LET’S TALK ABOUT RACE
SESSION 5:
Race and Education:
Thinking About APS Achievement Gaps
and About
Next Steps for Participants

Workbook

CHALLENGING
RACISM
through Stories and conversations

Community Conversation:
Let’s Talk about Race

Arlington All In!
Welcome to Session 5!

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Let’s Talk about Race, SESSION 5: Race and Education: Thinking About APS Achievement Gaps and About Next Steps for Participants

PARTICIPANT PREPARATION

- **Gaining on the Gap**, Introduction, Ch. 4 and 5. Table 9.1 and Afterword
  Used with permission
- Article: Teacher Expectations, NPR, 9/18/12 (Workbook and e-mail)
  For your own growth:
- Tatum: Ch. 10 ‘Breaking the Silence: Embracing Cross Cultural Dialogue’
- Take the Implicit Bias Test: https://harvardedu/implicit/research. Please focus on how you honestly feel taking the test, and not on your score.

“Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.”

“There is never a time in the future in which we will work out our salvation. The challenge is in the moment. The time is always now.”

James Baldwin

See “I am not your Negro”, a documentary on the writer James Baldwin.

SESSION 5 AGENDA: Let’s Talk About Race

Race and Education:
Thinking About APS Achievement Gaps, Next Steps for Participants

WELCOME

A. CHECK-IN:

B. EXPLORING causes of continued achievement gaps between Black and Latino students and White students in APS on the SOL scores

The Context for the Conversations on the Gap #1: What have we learned/explored about race and racism in these 5 sessions?
Key concepts and their meaning:
- Institutional Racism (FHA Lending through Red Lining), Prejudice, Privilege, Race,
- Racial Microaggressions, Racism, Social construct, Socialization, White privilege

The Context for the Conversations on the Gap #2. What happened after 1954 to address school segregation and underlying housing segregation?

Moving toward Equity vs Status Quo 1952.

C. CAUSES:

1. Why are there Achievement Gaps? Exploring Possible Connections with the focus on what APS and Arlington control.

“We have begun a shift from viewing achievement gaps as resulting from problems with the children who come to our schools to viewing them (the gaps) as resulting from problems with the school systems to which these children come. This perspective does not deny the

EFFECTIVE QUESTIONS FOR THIS SESSION

> What do you think might be causes of the gaps that are related directly and indirectly to race and racism?

> Thinking over these last 5 sessions, what could you consider as possible next steps in your journey of learning about and opposing racism?
relevance of other factors such as poverty; level of education; social supports such as medical care, quality child care and pre-school; and per pupil spending. It does, however, keep school systems on the hook as being a significant cause of perpetuating or widening the achievement gaps. Because school systems do have a significant set of contributing factors in their control, they cannot in good conscience excuse inaction by blaming other factors. They must take responsibility for doing as much as is within their power to eliminate such gaps.”

Workbook. Journal: Thinking back over what you have learned/explored in these conversations and in life, what do you think are some of the reasons significant academic gaps between White and Black and Latino students in APS continue to exist, even though the gaps have gotten smaller over 10 years?

Try to think of some things (materials, curriculum, teaching and teachers, experiences, opportunities, relationships) over which APS has some control for improving student success. APS spends close to $20,000 per year per student. Resources per student is not a basic problem unless there are problems with distribution.

2. Some current Data on Achievement gaps in APS

D. ACTION ON ACHIEVEMENT GAPS AND RACISM

ACTION: 1. What is going on in APS schools to eliminate these gaps?

Programs/Initiatives
- Adaptive Schools • APS Cultural Competence Initiative
- APS Council for Cultural Competence • Challenging Racism
- Office of Minority Achievement • Overrepresentation Committee
- Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity
- Superintendent’s Advisory Committee on the Elimination of the Achievement Gap
- Teacher Expectations and Student Achievement
- Tiered System of Support (for Student) • Whole Child Initiative

ACTION: 2. What might be my own action plan on anything related to achievement gaps and race and racism?

LARGE GROUP: MEET-UP, SELF CARE AND SENDING OFF

Meet- Up: Sit with your group, set down your things. Take with you your action journal notes. Find the right meet-up chart for you. Describe what you plan to do on the chart. Net work. Find a learning partner, possibly with the same plan.

We will transcribe these charts and provide a copy to all participants to help you network.

SELF-CARE: Michele Chang and Tim Cotman.

SENDING OFF: Steven Jones

We congratulate you for making the commitment of time for Let’s Talk About Race. Thank you for joining us on this journey to build an anti-racist Arlington.

PLEASE COMPLETE EVALUATION FORMS AND LEAVE IN THE PLACE PROVIDED.
**Conversation Guidelines**

1. Seek knowledge about yourself and others.
2. Use ‘I’ messages.
4. Ask questions of genuine interest. “Please tell me more” “Help me out here”
5. Experience discomfort. Talking about race does not create divisions itself. Talking about race opens doors.
6. Challenge and ask questions respectfully.
7. Say ‘ouch’ when something bothers you. Explain or write the ‘ouch’ in the Parking Lot.
8. Know that there is always the right to pass, i.e. to continue listening.
9. Assume good intent.
10. Practice recognizing the difference between intent and impact. One may have a given intent but a different impact on the listener. Try to think about both.
11. Accept and expect non-closure. Our goal is not always to agree but to explore difference.
12. Take Risks.
13. This conversation is a beginning. We will not finish today. Relax.
14. Respect confidentiality. It allows others to talk freely.
15. Enjoy learning each other’s stories.

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**Challenging Racism through Stories and Conversations**

CONVERSATION GOALS

EVERY SESSION INCLUDES EXPERIENCES THAT WILL...

1. Increase our understanding of ourselves.

2. Improve our understanding of people who are different from us.

3. Provide practice in talking about race, immigration and the process of learning English as another language and other subjects that maybe uncomfortable, along with the listening practice that makes those conversations possible.

4. Explore how our roles as parents and teachers can be improved by being able to talk about race and difference.

5. Move us from telling to others to listening to others and their stories.

6. Help us learn to ask questions of genuine interest when we encounter difference. Would you... "Please Tell me more," "Help me out here."

7. Move us from thinking and talking to thinking, talking and acting to challenge racism where we find it.
Definitions

**ANTIRACIST:** Conscious and deliberate behavior that works to reverse disparities cause by racism.

**ALLY:** A member of the “majority” group who rejects the dominant social construct of race and racism and takes action against this construct in the belief that eliminating oppression will benefit both the majority and the minority.

**CULTURE:** The sum of attitudes, customs, and beliefs that distinguishes one group of people from another.

**DISCRIMINATION:** Actions based on unconscious or conscious prejudice.

**ETHNICITY:** A socially defined group based on cultural criteria such as language, customs and shared history.

**PREJUDICE:** A preconceived judgment or opinion based on limited information.

**RACE:** A socially constructed means of identifying people that has virtually no basis in biology.

**RACIAL IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT:** Defining for oneself the personal significance and social meaning of belonging to a particular racial group.

**RACISM:** A system of advantage based on race. Racism like other forms of oppression is not only a personal ideology but also a system involving cultural messages, institutional policies and practices, as well as the beliefs and actions of individuals.

**SOCIAL CONSTRUCT:** A concept or practice which may appear to be natural and obvious to those who accept it but is in fact an invention or artifact of a particular culture or society. Ex: Race and ethnicity are both socially constructed.

**STEREOTYPE:** A set of beliefs generalized about a whole group of people.

**CULTURAL COMPETENCE:** The ongoing development of awareness, attitudes, skills, knowledge and behaviors that enable staff to create an equitable learning environment. By focusing on relationships, pedagogy, environment and curriculum, culturally competent educators increase the quality of education to insure that race and English language acquisition are no longer predictors of achievement for the students they teach.

**CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING:** A set of congruent behaviors that recognize the importance of including students’ cultural references, along with those of the teacher, in all aspects of learning.

**EQUITY:** Providing each student with the individual support he/she needs to reach a common standard of performance. Equity is demonstrated explicitly by teachers through expectations and the work to help students achieve those expectations, through rigor, the relevance of work to students’ lives, and most of all, by relationships.

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Note: The definitions above are found in Tatum, Chapter 1 and 2 except the second from Chapter 6. The three definitions on the bottom right are from Becoming Culturally Competent: Conversations on Race, the APS teacher training program, 2015.
Definition - Socialization

From Chapter 3, “Socialization”, *What Does It Mean to be White?* (Robin DiAngelo)

"The systems of (cultural) meaning tend to be below the surface of everyday awareness." (Page 13)

"Socialization is the process of being trained into our culture: learning the norms, meanings and practices that enable us to make sense of the world and behave appropriately in a given culture. We are taught these norms in myriad ways and through a variety of mediums." (Page 14)

"Socially constructed: Meaning that is not inherently true but is agreed upon by society. Once society agrees to this meaning, it becomes real in its consequences for our lives." (Page 17)

"As we are socialized into our culture’s gender roles, so we are socialized into our country’s racial roles. Our parents may tell us that race does not matter… but as with gender socialization this explicit teaching is not enough to inoculate us against the role of other messages circulating in our culture. For example, if race does not matter, why do we live so racially separate? We do so because in our culture race does matter." (DiAngelo, Page 17)

Socialization begins at birth.

"We cannot make sense of the world without the meaning making system that our culture provides. Yet this system is hard to see, because we have always been swimming with in it; we just take for granted that what we see is real, rather than a particular perception of reality." (Page 17)

This collective socialization is the framework of the glasses through which we see the world. Our personal experience is the lens. The collective socialization is to the superiority of Whiteness.
Socialization to White Privilege is our framework for looking at the world about race. Our social frame is in the unconscious. The lenses in that frame are our personal experiences that inform us.

Ingrained White socialization, that “White is better” has consequences for all of us, but the consequences are negative for people of color. (There are negative consequences for White people too, but in general they are unaware.) This system of White advantage based on race is racism. Racism has two forms: a personal ideology based on racial prejudice, and systems (such as discrimination) involving socialized cultural messages and institutionalized policies, practices and the behavior of individuals within those institutions, to the advantage of White people.
Forces for Equity

Pulling in the direction of equity and anti-racism:

Affirmative action, fair housing and equal employment legislation, section 8 housing, Neighborhood Development funds that can be used for housing and for services, Small Business Administration minority business loans, good job training programs, additional resources in schools, disaggregated school test data and employment data and bank loan data to show the issues around race and access, cultural competence training for teachers and parents, normalizing conversations on race and understanding the hidden and sometimes unaware effects of institutional racism.

“These forces have produced a mainstream middle class (group) of Black people (and some others groups of color) with a full ownership stake in American society, an elite, a biracial emergent group, and a large abandoned minority with less hope of escaping poverty than at any time since the Reconstruction…”

### Forces Against Equity

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<tr>
<th>Keeping us in the status quo?</th>
<th>True in the past?</th>
<th>True today?</th>
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<td>Schools segregated by race</td>
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<td>Curriculum is Eurocentric</td>
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<td>Different expectations for students of different races/ethnicities</td>
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<td>Eurocentric Assessments of student success/tests</td>
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<td>Names of schools that celebrate diverse individuals</td>
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<td>Lack of racial and ethnic diversity in teaching staff</td>
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<td>Families/students of different races do not feel welcomed</td>
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<td>Segregated neighborhoods</td>
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<td>Gentrified Neighborhoods</td>
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Tim Cotman and Melissa Stone, 2017

*Any person of color, no matter their status, carries 3 buckets of ways that racism effects them every day: the bucket of nicks and scratches (microaggressions), the bucket of things you have to advocate for your children or family, and the third bucket of things that are survival threatening, and cannot be ignored.* Gabriela Uro, “Let’s Talk About Race”, 2/15/17
**Journal:**

Thinking back over what you have learned/explored in these conversations and in life, what do you think are some of the reasons significant academic gaps between White and Black and Latino students in APS continue to exist, even though the gaps have gotten smaller over 10 years?

Try to think of some things (materials, curriculum, teaching and teachers, experiences, opportunities, relationships) over which APS has some control for improving student success. APS spends close to $20,000 per year per student. Resources per student are not a basic problem unless there are problems with distribution.

How might individual and institutional racism impact students, staff and schools and help produce and perpetuate these gaps?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

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On Time Graduates

The Virginia On Time Graduation Rate expresses the percentage of students in a cohort who earned a Board of Education approved diploma within four years of entering high school for the first time. Percentages are based on longitudinal student level data and account for student mobility and retention and promotion patterns.

![Graph of APS - On Time Graduate Rate]

![Graph of APS - Graduates Earning an Advanced Diplomas]
Middle School SOL Passing Rates, Grades 6, 7 & 8

Beginning with years when new subject standards were assessed

Note: The Virginia General Assembly eliminated the United States History I and II assessments given to students in grades 6 and 7. 2015 passing rates for Social Studies is limited to Grade 8 World Geography.

Writing SOL Passing Rates, Grades 5, 8 & 11

Note: The Virginia General Assembly eliminated the Grade 5 Writing SOL. The 2015 passing rates include Grade 8 and High School End of Course writing assessments.
Virginia Standards of Learning 2015 - 2016
Sample APS Middle School, Arlington, Virginia Data from: www.p1pe.doe.virginia.gov/reportcard/

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT: 30.9 % White; 11.3 % Asian; 18.1% Black; 35.5 % Hispanic

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<td>English - SOL % Passing Rate</td>
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<td>WHITE</td>
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<td>ASIAN</td>
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Challenging Racism: Assumptions

“We have begun a shift from viewing achievement gaps as resulting from problems with the children who come to our schools to viewing them (the gaps) as resulting from problems with the school systems to which these children come. This perspective does not deny the relevance of other factors such as poverty; level of education; social supports such as medical care, quality child care and pre-school; and per pupil spending. It does, however, keep school systems on the hook as being a significant cause of perpetuating or widening the achievement gaps. Because school systems do have a significant set of contributing factors in their control, they cannot in good conscience excuse inaction by blaming other factors. They must take responsibility for doing as much as is within their power to eliminate such gaps.”

“Institutional racism encompasses racial disparities that result from institutional structures and operations, although generally not from overt acts of intentional discrimination. Institutional racism is entrenched, intractable, and not easily eradicable in part because those who perpetuate it are often not even aware that they are doing so, and in part because it operates through the cumulative action of multiple people rather than as a single readily identifiable act of one individual. Tackling institutional racism thus means taking responsibility and looking for solutions as a system.”

Paloma Strand
“Introduction”, Gaining on the Gap (Smith et al. p. 2)
**APS: Continuing Issues Related to the Achievement Gaps**

### Issues related to race/Ethnicity in the Schools:

1. Overrepresentation of students of color in Special Education.
2. Overrepresentation of students of color referred for disciplinary action.
3. Overrepresentation of students of color who drop out.
4. The underrepresentation of students of color identified as gifted: Less identified than their percent in the population.
5. Underrepresentation of Advanced diplomas earned by students of color.
6. Underrepresentation of students of color in International Baccalaureate Program.
7. Schools in which significant numbers of students of color have low student SOL (Standard of Learning) scores.

### Issues in Arlington County:

2. Negative Perceptions of schools based on percentage of students of color.
3. Schools named after persons who owned slaves and the plantations of the persons who owned slaves.
4. Housing segregation.
5. The Wall: a historical marker now shows the location of the remnants of the wall that shut off Hall's Hill African American residents from crossing through a White neighborhood to get to Glebe Road. 17th Road and 1700 North Culpepper, 22207. You can get more information at [www.highviewpark.com](http://www.highviewpark.com)

### WHAT IS GOING ON IN APS TO ELIMINATE THESE GAPS?

- Adaptive Schools – Teacher Training (Team Building)
- APS Cultural Competence Initiative – Teacher Training
- Challenging Racism – Conversations on Race for Parents
- Office of Minority Achievement
- Overrepresentation Committee
- Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity – SEED Teacher Training
- Superintendent’s Advisory Committee on the Elimination of the Achievement Gaps – Made up of Parents, Staff, and Community Representatives
- Teacher Expectations and Student Achievement – Teacher Training
- Tiered System of Student Services – Early Student Intervention
- Whole Child Initiative
Journal:

What are your ideas of what you might do next? What you do to combat racism is a very personal decision. You may start by acknowledging what you have learned and building on that by conversations and reading. You may sit with all of this for a bit. You may be a person who has to find something you can do alone, such as drawing cartoons that explain racism, or write materials for bus signs exploring racism or... You can contribute money or help organize Standing Up for Racial Justice, or...

Use the list in your workbook for ideas.
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**Some ideas for next steps could be:**


3. Take the ideas you have learned here, and/or the materials and share them with a friend or colleague. Take along the Guidelines and follow them.

   Take these materials and conversations to a group to which you belong, church, service club, sewing circle, PTA, Civic Association.

   Be open and listen. Do not call people who disagree or are uncertain ‘racists’.

   Do not be self-righteous. Remember to accept nonclosure. Say, “Maybe we will talk about this another time.”

4. Talk about race. Break the taboo. Be comfortable with non-closure and with disagreement. Read Judy Ringer, 4 steps to a difficult conversation on line and learn to prepare.

   Push back against racial microaggressions, say “ouch”, and explain why the comment made you uncomfortable.

5. Get to know people of color in your life, and if that is not possible, read their stories. Acknowledge people of color in the workplace, in the mall, and anywhere you encounter them.

6. Develop comfort with difference by learning about others who are not like you in our community.

7. Recognize our romanticized White past, the good old days. Those days were not so good for people of color. Talk about this differently. Learn about it.

8. Use your power within in the institution where you work to ‘out’ racism.

9. Practice your answers to the often made generalizations about race such as “I am color blind. We are all the same under the skin.” “Can’t we all get along?” (See the materials for practice in the workbook.)

10. Work for those public policy changes that will undermine the foundations of racism that exist in the historic denial of access to opportunity: policies such as affordable housing, Small Business low cost minority loans, tuition free community colleges, increased scholarships at public colleges for all low income students who qualify, and affordable health care.

11. Join an anti-racist activist group such as SURJ, Standing Up for Racial Justice. Found such a group in Arlington.

12. Create a community group focused on eliminating gaps.


14. A next step that you are considering.
What is Next After Challenge Racism?
BUILDING AN ANTIRACIST SELF

Various resources as of Thursday, April 7, 2016, Please send any suggested edits or additions to: info@ChallengingRacism.org The list of books and readings from the Challenge Racism parent workshops is on our website under resources at: www.ChallengeRacism.org.

BASIC BOOKS

- Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?: And Other Conversations About Race, by Beverly Daniel Tatum. Especially Chapters 1 - 6 & 8
- 40 Ways to Raise a Nonracist Child, by Barbara Mathias and Mary Ann French
- What If All the Kids Are White?, by Louise Derman-Sparks, Patricia G. Ramsey, Julie Olsen Edwards. This book lays out a rubric for understanding the process of developing comfort with difference, and ways to recognize inequity and “that stuff” about race as Tatum calls it. It includes whole chapters of ideas in on how to develop experience with difference in the classroom. Many ideas apply at home.
- What Does it Mean to be White?: Developing White Racial Literacy, by Robin DiAngelo.
- Gaining on the Gap: Changing Hearts, Minds, and Practice, by Palma Strand, Robert G. Smith, Tim Cotman, Cheryl Robinson, Martha Swaim, Alvin Crawley

LOCAL GROUPS

- Black Lives Matter DMV http://www.blacklivesmatterdmv.org
- Challenge Racism Continued: Alumni Group
- Leah Maderal <list@maderal.com> 703.465.9603 (Parent in APS)
- NAACP Arlington, Branch 951 S George Mason Dr # 204, Arlington, Virginia 22204 (703) 920-1110 https://www.facebook.com/NAACP7047/
- Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) Northern Virginia: http://www.surjnova.org
- Washington Ethical Society: http://www.ethicalsociety.org
- Conferences and Training
- Crossroads: http://www.crossroadsantiracism.org
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CR – PARTNERSHIP WORKBOOK

MORE ONLINE RESOURCES

Note: Adding antiracist voices to your social media stream can be a simple way to remain in touch with ideas from discussions we had this year. Some Alternative Information Sources

- National Center for Race Amity: http://ncra.wheelock.edu
- National SEED Project: http://www.nationalseedproject.org
- National Summit for Courageous Conversations: http://www.summitforcourageousconversation.com
- Social Justice Training Institute: http://www.sjti.org
- White Privilege Conference: http://www.whiteprivilegeconference.com

WEBSITES, VIDEOS AND ARTICLES

- Southern Poverty Law Center: https://www.splicenter.org
- Teaching Tolerance: http://www.tolerance.org
- Project Implicit: https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/selectatest.html
- On the Genius of Infants: Are We Really Born Racist?: http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/
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MORE ABOUT WHITENESS AND RELATED SUBJECTS

- White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack, Peggy McIntosh
  http://nationalseedproject.org/whiteprivilegeunpackingtheinvisibleknapsack
- MTV White People: (also search “MTV Decoded”) https://youtu.be/_zjj1PmJcRM
- 10 Things White Privilege Has Done for Me in 10 Days: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/oliviaco/10thingswhiteprivilege_b_5658049.html
- White Privilege Pop Quiz: The Test You Can’t Fail: http://www.mollysecours.com/#/TakeTheWhitePrivilegePopQuizForTrayvonMartinItsTheTestYouCantFail/c1pqd/98333D7C756445CA9204473E9832A43D
- Tim Wise: http://www.timwise.org
- 10 Ways to be an Ally: http://whitepriv.blogspot.com/2010/02/10waystobeandally.html
- 7 Things I Can Do That My Black Son Can’t:
  https://www.yahoo.com/parenting/7thingsicandothatmyblacksoncant99408985077.html
A VERY SHORT COURSE FOR WHITE FOLKS ABOUT WHITENESS, WHITE PRIVILEGE, RACISM, ITS EFFECTS ON PEOPLE OF COLOR AND WHAT TO DO!

By Marty Swaim, trainer in Cultural Competence and co-facilitator, Challenging Racism through Stories and Conversations for Parents and Community. (Selection from a longer writing.)

TAKE RESPONSIBILITY TO RESIST AS HAVE MANY THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE OF COLOR AND ANTI-RACIST WHITE PEOPLE BEFORE YOU:

Be an Ally to People of Color by Interrupting Racism

“Let me be clear. I do not view myself as a bad person and I do not feel guilty about racism. Racism is a system that I inherited but did not create. I must take responsibility now that I can see it. This means working to challenge racism both within me and with out me”. White author, Robin DiAngelo, 11

INTERRUPT RACISM PERSONALLY

• We White people may work to not be prejudiced in our personal dealings with people of color, which is a good thing, and still unwittingly participate in group patterns that support racism. Work to be conscious of those patterns. People of color who are asked about what White people can do to interrupt racism often say “Pay Attention”. “Be Aware.”

• Build a positive racial identity, resist your unconscious socialization that ‘White is better’, know that people of color are your equals and that you can be an ally, possibly remembering all of the allies who have gone before as models.

• Take the ideas in this short course on Whiteness as the beginning. Educate yourself. Read and discuss the sources in the notes. Know yourself.

• Talk about race. Break the taboo of silence on race. Join a conversation group at your church or school or work or in your family. If none exists, begin one. Be comfortable with non-closure and with disagreement. Normalize conversations on race.

• Push back against micro aggressions, when you hear yourself or others say such things. Say “Ouch”: explain why the comments made you uncomfortable.

• Practice humility around privilege. Humility helps a White person remember that people of color know a lot more about our racialized existence and its impact than we do. 12

• Think about how to break the unconsciously socialized connection for many White people between people of color and fear. Get to know people of color in your work and community. Since men of color seem to be a focus of White anxiety, get to know Black men, Latino men and Asian men. If meeting any people of color personally is not possible, read their stories. Recognize that the stories of people of color

*See a partial list of White allies on ChallengeRacism.org

make us as White people uncomfortable because sometimes they are stories of hardship and racism. But get started.

• Develop comfort with difference, among communities of color and White communities.\(^\text{13}\) Great rubric/ideas in *When All the Kids Are White*....

• Recognize our romanticized White past, the good old days when you see them in history books or movies. Those good old days were not so good for Black people, Mexican Americans and other Latinos, Native Americans, or Asian immigrants. Tatum calls this skill learning to spot “that stuff”, messages that are racist, or sexist or classist. Once “that stuff” is spotted, one can name it and thus resist.\(^\text{14}\)

• In our personal and professional life, we participate in institutions. Use your power as a White person. Help the people in those institutions think about changes they might make to challenge racism in the institution.

For example, in 1999, the Arlington Public School Board included in their Strategic Goals “Eliminating the Achievement Gaps”. A community/parent committee, six Board members and the Superintendent took a stand for the idea that a school system could not be good if Black and Latino students fell many points behind in achievement. “... we have begun a shift from viewing achievement gaps as resulting from problems with the children who come to our schools to viewing them as resulting from problems with the school systems to which these children come. This perspective does not deny the relevance of other factors such as poverty... It does, however, keep school systems “on the hook” as being a significant cause of perpetuating or widening achievement gaps.”\(^\text{15}\)

The “Big Idea” in the training is “Staff and student perceptions of race and the acquisition of English as an additional language influence expectations, and therefore academic success. These perceptions of identity are within our sphere of influence.”\(^\text{16}\)

Teacher and administrative training on race, racial identity development, White privilege, and culturally competent teaching followed, along with conversations for parents and community called *Challenge Racism*.

• *Think about how you might reply* to these typical observations you will hear when you engage in conversations about race. *Prepare yourself by practicing a few ways to engage the speaker whom you encounter*. After asking the speaker to explain more fully what he/she means (for example, ‘Tell me more’, or ‘Help me out here.’), and acknowledging that you hear his point of view, ask him to think about your idea. For a good description of technique: Judy Ringer, ”We Have to Talk, 4 Steps to Difficult Conversations”, on the web.

Anticipate that conversations on race are work and will make you uncomfortable. Prepare yourself by knowing yourself and your own White racial identity, knowing about the people with whom you are conversing and as much as you can about the issues.

• *Talking about race denies our common humanness and therefore drives the races apart. I am just human.* Agreed, we are all human.

See films such as “Nothing But A Man”, 1964, Abby Lincoln; Buena Vista Social Club, or...

13. Louise Derman-Sparks and Patricia G. Ramsey, *What If All the Kids are White?* for themes and goals in developing comfort with difference and anti racist identity and skills, a very good guide for any age. 2006

14. Tatum, Ch. 3, P. 47


Talking about race does not make us less human, but rather more human as we increase our understanding of ourselves and the lives of others. We all have a racial identity to which we have been socialized as a group. That is a foundation of our lives. If your conversational partner is willing to continue, use the material in this essay to help the person understand how they were socialized to a White racial identity.

*Whiteness has no special advantages.* I as an individual worked hard, started out poor, etc. Poverty plus being of color is harder, for the reasons provided in #1 and #2.

*Affirmative action for college admissions means fewer qualified White people are admitted.* Acknowledge the simple math that if the number of spaces at a college is unchanged, more students of color will = less White students. However, 2 practices maintain White enrollment. *First,* many schools of higher learning increase spaces when they commit to more diversity. *Second,* most schools have legacy practices that assure places to alumni’s children, who are almost all White. White students who can pay the full cost continue to get admitted because colleges need the money. The equity issue in affirmative action is for low income White students, not the very poorest White students who are more likely to be admitted with scholarships. In fact, the assertion by the speaker above is probably not correct about total White admissions, but only about reduced admissions of certain low income White students. This important issue is part of the larger issue of income inequality, which now compares with income inequality in the Great Depression.

*People of color need to get over it. 150 years since slavery: get to work.*

It is a long time since slavery and none of us personally had slaves, but the fact is that for many people of color, the underlying dynamics of low or no opportunity have not changed much in the last 150 years.

*We are post-racial.* Electing a Black president did not make us post-racial because it did not change the system of racial advantage in institutions, and patterns of White micro aggressions against people of color that impact their daily lives.

**INTERRUPT RACISM THROUGH THE PUBLIC POLICIES THAT YOU SUPPORT**

Interrupt systematic behavior that advantages White people in institutions, politics, economics, policing and public safety, housing, schools and the workplace. What does this mean?

Think about the kinds of opportunities that have been historically denied to people of color:

- ease of investment in housing, access to good housing
- access to well funded and staffed schools
- access to affordable higher education and training
- access to work that pays a living wage, reflects increased productivity, and the possibility of support in retirement.

Look at these problems, and others such as good community policing, justice in the prison system, income inequality and poverty, universal pre-k, family leave and child care support, affordable health care, and transportation infrastructure through the lens of making sure that the solutions you support help American society to destroy the social foundations of racial injustice and inequality, and the poverty that has been a result.
Journal:

After the meet-up in the large group:

My learning partner is ____________________________

Our first phone call or meeting after tonight is ____________________________

If you know the answer to this next question, write it down. If not, just keep talking and eventually write it down!

For next steps, I am working on:

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Self Care:)

Get to Know Yourself, because you need to understand what saps your energy and where you find your re-charge. Is it time off on your own? Or are you energized by being surrounded by people? This also applies to understanding how to process information—do you concentrate best on your own, or through shared discussions with friends?

Just because you are an introvert doesn’t mean you aren’t equipped to do this work—remember this is about understanding where you find your re-charge.

Even if you are an extrovert, be careful not to overdo it!

Simple ways of re-charging:

• Give yourself permission to disengage: from difficult conversations, from social media arguments, from thinking of all the things you need to do to change the world.

• Give yourself permission to unplug from the news: a constant diet of news is toxic (especially in a time when consuming news includes the need to distinguish between news and “alternative facts”). Try waiting to check on those news apps until the middle of day—after, say, a good run or visit to the gym—or limit your screen time with talk news shows to every other day, or only a couple of hours each day. Use that time to read a good book or watch a movie, go have coffee with a good friend, or play a game with your kids.

• After a particularly difficult conversation, or participating in a social justice or racial justice activity, treat yourself like you would your bestie who’s going through a break-up: whether it’s ice cream, or a good glass of wine, or a long nap, or a massage, INDULGE YOURSELF.

Do something that you can make a good argument benefits ONLY YOU.

• Just Say No: We live in a capitalist world that places a premium on being busy. Our society tells us that if we aren’t working on something—anything!—be it homework, launching an iPhone app, or even social justice—all the time that we are, in fact, wasting time. Sometimes saying no is a radical act of self-care that’s as vital to our struggles as the marches, teach-ins, and walk-outs in which we participate. The next time you are tempted to say yes when you know your answer should be no try repeating this to yourself: I have enough. I do enough. I am enough.

• Try meditation, deep breathing, extended stretching—all ways to bring your focus inward, building awareness of your physical self.

Michele Chang, Facilitator, Challenging Racism
Thank you!

Preparation for your next steps:

Please use the materials in the workbook for session 5. Find us at
www.challengingracism.org. Marty Swaim, mswaim111@verizon.net
Arlington Partnership for Children, Youth & Families: 703-228-1667

Sign up for more study in
Challenging Racism: Learning How or learn how to facilitate these conversations by
attending the CR learning to Lead summer training, July 11-15 and 17-18.

PLEASE COMPLETE EVALUATION FORMS AND
LEAVE IN THE PLACE PROVIDED.