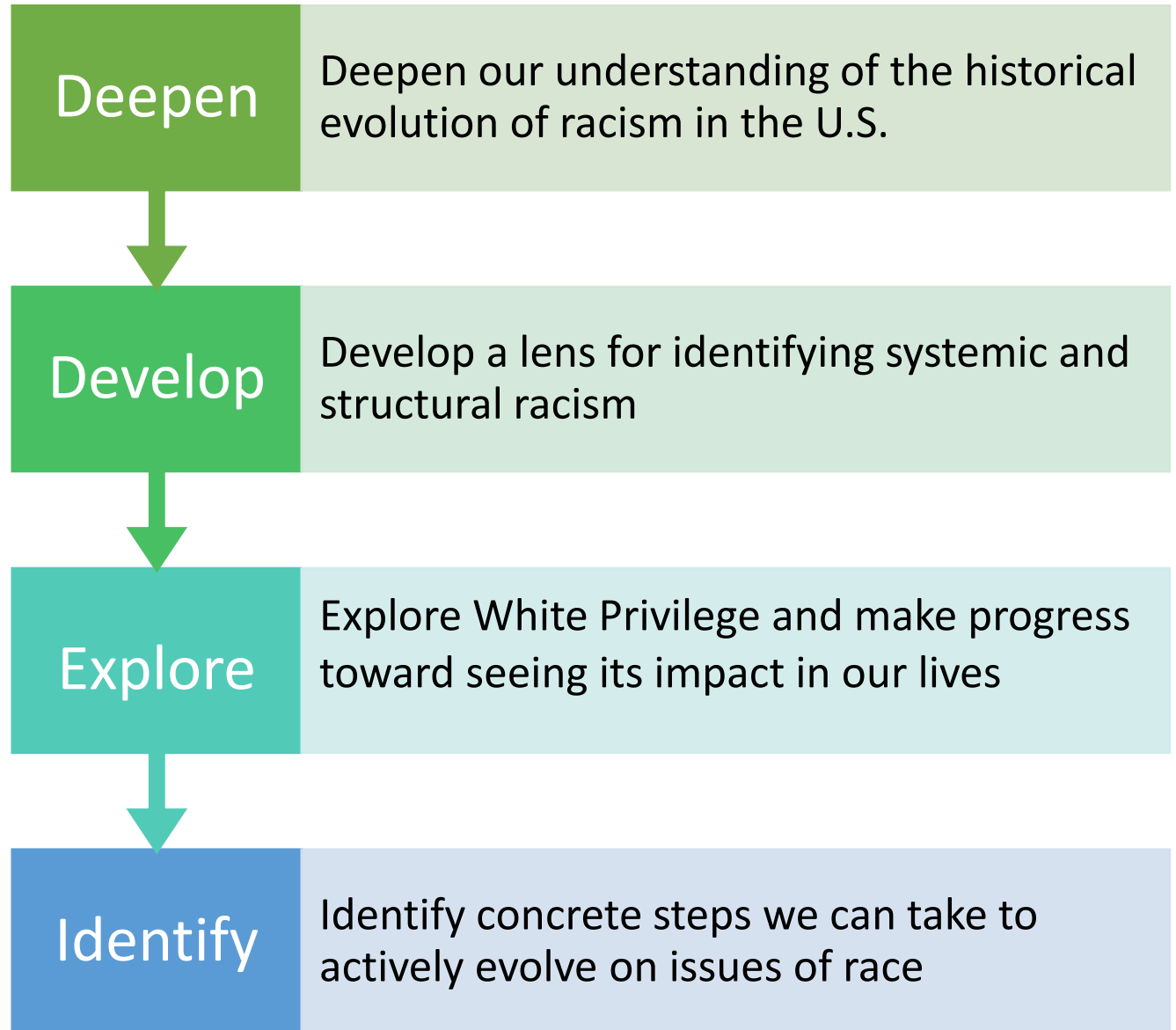





The Uncomfortable Truth: A Primer for Undoing Racism

Katie Hamm, MSW

Our Work Today



A person wearing olive green military-style clothing and black gloves is walking through a muddy, cracked landscape. The ground is dark brown and heavily eroded, with deep cracks visible. The background shows a hazy, overcast sky and distant hills. The overall scene is desolate and suggests a difficult environment.

We have to
walk through
the mud



Who Am I?



Disclaimer

- Any discussion of race in America is incomplete without acknowledging the harm done to Indigenous People by White European colonists.
- Today we focus on racism against Black Americans, while noting that the work is not complete until we repair the harm done to First Nations people, Latinx people and other People of Color, including Hmong Americans in our home communities.



<https://nativenewsonline.net/currents/no-longer-on-a-pedestal-california-columbus-statue-gets-closeted/>

A brief history

Enslavement of African People in the U.S. (1619? – 1865)

- Christopher Columbus likely transported the first Africans to the Americas in the late 1490s on his expeditions to the Dominican Republic (then Hispaniola) which fits what we know of the origins of the slave trade 125 years before the White Lion docked in the James River in 1619 with “20 and odd” Africans.
- Twelve U.S. Presidents were enslavers, eight of whom had enslaved people during their time as president.
- Thomas Jefferson enslaved more than 600 people of African descent and fathered many children with Sally Hemings, an enslaved woman believed to be the half sister of his wife.
 - History has traditionally been written to depict a “loving” relationship between Jefferson and Hemings, something historians challenge today. Hemings was 14 when she gave birth to Jefferson’s first child and was enslaved by him until after his death in 1826 when she was allowed to leave by Jefferson’s daughter Martha.

The Brutality of the Enslavement of Black People

- Vicious, intentional separation of families: mothers and fathers from their children, children from their parents and siblings, men and women from each other.
- The first formal Slave Patrol was formed in 1706 in the Carolinas. These early patrols are considered the birth of modern law enforcement.
- Torture served as an example to others to not defy orders or attempt to self-emancipate.
 - These tactics included beatings and torture from whipping to burning and branding, the removal of hands or feet, raping girls and women (including young children and grandmothers) in front of their families and other enslaved people, raping men in front of other enslaved men, and other means.



The “father” of modern gynecology

- J. Marion Sims – considered a pioneer in surgical gynecological procedures experimented on enslaved Black women in the 1840’s *without anesthesia*.
- Sims believed that Black women did not experience pain. Even though some of his experimental surgeries lasted more than an hour with women screaming in pain for the duration.
- This myth persists in medical professions today, according to a study by the University of Virginia (2016).

Photo retrieved from Facebook. Credit to Chartena Iris Douglas.



Emancipation Proclamation

- January 1, 1863 – Lincoln signed the document that would eventually provide grounds to free (not all) but many of the enslaved people in confederate states and redirected the purpose of the Civil War.
- It is extremely important to note that Lincoln was no great lover of Black people. He did not consider Blacks to be equal to whites.
- Congress passes the 13th Amendment abolishing slavery in January 1865. Lincoln was assassinated within 3 months. The Civil War ended officially on May 9, 1865.
- Juneteenth – the commemoration of the day enslaved people in Texas were told they were free by a Union Army general per federal order on June 19, 1865.

- The KKK was created in 1865 initially as a private club for former confederate soldiers
- Confederate soldiers became judges and law enforcement officers, who became the enforcers of Jim Crow laws
- Violence against Black families and communities continued as Black schools were destroyed, homes were burned, and Black men, women and children were targeted for acts of violence and torture

Photo taken on June 12, 2020 near the Lakota boat landing off of Highway K in Conover, Wisconsin.





Jim Crow (1877 – 1968)

Jim Crow laws were a collection of state and local statutes that legalized racial segregation. The laws were meant to marginalize African Americans by denying them the right to vote, hold jobs, buy homes, get an education or other opportunities. They were designed to OPPRESS.

Jim Crow laws were enforced through arrests, fines, prison, violence and death.



Tulsa Race Massacre (1921)

- Occurred over 18 hours on May 31-June 1, 1921 when a mob of over 1,500 white people attacked residents, homes and businesses in the predominantly Black Greenwood neighborhood of Tulsa, Oklahoma.
- 1,256 houses were burned, and historians estimate over 300 people were killed, mostly Black
- Destroyed the most affluent Black Business District in the country also known as Black Wall Street



Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment (1932-1972)

* 600 Black men were told if they participated in the project they would receive free health care.

* 399 of the men had latent syphilis while 201 served as the control group

* The men were given placebos, even though penicillin was the recommended treatment by 1947. They were NEVER actively treated for their syphilis so doctors could study the progression of the disease over the life span.

* As a result participants died, became blind or mentally ill, and passed it to their wives who then passed it to children.

* Congress held hearings on the experiments in **1973** and an out of court settlement of \$10 million was awarded to survivors and the heirs of those who died.



“Crazy thing is, they think all this is about George Floyd when we’re still crying tears for Emmett Till.”

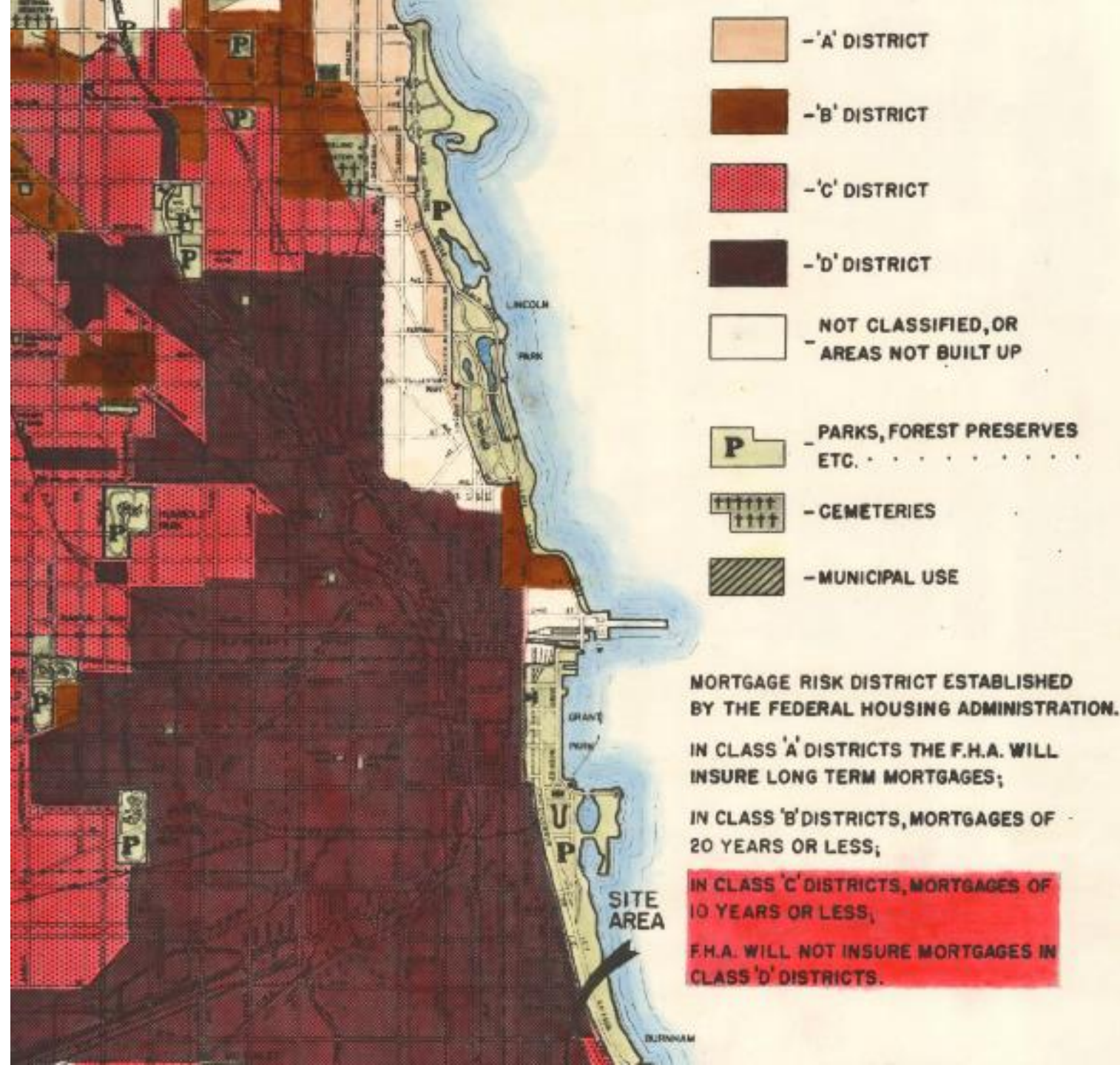


1955: Carolyn Bryant, the white woman who accused Emmett of whistling at her, admitted in 2007 that she lied during her testimony. She is 84 years old today. Her then husband and brother-in-law, who tortured the 14-year-old boy to death, were never convicted of any crime.

Redlining (1934-1970's)

- In the 1930's the Federal Home Loan Bank and the Home Owners' Loan Corporation conspired to create maps with marked areas considered bad risks for mortgages.
- This concentrated poverty as mostly Black communities in red-lined neighborhoods had no access to loans.
- In 2008, "reverse red-lining" extended credit on unfair terms (targeting those same communities) with sub-prime loans creating higher rates of foreclosure in Black neighborhoods during the Housing Crisis.

A 1938 FHA map of Chicago. Note the loan guidelines for each color-coded zone on the bottom right.



Accumulation of White Wealth

- In 2016, the net worth of a typical white family was \$171,000, nearly ten times greater than that of a Black family at \$17,150.
- Gaps in wealth between Black and white households reveal the effects of accumulated inequality and discrimination for generations

hamiltonproject.org



What does this look like in practice?

Gallup and the Brookings Institution published a report in 2018 that showed homes in majority Black neighborhoods were valued 23 percent lower than similar homes in white areas. Researchers estimated the lower appraisals cost Black homeowners \$156 billion in home equity.

A mixed-race family got their home appraised for \$330k, way below the local average

For a 2nd appraisal, they removed all black family photos/culture items & had only the white dad home. The appraisal: \$465k

Black-owned homes are devalued 23% on average

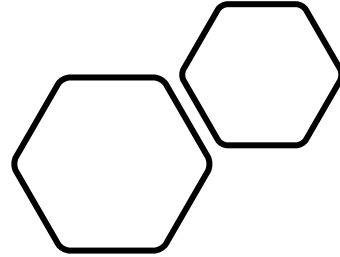
<https://t.co/PChbtDLtDF>



NYTIMES.COM

Black Homeowners Face Discrimination in Appraisals

From Enslavement to Mass Incarceration



- The Thirteenth amendment did abolish enslavement, but it allowed an exception: enslavement remained appropriate as punishment for a crime, ie through *incarceration*
- Criminal offenses post 13th amendment such as “mischief” and “insulting gestures” were disproportionately applied to Blacks
- “Convict leasing” helped rebuild the south by supplying labor for farming, railroads, mining, and logging. Prisoners were contracted under the legal status of laborers and were sold to the highest private bidder

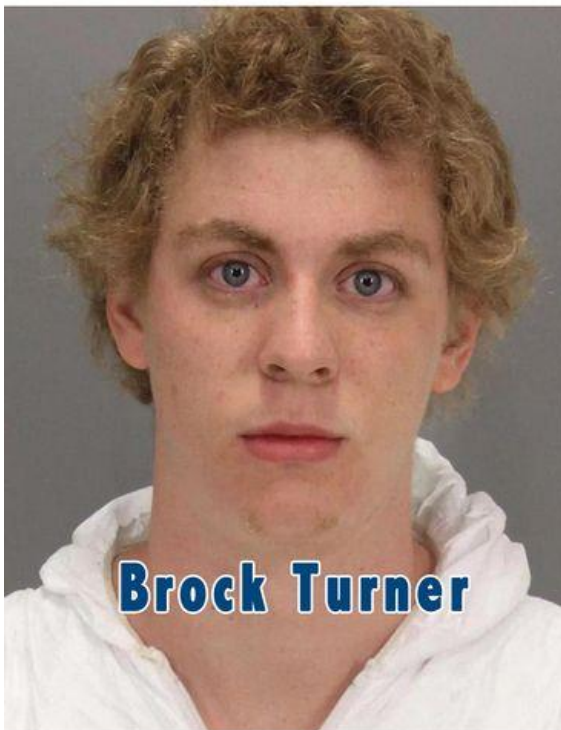
FROM SLAVE TO CRIMINAL WITH ONE AMENDMENT



13TH

- African Americans were arrested by the thousands during this period, were tackled with court costs and fines. When many had no means to pay off their debts, they were sold into forced labor
- “Prisoners became younger and blacker, and the length of their sentences soared” (David Oshinsky author of *Worse Than Slavery*)
- Over the past 40 years the U.S. prison population has increased over 500 percent with over 2 million people behind bars
- Black People are incarcerated at more than 5 times the rate of whites
- In 2014, Black people were 34% of the U.S. prison population though made up only 12% of the general population (whites make up 64% of the U.S. population but are 30% of prisoners) <https://www.naacp.org/criminal-justice-fact-sheet/>

Two College Athletes Who Raped Unconscious Women



Brock Turner



Cory Batey

Both Found Guilty, Sentenced:

**6 Months in
Local Jail**

**15 Years in
Prison**

What we haven't talked about...

- Congressional mismanagement of the Freedman's Savings Bank in 1874
- Indentured Servitude
- The GI Bill's impact on Black servicemen
- New Deal's Fair Labor Standards Act's exemption of domestic, agricultural, and service occupations
- Red Summer of 1919
- Three-Fifths Compromise
- One Drop Rule
- Slave Codes
- Bleeding Kansas
- Anti-Literacy Laws
- The War on Drugs
- The Myth of the Welfare Queen
- The Myth of Black on Black crime
- The School to Prison Pipeline
- The role of advertising & media in perpetuating myths about Black people throughout this time to the present
- Jesus was a man of color

So, what is implicit bias?

- Explicit Bias – a consciously held belief that is expressed directly.
 - “I simply like white people more than Black people. It’s just what it is.”
- *Implicit* Bias – a sub-conscious belief that is expressed indirectly with a lack of awareness or denial that you hold the belief
 - “Black people are just naturally born athletes.”
 - Choosing to sit nearer to a group of white people than Black people at a conference.

- Slavery (which was legal) (explicit)
- Jim Crow laws (explicit & implicit)
 - Segregation
 - Redlining
- Mandatory sentencing implementation (implicit)
 - Black people receive longer sentences than whites
- But also... (implicit)
 - School and business dress code policies that exclude Black natural hair
 - Screening out job applicants whose names sound “Black”

Laws & policies like...

Cheryl Ford
@BButterflyinc

Follow

Hmmm. My Intelligent, STRAIGHT **A**, 4.0 daughter can't wear her natural hair in braids to school? #CovertRacism2016 smh



HAIR/PERSONAL GROOMING
Hair must be clean and neat at all times

- Hair styles that are extreme, distracting, or attention-getting will not be permitted. No dreadlocks, cornrows, twists, mohawks, and no jewelry will be worn in hair.
- Hair must be a natural hair color. (No two-toned hair or severe contrasts). This includes unnatural hair colors.
- No male may dye, tint or high light his hair in any way.
- The male's hair length must be kept at a reasonable length; hair no longer than the top of the shirt collar, above the eyebrows and Afros no more than two inches in length (tapered sides and

© Twitter

How does this happen?

Societal message:

- Don't make waves
- Don't challenge the status quo

Our behavior:

- Prejudiced behavior
- Oppressive behavior & acceptance of privilege
- Behavior based on internalized oppression

To interrupt the cycle:

- We must unlearn the untruths
- Replace with new attitudes & knowledge
- Learn and practice ally skills
- Take action against oppression

We are born into society

Internalization

Eventually we believe:

- Stereotypes & lies = Truth
- Human Difference = Negative
- Some groups are more valuable than others

Systemic Training begins:

- Myths
- Stereotypes
- Misinformation
- Missing information
- Biased history (for example – Christopher Columbus, George Washington's teeth)

Taught & Reinforced by:

- Family & friends
- Schools, teachers, books
- Religious institutions (Missions)
- Media
- Government
- Cultural "standards"

White Privilege

- Inherent advantage possessed by a white person on the basis of their race in a society characterized by racial inequality and injustice

– oxford dictionary





White Privilege
DOESN'T MEAN YOUR LIFE HASN'T BEEN
HARD.
IT MEANS THAT YOUR SKIN COLOUR
ISN'T ONE OF THE THINGS MAKING IT
HARDER! #BLM

WHITE ♡
SILENCE
♡ = ♡
VIOLENCE

- I can if I wish arrange to be in the company of people of my race most of the time.
- I can go shopping alone, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed.
- I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of my race widely represented.
- When I am told about our national heritage or about "civilization," I am shown that people of my color made it what it is.
- I do not have to educate my children to be aware of systemic racism for their own daily physical protection.
- I am never asked to speak for all the people of my racial group
- I can choose blemish cover or bandages in "flesh" color and have them more or less match my skin.

McIntosh full essay, "Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack" (1988/1990)





Questions we can ask ourselves:

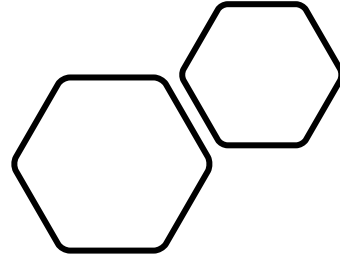
- When you go to school or work, do you see people that look like you and are the same race?
- Do you feel that you can go about everyday life, without someone making you feel like you are suspicious, up to no good, or a suspect?
- Do you feel safe calling the police to come to your home in an emergency?
- Do you have to focus on how you're dressed to make sure that you don't attract unwanted attention from the police?
- Do you feel that your race hinders you when traveling on airplanes, checking into Airbnb, renting apartments, or buying a home?

Racial Microaggressions

- Racial microaggressions are daily indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostility or superiority. They are negative insults toward people of color. They can often be invisible, and one only knows when it has happened because of a feeling of discomfort or a sense of not belonging that accompanies the interaction with a White person. White people who perpetrate microaggressions are often unaware of their behavior and can become defensive when confronted with their actions resulting oftentimes in further microaggressions: “You’re paranoid.” “You’re too sensitive” “I didn’t mean it that way.” Etc.

(Adapted from Sue et al. 2007)

Common microaggressions

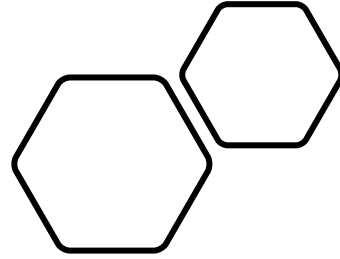


Assumption of criminality/stereotyping

- Clutching your purse or bag a little bit tighter when a group of Black youth walk by.
- Crossing the street to avoid a Black male.
- Locking the doors of your car at an intersection because you are driving in a “Black” neighborhood.
- Asking a Black woman how many children she has as part of casual conversation.

When we do this we make the assumption that Black people are criminal, will hurt you if given the chance, can't be trusted, are “overly” sexual, etc.

Common microaggressions, cont



Assumption that White cultural values are the ideal

- “Black people are always so LOUD.”
- “You’re so pretty for a Black girl.”
- “You speak so well.” or “You’re so articulate.”
- “Can I touch your hair?”

We’re assuming (due to our programming) that White behavior, speech and appearance is the norm.



Common Arguments that are Harmful



“Slavery was a long time ago...why can't we move on?”

- My grandmother, who partially raised me, was born in 1914.
- Her mother was born in 1889 and worked a family farm with formerly enslaved farm workers as a child.



“I don’t see
color.”

Why might this be
harmful?



White people are oppressed, too...



- White people CAN be oppressed in ways *other than race*, such as sexual orientation, gender and gender identity, body size and physical ability, class, etc.
- However, within those forms of oppression white privilege still lives.

All Lives Matter

- Black Lives Matter is about focus, not exclusion.
- When we say Black Lives Matter, we are saying Black Lives Matter, *too*. And we say this, because we don't see it reflected by society.



Gabrielle Union ✓
@itsgabrielleu

If all lives matter... SHOW US!!! Prove it! Show us our bodies hold the same value. There is no excuse for the slaughter. None.

5:56 AM · Jul 7, 2016 · [Twitter for Android](#)

34.8K Retweets **34.4K** Likes



Blue Lives Matter

- Being a cop is a choice, being Black isn't. A uniform comes off, skin color doesn't.
- You are Black from birth.
- Law enforcement is a vocation, being Black is an identity.
- Being injured (or killed) on the job is an occupational hazard that you sign up for. A harsh reality, but there it is.
- Being murdered or harmed because you are Black is a real lived fear that is constant and chronic, and that *no one chooses*.

So, what do I do now?

Educate ourselves through the voices of Black authors

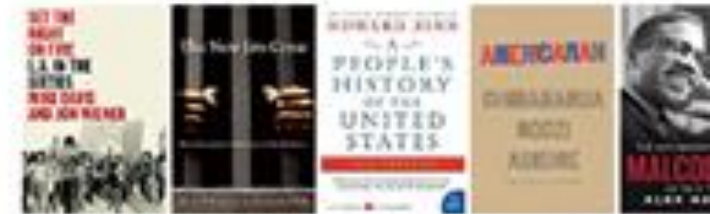
(I will follow up with a list of resources after the training)

Listopia > Anti Racism Book Lists



Let's Dismantle the Patriarchy

217 books — 46 voters



Library of Resistance

152 books — 32 voters



Immigrant Justice & Anti-Racism

121 books — 18 voters



Social Justice Vegan Books

49 books — 16 voters



Fight the Power! Activism in fiction

36 books — 14 voters



Books for Anti-Racist Teachers

48 books — 8 voters



Did you know?

Black fathers are the most involved fathers of any race?

The CDC reports that the majority of Black fathers live with their children (contrary to the myth) and, Black fathers are the most involved of all primary recorded race and ethnic groups.



Surgeon's kind
gesture proves 'why
Black doctors are
important,' patient
says

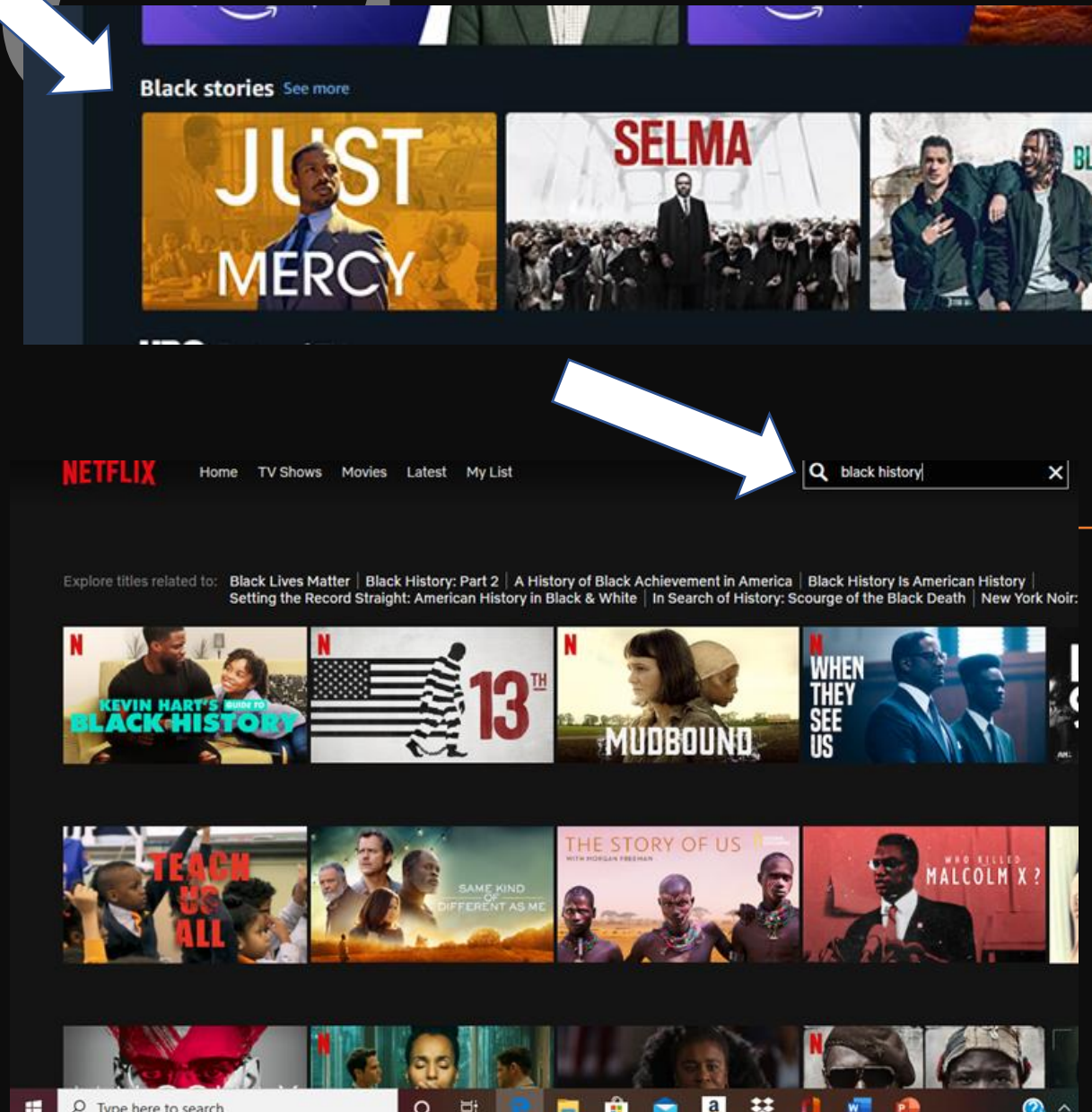


Lindsay Lowe 26, 2020



Offer ourselves counter-narratives

- Follow Black leaders and authors, Black social media groups and news sources
 - Consume Black films (written, directed, and performed by Black artists)
 - This has never been easier!
 - (13th and When They See Us, both by Ava DuVernay are good places to start)
 - Also, White Like Me by Tim Wise for more historical context
-



Be willing to be uncomfortable

- Take risks
- Stand up (speak up when needed)
- Be open to and accepting of critical feedback
- Be willing to apologize if you make a mistake (and you will)
- Respect the need for *Black (or POC) only* spaces and conversations

“The key to moving forward is what we do with our discomfort. We can use it as a door out—blame the messenger and disregard the message. Or we can use it as a door in by asking, Why does this unsettle me? What would it mean for me if this were true?”

“The most profound message of racial segregation may be that the absence of people of color from our lives is no real loss. Not one person who loved me, guided me, or taught me ever conveyed that segregation deprived me of anything of value.”

Robin DiAngelo

WHITE FRAGILITY

WHY IT'S SO HARD

FOR WHITE PEOPLE TO

TALK ABOUT RACISM

DIANGELO







The Power of Relationships





Questions

