

**BECOMING CULTURALLY
RESPONSIVE CHILD WELFARE
PROFESSIONALS:
FROM AWARENESS TO ACTION**

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DR. MONA IVEY-SOTO

- Professor for 13 years at 3 IHE working to prepare culturally responsive educators/advocates for urban schools and community contexts
- Actively engaged in the Nashville community and started the first mothers empowerment group for low income and homeless mothers. This work has launched an organization providing case management and relationship centered work for moms, dads and children.
- Provide extensive PD and consultation school districts, non profits, child welfare organizations, legal organizations throughout the country.
- Prior to academia, worked as a social worker, home visitor and educator in urban and rural communities throughout US.



I'm no longer accepting the things I cannot change...I'm changing the things I cannot accept.

— Angela Davis —

AZ QUOTES

Our problems stem from our acceptance of this filthy, rotten system.

— Dorothy Day



AZ QUOTES

“THE GREATEST CHALLENGE OF THE DAY IS: HOW TO BRING ABOUT A REVOLUTION OF THE HEART.”

-DOROTHY DAY

THEGREATESTFOLLOW.COM

EXPLORING CULTURE

- If someone asked you what your culture is, what would you say?
- How do you define it for yourself?
- How do we define or experience culture in others?



RELIGION/FAITH PERSPECTIVES	WORLD VIEW/GLOBAL IDENTITY
WORK ETHIC	VIEW OF LEADERSHIP
IMPORTANCE OF TIME	HOLIDAY CUSTOMS/TRADITIONS
CONCEPT OF SELF/OTHER	FAIRNESS/JUSTICE
PERSONAL /FAMILY VALUES	BELIEFS ABOUT RAISING CHILDREN
FOOD/EATING APPRECIATION	MUSIC,ARTS
PERSONAL SPACE	CONCEPTS OF LEADERSHIP
SOCIAL/POLITICAL BELIEFS	FACIAL EXPRESSIONS

Common Language for Important Ideas

UNDERSTANDING OUR MULTIPLE IDENTITIES

Social Group: A group of people who share a range of physical, cultural, or social characteristics within one of the social identity categories. Examples of social identity categories:

- **Race:** Black, White, Latin@, Native American, Asian, biracial, multiracial
- **Ethnicity:** Irish, Dominican, German, Chinese, Pakistani, Italian
- **Religion:** Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu, Atheist, Agnostic, Other
- **Age:** Elders, young people, adults
- **Gender:** Women, Men, Genderqueer
- **Class:** Wealthy, middle class, working class, poor
- **Sexual orientation:** Lesbian, gay, heterosexual, bisexual, pansexual
- **Physical, developmental, and psychological ability:** Able-bodied, person with a disability, person with mental illness, Neurotypical, Neurodiverse



OPPRESSION MATRIX

TYPE OF OPPRESSION	PRIVILEGED SOCIAL GROUP	BORDER SOCIAL GROUPS	OPPRESSED SOCIAL GROUPS	SOCIAL IDENTITY CATEGORY
RACISM	White People	Biracial People	Asian, Black, Latina/o, Native People	Race
SEXISM	Biological Men	Transsexual, Intersex People	Biological Women	Sex
TRANSGENDER OPPRESSION	Gender conforming biological men and women	Gender ambiguous biological men and women	Transgender, Genderqueer, Intersex People	Gender
HETEROSEXISM	Heterosexuals	Bisexuals	Lesbians, Gay men	Sexual Orientation
CLASSISM	Rich, Upper Class People	Middle Class People	Working Class, Poor People	Class
ABLEISM	Able-bodied People	People with Temporary Disabilities	Disabled People	Ability/Disability
RELIGIOUS OPPRESSION	Protestants	Roman Catholic (historically)	Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs	Religion
AGEISM/ADULTISM	Adults	Young Adults	Elders, Young People	Age

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- **Within each social identity category, some people have greater access to social power and privilege based on membership in that particular social group: Privileged Social Group (Advantaged, Dominant)**
 - **On the other side, there are groups whose social power is limited or denied. We call that the Oppressed Social Group (Subordinate, Targeted, Disadvantaged)**

**** Social group status may change depending on your context****

REFLECT & REACT

- Did you find that most or all of your social groups are considered Privileged or Oppressed?
- Which of your social group memberships were easiest & most difficult to identify?
- What implications does have for our work with children, families and communities?

IMPLICIT BIAS

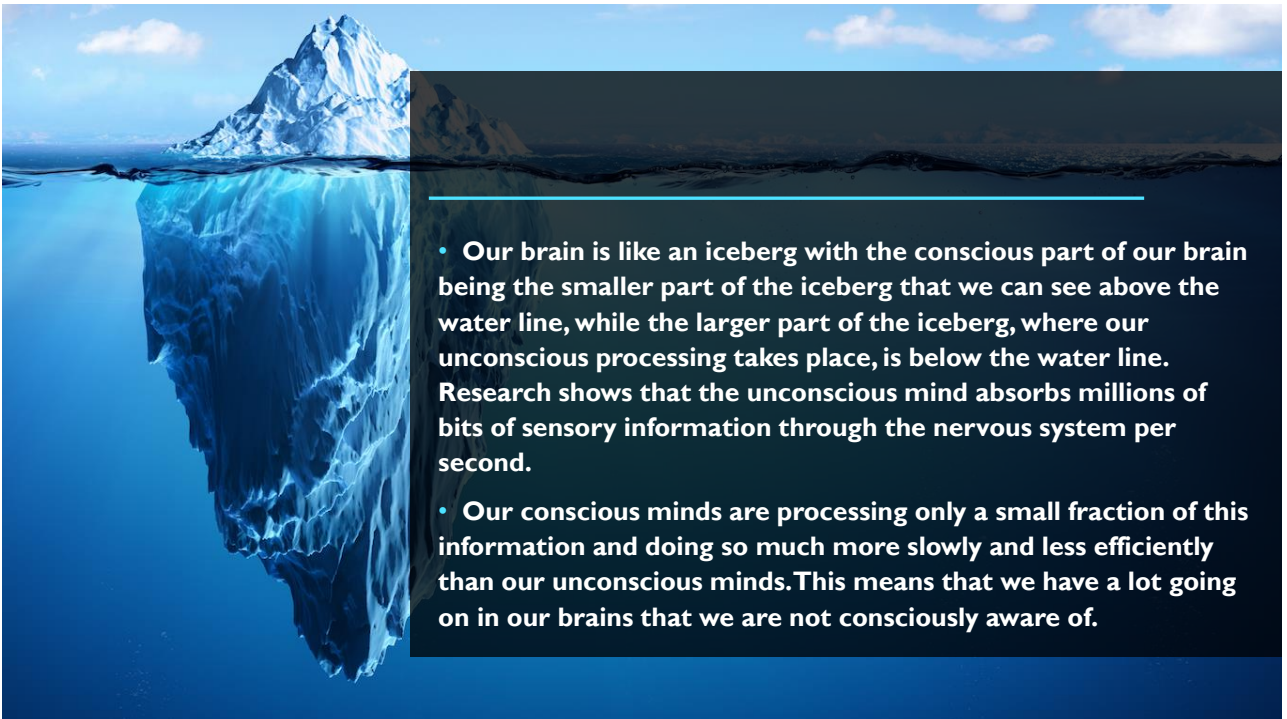
WHAT WE DON'T THINK WE THINK



**TO BE HUMAN IS TO BE
BIASED**

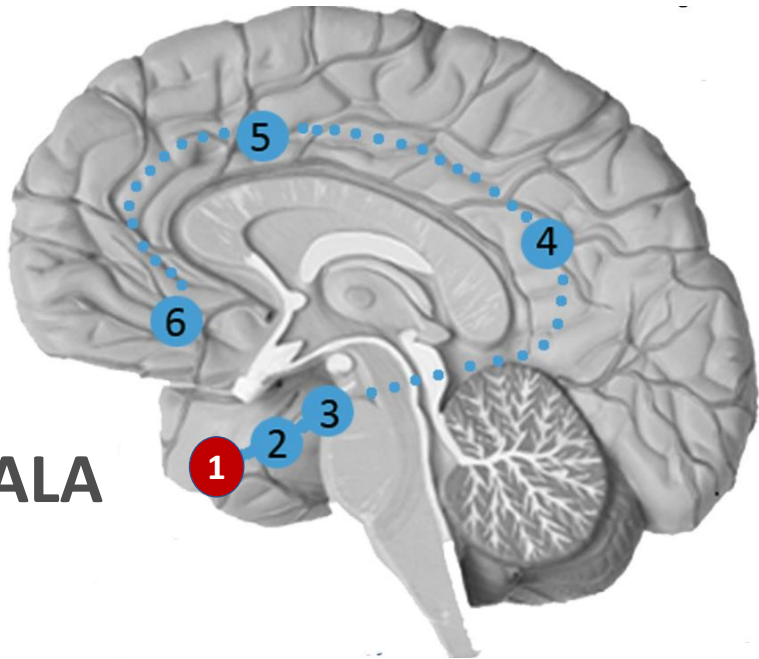
DEFINING IMPLICIT BIAS/UNCONSCIOUS BIAS

- The attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions and decisions in an unconscious manner. Activated involuntarily without awareness or intentional control. Everyone is susceptible!
- Our implicit biases are the result of mental associations that have formed by the direct and indirect messaging we receive, often about different groups of people. When we are constantly exposed to certain identity groups being paired with certain characteristics, we can begin to automatically and unconsciously associate the identity with the characteristics, whether or not that association aligns with reality.



- Our brain is like an iceberg with the conscious part of our brain being the smaller part of the iceberg that we can see above the water line, while the larger part of the iceberg, where our unconscious processing takes place, is below the water line. Research shows that the unconscious mind absorbs millions of bits of sensory information through the nervous system per second.
- Our conscious minds are processing only a small fraction of this information and doing so much more slowly and less efficiently than our unconscious minds. This means that we have a lot going on in our brains that we are not consciously aware of.

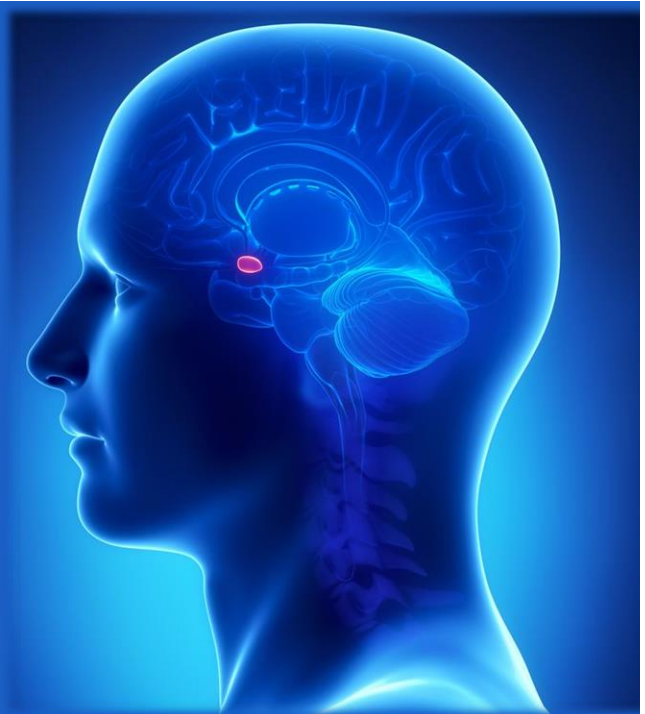
AMYGDALA



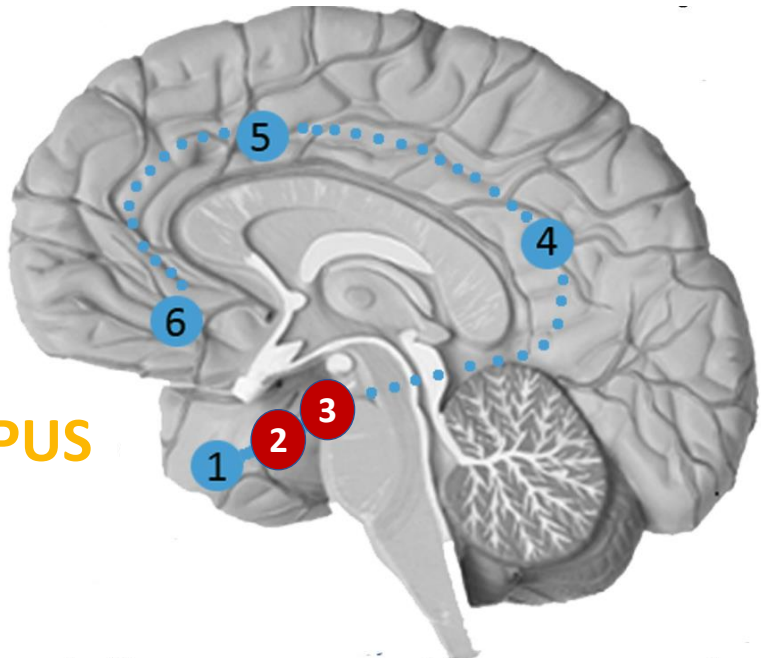
AMYGDALA

THREAT / DANGER DETECTION

- Autonomic Responses To Fear
- Emotional Responses
- Processing and Consolidating Memory
- Hormonal Secretions



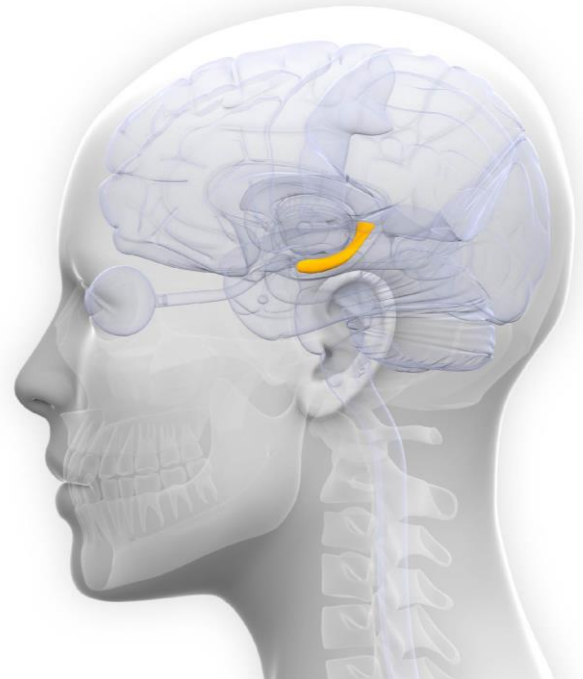
HIPPOCAMPUS



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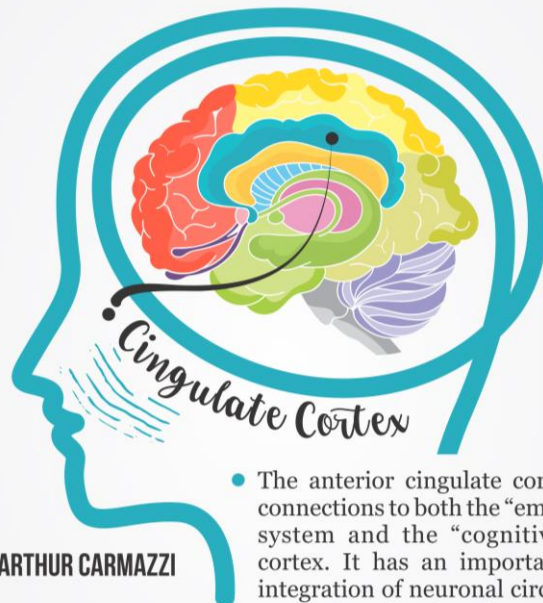
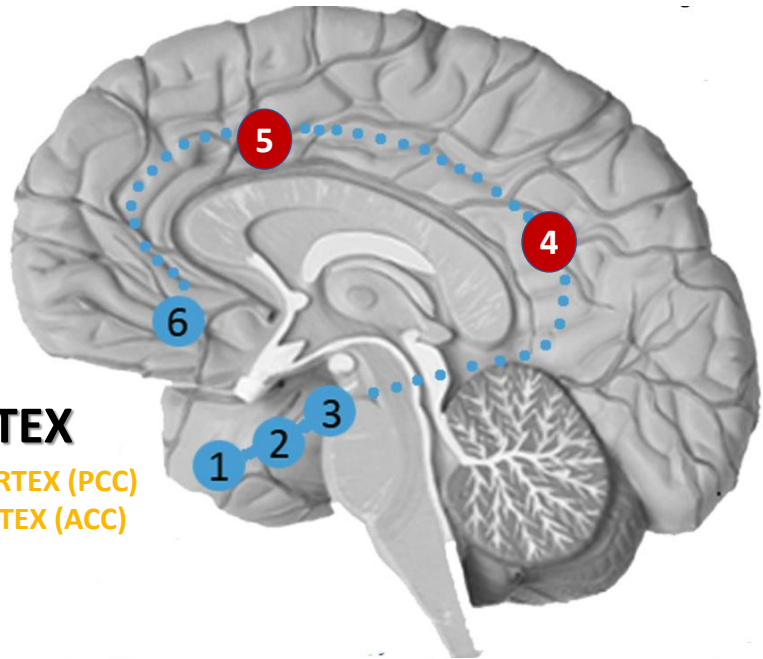
Memories & Experiences

Under stress, supplies memories of distressing scary experiences



CINGULATE CORTEX

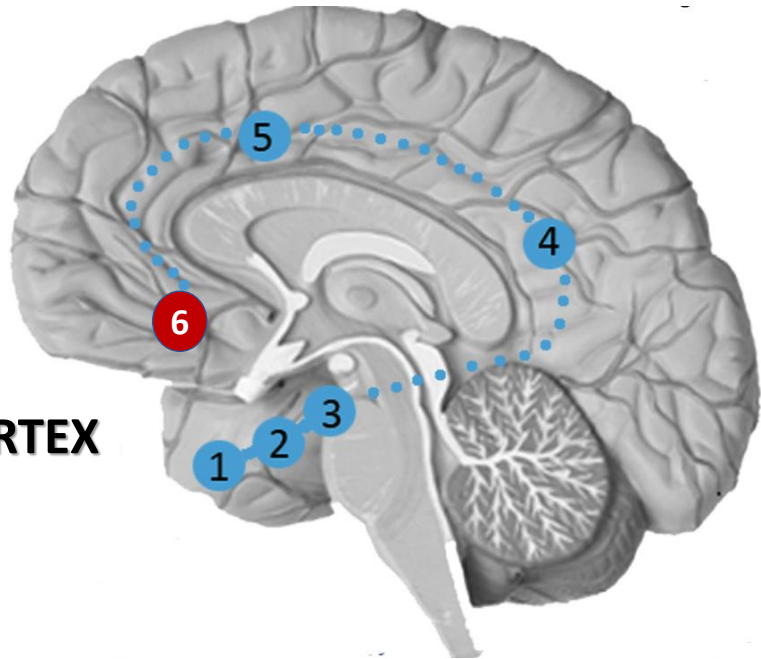
POSTERIOR CINGULATE CORTEX (PCC)
ANTERIOR CINGULATE CORTEX (ACC)



BY : ARTHUR CARMAZZI

- The anterior cingulate cortex (ACC) has connections to both the “emotional” limbic system and the “cognitive” prefrontal cortex. It has an important role in the integration of neuronal circuitry for affect regulation. The cingulate cortex is divided into 2 regions (posterior and anterior) with the ACC being active in cognition.

PREFRONTAL CORTEX



Nine Functions of the Prefrontal Cortex

Together these functions serve to connect the body proper, brainstem, limbic area, cortex, and input from other people. ⁱ

1. **Empathy**—The ability to see the world through another person's perspective ⁱⁱ
2. **Insight**—An inner sense of knowing ⁱⁱⁱ
3. **Response flexibility**—The ability to respond flexibly... it allows the individual to pause and put a space between impulse and action. ^{iv}
4. **Emotion regulation**—Attaining enough intensity so that life has meaning, but not too much arousal for life to become chaotic or too little arousal for life to become rigid and depleted. ^v
5. **Body regulation**—Coordinating different systems of the body to function optimally...one example is balance between the sympathetic and parasympathetic branches of the autonomic nervous system.
6. **Morality**—The capacity to imagine, reason, and enact behaviors on behalf of a larger social good. ^{vi}
7. **Intuition**—A term that denotes the nonlogical knowing that emerges from the body, especially the neural networks in the heart and intestines that send their signals upward, through the insula, to regions of the middle prefrontal cortex. ^{vii}
8. **Attuned communication**—A compassionate connection in a relationship...one example is when internal states are the focus of attention and are "attuned to" such that they become "seen" by another person. ^{viii}
9. **Fear modulation**—The ability to unlearn a fear



All citations come from "Pocket Guide to Interpersonal Neurobiology" by Dr. Dan Siegel | p.42, ii p.452, iii p.462, iv p.27, v p.452, vi p.477, vii p. 467, viii p.431

SYSTEM 1

Intuition & instinct

95%

Unconscious
Fast
Associative
Automatic pilot



SYSTEM 2

Rational thinking

5%

Takes effort
Slow
Logical
Lazy
Indecisive

Source: Daniel Kahneman

PRIMING

- **Priming is a psychological phenomena in which a word, image, sound, or any other stimulus is used to elicit an associated response.**
- **Some of the best examples of priming are in product advertising in which advertisers prime us to feel an affinity or emotional connection to a particular brand that leads us to choose that brand over others even when there is actually no difference between the products.**

- For example, we have been primed throughout history by our own government, by popular culture, and through the media to think of African American people as less intelligent, aggressive, and more likely to commit crime.
- We have received unrelenting messages that people who are immigrating to the United States from Central America and Mexico are criminals.
- Likewise, we have been primed to think of women as less competent, overly emotional, and their bodies as objects to be judged.
- For every stigmatized group of people, we have been repeatedly exposed to stereotypes that most of us can readily name that have been used to justify policies that have further stigmatized and marginalized.

Associations



The Associations we hold about groups of people are created and reinforced through priming.



Associations occur without conscious guidance or intention. **For example, the word NURSE is recognized more quickly following the word DOCTOR than following the word BREAD.**

We associate two words together because our unconscious mind has been wired to do so. *Quick — what do cows drink?*

ASSUMPTIONS

- **These harmful associations we carry can lead us to make Assumptions that have life and death consequences for people of color.**
- **For those with oppressed identities, particularly black and brown people, the assumption of risk, violence, threat can cause physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual harm that is unrelenting and often unexamined.**

“Implicit biases come from the culture. I think of them as the thumbprint of the culture on our minds. Human beings have the ability to learn to associate two things together very quickly — that is innate. What we teach ourselves, what we choose to associate is up to us.”

▀ **Dr. Mahzarin R. Banaj**

WHEN CAN UNCONSCIOUS BIAS CREEP UP ON YOU?

During "low-effort" thinking

During negative emotions

When we are distracted or under pressure



When things are ambiguous or uncertain

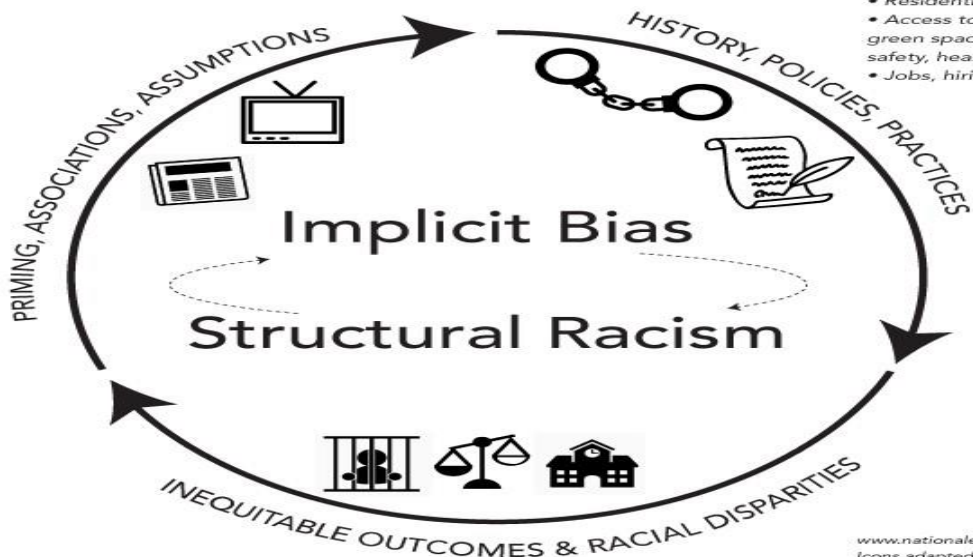
When certain traits are evident (ex., race or gender)

When we don't realize our prejudices and privileges

When we think of ourselves as knowledgeable, fair, and good people

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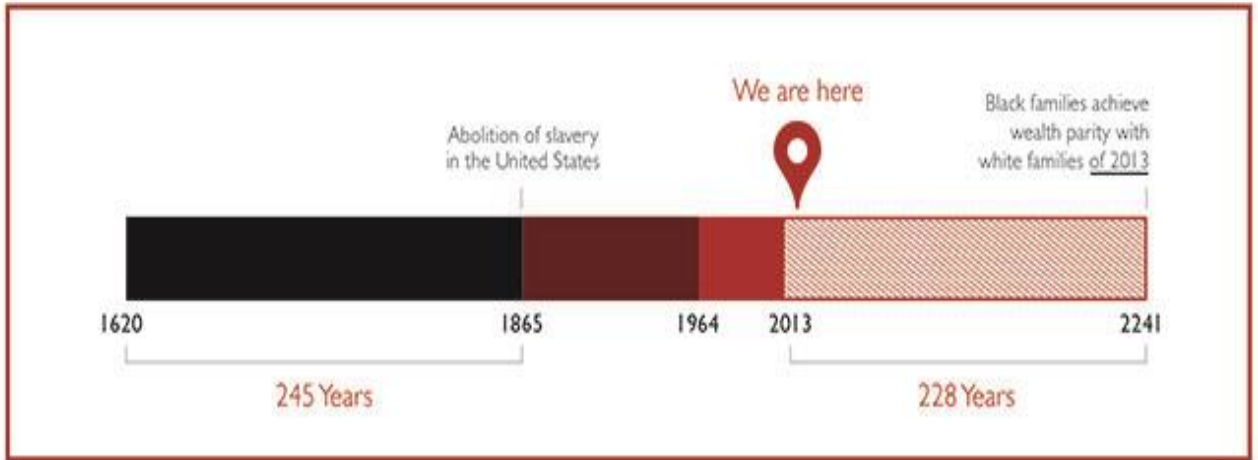
Adapted from All/Some for Teaching & Learning



- Voting rights
- FHA Loans
- Residential segregation
- Access to education, green space, resources, safety, healthcare, etc
- Jobs, hiring, & advancement

www.nationalequityproject.org
Icons adapted from the Noun Project

RACIAL AND ECONOMIC INJUSTICE TIMELINE



Tea Party signs promoting English don't always inspire confidence



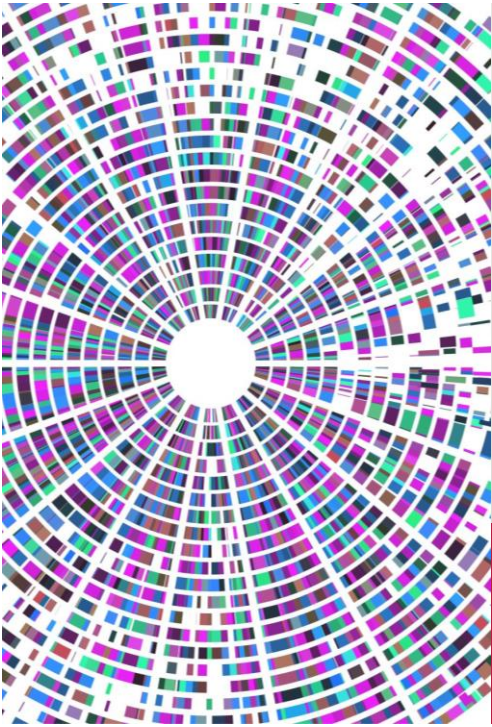
HOW IS RACISM DIFFERENT?

- Many people use the terms prejudice and racism interchangeably. It's important to understand the distinction!
- Racism – Prejudice/Bias + Power.
 - System of advantage based on race. Racism is not only a personal ideology, the beliefs or actions of individuals based on racial prejudice, but a system involving cultural messages, institutional policies and practices. It is durable, sustainable and in many cases invisible.
 - In the US and abroad, this system operates to the advantage of white people/white passing people and to the disadvantage of POC, particularly black and brown people.

(Tatum, 2015, From an excerpt of Dr. Tatum's essay in Ch.1 of "Why are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria" (2003))

“The problem is that white people see racism as conscious hate, when racism is bigger than that. Racism is a complex system of social and political levels and pulleys set up generations ago to continue working on the behalf o whites and at other people’s expense (POC), whether whites know/like it or not. Racism is an insidious cultural disease. It is so insidious that it doesn’t care if you are a white person who likes black people; it’s still going to find a way to infect how you deal with people who don’t look like you. Yes, racism looks like hate, but hate is just one manifestation. Privilege is another. Access is another. Ignorance is another. Apathy is another. So, while I agree with people who say no one is born racist, it remains a powerful system that we’re immediately born into. It’s like being born into air: you take it in as soon as you breath. It’s not a cold that you can get over. There is no anti-racist certification class. It’s a thing you have to keep scooping out of the boat of your life to keep from drowning in it. I know it’s hard work, but it’s the price you pay for owning everything.”

(Scott Wood)



FROM AWARENESS TO ACTION

WATCH YOUR MOUTH:

- **Dog Whistle Politics (2014):** When politicians use coded language they defend as benign, but is intended to provoke strong emotional responses in their target audiences
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- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| • Illegal alien | Heartland |
| • Welfare Queen | Real Americans |
| • Freeloaders | Hard working taxpayers |
| • Ghetto | Family values |
| • Black on Black Crime | Safe areas |
| • Bad schools | Good schools |

What racial and ethnic group do you associate with these terms?

How can we think of new language that promotes equity and justice for all children, families and communities

USING “BOTH HANDS IN OUR WORK”



Right Hand: Individual Actions

- Relationships with children, families
- Trainings/workshops
- Events in the community to address disparities/inequities

Left Hand: Systems Actions

- Examining organizational policies and procedures and advocating for change
- Examining hiring practices and support for staff from marginalized identities in the workplace
- Macro-level state and federal efforts to address intersectionality of the work.

WHAT'S IN YOUR JAR: PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

- Inner Circle of Friends
 - How many of them don't share the same race as you?
 - Of those, how many are African American? How many are Latino? How many are Asian? How many are Native American?
- Neighborhood/Community
 - How many of your neighbors are POC and/or people whose social identities differ from yours?
 - Do you spend time in diverse communities?
- Think about the last 5 books/podcasts:
- How many of the author's/storytellers were POC or told valid stories of POC?
- Think about the last 5 movies you saw:
 - How many had a main character that was a POC? **If they were a POC, were they the “bad guy”?
- Think about the neighborhood you grew up in:
 - How many of had neighbors and friends at school who were POC?
- Think about the friends/community that your parents/family socialized with:
 - How many of those individuals were POC?

WHAT'S IN YOUR JAR: PROFESSIONAL CONTEXT

- ~~How have you utilized your voice to speak up and advocate for change in policies, practices, behaviors and actions that are racist or oppressive to individuals from marginalized identities (race, class, gender, ability/disability, religion, family structure)?~~
- If you haven't yet done this, what will it take to encourage you to leverage your voice and actions in this way?

BECOMING ACTIVELY ANTI-RACIST/ANTI-OPPRESSIVE

-
- It is not enough to call ourselves “not racist!”
 - **We must be actively anti-racist meaning that we are deliberate and intentional about ensuring that our thoughts, behaviors and actions promote equity and justice for ALL people!**
 - Listen when people of color talk about everyday racism and the ways that their lives are impacted individually and systemically by injustice.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

- One of the strongest tools for combating implicit bias is consciousness raising—~~making our unconscious associations conscious, and simply recognizing that bias can occur even among those of good intent.~~
- Start where you're at, but don't stay there!
- Move from the Comfort Zone to the Contact Zone!
- Do an inventory of your personal and professional life with an eye for bias and isolation from identities different from your own.
- Talk to your kids, family members and others about this awakening/growth and encourage them to do their own "soul work"

- Challenge other white people in your life to think critically about racism — family, friends, coworkers, teachers and even public officials.
-
- Ask plenty of questions. Earnestly seek to understand people of color before trying to have your viewpoint understood.
 - Educate yourself about racism and the experience of racial minorities: Blogs, authors, podcasts, documentaries etc.
 - Surround yourself with other individuals (personally and professionally) who are also actively seeking an informed, anti-racist, anti-oppressive perspective.

INDIVIDUAL AND SMALL GROUP ASSESSMENT

- Consider 1-2 ideas/concepts/messages that you believe you'll be able to implement right away.
- Consider 1-2 ideas/concepts/messages that you think will take a little longer to change/implement in your personal and/or professional life.
- Use the following prompts to help you consider your immediate and longer-term goals:
 - I will....
 - I can....
 - I need to...

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Presentation Videos

Silent Beats: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=76BboyrE148>

Unequal Opportunity Race: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eBb5TgOXgNY>

Bias and Brain: <http://brainsonline.com/watch-videos/video/how-neuroscience-could-help-identify-racial-bias/>

Cradle to Prison Pipeline: <http://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2016/09/28/495488716/bias-isnt-just-a-police-problem-its-a-preschool-problem>

Empathy video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IEvwgu369Jw>

- **Mass Incarceration:** <http://www.theatlantic.com/video/index/404890/prison-inherited-trait/>

- **Michelle Alexander:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SQ6H-Mz6hgw>
- **Becoming Actively Anti Racist:**
<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/video/2016/jan/13/marlon-james-are-you-racist-video>
- **Systemic Racism:** <https://kottke.org/17/06/systematic-racism-in-america-explained-in-just-three-minutes>

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