

Learning How to be Anti-Racist 7/15/20

Slides and materials from the discussion held on 7/15/20

COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS

- 1) Please change your name in Zoom to include your pronouns.
- 2) Prepare to get uncomfortable and lean into that.
- 3) Use the “raise hand” feature if you would like to speak next.
- 4) Assume good intentions when others are speaking and take a breath before responding.
- 5) Use “I” statements and speak from your own experiences.

WHITE SAVIOR COMPLEX

(A Summary) by @eisellety

A white person who acts to help non-white people, but in a context which can be perceived as self-serving, or, in other words, it's an idea in which a white person "rescues" BIPOC from their own situations.

WHITE SAVIOR COMPLEX

(A Summary) by @eiselley

It is about power imbalances, white privilege + the premise that BIPOC need “saving” – that they should be grateful for their saviors.

This may not even be conscious behavior on the part of the white savior. But there is an erasure of humanity that is harmful.

WHITE SAVIOR COMPLEX

(A Summary) by @eisellety

It assumes that there is an inferiority of non-white people, and from this white saviors often consider themselves “experts” in problems they have never experienced and even believe their voice is more important than that of local leaders.

WHITE SAVIOR COMPLEX

(A Summary) by @eisellety

The complex imposes white/western ideals and solutions onto communities without input from the community.

The complex also leads to white people speaking over & on behalf of non-white people, instead of helping to amplify their voices.

WHITE SAVIOR COMPLEX

(A Summary) by @eisellety

Example –

Poverty Porn – any type of media, be it written, photographed or filmed, which exploits the poor's condition in order to generate the necessary sympathy for selling newspapers, increasing charitable donations, or support for a given cause.

WHITE SAVIOR COMPLEX

(A Summary) by @eiselley

Example –

Tokenism – the practice of making only a perfunctory or symbolic effort to do a particular thing, especially by recruiting a small number of people from underrepresented groups in order to give the appearance of sexual or racial equality within a workforce.

From *White Fragility*, by Robin DiAngelo (2018)

Graphic distillation of pp. 119-122 and pp. 141-143 by Russell Nadel, under supervision of Dr. DiAngelo

A white person's racial perspective, assumptions, and/or behaviors are challenged

Socialized FRAMEWORK OF RACIAL ASSUMPTIONS is immediately and unconsciously activated, often including some of these flawed lines of subconscious reasoning:

- Racism is simply personal prejudice.
- If I am a good person, I can't be racist.
- Judging is wrong, and it is possible not to judge.
- My learning is finished; I know all I need to know.
- Racism is conscious bias. I have none, so I am not racist.
- My own suffering relieves me of racism or racial privilege.
- How I am perceived by others is the most important issue.
- As a white person, I know the best way to challenge racism.
- If you knew me or understood me, you would know I can't be racist.
- Racists are bad individuals, so you are saying that I am a bad person.
- I am entitled to remain comfortable / have this conversation the way I want to.
- White people who experience another form of oppression cannot experience racial privilege.
- If you have more knowledge on the subject than I do, you [must] think you're better than me.
- Racism can only be intentional; my not having intended racism cancels out the impact of my behavior.
- I am free of racism.
- It's unkind to point out racism.
- If I can't see it, it isn't legitimate.
- I have friends of color, so I can't be racist.
- There is no problem; society is fine the way it is.
- Racism is a simple problem. People just need to...
- If I am feeling challenged, you are doing this wrong.
- My worldview is objective and the only one operating.

FEELINGS generated from Assumptions:

- "Singled out"
- "Attacked"
- "Silenced"
- "Accused"
- "Judged"
- Insulted / Indignant
- Shame
- Guilt
- Anger
- Fear
- Outrage

BEHAVIORS caused by Feelings:

- Physically leaving
- Emotionally withdrawing
- Seeking absolution
- Focusing on intentions
- Crying
- Denying
- Arguing
- Avoiding

Defensive CLAIMS spoken to justify the Feelings/Behaviors, recenter the attention on the "victimization" of the white person, and exempt the white person from further engagement or accountability:

- I know people of color.
- That is just your opinion.
- I marched in the sixties.
- I already know all this.
- You are judging me.
- You don't know me.
- You are generalizing.
- You're making me feel guilty.
- You're being racist against me.
- Some people find offense where there is none.
- The real oppression is class [or gender, or anything other than race].
- You hurt my feelings.
- You misunderstood me.
- The problem is your tone.
- I can't say anything right.
- That was not my intention.
- This is not welcoming to me.
- You're "playing the race card."
- You're not doing this the right way.
- I just said one little innocent thing.
- I have suffered too.
- I don't feel safe.
- You are elitist.
- I disagree.

Claims and Behaviors serve to PROTECT & PERPETUATE white privilege & racism:

- Take race off the table
- Close off self-reflection
- Maintain white solidarity
- Silence the discussion
- Hijack the conversation
- Protect a limited worldview
- Make white people the victims
- Rally more resources to white people
- Focus on the messenger, not the message
- Trivialize the reality of racism, or gaslight victims

INSTEAD, try receiving feedback and responding from an antiracist perspective:

A white person's racial perspective, assumptions, and/or behaviors are challenged

Listen and Breathe

Practiced **FRAMEWORK OF ANTIRACIST PRINCIPLES** is activated, including these more constructive fundamental understandings:

- **BEING "GOOD" OR "BAD" IS NOT RELEVANT.**
- I bring my group's history with me; history matters.
- I have unconscious investments in racism/the status quo.
- My journey will never be finished — it's a journey, not a destination.
- Racism is a multi-layered system into which all of us are socialized.
- Racism is complex, and I don't have to understand it for it to be real.
- It takes courage to break with white solidarity; how can I support those who do?
- As a white person I am safe during discussions of racism, even if it feels uncomfortable.
- Given my socialization, it is much more likely that I am the one who doesn't understand the issue.
- Feedback on white racism is difficult to give; how I receive feedback is not as relevant as the feedback itself.
- White comfort maintains the racial status quo, so discomfort is important and is necessary to my growth.
- I have unconscious blind spots about racism that are hard to see or recognize without a lot of ongoing effort.
- Racism hurts and kills people of color every day. **Interrupting it is more important than my feelings, ego, or self-image.**
- Racism circulates 24/7/365.
- The antidote to guilt is action.
- My analysis must be intersectional.
- Feedback from people of color indicates trust.
- Nothing exempts me from the forces of racism.

FEELINGS generated from Principles:

- Embarrassment
- Discomfort
- Guilt
- Humility
- Gratitude
- Curiosity
- Compassion
- Motivation
- Excitement

BEHAVIORS caused by Feelings:

- Reflecting
- Apologizing
- Listening
- Processing
- Engaging
- Grappling
- Believing
- Seeking more understanding

Proactive **RESPONSES** spoken internally or aloud to express the Feelings/Behaviors, engage further in meaningful reflection, and keep the attention on the actual victim(s):

- **Thank you.** This is very helpful.
- I want to change this pattern.
- There is no "right way to do this."
- This is hard, but also stimulating and important.
- I will focus on the message and not the messenger.
- I am not entitled to dictate the terms of this conversation.
- It is my responsibility to resist defensiveness and complacency.
- It's personal, but it's not strictly personal; these are common white patterns.
- I need to build my capacity to endure discomfort & bear witness to the pain of racism.
- I'd better get on this.
- I have some work to do.
- YES! I am opening and shifting.

Responses and Behaviors serve to INTERRUPT white privilege & racism by:

- Ensuring action
- Repairing harm
- Allowing for growth
- Minimizing defensiveness
- Stretching our worldview
- Demonstrating vulnerability
- Demonstrating that we practice what we profess to value
- Demonstrating curiosity & humility
- Interrupting internalized superiority
- Building authentic relationships & trust
- Interrupting privilege-protecting comfort

White Fragility Self-Test

By Ally Henny

Ask yourself the following (16 questions total):

1. Do I feel defensive when a person of color says “white people?”
2. Do I feel angry when people tell me that I benefit from white privilege?

White Fragility Self-Test

By Ally Henny

3. When a person of color talks about race, do I feel defensive because they're describing things that I do or think as racist?
4. Do I feel angry or annoyed by the above questions?

White Fragility Self-Test

By Ally Henny

5. Do I have a history of embracing or growing up in racism that I feel ashamed of and so I need to show people that I'm not racist anymore?
6. Does saying "Not all white people" or similar phrases make me feel better when someone calls white people out for something?

White Fragility Self-Test

By Ally Henny

7. Do I expect an apology when I feel like I've been unfairly accused of racism?
8. Do I feel better when I say, hear, or read, "It's okay to be white?"
9. Do I try to convince people of color that they're wrong about racism by pointing out people from their racial group who agree with me?

White Fragility Self-Test

By Ally Henny

10. Do I feel the need to talk about how hard my ancestors had it when they immigrated, or explain my own hardships when a person of color talks about being oppressed?
11. Do I think that racism would go away if people stopped talking about it?

White Fragility Self-Test

By Ally Henny

12. Does being told that something I say, think, do, or otherwise value is racist make me want to shut down, leave, or express my discomfort/displeasure in some way?
13. Do I feel the need to state that I have friends/family who are people of color when someone accuses me of racism?

White Fragility Self-Test

By Ally Henny

14. Do I feel the need to prove that I'm not racist?
15. Do I feel that my opinions and perspectives about race should be given equal weight to that of a person of color, that I have something unique and important to contribute to the race conversation, and/or that it is unfair to be told to listen more than I speak?

White Fragility Self-Test

By Ally Henny

16. Do I feel the need to defend myself on any of the above points in the comment section?
(or in any capacity?)

The beauty of anti-racism is that you don't have to pretend to be free of racism to be an anti-racist. Anti-racism is the commitment to fight racism wherever you find it, including in yourself.

It's the only way forward.

- Ijeoma Oluo

ACTION ITEM #1

Keep Reading

- Your book
- The articles listed on the *Critical Lens: Hamilton* document
- White Fragility Flowchart
 - Identify which beliefs/feelings/actions you've had in the past
 - Which ones you're having right now
 - Bring questions/observations next week

ACTION ITEM #2

Sign Up For:

- **SURJ Phone Zap**
 - Wednesday, July 22nd, 11am PST
 - Register: www.bit.ly/DefundPhoneZapSURJ
- **Take Action with JusticeLA and WP4BL**
 - Will receive texts on Mondays/ Wednesdays/ Fridays with that day's actions
 - Register: <https://tinyurl.com/JusticeLAaction>

CRITICAL LENS: HAMILTON

THE WORLD CELEBRATED MUSICAL HAS BEEN CALLED TO TASK FOR A VARIETY OF TRANSGRESSIONS FROM THE WAYS THAT ERASED THE REALITIES OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE, ENSLAVED AFRICANS, BLACK PEOPLE WHO PLAYED ROLES IN THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR AS WELL AS ERASING THE WAYS MANY FOUNDING FATHER WERE FAR LESS THAN HEROES IN THEIR COLONIZATION AND SLAVE-HOLDING TRUTHS. THIS TYPE OF ERASURE AND REWRITING OF AMERICAN HISTORY (WHETHER FOR ENTERTAINMENT OR NOT). I HAVE COLLECTED A SERIES OF ARTICLES THAT OFFER A MUCH MORE CRITICAL LENS INTO THE HAMILTON PHENOM.

[A BREAKDOWN OF THE CONTROVERSY SURROUNDING LIN MANUEL-MIRANDA & 'HAMILTON' IN PUERTO RICO](#)

[HAMILTON: THE MUSICAL:" BLACK ACTORS DRESS UP LIKE SLAVE TRADERS...AND IT'S NOT HALLOWEEN](#)

[CORRECTING 'HAMILTON'](#)

[THE MIXED RECEPTION OF THE HAMILTON PREMIERE IN PUERTO RICO](#)

['HAMILTON' REFUTED: HISTORIANS STRIKE BACK](#)

KNOWLEDGE
EMPATHY
ACTION

SHOWING UP
for
RACIAL JUSTICE

Defund The Police Phone Zap

**Wednesday July 15th and July 22nd
11 pst/2 est**

Register: bit.ly/DefundPhoneZapSURJ

Join SURJ to make calls to our local officials
together, demanding that they defund the police