

## Knowing Our Neighbors: Unsettling History, Hopeful Future

ELC Adult Education 2022

For several weeks, we have been attempting to view our history from a Native American perspective (“Facing East”). This process is challenging. We all bring MANY factors into this type of experience: our own heritage, how we were raised, our prior knowledge of the subject, and our experiences with race while growing up and in our present circumstances. Not surprisingly, Native and non-Native people process this type of learning experience differently, according to Dr. Lisa Poupart of the UW-Green Bay’s First Nations Studies Department. She asserts that people go through identifiable stages when processing the story of First Nations people. TAKE TIME TO REFLECT ON THIS!

Stages to Learning History from the Perspective of a Non-Dominant Group (For Native people)	Stages to Learning History from a First Nations Perspective (For Non-Native people)
<p><b>Stage 1: Denial</b> Seeking acceptance from the dominant group, while actively or passively distancing oneself from people of your own race. “Race is not relevant to me.”</p>	<p><b>Stage 1: Denial/ Minimization</b> Lack of awareness of non-dominant perspectives, or perspectives driven by stereotypes or limited interactions with people from the non-dominant group.</p>
<p><b>Stage 2: Shock</b> Learning more authentic history concerning the experiences of non-dominant groups (i.e., Native American people) may lead one to feel shocked, leading to greater understanding of racism and the impact it has had on your life.</p>	<p><b>Stage 2: Anger</b> Learning more authentic history from the perspective of “the other” brings awareness that is uncomfortable and often makes one feel defensive about one’s own privilege. Mixed feelings.</p>
<p><b>Stage 3: Anger, Rage</b> As one moves further into an understanding of the past, shock easily morphs to deeply rooted anger and even rage. This anger often motivates people to go further in their self-exploration concerning their own experiences and the experiences of their group. It also may make meaningful relationships with people from the non-dominant group difficult.</p>	<p><b>Stages 3 and 4: Sadness/ Guilt/ Shame</b> Going further into the history and authentically learning about the injustices and trauma that were part of the story of indigenous people may bring true feelings of sadness for what occurred. Also, can be followed by feelings of guilt or even shame for what occurred in the past. People need to be reminded that we are not responsible for what people did 150 years ago. We are only responsible for what we can control today.</p>
<p><b>Stage 4: Grief, Mourning</b> Further “playing out” of anger, leading to grief or sadness.</p>	<p><b>Stage 5: Radical Acceptance</b> Abandoning beliefs in White superiority, in this stage people may attempt to make connections with people of color and may feel alienated from other whites who do not “share their understanding” of the non-dominant history.</p>
<p><b>Stage 5: Healing</b> Coming to terms with the knowledge one has gained and feeling secure with one’s identify in relation to others. Also, a willingness to establish meaningful relationships with members of the dominant group in a respectful and open atmosphere.</p>	<p><b>Stage 6: Authentic Ally</b> A new sense of self is internalized with a commitment to confront racism, to form strong relationships with people of color, and to take positive actions to improve race relations.</p>
<p><b>Stage 6: Change Agent</b> Those in this stage can translate their knowledge and experiences into positive actions for change and are able to sustain the effort over time.</p>	