

Becoming Change Agents: Dismantling Systemic Racism

**Women on The Way Up: Embracing Challenges and
Creating Opportunities, November 3, 2022**

Old Indian Belief

The Way Up XXXV

Plan for Our Time Together

- Welcome & Getting to Know You
- Realistic Expectations
- Background Information
- Strategies
- Reflexivity- Big Takeaways

Welcome & A Little About Me

- Belinda Creighton-Smith, M.Div., EdD

Realistic Expectations

- What We Hope to Accomplish: Our Goal
 - Analyze the systemic function of “race,” “racism,” and “Whiteness” within our society in order to move from emotive driven reaction to authentic transformative work
- The “Road of Our Destination for Today: Our Objectives
 - Employ a Common Language
 - Examine Whiteness
 - Practicing a Strategy in Dismantling

Introductory Activity

- Directions: On a sheet of paper, draw the racial hierarchy as it exists in the United States today?
 - Why did you arrange the rungs in your racial hierarchy as you did?

Introductory Question

- Jane Elliott Asks
- A practice in intrapersonal Listening & Interpersonal Reflexivity



Background Information: Terms

- **Critical Race Theory**

- Race & racism is central the study (Graham et al., 2011; Brown, 2003)
- Examines racial stratification & systems (Tyler et al., 2018; Hernandez, 2016; Yosso et al. 2009; Brown, 2003; Crenshaw, 1995)
- Challenges dominant ideologies - resist normative and universal
- Values the counter narratives (Masko, 2005)
- Social justice obligation (Bell, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2012)
- Embraces interdisciplinary and comprehensive analysis

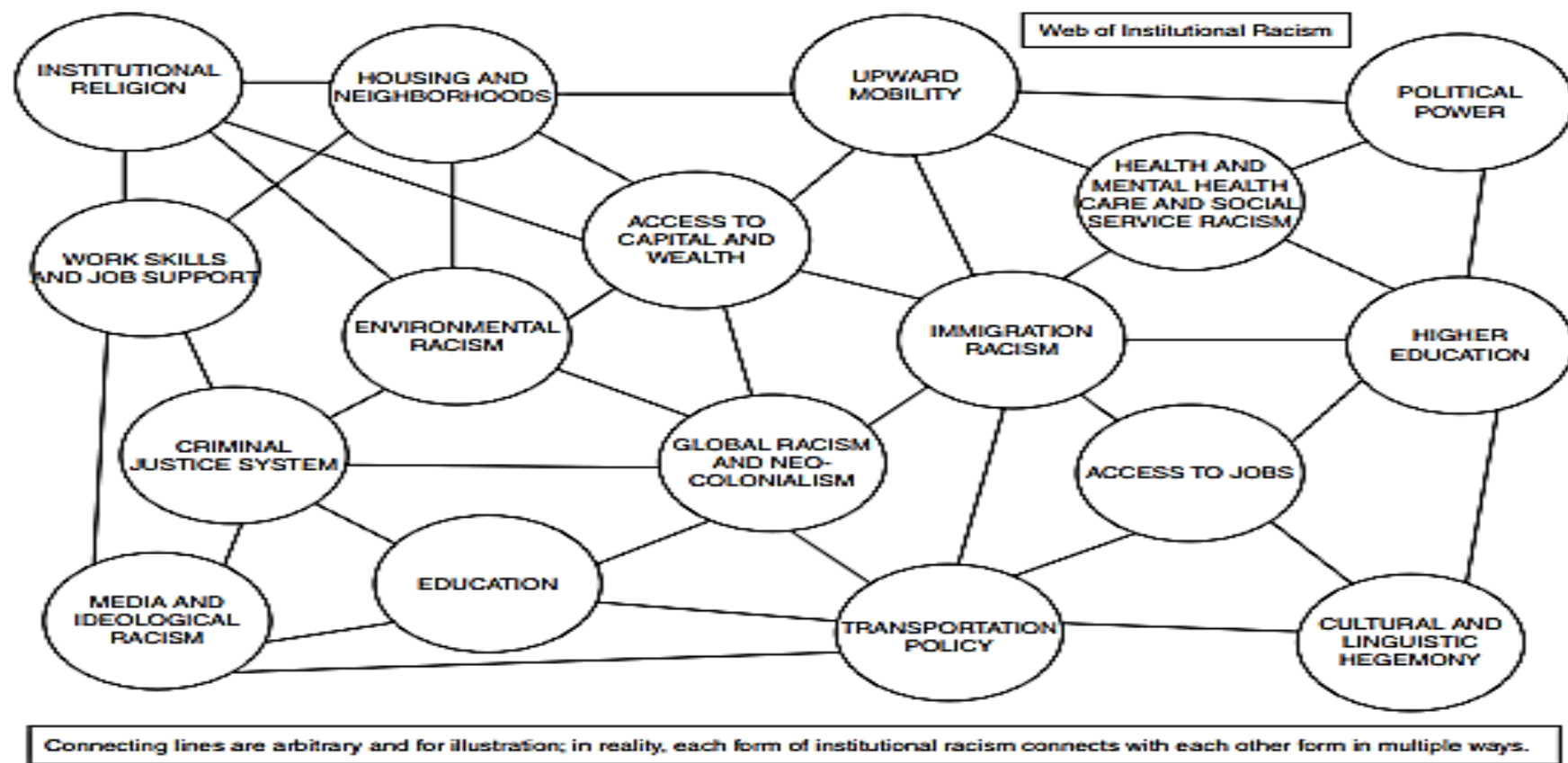
Definition of Terms

- **Race** is a social construct in which meaning is given to superficial physical characteristics...utilized to classify people based on a socially constructed racial hierarchy that has no biological or genetic support for such distinctions [Miller and Garran, 2008].
- **Racism** is a system of power and privilege which advantages some and disadvantages others... [It] “Is structured into society, not just in people’s minds (Andersen & Hill Collins, 2015, p. 56). Wellman (2000) concludes, “Racism is therefore essentially a structural relationship that produces hierarchy and domination...a system of exclusion and privilege” (p. 31).

Terms

- **Institutional Racism** is a system of power and dominance based on a racial hierarchy that advantages predominantly people classified as white and adversely impacts people classified as nonwhite [Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color]. It is the manner in which cultural and individual racialized beliefs are operative and implemented laws, legislation, policies and practices and the manner in which banking, business, education, healthcare, and the like function and perpetuate racial oppression, disparate outcomes and inequities.

FIGURE 1



Definitions

- **Structural Racism** is the framework that maintains and propagates the systemic workings of racism and its dynamic adaptability demonstrated in and amongst institutions (Creighton-Smith, 2022).
- **Structural racism** refers to the totality of ways in which societies foster racial discrimination through mutually reinforcing [and perpetuating] systems of housing, education, employment, earnings, benefits, credit, media, health care, and criminal justice...We argue that a focus on structural racism offers a concrete, feasible, and promising approach towards advancing health equity and improving population health (Bailey, et., al., 2017, p.1453)

How did we get here? The Creation of Whiteness

George Lipsitz (2006) writes,

“Although reproduced in new form in every era, the possessive investment in whiteness has always been influenced by its origins in the racialized history of the United States” (p.3)

Creation of Race (Buck, 2001; Miller & Garran, 2017)

- Declaration of Independence espouses “All men are created equal...”
 - Q: How do the patriarchs resolve the dilemma caused by the enslavement of African peoples and the extermination of the Indigenous Peoples
 - Creation of race & racial hierarchy

Psychological Wage of Whiteness (Buck, 2001)

- Promise of land
- Publishing houses promoted message of superiority
- Thomas Jefferson-Yeoman class
 - Small farmers
- Uphold the law and promote beneficiaries
- Freedom=right to own and sell your own labor versus slavery

*We cannot dismantle racism until we
confront the political identity of
whiteness*

Anti-Racism as a Stance, Approach, & Praxis (Kendi, 2019)

- *Anti-racism as a collective process, a movement, which requires significant, concerted and enduring labour, throughout an organisation, beyond the mere expression of anti-racist ideas and development of anti-racist policies. Anti-racism is a stance, an approach, and organizational praxis (p.96).*

Talking Whiteness & Racism (Patel, 2021)

- Anti-racism Stance
- Anti-racism Approach
- Anti-racism Praxis

Talking Whiteness & Racism (Patel, 2021)

- Anti-racism Praxis-Dismantling Institutional Racism
- Stage One – in pairs explore these two questions
 - When did I first become aware of Whiteness (and its intersectionality) and
 - How has Whiteness been salient in my life, my education, my history, my work? And for some – how they are racialized and impacted by the effects of Whiteness.

Talking Whiteness & Racism (cont'd)

- Anti-racism Praxis-Dismantling Institutional Racism
- Stage Two – Now, in small groups discuss the following:
 - What was it like to talk about Whiteness and its effects of racism?
 - What does Whiteness look like in our work/team

Reflexivity

- What is your big takeaway?

“Just as objective social reality exists not by chance, but as the product of human action, so it is not transformed by chance...then transforming that reality is an historical task, a task for humanity” (Freire, p.51)

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ISSN 1471 7646 (In Press)