BEHAVIORS OF IN-GROUP, POWER GROUP, NON-TARGET GROUP

1. DYSFUNCTIONAL RESCUING--When someone who has power over another person helps that person to a point where the person cannot operate independently, the power person may be dysfunctionally rescuing. There is an implication that "You need my help." For example, a student who is given a better grade than earned may be experiencing dysfunctional rescuing.

2. BLAMING THE VICTIM--After being rescued, the rescued individual does not have a solid foundation. For example, the female construction worker is rescued by the male construction worker. Then, when she is unprepared and cannot do a job, she is blamed. The stereotype is reinforced, "See, women aren't cut out for construction work." Blaming the victim often follows dysfunctional rescuing.

3. AVOIDING CONTACT--Often, because of fear of awkwardness or fear of making a mistake or doing something wrong, people in power groups don't really have any contact with people in non-power groups. Power group people may not see what is to be gained by involvement and they may not be aware that they, rather than the non-power group, can choose what level of involvement they want. Avoiding contact can also result in thoughts such as, "I'm not racist—how can I be racist, I don't even know any people of color."

4. DENIAL OF DIFFERENCE--Just as avoiding contact is a form of not dealing with conflict, so can thinking, "We are all the same," be a form of denial. To only see our similarities is to deny a person's humanity and experience of difference. To not acknowledge a person's pain over their difference is to dismiss them and to not see who they are. When a person says, "I'm color blind," they often are thinking, "I'm not racist" but to not see a person's color can also be a form of dismissal. Or, for a heterosexual so say, "Gay people are just people," is to deny the invisibility of lesbians or the violence that threatens gay men.

5. DENIAL OF POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF RACISM, SEXISM...--Often when we do work very hard on our own racism, sexism, ageism, or other "isms", we tend to focus on our own reality. "If I don't experience racism, then it doesn't exist." We are left with a feeling of safety that "All is fine with the world," and that allows us to forget about the harsher forms of institutionalized racism, sexism, and other "isms".

Adapted by Creative Response to Conflict from Althea Smith of VISIONS, 68 Park Ave., Cambridge, MA 02138
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