Courageous Conversations about Race in School Psychological Practice

Racial Equity Workgroup
Baltimore County Public Schools

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Maryland School Psychologists' Association
August 2020
woke
adjective [wohk]

actively aware of systemic injustices and prejudices, especially those related to civil and human rights.
One perspective.....

- When talking about systemic prejudices or benefits; a good place to start would be how you, yourself are affected
- White privilege- personal narrative
- Acknowledgement of benefits based on the racial and socioeconomic situation into which he was born
- Speaks about experiences as a white man; schooling experiences compared to interns who are people of color
Why Race?

- Race is the most difficult topic to discuss.
- Once we can talk about race comfortably, the other topics are easier.
My Perspective......

"... research tells us that we judge people in areas where we're vulnerable to shame, especially picking folks who are doing worse than we're doing."

Brene Brown

“Shame needs three things to grow exponentially in our lives: secrecy, silence, and judgment.”

– Brené Brown
If you trade your authenticity for safety, you may experience the following: anxiety, depression, eating disorders, addiction, rage, blame, resentment, and inexplicable grief.

Brene Brown
COURAGE STARTS WHEN WE SHOW UP AND LET OURSELVES BE SEEN

Brené Brown
Think, “pair,” share...

When was the last time you had a conversation about race professionally or personally?

Who was “in the room”/part of the conversation?
Our professional journey.....

- District-wide training
- Equity Workgroup
- Intellectual Disability
- Courageous Conversations
- Emotional Disability
What is a Courageous Conversation?

Any discussion with an adult or student which addresses race and encourages better understanding and connection.

A courageous conversation is an essential strategy to address racial disparities through safe, authentic, and effective cross-racial dialogue.
Agreements

- Stay Engaged
- Speak Your Truth
- Experience Discomfort
- Expect and Accept Non-closure
Conditions

1. Keep it **Personal, Local and Immediate**
2. Isolate **Race**
3. Normalize social construction & multiple perspectives
4. Monitor agreements, conditions and establish parameters
5. Use a "working definition" for race
6. Examine the presence and role of "Whiteness"
Personal, Local, and Immediate

- Describe race in your life
- How race impacts your life
- To what degree are you conscious of this?
Isolate Race

- Address race explicitly and intentionally
- Understand the deeper meaning
Why courageous conversations are important for school psychologists?

Acknowledging impact of race allows space for more trust and honest discussions with students, parents, and colleagues.

Knowledge of racial implications within the school hopefully leads to more equitable decision making in the school.

Encourages development of more authentic connections.
Stereotypes
- **American Indian or Alaska Native.** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment.

- **Asian.** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.

- **Black or African American.** A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa. Terms such as "Haitian" or "Negro" can be used in addition to "Black or African American."

- **Hispanic or Latino.** A person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race. The term, "Spanish origin," can be used in addition to "Hispanic or Latino."

- **Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander.** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.

- **White.** A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.
Question: Based on the previous slide, what racial group do you identify with?

Click Padlet Link

Click the “+” sign for the group you identify with

List common stereotypes held about your racial group
Discuss:

- Where were you on the compass as you wrote and reviewed the stereotypes about your group?
- What would you like those that are NOT in your group to know about the stereotypes listed?
Implicit Bias

Agreements

1. Stay Engaged
2. Experience Discomfort
3. Speak your Truth
4. Expect/Accept Non-closure

• Conditions
1. Keep it *Personal, Local and Immediate*
2. Isolate *Race*

Why courageous conversations are challenging for school psychologists (and most everybody else)?

Helms Model of White Identity Development:

- **Stage One** - Pay little attention to racial identity "I'm just normal"
- **Stage Two** - Beginning awareness of racism and White privilege as a result of personal encounters; characterized by discomfort
- **Stage Three** - Feelings of guilt or denial may be transformed into anger directed at people of color
- **Stage Four** - Individual gains an understanding of racism as a system but doesn't quite know what to do about it
- **Stage Five** - A recognized need to find more positive self-definition, need to find ways of thinking that go beyond role of victimizer
- **Stage Six** - Whiteness is incorporated as part of personal identity, marked increase in effectiveness in multiracial settings.
Why courageous conversations are challenging for school psychologists (and most everybody else)?

- When engaging in courageous conversations or racial dialogue, White and Black participants approach the topic in a different manner, which can strain communication.

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<tr>
<th>White Talk</th>
<th>Color Commentary</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Verbal</td>
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- However, this should not be seen as a barrier, as recognizing these issues are part of the ongoing work.
Question 1: What do you believe is the impact of race in your life?

- **Conditions**
  1. Keep it *Personal, Local and Immediate*
  2. Isolate *Race*
Question 2: What was it like for you to hear about the impact of race on someone's life?

• Conditions
  1. Keep it *Personal, Local and Immediate*
  2. Isolate *Race*
Question 3: How do you consider race when you are engaging with students in your school(s)?

- **Conditions**
  1. Keep it *Personal, Local and Immediate*
  2. Isolate *Race*
Thank you for your participation in this journey!