

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.





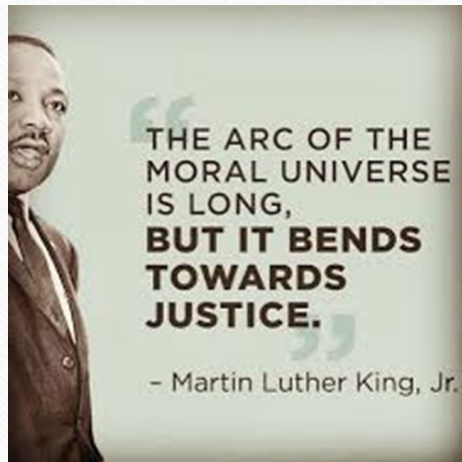
Workshop Outline

- 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
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- 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



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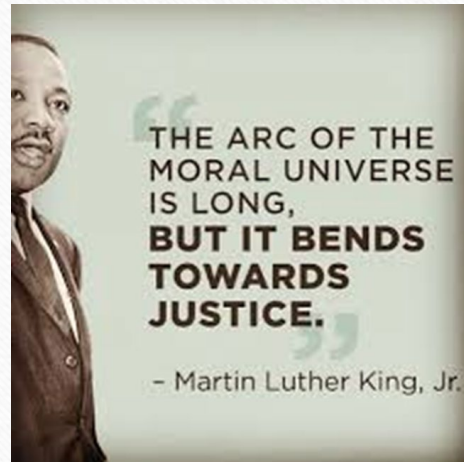
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Broad Timeline



- 1880's-1890's Child welfare system was established
- 1950's Black children provided services
- 1962 Battered Child Syndrome published (helped doctors assess abuse)
- 1963's First Mandatory Reporting State Law (Pennsylvania)
- 1973 CAPTA established Child Abuse Prevention & Treatment Act (Federal funds to support states efforts in child abuse prevention).
- 1980's & 1990's major shifts in services.
- Example: CA – the percentage of children receiving in-home “family maintenance” services fell five percent, while foster care caseloads doubled.

(Child Welfare Information Gateway.)

Mandatory Reporting

- In 1963 150k calls
- In 2009 3.3 million calls = 2348% increase in hotline calls
- Each year approx. 85% of calls do not warrant investigation or are not substantiated.
- Over the decades there have been large increases in reports that are unsubstantiated.
- 1% of the children in America are substantiated victims of abuse



Krason, Stephen M. (2013). "The Mondale Act and Its Aftermath: An Overview of Forty Years of American Law, Public Policy, and Governmental Response to Child Abuse and Neglect" (PDF). Scarecrow Press. pp. 1–58.
Children's Bureau, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2013). "Annual NCANDS Reports 1996-2011".
Joan E. Durrant (2012). "Child Abuse in Sweden". The Natural Child Project.
Finkelhor, David; Lisa Jones; Anne Shuttuch. "Updated Trends in Child Maltreatment, 2010" (PDF). University of New Hampshire, Crimes Against Children Research Center. Retrieved 19 December 2011.

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.

Key Terms

- Disproportionality: The underrepresentation or overrepresentation of a racial or ethnic group compared to its percentage in the total population
- Disparity: The unequal outcomes of one racial or ethnic group as compared to outcomes for another racial/ethnic group



The Tough Reality

The Foster Care
System is one of the
most segregated and
disparate institutions
in America



Fast Facts



- **Black & Native American families are more likely to be reported**
- **More likely to have children removed than white families.**
- **When controlled for SES, Black children and Native American children were not more maltreated than white children DHHS Study, 2010. (30 years of data). (Cooper, 2013)**



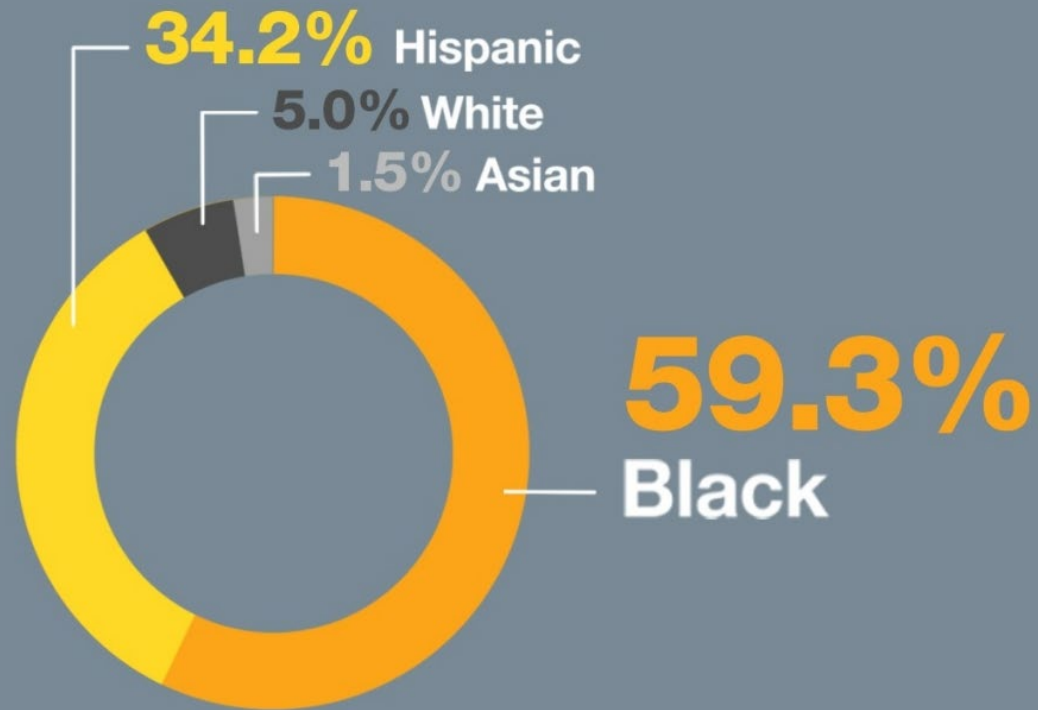
A look at the Data

- Black children represent approx. 14% of all children in the United States.
- Black children continue to be overrepresented in the foster care system.
- 2008- 31%
- 2014- 26%
- 2018- 23%
- This is a promising trend AND there is still work to do!
([childwelfare.gov](https://www.childwelfare.gov))



CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE

NYC, 2013



ALJAZEERA AMERICA

Source: Administration for Children's Services, 2013

New York

- Black children are approx. 15% of all children in NY State
- Black children are approx. 25% of all children in NYC
- 2017 Black children accounted for 57% of the foster care system in NY State
- These numbers inspired legislation to address the disparity.
- NYC requires all agencies to attend anti-bias trainings
- A bill passed at the NY state legislature to promote kinship care through expanding the types of relatives that children can be placed with.
- Another bill passed in NY – The State Central Register Reform Bill it shortens the length of time a parents name is visible in the abuse/neglect database
- As of 2019 there was a 10K drop in the total number of children in the system in NYC.



Additional Considerations

- Federal mandate requires states to consider relative/kinship care prior to outside placement with foster care parents.
- Black children are disproportionately placed outside of kinship care.
- Black children are more likely to be placed with a non-Black family when they are placed with a foster family.
- Typically kinship care receives less financial support (and in some cases fewer services) than a licensed foster care family.

Explanatory Theory

Racial Disproportionality:

Unconscious racism is embedded in our civic institutions; and the foster care system is vulnerable as one such institution controlled and influenced by those in power. Those in power in turn may unwittingly discriminate against people of color, which history demonstrates.”-Charles Lawrence



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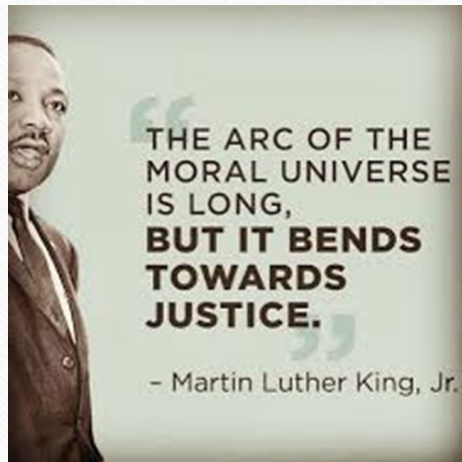
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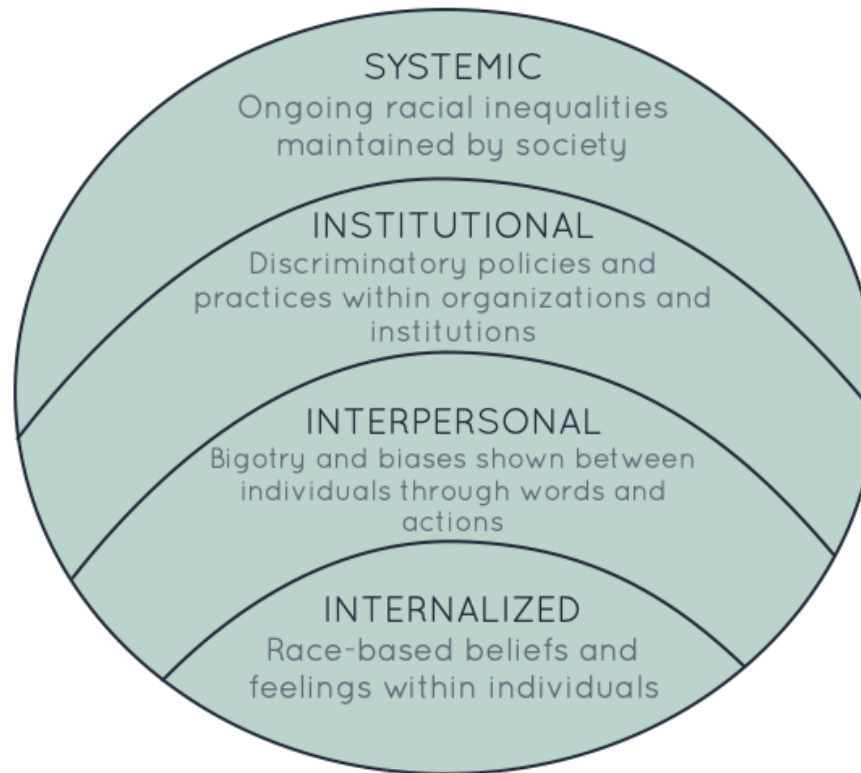
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Interconnected Levels of Racism

LEVELS ON WHICH RACISM EXISTS



Quick Response!

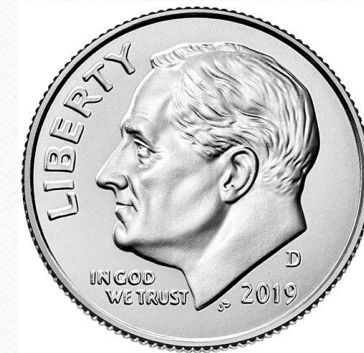


- A bat and a ball cost one dollar and ten cents \$1.10. If the bat costs one dollar more than the ball, how much does the ball cost?

Correct!



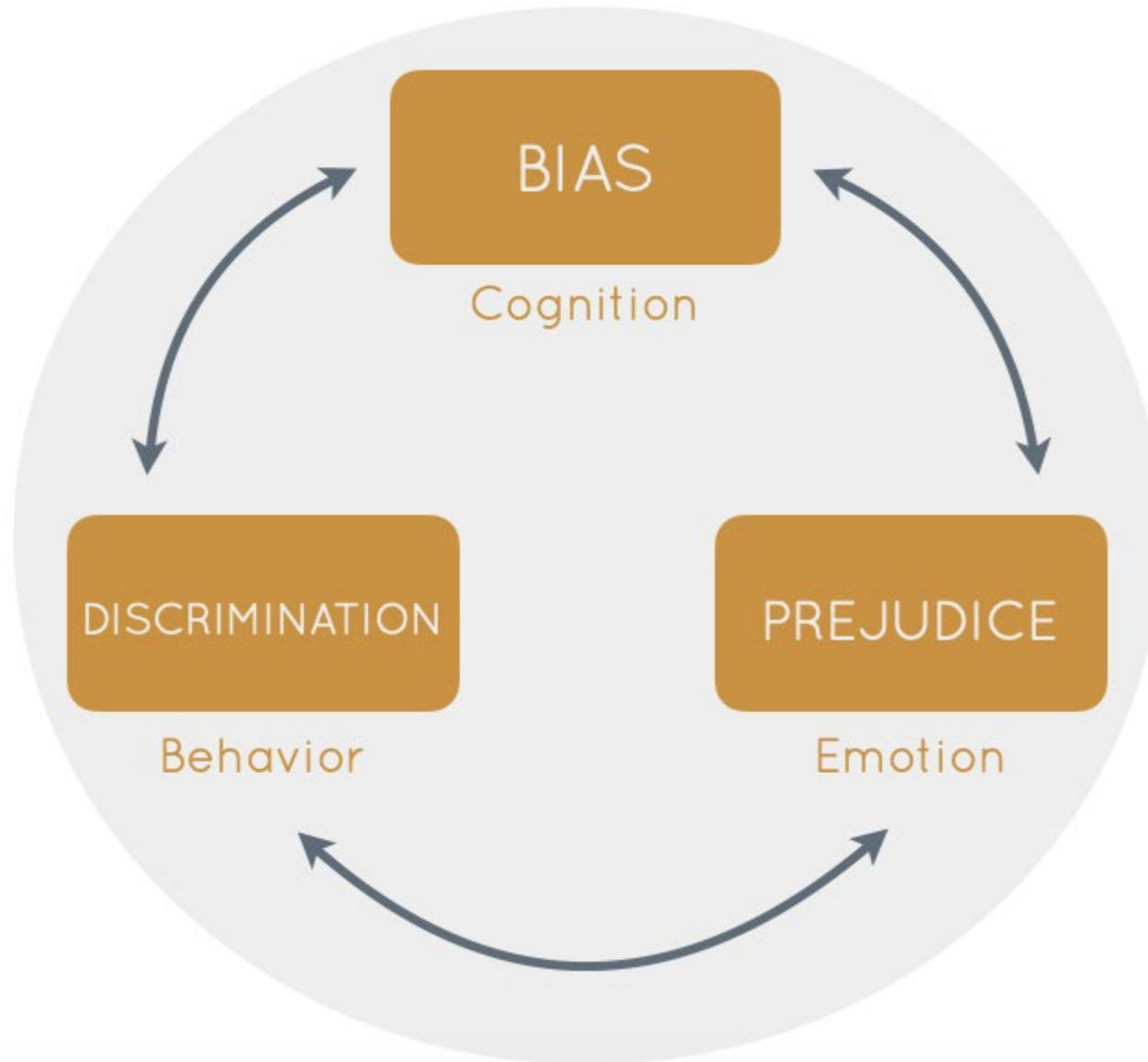
Most
common..



Implicit/Unconscious Bias

- . . .our implicit biases often predict how we'll behave more accurately than our conscious values. —The Perception Institute





Types of Bias

	DEVELOPMENT	INTENTION	EXPRESSION
EXPLICIT BIAS	Formed by more recent ideas and and a reflective learning process	Overt and often intentional	Practiced by individuals and institutions that hold prejudicial attitudes towards racially defined groups
IMPLICIT BIAS	Formed by developmental events and through associative learning	Disorganization	An automatic negative reaction to someone of a different race or ethnicity than one's own

Implicit/ Unconscious Bias

- Thoughts and feelings are “implicit” if we are unaware of them or mistaken about their nature. We have a bias when, rather than being neutral, we have a preference for (or aversion to) a person or group of people. Thus, we use the term “implicit bias” to describe when we have attitudes towards people or associate stereotypes with them without our conscious knowledge

- The Perception Institute

Implicit Bias



- Implicit bias lives in the sub/unconscious mind.
- Cognitive mechanism creates connection and short cuts
- Relies on instinct over analysis
- Rather unsophisticated & often inaccurate
- Looks for Short cuts for safety and survival
- Automatic associations to locate in-group and out-group

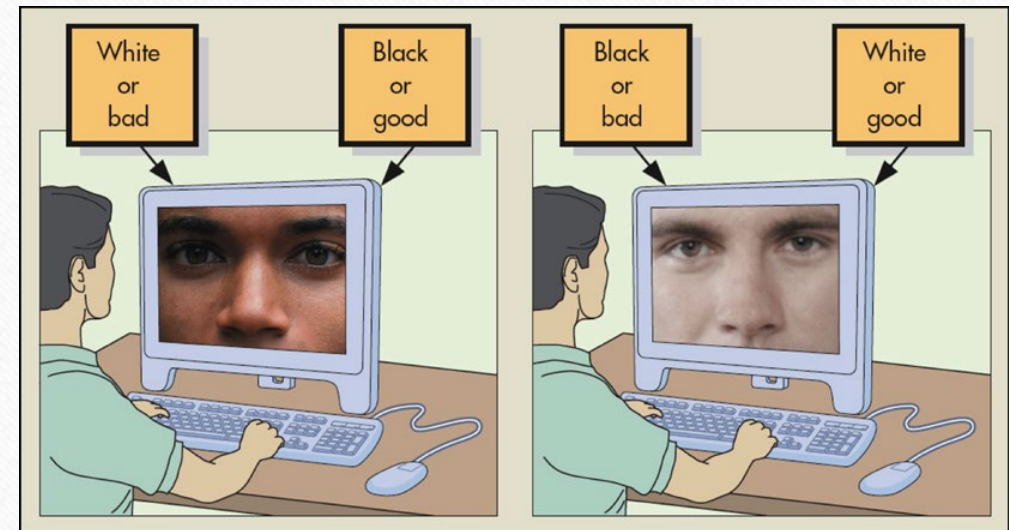
Racial Bias

- Racial bias is often implicit.
- Associative Learning reinforces bias.
- A learning principle which states that ideas and experiences reinforce each other and can be mentally linked to one another.
(Britannica)
- We group information into one associative memory.
- (think Pavlov's dogs)



Data from Harvard Implicit Bias Task

- Bias produces behavior contrary from conscious (stated) beliefs or principles
- 70% of Americans have implicit biases that favor Whites people over Black people
- What the data suggest:
 - acts of advantage and preference for whites
 - absence of advantage for Blacks and people of color
- Preference does not mean hostility or hatred toward Blacks, but involves discomfort, anxiety, fear or indifference



Bias Reinforces Stereotypes

THESE ARE THE FIRST PHOTOS RELEASED BY THE MEDIA.

I WAS CAUGHT IN THE ACT OF RAPING AN UNCONSCIOUS WOMAN



I WAS MURDERED AFTER BUYING SNACKS FROM THE STORE.



THE MEDIA NEEDS TO BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE TO A HIGHER STANDARD



AP Associated Press AP - Tue Aug 30, 11:31 AM ET

A young man walks through chest deep flood water after **looting** a grocery store in New Orleans on Tuesday, Aug. 30, 2005. Flood waters continue to rise in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina did extensive damage when it

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AFP AFP/Getty Images - Tue Aug 30, 3:47 AM ET

Two residents wade through chest-deep water after **finding** bread and soda from a local grocery store after Hurricane Katrina came through the area in New Orleans, Louisiana. (AFP/Getty Images/Chris Graythen)

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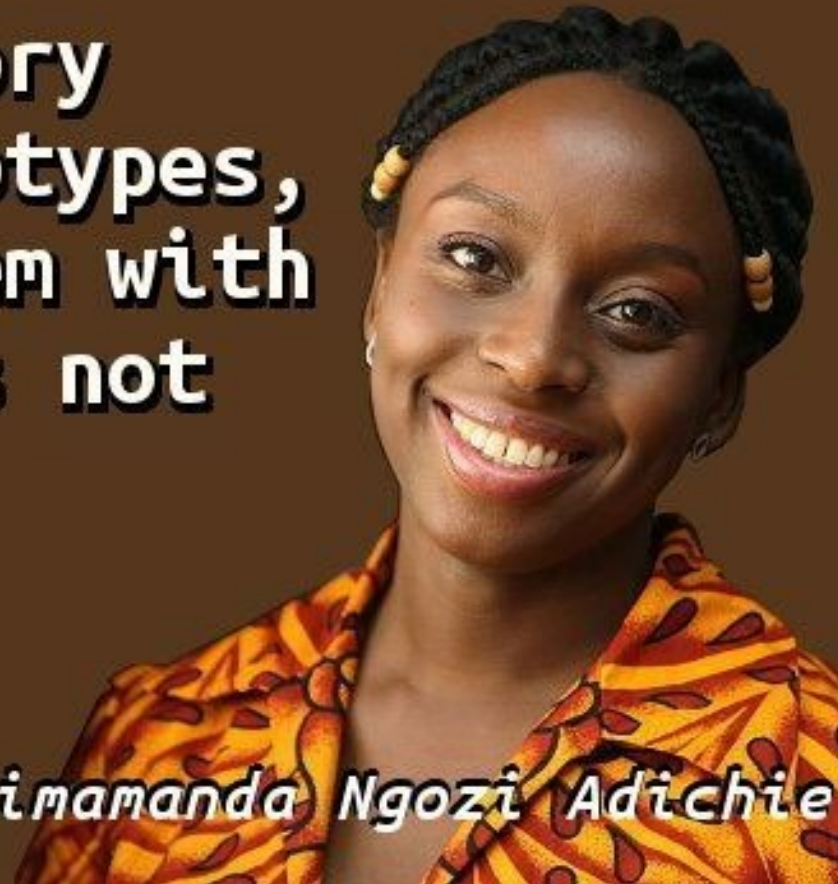
• Katrina's Effects, at a Glance AP - Wed Aug 31, 11:11 AM ET

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**“The single story
creates stereotypes,
and the problem with
stereotypes is not
that they are
untrue, but
that they are
incomplete.”**

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie



Bias Informs & Impacts our Interactions



- Implicit bias originates as an intrapsychic or internalized cognitive mechanism.
- Racial bias when expressed becomes interpersonal (between two or more people)
- The internal and interpersonal often inform and impact the structural level of systemic racism.

Case Example



National Institute for Children's Health Quality

- Gloria's Story
- Where was bias present in the story?
- What stereotypes are present in this story?
- How and where would you intervene to combat bias?

Remember maltreatment rates are the same across race, and yet removal rates are highly disparate!

“Racial bias causes black children to be disproportionately overreported, even when maltreatment occurs at equal or greater rates in white communities. “A number of published articles exist where white parents openly discuss their marijuana use as casual, fun and something that makes them better parents. No one takes their children away.”-Erin Cloud from Black Mamas Matter Alliance



Be Curious About Bias!



Questions

