



The Center For Dispute Resolution

An Overview of Diversity and Inclusion Activities

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April 19, 2021

Diversity Statement

The Center for Dispute Resolution believes that diversity contributes to a strong community, and we are committed to providing educational opportunities for students and offering services and programming to all people in a manner that explores, acknowledges, respects, and values individual differences. We believe that peace requires justice, and that we must work together to end individual and institutional forms of discrimination and bias on the basis of race, religion, sex, national origin, ancestry, age, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, family status, socio-economic status, and any other characteristic protected by law.

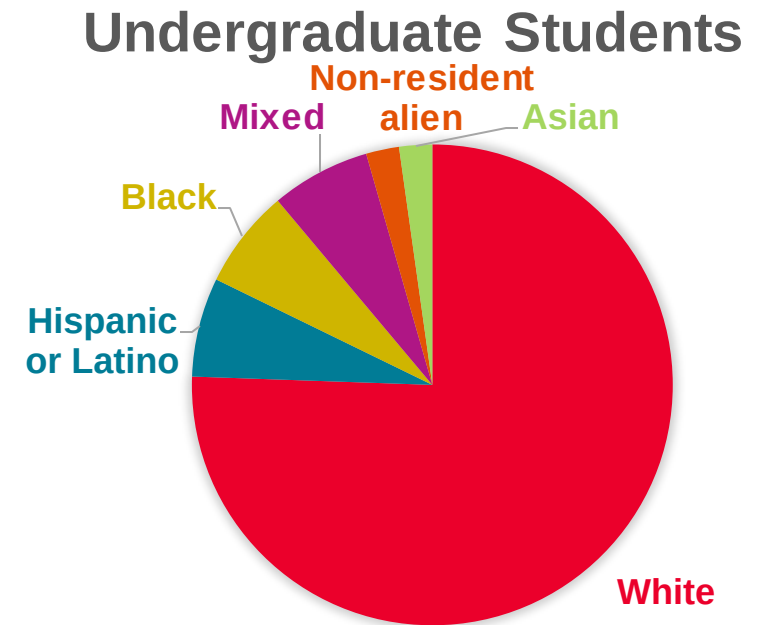
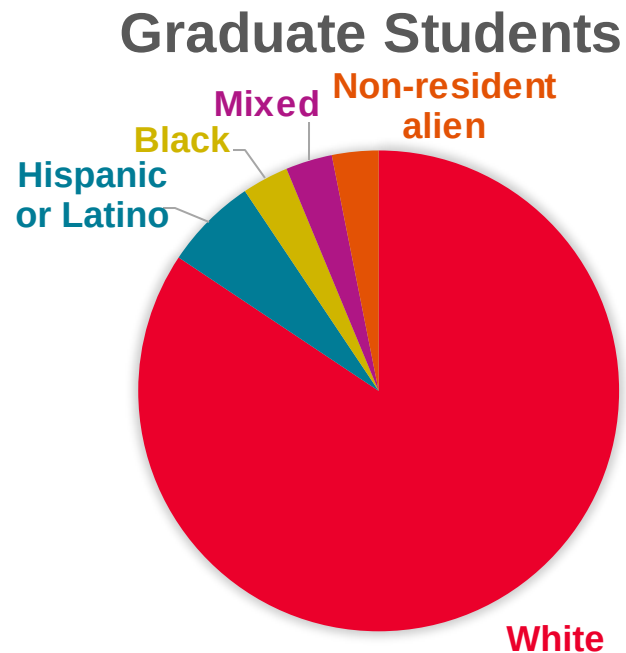
*Commitment Statement from the Department of
Communication Graduate Program:*

We unequivocally affirm our commitment to diversity, inclusion, and antiracism. We stand proudly against injustice and prejudice both inside and outside the academy. We seek to ensure that our curriculum reflects the diverse perspectives of a globalized world and that our graduates are equipped to continue this commitment in their professional lives.



Students in the Certificates in Conflict and Dispute Resolution – Spring 2021

- Graduate Certificate
 - 32 students
 - 84% White
 - 47% first-generation college students
 - 78% female
- Undergraduate Certificate
 - 45 students
 - 75% White
 - 31% first-generation college students
 - 84% female



III

Overview

SELECTED DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION ACTIVITIES

- Talking Circles in Schools
- Restorative Justice Efforts and Programs
- Diversity-Focused Facilitation
- Campus Workshops and Services
- Coursework Promoting Cultural Competence



Talking Circles

FOR AT-RISK YOUTH

- Circles for Girls
- Diversity Circles
- Guys' Gathering Circles



Circles for Girls

- 8-10 week structured educational exploratory groups for at-risk girls (identified by school counselors).
- Bring together 6-10 girls with trained college-age facilitators.
- Explore topics relating to social, emotional, and physical well-being.
- Topics include communication skills and conflict resolution, body image, healthy relationships, decision making and goal setting, bullying, and peer pressure, among others.
- Program exposes Missouri State students to diverse youth from a variety of backgrounds.
- Nearly 200 Missouri State students trained as facilitators.



“Facilitating Girls Circle challenged my stereotypes of being a woman in the society we live in, and even just my own stereotypes of, “OK, this person is from this home so they are probably going to look like this or they might do this,” so that was a really great thing for me to learn. That we shouldn’t ever go in expecting something.”

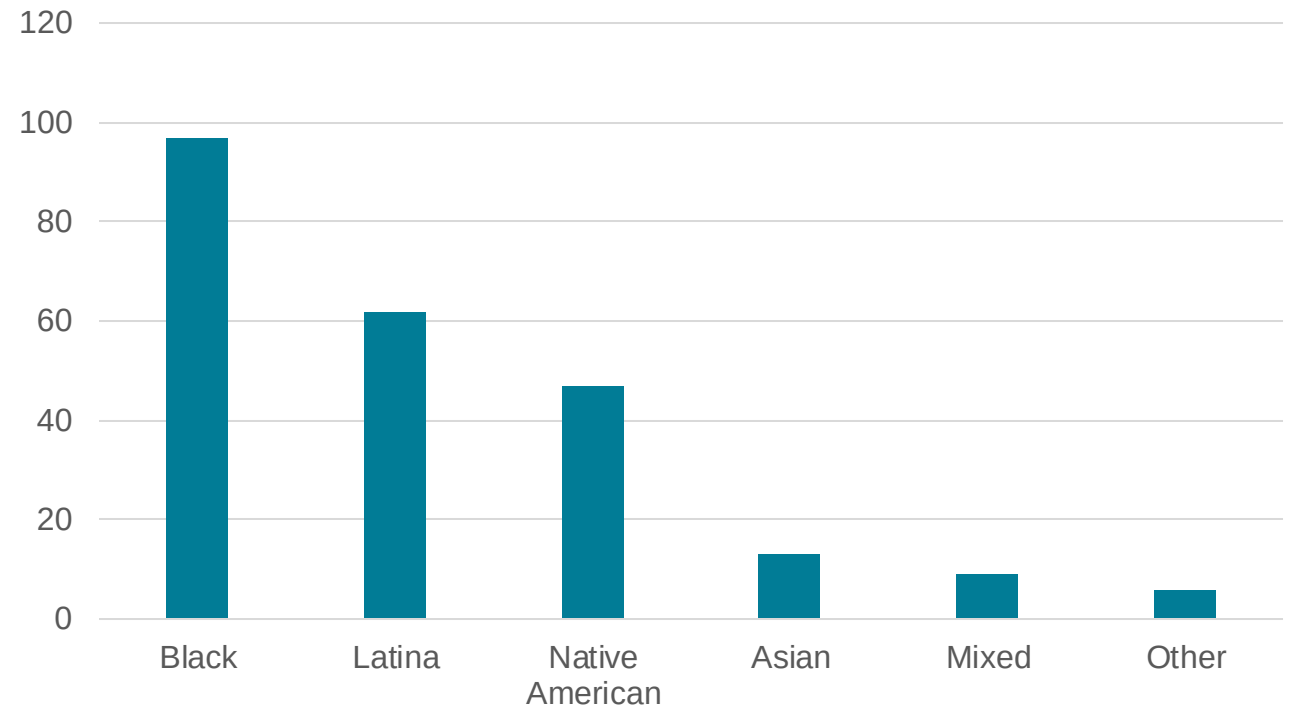
~Quote from a Circles for Girls facilitator

Circles for Girls

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

- Over 670 girls have taken part in Circles for Girls.
- 75% of girls identify as White.
- 38% identify as Black, Latina, Native American, Asian, Mixed, or another race/ethnicity.
- Many youth identify as more than one category of race/ethnicity.

Minority Youth Breakdown by Identified Race/Ethnicity

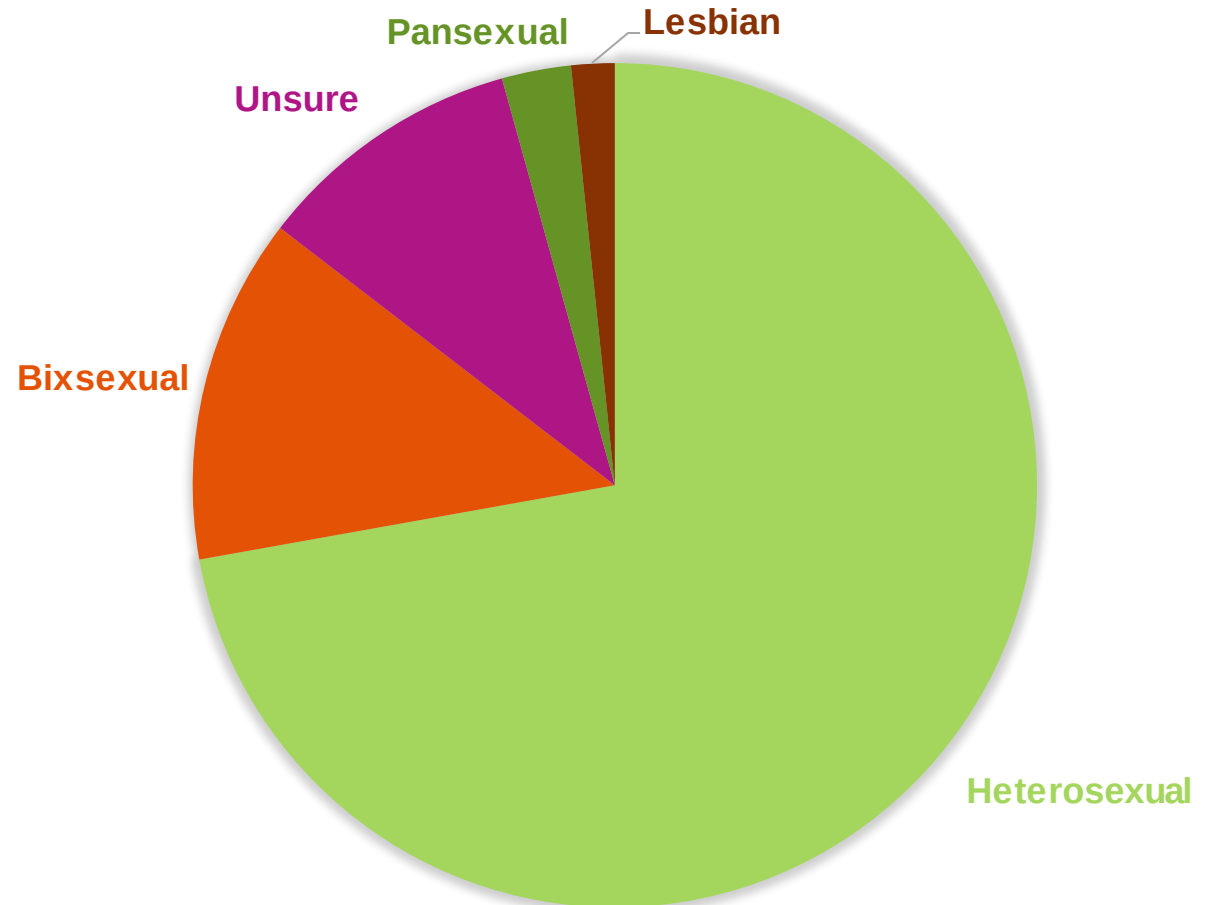


Circles for Girls

PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

- Over a quarter of girls report a non-heterosexual sexual orientation, or indicate they are unsure of their sexual orientation.
- Weekly topics are structured to be relevant to girls regardless of their sexual orientation (e.g., discussions of relationships).
- Circle offerings have also been modified for youth who identify as non-binary and/or genderqueer.

SEXUAL ORIENTATION



Diversity Circles

- Focused on at-risk girls of color in area middle schools.
- Bring together 6-10 girls with trained facilitators who are college women of color.
- Follow the same format and share some of the same curriculum as Circles for Girls but focus on helping girls of color connect and share their unique experiences in a safe and affirming environment.

WHAT YOUTH SAY:

"I feel like in this group we can express our feelings and tell you guys what we think about and how life is for us. I'm so glad ya'll can understand what we all Black people feel. We can talk about whatever we need and what we feel in this group. I feel like in this group we will be safe and good."



"I'm really happy that I'm in Girls Circle. Mostly with people that are Mexican. Thank you for helping me get everything out."



Guys' Gathering Circles

- 8-10 week structured educational exploratory groups for boys in area middle schools.
- Bring together 6-10 boys with trained college-age facilitators .
- Provide an action-oriented context where boys can learn to:
 - communicate effectively,
 - appreciate the diversity of others,
 - uncover their unique strengths,
 - develop leadership skills, and
 - connect with the important people in their lives.
- Over 100 boys have taken part in Guys' Gathering Circles.
- Over 20 Missouri State students have been trained as facilitators.

*"Guys' Gathering has been an absolutely gratifying experience for me. I find myself being **more understanding and respectful towards others with different perspectives...** It's amazing seeing the students' mental growth every single week, as well as my own."*

~Alexey Moussikhine, volunteer facilitator with Guys' Gathering Circle



Restorative Justice Efforts and Programs

- School-to-Prison Pipeline work
- Victim Impact Program
- Victim Offender Mediation/Dialogue



What is Restorative Justice

Assumptions

- When people and relationships are harmed, needs are created
- Needs that are created lead to obligations and responsibility
- The obligation is to heal and “put right” the harm

Principles

- Accountability
- Restoration
- Engagement

Values

- Respect
- Responsibility

“Restorative justice is an approach to achieving justice that involves, to the extent possible, those who have a stake in a specific offense or harm to collectively identify and address harms, needs, and obligations in order to heal and put things as right as possible.”

~ Howard Zehr



CDR Efforts to End the School-to-Prison Pipeline

- Provide training and courses to educators and schools on using restorative practices to address youth behavior and rule violations and improve school climate and culture.
- Provide conference presentations on restorative options for schools and ending the school-to-prison pipeline.
- Served on Greene County SToPP (School to Prison Pipeline) Committee.
- Offer diversionary restorative programs like the Victim Impact Panel and Victim Offender Dialogue.

SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE



Criminalizes minor school infractions.

Disproportionately sends students of color and those who are LGBTQ, have disabilities, or are English Language Learners into the criminal justice system.

Increases the likelihood youth will have future contact with the justice system.

Victim Impact Program for Youth

- Dialogue-focused diversionary program that helps youth explore the impact of crime on victims and communities.
- Since 2009 over 750 kids have been referred to the program.
- Over 80% of the youth taking part are impacted by the program (determined through qualitative analysis of essays after program completion).
- Over 100 Missouri State students and community members have served as VIP facilitators.
- Program meets the needs of diverse youth while allowing Missouri State students to work with youth from a variety of backgrounds and life experiences.

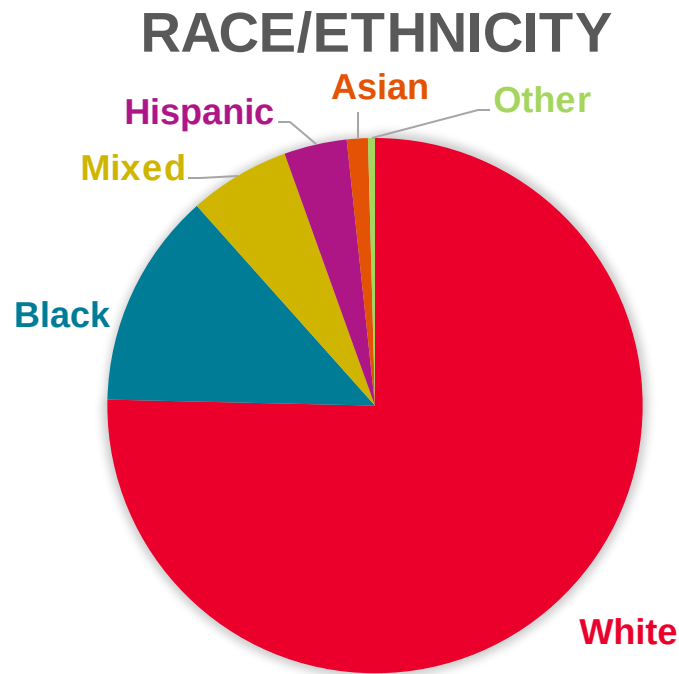


“This program has not only helped me to realize and learn the harmful emotional effects my actions cause, but also allowed me to get a sit-down, actual look on the other side of situations. I am very glad I participated in [the VIP program] though because I felt that I took in a lot from this experience... I am not only just sorry for what I did, but actually have an understanding now.”

~Quote from a youth's VIP essay

Victim Impact Program for Youth

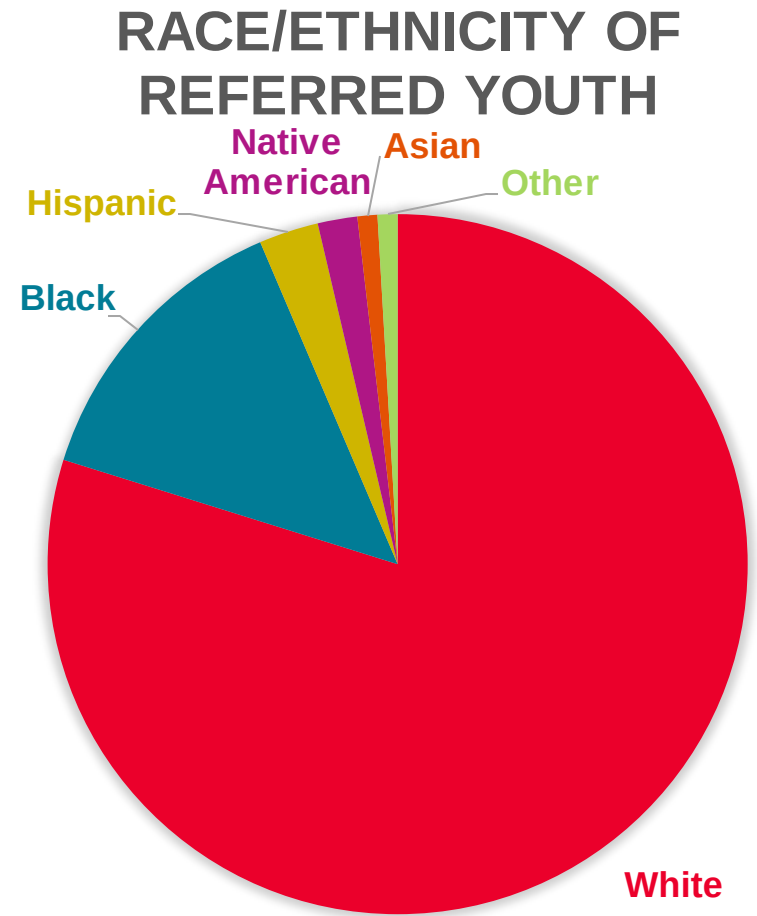
PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS



- 75% of youth participants are White, and 25% are youth of color.
- The shift to an individualized VIP experience post-COVID increased the percentage of youth of color who completed the program (submitted the required essay).
 - 58% of youth of color completed the essay requirement in the traditional VIP program.
 - 86% of youth of color completed the essay requirement in the individualized VIP program.

Juvenile Victim Offender Mediation

- Diversionary program where volunteers facilitate dialogues between youthful offenders and their victims as part of the CDR's collaborative program with the Greene County Juvenile Office.
- Over 360 kids have been referred to the program.
- Over 175 Missouri State students and community members have been trained to serve as mediators.



*“As a volunteer I have seen how VOM **creates space for everyone to be heard**, which promotes understanding for victims and offenders. VOMs maintain the **balance between accountability and restoration**. Too many youth go into the ‘system’ because of one foolish choice – VOM provides a process of **accountability without running their futures**.”*

~ Rhonda Preston, volunteer mediator and graduate of the Graduate Certificate in Conflict and Dispute Resolution program

Diversity-Focused Facilitation

- Train Missouri State students in facilitating dialogues.
- Assist community organizations in discussing sensitive issues related to diversity, incorporating students when possible. Examples include:
 - 2018 – facilitated dialogue among Ozarks District of the United Methodist Church pastors about how churches include LGBTQ individuals.
 - 2018 – facilitated “Flock Together” dialogue at Glendale High School.
 - 2020 – facilitated “Listening Sessions on Diversity” for staff of a major Springfield organization.



“Serving as one of the facilitators was simply incredible. I delved into a skill set that I never knew that I had, and I learned how to communicate across a huge cultural, generational, and religious gap.”

~ Kyle Richardson, Missouri State student volunteer

III Campus Workshops & Services

- Sponsorship of diversity-focused workshops for faculty, staff, and students, supported by COM faculty, such as:
 - Speaking up to Bias
 - Surviving Political Conversations
 - Multicultural Issues in Managing Conflict
 - Men, Women, and Conflict
 - Crucial Conversations
- Support and provision of campus mediation services for conflicts resulting from or exacerbated by issues related to race and gender, among others.



Coursework Promoting Cultural Competence

COM 597/698: CONFLICT AND RECONCILIATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND

- Offered in 2015, 2016, 2018, and 2019.
- 74 students have completed the course.
- Program designed to encourage cultural awareness and self-reflection, helping students draw connections between The Troubles in Northern Ireland and issues in the United States, including the civil rights movement, LGBTQ rights, Black Lives Matter, and more.
- In 2021 Dr. Berquist received the *Award for Excellence in Study Away Programming* in the *Cultural Competence* category, which recognizes faculty whose programs directly address the recognition and respect of multiple perspectives and cultures.

“I was able to witness in one trip the destructiveness of prejudice and hatred as well as the restorative and healing nature of forgiveness and effort to understand. I learned more than I ever thought I would, about the Troubles and about myself and my own culture.”

~Quote from a student reflection journal, 2019



Students at the “peace wall” dividing Catholic and Protestant communities in Belfast, 2019.

For More Information



The Center for Dispute Resolution

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Associate Director: Heather Blades

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*“Difference is the
essence of
humanity.
Difference is an
accident of birth
and it should
therefore never be
the source of
hatred or conflict.
The answer to
difference is to
respect it. Therein
lies the most
fundamental
principle of peace:
respect for
diversity.”*

~John Hume