Beliefs & Behaviors that help or Hinder Intercultural Relations

Vivian Jenkins Nelsen, President and CEO of The INTER-RACE Institute, Augsburg College has collected data from many groups about the beliefs and behaviors that get in the way of honest interaction between intercultural groups. She also has asked "what works?" The lists are not prioritized. Marla Amborn developed the questions.

Beliefs of European Americans That Hinder Intercultural Relations
- Racism is not a problem
- "Reverse racism" is a problem
- Color-blindness is the best diversity strategy
- Color/culture is unimportant in interpersonal relations
- European culture is superior
- Liberal European Americans are not racist
- All people of color are alike
- People of color must be micro-managed or watched
- People of color are oversensitive
- People of color try to "use" European Americans
- People of color always welcome and appreciate inclusion in white society
- People of color like familiarity by European Americans
- People of color are accepted into college because of affirmative action
- People of color can't achieve academically or in business
- People of color need lower standards to achieve academically

1. Which of these beliefs of European Americans have you observed to be most prevalent in your personal interactions?
2. How do these beliefs show themselves?
3. How do these beliefs hinder your relations with people of color? Other European Americans?

Beliefs of People of Color That Hinder Intercultural Relations
- All European Americans are intentional racists
- European Americans are united in the attitudes towards people of color
- Whites cannot and will not change except by force
- The best diversity strategy is to "be nice"
- Whites are trying to "use" people of color
- European Americans have all the power
- All European Americans will let you down in the "crunch"
- All European Americans are alike
- People of color have no racial prejudices

1. Which of these beliefs of people of color have you observed to be most prevalent in your personal interactions?
2. How do these beliefs show themselves? In the workplace? On campus?
3. How do these beliefs hinder relations between European Americans and people of color?

Behaviors of European Americans That _Hinder_ Intercultural Relations
- Resisting change until confrontations are inevitable
- Playing by white rules
- Associating only with "safe" people of color
- Expressing acceptance and friendship too quickly/easily
- Acting superior
- Offering help where it is not needed or wanted
- Only discussing behaviors of people of color
- Talking about, not to, people of color
- Associating only with European Americans
- Interrupting people of color when they speak
- Testing the competence of people of color and not European Americans
- Insisting that one is not prejudiced
- Relating "my best friend is a person of color" stories to prove one is prejudice free
- Telling racist jokes

1. Of the behaviors of European Americans the hinder cultural relations listed here, which have you encountered most frequently?
2. Which have you found to be the biggest hindrances to positive intercultural relations?
3. In what settings are these most likely to occur?
4. How do you feel when people behave this way?
5. What recommendations do you have for well-meaning European Americans to avoid these behaviors?
6. What recommendations do you have for persons of color when they encounter these behaviors?

Behaviors of People of Color That _Hinder_ Intercultural Relations
- Using avoidance as the only way to relate to European Americans
- Using confrontation as the only way to relate to European Americans
- Giving answers one thinks whites want to hear
- Ignoring the history, lifestyles, and contributions of other groups of color
- Telling people off too early and harshly
- Making snap judgments too early in relationships
- Associating only with one's race
- Rejecting honest expressions of acceptance and friendship
- Failing to keep commitments and offering no explanation
- Not expressing honest feelings

1. Of the behaviors of people of color that hinder intercultural relations, which of these have you observed most frequently in interactions between people of color and European Americans?
2. Why do you think they occur?
3. How do you feel when people behave this way?
4. In what situations is this behavior most likely to occur?
5. What recommendations do you have for European American when they encounter these behaviors?

<mark>Beliefs</mark> of European Americans That <mark>help</mark> Intercultural Relations
- European Americans need to know and value the ethnic heritage/culture of Asian, Indian, Latino, and African Americans
- European Americans need to know and value their own ethnic heritage/culture
- European Americans can't fully understand what it means to be a person of color
- Interdependence is needed between people of color and European Americans
- Color is a real difference, but not the basis on which to determine friendships or neighbors
- There are more similarities than differences between cultures
- People of color have standards of excellence
- Anger is a legitimate response to racism
- Openness is healthy
- I may be part of the problem

1. Which of these beliefs of European Americans have you observed to be the most helpful?
2. How do these beliefs show themselves?
3. What recommendations do you have for interacting across racial lines in ways that cultivate these beliefs in others?
4. What are the biggest barriers to cultivating these beliefs? Suggestions for overcoming these barriers?

<mark>Beliefs</mark> of People of Color that <mark>help</mark> Intercultural Relations
- Some European Americans are committed anti-racists
- European Americans can change biased beliefs and behaviors
- Interdependence is needed between people of color and European Americans
- Color is a real difference but not the basis on which to determine friendships or neighbors
- There are more similarities than differences between cultures
- Openness is healthy
- I may be part of the problem

1. Which of these beliefs of people of color have you observed to be the most helpful?
2. How do these beliefs show themselves? In the workplace? On campus?
3. What recommendations do you have for interacting across racial lines in ways that cultivate these beliefs in others?
4. What are the biggest barriers to cultivating these beliefs? Suggestions for overcoming these barriers?

Behaviors of European Americans That help Intercultural Relations
- Expressing feelings openly and directly
- Assisting other European Americans to understand racism and privilege
- Supporting ideas/actions of people of color
- Demonstrating an interest in learning about cultures of people of color
- Working through difficult conversations
- Taking risks, being the first to confront problems
- Examining one's own motives, prejudices, and covert racism
- Accepting the leadership of people of color
- Treating people of color as individuals
- Meeting people of color halfway
- Walking your talk

1. Of the Behaviors of European Americans that help Intercultural Relations, which of these do you personally find most helpful?
2. In what settings are these most likely to occur?
3. What recommendations do you have for encouraging these behaviors?
4. Of the Behaviors of people of color that help Intercultural Relations, which of these do you personally find most helpful?
5. In what settings are these most likely to occur?
6. What recommendations do you have for encouraging these behaviors?

Behaviors of People of Color That help Intercultural Relations
- Respecting other's point of view
- Acting powerfully, not defensively
- Taking risks, being the first to confront problems
- Working through difficult conversations
- Expressing feelings openly, directly, and in a timely way
- Examining one's own motives and prejudices
- Walking your talk
- Treating all people as individuals
- Showing pride in one's heritage
- Meeting others halfway

1. Of the Behaviors of people of color that help Intercultural Relations, which of these do you personally find most helpful?
2. In what settings are these most likely to occur?
3. What recommendations do you have for encouraging these behaviors?