

Who Do We Expect Students to Be?: Racial trauma in educational institutions

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PLEASE PASS THE LOVE YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVE

Group Power Discussion

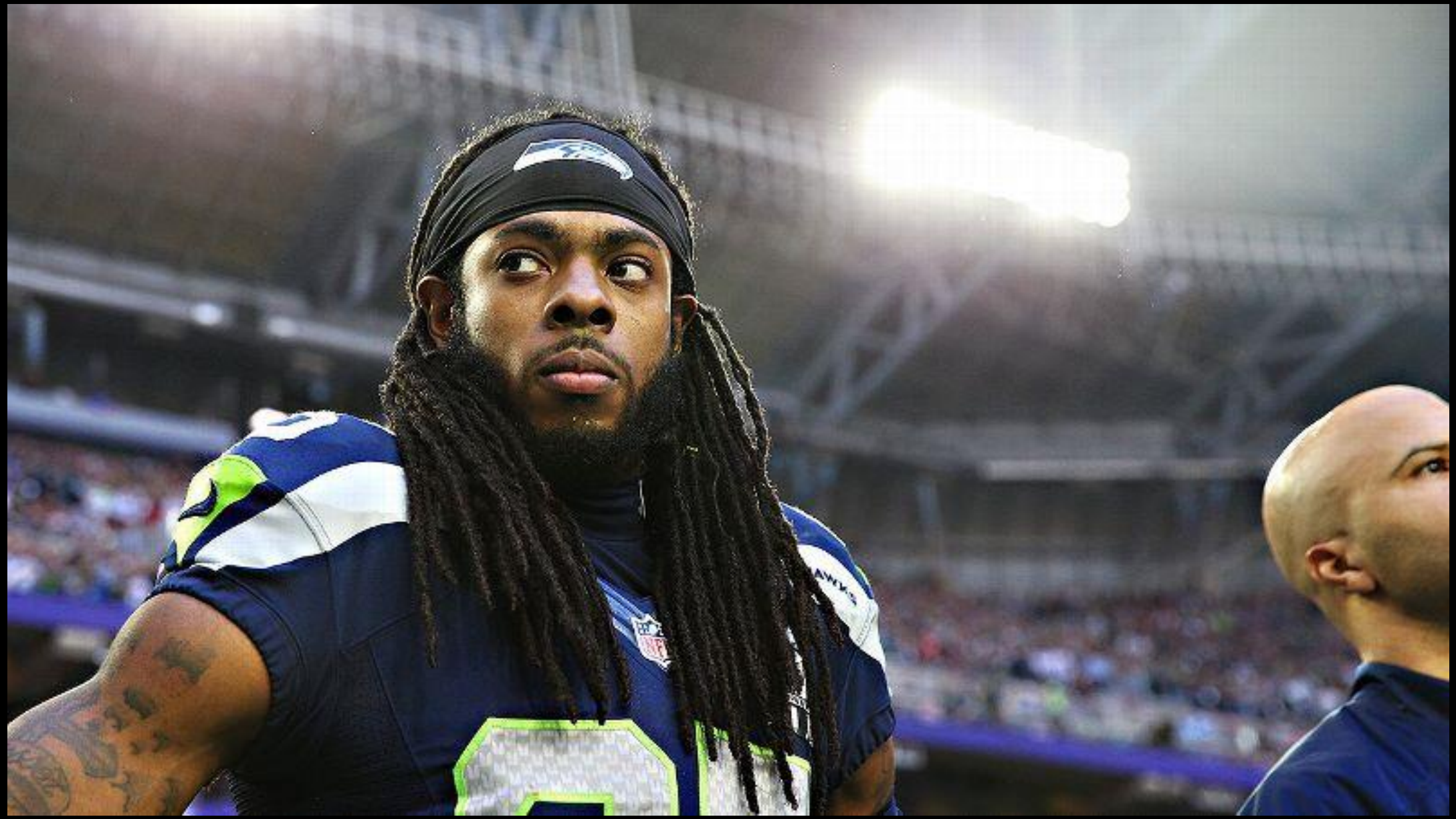
- Why did you come to this conference today?
- What are you willing to do for your students? (or your friends?)
- What does success look like for a student?

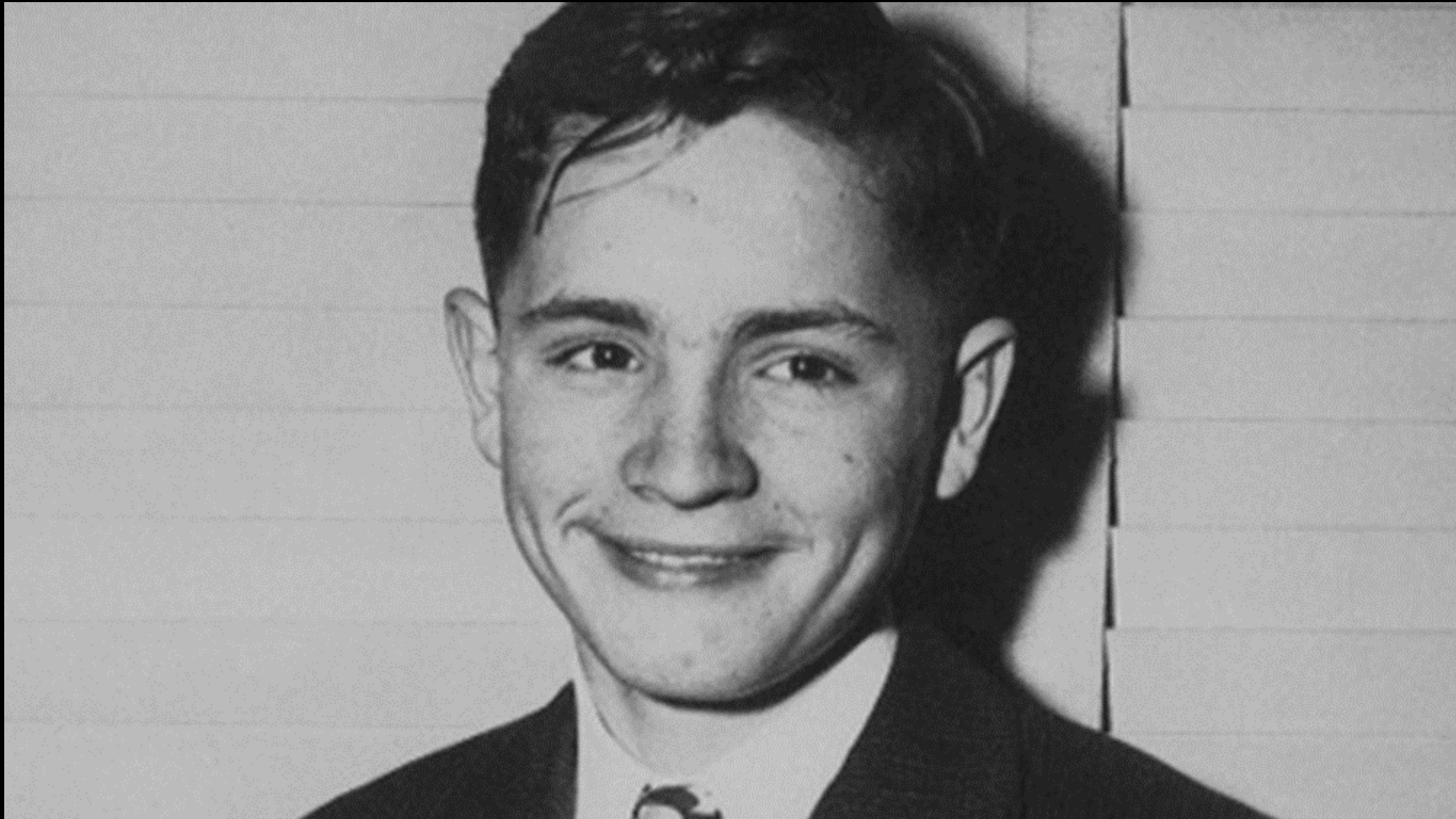
Depression
isn't a choice,
but stigma and ignorance are.

-Matt Haig









Benazir Bhutto: First female Prime Minister of Pakistan



English Language Learner



Richard Sherman: Graduated Stanford with 3.9 GPA



Charles Manson: Mass murderer and cult leader



Group Discussion

- How close were you with your guesses?
- What background knowledge contributed to your guesses?
- Now have the honest conversation:
 - What judgments or bias contributed to your guesses, if any?
 - What judgments or bias could you see others having/making with these pictures? Why?
 - What are the consequences of having bias (good or bad)?

You may

know me...

but you have no idea
WHO I AM

Implicit Bias

Attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner.

Those attitudes and stereotypes become self-fulfilling prophecies.



The Impact of Bias

Attitude

A flowchart illustrating the impact of bias. It consists of three stacked, rounded rectangular boxes. The top box is teal and contains the word 'Attitude'. A grey arrow points downwards from the bottom right corner of this box to the top right corner of the middle box. The middle box is a darker teal and contains the word 'Actions'. Another grey arrow points downwards from the bottom right corner of this box to the top right corner of the bottom box. The bottom box is a light blue and contains the text 'Consequence (good or bad)'. The boxes are arranged in a descending staircase pattern from top-left to bottom-right.

Actions

Consequence (good or bad)

Race and Education

- Late 1960s, most African-American, Latino and Native American students were in fully segregated schools
- 2/3 students of color attend schools that are underfunded with fewer resources compared to neighboring districts with higher populations of white students
- Most SOC are segregated in lower-track classes with larger class sizes, less qualified teachers, and lower-quality curriculum (Oakes & Orfield)

Education Demographics

- 82% of public educators are white
- In 2011-2012, 20% of administrators were people of color (POC)
- 51% of students are white
- Projections show persons of color becoming majority in US between 2041-2045 (Brookings)



The Impact of Bias

Attitude

A flowchart illustrating the impact of bias. It consists of three horizontal rectangular boxes stacked vertically, each containing a word. The top box is green and contains the word 'Attitude'. A grey arrow points downwards from the right side of this box to the right side of the middle box. The middle box is a lighter teal color and contains the word 'Actions'. Another grey arrow points downwards from the right side of the middle box to the right side of the bottom box. The bottom box is a light blue color and contains the text 'Consequence (good or bad)'. The boxes are slightly offset to the left as they go down, creating a descending staircase effect.

Actions

Consequence (good or bad)

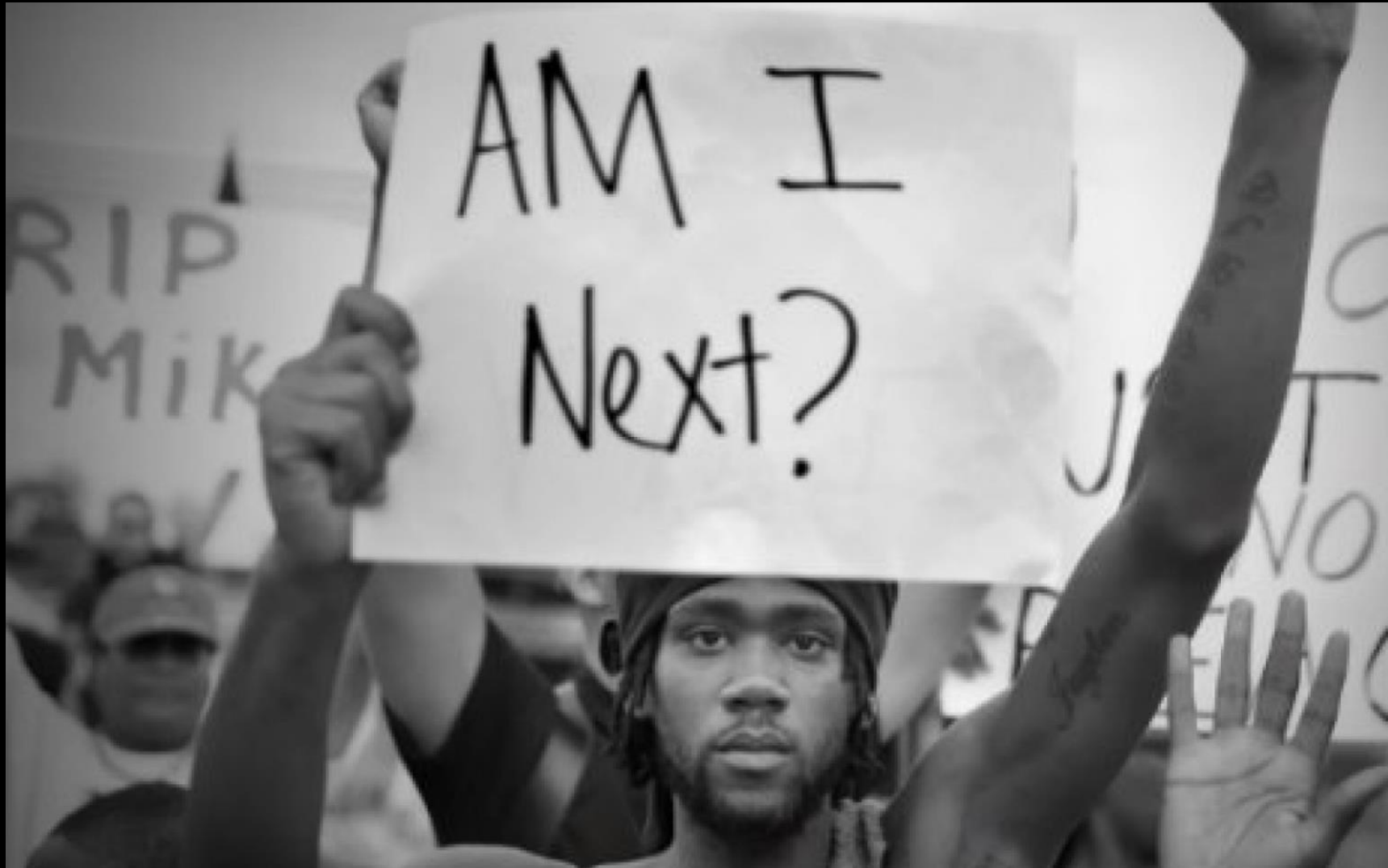
Stereotype Threat



Group Discussion

- What are some of your initial reactions after watching that clip?
- How do we know in schools today that students of color are victims of stereotypes and bias more than white peers? What evidence do we have for that?
- What could you assume would be short and long-term outcomes of the stereotype threat?
- As educators and school systems how do we create trauma for our racially & culturally diverse students?

Trauma

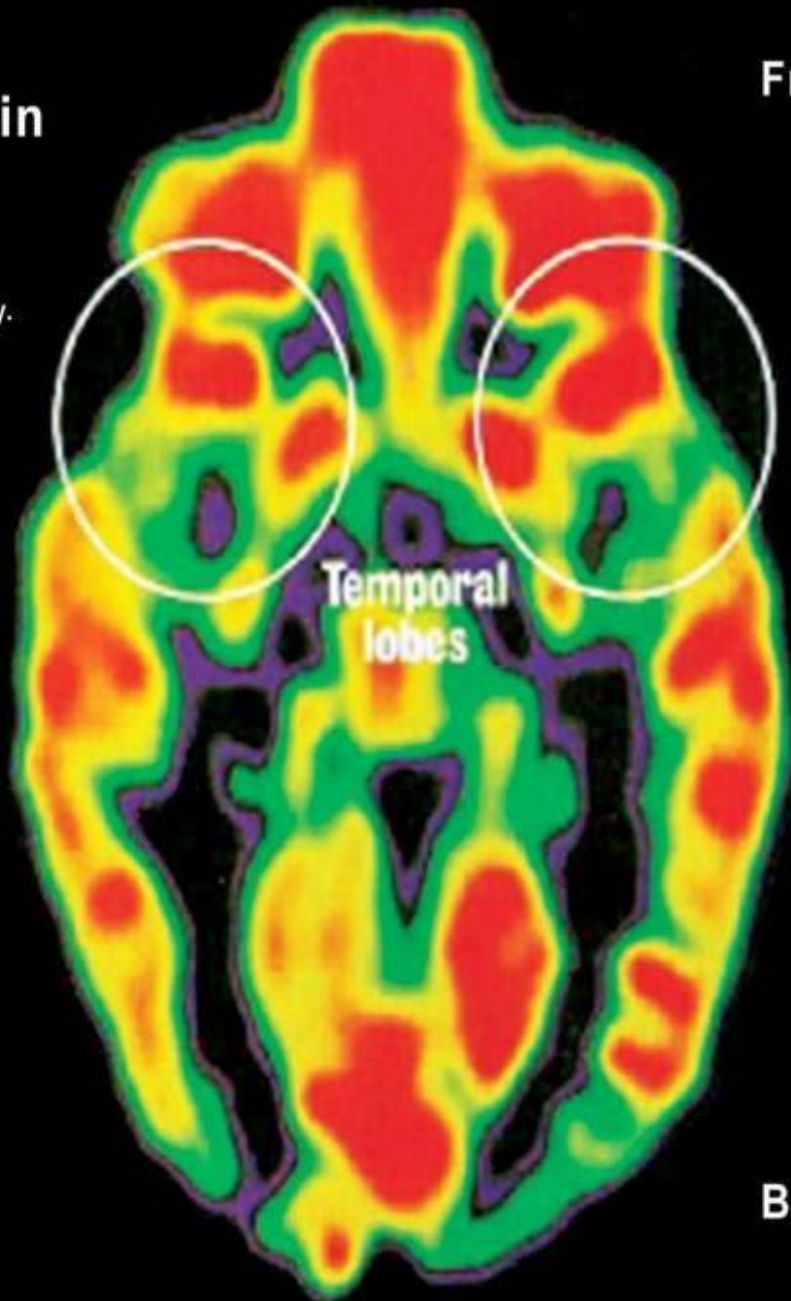


What is Trauma?

- “Prolonged exposure to repetitive or severe events such as child abuse, is likely to cause the most severe and lasting effects.”
- “Traumatization can also occur from neglect, which is the absence of essential physical or emotional care, soothing and restorative experiences from significant others, particularly in children.”
- Interpersonal violence tends to be more traumatic than natural disasters because it is more disruptive to our fundamental sense of trust and attachment, and is typically experienced as intentional rather than as “an accident of nature.” (International Society for the Study of Trauma and Dissociation, 2009)

Healthy Brain

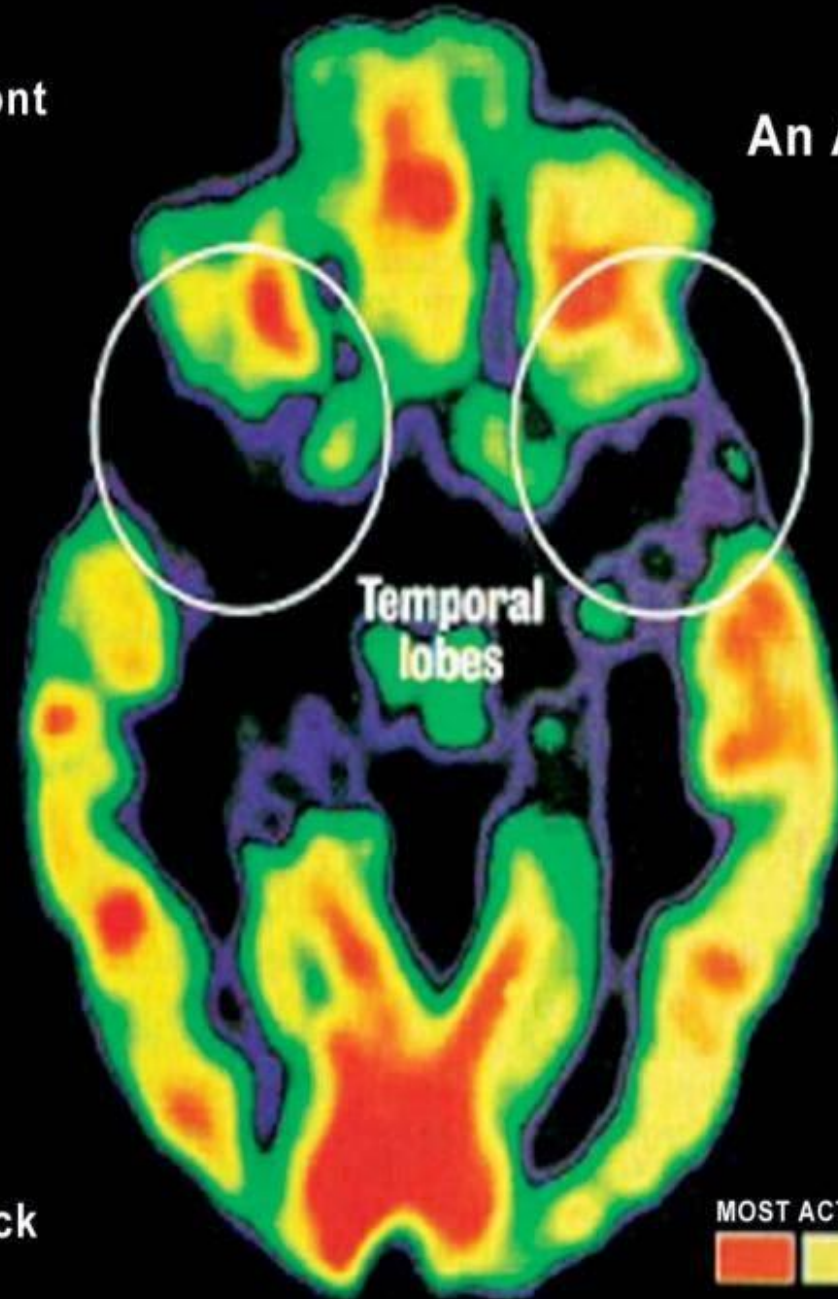
This PET scan of the brain of a normal child shows regions of high (red) and low (blue and black) activity. At birth, only primitive structures such as the brain stem (center) are fully functional; in regions like the temporal lobes (top), early childhood experiences wire the circuits.



Front

An Abused Brain

This PET scan of the brain of a Romanian Orphan, who was institutionalized shortly after birth, shows the effect of extreme deprivation in infancy. The temporal lobes (top), which regulate emotions and receive input from the senses, are nearly quiescent. Such children suffer emotional and cognitive problems.



Back



Impact of Trauma

Prolonged exposure to trauma and/or repetitive traumatic events

MAY:

- Cause an individual's natural alarm system to no longer function as it should.
- Create emotional and physical responses to stress.
- Result in emotional numbing and psychological avoidance.
- Affect an individual's sense of safety.
- Diminish an individual's capacity to trust others

Symptoms of trauma

1. *The development of new fears*
2. *Separation anxiety (particularly in young children)*
3. *Sleep disturbance, nightmares*
4. *Sadness*
5. *Loss of interest in normal activities*
6. *Reduced concentration*
7. *Decline in schoolwork*
8. *Anger*
9. *Somatic complaints*
10. *Irritability*

BEHAVIOR



Lack of physical activity



Smoking



Alcoholism



Drug use



Missed work

PHYSICAL & MENTAL HEALTH



Severe obesity



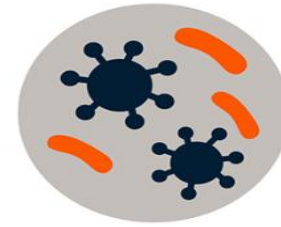
Diabetes



Depression



Suicide attempts



STDs



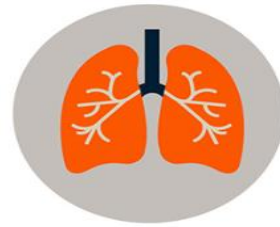
Heart disease



Cancer



Stroke



COPD



Broken bones

Weathering

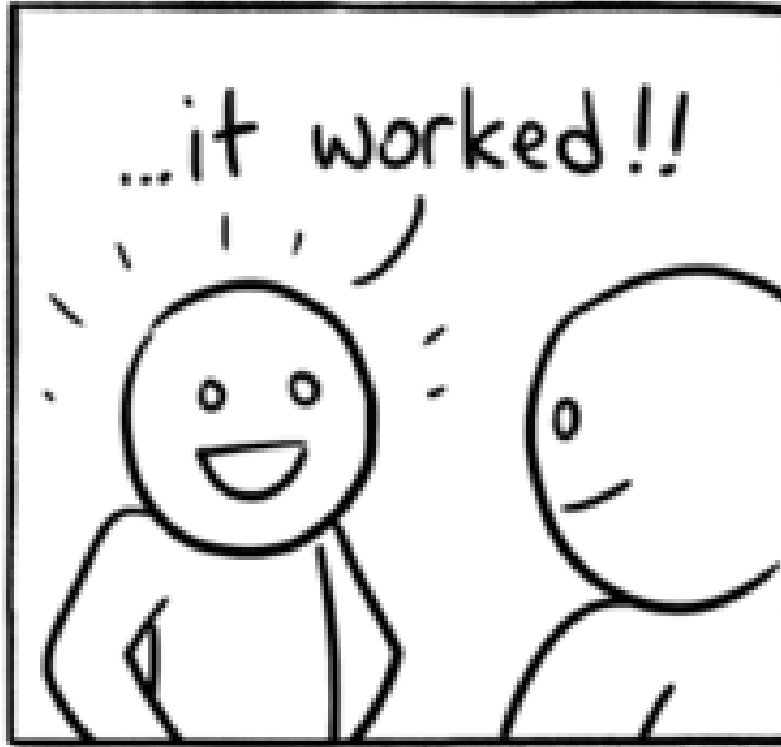
- Long-term physical, mental, emotional, and psychological effects of racism and of living in a society characterized by white dominance and privilege
- Weathering severely challenges and threatens a person's health and ability to respond in a healthy manner to their environment.
- Research does not account for the toll societal racism takes on students who may be viewed as successful

Epigenetics & generational trauma

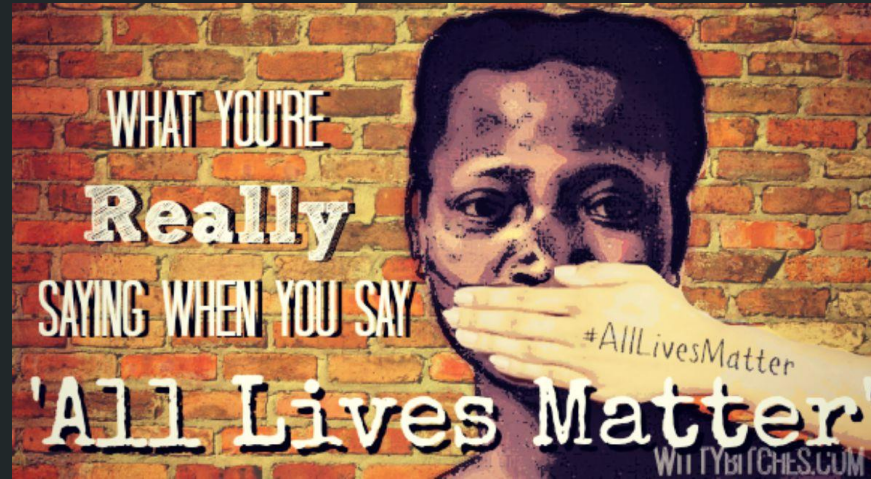
- Altering gene activity (Weinhold, 2006)
- “Health consequences of racism and discrimination can be persistent and passed from one generation to the next through the body’s ‘biological memory’ of harmful experiences
- Exposure to environments perceived as racist can result in an overactive physiological stress response.
- Racial discrimination is linked to birth outcomes among African American women even after accounting for psychological well-being, educational attainment, and risk behaviors such as alcohol use and smoking.”

The “Get Over It” Phenomenon

chainsawsuit.com



Trauma Created:

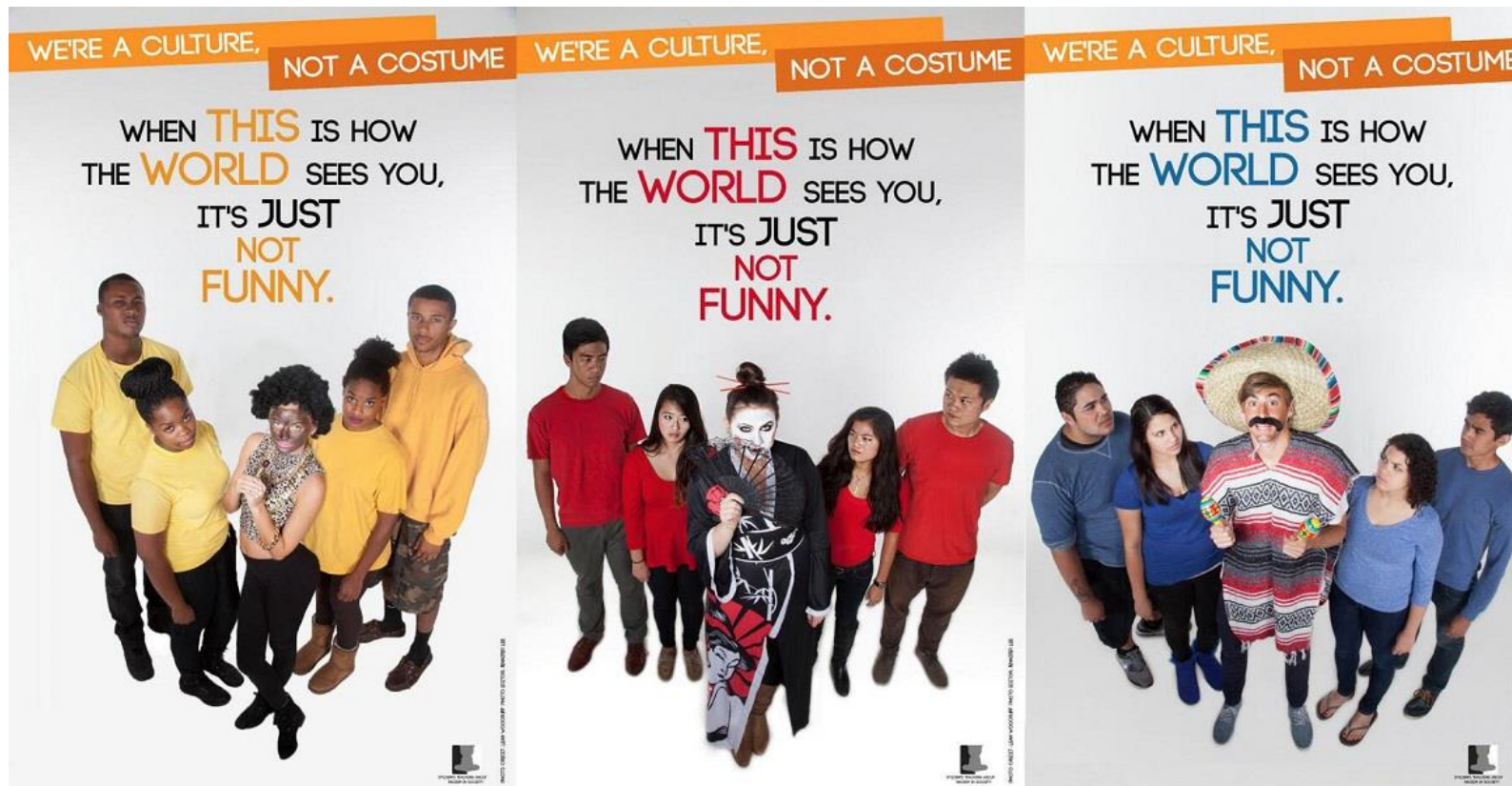


Racial Trauma

- We all see color but learn to attach negative stereotypes
- Viral news of the murders of innocent African Americans is secondary trauma
- Threats of deportation is secondary trauma
- Give children the facts
- Remind children that they are safe

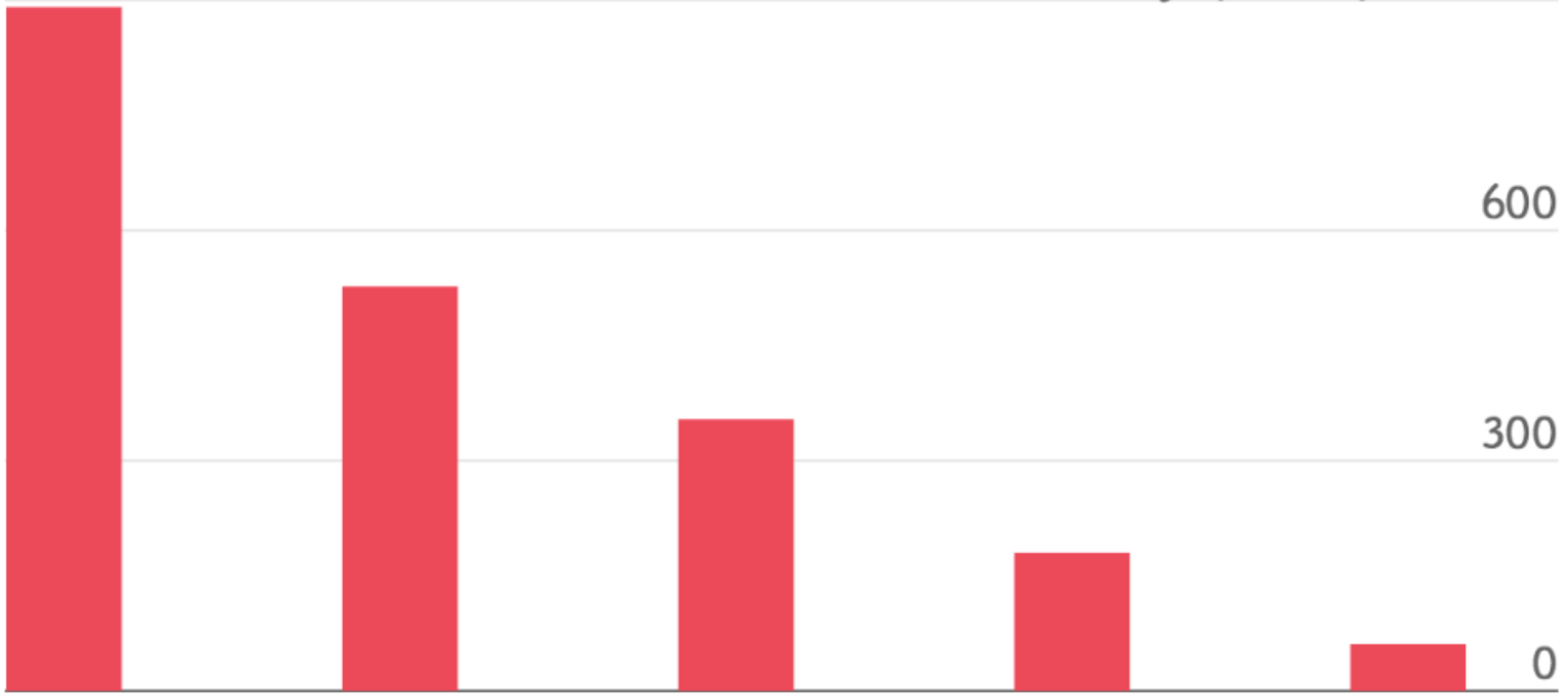
Words that create trauma:

- Just work harder
- Stop pulling the race card
- Stop talking about Black Lives Matter
- Illegal aliens
- If those thugs would stop being criminals
- Try following the law



Disproportionate incarceration

Male Juveniles in Residential Custody (2011) 900



Black American Indian Hispanic White Asian



Per 100,000. Lindsey Cook for USN&WR; Source: Child Trends

Trauma Mind Shift

“What’s wrong with you?”

Vs.

“What happened to you?”

(And then believing the story.)

Group Discussion

- How does educational policy exemplify white privilege? Examples?
- How does white fragility of educators contribute to the racial trauma for students of color?
- How would you like to see racism (systemic and individual) addressed in schools?
- How can white people use their privilege to combat racism?

On a sheet of paper...

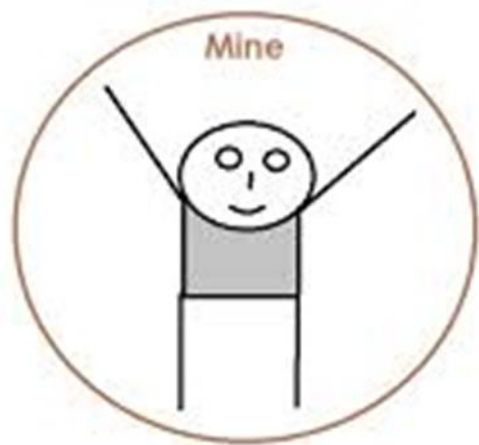
When I say go, you will have one minute to write down everyone you remember learning about when you were in school.

Who & what did you learn about in school?

- Classroom walls
- Books
- What was in the books?
- Columbus?
- Civil Rights and Slavery
- What does that do to students?
- White washed
- Euro-centric colonialism

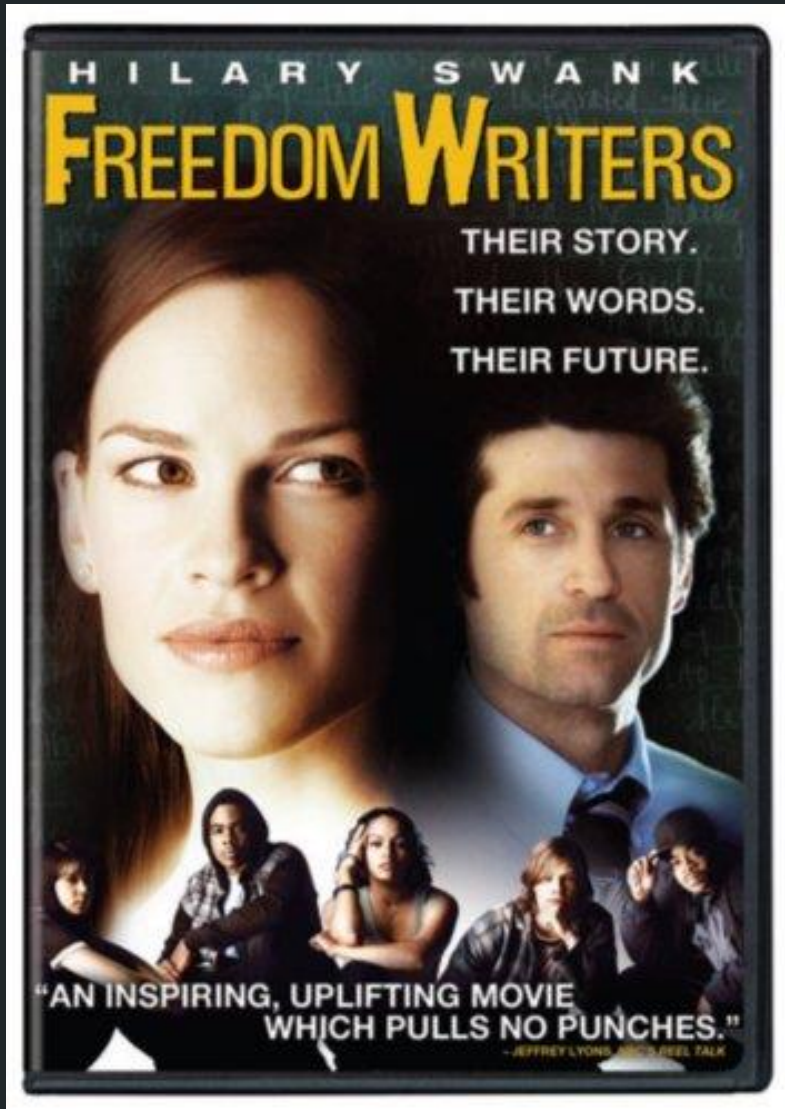
HELLO I'M

White
(and privileged)



**“PRIVILEGE IS WHEN
YOU THINK SOMETHING
IS NOT A PROBLEM
BECAUSE IT’S NOT A
PROBLEM TO YOU
PERSONALLY.”**

White Hero Complex



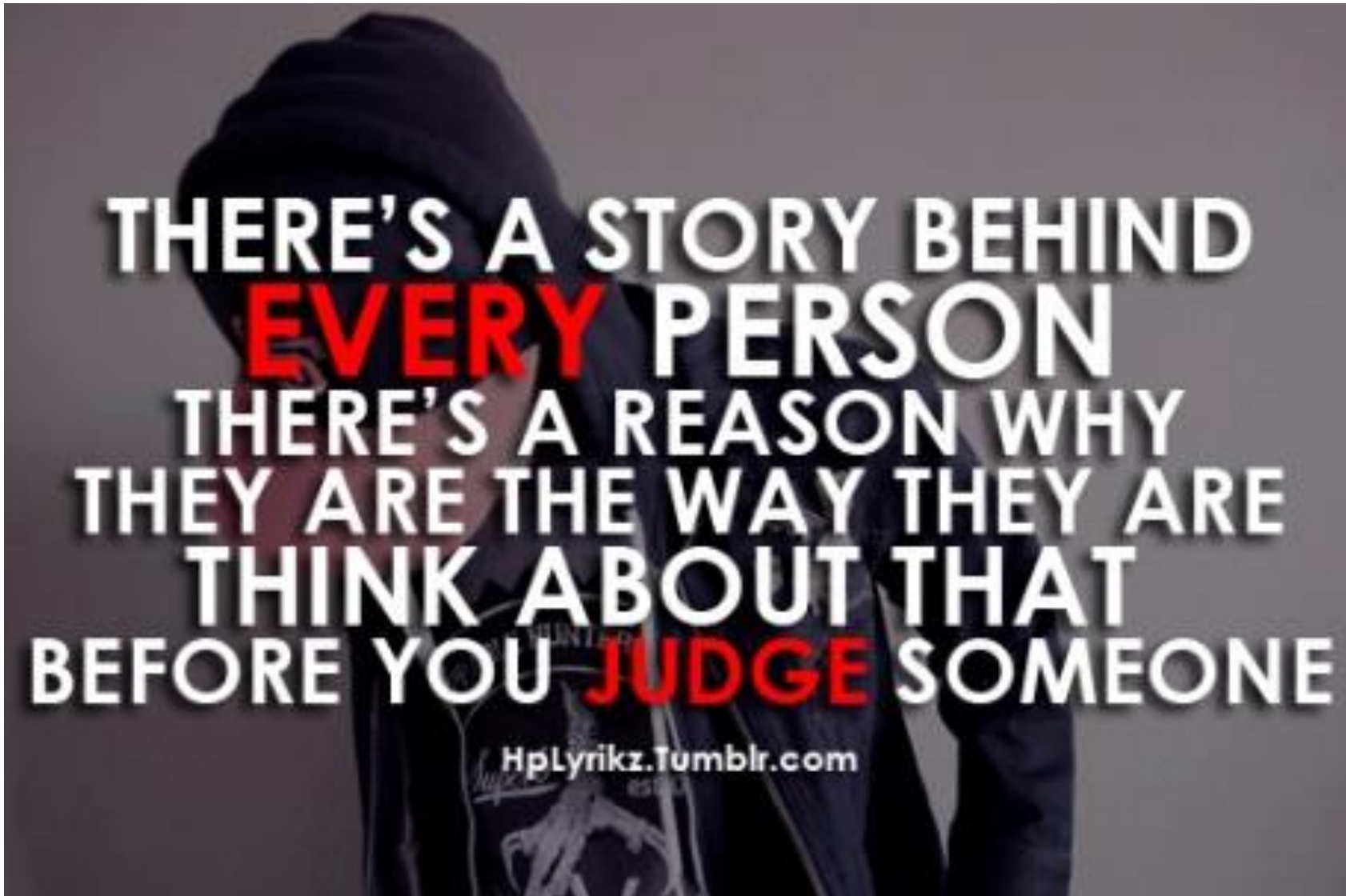
Microaggressions

- Warning there are two obscenities
- Microaggression Mosquitoes

Resiliency dilemma

- Resilience is that ineffable quality that allows some people to be knocked down by life and come back stronger than ever.
- Two factors:
 - Mastery- The degree to which individuals perceive themselves as having control and influence over life circumstances
 - Social Support- Having a strong network including adults outside of immediate family
 - **Many resiliency models ignore that racism is pervasive and endemic rather putting the onus on the individual to rise up (McCree & Stovall, 2015)**

TRUST IS EARNED NOT GIVEN



What to do?

Critical School Mental Health Praxis (CrSMHP) Recommendations

1. A critical lens is needed to address the root cause of ongoing systemic oppression reproduced through the policies of institutions and the practices of individuals working within them.
2. Intensive professional and personal self-reflection is needed to challenge stereotypes, biases, and expectations that influence the ability to build connected relationships with students.
3. Connected relationships between students and teachers create a culturally-conscious school climate that can prepare young people to be agents of institutional and individual change in their society.

What are your next steps?

1. Is it simply enough to know that it happens?
What action needs to happen?
2. What makes someone an “ally?” Can anyone proclaim being an one?
3. What is your commitment for action after leaving the conference?

Renovate teacher preparation programs

- Recruit & maintain high quality teachers representing diverse populations
- Require intensive training by highly qualified culturally competent faculty emphasizing on critical reflection praxis on top of basic required diversity course
- Provide with highly effective culturally competent mentors and models
- Redesign classroom management classes to building relationships and developing culturally conscious classroom climates
- Offer mandatory coursework in school mental health including topics in traumas for marginalized populations

Overhaul school systems

- Stakeholders and leadership need to reevaluate policies, procedures, curriculum, and assessments
- Engage in innovate models for teaching that allow students to engage in applicable hands-on learning
- Gather ongoing input from students, families, and community members
- Ongoing intensive critical training
- Abolish expectation for teachers to remain neutral in the face of injustice

Legislation

- Mandate greater time educators in training regarding race, culture, intersectionality and the impact on mental health
- Develop system of accountability to support and require culturally competence educational reform

Research

- Increase research specifically focusing on how schools impact racial and cultural diverse student mental health using a critical lens
- Invite persons with racially and culturally diverse backgrounds to research conversations and studies regarding school mental health

Once you know something, you cannot unknow it, so now what will you do?



Final Step

- On your sheet of paper, you will have an opportunity to make a lasting difference.
- After your experience at the conference, this session, your conversations, what do you want to remember? What do you want your contribution to be?

Thank You!

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