

## **Session 3: EMBODIMENT**

Session Three was an evening session. In this session, we examined the workings of male supremacy in our daily lives, looking at how we embody and enact aspects of male supremacy in our everyday practices. The key objective was to identify patterns and structures in the ways that male supremacy shows up in our lives, as a first step toward identifying ways that we can challenge it. We also sought to deepen relationships of trust within the group by inviting participants to share their own stories of enacting and challenging male supremacy.

### **Preparation**

As preparation for this session, we asked participants to:

- Continue with a daily centering practice.
- Write for 15 minutes on one area/type of relationship in your everyday life that you want to look at in terms of the workings of male supremacy, both in terms of how you enact it and also challenge it (could be friendships, intimate, political or parental relationships or another context) - and then discuss this writing activity with a person or pair of people from their small group (either in person or over the phone).
- Read “Going To Places That Scare Me” by Chris Crass.

### **Opening activities**

After opening the session with an overview of the session’s objectives and agenda, and a review of the goals, timeline and working agreements for the study-into-action process as a whole, we led a centering practice and a mutual connection practice, focusing on the question “How have you been accessing support since Session Two?” We then met in our Support Groups to discuss the reading, writing and meeting activities that we had done in preparation for the session. For the last five minutes of this small group work, we asked everyone to do some writing about what was coming up for them in terms of one or more commitments that they wanted to work on during the course of the study-into-action.

### **Re-enacting the workings of male supremacy**

The main activity of this session adapted the Theater of the Oppressed technique of Forum Theater to support participants in exploring their own practices of male supremacy. Splitting into smaller groups, we asked each group to create a five-minute skit about the workings of male supremacy in a specific context (home, street, work etc) to share with the larger group. We encouraged everyone to think about the behaviors associated with femininity and masculinity and in what ways such behaviors are reinforced, policed or challenged by male peers and other significant men in their lives (e.g. fathers, uncles, colleagues, bosses.)

After presenting the skit, we debriefed participants' emotional and physical experience, for those presenting and for those watching the skit. We discussed what came up for people in the skit in terms of the practices that make male supremacy work, the institutional forces at play in these practices, and the openings for action to challenge these practices. We then asked the group to re-run the skit, but this time inviting those watching to "tap in" to make an intervention in order to change the course of the action and in some way challenge the male supremacy that was being acted out.

### **Understanding the workings of male supremacy**

After completing the skits, we came back together as a large group to de-brief what the skits showed in terms of the workings of male supremacy, both in terms of our own personal practices as well as the systems of oppression in which these practices are rooted. We gave out and discussed a handout on the "Workings of Male Supremacy," which presents a framework for thinking about how male supremacy works in relation to women, the female and the feminine. We also noted that it is important to look at the ways in which male supremacist thinking and practice 'policies' the behavior of male-identified people and privileges expressions of masculinity that conform to the heteronormative gender binary.

### **Working on strengths**

We ended the session by inviting participants to work in pairs and take five minutes each to talk about the following questions:

- In what ways am I already challenging male supremacy?
- How can I build on these existing practices of challenging male supremacy?
- What support do I need to do this?

### **Closing activities**

We then closed the session with a reminder on self-care, the preparation assignments for Session Four and a closing circle, in which everyone was asked to share how they were feeling at the end of the session.