

impact

University of Idaho Extension programs that are making a difference in Idaho.

Idaho comes together for racial understanding in a dialogue-centered workshop

AT A GLANCE

Statewide training increases understanding and awareness of race and ethnicity relations, improving participants' ability to reach and equitably serve diverse audiences.

The Situation

Idaho was one of 20 states that participated in the 2018 pilot of the Coming Together for Racial Understanding (CTRU) Train-the-Trainer Workshop at the National 4-H Center in Chevy Chase, Maryland. The CTRU initiative seeks to facilitate racial understanding and healing through civil dialogue within the Cooperative Extension System.

Participating states comprised three-member Extension personnel teams; Idaho's team included two Extension faculty and one University of Idaho human resources personnel. It is important to note that a diversity specialist and support-designated position for University of Idaho Extension does not currently exist. States participating in this initiative brought content back to their state Extension system to facilitate dialogues surrounding race and ethnicity.

Our Response

The Idaho team developed a plan to offer the Coming Together for Racial Understanding training to UI Extension faculty and staff, outlined below:

- Actively engage Extension administration in these efforts.



Participants engaging in an activity during the two-day statewide training.

- Provide an “introductory session” of the content for Extension faculty and staff.
- Schedule a two-day “Coming Together for Racial Understanding” workshop for Extension faculty and staff in the fall of 2019.

To prepare Idaho's Extension system for this content, facilitators sought and gained administration support in marketing and encouraging workshop attendance.

In addition, the team implemented a preconference training during UI Extension Annual Conference. The preconference training was an “introductory session” which aimed to introduce and prepare potential participants for the workshop's structure and content.

The statewide two-day training for UI Extension faculty and staff was offered in October 2019 in Boise. The Western Rural Development Center provided funding to reduce registrant cost for this training and to provide travel scholarships for participants to attend the in-person training.

Program Outcomes

Fifty UI Extension faculty and staff participated in the statewide 2019 Coming Together for Racial Understanding workshop. Of these participants, 33 completed the pre/post retrospective written evaluation. The majority (90%) of participants identified as white, and 82% identified as female.

A total of 10 knowledge, skill and outlook/perspective outcomes were measured in the pre/post retrospective evaluation. Listed in the table are the mean scores of the six evaluation outcomes with the most significant mean score increases (1.5-2.3 points).

On average, total post-evaluation scores were 1.5 points greater in overall understanding, skill and outlook/perspectives from pre-evaluation scores. The greatest gain was in participants' overall understanding of the four levels of oppression and change, with over a two-point increase from pre- to post-training. These outcomes indicate the training increased foundational understanding and awareness surrounding race and ethnic relations dialogue. In addition, this suggests the training improved participants' ability to better reach and equitably serve diverse audiences.

Even with intentional adaptation of the dialogue content for Idaho's demographics, the Idaho facilitators continued to learn extensively about offering this content to an audience with low diverse representation from marginalized populations. These results were published in the Western Rural Development Center's

Rural Connections peer-reviewed magazine at <https://www.usu.edu/wrdc/files/news-publications/Amende-RC-FA-WIN-2020.pdf>.

Table 1. Mean pre/post evaluation statement scores (possible five points)

My level of understanding in...	Mean Pre-	Mean Post-
Four levels of oppression and change.	1.2	3.5
How to engage racially diverse audiences in important dialogues.	1.7	3.5
How target/non-target identities influence perspectives and realities.	1.7	3.3
Principles and processes of the two dialogue approaches (Facing Racism in a Diverse Nation & Community Dialogues for Racial Healing, both approaches were used)	0.9	2.6
Attitudes and beliefs held by people from different backgrounds.	2.1	3.6
My level of skill in...	Mean Pre-	Mean Post-
Communicating effectively with someone from a different race/ethnic background.	2.2	3.7

The Future

CTRU efforts continued in 2020, although they transitioned to a virtual Dialogue Circle Series from July 2020 to January 2021. Currently, Dialogue Circle Series participants are implementing action items to continue efforts initially established through dialogue.

Cooperators and Co-Sponsors

- Western Rural Development Center

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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