Racial Literacy:
A Social Imperative for 21st Century Leadership

P2P Women’s Circle - September 4, 2020

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Source: https://burnabyschools.ca/celebrating-diversity/
Session Overview

1. Define Racial Literacy

2. Explore Racial Literacy Framework
   • Read, Recast, and Resolve (racially stressful situations)

3. Explore Racial Stress Mindfulness & Management
   • Calculate it, Locate it, Communicate it

4. Group Activity

5. Debrief
Race relations in the U.S. are generally bad

White: 56%
Black: 71%
All adults: 58%

It has become ____ for people to express racist or racially insensitive views

About as common: 29%
More common: 65%
Less common: 5%
No answer: 1%

It has become ____ for people to express racist or racially insensitive views

About as acceptable: 31%
More acceptable: 45%
Less acceptable: 23%
No answer: 1%

“Race in America 2019”
PEW RESEARCH CENTER
“When people are threatened in a racial moment, they are overwhelmed and unable to access their own abilities, their own competencies and are unable to access the very things we think of what involves teaching and policing our society.”

Dr. Howard C. Stevenson the Constance Clayton Professor of Urban Education, Professor of Africana Studies, at the University of Pennsylvania.

Source: Coleman, S., & Stevenson, H. C. (2014)
Defining Racial Literacy

Racial literacy is “a skill and practice in which individuals are able to probe the existence of racism and examine the effects of race and institutionalized systems on their experiences and representations in U.S. Society.”

Source: Sealey-Ruiz (2017, p. 129)
Defining Racial Literacy, cont.

“The ability to read and recast, or reduce and resolve racially stressful encounters (RSE).”

1. Read
   • Accurately interpreting the meaning making of actors and actions in RSE
   • In written texts, social discourse and social interactions

2. Recast
   • Reducing stress in RSE using racial mindfulness
   • Racial socialization reduces/recasts/reframes the negative meaning of racial stress in RSE (from 10 to 7)
   • Racial socialization builds racial self-efficacy (confidence)

Source: Coleman, S., & Stevenson, H. C. (2014)
Defining Racial Literacy, cont.

“The ability to read and recast, or reduce and resolve racially stressful encounters (RSE).”

3. Resolve

• Assertively communicating affection, protection, correction, and connection during RSE
• Requires preparation and practice for RSE (Stevenson, 2014)
• Relaxation, storytelling, journaling, debating, role-playing

Source: Coleman, S., & Stevenson, H. C. (2014)
Racial Stress Mindfulness & Management

1. Calculate it
   • On a scale of 1-10, how stressful was it? Did it shift, spike?

2. Locate it
   • Find in your body where you feel the stress, be detailed

3. Communicate it
   • Tell yourself, “I’m feeling stressed at the level of 9 and I feel it in my left leg that’s twitching uncontrollably.”
   • Tell a trusted friend
   • Disclose appropriately within the dynamics of your work

4. Breathe and Exhale!!

Source: Racial Empowerment Collaborative
Leadership in Racial Literacy

...means being able to:

1. Face racial conflicts as challenges rather than as threats;
2. Resolve your own stress during the moment of a racial crisis;
3. Evaluate your stress vulnerability and management after each crisis;
4. Use relaxation strategies to resolve stress reactions that ignite avoidance of racial encounters;
5. Seek help from experts to resolve any racial conflict;
6. Keep a log of case studies of racial conflicts that allow you to learn from mistakes and triumphs; and
7. Develop mission statements that support the aim of a well-functioning diverse faculty/staff/organization.

Source: Coleman, S., & Stevenson, H. C. (2014)
References & Resources


• Racial Empowerment Collaborative [https://www.recastingrace.com/](https://www.recastingrace.com/)


Q&A

Thank You!!

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