DEVELOPING DIVERSITY CONSCIOUSNESS TO FOSTER ANTIRACIST PRACTICES, CULTURES, AND COMMUNITIES

Table of Contents

Overview

Consciousness is generally defined as the state of being mindfully aware or sensitive to something. Another way of defining it is the full activity of the mind or senses. This state of mind is necessary to develop diversity consciousness: understanding, awareness, and skills in the area of diversity.

This learner-oriented diversity education series positions diversity consciousness development as a never-ending, lifelong process rather than a defining moment—a process that requires intentionality, self-reflection and evaluation, patience, practice, steadfast commitment, and communal engagement.

Through the series, participants explore and engage six key areas of diversity consciousness development to promote sociocultural growth and empowerment, and ultimately, embody the mindset to foster antiracist practices, cultures, and communities.

Introduction

"To be a Negro in this country and to be relatively conscious is to be in a state of rage, almost all of the time — and in one's work. And part of the rage is this: It isn't only what is happening to you. But it's what's happening all around you and all of the time in the face of the most extraordinary and criminal indifference, indifference of most white people in this country, and their ignorance. Now, since this is so, it's a great temptation to simplify the issues under the illusion that if you simplify them enough, people will recognize them. I think this illusion is very dangerous because, in fact, it isn't the way it works. A complex thing can't be made simple. You simply have to try to deal with it in all its complexity and hope to get that complexity across."

– James Arthur Baldwin –
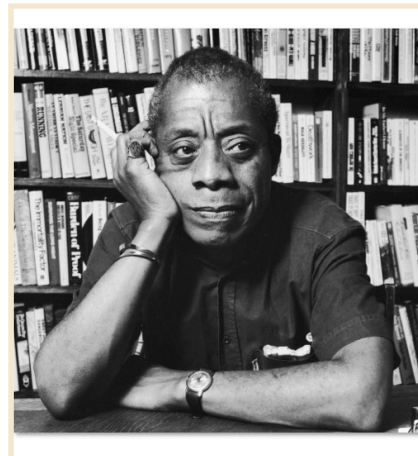
1.1 -Defining Racism

Anti-Black- (adj.) A two-part formation that both voids Blackness of value, while systematically marginalizing Black people and their issues. The first form of anti-Blackness is overt racism. Beneath this anti-Black racism is the covert structural and systemic racism which categorically predetermines the socioeconomic status of Blacks in this country. The structure is held in place by anti-Black policies, institutions, and ideologies. The second form of anti-Blackness is the unethical disregard for anti-Black institutions and policies. This disregard is the product of class, race, and/or gender privilege certain individuals experience due to anti--Black institutions and policies. This form of anti-Blackness is protected by the first form of overt racism

Colorblind Racism - (noun) The belief that racism is no longer a problem and that we all have equal opportunities. People who subscribe to colorblind explanations claim they do not see the color of people's skin and believe everyone to be equal. Colorblindness prevents us from seeing the historical causes of racial inequality and how racial inequality persists in our society

Institutional Racism - (noun) Institutional racism occurs within and between institutions. Institutional racism is discriminatory treatment, unfair policies and inequitable opportunities and impacts, based on race, produced and perpetuated by institutions (schools, mass media, etc.). Individuals within institutions take on the power of the institution when they act in ways that advantage and disadvantage people, based on race. Example: A police officer treats someone with racial bias, engages in institutional racism, representing a law enforcement institution

Internalized Racism - (noun) Individual or internalized racism lies within individuals. These are private manifestations of racism that reside inside the individual

Interpersonal Racism - (noun Interpersonal racism occurs between individuals. Once private beliefs come into interaction with others, the racism is now in the interpersonal realm. Examples include public expressions of racial prejudice, hate, bias and bigotry between individuals

Racial Inequity – (noun) When, where, and how two or more racial groups are not standing on a relatively equal footing

Racial Justice - the proactive reinforcement of policies, practices, attitudes and actions that produce equitable power, access, opportunities, treatment, impacts and outcomes for all
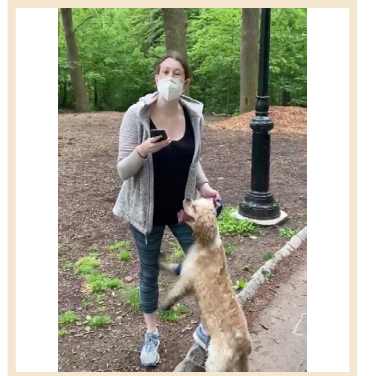
[Image 2]
Amy Cooper, 2020

[Image 3]
Peter Cvjetanovic (C) along with Neo Nazis, Alt-Right, and White Supremacists in Charlottesville, Virginia., Aug.11, 2017

Racism - (noun) a powerful collection of racist policies that lead to racial inequity and are substantiated by racist ideas

Racist – (noun); (adj.) Someone or something supporting racist behavior, ideas, policy, culture, sentiments, or values by their action(s) and/or inaction; and/or the expressing of racist ideas, values, and sentiments

Racist Idea – (noun) Any idea that suggests one racial group is inferior 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

Racist Policy – (noun) Any measure that produces or sustains racial inequity between or among racial groups. Policies are written and unwritten laws, rules, procedures, processes, regulations and guidelines that govern people. There is no such thing as a nonracist or or race-neutral policy. Every policy in every institution in every community in every nation is producing or sustaining either racial inequity or equity between racial groups. Racist policies are also express through other terms such as "structural racism" or "systemic racism". Racism itself is institutional, structural, and systemic

Structural Racism - (noun) The normalization and legitimization of an array of dynamics—historical, cultural, institutional and interpersonal—that routinely advantage White people while producing cumulative and chronic adverse outcomes for people of color. It is a system of hierarchy and inequity, primarily characterized by white supremacy – the preferential treatment, privilege and power for white people at the expense of Black, Latino, Asian, Pacific Islander, Native American, Arab and other racially oppressed people

Whiteness- (noun) The specific dimensions of racism that serve to elevate white people over people of color. This definition counters the dominant representation of racism in mainstream education as isolated in discrete behaviors that some individuals may or may not demonstrate, and goes beyond naming specific privileges (McIntosh, 1988). Whites are theorized as actively shaped, affected, defined, and elevated through their racialization and the individual and collective consciousness' formed within it (Whiteness is thus conceptualized as a constellation of processes and practices rather than as a discrete entity (i.e. skin color alone)

Whiteness is dynamic, relational, and operating at all times and on myriad levels. These processes and practices include basic rights, values, beliefs, perspectives and experiences purported to be commonly shared by all but which are actually only consistently afforded to white people
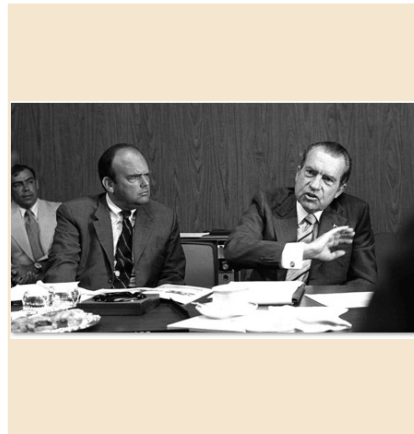
[Image 4] John Ehrlichman & 37th President Richard Nixon

"The Nixon campaign in 1968, and the Nixon White House after that, had two enemies: the antiwar left and black people. You understand what I'm saying? We knew we couldn't make it illegal to be either against the war or blacks, but by getting the public to associate the hippies with marijuana and blacks with heroin, and then criminalizing both heavily, we could disrupt those communities. We could arrest their leaders, raid their homes, break up their meetings, and vilify them night after night on the evening news. Did we know we were lying about the drugs? Of course we did."

- John Ehrlichman, Nixon White House Advisor

White Privilege- (noun) Refers to the unquestioned and unearned set of advantages, entitlements, benefits and choices bestowed on people solely because they are white. Generally white people who experience such privilege do so without being conscious of it

White Supremacy- (noun) The idea (ideology) that white people and the ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions of white people are superior to People of Color and their ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions. While most people associate white supremacy with extremist groups like the Ku Klux Klan and the neo-Nazis, white supremacy is ever present in our institutional and cultural assumptions that assign value, morality, goodness, and humanity to the white group while casting people and communities of color as worthless (worth less), immoral, bad, and inhuman and "undeserving." Drawing from critical race theory, the term "white supremacy" also refers to a political or socio-economic system where white people enjoy structural advantage and rights that other racial and ethnic groups do not, both at a collective and an individual level.

Previous page
Defining Racism (continued)

[Image 5] 40th President Ronald Reagan & Lee Atawater

"You start out in 1954 by saying, "Nigger, nigger, nigger." By 1968 you can't say "nigger"—that hurts you, backfires. So you say stuff like, uh, forced busing, states' rights, and all that stuff, and you're getting so abstract. Now, you're talking about cutting taxes, and all these things you're talking about are totally economic things and a byproduct of them is, blacks get hurt worse than whites.... "We want to cut this," is much more abstract than even the busing thing, uh, and a hell of a lot more abstract than "Nigger, nigger."

- Lee Atwater, Reagan and Bush White House Advisor and former Chairman of the Republican National Committee

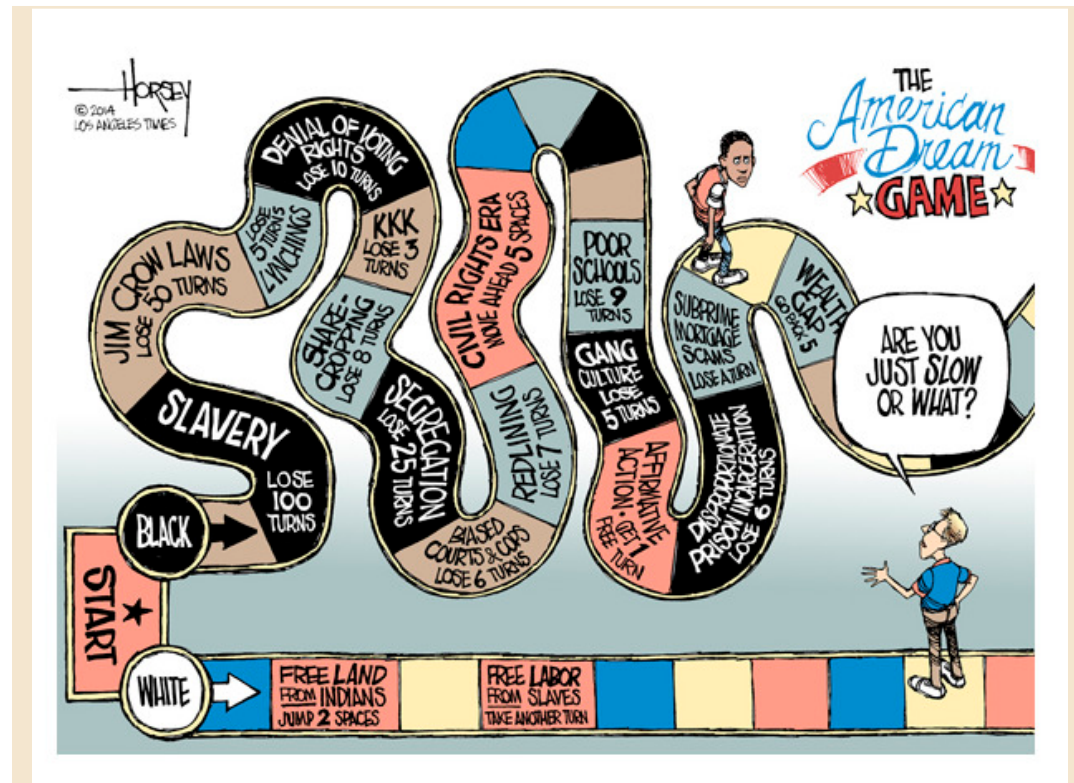*[Image 6]]* Lee Atawater & 41st President George Bush Sr.

1.2 - Racism & American Society

Examples

- Racial disparities are present in several places throughout the public and private sectors, including (but are not limited to)
    1. Criminal Justice
    2. Economic Opportunity
    3. Wealth
    4. Home Ownership
    5. Health
    6. Leadership
    7. Education

- Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994

- Racial Bias in American policing system, Washington Post

- Racial disparities in prisoner sentencing, Business Insider

- Racial disparities in fatal police shootings, Business Insider

- Study: anti-black hiring discrimination is as prevalent today as it was in 1989, Vox Media

- Bill Clinton concedes role in mass incarceration, CNN

- White Students Get More K-12 Funding Than Students of Color: Report, US News

- Non-White School Districts Get $23 Billion Less Funding Than White Ones, PSmag.com

- Achievement gaps in schools driven by poverty, study finds, The Washington Post

- Black-White Achievement Gaps Go Hand in Hand With Discipline Disparities, Education Week

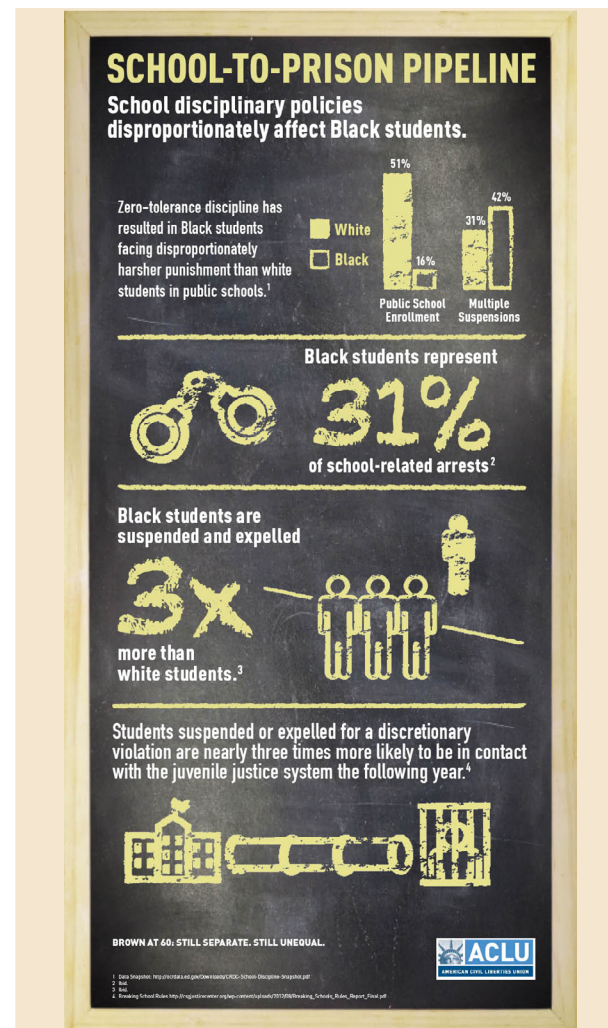- School-To-Prison Pipeline, The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)

1.3 - Racism In Our Community

Examples

Racial disparities in Pittsburgh include (but are not limited to):
- Quality of Life
- Public Health
- Support in Higher Education
- Home Ownership
- Leadership
- Education

- Pittsburgh's black population trails other cities in quality of life, report says

- Allegheny County Council recognizes racism as 'public health crisis'

- Pitt's Chancellor on on Black Community: 'We let them down.'Pittsburgh Post Gazette

- Pittsburgh Faces The 'Clash Of Two Pandemics' In Racism, COVID-19, WESA FM

- Juneteenth forum urges Pitt to do more to increase Black students, faculty and staff, University Times

- Black alumni say more work needed on diversity issues, University Times

- Pitt graduates write letter to administrators, urging support for black student-athletes

2.1 – Defining Antiracism

Accountability - (noun) In the context of racial equity work, accountability refers to the ways in which individuals and communities hold themselves to their goals and actions, and acknowledge the values and groups to which they are responsible. To be accountable, one must be visible, with a transparent agenda and process. Invisibility defies examination; it is, in fact, employed in order to avoid detection and examination. Accountability demands commitment. It might be defined as "what kicks in when convenience runs out." Accountability requires some sense of urgency and becoming a true stakeholder in the outcome. Accountability can be externally imposed (legal or organizational requirements), or internally applied (moral, relational, faith-based, or recognized as some combination of the two) on a continuum from the institutional and organizational level to the individual level. From a relational point of view, accountability is not always doing it right. Sometimes it's really about what happens after it's done wrong.

Antiracism - (noun) A powerful collection of antiracist policies that lead to racial equity and are substantiated by antiracist ideas

Antiracist – (noun); (adj.) Someone who is supporting an antiracist policy by their actions or expressing an antiracist idea. This includes the expression or ideas that racial groups are equals and do not need developing, and supporting policies that reduce racial inequity.

Antiracist Idea – (noun) Any idea that suggesting racial groups are equal in all their apparent differences—that there is nothing right or wrong with any racial group. Antiracist ideas argue that racist policies are the cause of racial inequities.

Antiracist Policy – (noun) Any measure that produces or sustains racial equity between racial groups.

Critical Race Theory (noun) A field of study which considers many of the same issues that conventional civil rights and ethnic studies take up, but places them in a broader perspective that includes economics, history, and even feelings and the unconscious. Unlike traditional civil rights, which embraces incrementalism and step by step progress, critical race theory questions the very foundations of the liberal order, including equality theory, legal reasoning, Enlightenment rationalism and principles of constitutional law.

Diversity Consciousness - (noun) The awareness, understanding, and skills that allow us to think through and value human differences. Diversity consciousness requires the presence of diversity skills, diversity awareness, and an understanding of diversity.

(Up next:)
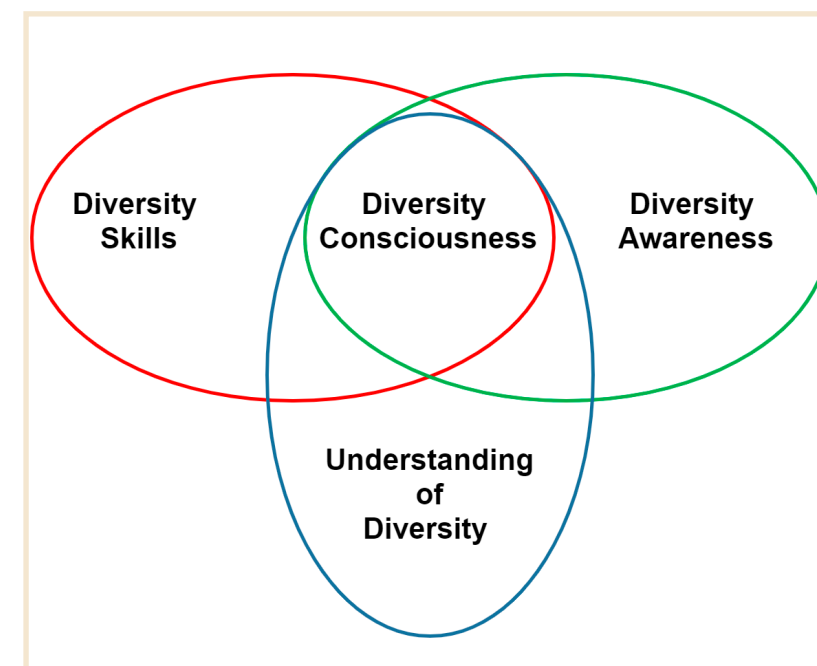The Importance of Diversity Consciousness and the 6 areas of development

2.1 – Defining Antiracism (continued)

Intersectionality - (noun) A theoretical framework for understanding how aspects of a person's social and political identities might combine to create unique modes of discrimination and privilege. Intersectionality identifies advantages and disadvantages that are felt by people due to a combination of factors.

Racial Equity – (noun) when, where, and how two or more racial groups are standing on a relatively equal footing.

Racial Reconciliation – (noun) Reconciliation involves three ideas. First, it recognizes that racism in America is both systemic and institutionalized, with far–reaching effects on both political engagement and economic opportunities for minorities. Second, reconciliation is engendered by empowering local communities through relationship- building and truth–telling. Lastly, justice is the essential component of the conciliatory process—justice that is best termed as restorative rather than retributive, while still maintaining its vital punitive character

3.1 – Developing Diversity Consciousness

Diversity Skills | Diversity Consciousness | Diversity Awareness | Understanding of Diversity

3.2 – The Importance of Diversity Consciousness

3.2.1 It Enhances Your Diversity Skills Including:

1. Flexible Thinking and Adaptability
2. Self-evaluation
3. Multicultural Networking
4. Conflict Management
5. Leadership
6. Teamwork
7. Critical Thinking
8. Ability to recognize and respect diverse intellectual strengths and learning styles
9. Ability to balance "fitting in" and "being yourself"

3.2.2 It is a Lifelong Never-ending Process

1. We move from a perspective that centers on ourselves and our immediate environment to one that is more inclusive and global.
2. We expand our horizons and empower ourselves to be more effective in engaging diverse people and communities
3. We strengthen our ability and confidence to be action-oriented

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Diversity Consciousness is NOT:

- COMMON SENSE
- GOOD INTENTIONS
- SIMPLE
- SELECTIVE
- BLIND TO OUR DIFFERENCES
- TEMPORARY
- TRENDY

Racist ideas have defined our society since its beginning and can feel so natural and obvious as to be banal, but antiracist ideas remain difficult to comprehend, in part because they go against the flow of this country's history. As Audre Lorde said in 1980,

"We have all been programmed to respond to the human differences between us with fear and loathing and to handle that difference in one of three ways: ignore it, and if that is not possible, copy it if we think it is dominant, or destroy it if we think it is subordinate. But we have no patterns for relating across our human differences as equals."

To be an antiracist is a radical choice in the face of this history, requiring a radical re-orientation of our consciousness.

— Ibram X. Kendi, How To Be An Antiracist

3.3 – The 6 Areas of Development

1. Examining Ourselves and Our World

1.2 How racially diverse were your social groups growing up?
1.1 How has your identity been influenced by your race?
1.3 How often have your educational and social experiences incorporated other cultures and communities?
1.4 What is your understanding of what it means to be White?

2. Expanding Our Knowledge of Others And Their Worlds

2.1 Do not simply sample differences from a distance
2.2 Seek to understand how the histories, perspectives, and contributions are interconnected
2.3 Try to decrease the social distance between you and those about whom you know little if anything
2.4 Focus on ordinary people and occurrences

3. Stepping Outside Of Ourselves

3.1 "To do so takes a very special kind of listening, listening that requires not only open eyes and ears, but open hearts and minds. We do not really see through our eyes or hear through our ears, but through our beliefs. To put our beliefs on hold is to cease to exist as ourselves for a moment—and that is not easy. It is painful as well, because it means turning yourself inside out, giving up your own sense of who you are, and being willing to see yourself in in the unflattering light of another's angry gaze. It is not easy, but it is the only way to learn what it might feel like to be someone else and the only way to start the dialogue."

-Lisa Delpit

4. Gauging The Level Of The Playing Field

4.1 Do you have an understanding and awareness of social inequities and injustices that disadvantage communities of color?
4.2 Do you have an understanding and awareness of social barriers in its various forms (stereotypes, ethnocentrism, limited perceptions, prejudice, discrimination, the 'isms) that disadvantage communities of color?
4.3 Do you have an understanding and awareness of unearned privileges in its various forms?
4.4 Do you immerse yourself in your own victimization to the point that you cannot see or comprehend the victimization of others?

3.3 – The 6 Areas of Development (continued)

5. Checking Up On Ourselves

5.1 Centered on critical self-analysis

5.2 Are you more comfortable around certain types of people? Why?

5.3 Do you make snap judgments about people? Why?

5.4 Who do you tend to include in your social circle? Why?

5.5 When you communicate (or don't communicate), what messages are you sending?

5.6 Is your behavior consistent with your thinking?

5.7 Have I addressed racist practices and policies within my sphere of influence?

5.8 Have I done as much as I can to advance racial equity and justice within my communities ?

6. Following Through

6.1 Active listening & learning

6.2 Constant engagement of diversity skills

6.3 Ongoing self-assessments

6.4 Commitment to antiracist practices and policies

"It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness, an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder."

- W.E.B DuBois

[Image 9]
"Face reality" by Laurie Cooper

3.4 – Strategies for Developing Diversity Consciousness

1. Take an active role in educating yourself.
2. Put yourself in a learning mode in any multicultural setting.
3. Remember that your own life experiences are one of many important sources of knowledge.
4. Move beyond your personal comfort zone.
5. Take an active role in educating yourself.
6. Put yourself in a learning mode in any multicultural setting.
7. Remember that your own life experiences are one of many important sources of knowledge.
8. Move beyond your personal comfort zone.
9. Be modest.
10. Don't be too hard on yourself if misunderstandings arise.
11. Realize that you are not alone.
12. Never stop learning!
13. BE INTENTIONAL

3.4.1 – Discussion Questions

1. **How will you be intentional in:**

- Expanding your sociocultural knowledge and networks?
- Ensuring your behaviors & actions align with your beliefs?
- In learning more about and actively addressing issues of institutional and systemic racism?
- Your commitment to being an antiracist? What will you do to ensure accountability?

"The opposite of racist isn't 'not racist.' It is 'anti-racist.'

What's the difference?

1. One endorses either the idea of a racial hierarchy as a racist, or racial equality as an anti-racist.

2. One either believes problems are rooted in groups of people, as a racist, or locates the roots of problems in power and policies, as an anti-racist.

3. One either allows racial inequities to persevere, as a racist, or confronts racial inequities, as an anti-racist.

4. There is no in-between safe space of 'not racist'. The claim of 'not racist' neutrality is a mask for racism."

3.5– Antiracist Resources

3.5.1 What to Read

- HOW TO BE ANTIRACIST, IBRAM X. KENDI
- MAKING ALL BLACK LIVES MATTER, BARBARA RANSBY
- WHITE FRAGILITY: WHY IT'S SO HARD TO TALK TO WHITE PEOPLE ABOUT RACISM, ROBIN DEANGELO
- THE WARMTH OF OTHER SUNS, ISABEL WILKERSON
- RACISM WITHOUT RACISTS, EDUARDO BONILLA-SILVA
- DIVERSITY CONSCIOUSNESS: OPENING OUR MINDS TO PEOPLE, CULTURES, & OPPORTUNITIES

3.5.2 What to Watch

- 13TH, AVA DUVERNAY
- JUNETEENTH: A PRELUDE TO TRUE EQUITY & SOCIAL JUSTICE AT PITT
- I CAN'T BREATHE: FROM AGONY TO ACTIVISM
- UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH OFFICE OF DIVERSITY & INCLUSION, THIS IS NOT "NORMAL" TOWN HALL SERIES
- UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH "THE ART OF DIVERSITY" SHOWCASE
- UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH OFFICE OF DIVERSITY & INCLUSION, "ADVANCING SOCIAL JUSTICE" DIVERSITY FORUM
- WHEN THEY SEE US
- JUST MERCY
- I AM NOT YOUR NEGRO
- SELMA
- LET IT FALL
- THE TRUTH ABUT THE CONFEDERACY IN THE UNITED STATES

3.5.3 Who & What to Follow

- RACHEL CARGLE
- IBRAM X. KENDI
- NIKKOLAS SMITH
- CHARLENE CARRUTHERS
- BRITTANY PACKNETT
- ALLY HENNY
- CANDACE ANDREWS

3.5.4 What to Listen to

- STILL PROCESSING
- SEEING WHITE
- CODE SWITCH
- BRENÉ BROWN WITH IBRAM X. KENDI

SIX AREAS OF DEVELOPMENT

1. EXAMINING OURSELVES & OUR WORLDS

2. EXPANDING OUR KNOWLEDGE OF OTHERS & THEIR WORLDS

3. STEPPING OUTSIDE OF OURSELVES

4. GAUGING THE LEVEL OF THE PLAYING FIELD

5. CHECKING UP ON OURSELVES

6. FOLLOWING THROUGH