

# Mobile in Black and White

Initiative of Mobile United

By Joél Lewis, Robert Gray, & Sandra Forbus

# Mobile in Black and White

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## About Mobile United



*Enabling Dialogue For Change*

Mobile United is dedicated to building an inclusive and prosperous community by deliberating issues and encouraging action when appropriate. Our community roles are encouraging tolerance and inclusiveness, building a unified network, and developing leadership.

Faced with the challenges of forestalling conflicts arising from racial integration in 1972, community leaders in Mobile came together as they had during the turmoil of the 1960s and solved their problems at the conference table. Problems in both decades were solved with a minimum of turmoil and violence, and ever since that time Mobile United and its members have provided the community with a forum for discussing and solving a variety of community challenges.

Mobile United offers the community a strong, diverse network of interested community servant-leaders. The organization provides an arena for identifying, communicating and addressing relevant issues that will improve or enhance life for all citizens in the area. Monthly General Membership meetings provide an arena for exploring a wide variety of community topics.

## Introduction

### The Initiative

Mobile United presents this initiative as an avenue to address issues of structural racism through a series of conversations in which film clips will be used as conversation starters. Stakeholders and citizens will be asked to participate in this process with the ultimate goal of determining action for increased quality of life for all citizens of the Mobile community.

### Purpose of this Guide

The purpose of this guide is to outline the Mobile in Black and White Initiative. This complex undertaking requires common ground for all involved. This document will serve a working document which will continuously be utilized as an outline of goals, processes, and outcomes.

# Community Conversations as a Tool for Community Change

## History

In 1972 because of the integration of the public schools, Mobile United was begun as a broad-based community forum that would bring people to the conference table to settle issues much in the same way that John LeFlore and Joseph Langan did in the 1950's.

James Crow, a founding member of Mobile United said that *The solution to community leadership rests in men and women of humility and integrity who will leave their pride, prejudice, and status at the door when they sit down to find solutions to common problems in theirs or others social or economic group.*

In 1999, Mobile United embarked on a series of community conversations on race. These conversations although productive were overshadowed by then current community issues such as Section 8 housing. Conversations produced priority initiatives for Mobile United Standing Committees, spurred the creating of an arts summer program for urban students, and laid the foundation for increased conversations about race in our community.

## Community Conversations Defined

Many communities have embarked on community conversations by bringing a diverse group of citizens together to participate in a facilitated discussion. Although these conversations have centered around different issues in the community, there are common principles that are central to each community conversation. This initiative shares the following common principles.

Community conversations:

- Help discover what a community cares about
- Increase dialogue
- Brings forth new ideas
- Increases understanding
- Generates action to promote change
- Create safe, civil environments
- Establish commonality

The aim of this initiative is designed to host community conversations that are respectful discussions, characterized by full and diverse participation in answering pertinent questions necessary for learning and change to occur. A safe environment must be created in order for participants to speak openly and to listen to each other respectfully. Consensus is not the goal.

## Goals

- To establish commitment of community stakeholders to address issues
- To foster open dialogue
- To create a series of video segments based on participation and feedback from conversations
- To increase awareness of issues in the community and experiences of other citizens
- To enable community ownership of issues of race
- To empower new leadership

## Desired Outcomes

Specific outcomes of Mobile in Black and White will include the following:

- Commitment of community stakeholders to address issues
- Formation of committees and subcommittees to review recommendations
- Development of new partnerships and collaborations
- Establishment of new media relationships and communication plans
- Coordination of general and targeted outreach to the community
- Integration of new elements and ideas into existing programs
- Development of specific projects and initiatives in response to issues raised
- Series of video segments created based on participation and feedback from conversations
- Awareness of issues in the community and the experience of other citizens
- New relationships and networks (across typical barriers)
- Community ownership of issues of race
- New processes for community problem-solving
- New policies
- New leadership

## Framework

### Community Conversation Approach

The one way we can move forward on racial harmony is by conveying a powerful message, and influencing people to make changes. Part of our planning process includes community engagement which we plan to undertake before the completion of the film. Using the trailer and video segments, trained facilitators will work with small groups in the Mobile community. All conversations are designed to inform future video segments and to strengthen the voice of the documentary.

## Timeline

Pilot conversations	April 2012
Start community conversations	June 2012
Conclude conversations	December 2012
Compile results	January 2013
Provide results to the community	April 2013
Video segments available online	May 2013

# Video Vignettes

## Segments for the Race Documentary

1. Why we still need to talk about race?
2. Current State of Race Relations
3. Introduction to Structural/Systemic Racism
4. Structural Racism in the Education System
5. Structural Racism in the Legal System
6. Structural Racism in the Healthcare System
7. Structural Racism in Community Life
8. Where Do We Go From Here?

## Evaluation

Kirkpatrick's Model of Evaluation will be implemented to effectively evaluate Mobile United community conversations on race. This model is appropriate for this initiative due to the complexity of the content and the desired outcomes of the conversations. The four levels of Kirkpatrick's Model of Evaluation are reaction, learning, behavior, and results.

Reaction will be measured by distribution of a paper questionnaire, informal statements, and focus group sessions. After each conversation, participants will provide information on their initial reaction to the conversation and opportunities for improvement. This approach will provide 100% immediate response to rating scale items and written comments and suggestions. Feedback from this questionnaire will shape the design and content of future community conversations.

A pretest – posttest design will be used to measure attitudinal (learning) outcomes, changes in behavior, and overall results. The pretest will be designed to include items related to existing attitudes toward race, current activities addressing race, and current perspectives of race. Comparatively, the posttest will include items seeking information on changes in attitude, new behaviors, and overall changes in organizations/ institutions. The desired results of the community conversations are for community stakeholders to not only define current perspectives on race but to make necessary changes in individual actions and organizational infrastructure to address systemic racism in our community.

Follow-up will occur with community conversations with participants 6-months and one year after conversations.

## **Partners**

Leadership Mobile

History Museum of Mobile

The Quest for Social Justice

## **Sponsors**

Community Foundation of South Alabama

Mobile County Commission, District 1, Merceria Ludgood

## **References**

<http://www.stamfordasks.org/supported/community-conversation/what-is-a-community-conversation>

<http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/activities/groundrules.html>



# Mobile in Black and White

Initiative of Mobile United

# Facilitator Guide

## Purpose of this Facilitator Guide

The purpose of this facilitator guide is to outline the Mobile in Black and White Community Conversations. In this guide, you will find the agenda, materials, and evaluations.

## Co-Facilitation

Due to the topic of the content of these conversations, it is imperative that effective facilitation techniques are applied to each gathering of stakeholders and community citizens. Each community conversation will be facilitated by multiple facilitators depending on the size of the stakeholder group. This co-facilitator approach is a purposeful attempt to be attentive to the feedback from participants and direction of the conversation. A scribe will be needed for each group (within group or outside).

## Preparation

- Read this guide
- Confirm with co-facilitator(s) and scribe
- Refer to checklist under forms
- Make copies for participants
- Arrive 30 minutes early
- Check the video

## Ground Rules (For your review: Also listed in the script)

1. **Listen actively** -- respect others when they are talking.
2. **Speak from your own experience instead of generalizing** ("I" instead of "they," "we," and "you").
3. **Do not be afraid to respectfully challenge one another by asking questions**, but refrain from personal attacks -- focus on ideas.
4. **Participate to the fullest of your ability** -- community growth depends on the inclusion of every individual voice.
5. **Share your own story and experience**, instead of invalidating somebody else's story with your own spin on her or his experience.
6. **The goal is not to agree** -- it is to gain a deeper understanding.
7. **Be conscious of body language and nonverbal responses** -- they can be just as disrespectful as words.

## Community Conversation Agenda Example

Welcome

Ground Rules

Reporting of Group Statistics

Opening Activity

Video Introduction

Video

Discussion Questions

Reporting

This agenda will change for each meeting depending on the video duration, discussion questions, and number of participants.

## Welcome

Welcome to this community conversation on race relations in Mobile. Mobile United presents this initiative as an avenue to address issues of race through a series of community conversations in which segments of a documentary entitled, “Mobile in Black and White” will be used to spark conversations. The aim of this initiative is to provide information for facilitators to host conversations that are respectful discussions characterized by full and diverse participation in order to address pertinent questions necessary for learning and change. The goals of this process are to:

- To establish commitment by community stakeholders to address issues
- To foster open dialogue
- To create a series of video segments based on participation and feedback from conversations
- To increase awareness of issues in the community and experiences of other citizens

Before we begin, I would like to review the ground rules.

## Ground Rules

1. **Listen actively** -- respect others when they are talking.
2. **Speak from your own experience instead of generalizing** ("I" instead of "they," "we," and "you").
3. **Do not be afraid to respectfully challenge one another by asking questions**, but refrain from personal attacks -- focus on ideas.
4. **Participate to the fullest of your ability** -- community growth depends on the inclusion of every individual voice.
5. **Share your own story and experience**, instead of invalidating somebody else's story with your own spin on her or his experience.
6. **The goal is not to agree** -- it is to gain a deeper understanding.
7. **Be conscious of body language and nonverbal responses** -- they can be as just disrespectful as words.
8. **Value the experience of each participant without judgment**. Everyone has experiences that are equally important to the conversation.

## Reporting of Group Statistics

If a pre-questionnaire was distributed, read the results here.

## Opening Activity

### Group Creation

Separate the large group into smaller groups. Have each person count off, such as 1,2,3, 1,2,3.... This will assist in separating people who are most familiar with each other. If working groups are participating, it may be useful to allow them to remain in groups in which they work the most.

### Read the following statement:

Each of us bring a variety of experiences both positive and negative to the discussion of race. In order for us to better relate to each other, I am asking that each of us share a racialized experience (positive or negative) that has made an impact on our perspective of race. For the sake of time, please share your experience in less than three minutes. We will use a timer to assist us in keeping time. I will begin with my experience...

### Video Introduction

This video segment is a smaller piece of a larger documentary and is a working draft. It is designed to help us start community conversations. The title of this video segment is “Why we still need to talk about race.” After we view the video we will begin the conversation.

### Video Instructions:

1. Insert the CD (The player should come automatically come up.)
2. Select the appropriate segment
3. Click play

**Video Segment: “Why we still need to talk about race?”**

**Discussion Questions/ Reporting**

1. Do we need to talk about race? If yes, why? If no, why not?
2. Are there challenges in talking about race? If yes, what are the challenges? If no, what makes talking about race not a challenge?
3. What is the most important issue in our community? Is race a contributing factor to that issue? If yes, how? If no, why not?
4. Do systemic racial inequities exist in Mobile? If so, where are they?
5. Is there a need for action on the issues of race in Mobile? If yes, what can be done by individuals, organizations, institutions, and leaders? If no, how do we move forward?

# Materials

## Checklist

Before the Conversation, check for the following:

- Be prepared to share a racialized experience (+ or -)
- Sign - In Sheet
- Action Forms
- Evaluation Forms
- Video (test prior to participants arriving)
  - Video Instructions
- LCD projector
- Computer

After the conversation, collect the following:

- Scribe notes (emailed to: [jlewis@mobileunited.org](mailto:jlewis@mobileunited.org))
- Sign - In Sheet
- Action Forms
- Evaluation Forms
- Facilitator Feedback Form
- Video



## Action Form

Participant Name:

Date:

As a result of this Community Conversation: I will:

Action	Collaboration	By When	Desired Outcome

Comments:

## Evaluation Form

### A. Purpose of the Community Conversation

Please tell us to what extent you agree with following statements about the purpose of the Community Conversation. Check the choice that most represents your feelings about each statement. A “Neutral” response merely means that you neither disagree nor agree with the statement.

1. **The conversation promoted a rich and productive dialogue.**

Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly Agree

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2. **The conversation clarified areas of disagreement that will need further dialogue.**

Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly Agree

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3. **The conversation increased my understanding of race in Mobile.**

Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly Agree

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4. **The conversation will help to build a local capacity to create more, and even better, community conversations in the future.**

Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly Agree

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5. **The conversation helped me to explore possible steps, beyond this meeting, to engage the larger community in improving race relations.**

Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly Agree

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6. **I will do something as a result of this conversation.**

Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly Agree

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**II. Organization of the Community Conversation**

Please tell us what you think about the overall organization of the Community Conversation.

**7. Overall, the conversation was well organized.**

Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly Agree

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**8. The preparation for the conversation was well done.**

Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly Agree

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**9. The video helped to frame the issues around why we need to talk about race.**

Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly Agree

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**10. The video provided a valuable resource to guide the discussion.**

Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly Agree

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**11. The length of the meeting was adequate to thoroughly address the topic of the conversation.**

Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly Agree

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**12. I believe that my participation was valued.**

Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly Agree

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**13. I think community conversations are important and useful means for addressing issues related to race.**

Strongly Disagree      Disagree      Neutral      Agree      Strongly Agree

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