through the generous support of Foundation For The Carolinas and was "seeded" by the funders of the original Souls of White Folks, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. The 2008 Souls of Our Students documentary addresses the following areas of diversity: race, religion, sexual orientation and socioeconomic status. In 2015, collaboration was formed building on the previous project’s success. The Souls of Our Students- A Transgender Focus film is a 10 minute supplement capturing interviews of three transgender students sharing some of the struggles they face. Two bonus features are also included focusing on the importance of pronouns and a parent’s story.

The Souls of our Students Committees include Rabbi Judith Schindler, Temple Beth El; Lacey Williams, Charlotte Coalition for Social Justice; Judy Seldin-Cohen, Community Activist; Terri H. Jarina, Roman Catholic Diocese of Charlotte; Dr. Mark Larson, Methodist Counseling & Consultation; Kathleen Carpenter, Unitarian Universalist Church of Charlotte; Rev. Lawrence Womack, St. Martin’s Episcopal Church; Rev. Russ Dean, Park Road Baptist Church, José Hernández-París, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools; Reverend Robin Coira, Myers Park Baptist Church; Dianne English, Community Building Initiative; Dr. Ellen Essick, Section Chief, NC Healthy School; Dr. Maria Hanlin, Habitat for Humanity of Greater Greensboro; Deb Kaclik, Director of Arts, Health, Physical Education and PreK-12 Curriculum Support Programs at Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools; Bishop Tonyia Rawls, Freedom Center for Social Justice; Todd Rosendahl, Director of School Outreach, Time Out Youth; Reverend Danny Trapp, MeckMin; Emily Zimmern, Levine Museum of the New South.

The documentary Souls of Our Students was produced by Professional Communications and received a national 2008 Telly Award. Professional Communications also directed and produced the A Transgender Focus supplemental film.

This Facilitator’s Guide was designed for MeckMin, 3900-A Park Road, Charlotte, NC 28209,

Phone - 704-565-5455, FAX – 704-565-5499, email:meckmin@meckmin.org, website:
www.meckmin.org.

How to use this Facilitator's Guide:

This guide is designed to provide you with an understanding of the overall goals of the Souls of our Students project and specific objectives for using the Souls of Our Students documentaries with various audiences to increase their learning and understanding of difference.

The guide is structured into several parts: a suggested outline for a 2 hour presentation of the material including the videos, a section with notes to the facilitator, a detailed facilitator's guide for that outline, and appendices with supplementary information.

Workshop Objectives:

- Increase awareness, knowledge, and understanding of differences in your communities (e.g., school, faith community, and neighborhood)
- Encourage dialogue about differences
- Have an opportunity to practice discussing differences with others
- Gain commitment from participants to continue the dialogue and make behavioral changes

The outline suggested is for a two-hour presentation that includes the original 26-minute DVD, *Souls of Our Students*, to introduce the topics (difference, discrimination, harassment, privilege, change, and hope) for discussion in the context of race, religion, socioeconomic status and sexual orientation and the 11 minute DVD, *A Transgender Focus* to introduce gender identity.

Due to the challenging topics and the need for the facilitator to be able to manage the dialogue and any resistance that may occur, the recommended group size is no more than 25 participants. Note there is not a break scheduled for this 2 hour session – any breaks needed should be given at the facilitator's discretion.

Facilitators Checklist

Pre-reading:

- Workshop Objectives and Notes to the Facilitator section
- Watch both DVD's and bonus features and familiarize yourself with the design detail
- Glossary of Terms
- Additional resources

Equipment Needed:

- TV/DVD player or laptop, projector and screen
- Souls of Our Students DVD's

Materials Needed:

- Copies of handouts for included activities (Appendix B & C)
- Chart Paper and markers

Recommended Room Set-Up

- Viewing should be set up so that all participants can see the DVD's and the chart stand as they are seated in a circle. Please do not allow participants to sit behind tables or desks (that will create barriers to dialogue.)
- Have hand outs available and a chart pad and stand (visible to all) with paper and markers

Design Outline

	Approximate Time
Welcome	2 minutes
Objectives	2 minutes
Ground Rules	5 minutes
Differences Activity	20 minutes
DVD Introduction	3 minutes
View Souls of Our Students DVDs	35 minutes
Small group discussion	15 minutes
Stereotype Activity	20 minutes
Next Steps	10 minutes
Closing	2 minutes

Notes To The Facilitator:

The Souls of Our Students Facilitator's Guide and DVDs focus on the issues of difference, discrimination, harassment, privilege, change, hope, and accommodation in the context of race, religion, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation and gender identity.

A great deal of the conversation spurred by these DVDs will relate to stereotypes – what they are and how they shape our perception of ourselves and others. The Glossary of Terms in Appendix B may be helpful for facilitating conversations.

On Confidentiality:

Emphasize that what is shared in this session is confidential. When individuals relate stories about anyone who is not present it is better not to use that person's name as it is unfair to criticize someone who is not present and therefore not able to offer her/his perspective.

Encouraging the group to establish ground rules will be helpful in creating an atmosphere of confidentiality.

On Diversity:

The word diversity encompasses many things. It is crucial that the group understand that no matter what their background is, they contribute to the diversity of their school, faith community or neighborhood. Diversity is a word that applies to everyone, not just people who are different from the majority or dominant norm. Examples of the ways that people can be different include but are not limited to: race, gender, gender identity, gender

expression, class, country of origin, religion, political beliefs, ability, sexual orientation, family composition, immigration status, personality traits, talents, size, and/or appearance.

On Privilege:

Advantages accrue to some groups while disadvantages accrue to other groups. Dialogue about privilege might include the examination of advantages and disadvantages that come with being a member of different groups (team, school, community). It might also include exploration of how one knows which group is which, what outside cultural or media messages confirm a particular perception, and how privilege affects relationships with others.

On Stereotypes:

Stereotypes are ideas/messages about people based on the group to which they belong, or are perceived to belong. Stereotypes are not facts, even if some pieces of them have some basis in an actual behavior attributable to some members of a group. It is very important to keep this in the forefront of any conversation with the group about stereotypes (see Internalized Oppression below) in order not to reinforce their negative perceptions of themselves or of each other. For you to do this, it may also be necessary to examine your own ideas. This is not a blame issue, but simply an acknowledgement of the fact that we all are bombarded with stereotypes—overtly or subtly—on a daily basis. Everyone engaged in diversity activities must be willing to examine their own ideas, attitudes, beliefs and behaviors.

On Internalized Oppression:

Internalized Oppression is a term used in diversity work to denote the process by which oppressed, marginalized or minority groups come to believe the negative stereotypes that they receive about themselves and to act accordingly. This can manifest itself in many ways. Here are some major ones:

- S/he feels shame at being a member of the group and seeks to disassociate and find another way to identify – this is different from a confident and open-minded person embracing a diverse range of peers. If, for example, a person never wants to be with members of her/his racial group, that is a red flag for follow-up.
- S/he blames members of her/his group for bringing about their oppressed condition. You should be on alert whenever you hear someone negatively judge or blame their own group.
- S/he lacks belief in herself/himself because of the social messages that tell her/him that s/he is inferior and incapable (e.g., girls aren't good at Finance or Engineering, Black or African-Americans are only good at sports, etc.).
- A person refuses to acknowledge issues of stereotyping, prejudice or discrimination related to an aspect of her/his identity. Such people may profess instead, for example, some sense of special status or may always simply switch the discussion to another topic or another aspect of their identity. While it may seem positive that a person is not preoccupied by these issues, it is important to recognize that denial can be a symptom of a sense of powerlessness which in many cases is a reflection of internalized oppression.

It is important to distinguish between internalized oppression and taking personal responsibility to change the things over which the person has control. When someone expresses anger, resentment, shame or rejection of her/his group *as a whole*, this is a manifestation of internalized oppression; it is based upon a stereotype of the

group. This is different than someone deciding that s/he will define herself/himself and make every effort not to be bound by the constraints that are often placed on members of her/his identity group.

On Laughter:

People often laugh or make jokes about things that hit them in a spot where they are vulnerable—thinking if I just laugh it off, then people won't know I am hurt—or about topics which make them uncomfortable. It is important not to let inappropriate laughter destroy a safe environment. Challenge the individuals who are laughing by asking them why they are laughing.

Helpful phrases for handling laughter:

Talk more about that.

How did that make you feel?

Why do you think that is?

Special note on facilitating tough topics:

The topics that are addressed in *Souls of Ours* Students can be difficult and are not regularly discussed in most people's everyday lives. There may be resistance in sharing stories of discrimination or marginalization due to fear of more discrimination and marginalization. If you sense this is the case, please feel free to use personal examples of experiences that are applicable. Sharing your own experiences and feelings opens the door for others to do the same.

However, avoid responding to participants' stories or comments with one of your own and/or telling participants how they should respond or react based on your own feelings or experiences. Also, refrain from saying things like, "Are you sure that happened?", "That's probably not what happened.", "I'm sure that's not what they meant", or "You took it the wrong way." In diversity work, it is important that people feel comfortable sharing their stories without fear that their personal experience will be contradicted, diluted, reframed or judged. Always feel free to ask for clarification when a person shares something.

It is imperative to create a safe environment where people feel that they can really open up. It may help to ask the group if there are any ground rules or guidelines (suggestions below) they would like to have when talking about these topics. If they agree on any rules, they must be enforced by both you and by the members of the group.

As these are difficult subjects, it is important to allow for silences. Often, participants are processing and thinking about the subject. Rapid fire responses to questions may not be common. If the silence lingers too long, feel free to rephrase the question, ask the group if they understand what you just asked them, or lead off with an example from your own experience.

Design Detail

Activity	Do/Say	Suggested Times
<p>Welcome</p> <p>Facilitator Note: create a chart with agenda</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce yourself • Talk about why this workshop is being offered. • Give a brief overview of the topic and the agenda for the session <p>Optional Have participants briefly introduce themselves</p>	2 minutes
<p>Workshop Objectives</p> <p>Facilitator Note: Create a chart with objectives</p>	<p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase awareness, knowledge, understanding of differences • Encourage dialogue about differences • Have an opportunity to practice discussing differences • Gain commitment to continue dialogue 	2 minutes
<p>Establish Ground Rules</p> <p>Facilitator Note: Create a chart with ground rules</p>	<p>Review ground rules and ask if all can agree by a show of hands</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to each other • Take turns speaking • Participation by everyone • Remain open to all ideas, even if they differ from your own • What is said here, stays here 	5 minutes
<p>Differences Activity</p> <p>Facilitator Note: Make copies of the Who Am I chart (Appendix B) for each participant</p>	<p>Step 1 –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a group, create a comprehensive list (on a chart) of the ways that people can be different. Examples include but are not limited to: Race, gender, gender identity, class, country of origin, religion, political beliefs, ability, sexual orientation, family composition, immigration status, personality traits, talents, size, appearance • Try to get every person 	<p>20 minutes total</p> <p>Step 1: 5 minutes</p>

	<p>to mention a difference. It may be helpful to ask the participants to name some of the types of differences they see at work, at the movies or shopping, and verify whether all those differences are accounted for on the chart list</p> <p>Step 2 – Individually, participants fill in the blanks on a Who am I chart (Appendix B) with the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How I describe myself • How I think others describe me • The one thing about me that might surprise you <p>Help participants with an example of differences you’re looking to have on the handout (e.g., describe yourself in terms of race, gender, family composition, etc.) Also note for participants that differences can be both seen (e.g., physical ability) and unseen (e.g., marital status.)</p> <p>Step 3 – In small groups of 3-4 (max) share their Who am I chart.</p>	<p>Step 2: 3 minutes</p> <p>Step 3: 12 minutes</p>
<p>DVD introduction</p>	<p>We’re going to watch a DVD made specifically to highlight diversity and inclusion issues affecting high school students. These issues and impacts are also present at work, neighborhoods, and faith communities. As you watch the video reflect on how the experiences and behaviors the students discuss are similar to those you’ve seen in other places. The DVD shares examples with a focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ways in which young people experience targeting, harassment and 	

	<p>exclusion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The forms of behavior among young people that reflect their inability to deal respectfully with differences among their peers. • The ways in which the students' experiences affect their sense of themselves, others, and the world around them. • The ways in which social issues, ideas, norms and values—particularly as reflected in media coverage of news and current affairs, popular culture and advertising—influence how people see themselves and others. • How peoples' inability to relate respectfully across lines of difference affects their relationships with one another, their communities, workplaces, and within their schools culture. 	
<p>Handout for notes during DVD. Appendix C View Souls of Our Students Appreciating Differences and A Transgender Focus</p>	<p>We are providing a handout for you to take notes or jot down questions you may have during the video. Ensure all workshop participants are positioned so that they can see and hear the video.</p>	37 minutes
<p>Reflection in small groups</p> <p>Facilitator Note: Create a chart with your selection of questions for discussion based on your assessment of the group and time available.</p>	<p>Ask participants to move back into their small groups and discuss the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What stood out for you from the DVDs? Why? • What did you learn? • Was there a statement that resonated with you? Which one? • Why is it important to hear the stories of people who are different than us? • Some of the students 	15 minutes

	<p>talked about the impact of another person speaking out for them. Why is this so powerful? Have you ever needed this help? Provided it?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is respecting pronouns so important? What small accommodations could you make for transgender students? • How would you support greater understanding between groups of people who disagree on important topics? 	
<p>Next Steps Facilitator Note: Chart questions for discussion. Capture ideas on chart paper.</p>	<p>We've talked about difference today and seen a video of Charlotte Mecklenburg students. Let me first ask, "What have you learned?" Recall from the video that the students challenge us to do things differently and to make small accommodations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What could you do to make a change in your community, workplace, school, or faith community to make it more inclusive? • What will you do individually that will build bridges across differences? • What support would you like from others in this group to do that? <p>So, for the next five minutes we're going to brainstorm ways to make changes and build bridges. One rule for our brainstorming is that we will not judge anyone's ideas. Let's get our ideas on a chart and then each of you can decide which idea works best for you individually, your family, your</p>	

	<p>neighborhood, or your community. Now, who has an idea? Facilitator Note: If the ideas don't start flowing here's some suggestions to get the group started:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have coffee with someone to discuss your differences • Continue meeting in your small group and build upon the Who Am I dialogue • Make discussions about difference a regular part of one of your activities like dinner club, or a lunch date • Hold cultural activities (e.g. a pot luck meal foods and people from different cultures) 	
<p>Public Commitment Facilitator Note: <i>Optional but recommended.</i> Public commitment is an effective way to reinforce future behavior.</p>	<p>Have each individual say which of the ideas they will use to continue the dialogue and in what time frame</p>	5 minutes
<p>Closing</p>	<p>Thank you for your participation. Reinforce commitment to continue dialogue. Offer additional resources if available (appendix D has additional resources)</p>	2 minutes

Appendix A – Glossary of Terms

Ally	A person (a member of the group with power) who shows full support of an oppressed person, group or community by being respectful, accepting, and welcoming of all people. Many allies also advocate on behalf of the oppressed group.
Bullying	The repeated direct or indirect physical, emotional and/or psychological assault of an individual. Targets of bullying are perceived to be inferior to the bully and are selected intentionally. Bullying can take the following forms: physical aggression (hitting, spitting, kicking), social alienation (gossiping, spreading rumors, excluding), verbal aggression (name-calling, teasing), intimidation (playing tricks on, publicly challenging) and/or sexual (commenting on body parts, demeaning comments based on sexuality). Cyber-bullying – using technology to threaten, insult, or harass.
Bisexual	Someone who is attracted to both women and men.
Community	A group of people whose members are connected to one another through a common identity, a set of experiences, and/or a shared purpose.
Cisgender	The term used to describe people whose gender identity or expression aligns with those typically associated with the sex assigned to them at birth.
Culture	A way of living that makes a group of people distinct. It includes values, beliefs, language, style of communication, patterns of thinking, or behavior norms that are passed down from one generation to the next through learning and experience.
Discrimination	<i>Action or behavior</i> reflecting stereotypes and prejudice which results in the denial of rights on the basis of race, religion, gender, ability, culture, economic class, sexual orientation, or age. It favors some individuals or groups and puts other individuals or groups at a disadvantage. (Ex: HR professionals screening out résumés from people with Arab or Asian sounding names.)
Diversity	Different characteristics among human beings which include but are not limited to culture, economic status, ethnicity, race, gender, ability, sexual orientation, religion, age, educational background, etc.
Exclusion	A set of community values that suggest that certain people are not able or not welcome to belong to and to contribute to a particular group or community. Exclusion may be explicit by physically prohibiting a person from joining, or implicit by using language and messages and creating an environment in which the person gets the feeling that s/he is not welcome.
Gay	A man who is physically, emotionally, and sexually attracted to other men.
Gender Expression	How you demonstrate your gender, based on traditional gender roles through hair style, dress, behavior, and interactions.
Gender Identity	How you think and know about yourself, your body chemistry, and how you interpret what that means. Gender identity is distinct from sexual orientation and does not indicate one’s sexual orientation.
Harassment	Continued verbal or physical intimidation of a person with the intent to demean, belittle and/or insult. Harassment causes the target to feel ashamed, embarrassed, fearful and/or anxious.
Inclusion	A set of community values that suggest that people of diverse backgrounds, perspectives and beliefs should have equal opportunity to belong and to contribute to their community. It requires people to value, respect, and

	accept their differences as being important to the overall community Inclusion also requires that people feel welcome and have access, in addition to being physically present.
‘Ism’	A system, doctrine, or theory which asserts that there is superiority of certain groups based on economic class, race, culture, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability and/or age over other groups. Groups may use these assertions of superiority and inferiority to justify and promote advantages for certain groups and disadvantages for targeted groups. Examples: Racism – oppression based on race/culture/ethnicity Sexism – oppression based on gender
Lesbian	A woman who is physically, emotionally, and sexually attracted to other women.
Oppression	The combination of prejudice and power that creates advantages that benefit some groups and discriminates against other groups. Terms commonly referred to as ‘isms’ are specific examples of oppression. Oppression operates at several levels: Talk – verbal expression of prejudice Avoidance – refusal to interact with members of a group Discrimination – exclusion, denial of rights of members of a group Physical attack – acts of violence targeting members of a group Extermination/genocide – murder and mass killing of members of a group
Prejudice	Any attitude we hold that implies a preconceived idea about groups or individuals, based on stereotypes. This prejudgment is made without really knowing the facts that may contradict it. Moreover, prejudices often run so deep that they are held onto even in the face of contradictory evidence. (Ex. Sally would not make a good accountant, because girls aren’t good at math
Stereotype	The <i>thought, idea or message</i> we have about a group of people which implies that all members of the group conform to the same general characteristics. An oversimplified opinion, attitude, or judgment about individuals and groups. These thoughts or ideas inform our behavior when interacting with members of the groups about whom we have stereotypes. (Ex. If I think that all African-American men are good athletes, I will be less likely to consider an African-America man for a technical position.)
Sexual Orientation	Reflects one’s expression of emotional, romantic, and/or physical attraction, desire, or affection.
Targeting	The intentional mistreatment of a group of individuals based on changing social norms and current events. (Ex. Anti-Muslim sentiment after 9-11, anti-Hispanic sentiment due to the immigration debate, and/or anti-Asian sentiment during and after WWII.)
Transgender	An umbrella term for people whose gender identity or expression is different from those typically associated with the sex assigned to them at birth (e.g., the sex listed on their birth certificate).

Appendix B – Who Am I Chart

How I describe myself	How I think others describe me	One thing that might surprise you about me

Appendix C – Note Taking Handout

DVD THEMES:

Differences:

Harassment:

Discrimination:

Privilege:

Acceptance:

Change:

Pronouns:

Safety:

Accommodations:

STUDENTS:

Isaiah

Alex

Em

Jesi

Antonio

Jessica

Sloane

Sara

Ingrid

Alex

Scout

Olive

Appendix D – Additional Resources

The web links below offer resources that can be used to further explore the topics introduced in Souls of Our Students Appreciating Differences and A Transgender Focus

- Welcoming Schools – www.welcomingschools.org
- Arab World and Islamic Resources and School Services: www.awaironline.org
- American Civil Liberties Union - www.aclu.org
- Office for Civil Rights - www.hhs.gov/ocr/
- Diversity Inc. - www.diversityinc.com/
- Diversity Matters - www.diversitymatters.info/
- EdChange Multicultural Pavilion – Multicultural Awareness Activities:
<http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/activityarch.html>
- Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) – www.glsen.org
- Gay-Straight Alliance Network (GSA Network) – www.gsanetwork.org
- Gender Spectrum - www.genderspectrum.org
- Trans Student Educational Resources - <http://www.transstudent.org/>
- National Center for Transgender Equality - www.transequality.org
- Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) - www.pflag.org
- The Face Behind the Veil: The Extraordinary Lives of Muslim Women in America by Donna Gehrke-White
- National Museum of the American Indian education link www.nmai.si.edu
- The National Underground Railroad Freedom Center www.freedomcenter.org
- Smithsonian African-American based lesson plans: www.smithsonianeducation.org
- The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum link to its “For Teachers” resources:
<http://www.ushmm.org>
- Holocaust Education for the Community:
<http://www.ushmm.org/education/cpsite/bringlessonshome/index.php?theme=educators>
- NC Healthy Schools - www.nchealthyschools.org
- Equality NC (Raleigh based, statewide offices) – www.equalitync.org