



Identity and Racial Trauma: A Perspective for Educators

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A Cultural Experience



Ethnic Culture or Ethnicity

- Is very important and determines how people within groups communicate with each other and understand the world
- Values, customs, language, social skills are transmitted from generation to generation
- May be shared by different “racial groups”
- Is often invisible even to those who practice the culture as well as observers



Characteristics of Racial Groups

- Are not biologically defined
- No explicit behaviors, values, etc. define members of the group(s)
- Are sociopolitical constructs that maintain a status hierarchy
- Result in differential socialization or treatment of people as if categories are real



We Don't Have A Shared Language for Talking About Race and Racism

- Racism: the use of sociopolitical and economic power to maintain the advantaged status of the dominant racial group over non-dominant groups
 - Institutional—laws, customs, and social policies used to wield power (stopping people in the “wrong” neighborhood)
 - Individual-level—microaggressions (small assaults), macroaggressions (hate crimes) committed at the level of person to person and intended to damage the integrity of the person
 - Cultural—down putting the cultural products and characteristics (e.g., language) of the minority-status group(s) (Black politicians are “Black leaders”)

Some Trauma Inducing Events for Some People

Key Findings
Police killed at least 102 unarmed Black people in 2015

37% of unarmed people killed by police in 2015 were Black

Only 9 of the 102 cases resulted in officers being charged with a crime

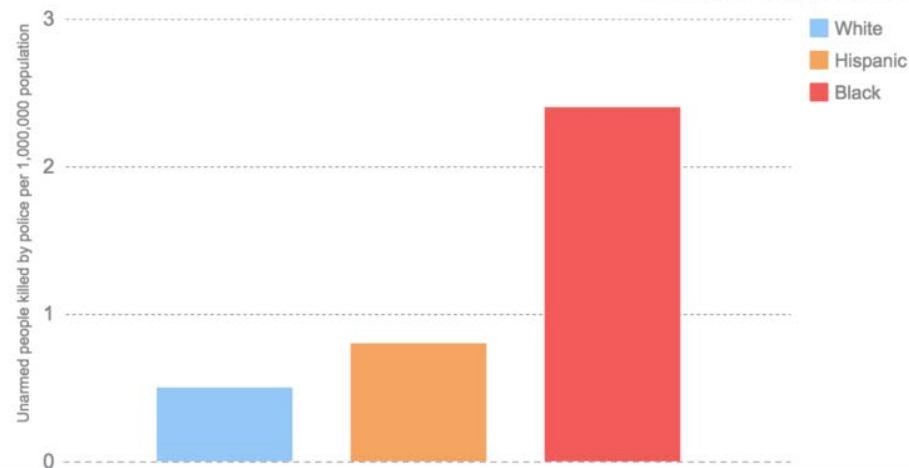


MAPPING POLICE VIOLENCE

Unarmed black people were killed by police at 5x the rate of unarmed whites in 2015.

Rates of unarmed people killed by police per million people in the United States.

Data from Jan 1 through Dec 31, 2015



Source: MappingPoliceViolence.org; US Census 2014

Michael Brown

Institutional Racism



Trayvon Martin

Three Types of Racism





Eric Garner

Racial Violence Has No Age Limits



Some Potentially Traumatic Events

Black women and girls killed by law enforcement
See their faces, speak their names and know their stories.

				No Picture		
Adaisha Miller	Alesia Thomas	Aiyana Jones	Darnesha Harris	Delores Epps	Eleanor Bumpurs	Erica Collins
No Picture		No Picture				
Heather Parker	Jacqueline Culp	Karen Day	Kendra James	Laporsha Watson	Mackala Ross	Malissa Williams
					No Picture	
Miriam Carey	Pearlie Golden	Rekia Boyd	Robin T. Williams	Shantel Davis	Sharmel Edwards	Shelly Frey
						
Shereese Francis	Shulena S. Weldon	Tarika Wilson	Tyisha Miller	Yvette Smith		

www.bougieblackgirl.com



Racial or Cultural Events Contributing to Major Life Stress or Trauma for Survivors

- Race-based or ethnic culture-based potentially life threatening or murderous assaults against the person or person's identity groups, may involve death or threatened death or serious injury to the person's selfhood
- May involve endangerment of significant others in the person's life or members of the racial or cultural group(s) with which the person identifies
- May be traumatic because it causes the person to re-experience events that happened to the person or others in the person's historical past
- May occur because of the additive effects of ongoing racial and gender microaggressions



A Self-Diagnostic Experience



Some Symptoms of Racial Trauma

- Emotional symptoms – anger, helplessness, shame, despair
- Cognitive/Physiological – re-experiencing, numbness, hyperarousal
- Self-medicating – drinking, substance abuse, binge eating
- Relationship dysfunction – lack of interest in partner, over-controlling, fighting, arguing



The Problem

- Educators and other practitioners have not been trained to recognize, diagnose, and not re-traumatize survivors of racism and ethnoviolence on survivors (“Tell us how you’re feeling”)
- Educators do not receive training in self-awareness with respect to racism and ethnoviolence and, therefore, cannot engage others in conversations about race
- The racial ideology of society, health care education, and social policy is White



Comfort Discussing Racial Issues: White Identity

- Contact – naïve

“I don’t see race; so I don’t talk about it”

- Disintegration – confusion

“I don’t feel safe enough to talk about race”

- Reintegration – Whiteness is power

“Any ALANA who talks about race is playing the race card”



Comfort Discussing Racial Issues: People of Color

- Conformity – Fitting in White groups/society is important
 - “My race is not important to me”
- Post-Encounter – Confusion
 - “I tried to fit in”
- Immersion – Anger
 - “I demand that you see race as I do”
- Emersion – Support
 - “I’ll talk to people who want to understand me”
- Internalization – Humanistic
 - “I’ll decide how I talk about race”



Comfort Discussing Racial Issues: White Identity

- Pseudo Independence – intellectualized acceptance
“Racism doesn’t exist in the younger generation”
- Immersion/Emersion – acceptance of personal responsibility
“I’m going to talk about race even if I don’t do it correctly”
- Autonomy – process of becoming
“Let’s consider how race and racism influence our situation”



Conditions of Courageous Conversations Adapted from Singleton and Curtis

- Diagnose your own racial identity and what it means about your manner of engaging in racial conversations
- Establish a focus for the conversation that is personal, local, and immediate (What's happening now?)
- Keep at the forefront of the conversation race as social constructions and the resulting implications
- Everyone is expected to listen and speak about their own feelings and personal truth (No ancestor worship allowed)



More Conditions

- Beware of White fragility (Disintegration)
- Acknowledge the many ways in which people may be diverse, **BUT INSIST ON FOCUSING ON RACE AND RACISM RATHER THAN ETHNICITY, NATIONALITY, SOCIAL CLASS, ETC.**
- Examine the types of White racial identity schemas present among the discussants and how they affect the problem being addressed



Resources

- http://www.bc.edu/content/dam/files/schools/Isoe_sites/isprc/pdf/Racism%20Recovery%20Steps.pdf
- <http://www.bc.edu/schools/Isoe/isprc/manuscript415.html>