Embracing Inclusion for One King County:
Addressing Implicit Bias, Racial Anxiety and Stereotype Threat

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Achieving Equity and Social Justice in King County

Addressing Implicit Bias, Racial Anxiety and Stereotype Threat

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King County Commitment to Equity and Social Justice

BUILDING EQUITY

STRUCTURES, POLICIES AND INSTITUTIONAL PRACTICES IN SOCIETY

- class and gender bias
- intergenerational poverty
- structural racism & discrimination

CONDITIONS IMPACTING THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF COMMUNITIES

- dilapidated housing
- unemployment & low wage work
- food insecurity
- limited & unsafe parks
- pollution & toxic exposures
- absence of community economic development
- disproportionality in justice system
- unsafe neighborhoods
- no insurance or quality healthcare

OUTCOMES FOR INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES

- poor health status
- incarceration
- obesity
- homelessness
- health problems
- untreated mental illness
- low birth weight

THE “UNHEALTHY STREAM” INCREASES INEQUITIES

THE “HEALTHY STREAM” CREATES EQUITY

- affordable housing
- quality education & early learning
- healthy food & food systems
- equitable justice system
- healthy built & natural environments
- transportation
- safe & supportive neighborhoods
- parks & natural resources
- health care & human services

- good health
- high quality of life
- healthy years lived
- happiness & satisfaction
- on time graduation
- civic engagement
- physical & emotional well-being
Polarization

Ferguson Decision
ABC News/Washington Post poll

Grand jury decision

- **All**: 48% Approve, 45% Disapprove
- **Whites**: 58% Approve, 35% Disapprove
- **Blacks**: 9% Approve, 91% Disapprove

Civil rights charges

- **All**: 48% Approve, 47% Disapprove
- **Whites**: 38% Approve, 62% Disapprove
- **Blacks**: 12% Approve, 88% Disapprove
Educational Equity
King County Children

Students Who Demonstrate Characteristics of Entering Kindergartners

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<th>Language Dev.</th>
<th>Literacy</th>
<th>Math</th>
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<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>36%</td>
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<td>Black/African Amer.</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>57%</td>
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<td>Am. Indian/Alaskan Nat.</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>42%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>65%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pacific Islander</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>44%</td>
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<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>66%</td>
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WA Kids Count Fall 2012
Mixed Picture of Success

- Percentages of high school graduates from King County who go to college:
  - 75.6% Asian/Pacific Islander
  - 62.8% White
  - 61.2% African American
  - 49.5% Latino
  - 42.7% American Indian/Alaska Native
Race and Suspension

(Losen & Martinez, 2013)
We know teachers want to be fair

- “disrespect or loitering.”
- 62 points on the SAT
- less critical feedback and over-praise.
Obstacles to Equity

John A. Powell
Health and Racial Equity in Turbulent Times: Implicit Bias Examined
Multiple Racial Dynamics

Implicit Biases

Racial Anxieties

Stereotype Threats
Our Brains in Action

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The Stroop Test
The Role of the Unconscious Mind

1. Sorting into categories
2. Creating associations between things
3. Filling in the gaps when we only receive partial information

These three processes together add up to **schemas**: the “frames” through which our brains help us understand and navigate the world.
Neurological Origins

Limbic system – categorizes what we perceive

The limbic system is a very old part of the brain; it can be found in animals.

It is also very fast.

One part of the limbic system, the amygdala, is responsible for strong emotional responses (i.e., fight or flight)

Schemas and People

Preference v. Bias

1) Schemas That Categorize People, e.g. child, elder, man, woman, White, Black, Catholic. Associations that are generalized about those schemas = Stereotypes

2) Positive Associations With Stereotypes = Preferences

3) Negative Associations With Stereotypes = Prejudices

Stereotypes
Awareness Test

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yrqrkihlw-s
Definitions

**Bias** – the evaluation of one group and its members relative to another

Expressed directly/explicitly: “I like whites more than Latinos.”

Expressed indirectly: E.g., Sitting further away from a Latino than a white individual.

**Explicit** = Person is aware of his/her evaluation

**Implicit** = The evaluation is automatic and not known to the person.

**Implicit Bias** – automatic association of stereotypes or attitudes with a particular group and its members.

Source: Unconscious (Implicit) Bias and Health Disparities: Where Do We Go from Here?
Stereotypes and Attitudes

- Stereotypes: traits associated with a particular group.
- Attitudes: warmth or coldness toward a particular group.
- We can have positive stereotypes and negative attitudes about particular group.
What do tables tell us?

- What race or ethnicity of most poor people in King County?
  - 88,2000 (white)
  - 37,200 (Latino)
  - 33,000 (black or African-American)
  - 32,000 (Asian-American)
How do we measure bias?

- Implicit Association Test (found at Project Implicit)
- Measures time differences between “schema consistent pairings” and “scheme inconsistent pairings”
- Most people perform second task more slowly.
What does the IAT tell us?

- It is *not* a DNA test – social scientists do not recommend it as a mechanism to “diagnose” an individual.
- As a tool to be used for research purposes, with millions of users over time, it is of great value in telling us about societal trends.

![Diagram A: Stereotype Congruent](#)

- **Stereotype Congruent (easy/fast)**
  - Boy: math, numbers
  - Girl: reading, Hannah

![Diagram B: Stereotype Incongruent](#)

- **Stereotype Incongruent (difficult/slow)**
  - Boy: reading, David, Michael
  - Girl: math, Emily, Sarah

![Diagram](#)
Findings

- Implicit bias is pervasive.
- Judges from three districts were given the IAT.
- 87.1% of white judges showed implicit preference for whites.
- 44.2% of black judges showed implicit preference for blacks. (Rachlinski et al, 2009)
The Race Effect
(2014 Nextions study)

Tom Meyer (White)
- “generally good writer but needs to work on”
- “has potential”
- “good analytic skills”
- 2.9/7 spelling grammar errors were found
- 4.1/6 technical writing errors found

Tom Meyer (Black)
- “needs lots of work”
- “can’t believe he went to NYU”
- “average at best”
- 5.8/7 spelling grammar errors found
- 4.9/6 technical writing errors found
Race and heart disease treatment

Acute CHD Presentations

- Unstable Angina

- “Wee heart attack!”
  - (subendocardial or partial thickness MI)
  - non-ST elevation MI

- “Big heart attack!”
  - (transmural or full thickness MI)
  - ST elevation MI
How are Native Americans seen?

• We don’t know as much as we should.

• Very few studies measure attitudes toward Native Americans and so academia is contributing to invisibility.

• Recent study measured implicit attitudes toward mascots: the “Fighting Irish” versus the “Fighting Sioux” and found these correlated with anti-Indian bias and bias translated toward people (Chaney et al, 2011).
Implicit Associations and Asian Americans

• Model minority myth has many inaccuracies.
• Any set of stereotypes kind be constricting.
• Implicit associations show a strong set of assumptions.
Examples of implicit bias

• When conductors were placed behind a screen, the percentage of female new hires for orchestral jobs increased 25% – 46%.
Confirmation Bias

We judge behavior differently depending upon the stereotypes or negative associations.
Displaying Implicit Bias

• Implicit bias affects more than our cognitive decision-making.

• Research has shown that body language is far more affected by implicit bias than verbal statements – but that most people cue in and respond more to nonverbal than to verbal cues.

• Particularly from people in power.
Internalized Perceptions

- We unconsciously think about race even when we do not explicitly discuss it.
- You cannot avoid bias by avoiding race; it does not work.
- Conversations about race are not easy, but they are vital.
- Environments & narratives matter

Source: Lester, Julius. Let’s Talk About Race
Does race affect sentencing?

**Scenario 1**
- A white boyfriend and black girlfriend are in a bar. They argue quietly. He hits her.
- A black boyfriend and a white girlfriend are in a bar. They argue quietly. He hits her.

**Scenario 2**
- A white boyfriend and black girlfriend are in a bar. They argue. He is heard yelling: “how dare you talk about a white man in public.”
- A black boyfriend and white girlfriend are in a bar. They argue. He is heard yelling: “how dare you talk about a white man in public.”
... but it is not enough.
Implicit Bias Interacts with External Structures and Networks

Source: Barbara Reskin. http://faculty.uwashington.edu/reskin/
Segregation impacts a number of life-opportunities

Impacts on Health

School Segregation

Educational Achievement

Exposure to crime

Transportation limitations and other inequitable public services

Job segregation

Racial stigma, other psychological impacts

Community power, civic participation and individual assets

Adapted from figure by Barbara Reskin at: http://faculty.washington.edu/reskin/
What can be done?

“Debiasing”
- Research shows people can reduce their implicit bias levels.
- Challenging in light of the prevalence of stereotyping in the media and culture.
- So – need behavioral approaches as well.

Bias Over-ride
- Institutions like schools can develop practices that help teachers over-ride the behavioral effects of implicit bias.
- Requires effort and thoughtful approaches that are context dependent.
Overcoming Implicit Bias

- Promote counter-stereotypic images
- Promote Individuation
- Promote empathic perspective-taking
- Promote inter-racial engagement (Devine, 2012)
Outcomes

- After 4 weeks, participants IAT scores were lower, they expressed more concern and awareness of discrimination, and they sought more inter-group contact.

- The effects held after 8 weeks.

- Required conscious effort, but the participants were generally positive about the outcomes of their efforts.
Rebound Effects

It is crucial to be aware of possible unintended consequences of focusing only on implicit bias as relevant racial dynamic.

Awareness will avoid rebound effects.

• **Racial Anxiety** – worry or concern that people have about or during inter-racial interactions.

• **Stereotype Threat** – concern about confirming negative stereotype about group.
Racial Anxiety

- Experienced by people of color as anxiety that they will be the subject of discrimination and hostile or distant treatment.

- Experienced by whites as anxiety that they will be assumed to be racist and will be met with distrust or hostility.
How we expect others to see us

When we anticipate that we will be judged or rejected because of our race, ethnicity, gender, or other identity characteristic, we are experiencing “racial anxiety.”
Effects

- People experiencing racial anxiety often engage in less eye contact, have shorter interactions, and generally seem awkward.

- If a teacher behaves that way with a child, the child feels like an outsider.
Effects on the brain?

- Heart rate goes up, cortisol (stress level) increases, and cognitive capacities go down.
Interventions

- Promote the recognition that increased inter-racial contact leads to less anxiety.
- Noticing race is not racist – it is seeing part of a person’s identity.
- Facilitate cross-racial ally groups to help people recognize that obstacles and challenges may not be linked to race, ethnicity, or gender difference (Walton & Cohen, 2011).
Stereotype Threat

Apprehension arising from the awareness of a negative stereotype or personal reputation in a situation where the stereotype or identity is relevant, and thus confirmable.
Evidence of Stereotype Threat

Figure 15. Performance on a Challenging Math Test, by Stereotype Threat Condition and Gender

Stereotype threat: if participants are told that women are worse than men at mathematics, the women’s scores worsen, men’s improve...

Proof of Stereotype Threat

(Steele & Aronson)
When White Men Can’t Do Math

When White Men Can’t Do Math

“White” Stereotype Threat

- The concern many whites feel that they will confirm that stereotype that they are racist.
Consequences of “kindness”

Failure to Warn (Cronin et al, 2006)

- Calculus and Chemistry
  - Best subjects history and biology/worst is math
  - Tutoring?
  - Time for other activities?
  - How difficult?
- Too hard?
- For White students but not for Black students (if the peer advisor is worried about seeming racist)

Unwarranted Praise (Harber, 2012)

- Poorly written essay – what kind of feedback
  - Praise and little criticism to Black and Latino students.
  - Critiques for White students.
  - Except if teacher feels supported by principal – then Black and White students treated the same.
  - Latino students still overly praised.
Mindset Matters

- Recognizing that both our IQ and our EQ are malleable allows change on both dimensions.
Institutional Interventions

- Contextual cues: ensure that the environment does not have race or gender-based triggers.
- Individuate: encourage people to recognize others’ unique characteristics.
- Affirm important values: when people focus on values outside of themselves, identities are not as salient.
- Create an “in-group” identity: that includes men and women of every race and ethnicity.
- Allow for different identity characteristics: Recognize color-blindness doesn’t work.
- Convey high expectations and belief in capacity to meet them.

http://www.reducingstereotypethreat.org/reduce.html
Application

1) Have you ever felt like people make assumptions about you that are not true?

2) How do you handle that experience?

3) How may implicit bias, racial anxiety, or stereotype threat interfere with equity goals in your department?

4) Brainstorm!
Thank You!!!
Follow up

• Take ownership for continuing the dialogue and work towards Building a Culture of Equity in King County
  • Join the Within our Lifetime Campaign @ www.withinourlifetimeline.net
  • Yammer – Sign up and join the Equity and Social Justice Group @ www.yammer.com/kingcounty.gov
  • Contact an ESJ IBT or Forum Planning Committee Member (details available in the program)

• Presentation and other resources from today can be found at www.kingcounty.gov/equity under Tools & resources (info available in the program)
Special Thanks To

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