Witnessing Whiteness in our Practice and on Campus

Shelly Tochluk, Ph.D.
“You don’t even know what’s going on around you, do you?”

“You need to stop letting him do that. Your white guilt is going to get him hurt.”

“The parents are invested in education and have dreams for their kids. They’re not coming to see you because of you.”
Who am I? Who are you?

• Multiple Social Identities

1. Race/Ethnicity
2. Socio-Economic Class
3. Gender Identity
4. Sexual Orientation
5. Nationality
6. Ability/Disability
7. Religion
8. Age
Who am I? Who are you?

Which position do you occupy in each category?

1. Race/Ethnicity
   1. White/European-American
2. Socio-Economic Class
   2. Middle Class
3. Gender/Gender Identity
   3. Woman/Cis-gender
4. Sexual Orientation
   4. Straight
5. Nationality
   5. U.S. Citizen
6. Ability/Disability
   6. Currently able-bodied
7. Religion
   7. Spiritual, not religious
8. Age
   8. Middle-aged
Who am I? Who are you?

1. Race
2. Socio-Economic Class
3. Gender/Gender Identity
4. Sexual Orientation
5. Nationality
6. Ability/Disability
7. Religion
8. Age

Select 3 that have made the biggest difference in your life?

What has made them so meaningful?
There has been historic, long-standing, ongoing, systematic targeting of groups perceived as “less than.” This has been supported institutionally in policies, laws, and representation in decision-making roles.

**Target Groups**
- Statistically less likely to succeed
- Deprived systematically of benefits
- Devalued, seen as deviant from norm and undeserving
- Stigmatized as inferior

**Non-Target Group**
- Statistically more likely to succeed
- Receive social, political, and economic benefits
- Valued, seen as normal, deserving and entitled
- Included in all
Target Identities

Which historically excluded groups are you (or have you been) a member of?

• People of Color
• Poor, Working Class
• Women
• Transgender
• Gay, lesbian, Bisexual, Pansexual, Asexual, Queer, Questioning
• Muslim, Jewish, Catholic, Agnostic, Hindu, Atheist, Buddhist, Spiritual, LDS, Jehovah’s Witness, Pagan...
• Elders (40+ by law) / Children
• People with a disability
• Immigrant
• English as a Second Language / Non-English
Non-Target Identities

Which historically included groups are you (or have you been) a member of?

- White
- Middle, Upper Class
- Men
- Cisgender
- Heterosexuals
- Christians/Protestant
- Young Adults/Adults
- Able-Bodied
- US Born
- English Speakers
Who am I? Who are you?

1. Race
2. Socio-Economic Class
3. Gender/Gender Identity
4. Sexual Orientation
5. Nationality
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Of the 3 identities you selected as being important in your life...

• Which ones are you part of the target identity?
• Which ones are you in the dominant position?
• What difference does it make?
What does it mean for you to be you?

- Intersectionality
- Advantages & Disadvantages
- Complexity
What does it mean for you to be you?

Recognize and address advantages
My Racial Advantages (aka Privileges)

Growing up...

• Did not have to think about race or racism and how it could impact me.
• Did not need to worry about being a bad representative of my race.
• Assumed it was okay for me to go or be anywhere I wanted.
• Was given the benefit of the doubt, assumed to be trustworthy, smart.
• Schools showed people of my race as doers, creators, and achievers.
• Church showed imagery of God and Jesus as white men.
• Posters in class showed white men to be the epitome of evolution.
My Racial Advantages (aka Privileges)

Establishing myself...

• Could choose to be in the majority if I wanted without negative result to my livelihood.

• People in positions of power saw themselves reflected in me.

• Understood the systems I needed to engage with for my future.

• Never had to modify my appearance (hair or dress) to fit cultural norms that felt foreign to me in order to get a job.

• Felt comfortable with the social cues and behavior patterns that allowed me to fit in.
My Racial Advantages (aka Privileges)

As an adult...

• Personal care products that work with my skin and hair are easy to find, anytime, anywhere.
• No need to have “the talk” with my children.
• Can call the police without fear for my safety.
• Engage in dialogues about race by choice.
• Receive praise for talking about race.
• When talking about race, I am listened to with less skepticism.
White Fragility (n):

"A state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves. These moves include outward display of emotions such as fear and guilt, and behaviors such as argumentation, silence and leaving the stress-inducing situation."
White fragility examples:

• “That is horrible. I’m glad nothing like that happens here.”

• “This is really out of ignorance. Most people don’t intend to be hurtful.”

• “Thankfully, we’ve educated ourselves enough to know that this would never happen in our community.”

• “There are really larger and more pressing matters right now. Why are you making so much of this?”
Addressing Whiteness
Addressing Whiteness

**White Person*** --- a person who self-identifies or is identified by society at large as being racially white.

**Whiteness*** --- a set of social constructs applied to human beings that have been transformed into social, political, economic, and cultural behavior. White culture, norms, and values are presumed to be normative/natural. They become the standard against which all other cultures, groups, and individuals are measured and usually found to be inferior.

**White Identity*** --- how a white person perceives/experiences themselves in terms of race
The need for a healthy anti-racist white identity.
Shame v. Guilt

White Shame

• Feeling of being inherently bad, wrong or unredeemable because of who you are.

• Results in paralysis, wasted energy and self-focus

White Guilt

• Feeling of being culpable or responsible for something one has done and feels is wrong.

• Too much leads to behaviors that undermine equity efforts

Brené Brown, *I Thought It Was Just Me, But it Isn’t*
We’re like fish in a fishbowl. We don’t recognize the water we’re in.
Society
Education
History
Both/And Mindset

The ability to hold two contradictory ideas as true simultaneously.

Living in the Tension
A Both/And Mindset

- Nuance
- Tension
- Complexity
Living in the Tension

I’m a good person.  
I’m complicit with racism.
Living in the Tension

We are all human. We are all racialized.
Living in the Tension

Focusing on our similarities is healing.

Acknowledging our different histories is necessary for healing.
Living in the Tension

“Be the change you wish to see in the world.”

Advocate and take action to change the world.
Developing a Systemic Perspective

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individualistic Lens</th>
<th>Systemic Lens</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indifference</td>
<td>Awareness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditioned not to notice the “other” or injustice</td>
<td>Recognizes systemic oppression and privilege clearly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distancing</td>
<td>Allyship</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emphasis on differences between groups</td>
<td>Recognizes dehumanizing affects on all. Takes action for change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusion</td>
<td>Emotionally challenging!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasis on similarities between groups</td>
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Four Types of Bias

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<tr>
<th>Internalized</th>
<th>Interpersonal</th>
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<tr>
<td>Institutional</td>
<td>Structural</td>
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### Four Types of Bias

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTERNALIZED</th>
<th>INTERPERSONAL</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Lies within individuals</td>
<td>• Occurs between individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Private beliefs and biases, influenced by our culture</td>
<td>• Biases that occur when individuals interact with others and their private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• May be unconscious</td>
<td>beliefs affect their public interactions.</td>
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| INSTITUTIONAL | STRUCTURAL |
Microaggressions

“Those brief and everyday slights, insults, indignities and denigrating messages sent to people in a marginalized group by well-intentioned people of the dominant group who are unaware of the hidden messages being communicated.”

Derald Wing Sue, Ph.D.
### Four Types of Bias

<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>INTERNALIZED</strong></th>
<th><strong>INTERPERSONAL</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>INSTITUTIONAL</strong></td>
<td>• Occurs within institutions and systems of power</td>
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<tr>
<td>• <strong>Unfair policies</strong> and discriminatory practices of institutions (schools, workplaces, etc.) that routinely produce inequitable outcomes for people of a marginalized group and advantages for those in the dominant group.</td>
<td><strong>STRUCTURAL</strong></td>
</tr>
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</table>
| • **Cumulative and compounding effects** of an array of societal factors including the history, culture, ideology, and interactions of institutions and policies.
Intrapersonal Bias in My Teaching

Where does racism still exist within me?

How am I unconsciously privileging white norms?

What assumptions affect my approach to teaching?
Interpersonal Bias in My Classroom

- Who do I actively include? Who is excluded?
- Is the tone of my syllabus inviting?
- Do I include a diversity or inclusivity statement?
Interpersonal Bias in My Classroom

How do students know where I stand?

Who is being asked to take the risk in my class?

Which microaggressions confuse me?
Institutional Bias on Campus

Who is present and who is not present?

Who feels included within the institution, and who feels excluded?

How would a visitor know we are an inclusive campus? What visible markers exist?
Cultural Bias within the Institution

- Do our outcomes reflect historic inequity?
- Do we prioritize an individual or systemic lens?
- How does our approach to faith formation account for historic and contemporary racism?
### Moving from Bystander to Ally

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<tr>
<th>Agent</th>
<th>Bystander</th>
<th>Ally/Solidarity Partner</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Active</td>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>Active</td>
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<tr>
<td>Actively joins</td>
<td>No response</td>
<td>Educate oneself</td>
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<td>in the negative behavior</td>
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<td>Interrupt and Educate</td>
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<td>Initiate an</td>
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Adapted from Karen Bradbury, Ph.D.
Cultivating an Anti-Racist Practice

Developing Leadership in Community

- Free online curriculum
- Download Agendas and handouts
- Create shared understanding, develop analysis, build emotional capacity and skills

Available at ShellyTochluk.com
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• Witnessing Whiteness: The Need to Talk About Race and How to Do It
• Living in the Tension: The Quest for a Spiritualized Racial Justice
  • Free downloadable curriculum for group discussions (available on the website)

www.ShellyTochluk.com