

**Challenging Racism and White Privilege  
In Our Community**

**Create CommUNITY**

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### Diversity Work

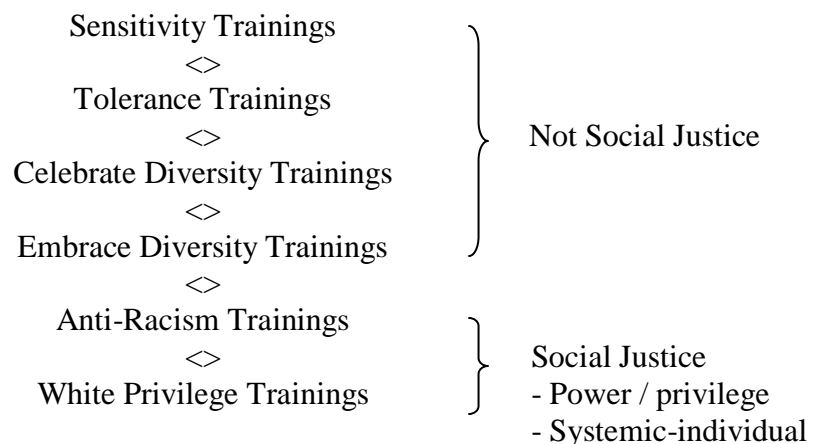
- Awareness of / appreciation of difference
- There is a lack of clarity about what social variables “diversity” actually refers to and thus this difference can occur along almost ANY line of identity, interest, groupings, etc.
- As a result, the efficacy of programs and initiatives that seek to support “diversity” is diminished
- With a few exceptions, “Diversity” does not address issues of power and privilege with respect to access to resources (such as a college education)

### Cultural Competency Work

- Intention is to learn skills to be able to relate across cultural lines
- Is more often a euphemism for dominant cultural groups learning about “those other” groups of people
- Of and by itself, this is not always a problem – we all need to learn to communicate with people who are different
- When the dominant culture does not interrogate its own social location (values, beliefs, power), however, it is a problem because it reinforces “the otherness” of the cultures being studied

### Social Justice Work –Range of Training Perspectives

There are usually a range of perspectives offered for “diversity” trainings throughout educational, organizational, and community trainings. They range in goals / objectives, underlying philosophies, expected outcomes, and intensity. Descriptors of this range, in general, are as follows:



## Race

Skin Color  
Physical Features  
Socially Constructed  
Categories

## Culture

Language  
Values  
Beliefs  
Traditions  
Food  
Music  
Clothing  
Holidays  
Religion

## Ethnicity

Ancestry  
(Family) of Origin  
More Geographically Located

### Key Points Regarding Race / Culture / Ethnicity

- Race and racial categories in the United States are a social construction created by the dominant group with the intent to determine Dominant and Subordinate categories and who has access to resources; they have an assigned meaning.
- Culture and Ethnicity, in contrast, are not imposed by a dominant group and instead arise out of the communities themselves. While they also change over time, they have an intrinsic meaning that gives them substance and purpose in ways that racial categories in the United States do not. (One exception to this is the African American community whose various cultures and ethnicities of origin were forcibly lost as a result of the Atlantic Slave Trade; thus, African American culture has arisen in relation to, and many would say in spite of, the racial categorization and construction of Blackness created by a white dominant society.)
- Racial categories have changed over time and therefore how various communities experience race has changed over time:
  - White immigrant experience (1880-1924, 1925-1960, 1961-present)
  - Various immigrant communities of color (e.g. 1930 “Hispanic” versus 1934 and 1980)
  - The example of recent immigrant families (for example University families)
- Ultimately, race and racial categories in the US are about power, privilege and conferred dominance for whites and the denial of access to resources for people of color.

## Racism = Prejudice + Power

### Formula

$$\begin{array}{rcccl} & & \text{Conscious} & & \\ & & \text{Attitudes} & & \\ \text{Racism} & = & \text{Prejudice} & + & \text{Power} \\ & & \text{Unconscious} & & \text{Individual} \\ & & & & \text{Cultural} \\ & & & & \text{Institutional} \\ & & \text{Conscious} & & \\ & & \text{Behaviors} & & \\ & & \text{Unconscious} & & \end{array}$$

### *Prejudice*

- Everyone has some degree of prejudice,
- It can be conscious or unconscious,
- It has certain functions for the individual or group.

### *Power*

- Must have access to it on all three levels,
- No such thing as “reverse” oppression,
- It can be intentional (active) or unintentional (passive).

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### Definition

The cultural images and messages that affirm the assumed superiority of white people and the assumed inferiority of people of color

+

A system of advantage based on race that benefits white people and disadvantages people of color.

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## **Whiteness = White Privilege + White Supremacy**

Whiteness (WN) is the overwhelming presence of white centrality, white normativity, white privilege and white supremacy in our society.

White Privilege (WP) is the system of advantages and benefits that white folks receive as a result of WN and racism in our society.

White Supremacy (WS) is the ideology (values, beliefs, ideals, behaviors and cultural markers) that justifies racism on all levels (individually, culturally and institutionally) and supports the existence of WP.

- This is the core of our work as white folks
- This requires a major paradigm shift in the thinking of white people:
  - Issues of race and racism ARE the concern of white people on a daily basis,
  - Now, white people are part and parcel to the solution and not just good-hearted folks who are helping out “others”.

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## **White Privilege**

Dalton, 1998: “White skin privilege is a birthright, a set of advantages one receives simply by being born with features that society values highly.”

- *White privilege is unearned*: This quote underscores the unearned aspect of white privilege. This is not to say that whites do not work for what they earn in their lives, but simply points out that at every turn, white privilege is working to help whites along more than people of color. Thus, while whites have to work hard, they never have to work as hard as people of color for the same results.

McIntosh, 2002: “An invisible package of unearned assets which I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was ‘meant’ to remain oblivious.”

- *Whites are actively taught not to see their privilege*: The central point here is that whites are meant to not notice the benefits and advantages they get as a result of being white. If whites were to have a thorough and deep knowledge of these advantages, they would be more apt to speak in much greater numbers against the power structure that bequeaths them. As a result the system of white privilege and racism would stand a greater chance of being dismantled. Thus, “Super Whitey” likes to keep whites oblivious to these benefits.

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