

# PROACTIVE TOOLS AND STRATEGIES TO HELP YOUTH RESIST PREJUDICE AND HATE

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# SECTION IV.

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## PROACTIVE TOOLS AND STRATEGIES TO HELP YOUTH RESIST PREJUDICE AND HATE

### OVERVIEW

This section of the *Program Activity Guide: Helping Youth Resist Bias and Hate*, 2nd edition provides parents, educators, youth service professionals, and other adults with an overview of promising practices and programs. Approaches to creating and maintaining equitable learning environments that have been found particularly successful are outlined in “Promising Practices.” “Promising Programs” are examples of school- or community-based programs that help participants learn ways to respond to conflict, appreciate diversity, and work toward common goals. Many of the programs identified exemplify those methods found to be effective in improving relations among students of different social, racial, ethnic, or religious backgrounds.

Activities appropriate for middle school youth that reinforces concepts explored throughout this *Program Activity Guide* are included in a Partners Against Hate publication, *Building Community and Combating Hate: Lessons for the Middle School Classroom*. This resource is designed to be a companion publication to the *Program Activity Guide*, 2nd edition and for educators’ use in existing classroom curricula. The activities provide teachers, youth service professionals, and others working with youth with a variety of ways to help adolescents to think about cultural diversity. These activities also allow opportunities for teachers to discuss hate-motivated behavior and the responsibility of individuals to create just societies in age-appropriate ways. Teachers and other adults who work with youth are encouraged to use as many of the activities in *Building Community and Combating Hate* as possible to ensure that all of the key concepts discussed throughout the *Program Activity Guide* are addressed.

### PROMISING PRACTICES

Following are some of the practices that have been found effective in restructuring schools so that they reflect an anti-bias philosophy, improve teacher and student performance, and create safe and equitable learning environments.

**Curriculum Reform:** Many schools have restructured their curricula and their teaching techniques to include the history, culture, life experiences, and learning

styles of the school community. Educators contend that such inclusion enables minority and low-income students to experience a greater sense of investment in their learning as they see themselves and their body of experiences reflected in textbooks, lectures, class presentations, and other aspects of the school day. Such inclusiveness helps promote educational equality, since approaching teaching from multiple perspectives and tailoring the methods used in the classroom to suit different learning styles will help ensure that every child attains educational success.

***Equitable Schools and Classrooms:*** Since bias is inextricably linked to inequality, it is vital that teachers create democratic classrooms – environments where students are respected as thoughtful, participating citizens. Creating egalitarian classrooms provide students and teachers with opportunities to examine their own and others’ biases, consider multiple perspectives, question the source of information, and view social action as a civic responsibility. In addition, to attain a social climate that favors equality of education, many schools have eliminated tracking and encouraged teachers to raise their expectations of students of color. Tracking in schools has been found to limit students’ chances of meeting peers from different racial backgrounds because of the overrepresentation of White, higher socioeconomic students in the upper tracks. Students in untracked schools have more positive interethnic attitudes and feel that relations between the races are better than do students in tracked schools.

***Training and Retraining Teachers:*** For schools to develop into antiracist institutions, more than curricular change is required – changing the behavior of adults, particularly teachers, is essential. Sometimes even those with the best intentions do not pick up on the subtle messages they convey to students, such as whom they attend to or how well they interact. Anti-bias teacher training must be extensive and ongoing, must address teachers’ own biases, and must challenge teachers to detect and rectify biased practices in their own classroom and school. Research has shown that, in general, the predominantly White, monolingual teaching force has been poorly trained to work with culturally and linguistically diverse students. Most educational programs that feature diversity training for teachers offer it in the form of add-on courses rather than integrating it throughout the program, even though research has shown that such add-ons have little impact on teachers’ classroom methods. Prospective teachers in particular must have opportunities to reflect on their own cultural vantage point, to rethink low expectations of students, to develop cultural knowledge relevant to the population they will teach, and to gain field experience in culturally diverse schools. Besides teacher certification programs, in-service training about diversity is a potential mechanism for helping teachers to meet these goals.

***School Desegregation:*** Numerous longitudinal studies about the long-term ramifications of desegregated elementary and secondary education have shown positive effects on the aspirations of African-American students and on interracial relationships. As early as 1967, the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights (USCCR) found that both African-American and White students who attended desegregated schools were more likely to experience desegregated environments later in life. Case studies of particular communities show that in most instances the minority students who participated in court-ordered school desegregation from an early age registered modest or significant achievement gains and the White students experienced no change or slight improvements. African-American students who attended desegregated schools were more likely to complete high school, to enroll in and graduate from four-year desegregated colleges, and to major in what for

minority students are nontraditional subjects that lead to more remunerative jobs and professions. As adults they were more likely to live in desegregated neighborhoods, their children were more likely to attend desegregated schools, and they were more likely to have close friends of another race than were adults who attended segregated schools.

**Cooperative Learning:** Cooperative learning is an educational strategy that groups students in small teams of four to five students of both genders and different achievement levels. The groups receive rewards and recognition based on their ability to work together to increase the academic performance of each individual member. All members must contribute and work interdependently to complete a learning task. The mentoring or peer teaching that occurs throughout the process raises the performance of lower achieving students and affirms the talents of the higher achievers. In integrated schools, this strategy is particularly valuable as a means of improving students' relationships with each other if their small teams are racially and ethnically diverse.

Traditional teaching methods, which emphasize competition and individual work, have been shown to be much less useful than cooperative approaches in promoting minority achievement and intergroup rapport. In many schools, sports and extracurricular activities are the only settings in which small groups of diverse students gather as equals on a cooperative basis. Not coincidentally, such activities have been shown to improve intergroup relations. Cooperative learning satisfies all of the situational criteria for positive intergroup contact, because it supplies the following:

- Cooperation
- Support of authorities
- Equal status among group members
- Interaction that is intimate, individualized, nonstereotypical, and interdependent – making similarities among participants salient.

Research shows consistently positive effects of this learning style on student achievement, conflict reduction, and intergroup relations. Of particular interest in the area of interrelationships, students who experience cooperative learning techniques have shown gains in friends of different backgrounds and have made more positive attributions to other groups. These gains are most consistently strong for White students in relation to African-American and Latino/a students.

**Conflict Resolution:** Conflict resolution is a process that utilizes communication skills and creative thinking to achieve mutually agreed upon solutions. The processes include negotiation between two parties, mediation between two parties by a third party, and consensus building among a group. Because many conflict resolution programs, focusing on conflict resolution also highlight bias awareness as an integral part of their training, they can also play an important role in enhancing intergroup relations. The National Institute for Dispute Resolution (NIDR), for example, launched an effort to connect what are generally regarded as the mutually exclusive professional communities in bias awareness and conflict resolution. Such programs teach conflict resolution skills that students can use on their own rather than as part of structured mediation programs.

**Peer Mediation:** Although peer mediation has become a popular approach to

conflict resolution at many schools, it does not put as much emphasis on bias awareness as do the more diffuse skill-oriented approaches. Moreover, research is sparse on the effectiveness of such programs in reducing school violence or expanding students' racial and ethnic attitudes. To date, only anecdotal evidence commending peer or professional mediation is available – evidence that indicates positive changes in students' attitudes about conflict. More specific research is needed with a focus on school-related violence motivated by prejudice.

## PROMISING PROGRAMS

Below is a sampling of some of the promising programs in use across the country by educators, youth service professionals, and other adults in the community. These programs aim to promote understanding, civility, and respect across cultural differences and help participants learn ways to respond to conflict in creative, nonviolent ways. Some of the programs listed are especially for use with youth, others are for parents, and several others are examples of programs that have been designed for use with teachers to help them improve their effectiveness in the classroom.

An up-to-date database of these and many other programs, including the name of a contact person for each program, mailing and e-mail addresses, and telephone numbers is maintained at [www.partnersagainsthate.org/promising\\_programs/index.html](http://www.partnersagainsthate.org/promising_programs/index.html). Additional programs will continue to be added to the database as they become operational and as Partners Against Hate staff becomes aware of them.

### *A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE® Institute*

This program started in Boston in 1985 when the Anti-Defamation League and WCVB-TV joined together to fight prejudice. Today, the A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE® Institute is an international institute with anti-bias and diversity education programs used by schools, universities, corporations, and community and law enforcement agencies throughout the United States and abroad. Training in diversity awareness and anti-bias education, including use of the *A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE® Institute Anti-Bias Study Guide (Elementary/Intermediate Level)*, is provided through the CLASSROOM OF DIFFERENCE® program. Peer Leadership and Peer Training programs provide opportunities for students to learn leadership skills and to serve as change agents in their schools and communities.

### *Bridge Builders Program*

In Memphis, TN, the Bridge Builders Program seeks to develop future community and business leaders who will “make decisions based on an understanding and appreciation of different cultures.” The program brings diverse groups of junior and senior high school students together over a two-year period in weekend and summer sessions to engage in dialogue, diversity training, community service, classroom work, and challenging physical activities.

### !!! NOTE

Parents, educators, youth service professionals, and other members of the community working with youth are invited to share information about promising programs that they would like to see added to the Partners Against Hate database. Suggested programs should provide an opportunity for young people to learn about diverse cultures or empower youth to fight hate in their schools and communities. To suggest a program, send an e-mail to [webmaster@partnersagainsthate.org](mailto:webmaster@partnersagainsthate.org). Be sure to include contact information for the program.

### ***Building Peaceable Middle Schools***

This program for students in grades 5-8 is available through Educators for Social Responsibility (ESR). The program develops team collaboration around common language, classroom practices, learning strategies, and WIN-WIN discipline. Also emphasized are direct skill instruction and curriculum infusion through advisories, health classes, and core academic subjects.

### ***Children's Creative Response to Conflict Program (CCRC)***

CCRC is a conflict resolution program for K-12 schools. CCRC emphasizes the importance of instilling a repertoire of conflict resolution skills in teachers so that they will be able to work effectively with students. One of the programs often put into place with CCRC training is peer mediation, a program where students are trained to assist in resolving disputes between fellow students.

### ***Civil Rights Team Project***

The Maine Department of the Attorney General's Civil Rights Team Project trains civil rights teams, groups of students, and faculty in high schools around the State to promote awareness of bias and prejudice in Maine's public high schools, middle schools, and elementary schools.

### ***Colorado Anti-Bullying Project***

Developed in 2001, this program brings together parents, school administrators, community leaders, and the media to raise awareness about the dangers of bullying and how to keep it from harming students. This community-wide approach to tackling the problem of bullying emphasizes gauging the extent of a school's bullying problem, getting teachers, parents, and local police to acknowledge bullying takes place and setting up rules to prohibit it; and teaching students techniques to deflect bullies.

### ***Conflict Resolution Through Literature***

This district-wide program sponsored by Educators for Social Responsibility (ESR), links social and emotional learning, conflict resolution, and diversity education to literature and language arts standards.

### ***Cradleboard Teaching Project***

In 1986, a White fifth-grade teacher realized that although she had an American Indian student in her classroom, she did not have a teaching unit about this population. She asked the student's mother, who was also a teacher, to develop a Native-American unit to use in her class. What began as a 7-page unit for the fifth-grade teacher, expanded into a 43-page unit, which can be used for all grades. From this teaching unit, the Cradleboard Teaching Project was born, a program that has expanded beyond curriculum to become a mechanism through which Indian and

non-Indian students from around the country can exchange ideas about their cultures.

### ***Interns for Peace***

This community-based pairing program matches African-American and Jewish teen groups and summer camps in Brooklyn, NY. The teens receive training in intensive gardening techniques, plan their own community garden, train younger children from matched summer camps to help with the gardening, and ultimately donate their harvest to those in need. Adult mentors include graduate students from the International Center for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution and young professionals interested in community service.

### ***Leadership for Equity, Antiracism, Diversity, and Educational Reform Program (L.E.A.D.E.R.)***

L.E.A.D.E.R. was developed in 1996 by the Los Angeles County Office of Education in response to a demonstrated need to support teachers in their efforts to reform classrooms. The program supports teachers, as well as the entire educational community, in its efforts to make the needed changes to curriculum and instruction of students to encourage their empowerment. These efforts promote educational equity, justice, cultural inclusion, self-esteem, and intergroup harmony.

### ***Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity (METCO)***

For the past several years in the Boston area, METCO has transferred African-American students from inner-city schools to nine suburban districts. With the support of their supervisors, the METCO directors in each of these districts form a coalition to improve the academic performance of the transfer students by transforming the classrooms and schools through antiracism training. Since 1992, about 500 school personnel – including four superintendents – have participated in a semester-long course, now called Empowering Multicultural Initiatives, and about 40 have become trainers-of- teachers in this program. The aim is to put in place antiracist teaching strategies and multicultural curricula into all classrooms, whether homogeneous or racially diverse. The program has grown into an independent nonprofit organization that offers its expertise to other school districts, private schools, and teachers-in-training through Wheelock College in Cambridge, MA.

### ***Multicultural Assessment Program (MAP)***

The Multicultural Assessment Program (MAP), developed by the National Association of Independent Schools, is a tool to help schools and teachers gauge how thoroughly and effectively they are implementing diversity strategies and training toward achieving their goals. Schools can use MAP to judge their own multicultural programs and their overall progress. This tool has been adapted by the Multicultural Coordinating Committee (MCC) in the Cambridge, MA school district for distribution in public schools. The MCC, an advocacy and support group for teacher activists, is promoting annual self-evaluation using the adapted MAP in every school in this diverse preK-12 district.

### ***Olweus Bullying Prevention Program***

This program, developed, refined, and systematically evaluated in Bergen, Norway, is the best-known initiative designed to reduce bullying among elementary and middle school children. The strategy behind the program is to involve school staff, students, and parents in efforts to raise awareness about bullying, improve peer relations, intervene to stop intimidation, develop clear rules against bullying behavior, and support and protect victims.

### ***Operation Understanding***

This yearlong program for African-American and Jewish high school juniors in the Washington, DC area includes classes, informal gatherings, local educational field trips, and a five-week trip through the Northeast and the South to visit the sites of historical importance to both groups. Participants read and converse about topics in preparation for each visit and keep journals as they travel. The last half of the year is spent in training to become spokespeople for intergroup understanding. The students invite their friends to an intensive weekend in which they practice public speaking and facilitation of topics sensitive to both groups. Finally, they begin speaking and initiating dialogue on African-American-Jewish relations in their own communities.

### ***Parenting for Peace and Justice***

This international organization provides support groups, workshops, manuals, and videos to help parents in areas such as implementing creative nonviolent discipline; understanding racism, sexism, and racism; and helping children respect diversity. Many schools organize parental workshops or discussion groups about race to complement a school's multicultural curricula.

### ***Project TEAMWORK***

Based at Northeastern University in Boston, MA, Project TEAMWORK trains former athletes to support students in forming Human Rights Squads in secondary schools. The multiracial, mixed-gender group of athletes trains young people in conflict resolution skills, prejudice awareness, and violence reduction techniques. A Project TEAMWORK staff member, who helps the Human Rights Squad develop its own agenda, supports each school throughout the academic year. Annual forums for all participating schools in the greater Boston area provide additional support and training.

### ***Resolving Conflict Creatively Program***

The Resolving Conflict Creatively Program, developed by Educators for Social Responsibility (ESR), is a comprehensive K-12 school-based program in conflict resolution and intergroup relations that provides a model for preventing violence and creating caring learning communities. Attention is given to examining teacher biases, considering multiple perspectives, questioning the source of information, and undertaking social action.

### *Seeking Harmony In Neighborhoods Everyday (SHINE)*

The SHINE program began in 1995 to help the racially and ethnically diverse children of the United States learn to interact and live together without intolerance and racial prejudice. The program was established in memory of the death of Alan Rambam's mother, a teacher who had spent her career promoting cultural harmony, diversity, and nonviolence.

### *Straight Talk about America*

The National Conference of Community and Justice (NCCJ) offers teacher training programming and K-12 curricula to help teachers and students explore cultural diversity. One of the organization's programs, Straight Talk about America, helps students examine their attitudes about diversity and intergroup relations. The teacher's guide includes suggested discussion questions, cooperative learning activities, journal writing, and problem solving through role-playing. Program topics include similarities and differences among groups of people; group membership as an aspect of identity; stereotypes; the human and social consequences of discrimination and systems of advantage; discrimination in the media; and strategies for interrupting bias, bigotry, and racism through specific action.

#### ► *Suggested Resource*

*Teaching Tolerance*, published twice a year by the Southern Poverty Law Center, includes articles and other information about promising programs and resources to teach children about diversity and to encourage them to engage in social action. This resource, which is free-of-charge to educators, can be ordered by contacting the Southern Poverty Law Center at 400 Washington Ave., Montgomery, AL 36104. Web site: [www.teachingtolerance.org](http://www.teachingtolerance.org).