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**Face-to-Face, Day-to-Day, Racism CR**

*By Tia Cross, Freada Klein, Barbara Smith, and Beverly Smith*

The following consciousness-raising guidelines were developed as a way of enabling feminists to explore and understand their own racist feelings and behavior through the use of a uniquely feminist tool. "The CR format," the authors explained in a preface which originally appeared, along with the guidelines, in the Cambridge, Massachusetts, newspaper Sojourner (4-9 May 1979), "encourages personal sharing, risk-taking, and involvement, which are essential for getting at how each of us is racist in a daily way, and it encourages the 'personal' change that makes political transformation and action possible." Although the authors caution "that these guidelines are not instant solutions—you can't spend fifteen minutes on each topic and assume you're done," the guidelines can serve as a beginning for a variety of social action groups and community workshops. They are also adaptable for women's studies classrooms in various settings, and we therefore reprint them, with the authors' permission, below.

### Early Memories—Childhood Experiences

1. When were you first aware that there was such a thing as race and racial differences? How old were you? Recall an incident. How did you feel?
2. What kind of contact did you have with people of different races? Were they adults, children, playmates?
3. How did you experience your own ethnic identity?
4. How did you first experience racism? From whom did you learn it? What did it mean to you? How did it function in your perception of yourself? How did it make you feel? How did it affect you in relation to other people?
5. When did you first notice yourself treating people of color in a different way?

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| 6. When were you first aware that there was such a thing as anti-Semitism? How old were you? Recall an incident. How did you feel? |
| 7. What did you learn at home about Black people and other people of color? |
| 8. What did you learn about Jewish people? |
| 9. How was what you learned about Black people and what you learned about Jewish people connected? |
| 10. What terms did your parents use to refer to Black people and other people of color? If these terms were negative, how did hearing these terms make you feel—curious, uncomfortable, angry? |
| 11. In the group say out loud and make a collective list of all the terms you were ever taught or heard about people of color. Also do the same activity with all the terms used for other ethnic and religious groups. |

### Adolescence—Early Adulthood

1. What kinds of messages did you get about race as you entered adolescence? Did your group of friends change?
2. Discuss the connections between coming of age sexually and racial separation. (When the four of us discussed being a teenager, one woman pinpointed the sexual-racial dichotomy by saying, "It's about who you can't date!")
3. If you went to integrated schools what messages did you get about Black people in general and about Black males specifically?
4. In what ways was race used by you or your friends as a subject of so-called teenage rebellion?
5. How did different groups of students get along in your school? Were you aware of divisions by race and class? How did it feel?
6. How were different groups of students treated by teachers and the school and the school administration?
7. If you were growing up during the '50s and '60s, what kind of information did you get about Black people through the media? How much of it was specifically about Black men? How much of it was specifically about Black women?
8. If you had interactions with Black people through work during the '50s and '60s, through political groups, or socially, what proportion of these interactions were with Black men? with Black women?
9. What were your experiences as white women with Black men? What were the racial-sexual dynamics of these relationships, that is, in what ways did they fuel your own racism, and, on the other hand, how did they affect your developing feminism? Were you making connections at that time between the racial and sexual aspects of what was going on?

### Becoming a Feminist—Racism in the Women's Movement

1. When did you begin to believe in your connections with all women?
2. As you became a feminist, to what degree did you feel connected to women of all different backgrounds and lifestyles?
3. How does your class background affect your racism and making connections with women different from yourself? What are the barriers you have to overcome to connect?
4. How do you see yourself as different from a Black woman? How do you see yourself as the same?
5. Everyone in the group fills in the blanks in the following statements. This exercise could be done out loud or by each person writing her response down first before hearing from the group. "Black women always ————.") "When I'm with Black people I'm afraid that ————.") "I wouldn't want Black people to ————.") "When I'm with Black people I'm afraid that ————.") "I'm afraid I will ————.") "I'm afraid they will ————.")
6. Discuss different values you think white and Black women have about childrearing, clothes, food, money, upward or downward mobility, etc.
7. Each week the group has the "homework assignment" of noticing racist situations—things each member sees, hears, or reads. Begin each session by sharing the things you've noticed.
8. Discuss what happens when you call another white woman on her racism. What are your fears? How does it feel to do this?
9. Discuss the ways in which white women lower their standards for being feminist for Black and other Third World women. Do you find yourself "hiding" your feminism in a situation where there are Third World people? Are you afraid to confront a Black woman's anti-feminism?

10. Discuss issues that the women's movement has worked on which might be considered racist, because they do not touch the lives of women of color. Discuss feminist issues which are classist. Discuss feminist issues that cut across racial and class lines, touching the lives of all women. Which of all these issues have you worked on or considered a priority?

11. In what way does being a lesbian connect to the whole issue of racism between white and Black women? What kinds of racism have you noticed in all-women's social situations, at bars and at cultural events? In what ways can shared lesbian oppression be used to build connections between white women and women of color?

Tia Cross, Freeda Klein, Barbara Smith, and Beverly Smith are two Black and two white feminists who have been active in doing work on racism in Boston.

Reaching Out to the Community: The Mothers and Daughters Conference at SUNY/New Paltz

By Nancy Schniedewind

Last spring we held an intergenerational Mothers and Daughters Conference at SUNY/New Paltz that was attended by over 350 people, many of them grandmothers, mothers, and daughters from the same families. The impetus for the weekend conference had come from a group of women's studies faculty and students who, during a discussion of the significant changes in our lives that involvement in women's studies had catalyzed, had begun to consider how exciting it would be if our mothers could share some of our new perspectives. At the same time, it occurred to us that we, as a Women's Studies Program, could engage mothers or grandmothers and daughters off campus and get them involved in our Program.

Thus, in addition to issuing "calls for papers" through the usual channels, we made particular efforts to contact local women with special expertise who hadn't been involved in women's studies before. We also encouraged groups of students to present workshops. In all, fifty workshops were offered.* Moreover, twenty-five undergraduates who enrolled in my two-credit modular course, Mothers and Daughters, explored the mother/daughter relationship before the conference through readings, class discussions, and papers.

The conference was a great success. As one daughter put it: "It brought many new ideas and issues to a central meeting place where two and three generations of women could understand their common needs, hopes, triumphs, and oppression, and look to each other for strength and camaraderie."

Although we were initially angered by the lack of support shown by the College in failing to provide housing, which forced us to put everyone up in local homes, this community-based housing turned out to be a boon. Many mothers stayed in the apartments or homes of their daughters, which was, for most of them, a novel experience. Mothers found themselves part of their daughters' world and living on their turf and terms. A far cry from going home to Mom for vacation! This three-day shared living experience deepened the exploration of the mother/daughter relationship.

The effects of the conference on mothers were noteworthy. For many, this was the first conference they had ever attended, and for the vast majority, the first women's conference. For some, it was the first time they had been away from home without their husbands—several of whom had shown resistance to their coming. Attendance, for them, meant taking an independent step. The conference made the women's movement more tangible and less threatening to them. One undergraduate wrote: "My mother didn't understand the women's movement. She was afraid to break the traditional feminine stereotype. Talking . . . about women's studies and coming to the conference helped her realize what liberation is all about."

The most profound effect of the conference on daughters, as a group, was the development of a new respect for their mothers, and for older women in general. Many realized for the first time that they could learn from the life experiences of their mothers and grandmothers.

The conference provided mothers and daughters a unique time and space in which to look at themselves and each other. The most consistent response women reported was that their relationship with their mother or daughter had changed for the better. Typically, one participant wrote: "This weekend has been a beautiful growing and learning experience for my mother and me." While the immediacy of such changes hit home most poignantly for those women who came with their mother or daughter (between one third and one half of the participants), those who came alone also left with plans to initiate changes in their relationships. In addition, many of the local women have developed an interest in women's studies.

In our self-evaluation of the conference we regretted not having planned a plenary session that explicitly related the mother/daughter relationship to a feminist analysis of the oppression of women. We also felt that we ought to have addressed more directly the issues of race and class. Even so, most participants came away feeling the energy of a multigenerational community of women cutting across divisions of race and class.

All in all, the conference was so successful...