

PARTICIPATION IN THE MEDIA

This handout lists several key questions to use when reading or viewing various media from the perspective of different groups of people. Choose one of the following groups of people, and on a separate sheet of paper, write answers to the related questions as you analyze the media. Then, write a summary of your findings on the media's messages about various groups that experience exclusion in our society.

Elderly People

- Is “being elderly” viewed positively?
- Are elderly people portrayed as capable and gifted?
- Are elderly people portrayed as wise or as out of date?
- Are issues faced by older people presented—including the ways in which they experience exclusion? If so, are these issues addressed in an informed manner, including an awareness of the need for structural change?

People with Disabilities

- Are all or some people with disabilities portrayed as creative, positive, and gifted? If not, how are the people portrayed?
- Are references made to issues they face, including institutional barriers to participation? Are the issues addressed in an informed manner, including recognition of the need for structural change?
- How many people with disabilities are portrayed compared with the number of people without known disabilities? Does this ratio reflect the ratio of the general population? Are people with disabilities portrayed in advertising?

Women

- What are the roles and responsibilities of men and women as depicted in the media?
- Are certain personal qualities more often displayed by female characters? by male characters? If so, what are they?
- How are challenges and conflicts handled by males? by females? How much are power-over versus power-with approaches used by each sex?
- Are references made to injustices toward women in society, including violence and institutional barriers? Are such issues addressed in an informed manner, including awareness of the need for structural change?

People of Color

- How many people of color are portrayed compared to the number of white people portrayed? Does this ratio reflect the ratio of the general population?
- What cultural and historical gifts of people of color are shown?
- How would you describe the relationships that exist between people of different racial groups? Are members of different groups portrayed as being in conflict or as working cooperatively?
- Are references made to injustices toward people of color in society? Are they addressed in an informed way, including mention of the need for structural change?