

Overview:

Trigger warning: This film is highly emotional and discusses an actual case of suicide, specifically self-immolation as sociopolitical protest. *Man on Fire* tells the story of a white minister, Charles Moore, who set himself on fire in 2014 to protest the racism in his small town of Grand Saline, TX.

Objectives:

As a result of using this media resource, participants will be able to:

1. Explore what small town racism looks like in contemporary America.
2. Question the efficacy of Charles Moore's death by protest in changing the situation.

Time:

1 hour

Group Size:

Entire group

Materials:

Projector and access to the film (in [Links](#)).

Note: The film can be purchased through New Day Films or it can be streamed free of charge through Kanopy if you have a public library card or a university login that grants you access.

Intercultural Development Continuum Stages:

- Minimization
- Acceptance

AAC&U Intercultural Knowledge and Competence Goals:

Cultural Self-Awareness:

- To articulate insights into own cultural rules and biases (e.g., seeking complexity; aware of how their experiences have shaped these rules, and how to recognize and respond to cultural biases, resulting in a shift in self-description).

Openness:

- To initiate and develop interactions with culturally different others.
- To suspend judgment in valuing interactions with culturally different others.

Empathy

- To interpret intercultural experience from the perspectives of own and more than one worldview.
- To demonstrate ability to act in a supportive manner that recognizes the feelings of another cultural group

Other Skills:

Diversity & Inclusion

Instructions:

1. Screen the film for participants.

Note: Before beginning the film, facilitators should inform participants about its sensitive content. You might also want to activate background knowledge for learners by crowd-sourcing definitions and examples for self-immolation and asking about what social justice protests they are familiar with or have taken part in.

2. After viewing the film, the facilitator may choose to do a Thiagi Debrief (see link below), but the questions should be carefully adapted to the context of the film. Other potential discussion questions include the following:
 - In what ways does the film resonate (or not) with your own lived experience?
 - What most surprised or shocked you as you were watching the film?
 - Which people in the film did you identify/empathize with?
 - Was there anyone who you could not empathize with? Why?
 - What insights are you left with about the capacities and limitations of a single person to affect social change?
 - Do you have any critiques to offer about how the narratives were presented by filmmakers?
 - Are there any social justice causes that you care deeply enough about to work actively to support (not via self-immolation, mind you!)? How have you or do you intend to get involved, and what are the possibilities and constraints on the impact of your personal actions?

Related Tools:

Tools to use in conjunction with this activity:

- [Thiagi Debrief](#)