Dominant and Subordinated Group Patterns

Dominant Groups

- Greater access to power and resources
- Make the Rules
- Define what is normal, "right," the "Truth"
- Assumed to be leader, smarter, competent...
- Given the benefit of the doubt
- Often unaware of dominant group membership and privilege
- Less aware about uninclusive and discriminatory treatment of subordinated group
- Are more comfortable with members of subordinated groups who share similar behaviors, appearance, and values to them
- Hold to dominant cultural beliefs, often without examination
- Collude, and if challenge, risk being ostracized/punished
- Focus on "how far we've come"

Subórdinated Groups

- Less access to power and resources
- Often seen as less than, inferior, deficient...
- Often assimilate, collude, abide by the rules, try to fit in...
- Track the daily indignities they experience; very aware of oppression
- Punished if challenge the status quo
- Have their truth and experiences questioned and often invalidated
- Know more about members of dominant groups than dominant group members know about them
- Often struggle with finding a balance between who they are and who they are told they need to be to be "acceptable"
- Often struggle with finding their voice and speaking up to challenge
- Focus on "how far we need to go

Key Concepts of Dominant/Subordinated Group Dynamics

- Not always about numbers
- Visible and Invisible; Innate and Chosen
- Multiple Group Memberships
- Not always about individual behaviors or feelings
- You didn't ask for it and you can't give it back