



J. Lee Consulting, LLC

Diversity Decoded: Racial Literacy & More for Cross- Cultural Mentorship

Agenda

PART 1

Racial Literacy

PART 2

Definitions and Other Relevant Concepts

PART 3

Mentoring Considerations

PART 4

Q & A

PART 5

Final Thoughts



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What Is Racial Literacy?

Racial Literacy Defined

This is the ability to understand what race is, why it is, and how it is used to reproduce inequality and oppression.

- the knowledge, skills, and awareness needed to talk thoughtfully about race and racism; this naturally includes having a rich vocabulary including terms such as race, racial identity, racism, oppression, and so on
- the ability to identify racism when it happens
- having strategies to counter or cope with racism
- understanding the role racism plays in society

(Harsford, 201, 2014)

Racial literacy is required for cross-cultural mentorship

Mentors who have this skill

- understand the non-biological nature of race, and are also clear about the real social and material consequences.
 - Scholarship that informs the concept of racial literacy identifies race as a signifier that is discursively constructed through language (Hall, 1997); fluid, unstable, and socially constructed (Omi & Winant, 1986) rather than static; and not rooted in biology, but having “real” effects in individual lives (Frankenberg, 1996).
- can discuss the implications of race and American racism in constructive ways.
- are committed to ongoing critical self-reflection and growth.
- are knowledgeable about their own experiences with race and racism, and are honest about their privilege.
- adopt an antiracist stance and resist a victim stance for communities of color.



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Understanding Racial Identity, Race, and Other Relevant Concepts

Race

"Race is a social fabrication, created to classify people on the arbitrary basis of skin color and other physical features." - Found at <https://nmaahc.si.edu/learn/talking-about-race/topics/race-and-racial-identity> adapted from Terry Keleher, Applied Research Center, and Racial Equity Tools by OneTILT

Racism

"A system of ignorance, exploitation, and power used to oppress African-Americans, Latinos, Asians, Pacific Americans, American Indians and other people on the basis of ethnicity, cultural, mannerisms, and color" - Marable Manning

Racial Identity

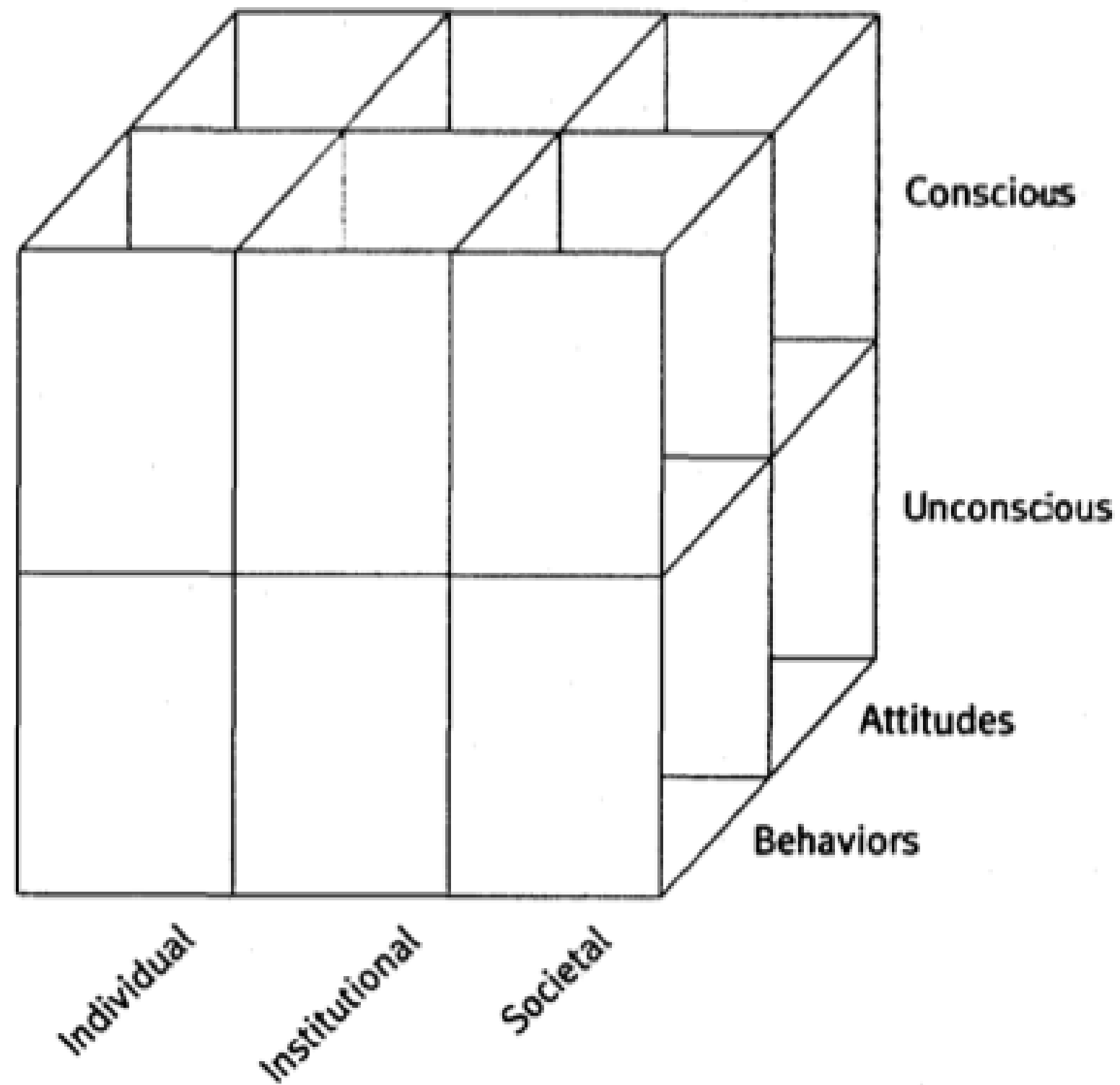
"The notion of race is a social construct designed to divide people into groups ranked as superior and inferior. The scientific consensus is that race, in this sense, has no biological basis – we are all one race, the human race. *Racial identity*, however, is very real. And, in a racialized society like the United States, everyone is assigned a racial identity whether they are aware of it or not..... Although race has no genetic or scientific basis, the concept of race is important and consequential. Societies use race to establish and justify systems of power, privilege, disenfranchisement, and oppression." - Found at <https://nmaahc.si.edu/learn/talking-about-race/topics/race-and-racial-identity> adapted from Terry Keleher, Applied Research Center, and Racial Equity Tools by OneTILT

LEVELS OF RACISM

Individual/Interpersonal racism: Individual phenomenon that reflects prejudice or bias; expression or actions of racist ideas and assumptions; can be covert or overt, conscious or unconscious, intentional or unintentional - includes microaggressions. (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2012)

Institutional racism: Reflected in the policies, laws, rules, norms, and customs enacted by organizations and social institutions that advantage whites as a group and disadvantage groups of color. (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2012)

Societal/Cultural Racism: Social norms, roles, rituals, language, music, and art that reinforce the belief that white (European) culture is superior to other cultures. Normative assumptions about philosophies of life; definitions of good, evil, beauty, and ugliness; normality and deviance; and perspectives on time provide the justifications of social oppression. (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2012)



Racism happens at all levels, reinforced by societal norms, institutional biases, interpersonal interactions and individual beliefs.

- **Individual (self) - Feelings, beliefs, and values.**
- **Individual (interpersonal/others) - Actions, behaviors, and language.**
- **Institutional - Legal system, education system, public policy, hiring practices, media images.**
- **Societal/Cultural - Collective ideas about what is "right".**

LEVELS OF RACISM

Internalized racism: As part of the socialization process, people from all racialized groups internalize messages about their own group as well as about other social groups, that reinforce racism. We all breathe in racist ideology, but with psychic effects that differentially impact white people and people of color. Occurs when people of color believe and/or act on negative stereotypes about themselves and their group as less capable, not as entitled, or more violent than whites. (Sensoy & DiAngelo, 2012)

Daily experiences with racism or other's prejudice can lead to

- Stereotype threat
- Model Minority
- Racial battle fatigue, Racial Trauma and other forms of racial exhaustion
- Imposter syndrome
- Turnover and retention in places of employment, school, organizations, etc.
- Disengagement
- Lack of representation, especially in leadership positions

RACIST IDEAS & PRACTICES

"Racial inequity is when two or more racial groups are not standing on approximately equal footing." (p. 18)

"A racist policy is any measure that produces or sustains racial inequity between racial groups. By policy, I mean written and unwritten laws, rules, procedures, processes, regulations, and guidelines that govern people." (p. 18)

"A racist idea is any idea that suggests one racial group is inferior to or superior to another racial group in any way. Racist ideas argue that the inferiorities and superiorities of racial groups explain racial inequities in society." (p. 20)

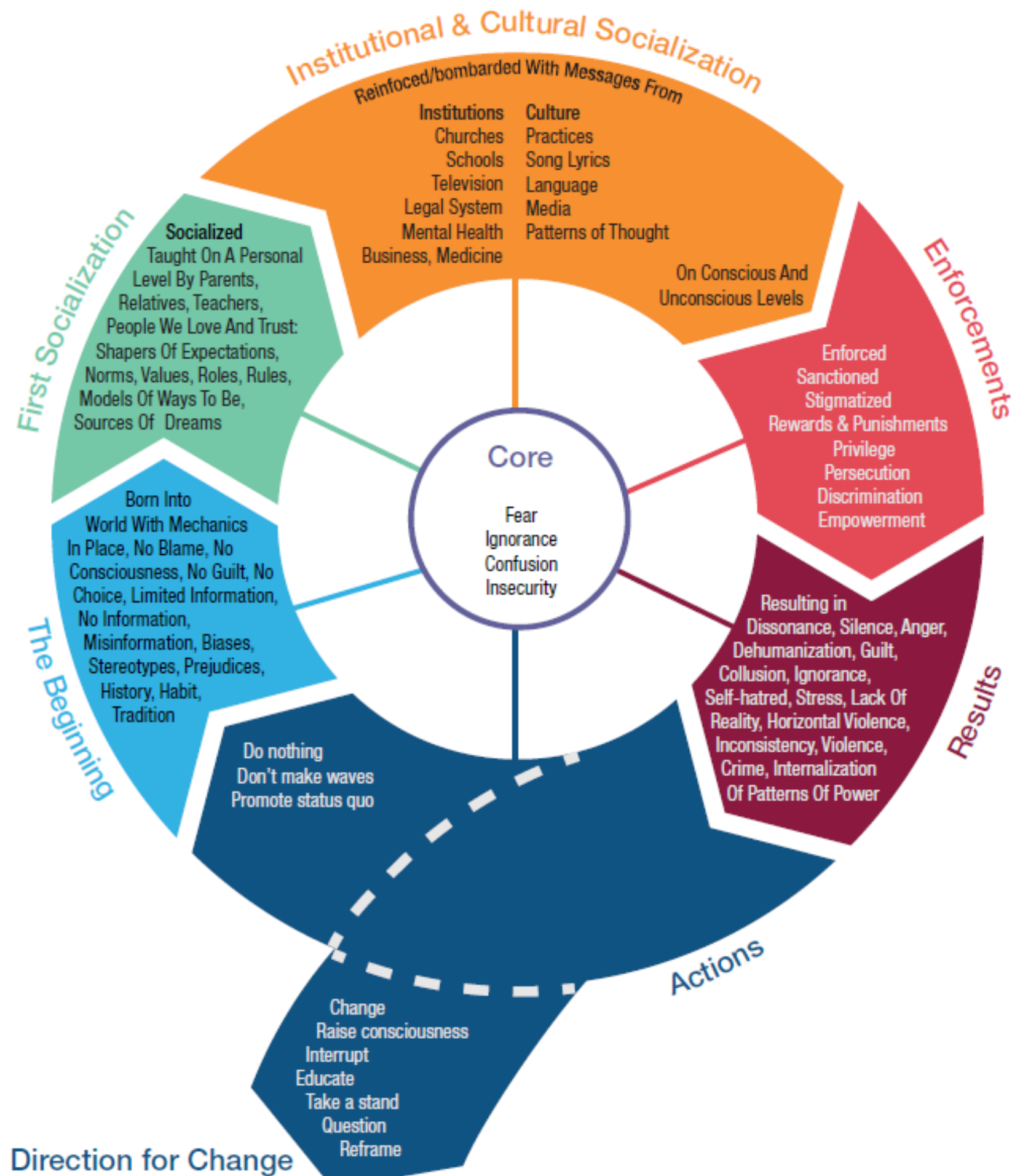
(Ibrim Kendi)

"Systems do not perpetuate themselves: They are perpetuated by the action or inaction of people who act automatically on the basis of their socialization"

Breedlove, 2016

CYCLE OF SOCIALIZATION

Cycle of Socialization developed by Bobbie Harro



“All members of society play a role in keeping a “dis-equal” system in place, whether the system works to their benefit or to their disadvantage. Through the socialization process, every member of society learns the attitudes, language, behaviors and skills that are necessary to function effectively in the existing society. This socialization prepares individuals to play roles of dominant or subordinate in systems of oppression.”

(Love, 2000)



"Our ideas, views, and opinions are not objective and independent,
but rather the result of myriad social messages and conditioning
forces." - Sensoy & DiAngelo

SOCIALIZATION

Unsolicited messages, ideas, values and social norms that are reinforced throughout different life experiences.

IMPLICIT BIAS

Result of socialization, upbringing, etc.;
connected to our social identities
Quick judgements & assessments

Rooted in stereotypes

Rooted in assumptions

Preferences rooted in ignorance or lack of information

Unconscious and often unintentional



MICROAGGRESSIONS

Behaviors, words, or actions

Result of implicit bias

Most often unconscious and done by well-intended people.

Connected to experiences with systemic bias.

IMPACT

Negative racialized experiences

Hostile or exclusive environments

Perpetuation of stereotypes and generalizations

Inequitable access to resources and hoarded privilege

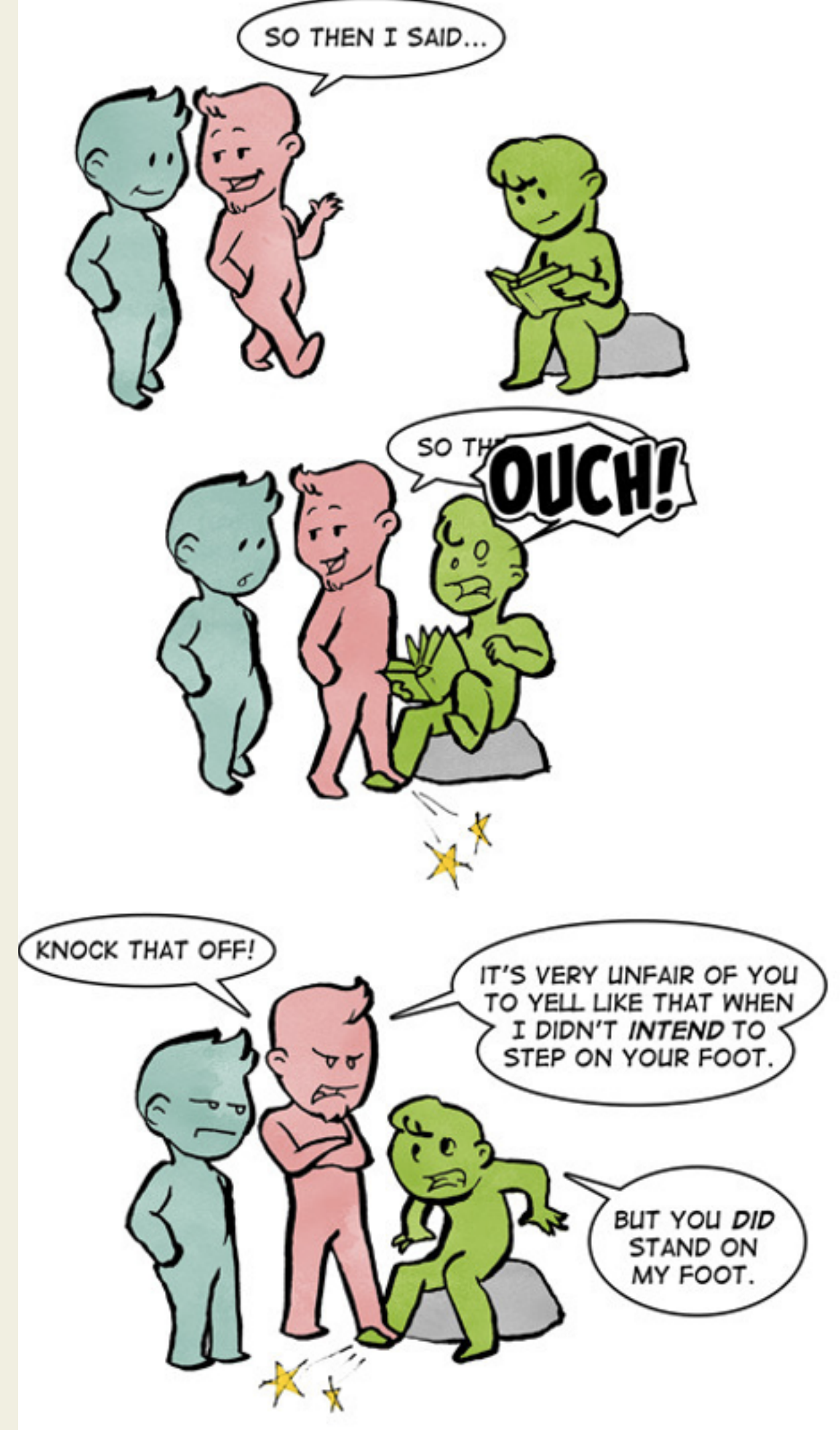
Rendering lived experiences and unique skills/knowledge invisible





How Microaggressions are Like Mosquito Bites found at <https://youtu.be/hDd3bzA7450>

- **Cultural Humility** is a lifelong process that ensures that individuals learn about other cultures and are sensitive and empathetic to cultural differences; EMPATHY is key.
- **Bias** is prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person, or group compared with another, usually in a way considered to be unfair; Implicit & Explicit.
- **Privilege** is unearned access, advantage, or immunity granted to a particular person or group (Christian privilege, White privilege, etc.)
- **Explain Aways** are attempts to fix, justify, or explain acts of intolerance in a way that is minimizing and doesn't honor the harm or impact
- **Pile on Principle** is when words and experiences accumulate over time, causing a "big" reaction to a "small misunderstanding"
- **Allyship** is a lifelong process of building relationships based on trust, consistency, and accountability with marginalized individuals and/or groups of people. Not self-defined—work and efforts must be recognized by those you are seeking to ally with.
- Understanding **Intent vs Impact** is understanding that the intent behind your words and/or actions may not align with how someone is impacted by your words or actions. Own both your intent AND your impact. Apologize and give time for any intended harm to be healed.



Pause & Reflect

- What of these concepts are you still unclear on?
- How do you see these concepts connecting to your mentorship?
- What questions do you have?





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Cross Cultural Mentoring

CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS

- Cultural responsiveness is essential to successful mentoring programs. This is needed from both agency professionals and mentors.
 - “Cultural responsiveness is being capable of genuinely embracing, working with, and continually learning about cultural differences”.
 - Cultural responsiveness includes awareness, knowledge, skills, and attitude.

Adapted from <https://www.youthcollaboratory.org/resource/culturally-responsive-mentoring-youth-color>)

CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS

- Learn about the community and history of your mentee
- Acknowledge and address false beliefs and biases that you may hold
- Attend cultural community events, festivals, and even protests that focus on providing a deeper understanding of other cultures
- Engage with curiosity and humility v. voyeurism
- Engage in "easy" research using the library, Google, Netflix, TikTok, etc.; explore stories about futures, joy, and possibilities
- Actively practice critical self reflection
- Practice deep generous listening



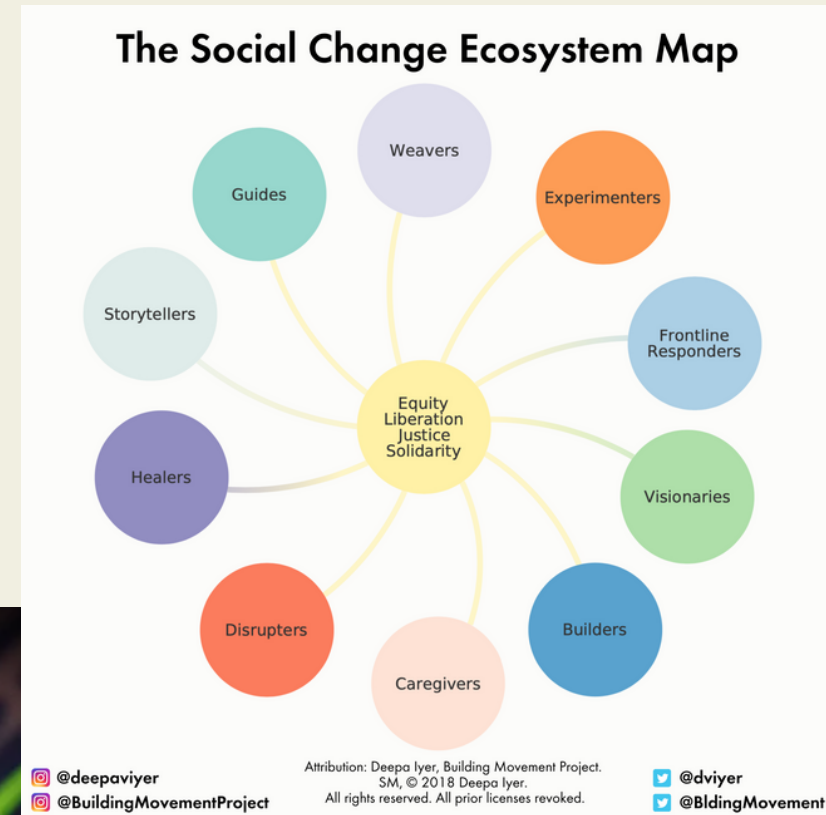
EMPOWERMENT

- An empowerment model of mentoring is responsive to systems of oppression and discrimination.
- The goal of empowerment mentoring revolves around facilitating healthy youth development and capacity-building.
- Empowering relationships with a mentor can support youth development and equip youth with skills to engage in higher level thinking and re-interpretation of marginalized identities as assets.
- Mentors that focus on a mentee's strengths and leadership rather than adult-driven activities appear to increase youths' sense of empowerment and build skills.

Adapted from <https://www.youthcollaboratory.org/resource/culturally-responsive-mentoring-youth-color>)

EMPOWERMENT

- Help youth understand systems of power and oppression, and the ways they may impact their lives
- Support youth in building agency and confidence in resolving racially stressful situations: Read. Recast. Resolve (H. Stevenson)
- Focus on building your own understanding of Community Cultural Wealth in order to support the various aspects of social capital held by communities of color
- Learn about your mentees strengths and engage in activities and opportunities that highlight and celebrate their strengths
- Use the Social Change Ecosystem to help your mentee develop agency and identity as a part of broader social change and activism



ETHNIC-RACIAL IDENTITY

- Ethnic-racial identity (ERI) is a key developmental process for youth of color.
- ERI includes beliefs and attitudes about ethnicity and race and the development of these attitudes and beliefs.
- Previous racial discrimination may create cultural mistrust toward adults of a different race which can be a barrier to relationship development (including rapport building) with a mentor of a different race.
- Feeling good about your community of origin/culture may be particularly important for youth of color, serving as a protective factor.
- For youth of color, mentoring can improve academic performance, self-esteem, and ethnic identity.

Adapted from <https://www.youthcollaboratory.org/resource/culturally-responsive-mentoring-youth-color>)

- Practice cultural humility, recognizing that your culture or ways of being are not the "only right way"
- Avoid getting stuck in guilt and defensiveness, but always create space to consider yourself as a part of the solution and the problem
- Recognize the impact of past experiences and "pile on principle" - don't take things personal
- Engage in radical love and belonging by demonstrating that your mentee is seen, heard, and valued just as they are
- Avoid unnecessary corrections in language, attire, music choice, etc., instead focus on deep and generous listening and question asking
- Use your growing understanding of Community Cultural Wealth to encourage your mentee to understand their own cultural wealth



Pause & Reflect

- What from today's session resonates most with you?
- What behaviors and/or practices do you see showing up in your own mentorship?
- What questions do you have?





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Final Thoughts

Final Thoughts

Mentorship is a lifeline for many youth of Color. Mentors who understand race, racial identity, and racism are better positioned to support, empower, and advocate for young people who experience the daily impact of racialized and systemic oppression.

- Stay engaged in learning
- Spend time reflecting on your own experiences, racial identity and points of privilege
- Use your voice and privilege to advocate for youth Color.



RACE MATTERS



**CRITICAL SELF
REFLECTION AND
HUMILITY IS KEY**



YOUR ADVOCACY IS NECESSARY

Ally vs. Accomplice vs. Co-Conspirator



Brittany Packnett Cunningham found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QZVILjJPreM>

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION & JUSTICE asks...

"**DIVERSITY** asks, 'Who is in the room?' **EQUITY** responds:
'Who is trying to get in the room but can't? Whose
presence in the room is under constant threat of erasure?'

INCLUSION asks, 'Have everyone's ideas been heard?'
JUSTICE responds, 'Whose ideas won't be taken as
seriously because they aren't in the majority?'

DIVERSITY asks, 'How many more of [*pick any
marginalized identity*] group do we have this year than
last?' **EQUITY** responds, 'What conditions have we
created that maintain certain groups as the perpetual
majority here?'

INCLUSION asks, 'Is this environment safe for
everyone to feel like they belong?' **JUSTICE**
challenges, 'Whose safety is being sacrificed and
minimized to allow others to be comfortable
maintaining dehumanizing views?'

A woman with short dark hair, wearing a light-colored blazer over a dark top, is speaking at a podium. She is holding a microphone in her right hand and gesturing with her left hand. The background is a solid light blue.

 @DrDLStewart
radicalinsightsllc.com



**Contact us for more learning and
training opportunities.
Thank you for your continued
support!**

THANK YOU!

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