

What Happens in an ASDIC Circle?

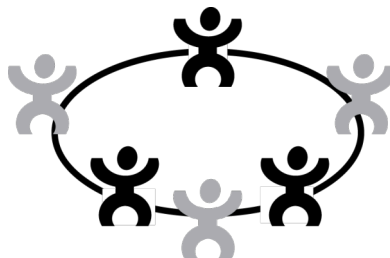
ASDIC dialogues invite participants to

- Actively explore the meaning, construction, and social purpose of racialized identity;
- Examine the roots of structural domination and social oppression that confer or restrict power, influence, and privilege;
- Recognize how the legacy of racism and contemporary structures of domination shape interpersonal and intergroup relationship;
- Build dispositions to become aware of and acknowledge racism and to recognize taken-for-granted racial privileges;
- Learn communication skills and language to effectively discuss contemporary racism;
- Develop empathy and the capacity to listen and to hold a 'double consciousness' in cross/racial interactions;
- Become acquainted with civic and activist leadership engaged in social justice change activities, and
- Cross barriers of difference to form friendships, coalitions, and networks to take action for dismantling racism and creating a just, equitable society.

ASDIC dialogues, as a pedagogy of reconciliation, embrace Mary Elizabeth Mullins' four principles for teaching reconciliation: The ASDIC dialogues address

- The fear of knowing and the fear of being in relationship - the fear of not finding answers and the fear of knowing what we do not know;
- The yearning to know-the yearning to find life beyond conflict, to face questions without answers, and to know what we do not know;
- Education as searching-the practice of truth-telling, of living with questions, and of searching for what we do not know, engaging in experiencing, exploring, deconstructing and reconstructing cultural symbols through storytelling and social analysis;
- Education as reconciliation-the practice of posing alternatives, the practice of reconsideration, the practice of remembering and covenantal eating, and the practice of meeting in our ordinariness, our "as-we-are" humanity.

ASDIC® *Antiracism Study Dialogue Circles*



*Fostering wholeness
Spinning webs of relationship
Untangling knots of oppression*

The Antiracism Study-Dialogue Circle (ASDIC, "azdek") is a community of twelve to fifteen people who gather as a "Circle" to create supportive relationship as they explore the ways their social behaviors and identities have been formed in the context of 'race' and the practices of racism in the United States.

The relationships are built around honest and deep dialogue. Circle participants, representing a range of faith and humanistic perspectives come from many walks of life, including teachers, students, congregational leaders, activists artists, attorneys, civic leaders, college and university faculty, and school administrators.

Binding them together as a Circle are values about the importance of relationship, shared life stories, the desire to eliminate personal and institutional racism, and a willingness to engage in an extended dialogue process that leads to an Action Plan.

ASDIC facilitators work with Circle participants to identify the negative influence of certain values, institutions, and practices in the larger culture on their lives and relationships so that the participants may become advocates for relational values and stand against values harmful to themselves and society, i.e., racism.

ASDIC Circles®

As a community dedicated to mending the brokenness of racism, ASDIC fosters wholeness, spins webs of relationship, and untangles knots of oppression.

The ASDIC program promotes honest and open dialogue and study concerning the ways racial socialization informs our sense of self and place, images, values, and relationships. And it promotes an understanding that study and dialogue can contribute to self understanding, create empathy for ourselves and others in our complicity and injury, and empower us to take responsibility for personal and social transformation. This work takes place as ASDIC collaborates to:

- Organize and host antiracism study dialogue circles
- Create and sustain partnerships and networks
- Create, identify, and provide resources
- Develop antiracism curriculum
- Provision, enable and empower participants
- Train new facilitators
- Build capacity for on-going antiracist transformation within institutions and communities
- Reconcile through social and racial justice

Testimonial

Certificate of Achievement Award

Hamline University, Division of Student Affairs, May, 2007:

The ASDIC experience is rigorous, compassionate, respectful and non-coercive. ASDIC participants undertake an intellectual and emotional examination of the historical social, political, and economic factors that continue to divide, limit, and exclude. Patient, kind, and supporting, the ASDIC Facilitators invite each participant to walk with them to explore the bitter and ugly places that are typically denied or avoided. Out of this process participants experience glimmers of a society beyond denial, shame, guilt, and rage - a society constructed on compassion, community, justice, hope, and love.

The Saint Paul Foundation Honoree
Facing Race Ambassador Award 2008

Participant Testimonials:

I have waited thirty years to witness and participate in circle tackling racism. I am so proud and feel complete to move forward in my journey to creating an anti-racist community.

- **Kia Moua**, Resident St. Paul's West Side

The ASDIC Circle has been a rich experience for me. Developing a mature understanding of how racism impacts all of our lives, is an important obligation we owe ourselves if we are committed to building communities based on justice and peace with one another. ASDIC challenged me at a deep level but always within a spirit of hope and joy for the world we can build together.

- **Rep Carlos Mariani Rosa**

ASDIC is a challenging, but always safe and mutually supportive meeting of differing but kindred minds. In ASDIC, you discover how devastating racism is economically, socially, and spiritually, but you also get to know wonderful people who believe we can fight racism and win.

- **Eric Paul Jacobsen**, College Professor,
Resident St. Paul's West Side

By providing more than an empathic awareness of the ills of racism, ASDIC equips participants with an advanced knowledge of racism and history, builds personal resilience, and encourages relationships to be developed and maintained. ASDIC is a means to make a difference by providing practical tools needed to enable us to eliminate racism.

- **Graduate School faculty person**,
Hamline University

ASCIC® is sponsored by Cherokee Park United Church, with support from The Saint Paul Foundation and the Otto Bremer Foundation.

Over forty ASDIC Circles offered since fall 2004:

**One or more ASDIC Circles or classes
have been offered at the following locations**

Carleton College

For-Credit Course IDSC 230

United Theological Seminary

For-Credit Course TR331

Duluth Civic Leaders Circle

sponsored by **ISD 709**

Safe Schools Healthy Students Initiative

Community Action Duluth

Cherokee Park United Church, Saint Paul

Mayflower Church UCC, Minneapolis

First Congregational Church of Minnesota

Calvary Baptist Church

Peace UCC, Rochester

Peace UCC, Duluth

Hamline University (Saint Paul)

Wesley Center, Hamline University

Center for Excellence in Urban Teaching

ASDIC Youth Circles

ASDIC Conocimientos After-School Program

Format: Circle formats include One meeting a week formats (12 or 10 sessions, totaling 30 hours), bi-weekly formats (6 or 7 sessions, totalling 30 hours), and weekend formats. Typically the Circle meets on a Tuesday or a Saturday.. Sample format of a 12 week format:
Tuesdays, 6:00 to 8:30 pm (dinner: 5:30).
Saturdays from 8:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. (breakfast: 8:00).

Cost: Circles are sponsored by an organization. The cost for a participant is \$150, which includes meals and all resources. *Pay what you can, scholarships are available. All are welcome without regard to financial circumstances.*

Enrollment in each Circle is limited. The study dialogue circle is open to all members of community. Closed sessions for agencies, schools, and businesses can also be arranged. CEU credit available.

Participant Testimonials:

As a community member who is deeply troubled by the continuing instances of racism and racial disparity in the Twin Cities and across the nation, I was grateful for the opportunity to participate in a program that was safe, challenging, uplifting, and truly profound. In our daily lives, there is little opportunity to learn and reflect in a way that is as substantive as ASDIC provides.

- **Cecia Kearns**, TC environmental activist

The ASDIC experience is transformative because it encourages participants to engage deeply and honestly on a topic we have been socialized to avoid. Through the readings, videos and dialogue, I have found renewed hope that by building "beloved communities", we can and will confront and dismantle systemic racism. Our ASDIC Circle lasted twelve weeks, but the knowledge and insight I gained will last a lifetime. Thank you!

- **Maria McNamara**, Member, CPUC, St. Paul

Most of my life I have lived in multi ethnic and multi racial communities without realizing how much white privilege has given me. The ASDIC circle experience brings to focus what we as descendants of Europeans have gained materially but lost in human terms from the perpetuation of racism. The need for justice is not an abstraction. We need not only to rethink our role in perpetuating the edifice of racism, but to actively change it. ASDIC has helped me in this.

- **Sandy Settevig**, Founding member WSCO

Additional Information on ASDIC Circles:

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