

### **Hidden Assumptions and Attitudes:**

1. The assumption that the dominant group represents humanity as a whole: for example, that "man" refers to all people, that pink band-aids are flesh-colored.
2. The assumption that we all share common experiences, resources, and interests. Women's experience is different from men's, blacks' from that of whites', working-class people's from middle-class people's. Society's institutions treat us differently and we grow up with different expectations and opportunities. We do not have the same access to money and time or to resources such as transportation and emotional support. We have different responsibilities and different limitations. As we work together, we need to bear this in mind.
3. The assumption that discrimination does not hurt the dominant group. Restrictive sex roles hurt men as well as women. Racism hurts us all. Both divide us as potential friends and allies.
4. The assumption that education on these issues should be carried out by the oppressed-that people of color should educate white people, that women should raise the consciousness of men. Yet no one can raise someone else's consciousness-that is a task we each must take for ourselves. Because change benefits us all, it is up to each of us to learn about and raise issues other than our own.
5. The assumption that the values, symbols, and world-view of the dominant culture are universal.
6. The assumption that people from different groups and lifestyles should try to look and act like members of the dominant group, or should fit the stereotypes to make dominant group members feel comfortable.
7. The assumption that these issues of liberation and survival are side issues that distract from the real work and can be conveniently set aside whenever they make people uncomfortable.

### **Ways We Can Work for Change:**

1. Raise the issues of racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, ageism, discrimination against the disabled, etc. Speak up about them. Make them our concern.
2. Join together with people of our own sex, class, or race to share experiences, frustrations, pain, and develop common understandings. Make time for consciousness raising.
3. Educate ourselves about people who are different from us. Read the writings of people of color, working-class people, women, etc. Learn the history of Africa, the Americas, Polynesia, Asia. Learn other languages.
4. Tell our own personal histories to each other. Recognize that we are all ethnic, that we are rich in the diversity of our heritages and life experiences.
5. Realize that third-world people face daily threats which are more immediate than what we

experience in a wealthy country.

6. Understand that many peace and justice issues affect third-world communities in special ways. For example:

Nuclear programs are dependent on uranium mined in southern Africa and on native lands in the U.S., Canada, Australia, etc.

Military intervention is planned to prevent self-determination throughout the third world.

Military recruiting is targeted at areas of high unemployment. With few jobs available, African-Americans and Latinos often have little choice but to enlist.

The massive transfer of resources to the military in recent budgets has particularly hurt the poor.

The massive expenditures for arms worldwide take funds and resources needed for economic development.

7. Learn and act upon issues of special concern to third-world communities. Integrate the concerns of these communities in your approach to peace issues.

8. Develop working relationships with all groups involved with social change, including African-American, Latino, Asian, and native groups. In planning for events form coalitions early, which include as many groups as possible.

9. Do not force your agenda on other organizations.