Naming It: Anti-Blackness

The Counselor's Call to Personal and Professional Development

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Introduction

Who are we?

What we hope to accomplish in our short time today.

- Why Naming Matters
- Definitions
  - Reflection and Discussion
- Personal Examples
- Action Steps
  - Working together
- Questions and Discussion

Why Naming Matters

Language shapes reality:

- Shifting away from general terminology like social justice and multiculturalism - moves us towards clarity and the ability to act
- Naming anti-Blackness and white supremacy shapes the discourse and focuses the conversation
- Directly and accurately confronts oppression and dehumanization
- Increases the opportunity for critical consciousness, self-reflection, and taking responsibility

__Starting point__ – to understand the terminology, the interrelated nature of these terms, and how to use this knowledge to effect change

(Nguyen, 2020; Shor & Freire, 1987)

Diagram
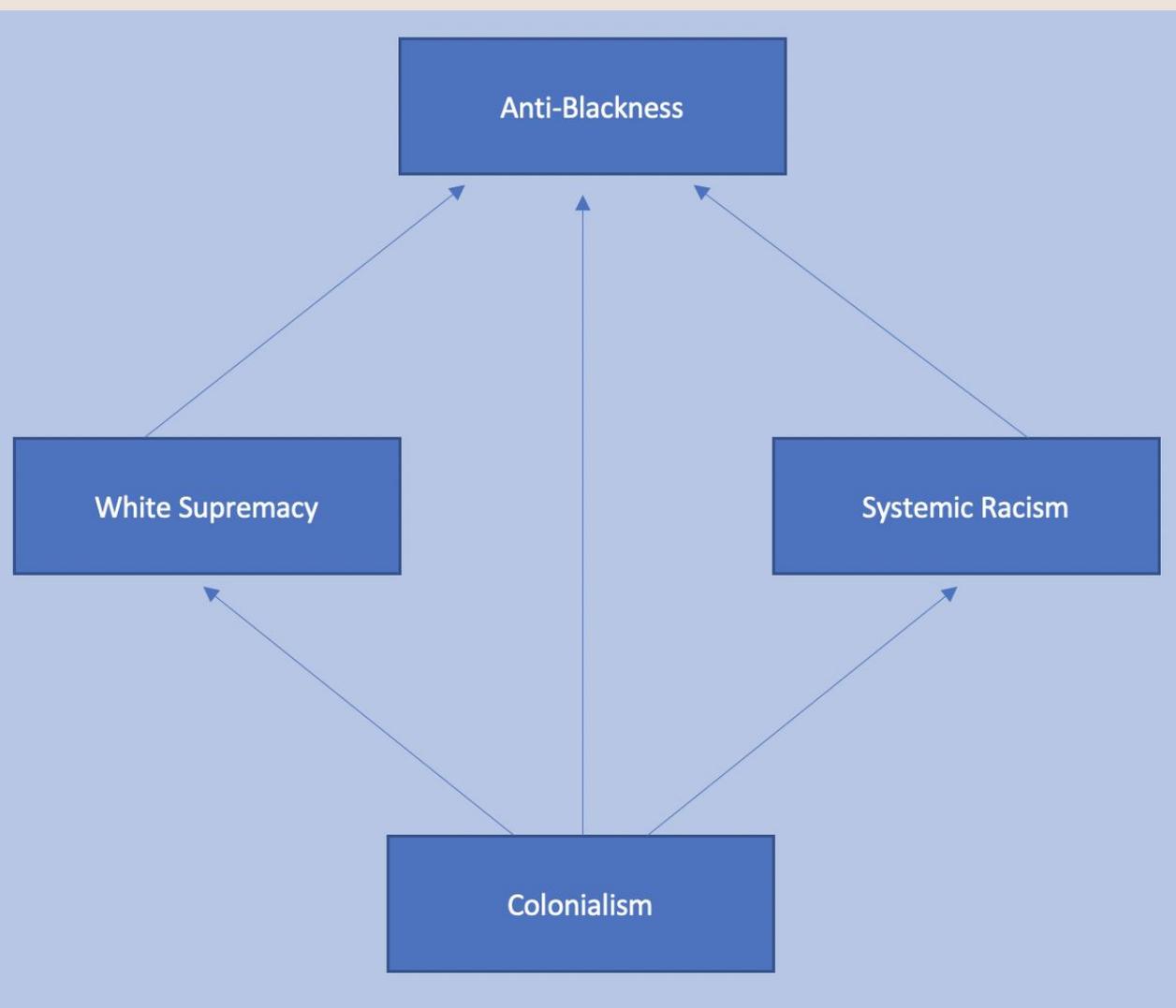
Anti-Blackness

❖ The systematic dehumanization of Black individuals

❖ Removes consciousness of the historical and contemporary systemic racism that Black individuals have suffered for centuries

❖ Stems from colonialism

❖ Anti-Blackness occurs in many areas:
- Healthcare
- Housing Policies
- Policing
- Elections
- Schools

- Other examples that you have seen??

(Curry & Curry, 2018; Hammond & Reverby, 2019; Sondel, Kretchmar, & Hadley Dunn, 2019)

In what ways have you either perpetuated anti-Blackness *or* witnessed anti-Blackness in your personal or professional life?

White Supremacy

- Rooted in colonialism - exploitation, dominance, and suppression
- The belief that whiteness and white bodies are superior – the human ideal – *white-body supremacy*
    - *Lives in our bodies and is linked to trauma*
    - *Persistent trauma can contribute to compromised immune systems and other health related vulnerabilities (Menakem, 2017)*
- Deeply ingrained in every level of our society – systems of governance and power
- Not extremism alone – woven into the fabric of family beliefs, practices, behaviors, and can be passed down over generations.

(DiAngelo, 2018, 2020; Menakem, 2017, 2020)

Where have you named white supremacy? Consider your professional or personal life.

White Fragility

- The reaction of white people when confronted with racism:
  - Silence
  - Defensiveness
  - Microaggressions
  - Argumentative

- White fragility contributes to the failure of white people to interrupt systemic racism
  - Individualism
  - Internalized white supremacy
  - Good/Bad Binary
  - Universality
  - Segregation
  - Miseducation

(DiAngelo, 2018)

Antiracism

- Racism: racist policies and racist ideas that perpetuate racial inequities
- Racial inequity: when two or more racial groups do not start as equal
- Antiracism: the *action* of combating systemic racism

- To be antiracist is not to be neutral; it locates the roots of problems in power and policies and confronts racial inequities
- Antiracism is a collection of antiracist policies that lead to racial equity

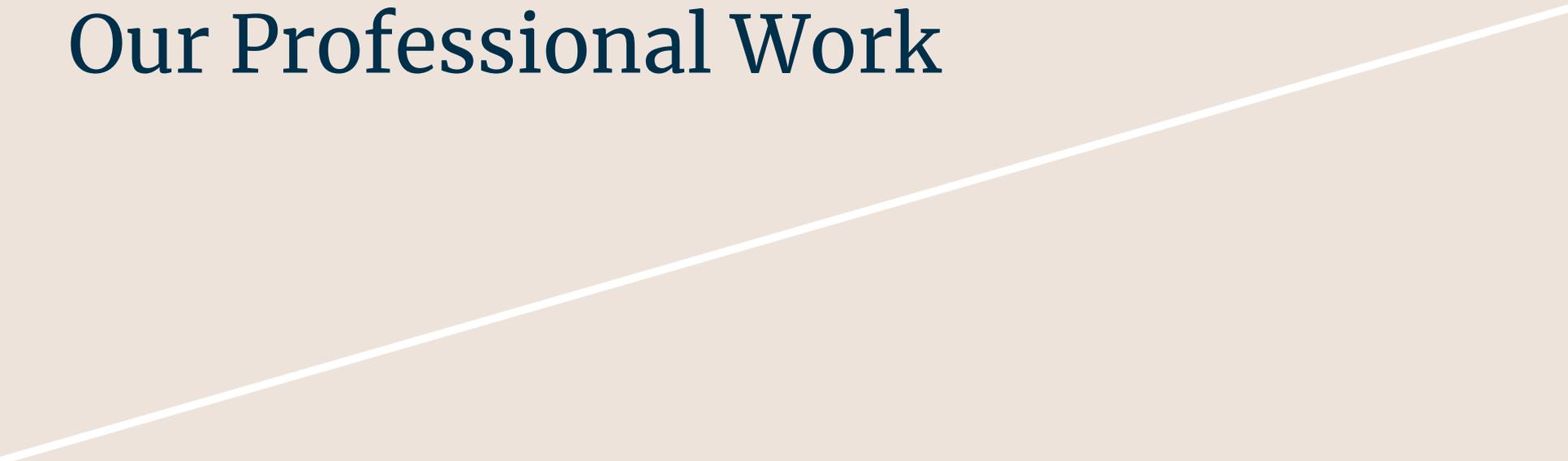(Kendi, 2019)

How to Be Antiracist

- Persistent self-awareness
- Constant self-criticism
- Regular self-examination

"To be antiracist is a radical choice...requiring a radical reorientation of our consciousness."

(Kendi, 2019, p. 23)

What steps have you taken to be anti-racist?

Personal Process: Translating into Our Professional Work

Personal/ Professional Example

- Using our experiences
  - Helps to enter conversations with students
  - Allows students space to unpack their own grief and pain, and sit in their emotions
- Centering discussions
  - Creates a shared space to discuss racial injustice, trauma and grief
  - Creates a shared experience
- Acknowledging
  - Sit in our own emotions and stay with the feeling
  - Can be done with and without students

Supervision Example

- Take Stock - Community of Support
  - Self and other (supervisor/supervisee - counselor/client)
  - Typical skills may seem ineffective
  - Acknowledged limitations
  - Engage in personal reflective work
  - Peer consultation
- Awareness of Leadership/Mentor Role
  - Create safety for all stakeholders
  - Make time for individual processing
  - Demonstrate humility and share your own process
- Engage Together
  - Group discussions with subgroups
  - Clinical skills training on addressing race, racial identity, and trauma
  - Self-care
  - Consider broader context
  - Make space for being a *work in progress*

Clinical Example

- Facing anti-Blackness all around
- Confront and process my own emotional, mental, and physiological responses
- Create space
  - Facilitate dialogue, processing, and learning for students
- Self-care; self-preservation
- Reaching out for my own support
- Taking action

Action Steps

1. Pause, Reflect, and Acknowledge Feelings; most importantly be honest with yourself
2. Connect with Trusted Colleagues and Friends
3. Have the courage to Name the problem
4. Join Advocacy/Affinity Groups
5. Consume Relevant Content by anti-racist educators – Books, Webinars, Trainings, Social Media, Movies, Documentaries – include sources from Black scholars, authors, and filmmakers
6. Take Action – Action creates congruence – actions speak louder than words
7. Model Personal and Professional Responsiveness – Lead by example and be transparent in the process
8. Create Safety for Students/Supervisees to process, learn, and take action
9. Self-care - mindfulness practice, such as meditation, box breathing, 4-7-8 breathing, journaling

How will you commit to naming: anti-Blackness? White supremacy?

"If we ignore the odds & fight to create an antiracist world, then we give humanity a chance to survive, a chance to live in communion, a chance to be forever free."

--Ibram X. Kendi

Questions?
Comments?
Final Thoughts…

THANK YOU!

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