

Race Matters:

Personal and Communal Strategies for
Addressing Systemic Racism

Experience Hope Team



Presenters

- ▶ Peg Morris
 - ▶ *Experience Hope Project Director*
- ▶ Michelle LaPlace-Watts
 - ▶ *Mental Health & Violence Prevention Program Manager*
- ▶ Cat Willett
 - ▶ *Project AWARE Project Director*
- ▶ Raelle Wilson
 - ▶ *Restorative Practices in Schools Coordinator*

Learning Objectives

- ▶ **Definitions:** Participants will be able to define key terms
- ▶ **Assessment:** Participants will self-evaluate current level of racial consciousness
- ▶ **Action Steps:** Participants will acquire resources and age-appropriate techniques to discuss diversity

Can we agree to...

- ▶ Respect privacy
- ▶ Speak and listen from our hearts
- ▶ Speak and listen with respect
- ▶ Step up/Step back
- ▶ Be mindful of intention *and* impact
- ▶ Take care of ourselves and each other
- ▶ Experience discomfort
- ▶ Expect and accept non-disclosure



A note about us...

- ▶ We, as presenters, are bringing our own perspectives, histories, struggles and joys to our racial equity work
- ▶ We are committed to this work and are experts in **our own** experiences.
- ▶ We hope to begin a discussion that can live on after this presentation

Our Perspectives

- ▶ Who we are?
 - ▶ Where were we born?
 - ▶ When?
- ▶ How do we identify racially/culturally?
- ▶ How did that impact our experience in school?
- ▶ How does this impact our current work?



Your Perspectives

- ▶ Turn to your partner and answer the following questions.
- ▶ Each person has 3 minutes
 - ▶ Who we are?
 - ▶ Where were we born?
 - ▶ When?
 - ▶ How do you identify racially/culturally?
 - ▶ How did that impact our experience in school?
 - ▶ How does this impact our current work?

Definitions

GETTING CLEAR ON WHAT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT

RACE

- ▶ The social meaning affixed to melanin content
- ▶ Associated with specific biological attributes and behavioral expectations/stereotypes
- ▶ Distinct from, and more powerful than, ethnicity, nationality, or cultural background
- ▶ There is shared “racial experience” for those with similar skin tones
- ▶ In the United States, cultural experiences are “racialized”

HOW TO TELL SOMEONE THEY SOUND RACIST



ETHNICITY

Social characteristics that people have in common such as language, religion, place of birth, religion, cultural practices, food preferences.

RACIAL/WHITE PRIVILEGE

- ▶ Advantages that accrue simply by virtue of skin color
- ▶ An invisible package of unearned assets that accrue to persons with light or lighter skin that can be cashed in each day and which are to remain oblivious to the bearer
- ▶ If racial privilege is true, one must give up the notion of meritocracy
- ▶ A discussion of racial privilege often triggers defensiveness

IMPLICIT BIAS

Also known as implicit social cognition, implicit bias refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner

RACISM & BIGOTRY

- ▶ **Racism:** Prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against someone based on the color of their skin or ethnicity with the underlying belief that one's own race or ethnic group is superior
- ▶ **Bigot:** A person who regards or treats a member of a racial or ethnic group with hatred and intolerance.

NATIONAL VALUES

- ▶ Behaviors and characteristics that people are taught to value and enact.
 - ▶ Examples in the US are individualism and meritocracy.
 - ▶ Individualism and meritocracy convey the idea that people control their fates regardless of social position and individual behavior and choices determine material outcomes
- ▶ National values often ignore historical and current realities and may support structural racism

STRUCTURAL/INSTITUTIONAL RACISM



A VISION OF RACIAL EQUITY IN SCHOOLS

- ▶ All racial groups expect equal levels of success
- ▶ People of color feel that their experiences and perspectives are respected and valued
- ▶ Practices that support privilege and bias are challenged and eliminated
- ▶ Curriculum is inclusive of images and stories of people of color
- ▶ Equal access to programs and materials regardless of academic achievement
- ▶ High expectations for all students
- ▶ Continuous adult professional development on policies, procedures and learning strategies that support racial equity

Assessment Tools

QUANTIFYING OUR CULTURAL HUMILITY QUALITIES

Self-Assessment

- ▶ <https://www.mentimeter.com/s/dc1c986c5817cda952aed6f2d0b60f4c/fc64c6ddf507>

The 8 R's of Talking About Race: How to Have Meaningful Conversations

1. Respect, Reflect and Resign
2. Research & Relearn
3. Reset & Reboot
4. Recognize Bias & Privilege

Pair Share

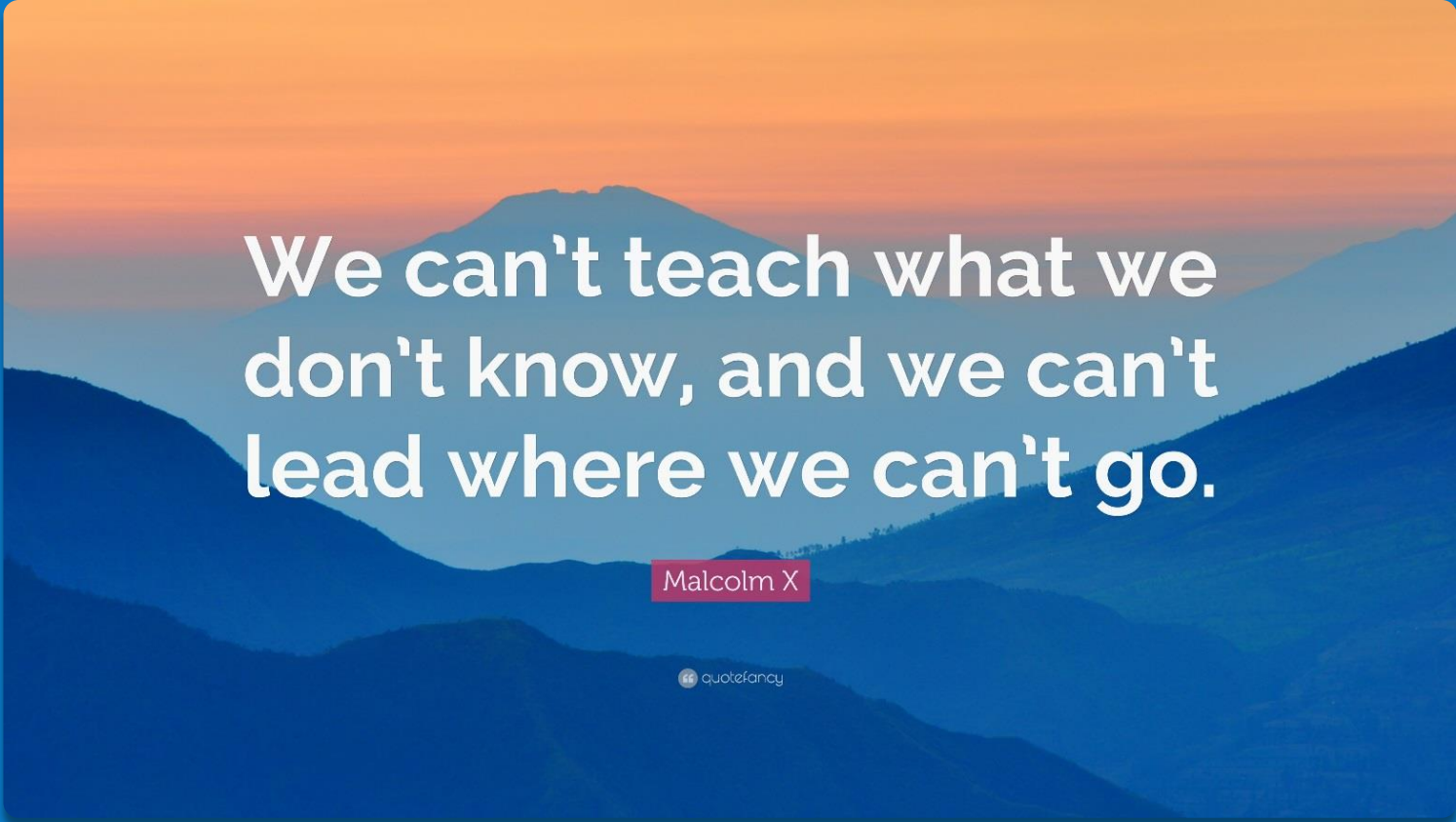
- ▶ What is your racial/ethnic identity?
- ▶ When and how did you become aware of this identity?
- ▶ What role has it played in your life?
- ▶ How does it affect you in your social activities?
- ▶ How does it affect you in your school?
- ▶ How does it affect you in your community?
- ▶ In what ways do you benefit from this identity?
- ▶ In what ways do you suffer or miss out because of this identity?

The Doll Test



Practical Applications

Advancing School Mental Health Conference 2016
9/29/16



We can't teach what we
don't know, and we can't
lead where we can't go.

Malcolm X

quote fancy

Race and culture appear in three dimensions:

- *Collective*
- *interpersonal*
- *personal*

Racial equity practices should address each dimension.



Self-Focused Philosophies

- ▶ Commit to understand our own background,
- ▶ Identify safe spaces in our workplaces
- ▶ Acknowledge that this work will be uncomfortable
- ▶ Address where we are *under-* and *over-*accountable.

**CARING FOR
MYSELF IS NOT
SELF-INDULGENCE,
IT IS SELF-
PRESERVATION
AND THAT IS
AN ACT OF
POLITICAL
WARFARE.**

AUDRE LORDE



Self-Focused Practices

STEPS TO SELF CARE AFTER EMOTIONAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA

Race-based trauma can create symptoms and experiences much like PTSD. Repeated race-based trauma puts your emotional, psychological, and physical well-being at risk

Mindful Isolation

Disconnect from triggering interactions or other situations that might elicit the fight-or-flight response

Discharge Energy

Find ways to exert physical energy. go for a brisk walk or run. Find (safe) ways to discharge intense anger that includes physical movement.

Ask For Help

If you find yourself unable to cope, find a trauma support group or therapist to assist you. You matter.

Community

Connect with people who you've identified as your empathetic and open support. Process your feelings with them.

Well-Being

- Feed yourself well
- Get good rest
- Avoid toxins
- Breath deep

JustJasmineBlog.com

- ▶ Self-care for those exposed to race-based trauma
- ▶ Create spaces for storytelling
- ▶ Spend time defining culture, race, privilege and racism for yourself. Where are these showing up in your work? In your personal life?
- ▶ Identify those who can support you in this work

Special Considerations for My White Folks!

- ▶ Listen more, talk less
- ▶ Find motivations for engaging in racial equity that move beyond recognition
- ▶ Take risks
- ▶ Find space for humility in this work – we're going to mess up
- ▶ If you see something, say something
- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wf9QBnPK6Yg>

Student-Focused Philosophies

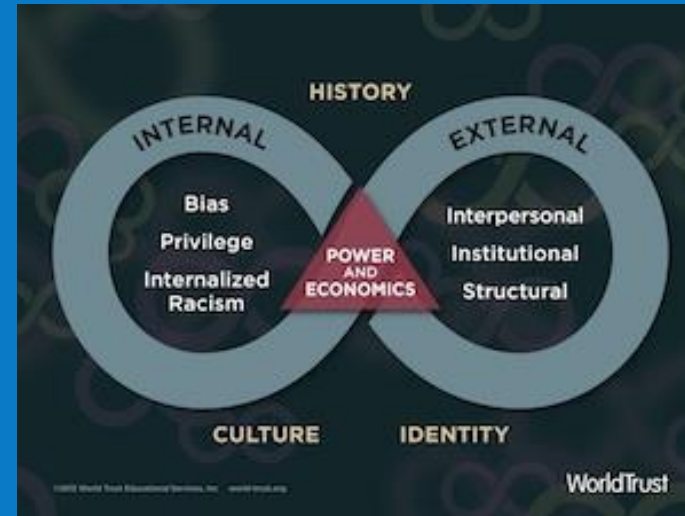
- ▶ Systemic oppression in schools is real
- ▶ Students are often not believed when they mention instances of racism.
 - ▶ Believing students is a *powerful* tool to undoing structural racism

Student-Focused Practices

- ▶ Actively seek out culturally-relevant evidence-based/promising practices
- ▶ Visit Tolerance.org or other sites for educational activities that address issues of oppression and empower youth to act.
- ▶ Use narrative/open-ended questions to collect racial/ethnic/gender/cultural self-definitions
- ▶ Use restorative circles in groups to set a structure of equality and inclusivity
- ▶ Educate yourself on current national and local events that offer examples of systemic bias or cultural humility
- ▶ Give students clear opportunities to be leaders in speaking out and advocating for change
- ▶ Do not limit these discussions to only students impacted by particular instances of oppression

Systems Philosophies

- ▶ Accepting what we don't know
- ▶ Allowing people to self-define their culture(s)
- ▶ Emphasizing long-term shift, not short-term fixes
- ▶ Humility
- ▶ Humor
- ▶ Consensus (where possible)



Systems Practices

- ▶ Be aware of overt and implicit organizational culture norms
- ▶ Collect data on how youth from different races/cultures navigate your systems
- ▶ Create consensual values and agreements for all staff.
- ▶ Assess organizational practices through anti-bias lens
- ▶ Allow for rotation of meeting facilitation and other leadership roles
- ▶ Evaluate the accessibility of your organization's professional development and promotion opportunities
- ▶ Other examples?





Not everything that is faced can be changed, but
nothing can be changed until it is faced.

(James Baldwin)

izquotes.com