

Promoting Equity in Early Childhood: Strategies for Change

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What is diversity?





Intersectionality

- Intersectionality recognizes that people's identities and social positions are shaped by multiple factors.
- Among others, a person's age, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, religion and belief, sexual orientation and socioeconomic background contribute towards their unique experiences and perspectives.
- In other words, intersectionality asserts that people are often disadvantaged by multiple sources of oppression: their race, class, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, and other identity markers.



Kimberlé Crenshaw

American Civil Rights Advocate
Professor, UCLA School of Law and
Columbia Law School

Applying an Intersectionality Framework

Recognize

Recognize differences - we must recognize that we all have unique experiences based on our multiple identities. Our experience with overlapping oppressions because of our multiple identities, are valid.

Avoid

Avoid using oversimplified language – move away from language that defines people by a singular identity.

Analyze

Analyze the space that you occupy - recognizing when that difference is not represented in the spaces you occupy. Take note of the welcoming or distancing practices of the spaces you frequent.

Seek

Seek other points of view - Explore the narratives of those with different interlocking identities than you. This includes surrounding yourself with others with differing interwoven identities

A dense field of white, 3D paper-cut human figures on a blue background. The figures are scattered and overlapping, creating a sense of a large crowd. The text "What is inclusion?" is centered over the image in a white, serif font. A thin white horizontal line is located in the bottom right corner of the image.

What is inclusion?



What is equity?

Equity and Disciplinary Practices

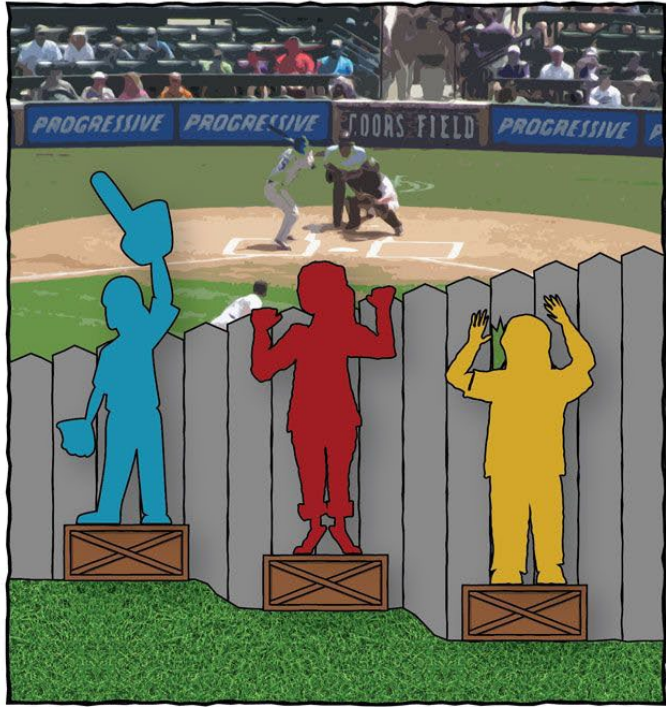


5,000 preschoolers were suspended at least once and nearly 2,500 were suspended a second time (2014)

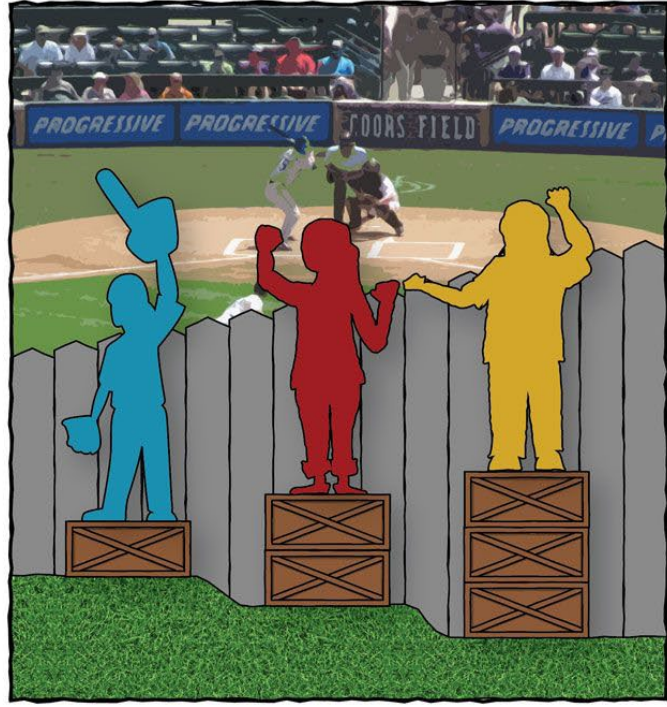
Black preschoolers: 3.6 times more likely to be suspended than their White peers (2016)

- *Black children:* 18 percent of the preschool population, but 48% of suspensions (2014)

Boys: 49% of the preschool population, but 82% of all suspensions (2014)



EQUALITY



EQUITY

Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity

Diversity

Includes, but is not limited to race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, socioeconomic status, veteran status, education, marital status, language, age, gender, gender expression, gender identity, sexual orientation, mental or physical ability, genetic information, and learning styles.

Inclusion

Authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policy-making in a way that shares power and ensures equal access to opportunities and resources

Equity

The guarantee of holistic treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all while striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of any group

Equity efforts so far.....

Reliance on
punishment vs
discipline

Focus on
implementing
isolated
interventions

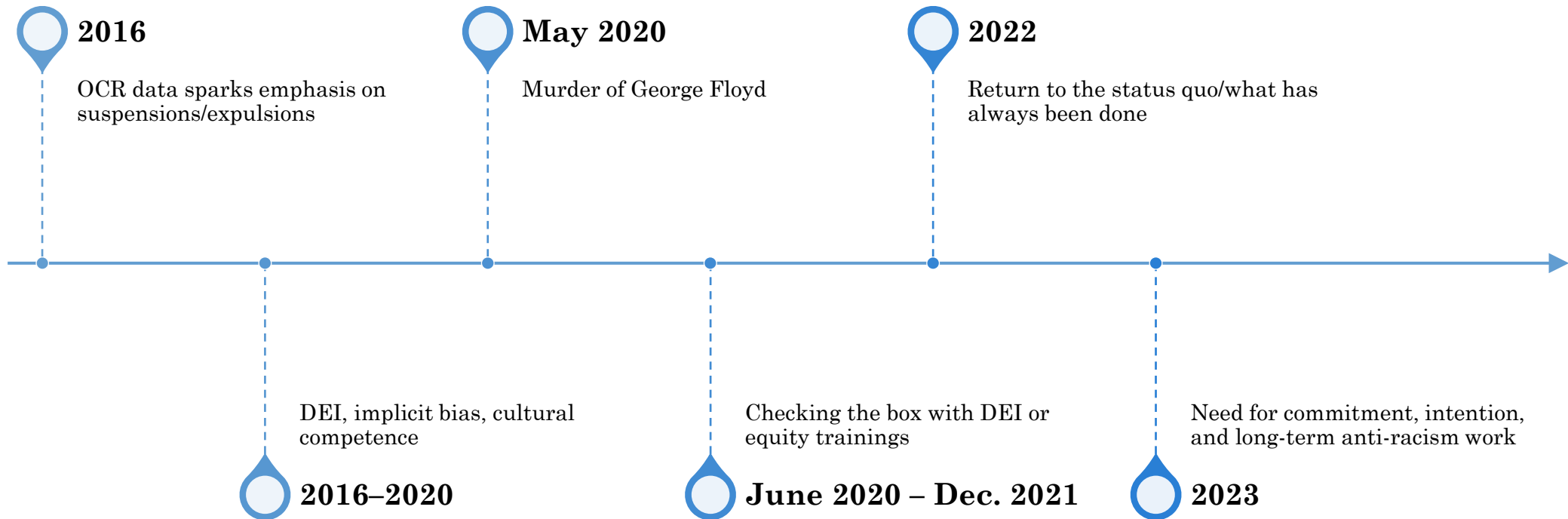
Educational practices
based on White
European values –
including early
childhood education

New emphasis on
“trauma-informed
care”

Siloed efforts within
communities

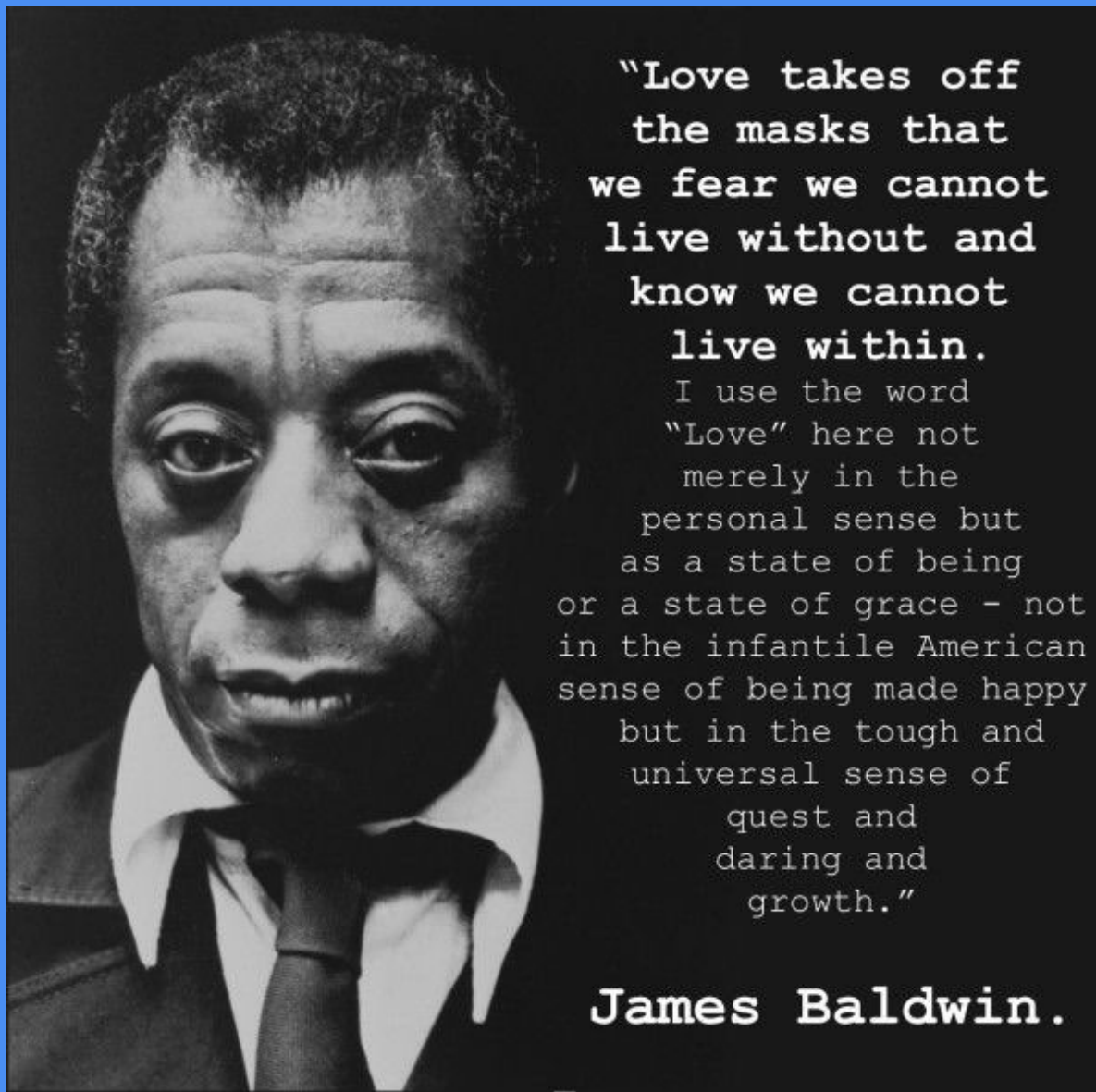
Focus on kindness,
compassion, and
empathy

Timeline of Equity Work in Early Childhood



It is time to get messy.

- Our nation and states are becoming increasingly oppressive.
- We cannot create more equitable, inclusive, and just programs by doing what we have always done.
- The status quo prevents creativity and thinking outside the box.
- We must commit to getting messy. That means deconstructing whiteness and anti-blackness within ourselves, our organizations, and in our early childhood practices.
- Messiness is where change occurs.



"Love takes off
the masks that
we fear we cannot
live without and
know we cannot
live within.

I use the word
"Love" here not
merely in the
personal sense but
as a state of being
or a state of grace - not
in the infantile American
sense of being made happy
but in the tough and
universal sense of
quest and
daring and
growth."

James Baldwin.



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Social justice work is holy work.

holy = to become whole



Assumptions

We *all* believe that a student's color should not fate him or her to negative outcomes.

Discussing equity and race is uncomfortable.

Creating discomfort without providing effective strategies is not productive.

In discussing equity and taking steps, we will make mistakes.

Brave spaces to discuss, exchange, learn and be vulnerable

Speak your truth

Lean into the discomfort and lean into each other for support

Commit to non-closure

Assume positive intent while practicing compassionate accountability

Seek intentional learning

Establishing Our Group Norms

Reminders for Discussing Race and Racism

Racism goes beyond individual intentions to collective group patterns.

A strong opinion is not the same as informed knowledge.

There is a difference between agreement and understanding.

For some, there is a deep interest in denying those forms of oppression which benefit some.

We do not have to be aware of oppression for it to exist.

Our racial position will greatly affect our ability to see racism.

Putting our effort into protecting rather than expanding our current worldview prevents our intellectual and emotional growth (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017).

A Focus on Multicultural Education

- Multicultural education: (1) affirms issues of identity and differences; and (2) assertively confronts issues of power and privilege in society by challenging racism, biases, and inequitable structures, policies, and practices of schools and society (Nieto & Bode, 2012).
- ***Problems with how Multi-Cultural Education has evolved:***
 - Some efforts of multicultural education have focused more on celebrating differences and affirming identity, and less attention on challenging racism and inequitable structures, policies, and practices.
 - Ideas of diversity, inclusion, equality, cultural competence, anti-bias, and culturally relevant teaching flourished.
 - Conversations about the achievement gap persist in education 30 plus year later.

Racism in Schools

Overt Racism: not acceptable,
clearly visible

Hate crimes, racist jokes,
hate speech

Covert Racism:
acceptable, hidden,
not visible

School funding formulas, colorblindness, myth of meritocracy, implicit racial bias, achievement gap, all White authors, low expectations, tracking, zero tolerance policy, disproportionate suspensions/expulsion, cultural deficit model, anti-blackness, Eurocentric curriculum, hairstyle/dress codes, model minority, overrepresentation in special education, underrepresentation in gifted/ talented programs, poor treatment of families of color, microaggression, cradle-to-prison pipeline

What is anti-racist education?



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A systematic, explicit and proactive approach to recognizing, resisting, and rectifying racial injustice and oppression in schools and society (www.buffetinstitutenebraska.edu).

Addressing the Root Causes

- We *ALL* must move beyond examining biases, becoming culturally competent, and implementing culturally relevant teaching strategies.
- To achieve racial equity and create socially-just programs for all children, we must address the root causes of inequities by:
 - Refocusing our attention on challenging racism and inequitable structures, policies, and practices;
 - Deconstructing Whiteness as the norm in education;
 - Confronting issues of power and privilege in our society; and
 - Engaging in efforts to heal from racial trauma - especially the damage to children's sense of self because of racism (York, 2016).

Defining Racial Justice

- ***Racial Justice:*** the proactive reinforcement of policies, practices, attitudes and actions that produce equitable power, access, opportunities, treatment, impacts and outcomes for all.
- ***Indicators of Racial Justice:*** equitable impacts and outcome across race is the key indicator of racial justice.

What Racial Justice is Not

Racial Justice



Diversity

Variety

Racial Justice



Equality

Sameness

Racial
Justice



Equity

Fairness,
Justice

What is race?

Race: a contrived sociopolitical way to categorize people based on skin color, and hair texture, a common ancestry, and cultural and moral attributes (York,2016; Golash- Boza, 2018).

Grouping people into categories based on their physical appearance and assigning value or inherent attributes for the purposes of privileging one group over another.

We must understand the construction of race, before we can deconstruct it.



Small Group Activity

- At what age did you first become aware of your race?
- What messages did you receive about race and racism as a child?



Internalized



Interpersonal



Institutional



Structural

Four Levels of Racism

Internalized Racism

- Lies within individuals
- These are our private beliefs and biases about race and racism, influenced by our culture.
- Internalized racism can take many different forms, including racial prejudice toward other people of a different race (Center for Social Justice).



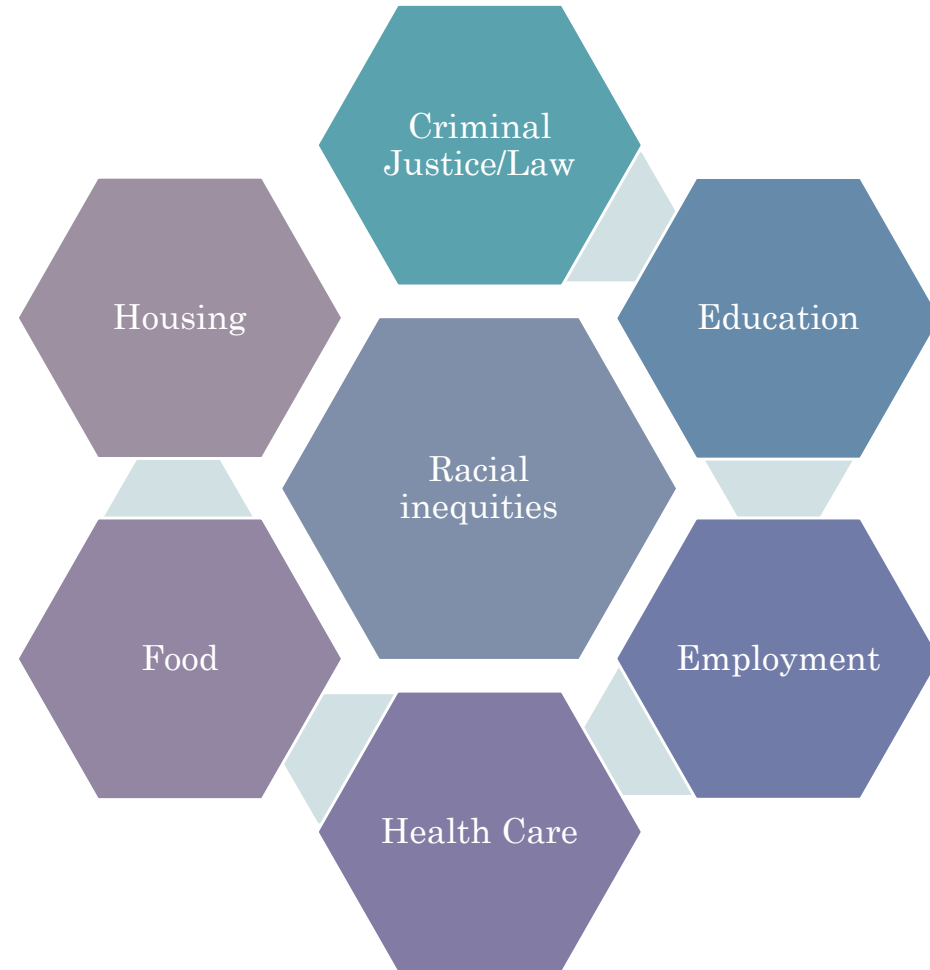
Interpersonal Racism

- Occurs between individuals
- These are biases that occur when individuals interact with others and their private racial beliefs affect their public interactions.
- Examples include racial slurs, bigotry, hate crimes and racial violence (Center for Social Justice).



Institutional Racism

- Occurs within institutions and systems of power
- Unfair policies and discriminatory practices of particular institutions (e.g., schools, workplaces, the criminal justice system, child welfare system) that routinely produce racially inequitable outcomes for people of color and advantages for White people (Center for Social Justice)



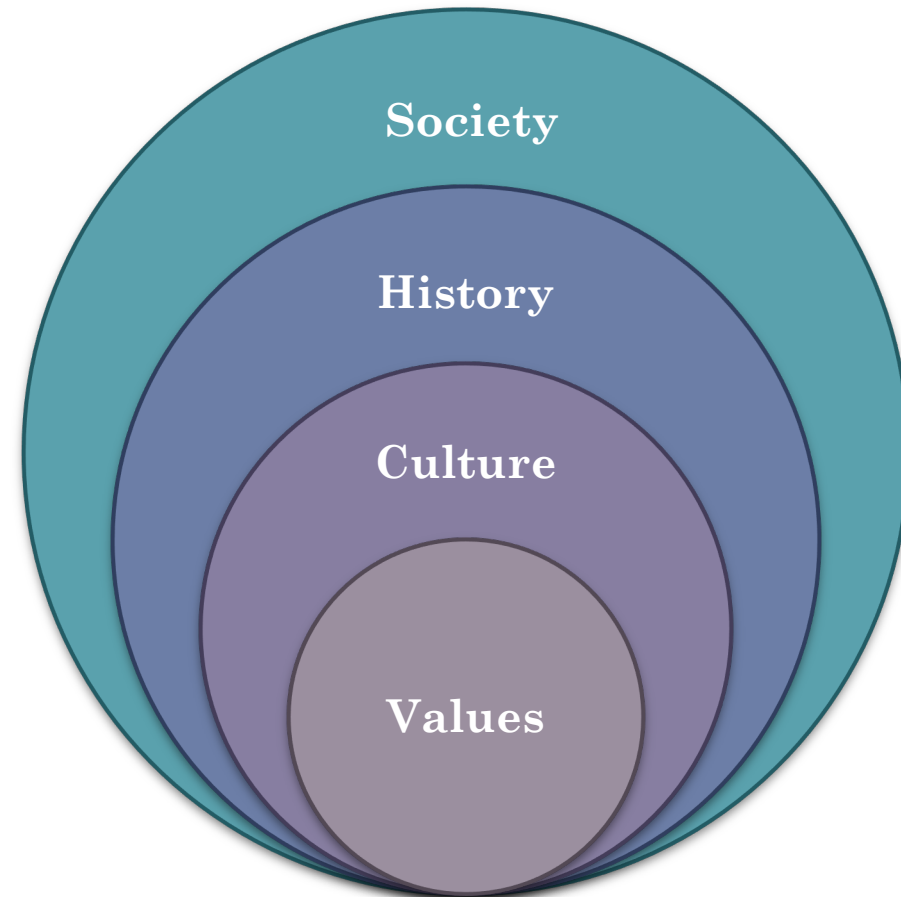
Structural Racism

- Racial bias among institutions and across society
- Involves the cumulative and compounding effects of an array of societal factors that systematically privilege White people and disadvantage people of color (e.g., history, culture, ideology and interactions of institutions and policies)
(Center for Social Inclusion)

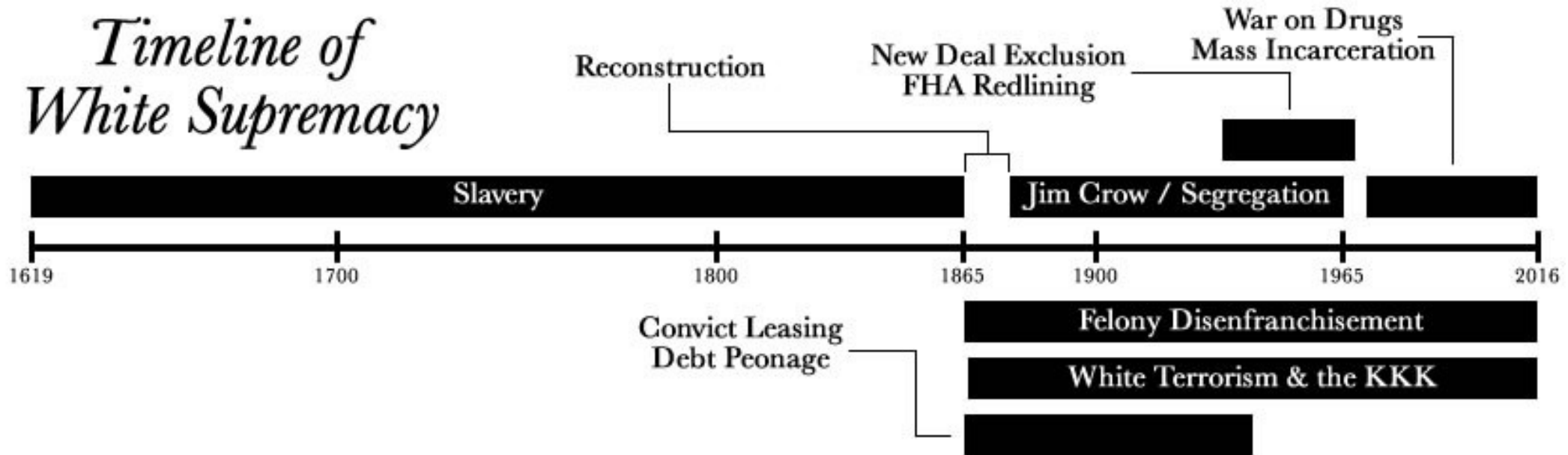


Unpacking Structural Racism

- **History**- provides the foundation of white supremacy (e.g., slavery, colonization, and Jim Crow)
- **Culture** which exists all around our everyday lives, providing the normalization and perpetuation of racism
- **Values** – valuing of whiteness as the norm
- **Social structures** - interconnected institutions and policies, the key relationships and rules across society providing the legitimacy and reinforcements to maintain and perpetuate racism.



Timeline of White Supremacy





RACISM

=

PREJUDICE

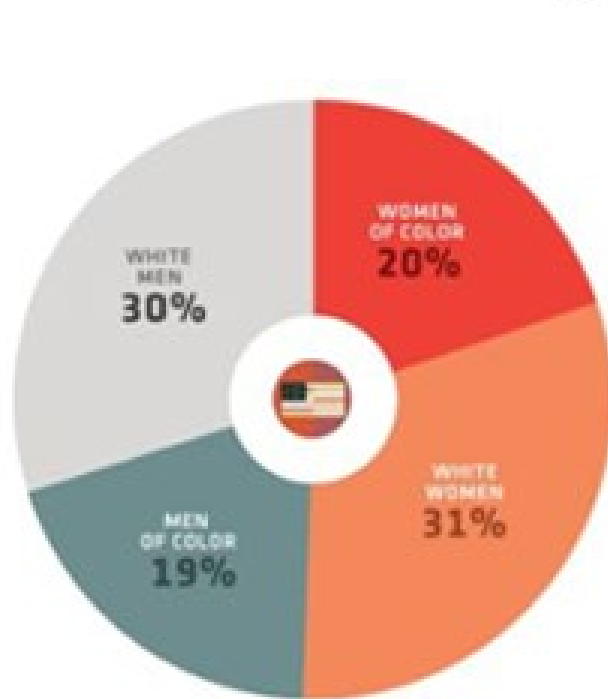
+

POWER

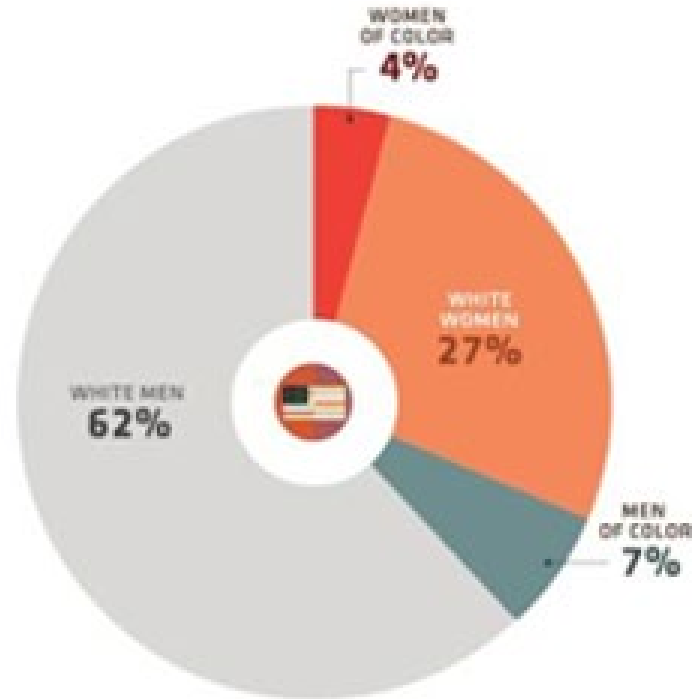
WHO HOLDS POWER IN AMERICA?

2019: Demographics of Political Power

US
Census

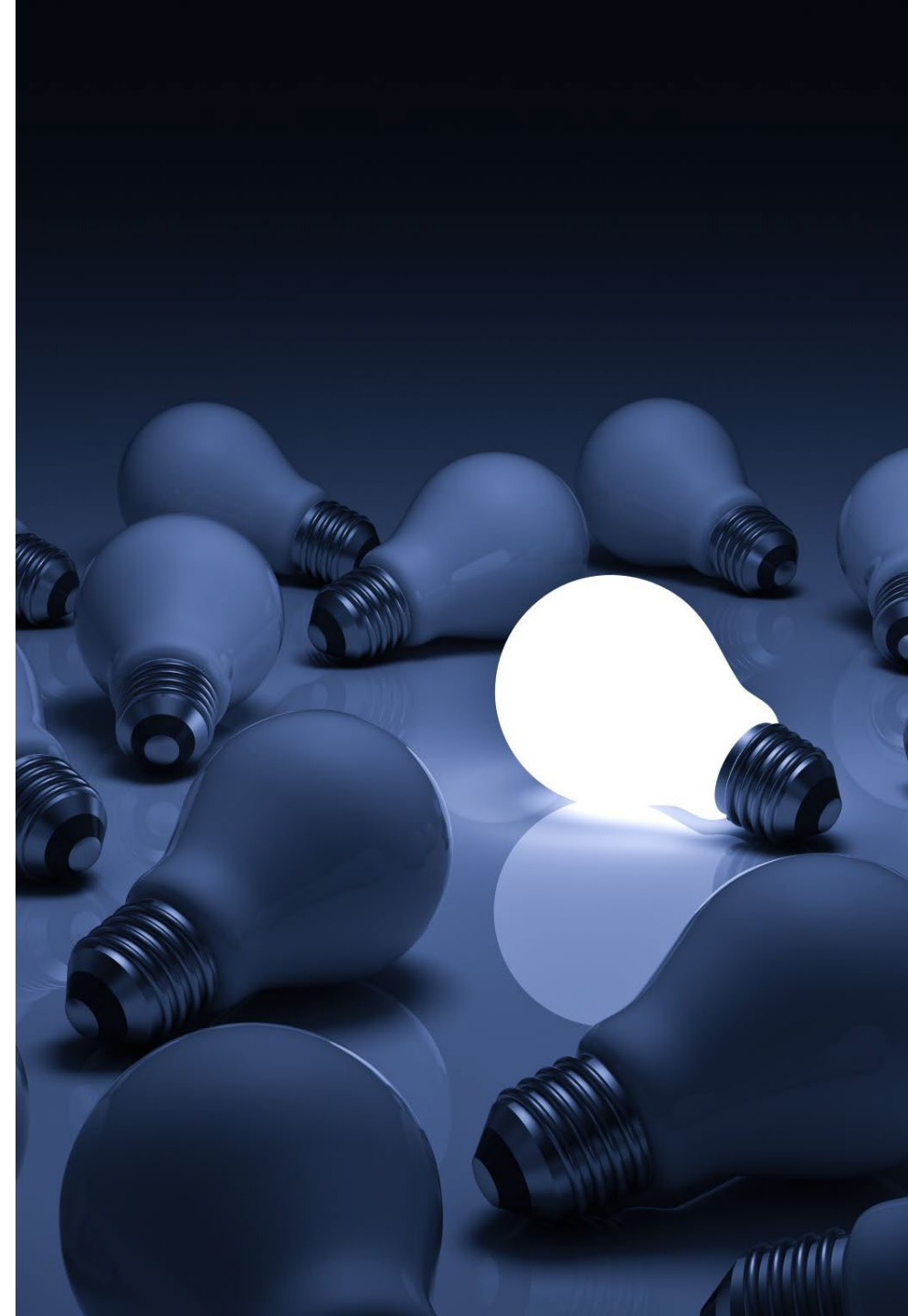


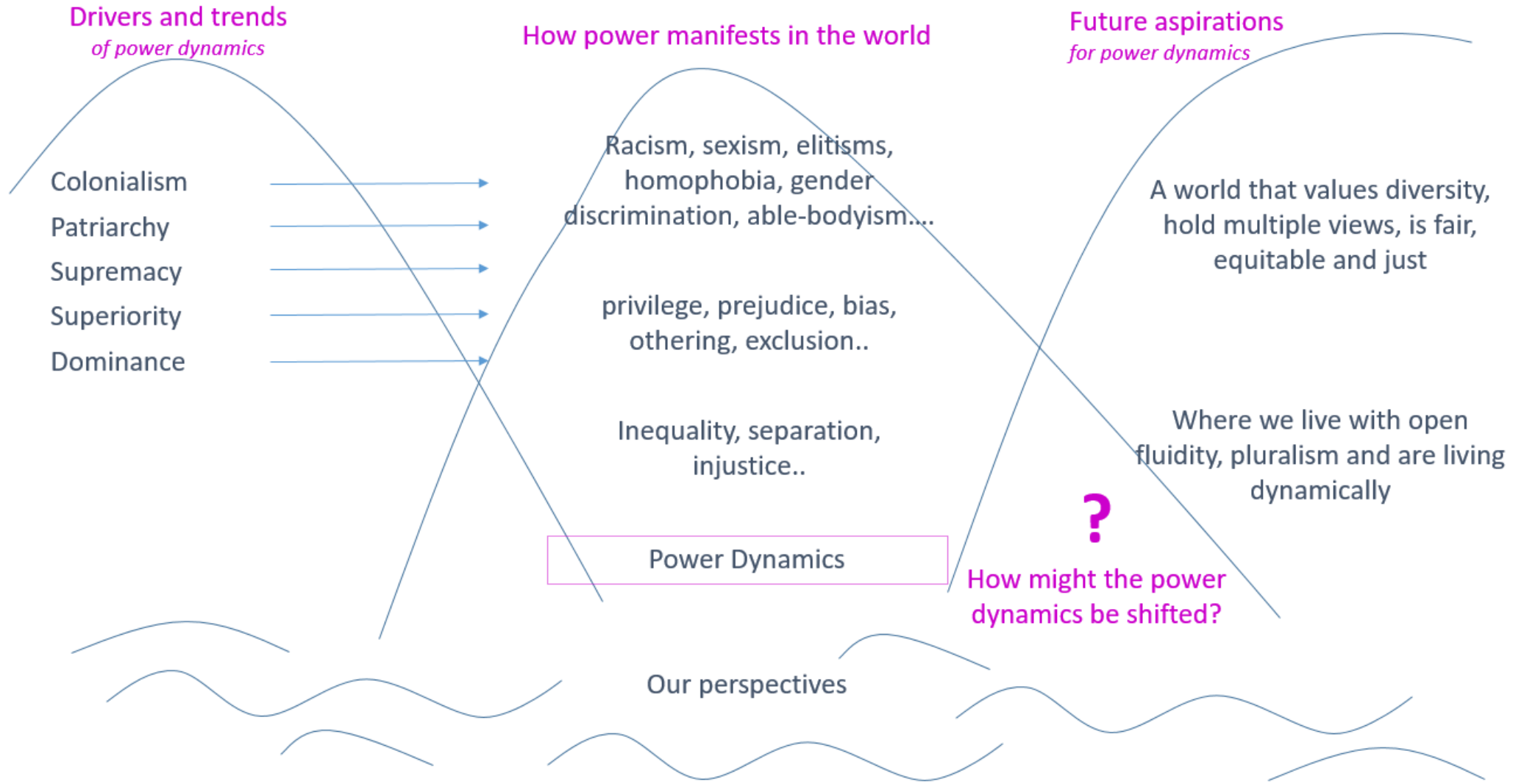
US
Elected
Officials



Power

- Power must be understood as a relational term between human beings in a specific historical, economic, political and social setting.
- Power is control of, or access to, those institutions sanctioned by the state.
- Power is ownership and control of the major resources of a state; and the capacity to make and enforce decisions based on this ownership and control.
- Power is the capacity of a group of people to decide what they want and to act in an organized way to get it.
- Power is the ability to define reality and to convince other people that it is their definition.





Exploring Anti- Blackness

A form of racism that devalues (dehumanizes) blackness and systematically marginalized Black people. In short, Anti-blackness is being opposed to or hostile towards Black people.

Based on the alleged inherent inferiority of Africa and African descendants. Racial stratification is commonplace in our society and dictates the life experiences and opportunities for Black people in our society.

Because Black people have been devalued and maligned across the globe, understanding anti-blackness is critical to unpacking the specific ways racism disproportionately impacts different groups of color.

Exploring Anti-Blackness

The racial hierarchy in this country cannot be ignored. Black people are disproportionately impacted by every social measure within our social structures and institutions.

Negative images about who we are continue to flourish throughout our society including media, television, and film.

Non-Black groups of color can more easily assimilate into American culture. Therefore, they are more likely to benefit from anti-blackness because they can gain access to power within American institutions and are accepted into the idea of whiteness.

The Manifestations of Anti-Blackness in Our Society

Workplace discrimination: EEOC reports tens of thousands of racial discrimination charges filed each year.

Continued housing discrimination against Black people - less likely to receive a home loan.

Black people are more likely to be arrested, convicted, and receive longer sentences than White people.

Differential access to health care and reports of mistreatment within the health care system

Black people are more likely to live in food deserts.

Vast differences in wealth between Black and White people

Internalized Racial Oppression

- ***Internalized racial oppression:*** internalizing and acting out (unintentionally) the constant messages that you and your group are inferior to the dominant group (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017).
- ***Manifestations of internalized racial oppression:***
 - People of color are deeply impacted by the negative images, stereotypes, prejudices, and myths promoted in a racist system.
 - Self doubt, low self-esteem, self-hate, sense of inferiority
 - Shame, rage, assimilation, denial, anger
 - Conflict between racial groups, addictive behavior,
 - Colorism, mediocrity
 - Violence and threat of violence, apathy, hopelessness
 - Division, isolation, and separation



Black Children and Their Worth



- When Black children receive daily negative messages about who they are, their value, worth, or ability, it severely impacts their self-concept, self-esteem and self-efficacy.
- ***Self-concept***: children's stable perceptions about themselves despite the variations in their behaviors (Bredenkamp, 2011).
- ***Self-esteem***: children's perceptions of their worth.
- ***Self-efficacy***: children's belief in their own ability to accomplish what they set out to do.

Racial Socialization in Practice

Expose children to historical figures and information about their group's accomplishments, capacities, values, and culture

Redefine and reframe definitions of success, strengths, and accomplishments by not using standards and definitions based on those of the dominant group

Expose children to members of their group in positions of power and control in their community, in other countries, in media and television

Internalized Racial Superiority

- *Internalized Racial Superiority* internalizing and acting out (often unintentionally) the constant messages circulating in the culture that you and your group are superior to the minoritized group (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017).
- *Consequences of Internalized Racial Superiority:*
 - white saviorism (can fix people of color)
 - resistance to change
 - defensiveness
 - sense of entitlement
 - blaming; labeling;
 - assumption of normalcy and continued oppression
 - white fragility
 - misinformed about history and the role Whites have played in racism

Racism's Negative Effect on White Children

Young white children hold positive in-group attitudes (Aboud, 2003; Gibson et al., 2015)

Negative out-group attitudes by age 7 (Kurtz-Costes et al., 2011)

In doll play, white children associate white with “good and Black with “bad” (York, 2016)





Racism's Negative Effects on Latine Children

- Young Hispanic children prefer whiteness more than their own and other children of color, including Black children (Dunham et al., 2007; Stokes-Guinan, 2011).

Colorism

Colorism is the process of discrimination that privileges light-skinned people of color over their dark-skinned counterparts (Hunter, 2005).

Colorism has its origins in Eurocentrism and racism. Just as race, privileges whites, colorism privileges light skinned individuals.

Colorism

Is a by product of racism

- Roots in Slavery
- Roots in colonialization

Affects groups of color

- Manifestation of internalized racial oppression
- Creates intragroup conflict

Perpetuated unintentionally (intentionally)

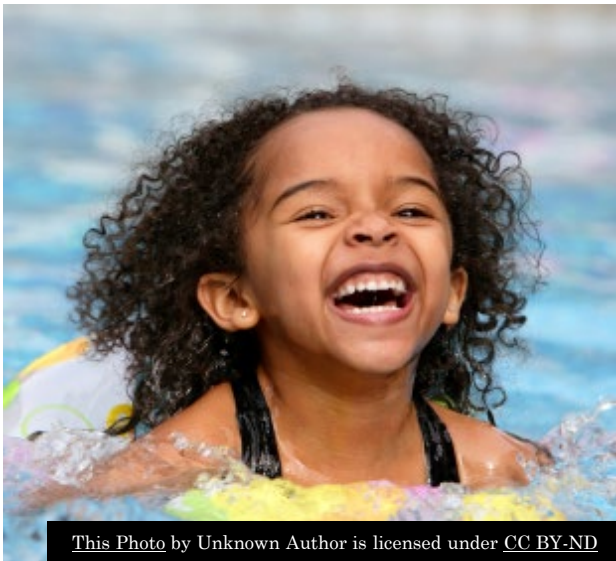
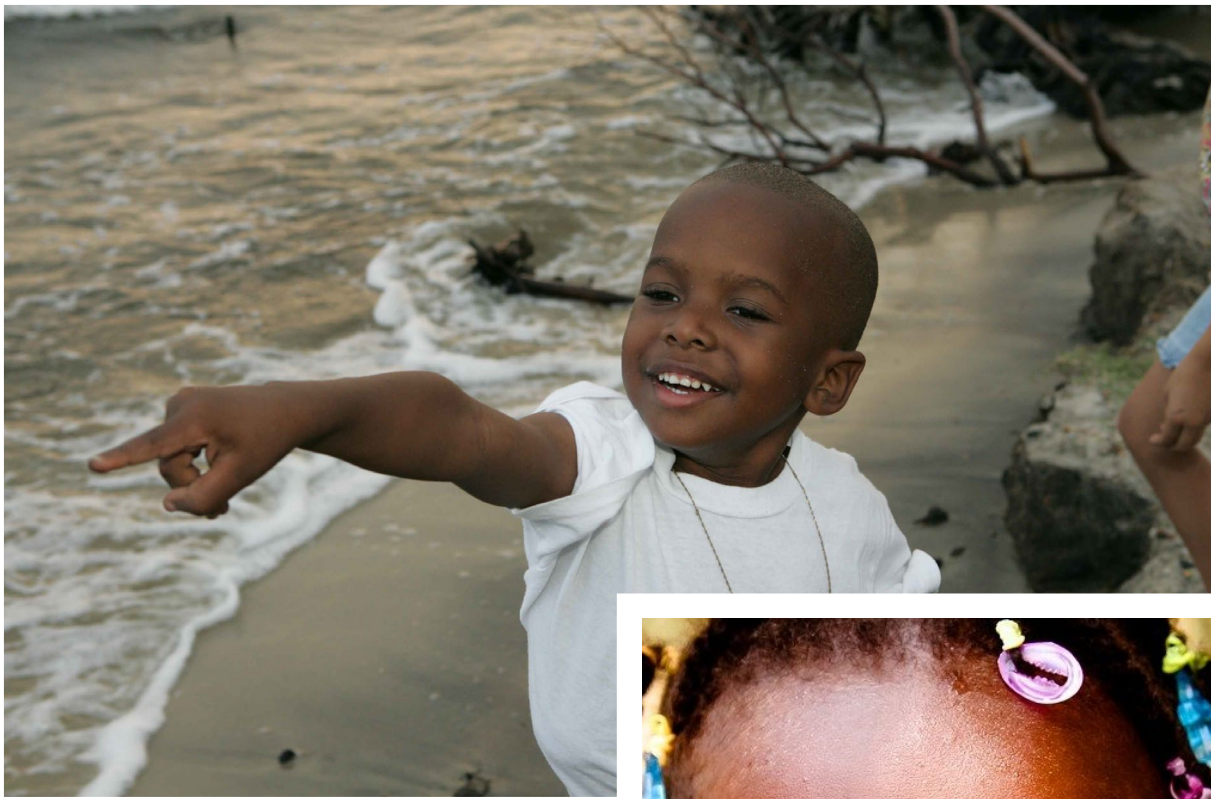
- Media, TV, film
- Within families and communities



'black-ish

Colorism in Early Childhood

- Children with darker skin:
 - Are treated less favorably than children with lighter skin tones,
 - are more likely to be suspended or expelled,
 - experience lower academic achievement,
 - Are more likely to enter the juvenile justice system.



*“In this country, American means white.
Everyone else has to hyphenate.”*

Toni Morrison



INDENTURED SERVANTS

were initially bound
to their employers,
in exchange for a
free passage to the
New World.

What is Whiteness?

- Whiteness is viewed as the norm, the standard for universal human values by which all others are viewed and to which they are compared (Roediger, 1991).
- “Authority of experience” vs. “oppression of experience”
- Affluent White whiteness



Whiteness

Whiteness as Property

The phrase Whiteness as Property was coined by Cheryl Harris in 1993. The phrase has been used to capture the social and economic advantages of Whiteness.



The phrase captures the reality that being perceived as White carries more than a mere racial classification. It is a social and institutional status and identity with legal, political, economic, and social rights and privileges that are denied to others (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2017).

False Narratives of White Supremacy

- Whiteness places value on certain experiences within society, including social, educational, financial, etc.
- Whiteness tells us that superior education, wealth, and materialism are the gold standard of success in our society.
- Whiteness dictates dress, hairstyles, attractiveness, tone of voice, behavior, how to show respect, etc.
- Whiteness tells individuals what it means to be a boy/man or girl/woman within society.

False Narratives of White Supremacy within Education

- Whiteness dictates how and what children are taught.
- Whiteness tells us what achievement looks like (e.g., early learning standards, grades, test scores).
- Whiteness determines what high-quality education looks like (i.e., teacher as purveyor of knowledge, child as recipient of knowledge).
- Whiteness tells us what it means to be a ‘good’ parent.
- Whiteness dictates what behaviors are acceptable/not acceptable in school.

Our early childhood system was set up to enable and perpetuate white supremacy.

- Who could learn
- Who got funding/resources and how much
- Where children learned
- Forced(s) Black children to learn in an educational system that was not set up for them
- Myth of meritocracy
- Controlling of bodies, emotions, knowledge, access
- Engaging families within a paternalistic framework.

Addressing Equity in Education

- We are entrenched in “first generation” equity work©.
 - Isolated or ‘band aid’ interventions
 - Based upon a *blame the victim* mentality (Black children and families are at-risk and in need of fixing)
 - Unwillingness to identify and address root causes

First Generation Equity Work©



Makes us feel like we are doing something meaningful



Allows us to stay in a place of comfort



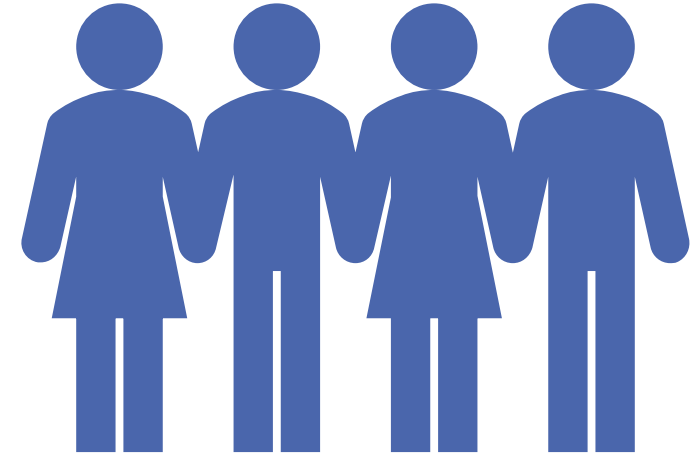
Maintains the opportunity and achievement gaps



Does little to address root causes

Second Generation Equity Work

- Borrowed from Guralnick (1993):
 - Early intervention was in the midst of a rapid period of change
 - Marked by a movement away from superficial analyses regarding the effectiveness of services and supports for young children with disabilities
 - Researchers and policy makers were being pushed to ask more specific questions and develop a more nuanced understanding about how to meet the needs of young children and their families.



Moving Into Second Generation Equity Work

- Will require a unique commitment and determination
- Let go of the traditional 'band aid' approach to education and intervention
- Push through some discomfort to understand the structural barriers and root causes *as well as our own role in perpetuating disparities*
- Keen understanding of how our systems were set up and how they have morphed over time

Current Equity Work is Grounded in Colorblindness

- Belief that there is no racial hierarchy
- Failure to consider the permanence of race's role within our nation's institutions
- Reliance on band aid interventions or approaches
- Sustains White as the norm and ensures this cultural frame of reference for all behaviors, interactions, and experiences *as well as the establishment of policies and practices*

Promising Model for Reducing Suspensions/Expulsions

- *Year 1*: Capacity Building
- *Year 2*: Development of the strategic plan using an appreciative inquiry framework
- *Year 3*: Implementation

Family Empowerment and Engagement

- *Advocacy Academy and Community Organizing*

- 5 Black families; 5 Latino families
- Three training sessions
- Follow-up coaching
- Moving into community organizing

- *Community-Wide Healing Sessions*

- Quarterly healing sessions in Black and Latino neighborhoods

Engaging Key Stakeholders

Counter to what has been traditionally done

Empower communities and shift control from the system back into the community

Individuals closest to the problem are actively involved in addressing the problem

Those in positions of power must give up some control and voice in determining the path forward.

Achieving Equity and Social Justice in Education

- Focus on outcomes is important, but we also must:
 - Examine the root causes of inequities, including what they look like in everyday practice.
 - Eliminate policies, practices, and attitudes that perpetuate disparate outcomes.
 - Enact policies and practices that address the root causes of inequity *and* promote better outcomes.



(National Council of Teachers of English, 2016)

Five C's to Advance Racial Equity

- Commit to the work.
- Commit to continual learning.
- Commit to using system wide data.
- Commit and develop a shared, clear, compelling vision and goal.
- Commit to targeted improvement efforts across the ECE system.

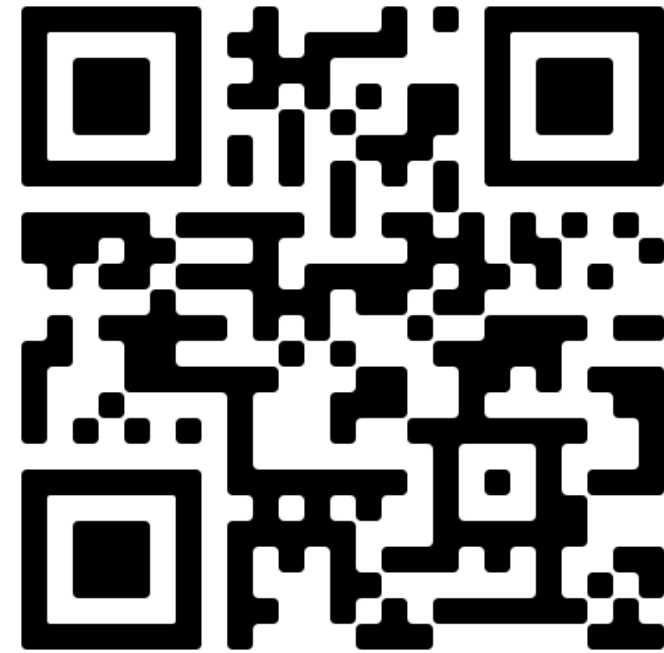
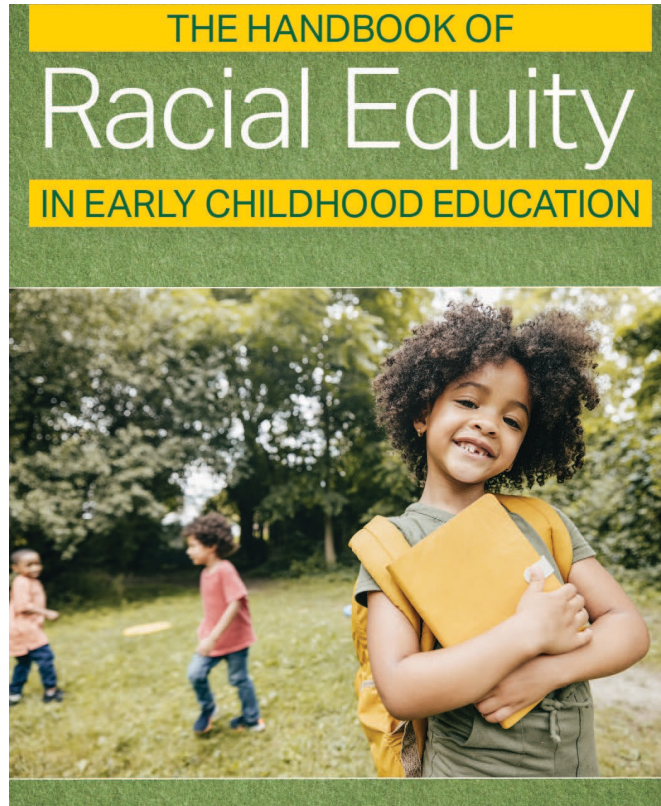


What is Needed Right Now

- Deep understanding of the issues and approach needed to achieve lasting change – improving quality is not enough
- Changes in policies (e.g., hiring, discipline, special education, teacher prep, early learning standards, funding)
- Investment in intensive pre- and in-service professional development (e.g., behavior management, trauma, CRAB)
- Commitment to helping children, families, and communities heal from historical, racial, and multigenerational trauma

“In short, we, the black and the white, deeply need each other here if we are really to become a nation- if we really, that is, to achieve our identity, our maturity, as men and women. To create one nation has proved to be a hideously difficult task.”

— James Baldwin, *The Fire Next Time*



Available on *Amazon* and *Brookes Publishing*

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thank you

tusind tak
謝謝 dakujem vám
ngiyabonga
dziękuję
merci
baie dankie
धन्यवाद molte grazie
gracias
obrigada
obrigado
teşekkür ederim
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tack så mycket
gràcies
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dank u
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