The Psychological Impact of Racism Part II

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By the end of this lecture you should be able to:

- Comprehend structural racism and invisibility
- Know racism as a form of trauma
- Appreciate the role that empathy might play in reducing racism
- Understand the impact that racism has on the psyche
- Appreciate how this past election cycle has impacted behavior/perception
- Comprehend the concept of ‘white fragility’
Four parts

Part I
Dr. Alisha Moreland-Capuia – Introduction and discussion of structural racism and invisibility

Part II
Dr. Kali Hobson – Current events and the psychological impact of racism

Part III
Dr. Monique Jones – White fragility

Part IV
Discussion – facilitated by ALL
Part I: Dr. Alisha Moreland-Capuia
Racism

A system of dominance, power and privilege based on racial group designations....where members of the dominant group create or accept their societal privilege by maintaining structures, ideology, values, and behavior that have the intent or effect of leaving non-dominant group members relatively excluded from power, esteem, status and or equal access to societal resources. (Harrell, 2000)

Defining terms

- **Prejudice** - the tendency to attach one-dimensional attributes or stereotypes to the person at the expense of all other characteristics. This tendency to hold a fixed view of others results in failure to see diversity within groups and or the individuality of its members.

- **Discrimination** - the conversion of prejudice into specific behaviors and or acts.

- **Privilege** – presumed benefit/power of group membership, granted at birth, unearned as a consequence of skin color. Conscious and unconscious use of privilege to maintain institutional and social power at the exclusion of and detriment to others.

Anderson et al. Racism and Invisibility: Race-Related Stress, Emotional Abuse and Psychological Trauma for People of Color. Journal of Emotional Abuse. Pages 9-30 | Published online: 22 Sep 2008
Structural Racism

Race, Power and Policy

Dismantling Structural Racism

- Education
- Health
- Employment
- Community
- Social and Economic System
- Housing
- Criminal Justice
Racism & Invisibility

“To be a person of color in this country is really... never to be looked at. What dominant culture sees when they look at you is not visible. What they do see when they do look at you is what they have invested you with.

What they have invested you with is all the agony, and pain, and the danger, and the passion, and the torment — you know, sin, death, and hell — of which everyone in this country is terrified.”

- James Baldwin (paraphrased)
The Invisibility Syndrome & Antiracist movement

Invisibility Syndrome

- Cumulative experiences of confronting race-related stress, emotional abuse and the psychological trauma of racism can lead to the development of the invisibility syndrome.

- Symptoms of the syndrome are an outcome of psychological conditions produced when a person perceives that his or her talents and identity are not seen because of the dominance of the preconceived attitudes and stereotypes.

Developing an Anti-racist ideology

Dominant culture is strongly encouraged to:

- Educate themselves through reading and discussions with persons of color about the nature of racism in its individual, institutional and cultural forms
- Acknowledge White privilege
- Take responsibility for learning about racism from people of color (should be done both inside and outside of the workplace)
- Secure mutual goals in working towards antiracist social change
- Be willing to assess and learn from their own stereotypes, prejudices, biases and fears
- Be willing to speak out against injustices, institutionally (this first requires believing that injustice exists)

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Exercise in developing empathy
Part II: Dr. Kali Hobson
Iesha Evans

- July 5, 2016 Alton Sterling was shot by police
- July 6, 2016 Philando Castile was shot by police
- July 9, 2016 Black Lives Matter protests in the streets of Baton Rouge, LA
- Iesha Evans, a LPN and mother, joined the protest – “because I wanted to look my son in the eyes to tell him I fought for his freedom and rights.”
- Arrested briefly after this photo
- Demonstrates strength, dignity, peace in the face of unrest, oppression, and violence
- Iconic image of the BLM movement
Kendall Jenner and Pepsi

- Pepsi ad released in April of 2017
- Jenner casually walks out into a “protest” armed with a can of Pepsi
- Hands a Pepsi to the officers and everything is calm and resolved
- Visual mimics the iconic photo of Iesha Evans
- Trivializes the BLM movement – that if only we had a Pepsi, everything would be solved
If only Daddy would have known about the power of #Pepsi.
The Face of White Fragility

- Timothy Dluhos, EMT in NYC
- Used an image of Hitler for his profile picture and tweeted things such as “F-cken chinks can’t drive”, “I work with the coloreds”, and referred to Mayor Bloomberg as “King Heeb.”
- When confronted and eventually fired, this is what he looked like.
- He cried “there has got to be a lot worse out there than me...my life is ruined.”
- He was only remorseful for his actions when they affected his life and livelihood

**Racism has to be confronted**
United We Stand?

- April 9, 2016
- Dr. David Dao was violently dragged from his seat on United Airlines after declining to give up his seat on an overbooked flight because he needed to see patients the next day.
- As with other POC injuries and deaths at the hand of authorities, the “no-angel” stories immediately began.
- The NYT wrote “Doctor Dragged off Flight Was Convicted of Trading Drugs for Sex” less than 24 hours after the event.
- What if he were white? Would he have been treated the same?
- A doctor fighting for his patients is not disruptive and belligerent, but heroic—when you’re white.
In Contrast...Dr. Robert Bentley

- Same age range as Dr. Dao
- Dermatologist and now former governor of Alabama
- Resigned the governorship because of a sex scandal involving an aide/mistress with whom he romantically schemed to close DMVs in black neighborhoods to disenfranchise black voters
- Imagine him getting dragged through the aisle, pummeled by security, choking on his own blood (as Dr. Dao was)...It's harder to imagine isn't it?
- Media coverage despite his crimes, which included threats of violence, are sweet, almost whimsical – calling him the “luv gov.”
- No mug shot can be found on Google images even though he was booked

- This is white privilege
Racism in Psychiatry – Current Practice

- Racism and clinical bias directly impacts how we treat patients
- Numerous studies have found that clinicians overpredict violence of non-whites vs whites which can lead to increased rates of S&R and overmedication
- AA are more likely than other race groups to be diagnosed with primary thought disorders and over-medicated
- AA less likely to receive SGA than whites (49 to 66%) which puts them at higher risk for TD and EPS
- AA more likely to receive excessive dosing (>1000mg of chlorpromazine equivalents/day) of antipsychotics

Be aware of implicit/explicit biases and challenge them!

Part III: Dr. Monique Jones
“If you do not understand white supremacy (racism)—what it is and how it works—everything else you know will only confuse you.”

Preconceived notions of who is a racist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Racist</th>
<th>Non-racist</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prejudice</td>
<td>Open-minded</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bigoted</td>
<td>Doesn’t see color</td>
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<tr>
<td>Old</td>
<td>Young</td>
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<tr>
<td>Southern</td>
<td>Northern</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ignorant</td>
<td>Educated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Nice</td>
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White Fragility

- Term coined by Robin DiAngelo, Ph.D.
- A minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves

**Examples:**
- Outward display of emotions:
  - Anger
  - Fear
  - Guilt
- Behaviors:
  - Silence
  - Argumentation
  - Leaving the stress-inducing situation
***This is the white fragility video***

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cGGI66uK9x4&t
Part IV: Discussion

“All you are ever told in this country about being black is that it is a terrible, terrible thing to be. Now, in order to survive this, you have to really dig down into yourself and recreate yourself, really, according to no image which yet exists in America. You have to impose, in face — this may sound very strange — you have to decide who you are, and force the world to deal with you, not with its idea of you.”

- James Baldwin, The Last Interview and Other Conversations
“If you are silent about your pain, they’ll kill you and say you enjoyed it.”

-Zora Neale Hurston
Reflections

- Reflections on Baldwin’s and Hurston’s quotes....

- In your mind, how has the election of #45 impacted race relations in the United States of America, Oregon?

- What is your visceral reaction to current events like Dr. Dao (physician of color) being dragged off a United flight versus Dr. Bentley (Caucasian)? How do we understand the disparate treatment?
Characteristics of white supremacy culture that show up in our organization

**perfectionism** • little appreciation expressed among people for the work that others are doing; appreciation that is expressed usually directed to those who get most of the credit anyway

antidotes: develop a culture of appreciation, where the organization takes time to make sure that people’s work and efforts are appreciated;

**sense of urgency** • continued sense of urgency that makes it difficult to take time to be inclusive, encourage democratic and/or thoughtful decision-making, to think long-term, to consider consequences

antidotes: realistic workplans; leadership which understands that things take longer than anyone expects; discuss and plan for what it means to set goals of inclusivity and diversity, particularly in terms of time;

**defensiveness** • the organizational structure is set up and much energy spent trying to prevent abuse and protect power as it exists rather than to facilitate the best out of each person or to clarify who has power and how they are expected to use it

antidotes: understand that structure cannot in and of itself facilitate or prevent abuse; understand the link between defensiveness and fear (of losing power, losing face, losing comfort, losing privilege); work on your own defensiveness;

**quantity over quality** • all resources of organization are directed toward producing measurable goals • things that can be measured are more highly valued than things that cannot, for example numbers of people attending a meeting, newsletter circulation, money spent are valued more than quality of relationships, democratic decision-making, ability to constructively deal with conflict

antidotes: include process or quality goals in your planning; make sure your organization has a values statement which expresses the ways in which you want to do your work; make sure this is a living document and that people are using it in their day to day work;
White Supremacy Culture
Dismantling Racism

worship of the written word • if it’s not in a memo, it doesn’t exist • the organization does not take into account or value other ways in which information gets shared

antidotes: take the time to analyze how people inside and outside the organization get and share information; figure out which things need to be written down and come up with alternative ways to document what is happening; work to recognize the contributions and skills that every person brings to the organization

only one right way • the belief there is one right way to do things and once people are introduced to the right way, they will see the light and adopt it • when they do not adapt or change, then something is wrong with them (the other, those not changing), not with us (those who ‘know’ the right way)

antidotes: accept that there are many ways to get to the same goal

fear of open conflict • people in power are scared of expressed conflict and try to ignore it or run from it • when someone raises an issue that causes discomfort, the response is to blame the person for raising the issue rather than to look at the issue which is actually causing the problem

antidotes: role play ways to handle conflict before conflict happens; distinguish between being polite and raising hard issues;

NOT A COMPLETE LIST, A SAMPLING
THE END

“Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness.” - Desmond Tutu