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".