Continuing Courageous Conversations: Facing Racial Bias

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Why this Courageous Conversation?

- This conversation is important in light of . . .
  - Our nation being divided on racial lines;
  - Sensitive people being influenced by personal and historical bias, behaving in ways consistent with those implicit and explicit values bias;
  - Police killings of unarmed blacks and the cry that “Black Life Matters;”
  - Our political environment.
"THE TALK"

WHITE AMERICANS

AFRICAN-AMERICANS

U.S. JUSTICE SYSTEM
What to Expect

• This courageous conversation has the goals of:
  • Defining terms
  • Examining causes
  • Beginning a healing process
  • Uniting individuals/groups
  • Creating a culture where all races matter
  • Identifying ethical considerations of racial bias for individuals and clinicians
Moving Through the Conversation

• If you can look into your heart with a magnifying glass what bias would you be surprised to see?
  1.
  2.

• What do you believe is the origin of those bias?

• Now reflecting on those bias, how have they influenced your behavior in the past and the present?
Definitions
• **Race** is a category of the human species sharing more or less distinctive physical traits transmitted in descent, but **is NOT based on biology solely**; it is **a social construct** with historical roots used to classify groups of people as superior or inferior.
Racial Bias Defined

• **Implicit Racial Bias**: Unconscious or subconscious prejudicial attitudes towards persons who are members of different racial groups.
  

• **Explicit Racial Bias**: Conscious prejudicial attitudes towards persons who are members of different racial groups.
Bias → Discrimination

• **Discrimination**— Any behavior or act—verbal, written, or physical—that is personally directed against or targets an individual or group based on perceived or actual characteristics such as race, color, religious belief, sex, marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national or ethnic origin, disability, veteran status, or age.
Racial Bias: Found Everywhere

• The results of racial biases, discrimination and racism can be seen everywhere: stereotypes, violence, underfunded schools, unemployment, police brutality, shabby housing, double standards in hiring, media, government and a disproportionate number of African-American men on death row, etc.

http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=Racism+Experiment&&view=detail&mid=BA1DF80BB3A948A990B4BA1DF80BB3A948A990B4&FORM=VRDGAR

Discriminate—color of skin
How true is the statement. . .

“If you are human, you are biased.”
Implicit Bias: Causes

https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=utube+showing+racial+bias&view=detail&mid=26DD57C592814822270726DD57C5928148222707&FORM=VIRE

- **Childhood messages** about groups superiority/inferiority, either taught or caught, may become residual adult implicit bias.

- **What ways do people who are committed to social justice, and seek to be nonbiased, still possess implicit prejudices or bias?**
Implicit biases can surface and become discriminatory action, especially when a person is fearful, feels threatened, experiences loss, fails to accept responsibility for own behavior, is under stress and/or engages in competition.
Once learned, bias and prejudices resist change, even when evidence fails to support them or points to the contrary.
Impact of Racial Bias and Discrimination
Potential Impact: Internalize Oppression

• Persons targeted, discriminated against, or oppressed over a period of time, often internalize (believe and make part of their internal view of themselves) the myths and misinformation.

• This holds people back from thinking well of themselves, from living full lives, and from standing up against injustice.
They turn the experience of oppression or discrimination inward. They begin to believe they are inherently not as worthy, capable, intelligent, beautiful, good, etc. as people outside their group; and act accordingly.

https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=utube+on+internalize+oppression&view=detail&mid=53D8DE63EF0BDF02635053D8DE63EF0BDF026350&FORM=VIRE
Potential Impact: Internalize Oppression

• It can be the source of physical or mental illness and self-destructive behavior;

• It can serve to divide people within the same group, so they are not as effective in supporting each other and standing together for change;

• It can also cause people to be suspicious of those outside their own group, making it difficult to build alliances.
Potential Impact: External Oppression

• In the case of police, can implicit bias affect split-second, life-or-death decisions. . . shootings of black men incorrectly thought to be holding guns? [http://www.cbsnews.com/videos/racial-bias-influences-officers-says-fbi-chief/](http://www.cbsnews.com/videos/racial-bias-influences-officers-says-fbi-chief/)

• Routine police tasks can be subject to unconscious racial bias, regardless of training or department policies and procedures
Impact of bias

- **Racial Profiling** – Stopping and questioning an individual, or identifying that individual as a potential suspect of criminal activity, based solely on race, ethnicity, religion, or national origin, rather than on articulable justification.
African American is 13% of US Population, but were 30% of those murdered by police (US Census)
Police Shootings by Race - 2015

- White: 50%
- Black: 26%
- Hispanics: 17%
- Other: 7%

Legend:
- White
- Black
- Hispanics
- Other
Racial bias and discrimination feed on each other.

If racial bias is not set aside, it could lead to discrimination, and if discrimination is not addressed, it could lead to more racial bias, and so on.
Unconscious prejudices and bias also affect court jury deliberations and other daily tasks requiring judgments of human character.
How **does mass media** routinely take advantage of societal bias to paint a negative mood, scene or character of African Americans?

Give examples

https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=utube+racial+bias+in+the+media&view=detail&mid=7EE5D4DD95C3315CC39E7EE5D4DD95C3315CC39E&FORM=VIRE
"If you're not careful, the newspapers will have you hating the people who are being oppressed, and loving the people who are doing the oppressing."

MALCOLM X

facebook.com/beingliberal.org
How does racial bias influence mental health of those who are bias and those against whom the bias is directed?
Implicit and Explicit Bias

• **Personal implicit biases not acknowledged will impact clinical care**, professional therapy and interpersonal relationship. Biases manifested as:
  • Covert/overt racism
  • Heterosexism
  • Classism
  • Sexism

• **What ethical principles** can be violated if clinicians do not set biases aside when treating clients?
Racial bias and Discrimination

- Prevent victims from achieving full potential.
- Prevent victim's fullest contribution.
- Prevent society benefiting from victim's contributions.
- They weaken the community as a whole.
- They increase the likelihood of retaliation.
- They go against democratic ideals
- Discrimination is illegal, in many cases.
It is painful when people limit themselves as a result of the discrimination and oppression they have experienced.
Reducing Racial Bias and Discrimination
If we are to move beyond our individual and group racial bias and discrimination, then change is needed.

Who must change--whites, or people of color? Both!
What Changes are Needed?

- Reflections and understanding the nature of privileges and be willing to minimize those privileges:
  - White privileges
  - Male privileges
  - Religion privileges
  - Sexual orientation privileges
- How do privileges fuel implicit and explicit bias
Reducing Racial Bias

• Acknowledge your bias and seek to uncover implicit bias programmed during childhood.

• Awareness of implicit biases, allows for monitoring them before they become discriminatory behavior. Attention to language, body language and to the stigmatization felt by target groups reduce discrimination.
Reducing Bias and Discrimination

• Support social justice efforts on behalf of different racial/ethnic groups.

• Work together to solve shared problems through community service and organizations.

• Parents, teachers, faith leaders and others can help children question their values and beliefs and point out subtle stereotypes they believe and act upon.
Reducing Bias

• **Speak up** when you hear racial slurs.
• **Take advantage of events** and information.
• **Promote racial understanding** at your workplace.
• **Attend events** about other cultures.
• **Become a close friend, ally, or mentor to individuals** who are struggling with external and internalized oppression.
Therapy for Individual Impacted by Racial Bias and Discrimination

- Internalized oppression is not the fault of people whom it affects. Therapy should address self-blame. Help them to see that their personal worth has nothing to do with society’s current or past prejudice.
Facilitating Racially Diverse Groups Impacted by Racial Bias and Discrimination

- **Establish ground rules**, including confidentiality, mutual respect, no interrupting, listening carefully, paying close attention to the speaker, disagreeing with ideas rather than people, etc.

- **Set a tone of respect** and acceptance that in itself can do a great deal to change people’s views of themselves and others.
Facilitating Racially Diverse Groups

• People **may experience emotional feelings** as they talk about these experiences. Feeling emotions is part of the healing process. Laughing, crying, trembling all help people heal from the hurts of oppression and reclaim their pride, humanity, and power.

• When these groups meet over an extended period of time **people build more safety to talk** about important issues.

Successful Community Effort: Restorative Justice

• A non-profit organization, Life Anew (founder-Kim Patton) trains and uses a Restorative Justice Model to engage police officers and community individuals in a non-threatening dialogue that focus on many issues, including race. Restorative circles are used to build healthier communities, promote peace and create a space to heal from harms caused by racial bias and broken relationships. It is used in schools, police officers, returning inmates, etc. Circles can be found in Austin on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

• [Video Link](https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=dealing+with+race+in+Restorative+Circle+&&view=detail&mid=4277BB699E3C3DA6919A4277BB699E3C3DA6919A&FORM=VRDGAR)
Building a Movement for Justice

Struggling to End Racism
Ethical Principles
Ethical Principles

- Ethical principles should undergird individual or group work
  - Do no harm
  - Begin where individual/group is/are
  - Encourage self-determination
  - Provide best practice intervention
  - Set own biases aside
Ethical Principles

• Become an advocate for those experiencing racial bias;
• Empower individuals to explore hurt and pain and to make decisions;
• Maintain confidentiality.
Thank you
References

- Community Toolbox Chapter 27, Section 4
  

  


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