RACISM, UNCONSCIOUS BIAS AND CREATING INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENTS

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We would like to acknowledge with respect the Seneca Nation, known as the “Great Hill People” and “Keepers of the Western Door” of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. We take this opportunity to thank the original caretakers on whose ancestral lands the University of Rochester now stands.

Guzman-Rea, J., Jemison, P., 2020. (Seneca, Heron Clan)
There are no right or wrong answers. Everyone’s experiences and opinions are important, and everyone is encouraged to express themselves without consequence.

If expressing a different point of view, participants should focus on sharing their own experiences rather than invalidating someone else’s.

Participants should monitor their own participation to ensure that all voices are heard.

What is said during the session is confidential.

SAFE SPACE - GROUND RULES
Understanding key concepts such as racism, privilege, unconscious bias, microaggressions, and allyship

Recognize how these concepts impact our environment

Describe potential strategies for interrupting behaviors associated with unconscious bias to help create an inclusive environment
UNDERSTANDING TERMINOLOGY AND RELATIONSHIPS

- Privilege
- Microaggression
- Unconscious Bias
- Allyship
- Cultural Humility

RACISM
The idea of race and racial inferiority was created to justify the unequal treatment of enslaved people.

“Race” is an historical “scientific” and biological myth. It is an idea. Today, scientists prefer to use the term “ancestry” to describe human diversity.

Geneticists tell us that there is often more variability within a given so-called “race” than between ”races” and that there are no essential genetic markers linked specifically to “race.”
Sickle-cell anemia is more commonly found in those of “sub-Saharan African” descent, rather than in “Black” patients.

Cystic fibrosis is more commonly found in those of “Northern European” descent, rather than in “white” patients.
BLACK, INDIGENOUS, AND PEOPLE OF COLOR

- Centers the experiences of Black and Indigenous groups and demonstrates solidarity between communities of color

- Reinforces that not all people of color have the same experience, especially when it comes to legislation and systemic oppression
Let’s first define racism:

- Racism =
  Racial Prejudice (white people and people of color have this)
  
  *Plus*

  Systemic, Institutional Power (white people have this)
RACISM

HEALTH

SCIENCE

GOVERNMENT

BANKING

EDUCATION

PRISON

TELEVISION

LAW ENFORCEMENT
LEVELS ON WHICH RACISM EXISTS

- Systemic
- Institutional
- Interpersonal
- Internalized
Systemic (structural) racism is racial bias among institutions and across society.

- Ongoing racial inequalities.
INSTITUTIONAL RACISM

- Institutional racism occurs within institutions and systems of power.

- Institutions create policies, practices, and procedures that create different outcomes for different racial groups.

- The systematic distribution of resources, power and opportunity in our society to the benefit of people who are white and the exclusion of people of color.

- For example, the under- and misrepresentation of certain racial groups in the media.
INTERPERSONAL RACISM

- Interpersonal racism occurs between individuals.

- Individual racism refers to an individual's racist assumptions, beliefs or behaviors; can be conscious or unconscious.

- Once we bring our private beliefs into our interaction with others, racism is now in the interpersonal realm.
INTERNALIZED RACISM

- Internalized racism lies within individuals.

- Internalized racism is the personal conscious or subconscious acceptance of the dominant society’s racist views, stereotypes and biases of racial and ethnic groups.

- It can lead to prejudice towards others of a different race; internalized oppression – negative beliefs about oneself by people of color; or internalized privilege – beliefs about superiority or entitlement by white people.
UNDERSTANDING TERMINOLOGY AND RELATIONSHIPS

Privilege → Microaggression → Allyship → Cultural Humility

Unconscious Bias → RACISM
Bias: “prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person, or group compared with another, usually in a way considered to be unfair.”

**Explicit bias** is an attitude that somebody is consciously aware of having.

**Unconscious bias** is a positive or negative mental attitude towards a thing, person, or group that a person holds at an unconscious level.
“To believe unfairly that all people or things with a particular characteristic are the same” (Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary)
We tend to evaluate individuals based on the characteristics of the group to which they belong.

How are stereotypes created?
Everyone has it

Think of it as a HABIT of MIND born out of our experiences

“Ordinary mental operations that serve us quite well in most circumstances but can sometimes fail our intentions”

We have a natural tendency to “lump” – make associations that organize our worlds

Most people believe they have less/fewer unconscious biases than others

It is difficult to conceptualize how our unconscious biases are not the same as our conscious ideas/thoughts
TEST: HOW MANY PASSES DOES THE TEAM IN WHITE MAKE?

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oSQJP40PcGI
Our biases are most likely to be activated by three key conditions. They are:

- stress
- time constraints
- multi-tasking
Old Framework: Prejudice is bad so if I think or act with bias, I am a bad person

New Framework: Prejudiced thoughts and actions are habits that we all have and breaking these habits requires more than good intentions
LEARNING AND UNLEARNING

- Unconscious bias develops early in life from repeated reinforcement of social stereotypes. Implicit pro-white bias occurs among children as young as 3-5 years old. (Baron, A. S., & Banaji, M. R. (2006). *Psychological science, 17*(1), 53-58.)

- Because unconscious biases are learned behaviors – like any learned behavior – they can be “unlearned.”
UNDERSTANDING TERMINOLOGY AND RELATIONSHIPS

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MICROAGGRESSIONS

Subtle, verbal and nonverbal slights, insults, indignities, and denigrating messages directed toward an individual due to their group identity, often automatically and unconsciously. Usually committed by well-intentioned folks who are unaware of the hidden messages being communicated.

First proposed by psychiatrist Chester M. Pierce, MD, in the 1970s.
Microaggressions are similar to carbon monoxide - "invisible, but potentially lethal" - continuous exposure to these type of interactions "can be a sort of death by a thousand cuts to the victim"

THE MEDIA

Two residents wade through chest-deep water after finding bread and soda from a local grocery store after Hurricane Katrina came through the area in New Orleans, Louisiana. (AFP/Getty Images/Chris Graythen)

A young man walks through chest deep flood water after looting a grocery store in New Orleans on Tuesday, Aug. 30, 2005. Flood waters continue to rise in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina did extensive damage when it
You speak English so well!

You’re so articulate!

I’m not racist. I have Black friends.

Faculty/medical student of color mistaken for a service worker

Descriptions “a great female scientist”

Don’t blame me, I never owned slaves.

Labeling an assertive female as “aggressive”, while describing a male counterpart as a “forceful leader”.

Examples of Microaggressions
"I DON'T SEE COLOR"

The dangers of the mentality:

- It allows you to ignore the complexities of racial issues.
- You can’t fix something you can’t see.
- You're not actively dismantling your own prejudices (we all have them!)
- It limits your ability to appreciate individualism.
- It minimizes the struggles of POC in today's society.

@ohappydani
HOW DO MICRO-AGGRESSIONS IMPACT PEOPLE?

- Build up over time
- Feel:
  - Unwelcome
  - Unacknowledged
  - Undervalued
  - Excluded
- Erode confidence
Hiring (affects diversity)

Promotion (career advancement)

Admissions (diversity)

Committee assignments (organizational decisions and policy)

Clinical (health care disparities)

REPORTS OF THE IMPACT OF UNCONSCIOUS BIAS
Are Emily and Greg More Employable than Lakisha and Jamal?

5,000 fictitious job applications sent to companies with help wanted ads in newspapers throughout Boston and Chicago.

Emily and Greg receive 50% more callbacks.
Black children with appendicitis were 80 percent less likely than white children to receive opioids for their pain (Goyal et al., 2015).

Some white medical students and residents believe Black people’s nerve endings are less sensitive than white people’s (Hoffman et al., 2016).

40% of 1st and 2nd year white medical students endorsed the belief that Black people’s skin is thicker than white people’s (Hoffman et al., 2016).
U.S. POPULATION BECOMING MORE DIVERSE

“Of all forms of inequity, injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhuman.”

Martin Luther King, Jr., National Convention of the Medical Committee for Human Rights, Chicago, 1966
At a hearing on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC on June 23, 2020, Dr Fauci was asked whether “racism itself” may be a big part of what’s driving the high coronavirus death rate in Black Americans.

“The answer, Congressmen, is yes,” Fauci said.
FACTORS THAT INCREASE RISK

- Discrimination
- Healthcare access and utilization
- Occupation
- Transportation
- Educational, income, and wealth gaps
- Housing
- Health Inequities
UNDERSTANDING TERMINOLOGY AND RELATIONSHIPS

RACISM

Unconscious Bias

Microaggression

Privilege

Allyship

Cultural Humility
WHAT IS PRIVILEGE?

- A special right, advantage or immunity granted or available only to a particular person or group of people

- A right or benefit that is given to some people and not to others
WHAT ARE SOME PRIVILEGES THAT PEOPLE HAVE OBSERVED OR EXPERIENCED?

Race
Ethnicity
able-bodied
Sexual orientation
height
gender
religion
economic or social class
“It’s the level of societal advantage that comes with being seen as the norm in America, automatically conferred irrespective of wealth, gender or other factors. It makes life smoother, but it’s something you would barely notice unless it were suddenly taken away — or unless it had never applied to you in the first place.”
WHITE PRIVILEGE: AN EXAMPLE

A white male with a criminal record, is 5% more likely to get a job over a man of color with a clean record.
White supremacy does not only refer to individual white people and their individual intentions or actions but to the belief, theory, or doctrine that white people are inherently superior to people from all other racial and ethnic groups, especially Black people, and are therefore rightfully the dominant group in any society.
OVERT
WHITE SUPREMACY
(Socially Unacceptable)

Lynching
Hate Crimes
Swastikas
KKK
Burning Crosses
Neo-Nazis
Racist Jokes
Racial Slurs
The N-Word
Hiring Discrimination
Discriminatory Lending
Mass Incarceration
Police Brutality
Euro-centric Curriculum
School-to-Prison Pipeline
Confederate Flags
Not Believing Experiences of POC
Virtuous Victim Narrative
Denial of White Privilege
Denial of Racism
Tokenism
White Savior Complex

COVERT
WHITE SUPREMACY
(Socially Acceptable)

Assuming that Good Intentions are Enough
Self-appointed White Ally
Celebration of Columbus Day

“Make America Great Again”
“Don’t blame me, I never owned slaves”
“Bootstrapping Theory”
Cultural Appropriation

“Post-Racial”
“Just one human family”
“Believing we are ‘Post-Racial’"

“Police murdering POC"
“Racial Profiling"
“Anti-Immigration Policies/Practices"

Colorblindness
Racist Mascots
Claiming Reverse Racism
“Not Challenging Racist Jokes

“Blaming the Victim"
“Expecting POC to Teach White People"
“But what about me?"

“English-only Initiatives"
“Housing Discrimination"

“Tokenism"
“White Savior Complex"
THE American Dream GAME

 ARE YOU JUST SLOW OR WHAT?

START

BLACK

WHITE

FREE LAND FROM INDIANS JUMP 2 SPACES

FREE LABOR FROM SLAVES TAKE ANOTHER TURN
Described by others as “swimming with the current” or “walking with the wind at our back”

When privilege remains invisible it is difficult to see how it affects the privileged and the unprivileged.

Becoming aware of privilege can lead to feelings of guilt for some

Recognizing privilege may help to address inequity
UNDERSTANDING TERMINOLOGY AND RELATIONSHIPS

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WHAT CAN ALLIES DO? HERE’S ONE STORY...

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GTvU7uUgjUI
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<td>Be willing to make mistakes, apologize, learn and try again.</td>
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<td>Be willing to be uncomfortable and have uncomfortable conversations.</td>
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<td>Be willing to confront your own privilege.</td>
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<td>Be aware that you cannot always change the antagonist but you can empower and support the protagonist.</td>
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<td>Learn how to speak up as an ally.</td>
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**How can individuals become allies?**
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RACISM
Competence indicates a theory can be mastered

None of us can be truly “competent” in another culture

Cultural humility: Lifelong learning and critical self-reflection

“Humble reflection on how one’s knowledge is always partial, incomplete, and inevitably biased”
Acad Med. 2008; 83: 625-6
INDIVIDUAL STRATEGIES TO REDUCE BIAS

1. Recognize bias is normal
2. Question the source of our discomfort with different groups of people
3. Engage with people in groups you don’t know well/have biases
4. Get feedback when possible

   Ross, 2014

6. Individuation: focus on individual rather than group membership

   Burgess, et al, 2007
WAYS TO INTERRUPT BIAS SITUATIONS

- “Ouch”
- Repeat back what is said
- Ask for more information (can you elaborate on that?)
- Play dumb; challenge the stereotype (e.g. I don’t understand your joke. Can you explain it to me?)
- Separate intent from impact
- Tell them they’re too smart to say something like that
- Appeal to values and principles
- Point out policy/law that prohibits such conduct
QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION
Centers the experiences of Black and Indigenous groups and demonstrates solidarity between communities of color.

Reinforces that not all people of color have the same experience, especially when it comes to legislation and systemic oppression.