



Exploring Race and Culture from a Trauma-Informed Lens Training Tool Kit

Segment 1: White Privilege

Part 1 – Exploring Racism and Whiteness/Embracing Truth

YouTube link: <https://youtu.be/xFuCY-FESa8>

Video length: 32:13

Panel participants on video

- Linda Hall, Director – Office of Children's Mental Health – Facilitator
- Armando Hernandez – Chief Diversity Officer, Journey Mental Health Center
- William Parke Sutherland – Health Policy Analyst, Kids Forward
- Pat Parker – Curriculum and Instruction Manager, the Helen Bader School of Social Welfare at UW – Milwaukee

After watching the Exploring Race and Culture from a Trauma-Informed Lens – Exploring Racism and Whiteness/Embracing Truth video, discuss the following questions with the group you viewed the training with. If you viewed the training individually, consider these questions.

Discussion questions

1. We are aware of the disparities that exist in our systems. Are our systems moving towards antiracism, equity and justice? How? How could they? How could your organization move towards this?
2. What is your response when you hear someone's story?
3. What is your race? How do you identify? Have you taken the time to explore this?
4. What opportunities have you experienced because of your race/skin color? Has your skin color given you privilege that others didn't have?
5. How does white fragility impact you versus showing empathy and being collaborative?

Resources

- "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack" and "Some Notes for Facilitators" - <https://nationalseedproject.org/Key-SEED-Texts/white-privilege-unpacking-the-invisible-knapsack>
- My White Friend Asked Me on Facebook to Explain White Privilege. I Decided to Be Honest - <https://www.yesmagazine.org/opinion/2017/09/08/my-white-friend-asked-me-on-facebook-to-explain-white-privilege-i-decided-to-be-honest>

- Dear Nice White People - <https://austinchanning.substack.com/p/dear-nice-white-people>
- Critical Race Theory - <https://www.edweek.org/leadership/what-is-critical-race-theory-and-why-is-it-under-attack/2021/05>
- Family Voices United to End Racism against CYSHCN and their Families - <https://familyvoices.org/famu/>
Tools - <https://familyvoices.org/famu/tools/>
- The Case for Reparations - <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>

Notes from video

As we consider trauma sensitivity we need to consider race. That means we have to address white privilege and racism in our country and how it influences everything, including human services. For most white people, there is much to learn about how white privilege works and what it means for people of color.

Topic 1: This discussion starts by grounding in our nation's history

William

- 1619 to now. In more than 400 years of U.S. history, only 57 years (since 1964) has there been legal equality on paper. And that doesn't take into account the war on drugs, mass incarceration, and recent efforts to dismantle voting rights protections.
- We can define race in historical context. It is a tool of white supremacy.
- White people lose their humanity in this also.

Pat

- Goes beyond 1619. Back in imperial Europe it was financially beneficial to promote the idea that some people are more "human" than others.
- Needed the church to buy in, but that was counter to church beliefs where all are created.
- Colonialism – where more powerful countries directly control less powerful countries. Through this, European countries gained political control. By 1800s European countries had political power and territorial control over 35% of world. By 1914 they had colonized 84% of the world.
- Two kinds of colonialism:
 1. Started as exploitation – come in, take over resources, and church wanted to come in and be missionaries and save people. For the most the part they left the government in place.
 2. Settler colonialism – when countries discovered they could gain more power, free labor. Settlers came in, took over, depopulated the land, enslaved people. Hierarchy – "It's OK for some people to take over and treat people in ways that are against my own morale code because they are less human than I am."

Armando

- We have to look at how our work grounded in the history of colonialism. We need to create spaces to discuss this.
- In our spaces we don't create opportunities to discuss matters of history and include the voices of people at the margins – an anti-colonial framework that can be a part of this inclusive orientation.

- We are aware of the disparities that exist in our systems, yet there are so many questions we need to ask. Are our systems moving towards antiracism, equity and justice?

Topic 2: Intersectionality and oppression, how this dehumanizes

Quote to ground this section:

“Race is a socially constructed method of placing human beings into categories that signify their proximity to whiteness and in turn inform how a person is treated and perceived throughout their life.

“Race is not a neutral topic: it is an ideology that has manifested itself in violence to Black and Brown bodies through hundreds of years of ongoing social dominance based on skin color. The idea of race is a product of the ideology of white supremacy. It is inseparable from the belief that people with lighter skin are superior to people with darker skin. Hundreds of years after European colonizers used this ideology to justify genocide, land theft, enslavement, and domination, we see the persistence of a racial hierarchy in everyday school life.”

Source: Boyes-Watson, Carolyn, et al (2021). Circle Forward Supplement: Moving toward racial equity in schools—Starting with the adults.

<https://livingjusticepress.org/product/circle-forward-supplement/>

Pat

- Intersectionality is how a person with multiple group identities can experience oppression, discrimination, and even privilege or disenfranchisement due to those multiple group identities.
- These identities will not and cannot change. People can experience different types of trauma as a result.
 - Micro-aggression – Chester Pierce identified this in the 1970s. Identified in subtle ways African Americans manifest aggression into real medical conditions. People experience these in many ways. Now in our attitudes—verbal, behavioral, environmental. Race based stress effects health due to micro-aggressions.
 - In the 1990s micro insults was raised.
 - Micro invalidation – comments people are made are explained. Need to understand the impact this has on people’s mental wellness.
- Study found children of color experience micro-aggression 5 times per day and caused depression in school. If we are addressing trauma and children, need to pay attention to this.

William

- When white people are called out for racism, micro-aggression, insults or invalidation they can get defensive. Remember the person doing this is showing you trust, giving you a gift and taking a chance that it will change your future behavior. It is a learning opportunity. Don’t make up excuses, instead reframe this.

Armando

- What is your response when you hear someone’s story?
- Our emotional response is complex.

- To get a little bit of a sense of what it is like to be a Black person or be on the receiving end of aggression is hard.
- It is easy to go to a place of problem solving.
- A better place is to listen, acknowledge, show empathy, and validate their story.

Topic 3: Deconstructing Whiteness

Armando

- Need to deconstruct whiteness and the role that it plays in your life.
- One initial step – What is your race? How do you identify – have you taken the time to explore this?
- Follow up step – What opportunities have you experienced because of your race/skin color? Has your skin color given you privilege that others didn't have?
- If you have been afforded privilege it is important that you do your homework, explore your history, and doing your emotional homework.
- How are you responding to the challenges day-to-day?
- How does white fragility impact you verses showing empathy and being collaborative? It is important to be critical in this.
- Systems are fundamentally set up to put whiteness at the center of programs, stories, values, and policies. Allies remove themselves from the center and put other cultures there. Challenge white people to try to de-center themselves.

William

- With whiteness I think about systems of power, unearned virtue, grace, and the benefit of the doubt (“well he’s just a young man and we don’t want to ruin his life”). Things that get granted to white people and often are not granted to people of color.
- White people are racialized into a group. White supremacy did that.

Pat

- Reclaim your own humanity – it was taken from you from people who saw wealth and power over humanity.
- You have been propagandized.
- It kind of is not your fault, but now that you have heard all this it is back on you.
- Be comfortable with being uncomfortable.
- Personal growth comes from being other-minded, looking at the world from someone else’s lens.
- Listen as if the speaker is wise.

End thought

- There is a lot to do and every step matters.
- Paul Kivel, in *Uprooting Racism*, offers a summation: “When confronting the reality of racism many people --- especially white people – become sad, angry, overwhelmed, anxious, and passive. They wait for someone more qualified to step up. But there is no one who can take your place or do your part. Your imperfect words and actions are better than your perfect silence and inaction.”