

# Starting With Ourselves

## Racial Identity Development for White Educators

**M**y son, Cairo, is left-handed. Everyone else in my family, as far as I know, is right-handed, and at first, I was intrigued by his difference. As someone who is right-handed, however, I did not really know what it was like for Cairo in a world that centers right-handed people.

When Cairo and our daughter, Serena, were young they regularly switched seats in our minivan. Sometimes Cairo would climb into the booster seat and buckle himself in with no problem. At other times, he would say that he couldn't buckle himself in. I found this maddening because we were usually on our way somewhere with some type of time constraint—the pediatrician, a practice or game we had to get to by a certain time—and I would be so frustrated anytime he said he couldn't do it. In my mind, of course he could do it! He had done it before, so why wouldn't he be able to do it again? It took me far too long to realize that he wasn't just saying he couldn't buckle himself in to spice up an otherwise boring ride in the car. When I took the time to wonder why this might be happening, I noticed that when he sat on the right of the car, he could reach up with his left hand, grab the seat belt, pull it across, and buckle himself in with ease because he was using his dominant hand. On days where he had switched seats with Serena and was sitting on the left side of the car, however, he struggled to reach up to buckle himself in with his right hand because that was not his dominant hand.

What if I had taken the time much sooner to be curious and inquire about what Cairo was experiencing? What if I hadn't assumed that I knew what his intentions were? What if I had reflected on the privilege of what it means to be a right-handed person? If someone had asked me back then about the right-handed privilege I enjoyed, I would have struggled to see how I was advantaged, and if someone were to have brought to my attention that I wasn't aware of the challenges left-handed people faced, I may have even said something like "I can't be handist. My son is left-handed." Proximity does not necessarily lead to understanding. Just because you're in a relationship with someone, even a close relationship, doesn't mean you understand their lived experiences. I wasn't aware of my privilege. I was, therefore, not aware of what it felt like to be someone who was not right-handed, like navigating the challenges of writing in a spiral notebook or on a whiteboard; using scissors, can openers, ice cream scoopers, game controllers, computer keyboards; opening refrigerators; trying to eat or work next to a right-handed person without bumping arms; or encountering right-handed desks in classrooms. In my relationship with my son, and by leaning into curiosity and wonder instead of judgment and assumptions, I began to learn.

As a Black, immunocompromised woman whose body is taller, wider, and heavier than what is considered the average body type, I know what it feels like to be marginalized. I also have experienced privilege as an English-speaking, heterosexual, cisgender, able-bodied, Christian, right-handed, college graduate homeowner with a US birth certificate whose family has two cars. During the pandemic, my family also experienced advantages with our access to Wi-Fi with high bandwidth and multiple devices. While working from home, I have experienced the privilege of being someone who lives on the East Coast of the United States, with most meeting times considerate of people who live where I live.

Because of the marginalized aspects of my identity, some of my privileges don't always feel like privileges. For example, although I have a master's degree, I also carry quite a bit of school loan debt, which limits my financial choices. We purchased our first home during the subprime mortgage crisis and had to refinance our mortgage a couple of times to keep from losing our home. Because of the amount of credit card debt we carry as a result of trying to pay for some of our basic needs like car repairs, tuition for our children, and emergency plane tickets, the interest rate on our mortgage is high, which has limited our financial choices as well.

We see the world through the lenses of race, gender, socioeconomic class, religious beliefs, language, age, ability, citizenship, education, and employment stage. We are also influenced by our personalities, likes, dislikes, interests, and position in our families, and, as I mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, our dominant hands. Some parts of our identities are more salient than others. Although I wasn't as aware of the privileged parts of my identity in the past, including being right-handed when it could have been helpful to my son, I am more aware now, and when you know better, you do better.

## STAGES OF WHITE RACIAL IDENTITY

Awareness of the impact of our identities and lived experiences across differences is an integral part of our racial consciousness journeys and racial identity development—our journey toward doing better. Unless we had a unique childhood, this is not an experience that most of us have had as we grew up in the United States, so it's work we need to do now in order to be our full selves and to best support our students.

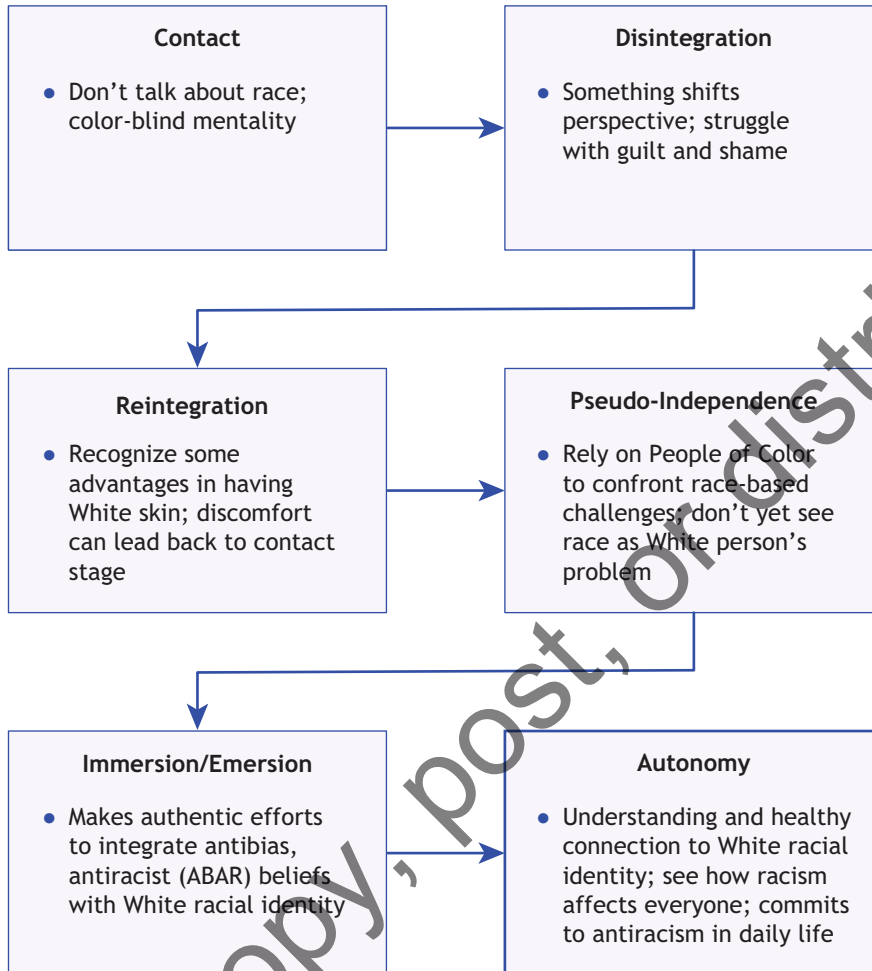
Beverly Daniel-Tatum, PhD, president emerita of Spelman College, psychologist, and author of *Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?* and *Other Conversations About Race* (2017b) explores racial identity development in her work. In a 2020 interview with the Parents League of New York, she shared that young People of Color usually begin to develop a racial/ethnic identity in adolescence as they begin to see themselves through the eyes of others. For White people, it is possible for the process to also begin in adolescence, unless they live in predominantly White, segregated communities. In that case, the racial/ethnic identity development begins much later. “For them,” Daniel-Tatum states, “being White is just ‘being normal’ like everyone else, and that dimension of identity goes unnoticed and undiscussed most of the time. For that reason, many White adults who live and work in predominantly White environments have given little consideration to the meaning of their own racial group membership” (Parents League of New York 2020).

What, then, does racial identity development look like for a White adult in the United States? How does one begin to develop a racial identity when one has lived in a predominantly White community for decades? Janet Helms studied racial identity development and explored the concept in *A Race Is a Nice Thing to Have: A Guide to Being a White Person or Understanding the White Persons in Your Life* (2008), which includes the following stages for people who identify as White: contact, disintegration, reintegration, pseudo-independence, immersion/emersion, and autonomy (see Figure 2.1). Let's dig into these concepts further.

**Contact:** Folks in the contact stage have a “color-blind” approach to race, a perspective that talking about racial difference and believing that race is an issue is what causes racism, and do not tend to commit explicitly racist acts. Those in this stage can harbor racist beliefs that are harder to detect because of their refusal to see race, and when confronted with race-based incidents where the advantages of having White skin are revealed, can move into the disintegration stage. Someone in this stage may say things like the following:

- *There is only one race—the human race.*
- *The United States is a melting pot.*
- *We are a nation of immigrants.*
- *All lives matter!*

FIGURE 2.1 Stages of White Identity Development



**Disintegration:** People in this stage have new experiences and/or learn something new that begins to shift their perspectives about race-related matters, and they struggle with guilt and shame because they begin to see that their previous perspective was based on false narratives and/or incomplete information. This can be a foundation on which a person begins to build ABAR beliefs and move to the reintegration stage.

Someone in this stage may say things like the following:

- *I didn't realize that redlining kept Black people from owning homes.*
- *I didn't understand how some People of Color felt about the police until I saw the recording of George Floyd's murder.*

- *If someone like Serena Williams can experience inferior health care after the birth of her child, perhaps there are systemic inequities in the health care system.*
- *I believed what was said about the young Black men who were accused of assaulting the Central Park jogger being super-predators, but it turns out they were falsely accused.*

**Reintegration:** People in this stage might blame people from marginalized groups for the challenges they face. While experiencing reintegration, there may be a belief that the advantages that come along with having White skin are deserved. If someone in this stage is able to overcome these feelings, they may transition into the pseudo-independence stage.

Someone in this stage may say/ask things like the following:

- *Look at the rioters burning down their own community.*
- *What about Black on Black crime?*
- *If you think the United States is so bad, you should leave!*
- *I have experienced reverse racism.*
- *If you haven't done anything wrong, you have nothing to fear from the police.*

**Pseudo-independence:** Someone in this stage may look to People of Color to confront race-based challenges. They don't see it as their work but are supportive of the work being done, which affirms their view of themselves as not being racist. This is the first stage of positive racial identification, though the person has yet to connect with being White and becoming an active antiracist.

Someone in this stage may do things like the following:

- *Remain silent during race-based discussions/interaction but send private messages to or talk with People of Color individually to express support.*
- *Support the hiring of People of Color to "increase diversity" for junior-level positions but not for leadership roles.*
- *Support "inclusion" efforts so that People of Color have a seat at an already established table but not with decision-making power.*
- *Support People of Color who kneel during the national anthem in protest of the shootings/killings of unarmed People of Color, but not kneel themselves.*

It's important to consider the impact that pseudo-independence has on People of Color. Neil A. Lester's (2017) article, "For White Allies in Search of a Solution to Racism/When Folks of Color Are Exhausted," offers guidance for people who find themselves in this stage.



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**Immersion/emersion:** Here, one exhibits authentic efforts to integrate ABAR beliefs with their White racial identity, especially by developing relationships with other White people who are engaging in ABAR practices.

Someone in this stage may do things like the following:

- *Participate in a protest against race-based injustices.*
- *Participate in a book club where a book about race is discussed.*
- *Attend equity sessions at conferences.*
- *Join a White affinity group with an antiracist focus.*
- *Sign petitions in support of equitable and just racial practices.*

**Autonomy:** At this stage, one develops an understanding of and healthy connection to their White racial identity, sees how systemic racism affects everyone, and is a committed and active antiracist.

Someone in this stage may do things like the following:

- *Educate themselves on the positions that political candidates support that have racial implications before voting and allow that information to shape their vote.*
- *Advocate for affordable housing efforts in their communities.*
- *Speak up against an injustice instead of waiting for People of Color to address it.*
- *Speak up in favor of ABAR instructional practices at school board meetings.*
- *Donate to Indigenous organizations and are aware of the history of the land they live and work on.*



It's important to be aware of one's own racial identity development to avoid going from being unaware of systemic injustices to believing that the way to address them is to try to help people who you believe are less fortunate than you are instead of seeing how systemic oppression negatively impacts all of us. Without healthy racial identity development and a full and accurate understanding of history, you can begin to think that it's your responsibility to save people from marginalized groups instead of realizing that we *all* need saving from the consequences of racism. Without healthy racial identity development, you may find yourself pitying People of Color, for example, or adopting a deficit perspective and assigning blame for the challenges they experience—a mindset that is indicative of the reintegration stage of White identity development—instead of working to dismantle the systems that created the challenges in the first place.

## THE DANGER OF DEFICIT THINKING

Let's look at a specific example of how lack of full understanding of racial identity can lead to deficit thinking models—and then in the next section we'll wrestle with how to rework some of this wiring in our own thinking. Consider the work of Ruby Payne, for example, who is best known for her book *A Framework for Understanding Poverty* (2018; now in its sixth edition). Payne's work delves into what she calls the *culture of poverty* and how she believes it impacts education. However, Payne's perspective is an example of a deficit perspective about people experiencing poverty. She writes about the symptoms of poverty without interrogating the causes. Unfortunately, there are a number of schools and districts that have used and are using Payne's work to inform their perspectives about and approaches to how they perceive and work with students and families who are experiencing poverty.

In *A Framework for Understanding Poverty*, for example, Payne (2005) lists survival skills needed by different societal classes. The section about surviving in poverty includes survival skills like *I know how to*:

- Locate grocery stores' garbage bins that have thrown-away food.
- Bail someone out of jail.
- Physically fight and defend myself.
- Get a gun, even if I have a police record.
- Keep my clothes from being stolen at a laundromat.
- Sniff out problems in a used car.
- Live without a checking account.
- Get around without a car.



These statements are problematic on so many levels, filled with stereotypes and assumptions. For example, people who are considerate of the impact of harmful emissions may take public transportation or ride bikes, regardless of their socio-economic status, so people who are experiencing poverty are not the only people who can get around without a car. My family washed our clothes in a laundromat before my parents were in a financial position to buy a washer and dryer for our apartment, and my family was never concerned about our clothes being stolen. I wonder about the use of the word *sniff*, too, as it evokes images of animals instead of humans. Aren't there many reasons why someone would choose not to have a checking account? And I know there are people in the middle and wealthy classes who know how to bail someone out of jail.

The section about surviving in the middle class includes statements about getting children to Little League, piano lessons, and soccer; ordering comfortably in a nice restaurant; getting the best interest rate on a car loan; getting a library card; decorating the house for holidays; and talking to children about going to college. The section about surviving in wealth includes statements like having favorite restaurants in countries around the world, having at least two homes that are staffed and maintained, knowing how to enroll your children in preferred private schools, and supporting the work of a particular artist. Are these things true? And if they are, is it because people who are experiencing poverty don't want these things for themselves and their families, or is it that they don't have access?

When we examine this example, the problems with deficit thinking become clearer. There is avoidance in assigning blame to people in underserved, underrepresented populations—or simply throwing our hands in the air and saying, “That’s just the way it is”—instead of recognizing our role in sustaining or dismantling the systems that created the imbalance.

## BE OPEN TO PRODUCTIVE STRUGGLE WITH RACIAL IDENTITY

We know as educators that if students try to move from confusion to understanding without experiencing the challenge of the process, they are not really learning. The same is true for us as adults and is particularly important to consider when it comes to racial identity and consciousness development. We need to engage in the same productive struggle that we encourage our students to engage in as they're learning something new. We can embrace this process as it relates to our own learning and growth by developing our emotional intelligence (also known as EQ, or emotional quotient).

In her book *Onward: Cultivating Emotional Resilience in Educators*, Elena Aguilar (2018) encourages us to engage in critical work as we develop our emotional

intelligence practices, including knowing ourselves, understanding emotions, building community, cultivating compassion, being a learner, and riding the waves of change. Each of these practices is essential to laying a strong foundation as we interrupt systems of oppression as they show up in our learning spaces. This work is hard, and the temptation to maintain the status quo is strong, so we must be aware of the potential pitfalls we may face. Systems of inequity are formidable foes.



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A major aspect of productive struggle with racial identity is understanding how we have been racially socialized. In “White Supremacy Culture Characteristics: The Characteristics of White Supremacy Culture” from *Dismantling Racism: A Workbook for Social Change Groups*, Okun (n.d.) defines thirteen characteristics that are present in our culture.

In my experience, here’s how five of these characteristics can show up in this work in schools, in particular, and create barriers to our progress if we’re not careful:

- *Perfectionism*: Failing to engage meaningfully in race-related work for fear of making mistakes
- *Sense of urgency*: Not taking into consideration that racism and systems of oppression have evolved over centuries and that there are no quick fixes in this work
- *Defensiveness*: Believing that if someone’s intentions are good, not being open to having their thoughts, feelings, experiences, or choices challenged without triggering a strong self-protective reaction that typically centers the wants of that person instead of progress toward collective healing and benefit
- *Fear of open conflict*: Having a strong aversion to strong, public emotions/emotional displays, especially if one feels blamed or perceived as responsible for the source of those emotions
- *Right to comfort*: Showing up as people wanting to engage in work that focuses more on general diversity and inclusion matters—those that typically veer away from race

All of these characteristics divert us from the work of liberation and are evidence of the fact that we, as a society, need healing.



## THE NEED FOR HEALING FROM RACIALIZATION

In the summer of 2019, I had the opportunity to speak at and participate in the White Responsibility Anti Racism Teach-In and to learn from some of the people who had most influenced my learning about race and education; being in the company of thought leaders like Jacqueline Battalora, Zaretta Hammond, Liza Talusan, and Ijeoma Oluo transformed me. The teach-in deepened my understanding of race as a social construct as well

as the vital connection between culturally responsive teaching and the liberation that comes with effective literacy instruction and provided tools to support productive conversations about race.

During the teach-in, one of the presenters shared an image of a Dove Summer Glow Nourishing Body Lotion. The image showed that the product was made for people with “normal to dark skin.” There was an audible gasp from other participants, which caused cognitive dissonance for me. I didn’t gasp, I didn’t see anything out of the ordinary in that image, but clearly, there was something upsetting to other participants, so I looked at the image again. And that’s when I saw it. *Normal to dark skin. Normal to dark skin.* Dark skin is not considered normal.

Why hadn’t I noticed the problem with the product as soon as I saw it? It became clear to me that I needed to heal from something deep inside, and it had to do with oppression.

There are four interlocking aspects of oppression that build on and support each other: ideological, institutional, interpersonal, and internalized (see Figure 2.2). Any effort to end oppression should address all four levels.

Explore the resources based on California Newsreel’s documentary series *Race: The Power of an Illusion* (<https://newsreel.org/guides/race/pressreleasecredit.htm>) about race in society, science, and history to learn more about the origins, beliefs, and consequences of what we call “race.” There are resources to help you to learn more about what race is, whether or not you can tell someone’s race by looking at them, how ideas about race have changed over time, human diversity and how different are we really, how race impacts our daily lives, and how race has impacted housing in the United States.

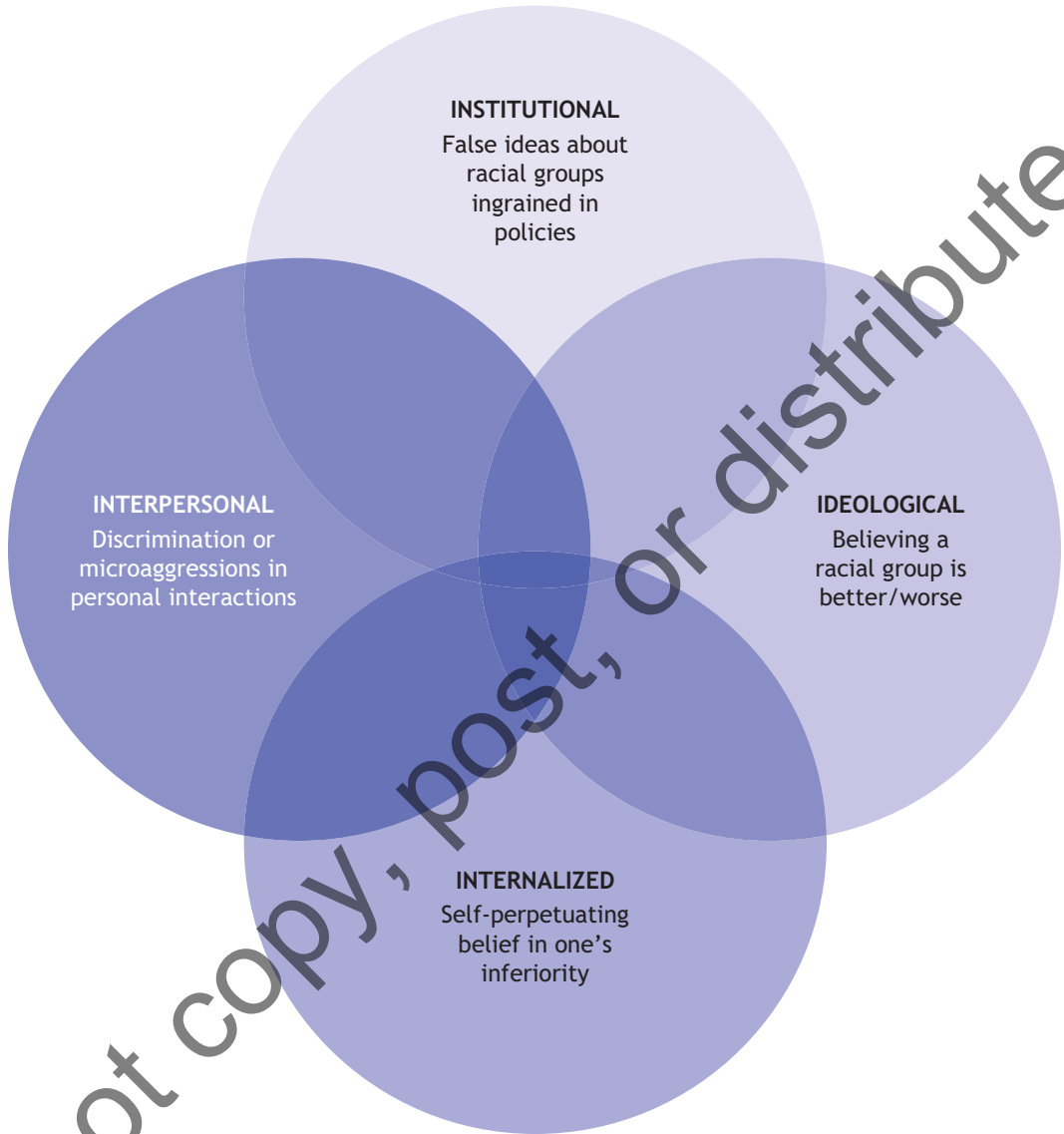


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**Ideological:** This is the false narrative that one group of people is better than another. There is a privileged group that attributes positive characteristics to itself and a group that is disadvantaged and assigned negative characteristics.

*Example:* The belief that White and Asian people are more intelligent and hard-working than Black people.

FIGURE 2.2 Interlocking Aspects of Oppression



**Institutional:** This is how false ideas about groups of people become ingrained in the practices and policies of our health care, legal, housing, economic, political, educational, media, entertainment, employment, and other systems. When these false ideas become institutionalized, we see evidence of disadvantaged and marginalized groups being denied equitable, fair, and just access to these systems.

*Example:* White women earn \$0.82 for every dollar non-Hispanic White men earn, but Black women earn \$0.63 for the same (and even less in some states).

**Interpersonal:** This is how bias, discrimination, prejudice, and stereotyping show up in individual and group interactions.

*Example:* Saying to a Person of Color, “When I look at you, I don’t see color” or “You’re so articulate!”

**Internalized:** This is when historically and currently marginalized people believe the false narrative that they are inferior. Once this belief is internalized, individual actors aren’t needed because the oppression has become self-perpetuating. It has become part of the DNA of the people in these groups. You don’t, for example, need to tell your fingernails to grow. They just do because the directions for that growth are already programmed at a cellular level.

*Example:* My reaction (or lack thereof) to the Dove ad represents internalized oppression, which can show up as internalized inferiority, just as a White person seeing the same ad and not noticing anything wrong would indicate internalized superiority or supremacy. Both reactions show evidence of a need for healing.

In his book, *My Grandmother’s Hands* (Menakem 2017), Resmaa Menakem explores the concept of White supremacy as a trauma response—not simply an attitude, belief system, or way of seeing the world. In a *Medium* article, Menakem states the following:

White Supremacy—and all the claims, accusations, excuses, and dodges that surround it—are a trauma response. This response lives not inside psyches, but deep within bodies. (In fact, a more accurate term for the affliction is *white-body supremacy*, since it elevates the white body above all other bodies. The white body is the ostensibly supreme standard against which other bodies’ humanity is measured.) The attitudes, convictions, and beliefs of white-body supremacy are reflexive cognitive side effects, like the belief of a claustrophobe that the walls are closing in. These ideas have been reinforced through institutions as practice, procedures, and standards. (Menakem 2014)

An example of how this shows up is the volume and frequency of media coverage regarding Gabby Petito, a young White woman who went missing and was later found murdered in September 2021, compared to the consistent lack of coverage about missing, murdered Women of Color, particularly Indigenous women. How we typically respond to the ideas and impact of White supremacy has been ineffective up until this point. If we acknowledge White supremacy as a trauma response, however, we can address it more effectively as a condition for which we all need healing.



## UNCOVERING, DISMANTLING, AND HEALING FROM RACIALIZATION

I had the privilege of leading a group of my colleagues from a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds through a ten-week discussion of *The Racial Healing Handbook* by Anneliese Singh (2019). Though some of the questions in the book involved recalling painful experiences and were challenging to consider, it was such a powerful and beneficial experience. I didn't have a true appreciation of the depth of the wound racialization had caused in my person, and reading the book and engaging with the activities was like a balm for that wound. Other participants in the book discussion shared that they had a similar experience. It's vital for us to engage in this healing work if we have any hope of beginning the journey of recovering from the impact of racialization and offering our students a better way of being.

Although I encourage you to purchase this book and do the work Singh leads us through, the following are some of the questions from that work that have immediate implications for educators. I encourage you to use these reflection questions, based on Singh's (2019) book, to guide your journey toward uncovering, dismantling, and healing from racialization. (See the responses from educators in Chapter 1 and in the online companion, as well as the Letters to My Younger Self in the online companion.)

1. **Knowing my racial identity:** Examining what we needed to know about race when we were growing up can guide us in offering those learnings and experiences to our students now. These questions can guide this inquiry:
  - *What did I need to know about my race when I was growing up? How would these things have changed my earliest memories of race and racism?*
  - *What were the racial scripts of the people who raised me?*
  - *When did I begin to notice race?*
  - *What reinforcements of racial socialization—rewards for playing along or punishments for stepping outside of racial scripts—did I experience, and what were the dehumanizing results?*

It is important for teachers to be aware of how we've all been socialized and the racial scripts we and our students are operating by as well as to ensure that we are not dehumanizing anyone with our policies, and instructional practices.

2. **Exploring my internalized racism:** Taking the time to resocialize ourselves racially better equips us to create and sustain healthy learning communities for our students. These questions can guide this self-reflection:
  - *What is the world I needed to see when I was a child?*
  - *What did I need the adults in my life to teach me?*



- *What are the institutional and cultural messages I needed to hear?*
- *What positive reinforcements would have benefited me, and what could have been different with a healthier race socialization?*
- *How can I resocialize my racial self?*

3. **Learning and unlearning racism:** Being aware of where we need to engage in more learning can help us to be aware of the gaps in what we can offer our students instructionally. The following questions can help form this awareness:

- *What is my personal lesson plan on the history of racism?*
- *How would I rate myself now on my own knowledge of the history of racism?*
- *Think about the knowledge I have about the following groups, and rank from 1 (a lot of knowledge) to 3 (very little knowledge):*
  - Alaska Native/First Nations/Indigenous People/Native Americans
  - Asian/Pacific Islander Americans
  - Black/African Americans
  - Latinx/o/a/ Hispanic Americans
  - Middle Eastern Americans
  - White/European Americans

4. **Grieving and naming racism:** When we are aware of what stage(s) of grief we and our students are experiencing as a result of race-based incidents in our lives, we can better prepare to support students effectively. Ask yourself these questions to grapple with this process:

- *What is a recent experience with racism? What did it feel like? How did I respond?*
- *Can I apply the five stages of grief to my experiences with racism (denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance)?*

5. **Raising my race consciousness:** Educators must be aware of how we respond to taking risks related to ABAR instructional practices. This work takes courage, and noting where we are strong can help to build a scaffold for the areas needing growth. Reflect on these questions:

- *How am I becoming antiracist?*
- *How do I take risks to challenge racism when I see it or realize when I am participating in it?*
- *What are my strengths in this area and what are my areas that need growth?*

6. **Catching yourself in the flow of racism:** Being aware of how we respond to (or inflict!) microaggressions that occur in our classroom and/or school can help us to take a more proactive approach so that we are more prepared to respond effectively when the microaggressions occur instead of fleeing, freezing, fighting, or appeasing. Ask yourself these questions:

- *How can I delve deeper into personal experiences of racial microaggressions?*
- *What is my most often experienced racial microaggression?*
- *How does this most often manifest?*
- *What is my typical internal response?*
- *How can I refine my typical internal dialogue so I don't internalize racism?*

**7. Understanding racism in relationships:** Identifying the messages we received in school can help us to be more mindful of the messages our students receive from us and the school community as a whole. With that knowledge, we can work to ensure that the messages students receive about their own race and the race of others are healthy messages that authentically support what we say we believe. Ask yourself these questions:

- *How does race and racism show up in school?*
- *What were the main messages I learned in school about my own race and the race of others?*

**8. Reclaiming your whole racial self:** Being aware of the intersectional aspects of ABAR instructional practices can better prepare us for the nuances and complexities of this work. Here are some guiding questions:

- *What are my intersecting identities of privilege and oppression?*
- *How do I think my (dis)ability intersects with my race?*

**9. Becoming a racial ally:** Examining the challenges of allyship can help us to be more strategic and proactive when it comes to supporting our students to be upstanders. Reflect on this:

- *What were three times when it was tough to be a racial ally?*

**10. Engaging in collective racial healing:** Thinking about the aspects of creating a healthy community can help us to create such a community with our students. Consider these questions:

- *What is my relationship to community?*
- *What is the foundation of healthy communities I'm part of?*
- *What are the rewards of being in community?*

**11. Dreaming of what a racially just world looks like:** Writing down our next steps and developing an accountability plan helps us to move toward making our dream of a racially just world a reality. Here are questions to help you form your plan:

- *What are my next steps?*
- *How can I continue to grow as an antiracist?*
- *How do I hold myself accountable?*

Anneliese Singh shared on the Abolitionist Teaching Network's *Teaching to Thrive* podcast, when discussing how we heal from racism, that

. . . racial healing is when we take the time to really do that life inventory, that we go back and we . . . reconnect with that little kid that is in all of us that just learned such lies about race and racism, and we scoop that little kid up if you're White and say, "Sweetie, whew, that was a big lie, and we've got some work to do. And sometimes you're going to feel guilty and ashamed, and wish you would've known better, and I'm going to be right there along with you as your loving adult and we're going to move through those emotions and we're going to reclaim our humanity." (Love and Culley-Love 2021, 41:31–42:03).

One goal of this book is to walk alongside you through this process for your own healing and development as an educator and to equip you to support your students through the same process.

Although race is a social construct, it has significant meaning and power in our society. In order to equip White students as global citizens, teachers need to both learn about and teach students about the contact, disintegration, reintegration, pseudo-independence, immersion/emersion, and autonomy stages of White racial identity development, as well as the impact of Whiteness, racialization, and privilege on relationships, communities, power, access, and systems.

We have to be willing to give ourselves the learning experiences that we should have participated in our K–12 experiences and in our undergraduate and postgraduate learning experiences. Although this process won't necessarily lead to a degree, it will equip you with the ability to truly be the teachers our students deserve.

As Daniel Hill (2020) states, "I believe there is an opportunity for White folks to experience our own version of liberation from white supremacy. But we have to believe we are damaged to experience that liberation. Currently, only a minority of White folks actually believe this" (48). The following reflection questions are designed to support you as you begin to write/record your own racial autobiography. There's a link to my racial autobiography recording, which includes the questions that guided my exploration, in the online companion to this book.

## Breathe and Reflect

Think back to when you were five, six, or seven years old, and reflect on your earliest memories of race. Reflections can focus on personal interactions with or about people from other racial groups and what you saw (or didn't see) on TV shows, on cartoons, in movies, in books, at the supermarket, at the mall, on vacations, with toys, in advertisements, in magazines, at camp, at places of worship, on teams, at school, and so on. Use this reflection to begin to write or record your own racial autobiography, and consider how you can help your students to do the same. ■

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Take an inventory of the voices that inform your ideas, preferences, beliefs, and opinions. Who are your neighbors, friends, and authority figures? What news sources do you rely on? Who are the authors of the majority of the books you read? Who are the stars of the TV shows and movies you watch? If you have a place of worship, is there a racial majority group? How have these parts of your life changed or remained the same over time? Use this reflection to begin to create your own racial journey map, and consider how you can help your students to do the same. ■

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