

# Exploring Exceptionalism Discussion Handout #2

## Instructions

- ✓ Identify the issue/s surrounding equity, access and belonging in each scenario.
- ✓ Reflect on how this situation may, or may not, be relevant or present in your own chorus.
- ✓ Brainstorm a range of possible responses to the scenario.
- ✓ Determine who in your chorus is responsible to speak up, challenge, or support the issue presented?
- ✓ Record your conversations and responses for reporting back to the larger group.

## Scenarios for Discussion

1. The creative committee of the Santa Barbara Pride Chorus is planning a concert to reflect the diversity of people and cultures in California. It is a priority to perform at least one song in Spanish, since Spanish speaking Americans have made significant impact on culture, art, and music while at the same time having suffered oppression and systemic racism. The goal is to show that Spanish speakers are as much a part of North America as English speakers. The song that is chosen is the popular “We Don’t Talk About Bruno” by Lin-Manuel Miranda from the Disney movie *Encanto*.
2. The Rainbow Gay Men’s Chorus toured to greater Minnesota to perform a series of outreach concerts. After the concert in Grand Rapids, Judy Garland’s birthplace, a local PFLAG organization hosted a picnic for the chorus and for local LGBTQIA+ individuals in the area. A dozen visiting chorus members paraded through downtown to the park dressed in drag as scantily clad Dorothy characters.
3. The Ottawa Pride Chorus is planning a concert honoring the history of their city. Concert songs document the history of the Gays of Ottawa/Gai(e)s de l’Outaouais, the prominence of the river and railroad, relationship to the British Monarchy, and hidden stories of LGBTQIA+ politicians. A few weeks into rehearsals, a singer from the Algonquin tribal nation speaks at a retreat with concern that the history of Ottawa’s First Nations is not addressed in the concert. The Artistic Director agrees and programs the Navajo round “Now I Walk in Beauty.” She/they ask the creative committee to choreograph chorus movement for the song.
4. In an international Zoom gathering of 10 leaders from LGBTQIA+ choirs around the world, the artistic director from Guyana, South America describes their frustration that the Guyana government has canceled recent concerts. They are struggling financially due to the loss of ticket revenue. Three conductors from the U.S. and one from Canada offer to plan an outreach tour to South America to show support for the Guyana Chorus.
5. The Miami Rainbow Chorus programs a concert and glitter party in the Little Haiti district to support the local gay Haitian community. While the Haitian-owned venue welcomes the revenue, it does not help with the promotion or planning of the event. The concert is packed, but only 3% of the attendees are Haitian or residents of Little Haiti.

## Action Steps

What are some concrete steps your chorus could undertake to better address exceptionalism?

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