

Learning How to be Anti-Racist 6/17/20

Slides and materials from the discussion held on 6/17/20

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.

By Annie Reneau

https://www.facebook.com/motherhoodandmore/posts/3259690517409997?_tn_ =K-R

An analogy about expectations for my fellow white folks just diving into anti-racism education:

Imagine showing up to a class an hour late. How would you expect the professor to respond to your entrance?

Would you expect them to greet you at the door, tell you how happy they are that you arrived, walk you to your seat and make sure you were seated comfortably? Ask you if you have everything you need, and thank you for showing up? Would you expect them to take time away from the class to do that, and would that even feel appropriate?

OR would you expect them to say, “Hi, take a seat.” Or perhaps nothing at all—maybe just give you a glance while they get on with the class as you find a place to sit?

And how would you enter that class if you were an hour late?

Would you walk in and announce, “Hey, I’m here!” and then give a big explanation for why you are taking the class and what took you so long to get there, diverting the class’s attention and taking away valuable class time?

Would you walk straight up to the professor and say, “Sorry I’m late, but could you please go over what you’ve covered in the last hour with me?” (Imagine the professor’s face if you did that, and hold that thought.)

OR would you quickly and quietly sit down, open your book, and do your best to keep up with where the class is now, knowing you’re going to have to catch up on the first hour’s material on your own (maybe borrowing someone’s notes to help with what you’ve missed)?

Would the professor be glad that you were in the class? Sure. Better late than never. But would you expect them to express gratitude or happiness that you finally showed up? Of course not.

Now imagine the professor’s life depends on people like you showing up for class. Imagine that they’ve seen countless students arrive late, sit down for a few minutes, decide the desk is too uncomfortable or the subject matter is too hard, then walk out, over and over and over. Would you expect them to feel relieved at your arrival? Would you expect to be met with a warm welcome, or some understandable skepticism?

White folks, we are that late student. Only we are far more than an hour late.

If you're just diving into anti-racism activism and it all feels a bit pricklier or less patient or less welcoming than you expected, this is why. We don't get a cookie for showing up to a place we already should have been. We should not expect an open-armed, warm welcome because we've finally arrived.

We might be embarrassed when we realize how late we are. We might feel like we have some good reasons for it. But lengthy apologies and explanations just waste valuable class time and no one really wants to hear it, no matter how heartfelt or sincere. The class just wants to move on.

We're undoubtedly going to feel a little lost. But if we raise our hands to ask questions about stuff that was covered in the hour we missed, we should expect the response to be a simple "You're going to need to get someone's notes on that" or "That was covered in Chapter 1—go back and read it." No one would expect a professor to go over material that's already been covered for the student who showed up an hour into class. And no one should expect them not to find those questions annoying.

Yes, it is good that we're here. There's no question about that. But we're late to a class that's already in session and that's the dynamic we should expect. The most respectful thing we can do is recognize our lateness, then quickly take a seat, open our books, and listen like someone's life depends on it.

PREJUDICE

*Irrational or unjustifiable
negative emotions or
evaluations toward persons
from social groups; a primary
determinant of
discriminatory behavior*

DISCRIMINATION

Inappropriate treatment of people because of their actual or perceived group membership and may include both overt and covert behaviors, including microaggressions, or indirect or subtle behaviors that reflect negative attitudes or beliefs about a non-majority group

MICROAGGRESSIONS

Everyday, subtle, intentional – and oftentimes unintentional – interactions or behaviors that communicate some sort of bias toward historically marginalized groups.

-Dr. Tiffany Bowden

Examples of Microaggressions

From @theconsciouskid

Theme:

Foreigner in own country

When Asian, Mexican, or Latinx Americans are assumed to be foreign-born

Microaggression:

“Where are you from?”

“No, where are you *really* from?”

“Where were you born?”

“You speak good English.”

A person asking an Asian American to teach them words in their “native” language.

Message:

You are not American.

You are a foreigner.

Examples of Microaggressions

From @theconsciouskid

Theme:

Ascription of Intelligence

Assigning intelligence to a person of color the basis of their race.

Microaggression:

“You are a credit to your race.”

“You are so articulate.”

“Where were you born?”

Asking an Asian person to help with a Math or Science problem.

Message:

People of color are generally not as intelligent as white people. It is unusual for someone of your race to be intelligent.

All Asians are good at Math/Science.

Examples of Microaggressions

From @theconsciouskid

Theme:

Color Evasiveness

Statements that indicate that a white person does not want to acknowledge race.

Microaggression:

“When I look at you, I don’t see color.”

“America is a melting pot.”

“There is only one race, the human race.”

Message:

Denying a person of color’s racial/ethnic experiences.

Assimilate/acclurate to the dominant culture.

Denying the individual as a racial/cultural being.

Examples of Microaggressions

From @theconsciouskid

Theme:

Assumption of criminal status

A person of color is presumed to be dangerous, criminal, or deviant on the basis of their race.

Microaggression:

A white person clutching their purse or checking their wallet as a Black person passes.

A store owner following a customer of color around the store.

“Where were you born?”

A white person waits to ride the next elevator when a person of color is in it.

Message:

You are a criminal. You are going to steal/You are poor/You are dangerous.

Examples of Microaggressions

From @theconsciouskid

Theme:

Denial of Individual Racism

A statement made when white people deny their racism and racial biases.

Microaggression:

“I’m not a racist. I have Black friends.”

“As a woman, I know what you go through as a person of color.”

Message:

I am immune to racism because I have friends of color.

Your racial oppression is no different than my gender oppression.

I can’t be racist. I’m like you.

Examples of Microaggressions

From @theconsciouskid

Theme:

Myth of Meritocracy

Statements which assert that race does not play a role in life successes

Microaggression:

“I believe the most qualified person should get the job.”

“Everyone can succeed in this society, if they work hard enough.”

Message:

People of color are given extra unfair benefits because of their race.

People of color are lazy and/or incompetent and need to work harder.

Examples of Microaggressions

From @theconsciouskid

Theme:

Pathologizing Cultural Values/Communication Styles

The notion that the values and communication styles of the dominant, white culture are ideal.

Microaggression:

Asking a Black person: “Why do you have to be so loud/animated? Just calm down.”

To an Asian person: “Why are you so quiet?”

Dismissing an individual who brings up race/culture in a work or school setting.

Message:

Assimilate to dominant culture.

Leave your culture outside.

RACISM

*Systemic and
institutionalized prejudice
and discrimination against
a race of people*

STRUCTURAL RACISM

Is a system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing ways to perpetuate racial group inequity.

-@theconsciouskid

STRUCTURAL RACISM

Is primarily characterized by white supremacy – the preferential treatment, privilege, power, access, and opportunities for white people – at the expense of cumulative and chronic adverse outcomes for people of color.

-@theconsciouskid

REVERSE-RACISM

Racism directed at members of historically dominant racial groups

NOT REAL

ACTION ITEM #1

Look up **Juneteenth** and find some way to celebrate it on Friday

ACTION ITEM #2

Name three black journalists you read or three black websites you follow. Share next week.

(Hint - www.theroot.com)

ACTION ITEM #3

(OPTIONAL)

Purchase any two books by Black writers
by Saturday, June 20th.

The goal is to Blackout bestseller lists
with Black voices.

#BlackoutBestsellerlist #Blackpublishingpower