Anti-Racist Tools for the Social Work Care & Workplace Context
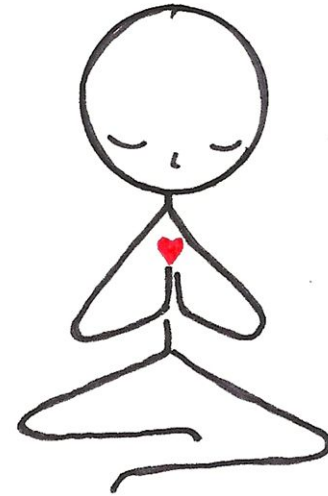
BC Association of Social Workers Anti-Racism & Cultural Advocacy Committee

Meditation: Creating Intention and Reflecting on Social Work Values

Learning Objectives

1. Define the concept of race as a social construct and identify the ways it is manifested systemically.
2. Link SW practice to Anti-Racist practice through honouring our values and each other at the organizational level.
3. Deepen understandings of Intersectionality, Privilege and Marginalization.
4. Recognize and advocates against racist and discriminatory remarks and systems.
5. Consider the barriers to responding. Identify how racism in the workplace impacts individual staff, clients, client service, and organizational culture. How can we create safer more culturally safe spaces that are trauma-informed and anti-racist?
6. Learn how to respond competently to racial comments, behaviours or policies in the workplace setting taking the stance of cultural humility. (compassionate, reflective, non-judgmental).
7. Understand how life transition, and end of life circumstances present challenges and opportunities in cultural understandings of "Quality of Life".

Introduction of this Toolkit

This toolkit & workshop is aimed at Social Workers, Settlement Workers, Counsellors, Community Service Workers, and Health Care Workers.

We intend to provide tools for those who witness racism, who may feel helpless as to how to respond, but are committing to change, although they may not always wish to be perceived in the workplace as challenging the status quo.

Racism refers to practices, policies, attitudes and perceptions that we believe operate (intentionally or unintentionally) in racist ways, or ways that are harmful to racialized individuals. The reality is that we cannot pretend that racism is not a problem here in Canada. We need to have authentic conversations about it. We need to face it and address it.

Race as a Social Construct

- To fight racism and discrimination, we need to recognize, name, and understand the attitudes and behaviours which arise from thinking of human beings in terms of belonging to different race-based groupings (Blumenbach, 1775).
- "As a social concept, 'white' is profound in its meaning…It means people who either come from or appear to come from Europe, but it's necessarily a construct of oppression." Robin DiAngelo
- "Race is a **socially constructed category** that powerfully attaches meaning to perceptions of skin colour; inequitable social/economic relations are structured and reproduced through notions of race, class, gender, and nation" (http://www.aclrc.com/whiteness)
- "Individual acts of racism are supported by institutions and are nurtured by the societal practices…which reinforce and perpetuate racism."

    "**Undoing Internalized Racial Oppression:** Over many generations, this process of parallel disempowerment and empowerment and access expresses itself as inferior definitions of self or self-defeating behaviours, as well as unearned privileges, access to institutional power and invisible advantages based upon race." People's Institute for Survival & Beyond

1.Cultural Safety and Humility

- Advocates for culturally safe practices that are free from racism and discrimination.
- Identifies the person's and family's cultural traditions, beliefs, expectations and preferences, incorporates and advocates for their incorporation into decision making and care planning.
- Assesses communication patterns, strategies, needs, and wishes of person and family;share information according to their readiness and capacity.
- Practices self reflection to understand personal and systematic biases.
  (BC Centre of Palliative Care PDF)

1. Practitioner satisfaction, Patient satisfaction and Patient trust, important in cultural humility training. (Satisfaction)
2. Trust vs Mistrust is key player with minority groups when interfacing with mainstream medicine/ medical help/assistance.(Trust)
3. Culture is not a an independent, homogeneous, dichotomous variable. (Fluidity)
4. Emotion-focused coping (seeks to lessen emotional distress) vs Problem focused coping (seeks to alter or manage the problem) (Coping)

Citations:
(Kagawa-Singer, M.,&Blackhall, L. J.(2001).Negotiating Cross-Cultural Issues at the End of Life. Jama, 286(23), 2993.)
(McCleary, Lynn and Blain, Julie.(2013). Cultural values and family caregiving for persons with dementia. Indian Journal of Gerontology. 27. 178-201.)

2. Microaggression and Communication

- Sue and colleagues (2007) define microaggressions as "**brief** and commonplace **daily** verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether **intentional or unintentional**, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward persons of color" (p. 271). It represents a **lifelong burden of stress, continuous reminders of the target group's second-class status** in society and symbolic of past governmental injustices directed toward people of color. (Sue et al, 2019)

Examples:

1. "Where are you from?" "You speak good English" (**You are a foreigner/You are different**)
2. "You are so articulate" (**intelligence based on race**)
3. "When I look at you, I don't see color." (**denying racial identity**)
4. "I'm not racist. I have several black friends." (**immunity to racist behaviour**)
5. Asking a Black person: "Why do you have to be so loud/animated? Just calm down."To an Asian or Latino person: "Why are you so quiet? We want to know what you think. Be more verbal." "Speak up more. (**dominant culture is more ideal/assimilate**

Allies vs. Transformers

Allies are individuals who belong to dominant social groups and through their support of and with non-dominant groups, **actively work** towards accountability & the eradication of prejudicial practices and unearned benefits they witness in both their personal and professional lives.

https://youthrex.com/infographic/how-to-be-a-racial-transformer/

HOW TO BE A RACIAL TRANSFORMER
Here's a sample illustration to remind you of the many possible ways to use your power—your superpowers—as a Racial Transformer.

OPEN MIND: learn about others' histories, plights and aspirations, and make conscious choices that prioritize racial equity and inclusion.

ALERT EYES: keep your eyes on the prize by envisioning real solutions to the realities of racism, using an equity-conscious lens, rather than colorblindness.

BIG EARS: listen to, and learn from, people of color.

VOCAL MOUTH: speak up and speak out about injustices—and help others find their voice by knowing when *not* to speak.

STRONG BACKBONE: muster the courage to take risks, go against the grain and even make mistakes.

LOVING HEART: respect and uplift the dignity and humanity of every person.

ROLLED-UP SLEEVES: dig in and do the work—not just talk—of racial justice.

OUTSTRETCHED ARMS: join hands with others unlike you in organizing and building power for change.

RACIAL JUSTICE

DECODER RING: watch out for coded racism and expose it.

SMART PHONE (if you have one): inform and activate your networks—blog, share, tweet, comment, and post prolifically about race issues and actions.

POCKETBOOK: donate to social change causes (especially those lead by people of color); and support good businesses and boycott the bad ones.

MOVING LEGS: visibly "vote with your body" by showing up in support and solidarity at public actions, marches and rallies.

GROUNDED FEET: dig in for the long haul—holding onto your values, allies, aspirations and spirit—eager to dance in the delight of being on a worthwhile and winning road to justice.

COLORLINES.com

Barriers to Action

1. Lack of self-awareness/awareness when it comes to one's own discriminatory attitudes
2. Conflict avoidant and/or fear of possible repercussions/negative experiences in the past around speaking up
3. Individuals own trauma history or experiences with racism/discrimination
4. Unsure how to address these attitudes with colleagues/clients
5. Not feeling it is appropriate to address client's discriminatory beliefs i.e not my role, paternalistic attitude when it comes to clients
6. It is not simply up to the person of colour/racialized individual to address these issues as they arise in the workplace
7. What gets in the way of responding to racism and discrimination in the workplace? Think of an example of ways in which you may have shared in or contributed to an environment that has not been inclusive

BIASED (Jennifer L. Eberhart): *please watch on your own time*

Group Exercise: Challenges requiring Action

Explore how racism and other forms of discrimination create unsafe or non-inclusive work environments for the following groups. Also explore strategies & techniques for how to respond and create safer more inclusive work environments:

1.   Co-workers / Colleagues (when directed laterally or to client communities)

2.   Clients (when directed laterally or to Care Workers)

3.   Within Teams & Organizations: Including from or towards Supervisors/ Employers, or Boards of Directors, Funders, or Partner Organizations

Please come to the presentation having thought through these areas, discussed with your peers, and be ready to share with the group

ACTION: A COMMUNICATION FRAMEWORK ON HOW TO UNPACK & RESPOND TO DISCRIMINATION, MICROAGGRESSIONS, RACISM

A = ASK clarifying questions, ie: "I want to make sure that I understand what you were saying. Were you saying that…?"

C = CURIOUS: Ask from curiosity not judgment, Listen actively and openly to their response.

T = TELL: "When I hear that statement or comment it could prompt various responses.."

I = IMPACT: Explore the potential impact of such a statement or action on others. "What do you think people might think/how might people be impacted when they hear that type of comment?"

0 = OWN: "When I hear your comment I think/feel…", "Many people might take that comment to mean...I would like to think that is not your intent."

N = NEXT STEP: Request that appropriate action be taken: "I would appreciate it if you would consider using a different term, or revisiting your view on, because some people may find it inconsistent with our community/ organization/ agreements"

(Souza, Vizenor, Sherlip, & Raser, 2016)

Practical Techniques to Respond to Racism in the Workplace - Day to Day

1. First consideration - is it safe to communicate in the moment? Is it appropriate to respond?
2. Ground yourself. It is likely when we witness/experience racism that our nervous system may get activated (fight/flight/freeze response). What this means is that it is important to ground or centre ourselves before responding.
3. Take a compassionate stance: seek to understand where the person may be coming from and acknowledge that if possible.

Practical Techniques continued...

4. Separate the person from the behaviour e.g. avoid overarching judgmental statements

5. Dialogue if possible. This may include providing education and exploring where one's beliefs are coming from.

6. Listen and respond where there is a strategic opening in the conversation

7. Use humour when possible. Allow people to make & laugh at mistakes. Self-deprecating humour is a very useful tool

8. Speak to a colleague or supervisor prior to intervening and/or to debrief with if possible.

Practical Steps at an Organizational or Institutional Level

1. Create an environment where feedback flows & difficult decisions can be taken
2. Educate managers on intersectionality
3. Take honest looks at organizational hiring, advancement, cultural practices
4. Engage managers as allies for change and hold them accountable for making small numbers grow. Tolerate discomfort!
5. Talking vs. Dismantling. Be action-oriented but not combative
6. Understand impacts and fears of Authority, including Corporate brutality, Police brutality
7. Dissect, build on, and adapt Organizational mission & vision statements
8. Ensure that there is space to hear and share Employee Experiences

Glossary of Terms

Race is a social construct. Race as a biological fact has been invalidated by biologists and geneticists, but race as a social construct is very real. Physical traits still have meaning as markers of social race identity. It is this social race identity that confers placement in the social hierarchy of society, and thereby access to or denial of privileges, power, and wealth.

Racism is the practice of discrimination and prejudice based on racial classification supported by the power to enforce that prejudice

Ethnocentrism is the view that one's own group is the center of everything and that all things are judged based on one's own group.

Assimilation means being absorbed into the cultural tradition of the dominant society and consequently losing one's historical identity.

Familism refers to strong identification and solidarity of individuals with their family as well as strong normative feelings of allegiance, dedication, reciprocity, and attachment to their family members both nuclear and extended.

Filial piety: an important concept in many parts of Asia including Korea, China, and Japan. It is the expectation that children will care for their without question in gratitude for their parents caring and sacrifices and infuses all aspects of a parents care.

Prejudice is the negative (or positive/idealized) attitudes, thoughts, and beliefs about an entire category of people formed without full knowledge or examination of the facts.

Discrimination is acting on the basis of prejudice. Discrimination is often codified by laws, regulations, and rules.

Oppression takes place when a person acts or a policy is enacted unjustly against an individual or a group because of their affiliation to a specific group where people are deprived of human rights or dignity.

Reflexivity can be defined as reflecting on our own social location (areas in which we occupy privileged, places of our power, and marginalized space) our own practice as well as the broader social, institutional organizational contexts at play that perpetuate racism through a critical lens. SW is inherently a practice that is self-reflective/reflexive and values driven.

Glossary continued

Institutional Racism is the manifestation of racism in social systems and institutions. It is the social, economic, educational, and political forces or policies that operate to foster discriminatory outcomes. It is the combination of policies, practices, or procedures embedded in bureaucratic structure that systematically lead to unequal outcomes for groups of people.

Racialized groups include people who might experience differential treatment on the basis of race, ethnicity, language, religion or culture. Racialization is the process through which groups come to be designated as different and on that basis subjected to unequal treatment. Racialized groups are treated outside the norm and receive unequal treatment based on their race. consciousness. That sense of invisibility results in decisions being made by those in power that may be harmful simply because the needs were not considered.

Exclusion, in which people are denied the opportunity to participate in a certain right,benefit, or privilege.

Marginalization people (those who are oppressed) find that they are on the fringe of political, social, or economic.

Microaggressions or Micro-inequities are "those tiny, damaging characteristics of an environment, as these characteristics affect a person not of that environment. They are the comments, the work assignments, the tone of voice, the failure of acknowledgement in meetings or social gatherings. These are not actionable violations of law or policies, but they are clear, subtle indicators of lack of respect by virtue of membership in a group.

Intersectionality promotes an understanding of human beings as shaped by the interaction of different social locations. These interactions occur within a context of connected systems and structures of power (e.g., laws, policies, state governments and other political and economic unions, religious institutions, media). Through such processes, interdependent forms of privilege and oppression shaped by colonialism, imperialism, racism, homophobia, ableism and patriarchy are created.

Additional Resources

1. UNICRI Anti-Racism Toolkit: https://issuu.com/progettisociali/docs/toolkit_stampa
2. Anti-racism toolkit: https://www.toolkits.hello-collective.com/anti-racism-toolkit#supportingemployees-sectionhttps://cfs-fcee.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Anti-Racism-Toolkit-Final-1.pdf
3. Racial Microaggressions: https://reason.kzoo.edu/csjl/assets/Racial_MicroaggressionsshortVersion.pdf
4. Georgetown University Anti-Racism Toolkit https://guides.library.georgetown.edu/antiracism
5. People's Institute for Survival & Beyond, Principles: https://www.pisab.org/our-principles/
6. One stop shop for all Anti-Racism resources for SWers: https://www.socialwork.career/2020/06/anti-racism-resources-for-social-workers-and-therapists.html
7. Six things White People can do to reach friends and family end racism: https://everydayfeminism.com/2017/08/friends-and-family-end-racism/
8. Infographic on how to be a racial transformer: https://youthrex.com/infographic/how-to-be-a-racial-transformer/
9. Fight racial bias: https://nextbigideaclub.com/fight-racial-bias-according-stanford-psychologist/24048/?
10. 'Say their Names': Chicago Public Schools toolkit: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1eNpj8hR7q_XZljgcC8XM5oZVUA72_h51HmNH0FCLO14/edit

References

Baines, D. (2011). Doing anti-oppressive practice: social justice social work by D. Baines. Black Point, NS: Fernwood publishing.

Bishop, A. (1994). Becoming and ally. Halifax NS: Fernwood Press.

National Association of Social Workers (2007). Institutional Racism and the Social Work Profession: A Call to Action.
https://www.socialworkers.org/diversity/institutionalracism.pdf

University of Guelph Human Rights and Equity Office (Understanding racialization: creating a racially equitable university) https://www.uoguelph.ca/diversity-human-rights/.../UnderstandingRacialization.pdf

Hankivsky, O (2014). Intersectionality 101. Institute for Intersectionality Research
Policy, SFU. https://www.sfu.ca/iirp/documents/resources/101_Final.pdf

Race as a Social Construct:
https://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2015/06/16/how-fluid-is-racial-identity/race-and-racial-identity-are-social-constructs#:~:text=Race%20is%20not%20biological.,would%20remain%20constant%20across%20boundaries.

https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/race-is-a-social-construct-scientists-argue/

https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/whiteness-is-a-racial-construct-its-time-to-take-it-apart/article32301637/

¿Final Questions?

Closing Exercise:

1. Set an intention: action/attitude/behaviour to actualize what we've discussed
2. 'Speak' that intention into your semi-closed fist
3. Turn your sound on and turn yourself off from 'mute'
4. Hold your fist up in front of you
5. When we say 'Action!', Open your fist and speak your intention, all together!

THANK YOU!!

Just for fun:

- Diet Racism: https://youtu.be/xdyin6uipy4
- What if Black people said stuff White people say:
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A1zLzWtULig
- **Undoing Racism® (People's Institute for Survival & Beyond) - Undoing Internalized Racial Oppression:** Internalized Racial Oppression manifests itself in two forms: 1) Internalized Racial Inferiority - The acceptance of and acting out of an inferior definition of self, given by the oppressor, is rooted in the historical designation of one's race. Over many generations, this process of disempowerment and disenfranchisement expresses itself in self-defeating behaviors. 2) Internalized Racial Superiority - The acceptance of and acting out of a superior definition is rooted in the historical designation of one's race. Over many generations, this process of empowerment and access expresses itself as unearned privileges, access to institutional power and invisible advantages based upon race. Racism is the single most critical barrier to building effective coalitions for social change. Racism has been consciously and systematically erected, and it can be undone only if people understand what it is, where it comes from, how it functions, and why it is perpetuated.