



# Overcoming Racism in Spite of White Supremacy

Understanding what it is

FREC Conference Nov. 2 & 3, 2018



# Introductions:

- Name
- Where you live
- Where you work
- One fun fact about who you are



# What is Racism?



Discuss in groups of 3 or 4



# RACISM

“Given the dominant conceptualization of racism as individual acts of cruelty, it follows that only terrible people who consciously don’t like people of color can enact racism.

Though this conceptualization is misinformed, it is not benign. In fact, it functions beautifully to make it nearly impossible to engage in the necessary dialogue and self-reflection that can lead to change.”

(DiAngelo, 2018, p. 123)



## Racism: personal & institutional

Personal Racism = dislike or hate of people because of their ethnicity, skin color, or other distinguishing human characteristic. Biases keep racism alive!

Institutional racism = encompasses our economic, political, social, and cultural structures, actions, and beliefs that systematize and perpetuate an unequal distribution of privileges, resources and power between white people and people of color (Hilliard, 1992).



Rosa Parks was arrested in 1956 for failing to give up her seat on a Montgomery city bus.

# Racism & White Supremacy

Racism is a structure; not an event!

White Supremacy is part of that structure;

White Supremacy is the unnamed political system that has made the modern world what it is today. It has shaped Western political thought for hundreds of years – it is never named! It's an economic system that has been structured around the racial exploitation of others.

White Supremacy is a sociopolitical economic system of domination based on racial categories that benefits those defined and perceived as white.

# White Supremacy

- ▶ Ten Richest Americans are all white
- ▶ US Congress is 90% white
- ▶ US governors are 96% white
- ▶ Top US military advisors are 100% white
- ▶ Current US presidential cabinet is 91% white
- ▶ People who decide what TV shows we watch are 93% white
- ▶ People who decide what news is covered are 85% white
- ▶ Directors of the 100 top-grossing films are 95% white
- ▶ Full time college professors are 84% white
- ▶ NFL team owners are 97%

# Feagin on Systemic Racism

- It involves the deep structures and the surface structures of racial oppression.
- The unjustly gained political and economic power of whites.
- Continuing economic, and other resource inequalities along racial lines.
- The white racial frame is what is used to rationalize white privilege, power, and white supremacy.



## White Racial Frame - definition

Seen comprehensively, all the mental images, prejudiced attitudes, stereotypes, sincere fictions, emotions, racist explanations, and rationalizations that link to systemic racism make up a white racial frame.

This is embedded deeply in the dominant U.S. culture and institutions.

(Feagin, p. 95)





# Discussion:

- What comes up for you as you view this short clip?
- Pay attention to how you felt as you viewed this video.

# Warning!

Racism is a structure, not an event.

White supremacy is the institutionalization of the White Dominate culture in ALL of our American institutions – a system that benefits whites (not necessarily all whites).

Warning is this: Whites continue, mostly unconsciously, to perpetuate White Supremacy in our institutions by:

- Not understanding what White Supremacy is.
- Not understanding how deep racism is in our institutions.
- Not having many meaningful interactions with people of color.
- Continued segregation of housing and schooling.
- Not being able to talk about race without becoming defensive. “I’m not a racist!”

# White Supremacy

- “...white supremacy is not merely the work of hotheaded demagogues, or a matter of false consciousness, but a force so fundamental to America that it is difficult to imagine the country without it.”
- (Ta-Nehisi Coates p. 202)

# What To Do?

- ▶ Integrate as much as possible.
- ▶ Learn as much as you can about this complex issue.
- ▶ Be open to a person of color when you are called out on a racist act.
  - Listen, don't argue, be grateful.
- ▶ When confronted with racism being good or bad isn't the issue.
  - Learning can't happen when one becomes defensive.
- ▶ Understand that talking about racism may be uncomfortable.
  - Many whites misinterpret their discomfort with safety – talking about racism does not make a white person unsafe!
- ▶ When being racially challenged:
  - Breathe: Listen: Reflect: Take the time to process feelings.

# References for this Workshop

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- ▶ <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>