

**SC Policy KEC Complaint:
Anti-Defamation League
Peer Training Student
Manual**

March 9, 2022



PEER TRAINING
Student Manual

Anti-Defamation League Peer Training Student Manual

Evaluation

- The 12 Chapter, 312 page Manual is intended to prepare students to train other students in *“facilitating discussions about issues of bias and bullying and motivating peers to take actions to stop these behaviors when they happen in your school and community”* (page iii)
- An outcome for peer trainers is to “develop an understanding of basic terms and concepts relating to bias and discrimination and apply that understanding to their interactions with others.” (Page 12)
- Chapters 1 through 7 introduce students to group dynamics and provide activities to generate group interaction. Bullying is a problem in schools and these chapters are worthwhile and beneficial.
- Chapter 8 Language & Communications defines numerous basic terms to be used throughout the Manual, including a controversial definition of racism. This definition is a basis for the remainder of the Manual, and illustrates the biased nature of the instruction.

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Evaluation continued

(Page 135) Terms and Examples Cards Template “Term: Racism”

“The marginalization and/or oppression of people of color based on a socially constructed racial hierarchy that privileges white people.”

<p>Term: Heterosexism</p> <p>The marginalization and/or oppression of people who are or are perceived to be lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (LGBTQ), intersex and/or asexual, based on the belief that heterosexuality is the norm.</p>	<p>Examples</p> <p>A mom asks her son if he is taking a date to prom, and he says no. She is considering that he is gay.</p> <p>A high school has a policy that prohibits students from having prom dates. Despite this, a student determined to go to prom joined a civil rights organization. In response, the school changed its policy.</p>
<p>Term: Racism</p> <p>The marginalization and/or oppression of people of color based on a socially constructed racial hierarchy that privileges white people.</p>	<p>Examples</p> <p>A teacher jokes that a student is not smart enough to earn a B grade, but the student is supposed to be great.</p> <p>A recent report at a school showed that students in similar grades in math were steered toward AP courses. African-American students were often steered toward remedial courses. (S)</p>
<p>Term: Religious Bias</p> <p>The marginalization and/or oppression of people who belong or appear to belong to a particular religious group or no religious group.</p>	<p>Examples</p> <p>A group of students called a student “weird” and asked him to leave the room.</p> <p>An atheist student refused to recite the Pledge of Allegiance during home room.</p>

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This definition of racism is part of the basic vocabulary of the Manual with application embedded throughout the Manual.

In February, the accusation by Whoopi Goldberg that the Holocaust wasn't about race because Nazis and Jews were both white, caused consternation when this definition was used to support her contention. The ADL had only formed this racist definition in mid-July 2020. Prior to that time, their definition was "the belief that a particular race is superior or inferior to another, that a person's social and moral traits are predetermined by his or her inborn biological characteristics". An "interim definition" now in place states "racism occurs when individuals or institutions show more favorable evaluation or treatment of an individual or group based on race or ethnicity."

Words do matter, and the definition in this Manual used to develop the remaining chapters should invalidate the remaining material.

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- Chapter 9 Microaggressions activity (p.146) definition excludes certain races from potential victimization and is therefore itself racist. Bias is Universal activity (p. 150) discusses “explicit bias”, which bias is ironically illustrated throughout the Manual. Silent Biases activity (p. 177) teaches about stereotypes, generalizations often applied to those with differing opinions. Stories of Social Media Cruelty (p. 180), unlike most of the content, is a noteworthy activity from which adults, as well as students might learn.
- Chapter 10 Examining Systemic Racism (p. 241-244) links back to the now disavowed definition of racism on page 135. Page 242 illustrates the most egregious bias in the Manual when it instructs trainees to...

Systemic Racism (p. 242 and p. 245)

- *...”Display the following definition of systemic racism that you prepared in advance. ‘A combination of policies, practices and structures that advantage white people while causing widespread harm and barriers to access and opportunity to people of color. One person or even one group of people did not create systemic racism. Systemic racism (1) is grounded in the history of our laws and institutions which were based on a foundation of white supremacy. (2) exists in current institutions and policies (related to educational access, housing, healthcare, political access, job opportunities, criminal justice, etc.) that privilege white people and marginalize people of color, and (3) exists across culture (e.g., traditions, language, behavioral norms, values, and media) to communicate and reinforce racist ideas, tropes and stereotypes.’”*
- **THIS DEFINITION CONTAINS FALSEHOODS AND IS UNWORTHY OF INCLUSION IN HANOVER SCHOOL CURRICULUM**

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- Chapter 10 (cont.) Stop, Think, Feel, Act Activity (page 261). Students are asked “What are some of the risks and challenges of speaking up?” Those of us who are speaking out now have asked ourselves that question. We take these risks because it is wrong to be indoctrinating our children with a biased view of our Nation and our culture and the time has come for parents to act and demand School Committees be held accountable.
- Chapter 11 First Steps for Social Justice. “Ask students ‘What are some of the issues of injustice you see in your school or community right now?’” Social Justice Project Planning (p. 280) leads to “10 Ways to Engage in Activism”. (Page 283)

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- ***“10 Ways to Engage in Activism”. (Page 283) #6 Demonstrate. Marching in the streets enables people to express themselves while meeting and connecting with other people who feel passionate about the same issues. Demonstrations and protests can be uplifting and empowering and can help you feel part of a larger movement. In preparing to attend a demonstration or protest, consider what your goals are in attending, and think through what message you want to communicate. Create posters, prepare songs or chants and practice symbolism that conveys your thoughts. Organize a group of students to go together, identify a chaperone, make transportation arrangements and ensure that safety concerns are addressed.”***
- **Is this what Hanover parents expect their students to be learning in school?**

My Response to the School Department Review

provided by High School Faculty Council on 1/19/2022

- The Faculty review was devoted to the entire World of Difference program and not the 312 page Peer Leadership Manual which was the sole focus of the complaint, and most of the review was unrelated to the complaint.**
- The review states that the Manual contains “far too many activities that could possibly be implemented or completed in one school year. Our goal has always been to identify a few of those activities which best suit our students and the teachers’ pacing and sequencing of the course. A few of the options or statements in the manual may be considered controversial in nature, and the belief that all of these activities would be utilized is premature, and were never intended to be a part of this pilot class.”**
- This is a training manual for activism with clear expectations (page 14). It is to be used in a sequential manner, and not for pick and choose usage. In addition, much of the content incorporates biased definitions that are presented with no diversity of opinion.**

Summary

- **Arguments have been made that this is a pilot program, that it is voluntary, that only a handful of students are involved, that teacher discretion would ensure that admittedly controversial material would not be taught, that the School Committee can't evaluate curriculum until it has been taught, etc. I reject all of these arguments. This Manual contains racist content which has no place in a public school system and we should not be training high school students to teach younger students using material containing controversial social justice content.**
- **On February 8, I met with Supt. Ferron, and the SC Chair and Vice-Chair who professed knowledge of the controversy involving the ADL definition of racism. After the controversy, the ADL immediately changed their racist definition of racist (the second change in two years). The earlier, now recanted definition is used in the Manual in use in Hanover.**

Recommendations

- **The School Department has provided its review of the Manual which has been appealed by myself and others. It is now the responsibility of the School Committee to rule on this issue. School Committee Policy KEC states “the Committee assumes final responsibility for all books and instructional materials it makes available to students”.**
- **This complainant would prefer that the initial beneficial portion of the Manual remain in use. However, the School Committee members with whom I met on Feb. 8 stated that the Manual was a package that could not be altered. Therefore, it is requested that the Hanover School Department immediately cease use of the ADL Peer Training Manual and that it be withdrawn from the Hanover Schools curriculum for the reasons previously cited.**
- **Thank you for allowing me to speak tonight.**