SYSTEMIC RACISM & STRUCTURAL RACIALIZATION: EXAMINING THE IMPACT ON BEHAVIORAL HEALTH DISPARITIES

ADÈLE JAMES, MA, CPC (SHE/HER/HERS)

About California Institute for Behavioral Health Solutions (CIBHS) and Our Presenters

Adèle James, MA, CPC (she/her/hers)
CEO, Adèle James Consulting
It’s a privilege to learn about racism instead of experiencing it your whole life.

@TheFeministVibe

How important is it that you be involved in decisions that impact your household?
HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED ABOUT?

Participant Poll Question 1
Do you know who founded your organization?
- Yes
- No

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED ABOUT?

Participant Poll Question 2
Were the founders of your organization reflective of/knew the historical and societal context of the community served?
- Yes
- No
- Don’t know
What influence might your organization’s origins have on the extent of your success in serving Black Indigenous/People of Color (BIPOC)?

- A Great Deal
- Some
- None

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED ABOUT?

IF YOU’RE NOT AT THE TABLE, YOU’RE ON THE MENU
WHAT IS CULTURE?

Culture are the beliefs and values held by a group of people. Another way of thinking about culture is how a group of people define what is “normal” and what is “not normal”.

WHAT IS WHITE SUPREMACY CULTURE?

White supremacy culture is one that supports the idea that white people and the ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions of white people are superior to People of Color and their ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions. This idea (or ideology) is the glue that binds together institutional policies and practices to create a national and global white supremacy system.

Sharon Martinas and the Challenging White Supremacy Workshop
(www.cwsworkshop.org)
LEARNING NOT TO AVOID THE UNCOMFORTABLE

While learning about a situation for one person may be triggering, experiencing the situation can be life threatening for someone else.

RACISM KILLS

FREEDOM IS A CONSTANT STRUGGLE

“I feel that if we don’t take seriously the ways in which racism is embedded in structures of institutions, if we assume that there must be an identifiable racist who is the perpetrator, then we won’t ever succeed in eradicating racism.”

Angela Y. Davis, Freedom is a Constant Struggle
WHITE SUPREMACY VALUES: HOW THEY MIGHT REINFORCE STRUCTURAL RACISM

- Perfectionism
- Either/or thinking
- Right to comfort
- A sense of urgency
- Defensiveness/denial
- Quantity over quality
- Worship of the written word
- Belief in only one right way

- Paternalism
- Power hoarding
- Fear of open conflict
- Individualism
- Belief that I’m the only one (who can do this right)
- Belief that progress is more, bigger
- Belief in objectivity

DIVERSITY IN THE U.S. SENATE 1930 - 2020
SYSTEMIC RACISM

The complex interaction of culture, policy and institutions that holds in place the outcomes we see in our lives. Systemic racism is naming the process of white supremacy ...[that] creates disparities [for BIPOC] in many success indicators including wealth, the criminal justice system, employment, housing, health care, politics, and education. It prevents or makes it more challenging for people of color to participate in society and in the economy.

Glenn Harris, president of Race Forward and publisher of Colorlines.
A purpose of systemic racism is to divide white people from BIPOC, BIPOC from other BIPOC, white people from other white people, and all of us from ourselves.

The Home Owners' Loan Corporation used this redlining map to preserve segregation in Fresno. The areas shaded red were home to an "undesirable" population. (Courtesy of T-RACES, University of Maryland)
FRESNO COUNTY 1936 REDLINING MAP & 2014 AREAS OF POVERTY

A NORTH-SOUTH DIVIDE?
SEE WHERE MORE PEOPLE TEST POSITIVE FOR VIRUS IN FRESNO, CLOVIS

COVID-19 testing positivity rates
- 20% or higher
- 10% to 20%
- 7% to 10%
- 7% or lower

Fresno Bee, July 27, 2020
“Examining one bar cannot explain why a bird cannot fly. But multiple bars, arranged in specific ways, reinforce each other and trap the bird.”

John A. Powell, ED, Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race & Ethnicity
RACE is...

• continues to evolve and change
• has concrete ramifications for people’s lives, and
• has many interconnecting sides or facets

The process of racialization is one way that our society sorts communities and people to allocate resources and access to resources.

It is helpful to shine light on it

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STRUCTURAL RACIALIZATION

➢ Structural racialization is when systems and processes produce and reproduce unequal outcomes along racial lines with or without intent.

➢ Racialized outcomes do not require racists actors.

John Powell, ED, Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race & Ethnicity
**LEVELS/FORMS OF STRUCTURAL RACISM/RACIALIZATION**

**MACRO LEVEL**
- **INSTITUTIONAL** (bias within an agency, school etc.)
- **STRUCTURAL** (cumulative among institutions; durable; multigenerational)

**MICRO LEVEL**
- **INTERNALIZED** (beliefs within individuals; stereotype threat)
- **INTERPERSONAL** (bigotry between individuals; racial anxiety)

**THE ARCHITECTURE & IMPACTS OF STRUCTURAL RACISM/DISCRIMINATION**

- **Structural Racism/Discrimination:** A system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing ways to perpetuate racial group inequity.
- **Social Determinants:** The conditions in which we are born, grow and age, and in which we live and work. They shape economics, education, transportation, food, housing, justice, health care, and communications.
- **Health Disparities:** Differences in health and mental health status among distinct segments of the population.

**CONSEQUENCES OF STRUCTURAL RACISM & DISCRIMINATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marginalization/Discrimination</th>
<th>Limited economic mobility/poverty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Limited educational mobility</td>
<td>Interferences with access to resources</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disparities in health care</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
CLINICAL IMPLICATIONS OF DISCRIMINATION & OPPRESSION

- Depression
- PTSD
- Transgenerational Trauma
- Substance Abuse
- Misdiagnosis
- Physical Illness
- Suicide

CALIFORNIA POVERTY RATE BY RACE/ETHNICITY 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Asian/Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander</th>
<th>American Indian/Alaska Native</th>
<th>Multiple Races</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poverty Rate</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.11</td>
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Kaiser Family Foundation
RACE, COVID & UNEMPLOYMENT

An analysis of unemployment in California at the height of the COVID-19 crisis shows that as many as 22% of Blacks and 26% of Latinos were jobless, compared to 17% of both white and Asian workers.

MENTAL ILLNESS & SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS

- People from lowest socioeconomic strata are 2 to 3 times more likely to have a mental disorder and higher levels of distress than those in higher strata.

- Poverty increases risk for mental disorders through greater exposure to stressful environments (e.g., violence, unemployment) and less buffering from social or material resources.

- Conversely, having a mental disorder increases risk for poverty through reduced functioning and productivity.

- Poverty and race are intertwined due to legacy of racism and discrimination.

(Unger, 2005; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001)
COVID-19 AND MENTAL HEALTH EQUITY IN THE U.S.

Past disasters and public health emergencies suggest that socially disadvantaged groups (e.g. racial/ethnic minorities, people with low income) will experience more psychiatric morbidity related to the pandemic than socially advantaged groups.

Historically, produced arrangements of power and privilege provide socially advantaged groups with more resources to limit their exposure to, and cope with, stressors caused by disaster.

COVID-19 impacts:
- Stress resulting from COVID-19 related financial insecurity and inequity.
- Grief stemming from disparities in COVID-19 mortality.

THE TRUTH HURTS

- Lack of money is the #1 reason why adults in America do not receive proper mental health services.
- And, it could also be the reason so many mentally ill continue to live in poverty.

From the Psychology of Poverty, 2013
Lack money

No treatment

Mental health deteriorates

A SAD CYCLE

Lack of worth

SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH - STRUCTURES THAT SHAPE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

The social determinants of health are the conditions in which we are born, grow and age, and in which we live and work. These factors impact a client’s health and well being.
YOUR ACTIONS MATTER

Racism has less to do with what’s in your heart or mind, and more to do with how your actions or inactions amplify or enable the systemic dynamics already in place.


OPTIONS FOR ADDRESSING RACISM & DISCRIMINATION

- Avoid addressing racism & discrimination (intentionally or unintentionally).
- Only address racism & discrimination when it comes up as a result of a situation.
- Proactively and intentionally work towards creation of an anti-racist/anti-discriminatory work environment.
With what you understand now about structural racism, which stage would you assess your organization to be in?

1. **Cultural Destructiveness**
   Difference viewed as problem. Recognizes one superior culture.

2. **Cultural Incapacity**
   Lacks cultural awareness and skill perpetuates stereotypes, paternalistic toward non-dominant groups.

3. **Cultural Blindness**
   Colorblind, considers all cultures to be alike, culture does not account for difference.

4. **Cultural Pre-Competence**
   Recognizes difference but complacent in making change.

5. **Basic Competence**
   Accepts, appreciates and values difference-seeks opinions of diverse groups.

6. **Advanced Competence**
   Actively educates self & less informed, seeks to interact/collaborate with diverse groups.

**POLL QUESTION:**
Equal vs Equity

**EQUALITY VS EQUITY**

**EQUALITY**

**EQUITY**
STRATEGY 1: TARGETED UNIVERSALISM

- Inclusive of the needs of both dominant and marginal groups but pays particular attention to the situation of the marginal group.

- Rejects a blanket universal, which is likely to be indifferent to the reality that different groups are situated differently, relative to the institutions and resources of society.

- Argues against claims of formal equality that would treat all people the same as a way of denying difference.

CONSIDER...

- Societies and, by extension, organizations create structures and institutions in the likenesses of those who have power and privilege.

- Even if the endeavor is well meaning, no one is without bias nor are they culturally neutral.
STRATEGY 2: YOUR ANTI-RACISM VISION

- What are the implications of doing nothing/not changing the current situation?
- Who benefits if you do nothing?
- How might you benefit by the status quo?
- What might be the benefits for all of achieving an anti-racist vision?

STRATEGY 3: MATCHING STRATEGIES TO STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF OPPRESSION

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<tr>
<td>• Change policy (laws, etc.)</td>
<td>• Mentoring</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Challenge discriminatory &amp; exclusionary practices</td>
<td>• Support groups, mono-racial, gender, identity group causes</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Demand inclusive power, decision making, resources sharing</td>
<td>• “Healing” programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Create new equitable institutions &amp; practices</td>
<td>• Counseling</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Highlighting history, root causes, cumulative impacts</td>
<td>• Diversity trainings - prejudice reduction &amp; cultural competency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Challenging common stereotypes, biases cultural/media images</td>
<td>• Cross-/inter-identity group dialogues</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Exposing myths; explaining justice</td>
<td>• Diverse community events</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Advancing socially conscious remedies</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Promoting values of equity, inclusion, access and dignity for all</td>
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Source: Race Forward
Considerations for anticipating, assessing and preventing potential adverse consequences of proposed actions on different racial groups.

1. Identifying stakeholders
2. Engaging stakeholders
3. Identifying and documenting racial inequities
4. Examining the causes
5. Clarifying the purpose
6. Considering adverse impacts
7. Advancing equitable impacts
8. Examining alternatives or improvements
9. Ensuring viability and sustainability
10. Identifying success indicators

GARE MODEL

Normalize
- Shared analysis; prioritize needs
- Knowledge and skill building
- Use of data and storytelling

Operationalize
- Identifying what Racial Equity (RE) looks like
- Identifying behavior and organizational culture
- Use of racial equity tools

Organize
- Coming together and cross collaboration (partnerships)
- Building internal sustainable infrastructures

STRATEGY 4:
Racial Equity Impact Assessment GUIDE
Call to Action:
Test the use of a Racial Equity (RE) Tool

Instructions:
Identify a program.

Review RE Tool: Consider Adverse Impacts of your program on BIPOC (# 6).

Discuss: Internally within organization or program.

Questions
Contact Information

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