



FIFTH ANNUAL
SYMPOSIUM ON FAIRNESS & EQUITY ISSUES
IN CHILD WELFARE TRAINING AND EDUCATION
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EXAMINING THE ORIGINS OF BIAS

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The purpose of this exercise is to allow participants to examine how their childhood experiences may have given rise to bias. Participants should be advised to share only information within their comfort zone. I use this exercise as part of the *Framework Curriculum*, but it can be used with any group to discuss personal biases.

On the following pages are words that can trigger memories of experiences and associations from childhood. Sets of these words can be printed onto brightly colored paper, cut out and placed into plastic Ziploc™ bags, or clipped together. Participants should choose no more than 10-15 words, and be given at least 15 minutes to discuss their biases at their tables. Group members should only disclose information that they are comfortable sharing with others.

For example:

Education, religious activities, sickness, hard work, family, and friends were words that I chose. My parents were denied education and therefore, by the time my siblings and I were in middle school, we had to decide which college we planned to attend and what our majors would be. Religion and religious observances were extremely important in my family and are still deeply rooted in my life. I was very ill as a child so there were many hospital visits. I always had new clothes and my father worked hard to ensure that my mother did not have to work. We always had vacations. My brother and I fought constantly but we are close now.

Exercise: Examining the Origins of Bias

Toys	Depression	Alcohol
Step-parents	Friends	Education
Cultural holidays	Family	Grandparents
Cultural activities	Religious Services	Cousins
Family Stories	Religious Activities	Celebrations
Godparents	Sports	Holidays
Sickness	Skin Color	House
Sadness	Skin Tone	Apartment

Pictures	Abuse	Movies
Medication	Honesty	Theater/plays/ musicals
Computer	Blame	Travel
Television	Moving	Bus
Drugs	Dancing	Music
Family Picnics	Hard Work	Food