

Why We Should Talk about Worldview

✓ PREPARATION

- ▶ As the facilitator you will need to decide which content to use and when. You will find enough content in this module to facilitate a 3 hour session, however we advise you to stick to 60 minutes. We have intentionally provided a wealth of information and activities for you to tailor and personalize for students, staff, and community members. The module discusses social capital, civic pluralism, social scientific theories, worldview and the civic goods of pluralism.
- ▶ Familiarize yourself with the content and decide which videos and activities will be most beneficial, relevant, and effective for you to facilitate to your community.
- ▶ Print copies of the [Glossary of Terms](#) to hand out at the beginning of the workshop. Familiarize yourself with the terms (you will only be presenting a few of them formally in the beginning, the rest are for reference)
- ▶ [Cue videos 2.3](#)
- ▶ [Cue videos 8.3](#)

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

- ▶ Explain key terms, such as religious pluralism, interfaith cooperation, and worldview
- ▶ Summarize the relevancy of religious and worldview identity to the American civic landscape and US higher education
- ▶ Increase awareness of the religious, spiritual, and secular landscape of US college campuses
- ▶ Increase understanding of how the religious, spiritual, and secular US college landscape influences one's own work and campus culture

➔ WELCOME & OVERVIEW

Tell participants: The BRIDGE Modules are designed to open a wider conversation about worldview diversity in your work with students and introduce you to the experience of interfaith relationship building.

Our goal is to understand why talking about worldview matters, and that we have existing interpersonal skills to call upon to be able to do so. We just need to practice.

¹ Rockenbach, A. and M. Mayhew. IDEALS definition of Worldview

BRIEF DEFINITIONS

Distribute the Glossary of Terms handout

Tell participants: Clear understanding of terms is essential whenever engaging identity and worldview. In order to achieve that clarity, I am going to formally present a few key terms but this is the only time in the workshop that I will present in such a formal way. I know I'm going through a lot of information! Feel free to stop me when you have questions so we can all start from the same page.

[Optional Slide: WORLDVIEW]

Worldview: A guiding life philosophy, which may be based on a particular religious tradition, spiritual orientation, non-religious perspective, or some combination of these. The foundational outlook you have on life that helps you make sense of the world around you.¹

[Optional Slide: WORLDVIEW ENGAGEMENT/INTERFAITH COOPERATION]

Religious Pluralism: A world where people of differing religions and worldviews can live and work together in peace while maintaining their distinctiveness. We focus on working toward religious pluralism specifically: the proactive engagement of worldview diversity to a positive end.

Interfaith Cooperation/Worldview Engagement: This is the tactic through which to work toward religious pluralism. Interfaith cooperation is built by cultivating respect for worldview identity, mutually inspiring relationships between people of different worldviews, and action around shared values.

The rest of the terms on the sheet are for your reference; for the sake of time we won't talk about them today.

VIDEO & DISCUSSION: SOCIAL CAPITAL

Tell participants: This video describes the purpose and importance of engaging religious diversity.

[Play video, Lesson 2. Module 2.3: Exploring Social Capital]

Ask participants: What major takeaways can we pull from this video? How does what the video explains resonate with our current climate?

Steer the group toward these points:

- ▶ Americans no longer have the option to ignore worldview diversity
- ▶ Diversity itself doesn't guarantee that people will get along or even interact with one another
- ▶ Diversity without social cohesion can be dangerous
- ▶ Interfaith Cooperation builds social cohesion if it is designed to encourage healthy interaction

Transition to pointing out that engaging with worldview identity and diversity is complicated for various reasons.

Ask participants: Why do you think we have such a hard time engaging worldview in general?

Potential themes that might emerge (you can mention these as well):

- ▶ People often assume engaging around worldview will lead to conflict.
- ▶ We're not sure what is permissible within the public educational system in particular.
- ▶ No tradition is monolithic; there is a wide diversity of experience, interpretation, and practice within every tradition.
- ▶ People are a combination of many intersecting identities; one's worldview affects and is affected by their race, gender, sexual orientation, political affiliation, and many more aspects of identity.
- ▶ Some folks have been done legitimate harm by certain interpretations of religious teachings; it's

important that we provide support for reconciling their experiences while challenging generalizations about entire belief systems based on the actions of a few.

- ▶ Worldview is often challenged, explored, and in flux during a person's college years.

Summarize: This is messy, imperfect work, but it is necessary and often very enriching, not just for communities but for individuals as well. It's important to enter it with goodwill, a willingness to understand another, and compassion for yourself.

If you are ending the entire session here...

Tell participants: Thank you so much for your participation today! I will be sending a follow-up email that includes a link to a survey so you can provide feedback about your experience and how this workshop could be strengthened in the future. We really appreciate your input, so thank you for your time in advance. I'll also include some follow-up resources that will help support your continued engagement with worldview identity, and don't hesitate to be in touch to continue the conversation about how you can incorporate this into your daily work. Thanks again!

● VIDEO & DISCUSSION: THE CIVIC GOODS OF PLURALISM

Tell participants: Tell participants. It's important that we are aware of the impact engaging worldview can have on our society. Actively engaging in our religiously diverse democracy calls us to have an understanding and a knowledgebase of the people that inhabit this world with us. As the most religiously diverse developed country in the world, we are also the most religiously illiterate (Prothero, 2008). This paucity of information serves as the foundation for many misunderstandings, perpetuates stereotypes, and fuels hate crimes. Please watch this video. When you watch this video, consider how these 'goods' translate to our campus specifically.

[\[Play video, Lesson 8. Module 8.3: The Civic Goods of Pluralism\]](#)

● REFLECTION & VISIONING

[\[Optional Slide: Civic Good of Pluralism\]](#)

Tell participants: Let's think about how the civic goods would appear on our campus if pluralism were the norm. We'll consider each Civic Good separately. Describe to me what you would see around campus to indicate these things were present:

- ▶ More Understanding, Less Prejudice
- ▶ Strengthens Social Cohesion
- ▶ Creates Bridged Social Capital
- ▶ Continuity of Identity Communities
- ▶ Creates Binding Narratives for Diverse Societies

Write the things people mention on the board or on paper.

● ACTION STEPS

Ask participants: We've established that engaging worldview differences is important to build religious pluralism, and that pluralism encourages the civic goods we just explored. What is our charge in working with students? What is one *specific action* you can take to continue to grow your ability to engage worldview difference in a healthy way?

Example answers:

- ▶ Read up on other worldviews to grow my literacy
- ▶ Include my worldview in discussions around my multiple identities
- ▶ Invite people to be vulnerable in sharing their beliefs, and modeling that vulnerability with them
- ▶ Advocate for more awareness and accommodation for worldview minorities on my campus

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