

DOES LEADERSHIP AND ACADEMIC COACHING PAIRED WITH SMALL PEER  
GROUP INTERACTION IMPROVE BLACK MALE STUDENT ACADEMIC  
ENGAGEMENT, SELF-EFFICACY AND SELF ESTEEM?

by

Kyle Foster

A capstone project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts in Teaching.

Hamline University

Saint Paul, Minnesota

May 2019

Capstone Project Facilitators: Mike Adams and Frank Webster  
Content Expert: Mike Adams  
Peer Reviewers: Keenan Jones and Maddie Kiley

## Project Summary

As an educator and person of color I know the trials and tribulations a minority may encounter as they navigate through this world, these encounters happen in their personal experiences as well as educational experiences. Having an amazing father and family to guide and support me allowed me to thrive, but also equipped me with the skills to be able to handle any and all obstacles I encountered. Many students in urban/inner city environment may not have fathers at home to provide those supports or some may not even live with their family. In 2018, Cokley stated that black boys are three times as likely to get suspended as opposed to white boys and also black students' behavior is more often criminalized. All of these experiences brought me to my guiding question: *Does Leadership and Academic Coaching Paired with Small Peer Group Interaction Improve Black Male Student Academic Engagement, Self-Efficacy and Self Esteem?*

This project evolved into a curriculum for a 14-day core value/sociopolitical identity small group coaching curriculum for Black male students. There are two curriculums provided in the project, one of the curriculums is a student version and the other curriculum is the teacher version. The teacher's version provides specific and concrete examples and narrative throughout the different sections. There is specific word for word examples or suggestions to use, but the group leader could use their own examples that better fit their group or the personality of the group members. Each lesson has objectives or learning targets followed by some sort of an introduction. The introduction could be a quick team building activity or simply the group leader explaining what group was going to look like for that day. There are several different introduction activities that have been included with this project. Next, there is a procedures sections which is where the

majority of the time in group will be spent. Lastly, each lesson ends with some sort of closing activity which could be an exit card or a turn and share with an elbow partner. There are several closing activities included as well. Similar to all of the sections of the curriculum, the group leader could use the exact information provided or take and tweak to better meet the needs of the group. Most of this project involves interpersonal reflection paired with intrapersonal reflection. The project is set up in a way where interaction amongst peers happens in a circle format where one person is talking at a time. There is also time dedicated for students to partner or group up to answer questions about certain topics. The first day is where the leader introduces group guidelines as well as circle guidelines and it is an essential step to maintain quality group expectations. The next three days looks at core values and understanding each group members own core values, and there is a specific activity to complete. Group members will also be asked a series of questions in regards to their core values and the aspects of their core values that are important to them and why it is important. The next four days are dedicated to sociopolitical identities and there is also an activity the students can complete with regards to thinking about their sociopolitical identity. The next two days will provide an opportunity for group leader to initiate questions to the group around their sociopolitical identities. There are several questions for the group members to chose from. The last few sessions involve having a true circle discussion around their identities and what role that plays in their educational world and well as their personal life. The last session of group is a warp up to provide an opportunity for the students to talk about their experiences in group and what they liked or would change. Depending on the relationship that has been built with group members you may want to encourage them to

continue having these conversations amongst their peers and friends, but they can always come visit if there was anything they needed to talk about.

The intended audience for the project is 5-12<sup>th</sup> grade students. Ideally, it would be nice if the group could be hand picked to ensure there is a genuine interest in joining or being a part of group. The group works better when group members are invested and willing to have conversations about race, culture, ethnicity and society. This is a tool that can also be used with adults and colleagues as well. This could be used as a year long staff development to get conversations started for staff around race and equity. You could certainly use an activity or two with your class but the project is intended to be used with all 14 days being utilized.

Each day is roughly 20-30 minutes and is intended to be spread out over a period of time. The reason for the shorter amount of time is because my group met during lunch and that is about all the time we were allotted. This group could also be completed as an after school program. The most important part about the project is the conversation between group members and as a whole group, so if you go slower than what the project indicates that is absolutely fine. You want the conversations and experiences for the group to be authentic but also flow together so they can see the correlation between group sessions and the real world. You want sessions to pick up seamlessly from where they left off.

## Stage 1 Desired Results

<p>ESTABLISHED GOALS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify Core Values</li> <li>• Discuss Core Values</li> <li>• Define Sociopolitical Identities</li> <li>• Personally acknowledge their Sociopolitical Identities</li> <li>• Identify Sociopolitical Identities they are aware of on a daily basis</li> <li>• Reflect and Analyze their sociopolitical identities</li> </ul>	<b>Transfer</b>	
	<p><i>Students will be able to identify their own core values and what role their core values play in their personal life. Students will be able to independently use their learning to identify the social groups to which they as individuals belong to that may align with their race, ethnicity, gender, class background, sexual orientation, etc. Not only is defining sociopolitical identity an important aspect of this project but being able to identify what groups we find a connection with is equally important.</i></p>	
	<b>Meaning</b>	
	<p><b>UNDERSTANDINGS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Students will understand that these activities will increase their awareness of their culture and other cultures and will have a better perspective for themselves and others. Increasing our understanding the impact of sociopolitical identities in the work students do with their classmates, teachers and at home. Applying what we have learned about our own sociopolitical identities and those of our classmates to help us recognize our own personal biases.</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What did you learn about yourself from this activity?</li> <li>• Was there anything about your identity you found surprising?</li> <li>• What role do you think your sociopolitical identity plays in your daily life?</li> <li>• How do you think your sociopolitical identity affects you in your daily life at school? At home?</li> <li>• What can we learn from recognizing our differences in our sociopolitical identities?</li> </ul>
	<b>Acquisition</b>	
<p><i>Students will continue to reflect on what they have learned about core values and their own sociopolitical identities as they define us as individuals and as a collective group.</i></p>	<p><i>Students will be skilled at understanding the impact of sociopolitical identities in school, at home and with family and friends. The hope is that students approach their own learning as well as learning of others' with grace and understand bias is a part of the human experience and we are all life-long learners.</i></p>	

## Stage 2 - Evidence

Evaluative Criteria	Assessment Evidence
Core Values Worksheet	PERFORMANCE TASK(S): Students will start by choosing 10 core values that feel most important to them. They will then shrink their list to five. Once they have their list of five, they will eliminate the two least important ones which will leave them with a list of three. The list of three will be each students core values. There are a couple questions which require some personal reflection for each student. There will also be three questions where they will share their answers with the group or with a partner. If you have students share their answers with a partner, make sure to have a couple different rounds so they can get perspectives from other students in group.
Sociopolitical Identities Worksheet	OTHER EVIDENCE: Students will be given the definition of sociopolitical identities. The first day they will be asked to circle eight identities they feel are <b>very</b> important. Next, they will star the identities they feel are the <b>most</b> important. Lastly, they will put an exclamation point next to the identities they feel the most aware of on a daily basis. There will be a series of questions as a follow up session to the sociopolitical identities activity. It would be best to give the group a chance to view the questions and have them answer during the next session.

## Stage 3 – Learning Plan

### *Summary of Key Learning Events and Instruction*

Ultimately, the hope is that the learning that takes place in group will help support the students in continuing to find opportunities to uphold equity in their classrooms, with their friends and in their community. The learning will look different with each student. Depending on where the group is when they start will be a huge determining factor as to where they finish.

# **Student Manual**

## **Core Value/ Sociopolitical Identities Project**

### **Day 1**

#### **Objectives**

- Students will be able to explain what a circle is and what the purpose of a circle is
- Students will be able to identify and explain the four agreements for circles

#### **Introduction**

- Have students come in and sit in circle
- Explain the purpose of Group
- Establish Circle Guidelines with Students
- Introduce talking piece and what purpose the talking piece serves
- Introduce Agreement to Support Engagement

#### **Procedures**

- Students will have an opportunity to share one thing about themselves to the group
- It is encouraged that all students share but not required
- It is essential to ensure all students are respectful during circle time

#### **Closing**

- Thank students for their ability to participate
- Encourage confidentiality among group members

## **Core Value/ Sociopolitical Identities Project**

### **Day 2**

#### **Objectives**

- Students will be able to personally identify 10 core values
- Students will be able to narrow their list of core values to 5

#### **Introduction**

- Have students come in and sit in circle
- Review the purpose of Group
- Review Circle Guidelines with Students
- Review talking piece and what purpose the talking piece serves
- Review Agreement to Support Engagement

#### **Procedures**

- Provide students with the list of core values
- Review the core values briefly and provide students opportunity for questions
- Have students circle 10 core values they feel represent them
- From the list of 10, then students should narrow their list to 5

#### **Closing**

- Inform students to be ready to dive right in starting next session
- Thank students for their ability to participate
- Encourage confidentiality amongst group members

## **Core Value/ Sociopolitical Identities Project**

### **Day 3**

#### **Objectives**

- Students will be able to identify their top three core values
- Students will be able to personally reflect around their core values

#### **Introduction**

- Have students come in and sit in circle
- Review the purpose of Group
- Review Circle Guidelines with Students
- Review talking piece and what purpose the talking piece serves
- Review Agreement to Support Engagement
- Provide students with opportunities to ask questions to enhance clarification

#### **Procedures**

- Have students review their list of five core values
- Give students a short time to think about why they chose those core values
- Have students turn and talk to elbow partner to share their list of 5 core values
- Students will turn and talk to other elbow partner to share their core values

#### **Closing**

- Let students know there will be whole group discussion around core values
- Encourage students to think about their core values and how they are evident in their daily lives
- Thank students for participation

## **Core Value/ Sociopolitical Identities Project**

### **Day 4**

#### **Objectives**

- Students will be able to narrow their list to 3 core values
- Students will be able to see differences between group members' core values

#### **Introduction**

- Have students come in and sit in circle
- Review the purpose of Group
- Review Circle Guidelines with Students
- Review talking piece and what purpose the talking piece serves
- Review Agreement to Support Engagement
- Provide students with opportunities to ask questions to enhance clarification
- Remind student their participation is highly encouraged but not required

#### **Procedures**

- Eliminate two of the least important core values
- Ensure students are aware of their top three core values
- There will be discussion questions regarding core values
- All students will have a chance to answer the questions or pass
- The second discussion question will be presented to group

#### **Closing**

- Introduce the term sociopolitical identity
- Have students start thinking about a potential definition or what they think the meaning is
- Thank students for participation and encourage them to step outside their comfort zone

## **Core Value/ Sociopolitical Identities Project**

### **Day 5**

#### **Objectives**

- Students will be able to define sociopolitical identities
- Students will be able to review the list of sociopolitical identities

#### **Introduction**

- Have students come in and sit in circle
- Review Circle Guidelines with Students
- Review Agreement to Support Engagement
- Remind students their participation is highly encouraged but not required

#### **Procedures**

- Introduce and define sociopolitical identities
- Review list of sociopolitical identities
- Have students review the definitions of the identities
- Provide specific examples to help the students better understand

#### **Closing**

- Have students begin thinking about their own sociopolitical identities
- Thank students for participation and encourage them to step outside their comfort zone

## Core Value/ Sociopolitical Identities Project

### Day 6

#### Objectives

- Students will be able to define and explain sociopolitical identities
- Students will be able to identify eight sociopolitical identities that are very important to them

#### Introduction

- Have students come in and sit in circle
- Review Circle Guidelines with Students
- Review Agreement to Support Engagement
- Remind students their participation is highly encouraged but not required

#### Procedures

- Briefly re-define sociopolitical identities
- Allow for questions for clarification
- Students will individually circle eight identities they feel are very important for them
- Remind students this is an individual activity

#### Closing

- Have students start thinking about the eight identities they felt that were the most important and best represent who they are
- Thank students for participation and encourage them to step outside their comfort zone

## **Core Value/ Sociopolitical Identities Project**

### **Day 7**

#### **Objectives**

- Students will be able to define and explain sociopolitical identities
- Students will be able to identify three sociopolitical identities that are most important to them

#### **Introduction**

- Have students come in and sit in circle
- Review Circle Guidelines with Students
- Review Agreement to Support Engagement
- Remind students their participation is highly encouraged but not required

#### **Procedures**

- Briefly re-define sociopolitical identities
- Allow for questions for clarification
- Students will examine their sociopolitical identity sheet
- Students will look at the list of the eight most important identities to them
- Group members will then star three identities that are the most important to them
- Students will share their list of three to group

#### **Closing**

- Have students think about a family tradition that is important to them
- Students can choose to share their favorite family tradition to group
- Thank students for participation and encourage them to step outside their comfort zone

## **Core Value/ Sociopolitical Identities Project**

### **Day 8**

#### **Objectives**

- Students will be able to define and explain sociopolitical identities
- Students will be able to identify three identities they feel most aware of on a daily basis

#### **Introduction**

- Have students come in and sit in circle
- Review Circle Guidelines with Students
- Review Agreement to Support Engagement
- Remind students their participation is highly encouraged but not required

#### **Procedures**

- Briefly re-define sociopolitical identities
- Students will examine their sociopolitical identity sheet and review their most important identities
- Students will put an exclamation point by the three identities they are most aware of on a daily basis
- Students will share the three identities they are most aware of to group

#### **Closing**

- Thank students for participation during the activities
- Thank students for sharing things that are very personal to them and might be difficult to share

## **Core Value/ Sociopolitical Identities Project**

### **Day 9**

#### **Objectives**

- Students will be able to answer questions around their own sociopolitical identities
- Students will be able to reflect and analyze their sociopolitical identities

#### **Introduction**

- Have students come in and sit in circle
- Review Circle Guidelines with Students
- Review Agreement to Support Engagement
- Remind students their participation is highly encouraged but not required

#### **Procedures**

- Briefly re-define sociopolitical identities
- Have students briefly review their sociopolitical identities sheet
- Students will be introduced to three questions
- Each person in the group will have an opportunity to answer the questions out loud

#### **Closing**

- Thank students for participation during the activities
- Thank students for sharing things that are very personal to them and might be difficult to share
- Encourage students to pay attention to how their sociopolitical identities play a role in their everyday life

## Core Value/ Sociopolitical Identities Project

### Day 10

#### Objectives

- Students will be able to explain how their own sociopolitical identity plays a role in society
- Students will be able to reflect and analyze about their sociopolitical identity

#### Introduction

- Have students come in and sit in circle
- Review Circle Guidelines with Students
- Review Agreement to Support Engagement
- Remind students their participation is highly encouraged but not required

#### Procedures

- Informal discussion around sociopolitical identities
- Find out about their knowledge around sociopolitical identities prior to this activity
- Find out how this activity made them feel
- Try to dive into their thinking around this work before and after completing this activity
- Where were group members when group started as opposed to where group members are now that group is over?

#### Closing

- Inform students the next three sessions will be around analyzing their sociopolitical identities in a much deeper level
- Participation is essential in order to gain something from the next activity
- There may be some uncomfortable moments and we need to work through those together
- Thank students for participation during the activities
- Thank students for sharing things that are very personal to them and might be difficult to share

## **Core Value/ Sociopolitical Identities Project**

### **Day 11**

#### **Objectives**

- Students will be able to explain a time when they felt proud to be a member of a certain sociopolitical identity group
- Students will be able to explain a time when they felt painful to be a member of a sociopolitical identity group

#### **Introduction**

- Have students come in and sit in circle
- Review Circle Guidelines with Students
- Review Agreement to Support Engagement
- Remind students their participation is highly encouraged but not required

#### **Procedures**

- We will stay in the circle discussion format and answer various questions related to feelings, experiences and emotions around sociopolitical identities
- There will be a script with word for word instructions on what to do and say
- Be sure to allow students to know they do not have to answer questions or they can pass if they choose
- There will also be two other alternative questions the students can answer if they choose to

#### **Closing**

- Inform students the next two sessions will be around analyzing their sociopolitical identities on a much deeper level
- There may be some uncomfortable moments and we need to work through those together
- Thank students for participation during the activities
- Thank students for sharing things that are very personal to them and might be difficult to share

## **Core Value/ Sociopolitical Identities Project**

### **Day 12**

#### **Objectives**

- Students will be able to explain what they wished others understood about being a member of a certain sociopolitical identity group
- Students will be able to explain what role their sociopolitical identity plays in their everyday life

#### **Introduction**

- Have students come in and sit in circle
- Review Circle Guidelines with Students
- Review Agreement to Support Engagement
- Remind students their participation is highly encouraged but not required

#### **Procedures**

- There will be a circle discussion around what the students wished society and other knew and understood about being a part of a certain sociopolitical identity group
- There will be a script with word for word instructions on what to do and say
- Be sure to allow students to know they do not have to answer questions or they can pass if they choose.

#### **Closing**

- Inform students the next session will be around analyzing their sociopolitical identities on a much deeper level
- There may be some uncomfortable moments and we need to work through those together
- Thank students for participation during the activities
- Thank students for sharing things that are very personal to them and might be difficult to share

## **Core Value/ Sociopolitical Identities Project**

### **Day 13**

#### **Objectives**

- Students will be able to explain how their values and beliefs and show up in their everyday lives
- Students will be able to explain what further understandings or insights they obtained from this activity

#### **Introduction**

- Have students come in and sit in circle
- Review Circle Guidelines with Students
- Review Agreement to Support Engagement
- Remind students their participation is highly encouraged but not required

#### **Procedures**

- This last session will be a discussion around the benefits of participating in this group
- Students will have an opportunity to discuss whether or not they enjoyed participating in group Students will also have the opportunity to talk about what specifically they benefited from
- For those who did not enjoy group or did not gain anything, they will have an opportunity to explain why that was the case as well

#### **Closing**

- Inform students this is the last session but they are always welcome to stop by and check in for guidance and support as needed
- Thank the group for having courageous conversations and working through some potentially uncomfortable moments
- Thank students for participation during the activities
- Thank students for sharing things that are very personal to them and might be difficult to share

## Core Value/ Sociopolitical Identities Project

### Day 14

#### Objectives

- Students will be able to explain if and how they benefited from participating in group
- Students will be able to explain how they could have benefitted from group sessions

#### Introduction

- Have students come in and sit in circle
- Review Agreement to Support Engagement
- Remind students their participation is highly encouraged but not required

#### Procedures

- This last session will have discussion around the benefits of participating in this group
- Students will have an opportunity to discuss whether or not they enjoyed participating in group
- Students will also have the opportunity to talk about what specifically they benefitted from
- For those who did not enjoy group or did not gain anything, they will have an opportunity to explain why that was the case as well

#### Closing

- Inform students this is the last session but you are always available for guidance and support as needed
- Thank the group for having courageous conversations and working through some potentially uncomfortable moments
- Thank students for participation during the activities
- Thank students for sharing things that are very personal to them and might be difficult to share

# **Teacher Manual**

## Core Value/ Sociopolitical Identities Project

### Day 1

#### Objectives

- Students will be able to explain what a circle is and what the purpose of a circle is
- Students will be able to identify and explain the four agreements for circles

#### Introduction

- Have students come in and sit in circle
- Explain the [purpose of Group](#) (This is a great time to be transparent that they may feel uncomfortable at times. Some ideas could include helping them to become aware of their race and culture and how that affects their daily life. Being able to see race and culture as a window and a mirror is ultimately what our goal is. It is advised to provide some ideas for group purpose but ultimately you want the thought and ideas about group purpose to come for stakeholders. What you are looking for is something tangible the students can have to keep them engaged with group, yet also holding them accountable.)
- Establish [Circle Guidelines](#) with Students (It could also be a great idea to have the students establish some of their own circle guidelines. There are circle guidelines that are provided, but feel free to establish your own. What you are looking for is something tangible the students can have to keep them engaged with group. You could use the guidelines provided as a starting point and as a group come up with your own.)
- Introduce talking piece and what purpose the talking piece serves (It would be beneficial to ask the students if they have something they would like to bring in for a talking piece. You could also have one person bring a talking piece for each session. You really want to emphasize the importance of the talking piece. The talking piece is ultimately what is needed to speak in group. Explain to them you understand there will be times where they may want to speak right away, but it is important to honor and respect the speaker. The talking piece and circle guidelines go hand in hand.)
- Introduce Agreement to [Support Engagement](#) (Have the students sign the agreement to ensure accountability during group. The agreement to support engagement is for the whole group sessions. The talking circle guidelines pertain more to the talking circle and during the circle questions. The guidelines I provided are what was used but feel free to come up with your own or have students help to come up with some together.)

#### Procedures

- Students will have an opportunity to share one thing about themselves to the group (Start with something very easy to get the students comfortable sharing

**with the group. In order to potentially transition to more courageous conversations the students need to feel comfortable in group)**

- It is encouraged that all students share but not required **(Be sure to not make the students feel pressured to share, let it be their choice)**
- It is essential to ensure all students are respectful during circle time **(This is one of the most important aspects of group. Group leaders wants to establish an environment that is comfortable and non-threatening. You can tell the students in order to get the most out of group it will be essential to have conversations that may make them feel weird or uncomfortable. Explain to them that all people have different levels of comfort when talking about race and we want to ensure everyone in group feels comfortable enough to share their experiences.)**

**Closing (There are several other closing activities to choose from)**

- Thank students for their ability to participate
- Encourage confidentiality among group members **(Also very essential as you want the students in group to trust that what they say will go no further than group)**

## Core Value/ Sociopolitical Identities Project

### Day 2

#### Objectives

- Students will be able to personally identify 10 core values **(There is a worksheet provided to help navigate through this activity. Having group members come up with a definition first might be beneficial)**
- Students will be able to narrow their list of core values to 5 **(The worksheet allows the student to know they are eventually narrowing down their list, but you could also do each one at a time so they do not know they are eventually narrowing down their list. Adopting and revising to create something that works best for group leader and members of the group.)**

#### Introduction

- Have students come in and sit in circle **(Having a seating chart might help to ensure students sit in a different spot during each group session. You want to ensure students are not sitting by the same person each group session.)**
- Review the purpose of Group
- Review Circle Guidelines with Students **(Be sure to explicitly review the guidelines the first few sessions as you want to ensure everyone is on the same page. The first few sessions it may be beneficial to go slow and make sure all students understand the guidelines and agree to abide by them. If there is any push back, you can always ask the students to come up with their own guidelines.)**
- Review talking piece and what purpose the talking piece serves **(Again, going slow initially and explaining to establish comprehension will save time in the long run)**
- Review Agreement to Support Engagement
- [Warm welcome ideas](#) have been included as well **(Do not feel as though you NEED to use these, but it is another resource for a quick warm welcome to complete with group)**

#### Procedures

- Provide students with the list of core values **(There is a [core value worksheet](#) attached, it can be used however you feel most useful. One activity to get the students talking about core values is asking them what they would want people to say about them. The hope is that the students would list maybe four or five qualities they would want people to say about them and realize those are on the core values list. Another idea for a definition creating activity is to ask them to think about what qualities they see or like in their own friends. The hope with this is that those qualities would potentially show up on the core values list as well.)**

- Review the core values briefly and provide students opportunity for questions **(It would be beneficial to define some of the core values to ensure comprehension for students)**
- Have students circle 10 core values they feel represent the **(Once students have established their list of ten they will narrow that list to five)**
- From the list of 10, then students should narrow their list to 5 **(Group leader could have students share with group or partner or keep to themselves. I think it is best to gauge the group and what you feel is best for the group. If you have a group where you think they might enjoy sharing, then have them share, if you more of a quiet group and you do not think they want to share that is fine too. You could also ask the group if there are any students that would like to share one of their core values.)**

### **Closing**

- Inform students to be ready to dive right in starting next session
- Thank students for their ability to participate
- Encourage confidentiality amongst group members

## Core Value/ Sociopolitical Identities Project

### Day 3

#### Objectives

- Students will be able to identify their top three core values
- Students will be able to personally reflect around their core values

#### Introduction

- Have students come in and sit in circle
- Review the purpose of Group
- Review Circle Guidelines with Students
- Review talking piece and what purpose the talking piece serves
- Review Agreement to Support Engagement
- Provide students with opportunities to ask questions to enhance clarification

#### Procedures

- Have students review their list of five core values
- Give students a short time to think about why they chose those core values **(Be sure to have enough wait time for the students to process their answer before sharing. Modeling is something that seemed to help during group sessions. For example, the teacher could list a core value for themselves and give an explanation as to why they chose that as a core value.)**
- Have students turn and talk to elbow partner to share their list of 5 core values **(Confidentiality and respect during these courageous conversations is essential and group members need to feel a general level of respect among group members. Group leader wants to make sure everyone in group feels as though their voice is heard and they are valued in group.)**
- Students will turn and talk to other elbow partner sharing their core values **(Inform students they should share a different core value with their new partner)**

#### Closing

- Let students know there will be whole group discussion around core values **(This would be a great opportunity to let them know their participation will be highly encouraged but not mandatory)**
- Encourage students to think about their core values and how they are evident in their daily lives **(This is the perfect opportunity to get the students thinking about their own core values and what role it plays in their personal lives)**
- Thank students for participation **(The more you praise students for their participation and input the more willing and eager they will be to participate)**

## Core Value/ Sociopolitical Identities Project

### Day 4

#### Objectives

- Students will be able to narrow their list to 3 core values
- Students will be able to see differences between group members' core values

#### Introduction (As you feel the students are understanding the circle guidelines and engagement agreement you do not need to spend as much time on this part)

- Have students come in and sit in circle
- Review the purpose of Group
- Review Circle Guidelines with Students
- Review talking piece and what purpose the talking piece serves
- Review Agreement to Support Engagement
- Provide students with opportunities to ask questions to enhance clarification
- Remind student their participation is highly encouraged but not required

#### Procedures

- Eliminate the two least important core values (**The three left are their core values**)
- Ensure students are aware of their top three core values (**This could be a great opportunity to get the group thinking about the decision making process of getting to their top three identities**)
- There will be discussion questions regarding core values (**The provided worksheet can be used as a guideline for discussion. It might be beneficial to introduce questions to students first and allow them time to think about their answers and have them share next session**)
- All students will have a chance to answer the questions or pass
- The second discussion question will be presented to group (**Depending on time you can always get to this question during next session**)

#### Closing

- Introduce the term [sociopolitical identity](#)
- Have students start thinking about a potential definition or what they think the meaning is
- Thank students for participation and encourage them to step outside their comfort zone

## Core Value/ Sociopolitical Identities Project

### Day 5

#### Objectives

- Students will be able to define sociopolitical identities
- Students will be able to review the list of sociopolitical identities

#### Introduction

- Have students come in and sit in circle
- Review Circle Guidelines with Students
- Review Agreement to Support Engagement
- Remind students their participation is highly encouraged but not required

#### Procedures

- Introduce and define [sociopolitical identities](#) (**Students could provide their definition first before you give them the official definition or whole group could brainstorm ideas together**)
- Review list of sociopolitical identities (**While they are reviewing the list make sure students are keeping in mind their core values**)
- Have students review the definitions of the identities (**There have been definition added to ensure comprehension but feel free to add or adapt as you see fit**)
- Provide specific examples to help the students better understand (**What was beneficial to me was to provide students concrete examples to better their understanding. There are examples provided in the worksheet but feel free to tweak and adjust as you feel necessary for your students**)

#### Closing

- Have students begin thinking about their own sociopolitical identities (**Have students start to think about their sociopolitical identities and what role that plays in their real world and in their everyday interactions**)
- Thank students for participation and encourage them to step outside their comfort zone (**This is vital in providing an opportunity for all voices to be heard. The more you can pump up those students who are apprehensive the more eager they will be to share.**)

## Core Value/ Sociopolitical Identities Project

### Day 6

#### Objectives

- Students will be able to define sociopolitical identities
- Students will be able to identify eight sociopolitical identities that are very important to them

#### Introduction

- Have students come in and sit in circle
- Review Circle Guidelines with Students
- Review Agreement to Support Engagement
- Remind students their participation is highly encouraged but not required

#### Procedures

- Briefly re-define sociopolitical identities (**All students could think of their own definition before the actual definition is presented**)
- Allow questions for clarification (**Instead of asking “do any students have questions”, you could say “what questions do you have”?**)
- Students will individually circle eight identities they feel are very important for them
- Remind students this is an individual activity (**Let students know this is an activity where they should take their time and really think in depth about their answers**)

#### Closing

- Have students start thinking about the eight identities they felt that were the most important and best represent who they are
- Thank students for participation and encourage them to step outside their comfort zone (**When you authentically thank your students for their input and participation this will encourage them to continue to participate**)

## Core Value/ Sociopolitical Identities Project

### Day 7

#### Objectives

- Students will be able to define and explain sociopolitical identities
- Students will be able to identify three sociopolitical identities that are most important to them

#### Introduction

- Have students come in and sit in circle (**Make sure students are sitting in different spots and sitting by different classmates**)
- Review Circle Guidelines with Students (**If you see any issues that arise during group, this would be the time to address those**)
- Review Agreement to Support Engagement (**If you are seeing things that are positive and you want to praise that, this would be that time**)
- Remind students their participation is highly encouraged but not required

#### Procedures

- Briefly re-define sociopolitical identities
- Allow questions for clarification
- Students will examine their sociopolitical identity sheet (**There is an attached [script](#) to help navigate through dialogue for revisiting this work. Feel free to use as is or adjust as you feel necessary.**)
- Students will look at the list of the eight most important identities to them
- Group members will then star three identities that are the most important to them
- Students will share their list of three to group

#### Closing

- Have students think about a family tradition that is important to them (**Having a student share or even asking a question about their family shows the student you care and are interested in their personal life**)
- Students can choose to share their favorite family tradition to group
- Thank students for participation and encourage them to step outside their comfort zone

## Core Value/ Sociopolitical Identities Project

### Day 8

#### Objectives

- Students will be able to define and explain sociopolitical identities
- Students will be able to identify three identities they feel most aware of on a daily basis

#### Introduction

- Have students come in and sit in circle
- Review Circle Guidelines with Students
- Review Agreement to Support Engagement
- Remind students their participation is highly encouraged but not required

#### Procedures

- Briefly re-define sociopolitical identities
- Students will examine their sociopolitical identity sheet and review their most important identities (**Group leader could also use this time to ask if anyone has noticed anything about their sociopolitical identity in their personal lives**)
- Students will put an exclamation point by the three identities they are most aware of on a daily basis (**Be sure to explain that these identities they chose for this section do not have to be ones they chose in the previous two sections**)
- Students will share the three identities they are most aware of to group (**For students who may not be as comfortable sharing you may allow them to only share one. At this point I think you should have a good feel for group dynamics and will know if this would be something they feel comfortable sharing with group or not. You could also have this as a partner activity.**)

#### Closing

- Thank students for participation during the activities
- Thank students for sharing things that are very personal to them and might be difficult to share (**Acknowledgement of the fact these conversations might be hard is essential and the more open about that conversation the better**)

## Core Value/ Sociopolitical Identities Project

### Day 9

#### Objectives

- Students will be able to answer questions around their own sociopolitical identities
- Students will be able to reflect and analyze their sociopolitical identities **(Putting an emphasis on personal reflection and not worry about others answers and what other think. Ideally at this point in group, it is expected that all participants have built a relationship and they trust each other)**

#### Introduction

- Have students come in and sit in circle
- Review Circle Guidelines with Students
- Review Agreement to Support Engagement
- Remind students their participation is highly encouraged but not required

#### Procedures

- Briefly re-define sociopolitical identities
- Have students briefly review their sociopolitical identities sheet
- Students will be introduced to [seven questions](#) related to their sociopolitical identities **(Depending on the depth of the conversation you may not get to all the questions. It is much more important to stay in the moment if you are having great conversations rather than worry about trying to get through the questions)**
- Each person in the group will have an opportunity to answer the questions **(Like all other discussion questions establish confidentiality among group members)**

#### Closing

- Thank students for participation during the activities
- Thank students for sharing things that are very personal to them and might be difficult to share
- Encourage students to pay attention to how their sociopolitical identities play a role in their everyday life **(Ultimately this is where we see things resonate with the students in group and if they can translate what they are doing in group to their personal life that is a success)**

## Core Value/ Sociopolitical Identities Project

### Day 10

#### Objectives

- Students will be able to explain how their own sociopolitical identity plays a role in society
- Students will be able to reflect and analyze about their sociopolitical identity

#### Introduction

- Have students come in and sit in circle
- Review Circle Guidelines with Students
- Review Agreement to Support Engagement (**Emphasis on expect and accept non-closure is crucial in the upcoming sessions**)
- Remind students their participation is highly encouraged but not required

#### Procedures

- Informal discussion around sociopolitical identities (**With the depth of the prior conversations and the depth of the next sessions coming up, it is nice to have an informal relaxed meeting**)
- Find out about what their knowledge was around sociopolitical identities prior to this activity
- Find out how this activity made them feel (**It is important that group members are able to explain what and how these activities made them feel, or on the contrary if it did not make them feel good, what adjustments could be made in order to help with that**)
- Try to dive into their thinking around this work before and after completing this activity (**We want group members to think critically and self-analyze**)
- Where were group members when group started as opposed to where group members are now that group is over?

#### Closing

- Inform students the next three sessions will be around analyzing their sociopolitical identities on a much deeper level (**Challenge students to really invest in the upcoming conversations. The circle script activity is where we hope to see the change happening with these young adults.**)
- Participation is essential in order to gain something from the next activity
- There may be some uncomfortable moments and we need to work through those together
- Thank students for participation during the activities
- Thank students for sharing things that are very personal to them and might be difficult to share

## Core Value/ Sociopolitical Identities Project

### Day 11

#### Objectives

- Students will be able to explain a time when they felt proud to be a member of a certain sociopolitical identity group
- Students will be able to explain a time when they felt painful to be a member of a sociopolitical identity group

#### Introduction

- Have students come in and sit in circle
- Review Circle Guidelines with Students
- Review Agreement to Support Engagement
- Remind students their participation is highly encouraged but not required

#### Procedures

- We will stay in the circle discussion format and answer various questions related to feelings, experiences and emotions around sociopolitical identities (**Important to remind group that everyone has different experiences and might have different perspectives and to honor and accept that**)
- There will be a [script](#) with word for word instructions on what to do and say (**Depending on the comfort level of the group facilitator there is a verbatim script that you can read, but also feel free to adapt**)
- Be sure to allow students to know they do not have to answer questions or they can pass if they choose (**Although passing is always a viable option, we would rather have students give us something rather than pass. You could always ask the students if they wanted to formulate their own questions to answer.**)
- There will also be two other alternative questions the students can answer if they choose to (**The optional questions are there if needed, but do not need to be used. The thought is that if they do not want to answer the initial question there are a couple alternate questions. If students refuse to answer both sets of questions than you could ask them to come up with a question they would like to answer.**)

#### Closing

- Inform students the next two sessions will be around analyzing their sociopolitical identities on a much deeper level
- There may be some uncomfortable moments and we need to work through those together
- Thank students for participation during the activities
- Thank students for sharing things that are very personal to them and might be difficult to share

## Core Value/ Sociopolitical Identities Project

### Day 12

#### Objectives

- Students will be able to explain what they hoped others understood about being a member of a certain sociopolitical identity group
- Students will be able to explain what role their sociopolitical identity plays in their everyday life

#### Introduction

- Have students come in and sit in circle
- Review Circle Guidelines with Students **(The hope is that at this point in group, most students would be aware of the guidelines and have a pretty good handle on things)**
- Review Agreement to Support Engagement **(Group leader could also have the students in group sign the agreement at the end of group)**
- Remind students their participation is highly encouraged but not required

#### Procedures

- There will be a circle discussion around what the students wished society and others knew and understood about being a part of a certain sociopolitical identity group **(This question can be loaded and difficult to answer for some, maybe providing an example would be beneficial)**
- There will be a [script](#) with word for word instructions on what to do and say
- Be sure students in group know they do not have to answer questions or they can pass if they choose

#### Closing

- Inform students the next session will be around analyzing their sociopolitical identities on a much deeper level
- There may be some uncomfortable moments and we need to work through those together
- Thank students for participation during the activities
- Thank students for sharing things that are very personal to them and might be difficult to share

## Core Value/ Sociopolitical Identities Project

### Day 13

#### Objectives

- Students will be able to explain how their values and beliefs show up in their everyday lives
- Students will be able to explain what further understandings or insights they obtained from this activity

#### Introduction

- Have students come in and sit in circle
- Review Circle Guidelines with Students
- Review Agreement to Support Engagement
- Remind students their participation is highly encouraged but not required

#### Procedures

- There will be circle discussions around each students' values and beliefs and how they show up in their everyday lives **(You can remind students they had an opportunity to think about this during one of the prior sessions. Ultimately we want the group to be aware of their sociopolitical identities and how that helps or hinders their ability to navigate through the real world.)**
- There will be discussion around what further insights or understandings the students took away from the activity **(This is where the critical thinking process takes place and group leader wants students thinking about further insights or wonderings they may have)**
- There will be a [script](#) with word for word instructions on what to do and say **(This is the script that I used, but feel free to tweak and adjust to better fit the needs of the students you have in group)**
- Be sure to allow students to know they do not have to answer questions and they can pass if they choose

#### Closing

- Inform students the next session will be a wrap up from all of the sessions **(Let group know just because the last session is coming up, that does not mean the conversations stop regarding these topics)**
- Thank the group for having courageous conversations and working through some potentially uncomfortable moments
- Thank students for participation during the activities

## Core Value/ Sociopolitical Identities Project

### Day 14

#### Objectives

- Students will be able to explain if and how they benefited from participating in group
- Students will be able to explain how they could have benefitted from group sessions

#### Introduction

- Have students come in and sit in circle
- Review Agreement to Support Engagement
- Remind students their participation is highly encouraged but not required

#### Procedures

- This last session will be a discussion around the benefits of participating in this group
- Students will have an opportunity to discuss whether or not they enjoyed participating in group **(Regardless if their experience was negative or positive, it is important to find out what about group made their experience positive or negative)**
- Students will also have the opportunity to talk about what specifically they benefited from
- For those who did not enjoy group or did not gain anything, they will have an opportunity to explain why that was the case as well **(Hopefully this information will provide group leader and opportunity for reflection)**

#### Closing

- Inform students this is the last session but they are always welcome to stop by and check in for guidance and support as needed
- Thank the group for having courageous conversations and working through some potentially uncomfortable moments
- Thank students for participation during the activities
- Thank students for sharing things that are very personal to them and might be difficult to share **(Genuinely thank them for their participation in group and also the ability for group members to have courageous conversations with their peers)**

# Materials

# Warm Welcome Ideas

- Without talking have the students arrange themselves in order based on their birthday.
- Think about a favorite tradition, custom or celebration that is connected to you or your family. Take a minute and share with an elbow neighbor.
- Share with a partner a time when you recently heard a class-mates/friends voice/perspective/opinion and then responded in a way that felt positive. What do you think helped you to respond positively?
- Take a moment to think of a recent story that has made you feel **good** about your family, community or the world. Share the story with someone sitting near you and in return, listen to their story.
- What is your favorite emoji and why?
- If you could describe yourself in one word, what word would that be?
- Take a moment to think of your break (could be winter break, spring break or MEA). What is one thing you did to take care of yourself during your time off?

# Closing Activities

- Exit Card- Have students put one thing they learned on the card and place it on the table as they walk out.
- Optimistic Closure- You could ask one or two students to share something positive that is happening in their life.
- Exit Card- How are you incorporating your core values into your daily life?
- Optimistic Closure- Someone in group could share something they are grateful for.
- Have students turn to their partner and thank them for sharing their ideas and also listening.
- Snowstorm- Students write anything they want (appropriate of course) on a piece of paper. It could be a questions, insight, wondering etc... All students wad up paper and throw it in middle. Students come and grab a piece and read whatever they get out loud.

# Talking Circle Guidelines

**RESPECT** the talking piece – only the person with the talking piece can speak

**SPEAK** from the heart – be courageous, open and honest

**LISTEN** with respect – do not provide advice or argue with others

**HONOR** what others have shared – what is said in circle stays in circle

# Group Purpose Ideas

- Increase awareness of their own identities and values and how they impact their relationships and work with teachers, society, and friends/classmates
- Increase awareness of their cultures/cultural backgrounds to better understand their perspectives
- Work to support students so they are better able to push back on the stereotypes that they are forced to confront in our community

# **Four Engagements to Support Group**

- 1. Stay engaged:** remain involved in the  
dialogue
- 2. Experience Discomfort:** discomfort is  
inevitable, especially, in dialogue about race  
& culture
- 3. Speak your Truth**
- 4. Expect and Accept non-closure**

# Core Values

We all have core values, but often we are not aware of what those are. This activity will help you identify your core values. This can be a very useful activity to see how our core values change or not.

## Process

1. Read through the list of values and circle 10 that you feel are most important to you.
2. Cross off five of those values, leaving you with the five that are the most important to you.
3. Now, from your list of five values, cross off two, leaving you with the three values that are most important to you. These are your core values.

## Reflect

On your own, reflect on the following questions.

1. How does it feel to read your list of values? What did it feel like to do this activity?
2. One year ago, what do you suspect your core values might have been? Three years ago, what do you think they might have been?

Sharing your core values with classmates is a powerful way to connect and learn about each other. Find a partner and answer the following questions.

3. Describe the elimination process you went through to arrive at your three core values. How are the ones that you crossed off reflected in your top three?
4. Consider how your actions reflect your core values. Which values show up more often in your actions at school? At home? In your social life? With family?
5. What are some ways in which your actions reflect your core values? Think of one example of how actions you take reflect your core values.

Now you and your partner find another pair and share your three core values with the group. Then answer the following questions:

6. Share a time when you acted on your core values.
7. Which of your core values feels the easiest to uphold? Which feels the hardest?

# Values

The following values apply to school and personal life. This is not all of the core values- you are welcome to add your own or add the ones we came up with as a group.

Acceptance	Flexibility	Peace
Achievement	Focus	Perseverance
Adventure	Forgiveness	Personal Development
Affection	Freedom	Personal Growth
Appreciation	Friendship	Positive Attitude
Arts	Fun	Power
Authenticity	Generosity	Pride
Authority	Goals	Privacy
Balance	Gratitude	Recognition
Beauty	Growth	Reflection
Belonging	Happiness	Reputation
Caring	Health	Respect
Celebration	Helping Others	Responsibility
Challenge	High Expectations	Results
Choice	Honesty	Risk Taking
Collaboration	Hope	Routine
Commitment	Humor	Self-Expression
Communication	Imagination	Self-Respect
Community	Independence	Sharing
Compassion	Influence	Solitude
Competition	Initiative	Spirituality
Connection	Integrity	Success
Cooperation	Interdependence	Support
Creativity	Intuition	Teamwork
Effectiveness	Justice	Time
Efficiency	Kindness	Tolerance
Empathy	Knowledge	Tradition
Equality	Leadership	Travel
Equity	Loyalty	Trust
Excellence	Meaningful Work	Truth
Excitement	Mindfulness	Unity
Expertise	Nature	Variety
Fairness	Nurturing	Zest
Fame	Order	
Family	Passion	

Adapted from Aguilar, 2018

**Sociopolitical Identities:** identifying the social groups to which we as individuals belong that may align to our race, ethnicity, class background, sexual orientation

Identity	Circle eight that you feel are <u>very important</u> to you	Star three that feel the <u>most important</u> to you	Put an exclamation point (!) next to three identities you feel <u>most aware</u> of on a daily basis
<b>Ability</b> (typical, have a disability)			
<b>Age</b> (child, teen, young adult)			
<b>Education</b> (elementary/middle/high school)			
<b>Ethnicity</b> (e.g. language, religion, dress, shared history)			
<b>Family Status</b> ( e.g. parents are married/not married, living together/single parent, parent widowed, live with another relative, foster family)			
<b>Gender</b> (e.g. identify as female, male, transgender, queer, cisgender)			
<b>Geographical Location</b> (where you live, neighborhood, city/state)			
<b>Immigrant Status</b> (born in the U.S., became a citizen refugee, immigrant, undocumented immigrant)			
<b>Language</b> ( what language/s you speak/use)			
<b>Relationship Status</b> (have a boyfriend or girlfriend, single)			
<b>Nationality</b> (what country you belong to)			
<b>Physical Appearance- how you look</b> (e.g. short/tall, thin/heavy, feminine/masculine, able-bodied/disabled)			

<b>Race</b> (people with difference or similarities in appearance such as skin color)			
<b>Religion</b> (e.g. Muslim, Jewish, Christian, Agnostic, Atheist)			
<b>Sexual Orientation</b> (e.g. straight, gay bisexual, asexual)			
<b>Socioeconomic Status</b> (wealthy/rich, middle class, working class, poor)			
<b>Other:</b>			

**Your individual responses will be kept confidential. Collectively this information will help you better understand your identity and the identity of your classmates.**

## **Sociopolitical Identities, Continued**

### **Reflect:**

What insights into yourself did you learn from this activity?

Were you surprised by any of your reflections?

What role do you think your sociopolitical identity plays in your daily life?

What do you wish that others understood about your sociopolitical identity?

# Sociopolitical Identities, Continued

## Reflect:

What did you learn about yourself from this activity?

Was there anything about your identity that you found surprising?

How do you think your sociopolitical identity affects you in your daily life at school? At Home?

# Circle Script

Materials: Circle Script, Talking Piece, Common Circle Guidelines.

**Opening:** Explain the use of the talking piece (only the person holding the talking piece speaks; you can pass; the talking piece gets held and passed by each person) & the reason you chose your particular talking piece.

**Context/Framing:** Today, we are coming together in a talking circle to explore more deeply our socio-political identities and how they impact our beliefs and values. Some of us may be more or less familiar with this structure so there are common circle guidelines to share. In transparency, we are using a talking circle because its structure provides the opportunity for equity of voice (through the use of the talking piece) as well as a way to hold space for conversations that might create discomfort for some. One of the hardest pieces of this work might be to remember that nobody else is responsible for your feelings – any discomfort that might arise, I invite you to lean into it and keep in mind what was shared in prior sessions – for many students and families this discomfort is something they experience on a daily basis.

**Round 1:** Last few sessions we spent some time thinking about our various socio-political identities. Let's begin by thinking about a time when we felt very *proud* to be a member of one of those socio-political identity groups we starred or circled. We will pass the talking piece and share.

**Part 2:** Think again about the experience – what did it teach you? What value or belief do you draw from it? (Give a little wait time then either begin with your share or by passing the talking piece to the left around the circle)

**Optional Part 3:** As we listened to each others' stories and reflected on our own story, what did you notice? (Give a little wait time then either begin with your share or by passing the talking piece to the left around the circle)

**Round 2:** This round we will think about a time when it felt very painful to be a member of one of those socio-political identity groups. If you would share what you are willing to about that experience....

**Part 2:** Think again about the experience – what did it teach you? What value(s) or belief(s) do you draw from it? (Give a little wait time then either begin with your share or by passing the talking piece to the left around the circle)

**Optional Part 3:** As you listened to others' stories and reflected on your own story, what did you notice? (Give a little wait time then either begin with your share or by passing the talking piece to the left around the circle)

**Round 3:** What do you wish that others understood about your socio-political identity?

**Optional Part 2:** As you listened to what others said, what did you notice? (Give a little wait time then either begin with your share or by passing the talking piece to the left around the circle)

**Round 4:** What role do you think your socio-political identities play in your daily school life? If any part of your instinct is to think “it doesn’t,” why do you think that is so?

**Optional Part 2:** As you listened to what others said, what did you notice? Note any learnings, insights, or realizations. (Give a little wait time then either begin with your share or by passing the talking piece to the left around the circle)

**Round 5:** Now think about those values and beliefs you identified earlier and consider how they show up in your daily life and at school. How do you live out one of those beliefs or values in your daily life and at school?

**Part 2:** Are there any ways in which this value or belief might be getting in the way of creating a more equitable outcome for you?

**Round 6:** What’s an insight or understanding you will take away from this circle – maybe a new idea or a new way of looking at something? Or, what’s something that’s lingering in your mind, that you might still be thinking about tomorrow? (Pass the talking piece around the circle, ask that everyone participate in this round – but acknowledge they can pass)

**Some prompts to offer:**

I hadn’t thought about...

What I’m still thinking about...

What’s lingering in my mind is...

What I’d like to know more about is...

**Storytelling/Closing:** Thank you to all you for... (reflect what you’re actually thankful for – honesty, bravery, openness, curiosity, reflectiveness, courage etc... share any closing reflections).

## REFERENCES

- Aguilar, E. (2018). *Onward Cultivating Emotional Resilience in Educators*. Jossey-Bass: A Wiley Brand.
- Cokley, K. O. (2018, September 20). What it means to be black in the American Educational system. Retrieved February 2, 2019, from <http://theconversation.com/what-it-means-to-be-black-in-the-american-educational-system-63576>
- Finley, T. (2015, December 15). 22 Powerful Closure Activities. Retrieved December 28, 2018, from <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/22-powerful-closure-activities-todd-finley>
- Leadership and Academic Coaching Training, Mentor Coaching, Leadership Classes. (2015, Fall). Retrieved 2018, from <http://www.upcoachingframework.com>
- Renard, L. (2017, August 30). 15 creative lesson ideas for the first day of school. Retrieved December 28, 2018, from <https://www.bookwidgets.com/blog/2017/08/15-creative-lesson-ideas-for-the-first-day-of-school>
- Schweigert, K. (2011, March 4). Lesson 1. Retrieved November 3, 2018, from <http://www.centerforrestorativeprocess.com/lesson-1.html>