Harborview Ethics Forum

White Trauma: Creating Space for White People's Vulnerability with The Hopes of Undoing the Perpetuation of Structural/Systemic Racism

Sherronda Jamerson, MA, SUDP

The University of Washington acknowledges the Coast Salish peoples of this land, the land which touches the shared waters of all tribes and bands within the Suquamish, Tulalip and Muckleshoot nations.*



*Our acknowledgement of the tribes and bands within the Suquamish, Tulalip and Muckleshoot nations comes from consultation and guidance by the Governor's Office of Indian Affairs and Federal regulations and policies. In this phrasing, we are adhering to tribal sovereignty.

We will be recording today! Video will be available on our website if the speaker has given permission.



Disclosures

Today's speaker has no financial relationships with an ineligible company relevant to this presentation to disclose.

None of the planners have relevant financial relationship(s) to disclose with ineligible companies whose primary business is producing, marketing, selling, re-selling, or distributing healthcare products used by or on patients

All relevant financial relationships have been mitigated



White Trauma... Structural/Systemic Racism

Objectives

- 1) Maintaining openness and moving forward.
- 2) Learn how trauma and stress can invade the body and skew perception.
- 3) Increase awareness of how unconscious or unspoken racism can compromise discussions and outcomes

Harborview Ethics Forum



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Harborview Ethics Forum



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Bioethics Grand Rounds

- Date/Time: Tuesday, November
 19th from 12 PM 1 PM
- Speaker: Robert Klitzman, MD,
 Program Director, Bioethics;
 Professor of Psychiatry, Columbia
 University Irving Medical Center
- **Title**: Doctor, Will You Pray for Me?: Medicine, Chaplains and Healing the Whole Person

Harborview Ethics Forums

Stop the Bleed | 12/11/24 at 12pm



White Trauma: Creating Space for White People's Vulnerability....



Today's speaker:

Sherronda Jamerson, MA, SUDP

Sherronda Jamerson obtained a master's degree in clinical psychology in 2012 from City University College in Seattle, WA, and became certified as a Chemical Dependency Professional in 2007. Her experiences include developing, implementing, and presenting EDI trainings to associations of healthcare professionals, healthcare providers, schools, and community-based organizations. She has also presented at state, national, and international behavioral health and global research conferences on the topics of DEI and Healthcare Equity. She presents with confidence and passion.

The Practice

Demonstrate Respect for your Experience- your experience is yours to own.

Translate your meaning- Say what you mean and mean what you say. Don't say what you think others want to hear.

Listen to yourself- If you choose to blend in with crowd then you give up the opportunity to stand out from the crowd.

Give your accurate location-Own your experience in time

Demonstrate that you are coachable- We need to be open to self-discover without being concerned about popular opinion or hurt feelings.



White Trauma:

Creating Space for White People's Vulnerability with the Hopes of Undoing the Perpetuation of Structural/Systemic Racism.









Learning Objectives:

Learn how trauma can invade the body and skew perception

Increase awareness of how unconscious or unspoken racism compromise discussions and outcomes

Maintain openness and move forward



Legacy Trauma

White bodies have inherited a different legacy of trauma. This trauma goes back centuries, passed down from one white body to another for many generations.

White bodies have traumatized each other for centuries. Way before coming into contact with Black and Indigenous bodies.

This trauma and carnage profoundly effected white bodies and the expression of their DNA.

This historical trauma is closely linked to the white body supremacy in America



Living Legacy

The living legacy of trauma describes the way in which past traumatic events do not just leave scars upon victims that clearly have been inflicted in the past.

Trauma leaves behind a living legacy of emotions (fear, shame, anger) and physical responses (startling, impulses to run or hide or fight, even against one's own body) that continue to be stimulated by the subtlest of cues in people's day to day lives.



DNA Expression

Recent work through human genetics suggest that trauma is passed on through our DNA expression. Through the biochemistry of the human egg, sperm, and womb.

No matter what we look like, if were born and raised in America, white body supremacy and our adaptation to it is in our blood



Induce anxiety, arrests the vocal process, and blocks the creative flow of authentic self-expression. Trauma affects the involuntary nervous system, body, brain, and memory function. It is hard to recognize this level of trauma therefore it get mislabeled or dismissed as being part of your personality.

Voicelessness –vs- Silence

Voicelessness

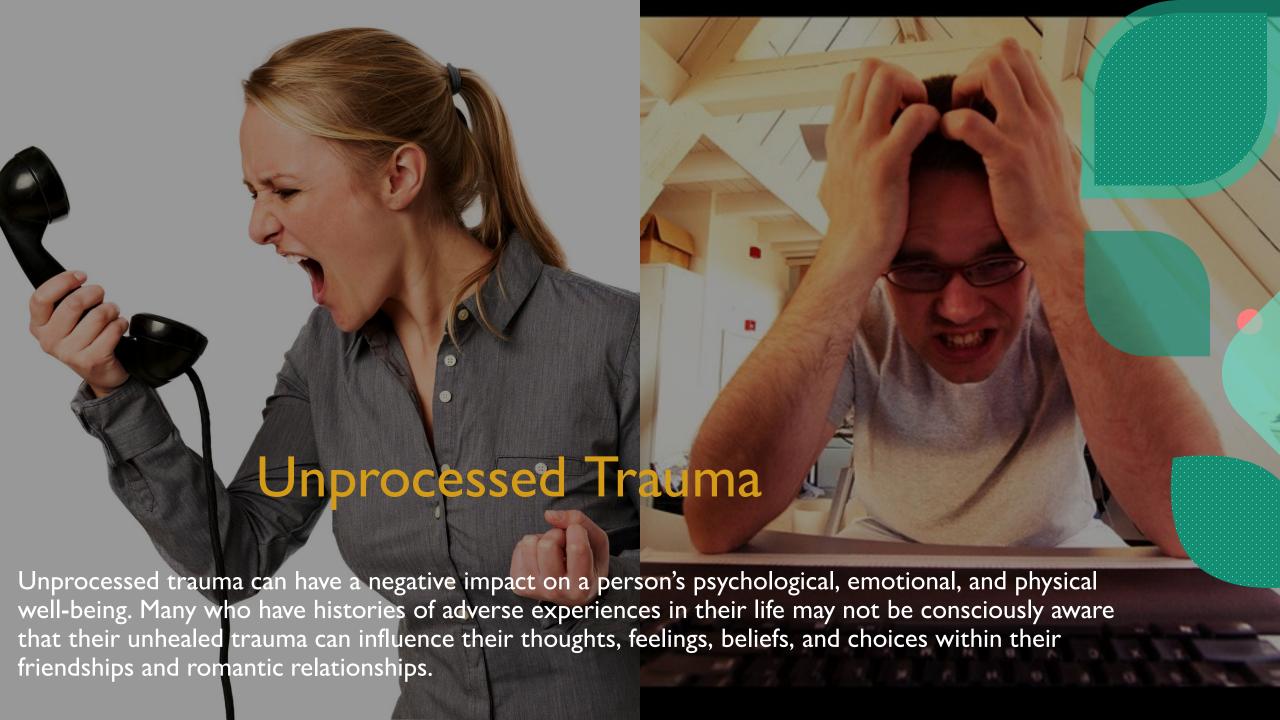
- Not meeting Societal standards
- Substituting my story with your narrative
- Expectations of gratitude
- Constant surveillance
- Dominance
- Oppression
- Direct Trauma
- Vicarious Trauma
- Microaggressions
- Stereotypes
- Prejudice



Silence

- People chose to stay silence when they are conflict avoidant
- When doing the right thing is not popular
- When they feel like it's going to hurt their chances at success
- When they are to concerned about other people's opinion
- Not wanting to be labeled





Unprocessed Trauma

Can trigger real physical pain and disease

Lead to a range of self-destructive behavior



Trauma can be blocked out (consciously or unconsciously) but it doesn't' mean he/she/them/they will not feel the effects of it.

The effects of unresolved trauma can be devastating. It can affect our habits and outlook on life, leading to addiction and poor decision making, and perpetuate suffering.







Trauma Bodies

Trauma lives in the body

It's a spontaneous protective mechanism used by the body to stop any future potential harm.

It is a highly effective tool for safety and survival.

An embedded trauma response can manifest as fight, flee, or freeze

Trauma can get stuck in the body and will stays there until it is addressed

The body is where we live. It's where we fear, hope, and react. It is where we constrict and relax. The body cares most about safety and survival.



Trauma Bodies

There is something about an event, person, or situation that rekindles an old pain or discomfort, and the body tries to address it with reflective energy that is still stuck inside the nervous system.

The body then began to create strategies around the stuckness including extreme reactions, strange likes and dislikes, compulsions, seemly irrational fears, and unusual avoidance strategies over time.

This can be embedded in the body as a standard way of surviving and protecting itself.

When these strategies are repeated, they can be passed on to the next generation.

It can become the standard response in families, communities, and cultures.

Trauma Bodies

From the bodies perspective safety or danger is neither situational nor based in cognitive feelings, rather they are physical visceral sensations the body use to sense safety or danger.

Danger can mean more than just bodily harm. It can mean a threat to what we do, say, think, care about, believe in, or yearn for.

The body will do what it needs to do to recover that sense of safety

Trauma sets in very quickly into the body; to quickly to involve the rational part of the brain.

Trauma can cause us to react to current events that seems wildly inappropriate, overcharged, or out of proportion.



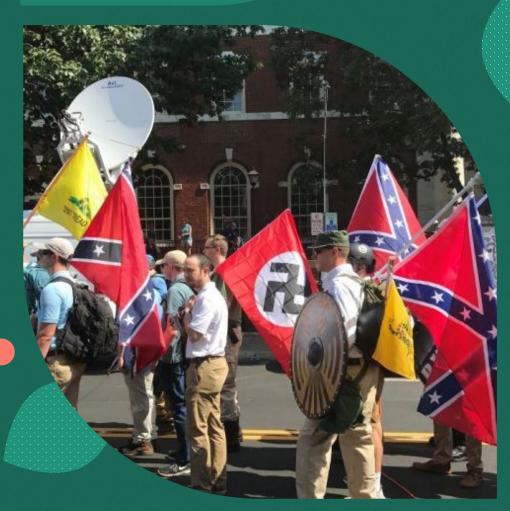
White Supremacy as a Trauma Response

For the past three decades, we've earnestly tried to address white supremacy with reason, principles, and ideas — using dialogue, forums, discussions, education, and mental training. Clearly, this isn't working.

Our bodies have a form of knowledge that is different from our cognitive brains. This knowledge is typically experienced as a felt sense of constriction or expansion, pain or ease, energy or numbness. Often this knowledge is stored in our bodies as wordless stories about what is safe and what is dangerous.

White supremacy — and all the claims, accusations, and excuses that surround it is a trauma response. This response lives not inside psyches, but deep within bodies. (A more accurate term for the affliction is white-body supremacy, since it elevates the white body above all other bodies. The white body is the apparent supreme standard against which other bodies' humanity is measured.)

The attitudes, convictions, and beliefs of white-body supremacy are reflexive cognitive side effects that have been reinforced through institutions as practice, procedures, and standards



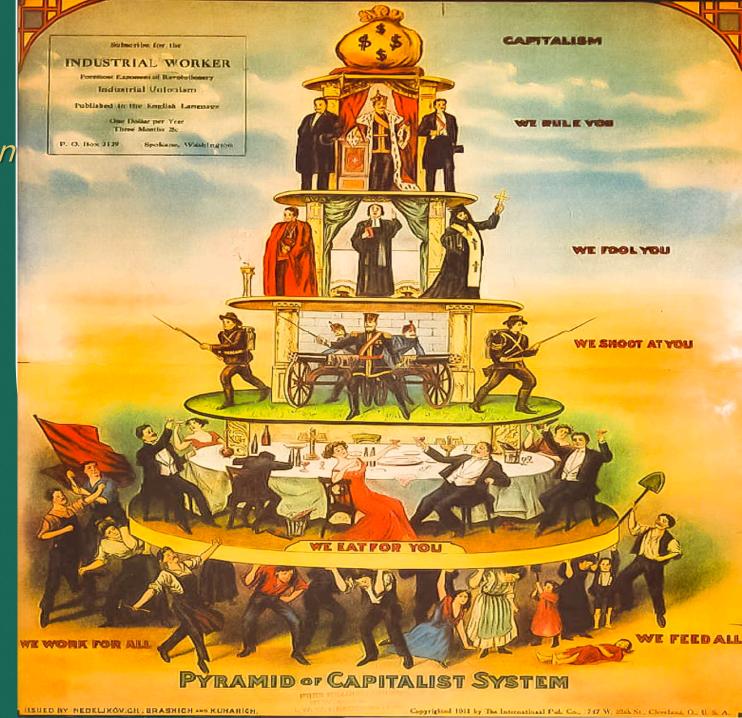
Social Stratification

The Segregation of a Society based on arbitrary factors such as:

- •Wealth
- Race
- Ethnicity
- Education
- Gender
- Occupation
- Social Status
- Derived Power

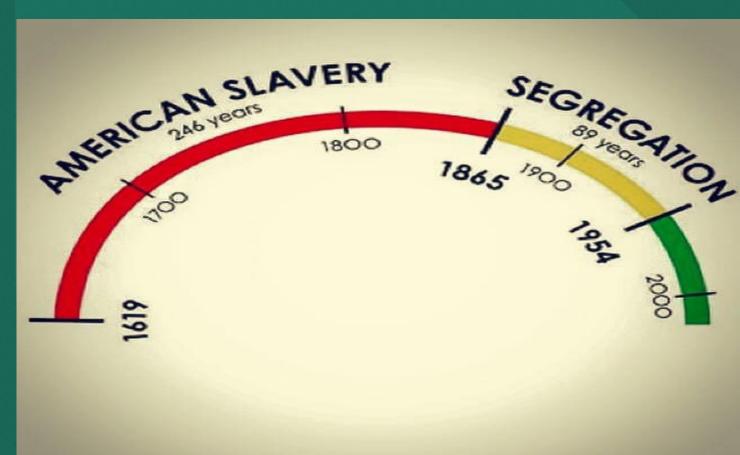
(Social or Political, Earned or Inherited)

It's 2024 and nothing has changed



Constitution of the United States

- Slavery started in 1619
- 168 years later
- The Constitution was written on September 17, 1787
- 76 years later
- The Emancipation Proclamation was written on January 1, 1863. Which declared that ALL were free
- 1865 Juneteenth



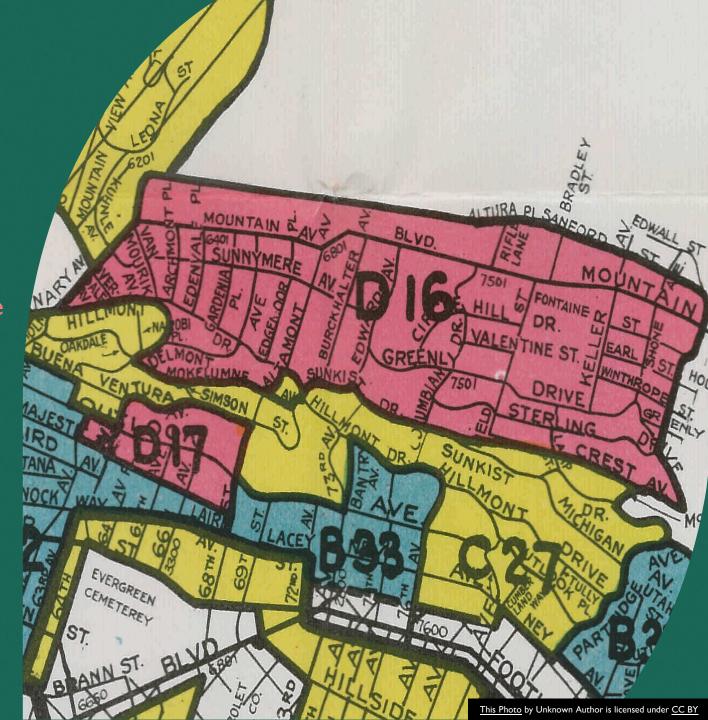
What is Redlining

Colored coded maps and trainings used by the **federal government** from 1930s until 1968 to guide discriminatory home lending policies.

Such policies also shaped and continued to influence policy and public investment decisions nations wide.

banks used redlining to make blanket assumptions about people from a particular neighborhoods.

Rather than looking at the merits of each individual loan candidate, they decided ahead of time that the neighborhood from which the person came meant he or she wasn't a good candidate.



Redlining outcomes:

- 1. Quality of life
- 2. Life expectancy
- 3. Wealth
- 4. Education
- 5. Access
- 6. Opportunities
- 7. Ethnicity
- 8. Prison time
- 9. Types of crimes
- 10. Quality of food
- 11. How deposit to pay
- 12. The cost of your day to day bills

Effects of Structural Power Privileges and Greed

Top 10 richest Americans: 100% White

US Congress: 82% White*

US Governors: 90% White*

Top military advisors: 100% White

US House Freedom Caucus: 99% White

Current Pres Cabinet: 91% White



Effects of Structural Power Privileges and Greed

TV shows we see: 93% White

People deciding what books we read: 90% White

People deciding what news is covered: 85% White

People deciding what music is produced: 95% White

Directors of top 100 grossing films of all time worldwide: 95% White

Teachers: 82% White

Full Time College Professors: 84% White

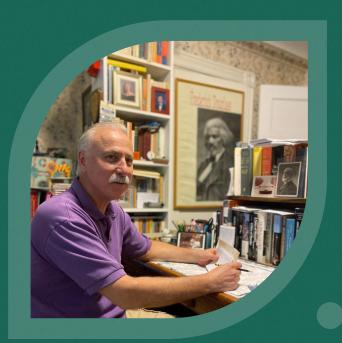
Owners of men's professional football teams: 97% White



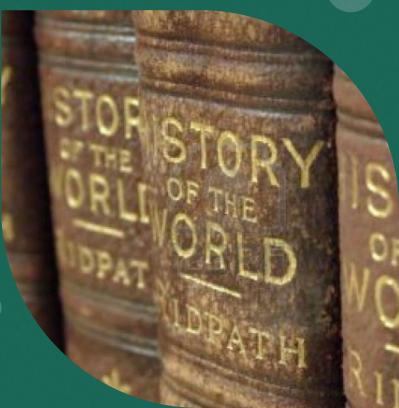
Origins of the United States

"White supremacy precedes the origins of the United States. Every aspect of social interaction, particularly in the 18th and 19th centuries, was dominated by white identity, and white supremacy became an expression of American identity. These sentiments can also be found in America's Christianity."









White Ways of Being -vsWhiteness

Naming whiteness and white ways of being and differentiating them from what it means to be a human being is a necessity, especially in the presence of white folks who conflate the two so much so that they appear indistinguishable.

White supremacy insidiously tricks white people not only into believing that they are supreme simply because we are white, but also that the end of white supremacy would mean an end to their survival.

Often a huge step in the process of facing whiteness is being able to distinguish one's spiritual self from one's socialized self, understanding that one's social self will continue to operate, but that there is a deeper, human self under the calcification of our hearts longing to remember that we are connected, we are One.



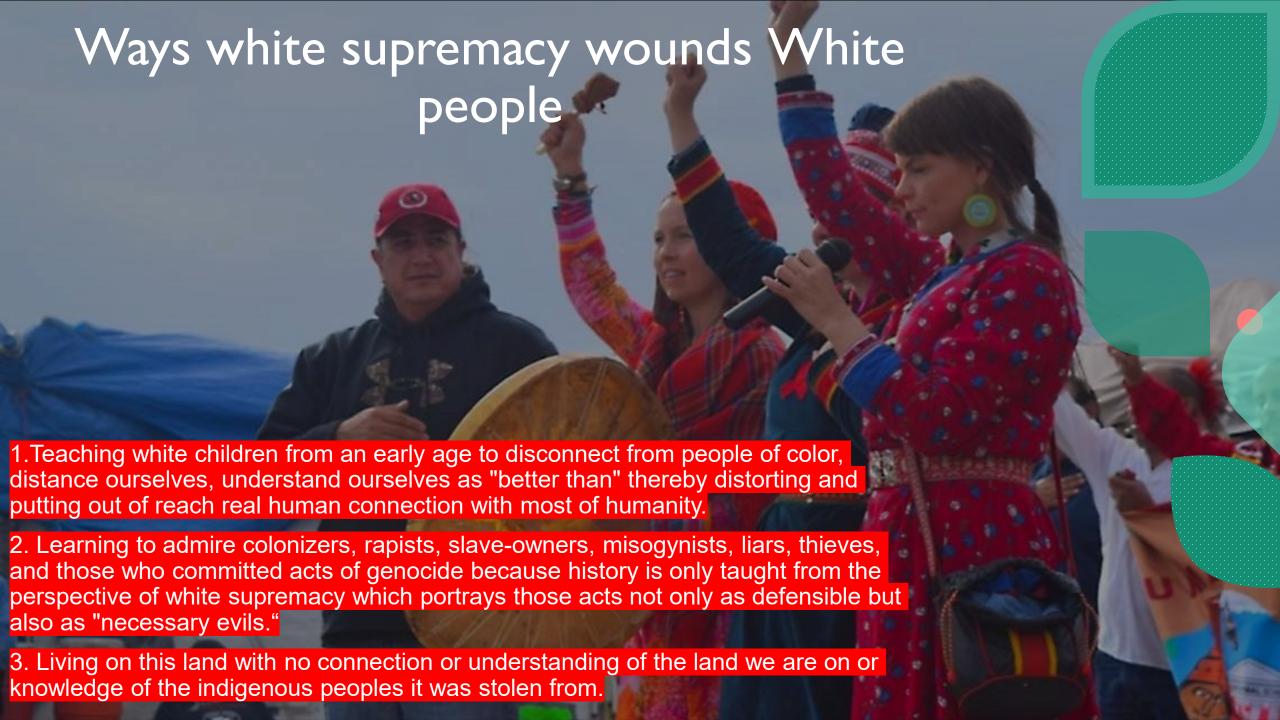
White Supremacy Shapeshifting

Many people still visualize white supremacists as hood-wearing, torchbearers who are outspoken advocates of oppressing Black Indigenous People of Color (BIOPC). While this is certainty still the case, white supremacy has shapeshifted since the United States' inception.

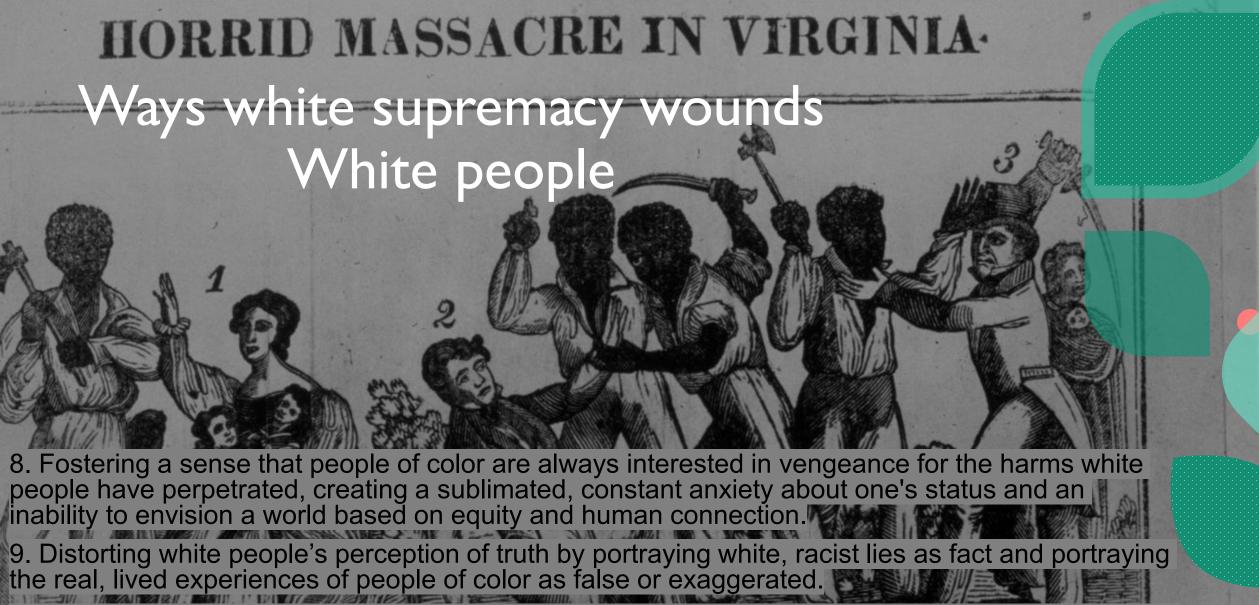
Holding on to this outdated version of white supremacy and using it as a prototype is one of the reasons why dismantling and deconstructing white supremacy has remain a challenge.

What it less commonly known and understood is how a system based on white supremacy harm not only BIPOC, but also WHITE people.









10. Instilling in white people a scarcity mentality, making such things as neoliberal capitalism, mass incarceration, xenophobia, continued fossil fuel extraction, and the never-ending "War on Terror" appear defensible and even necessary.

Implicit & Explicit Bias

Explicit Bias

- Person is aware of their evaluation of a group
- Believes evaluation to be correct
- Explicit bias toward ethnic/racial groups has declined and now considered unacceptable

Implicit Attitudes

- Automatically triggered
- Does not require any endorsement or attention for expression
- Operates in an unintentional, often unconscious manner
 Can be activated quickly and unknowingly by situational cues (skin color, accent)
- Influence behavior without awareness
- Common and persistent

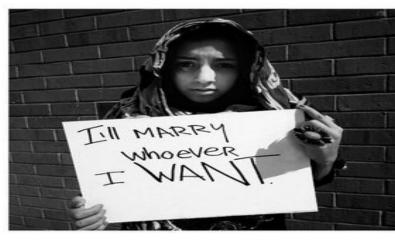
"Attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, decision making, and behavior, without our even realizing it"

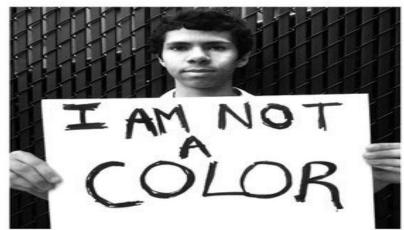
Event if we were never taught to hate explicitly, we were taught to hate implicitly





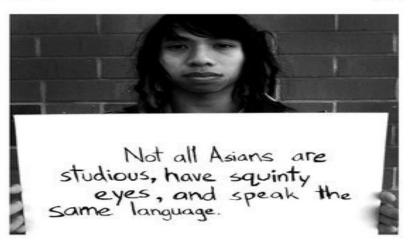














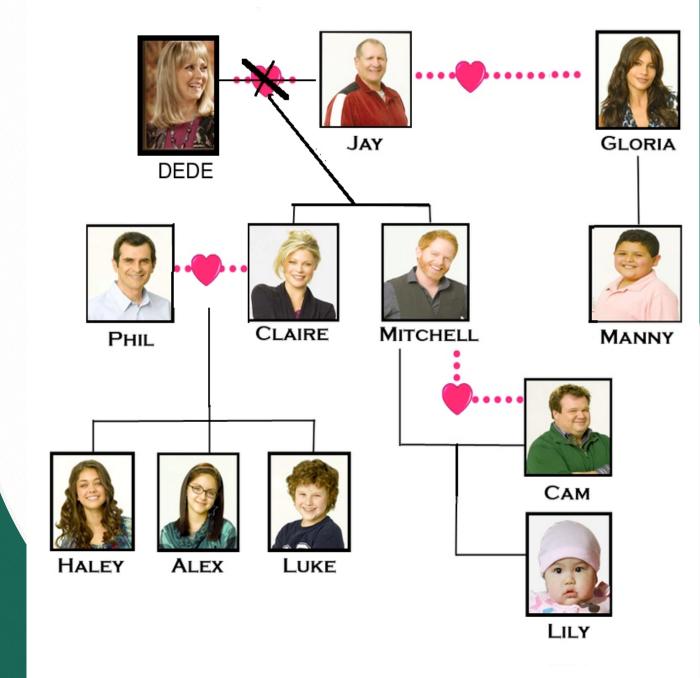


Is Racism Inherent?

If you are a White person in America, social justice educator Robin DiAngelo has a message for you: You are a racist, pure and simple, and without a lifetime of conscious effort you always will be.

Nothing will change until Black lives matters more than white comfort.

Tim Wise





Whiteness Uphold White Supremacy

Whiteness works to uphold white supremacy, a founding ideology of this country that we must continue to disrupt to truly achieve our nation's ideals.

A manifestation of whiteness is when white individuals are given "the benefit of the doubt" despite evidence of harm — when a white person's intentions or reputation is more important or centered over the impacts of that person's actions or inactions.



The Impact of Whiteness

Structural racism is an abstract concept unless you or your family are burdened, exhausted, demoralized or harmed by it.

The policies, practices and norms of our systems and organizations synergize to uphold and reinforce whiteness, which produces hostile and inequitable environments — in our schools, our workplaces, our cities. These harmful environments hinder innovation, creativity and excellence. These environments even extinguish existence.

So, what needs to happen is to foster disruption, reconciliation, and repair





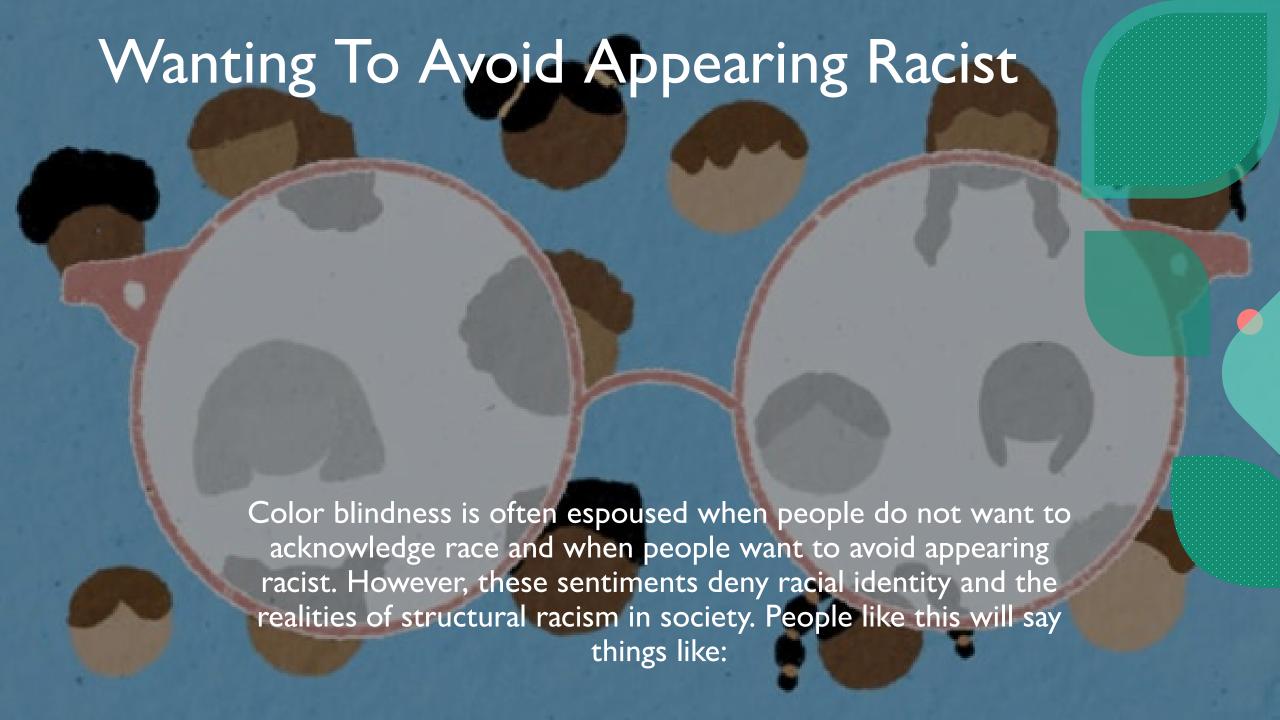


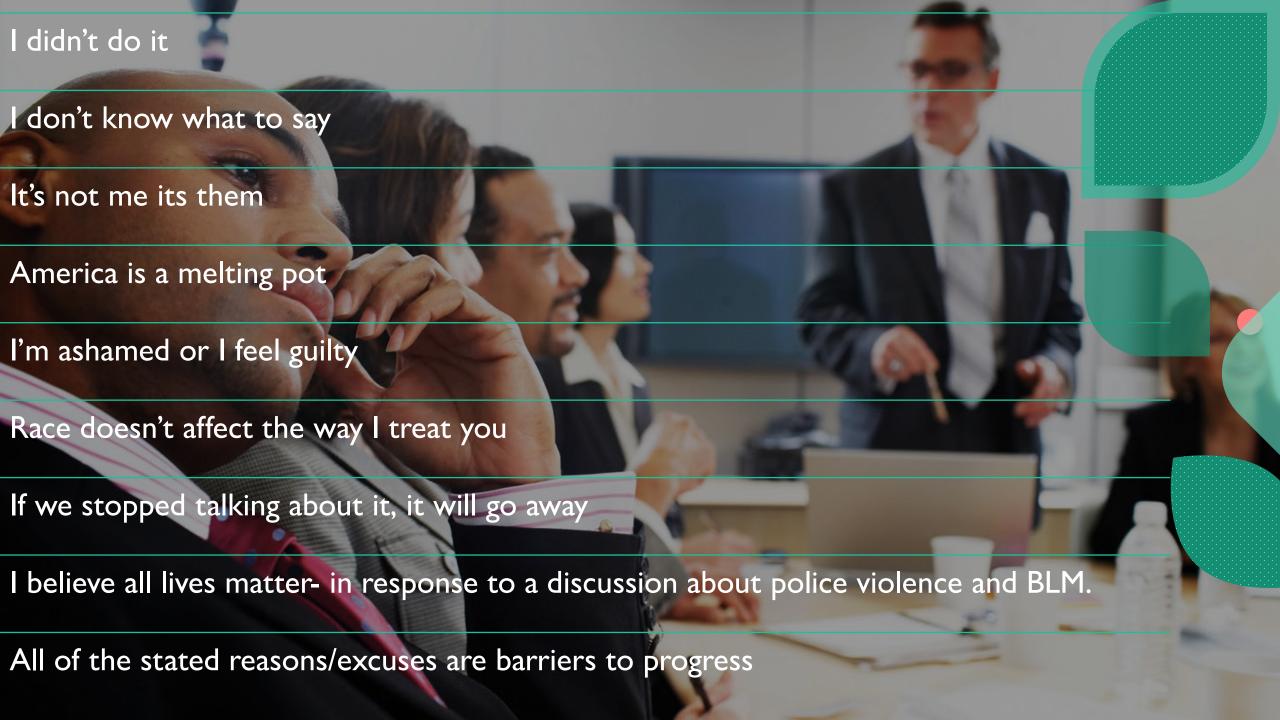


Reproducing Marginalization

Whiteness also intersects with, supports and reproduces other mechanisms of marginalization and exclusion like classism, sexism, heterosexism and ableism, among others, to establish and perpetuate hierarchy among white people as well.









White Fragility

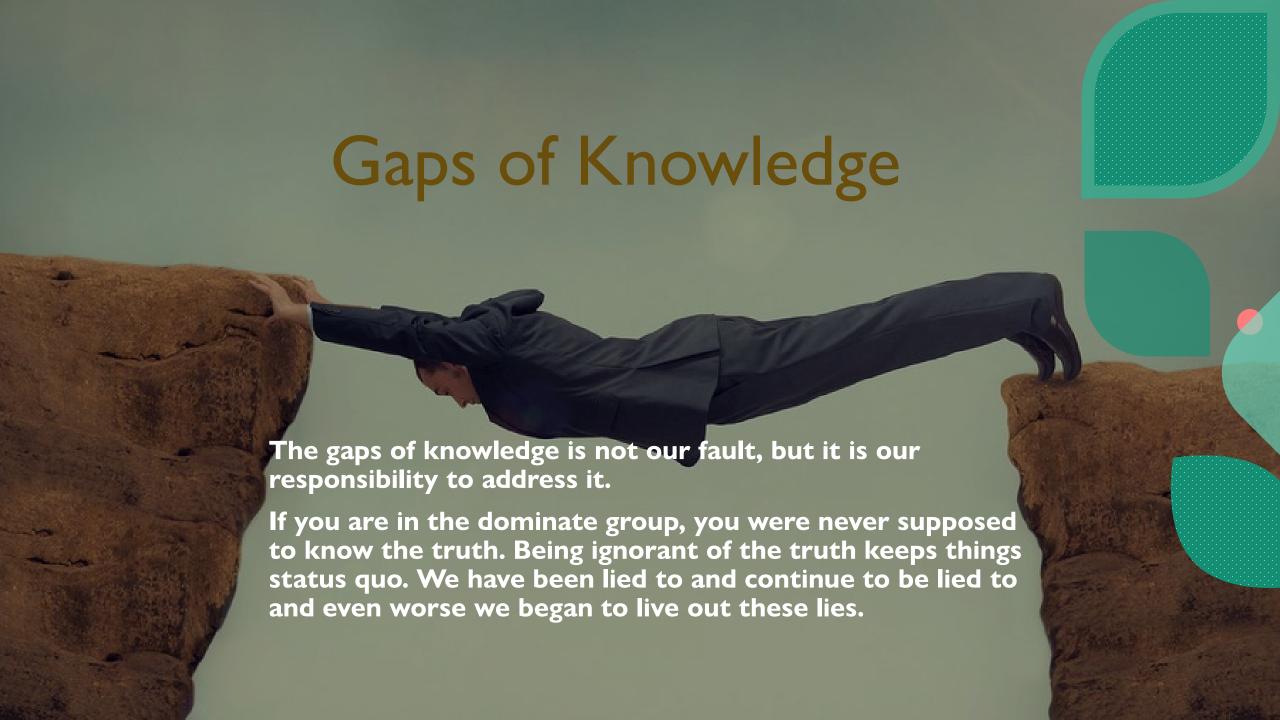
White bodies can be triggered into constriction, fear, hate, based on whatever trauma the individual has retained. This leads to feelings of white fragility.







Having privilege do not make you a bad person but it does leave gaps in our knowledge and what we don't acknowledge, we don't recognize, what we don't recognize we can't treat, and what we can't treat we can't heal.



Lack of understanding = Lack of meaningful relationships

Judging is Easier than Understanding
Lack of Understanding Creates Barriers
Barriers Reenforce Ignorance
And Ignorant of the Cycle, We Perpetuate It



Recovery From Trauma

Recovery from trauma is much more than remembering what happened and disclosing it to a witness. Recovery includes waking up the prefrontal cortex with psychoeducational and mindfulness techniques so that the body and nervous system become calmer.

It includes learning to recognize the implicit nonverbal feeling and body memories as <u>memory</u>, rather than as signs of alarm, to work with the bodily and nervous system effects of the trauma, and to understand impulsive or self-destructive behavior as driven by trauma responses.

Last but certainly not least, recovery must include acceptance of what has happened and acceptance of oneself—letting go of the shame and beliefs in unworthiness and welcoming the child we all once were as young and innocent, hurt rather than damaged



Mindfulness

Mindfulness is being aware of what you are feeling n the moment. Research has shown that brief mindfulness exercises can reduce discrimination and bias behaviors. The effects are short term, however, as an ongoing practice, frequent mindfulness exercises will improve our interactions and help us to reduce our own biased behaviors.

Overconfidence in our ability to make objective or inclusive decisions can prevent us from taking the proper steps to stop and question ourselves and our process with healthy skepticism. Therefore, we tend to cause more injuries and remain ignorant to that fact



Self Healing Exercise

- Soothe yourself- mind, body, and heart.
- Notice your body reactions
- Accept discomfort
- Stay present in your body
- Safely discharge the energy that remains (exercise, dance, physical labor, whatever safe activity your body desires).
- Trauma healing needs to be done slowly, perceiving the bodies reactions, learning to calm or settle.









Power -vs- Violence

Self discovery is power

LIFE ISN'T ABOUT FINDING YOURSELF. LIFE IS ABOUT CREATING YOURSELF. YOURSELF.

Silence is violence

"He who passively accepts evil is as much involved in it as he who helps to perpetrate it. He who accepts evil without protesting against it is really cooperating with it."

- Martin Luther King, Jr.



Inquiry is ...

Perspective-taking

• Perspective-taking is seeing the world from a different viewpoint. It is part of human development and part of our process for learning empathy.

Learning

Teaching

 Perspective-taking can include considering an experience from the point of view of a person being stereotyped.

• Experiences and direct interaction with people from stereotype group can help us to see and imagine different perspectives.

Different perspective with shared goals

- 1. Work together as collaborators to establish mutual goals. This requires being adaptive and valuing differences
- 2. "Healing happens in relationship" this requires reciprocal connections, bidirectional communication, and the deliberate fostering of understanding and shared learning.
- 3.Be mindful of your words and language
- 4. Allow people to tell their own story.
- 5. Active communication and support of one's capability to heal and recover
- 6.Ongoing training and capacity building for community and staff. Be flexible



- Cultural humility is a lifelong process of self-reflection, self critique and commitment to understanding and respecting different points of view.
- It involves engaging with others humbly, authentically and from a place of learning.
- The goal is to position ourselves, not as experts, but as people interested in learning.
- It requires us to be comfortable with not knowing, , and being present, genuine and curious.

Trauma Informed Care

Given the prevalence of trauma, it is crucial that we practice incorporating trauma informed care.

Trauma informed care is an approach that focuses on Resilience and Strength.

It requires being aware of, understanding, recognizing, and responding to the effects of trauma

Don't Let GO!

As we continue to learn and grow, we will make mistakes.
 People will correct us, and in doing so they will help us to learn and grow further.

- One of the best things we can to is have levels of grace necessary to: Learn from our mistake, Thank those who correct us, Accept feedback in positive way.
- Keep in mind that you are not getting called out; you are getting called in.

"Diversify"

• There is wealth of evidence that indicates that diversity enhance creativity and allow for greater innovation.

- Research from McKinsey found that racial and ethnic diversity also led to greater financial returns for corporations.
- When there is no diversity within a group, the same ideas, thoughts and beliefs create an echo chamber.
- Refusing to hire people of different racial backgrounds will disadvantage companies, no matter how successful they've been in the past.

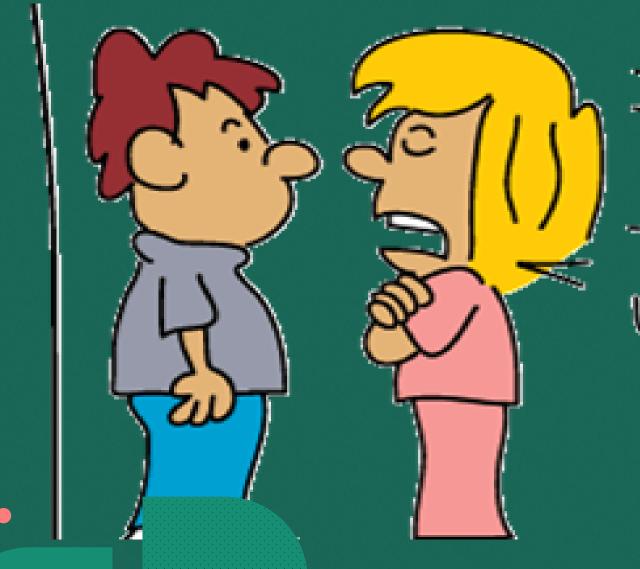


Illusions Created by Awareness

- We believe that we can control more about ourselves and our universe than we actually can
- We believe that we know WHAT our preferences are and WHY we have them

However...

- Human behavior is the result of both implicit and explicit attitudes
- The more we avoid, ignore, or deny, something the more we are to believe that we have mastery over it!
- The reality is....it's just one more thing stored in your nervous system



I'M DECIDING WHETHER TO BUILD YOU UP TODAY OR TEAR YOU DOWN.



None Are Free Until All Are Free

• "Perfectionism is white supremacy by another name." For white supremacy to thrive there must always be a subordinate cast to oppress.

- Any person at any time can become part of a marginalized community through not fault of their own.
- White people who do not fit the picture of perfection that is deemed the prototype of whiteness are at risk of being castigated and banished from white supremacy society

Having the courage to BLOOM

- Courage does not always roar.
- Sometimes courage is the quiet voice at the end of the day saying,
 - "I will try again tomorrow."
- And the day came when the risk to remain tight in a bud was more painful than the risk it took to BLOOM

Let's Make It Happen!

-Henry Ford-

Coming together is a beginning

Keeping together is progress

Working together is Success

-Thich Nhat Hanh-

Nothing exists by itself alone.

We all belong to each other; we cannot cut reality into pieces.

My happiness is your happiness; my suffering is your suffering. We heal and transform together.



In Conclusion

"I am ready to stop resisting, and to start existing, as my full and authentic self...

The truth is, I am what the world looks like, you are what the world looks like. Collectively, WE are what the world looks like. And in order for our systems to reflect that, they don't have to create a new reality... they must accept the one we already live in."







