White Supremacy in Everyday Language

Overcoming Racism Conference 2019
EmmaLee Pallai & Susana Carlos
Introductions
Objectives

By the end of this workshop participants will be able to:

1. Identify ways white supremacy colonizes the mind through language and re/naming.
2. Discuss alternatives to white supremacy in our speech and everyday language
Agenda

1. Introductions
2. Overview of Renaming/use of language to subjugate and eradicate others
3. Group Activity: Identifying Language
4. Overview of backlash to language reclamation
5. Group Activity: Goal-Setting
6. Time for Questions & Ending Thoughts
History of Renaming
History of Renaming

“We were told not to speak our language and we listened…

Somebody told us we were “Sioux,” and we said, “Yes, sir, we are Sioux.”

Somebody else came along and said, “No, you are Dakota,” and we said, “We are Dakota.”

Others along the way said we are Aboriginal, Natives, Indians, Native Americans, Native Canadians.”

-Wambdi Wapaha Glenn Wasicuna
Language as Transcending Levels of Racism

- Structuralized/Institutionalized Racism

![Bar chart showing race of homeless adults compared to representation in Minnesota population.](chart.png)

Discrimination is also associated with the overrepresentation of those who identify as LGBTQ in the homeless population. Twenty-two percent of youth (age 24 and younger) and 10% of adults (18 and older) experiencing homelessness identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, or questioning (LGBTQ).
Language as Transcending Levels of Racism

- Interpersonal Racism

“What’s the matter? It’s the same distance!”
Language as Transcending Levels of Racism

We are talking about the multiple levels of racism at which language is working:

- Internalized Racism
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Black</th>
<th>White</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>poor</td>
<td>wealthy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>violent</td>
<td>progressive</td>
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<tr>
<td>religious</td>
<td>conventional</td>
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<td>lazy</td>
<td>stubborn</td>
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<tr>
<td>cheerful</td>
<td>successful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dangerous</td>
<td>educated</td>
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</tbody>
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who is reflecting what he has been exposed to

Racism Structured Into Everyday Language

Prefixes:
- Black - Bad
- Indian - False

Tenses:
- Use of past tense that keep people in a distant past and not part of current landscape

Passive Voice:
- Slaves WERE brought to america
- We remove the guilt of the active party acting egregiously upon others
Group Activity

In groups:

● Discuss biased language, phrases, imagery, in everyday living
● Write out on your worksheet, separating as:
  ○ Institutionalized/Structuralized
  ○ Interpersonal
  ○ Internalized
● Be prepared to report back to the larger group
SOMEONE: “i hate political correctness!”
POLITICAL CORRECTNESS: “i actually prefer to be called ‘compassion’”
SOMEONE: “but that makes it harder for me to say that i hate it”
COMPASSION: “i understand”
DOES POLITICAL CORRECTNESS WORK?
Group Discussion Questions

- Have you experienced stereotype threat?
- Have you experienced/seen these in daily interactions?
- How does this connect to language?
Activity: Goal-Setting

For this activity, list your goals with the following prompts:

- "One thing I’m going to focus on after this workshop is..."
- "One thing I can do to overcome racism through my use of language is..."
- "Steps that I will take to reach this goal are..."
Any Questions?

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I HAZ A QUESTION
MICROAGGRESSIONS AGAINST WHITE PEOPLE?

OPTIONAL