

CASA

Racial Equity in Foster Care: toward cultural responsiveness

Mica McGriggs, PhD (she/her)

Meet Dr. Mica McGriggs

Pronouns: she/her



- Dr. Mica McGriggs earned a Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology at Brigham Young University and went on to complete a post-doctoral fellowship at Columbia University. Her area of expertise in the somatic embodiment of racial trauma. Along with her clinical and academic work she has worked as a consultant on issues of diversity, equity & inclusion at the organizational level for several years. Dr. McGriggs has worked with a variety of top leaders from CEO's of corporations, to Executive Directors of Non-Profits, to government Officials (including Police Chiefs) on issues of diversity and sustainable inclusion. Dr. McGriggs has contributed widely to the academic and public discourse on the intersections of race, gender, and religion/spirituality and has had the opportunity to have her work featured in media outlets including NPR, CNN, Teen Vogue, Fusion, CBS news, The Salt Lake Tribune, Huffington Post, News Week, and Seattle PI among others. She resides in NYC and currently works at an independent school where she leads work in Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion.





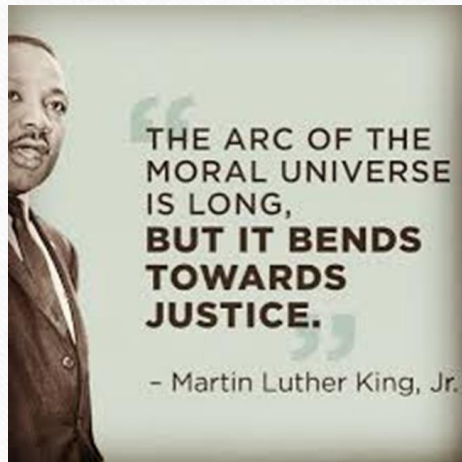
Workshop Outline

- Historical Context
- Current State of Foster Care System
- The Impact of Racial Bias on Present Day Disparities
- Perspectives and Tools for “closing the gap”



Values Based Learning

- get Educated
get Real
get to Work



- We are here for KIDS!
- When we increase our **understanding**, we can increase our **awareness**, which will increase our **impact**.
- **Please describe why you choose this work?** (type in the chat)

Community Agreements

- Respect
 - Listen to understand not to respond
 - Discomfort is essential to growth
 - Expect Non-closure
- Pay mindful attention to any sensations in your body
- This is a Labor of love i.e. the quest, daring, & growth



Racial Anxiety

- “Refers to the heightened levels of stress and emotion that we confront when interacting with people of other races. People of color experience concern that they will be the subject of discrimination and hostility. **White people, meanwhile, worry that they will be assumed to be racist.** Studies have show that interracial interaction can cause physical symptoms of anxiety and that our non-verbal behaviors—making eye contact, using welcoming gestures or a pleasant tone of voice, for example—can be affected as well. When everyone in a conversation is anxious that it will turn negative, it often does. This causes a kind of **feedback loop where the fears and anxieties of both white people and people of color are confirmed by their everyday interactions**” – The Perception Institute

PWI's

- All Predominantly White Institutions/Structures continue to struggle with issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Please name other institutions/structures/orgs that



Historical Context





Jane and Ida: is a Black friend enough??



Save the Children



- In the beginning the foster care system was predominantly white. (early 20th century)
- Early foster care or “save the children” programs focused on relocating the children of poor European immigrants.
- The Hull House and other early community based programming served primarily white immigrant families.

Kinship Care

- African American children has limited access to the Hull House and Addams milk program, however they were excluded formally until the 1950's.
- Black Children who needed relocation/care from the foster care system were neglected by the system. They were often cared for through kinship networks
- 1950's is when Black children were brought into the system.
- This is also when foster care policies became much more punitive.
- Money for “in-home” services decreased.





“Kill the Indian, Save the Man”

Christianize & Civilize



Indian Boarding Schools

- Involuntary removal from families and relocated into boarding schools.
- 100 year era of Boarding Schools for Native American Children.
- Govt Assimilation policy
- Bans on: language, hair, dress, visits from family.
- Many were adopted out to white families through the Native American Adoption project.

“In disproportionately high numbers, Native American and African American children find themselves in the American foster care system. Empirical data establish that these children are removed from their families at greater rates than other races and stay in foster care longer, where they are often abused, neglected, and then severed from their families forever.”-

Cooper, 2013



Most likely to be mistreated

Trauma

- Black children were neglected by the foster care system for over half a century... when they were included policies became more punitive.
- Native American children were kidnapped from their homes and way of life.
- Both groups are the most likely to be mistreated in the system today.
- The Hx of Foster Care in American is a story of Trauma.
- Historical and Generational trauma compound the traumatic load of the children we serve today.
- Let us be informed by this trauma as we look to improve the work we do!



Moving Forward

Supporting all kids requires us to operate from a “know better, do better” lens.

As we increase our understanding we increase our impact.

Being informed about racial bias and the impact of intra-psychic racism will improve our ability to provide holistic care for children.

A trauma informed lens will guide our work.



Culturally Responsive Child Advocacy

- Face History
- Examine Biases
- Explore Identity & Positionality
 - Leverage Privilege
- Advocate for Structural Change



Questions



Literacy Moment

- **Bias:** An inclination or preference either for or against an individual or group that interferes with impartial judgment. Implicit: typically unconscious, unintentional, automatic associations (thoughts/cognitions)
- **Discrimination** is negative action toward an individual as a result of one's membership in a particular group (behavior/actions)
- **Microaggressions:** Microaggressions are subtle words, cues, and/or behaviors that insult, invalidate, or exclude traditionally marginalized group members. The long term effect of micro aggressions can have a significant negative effect on one's health. (stereotypes, troupes, benevolent racism etc.)
- **Prejudice** is a negative attitude and feeling toward an individual based solely on one's membership in a particular social group (feelings/emotions)
- **Privilege:** Generates Access Systemic favoring, enriching, valuing, validating, and including of certain social identities over others. Individuals cannot "opt out" of systems of privilege; rather these systems are inherent to the society in which we live.
- **Racism:** A system of oppression involving systematic subordination of members of targeted racial groups by those who have relatively more social power. This subordination occurs at the individual, cultural and institutional levels.