



Discussing Race and Building Healthy Racial Self-esteem

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Why it's important to talk about race

At age 2-and-a-half, children can start developing and observing racial biases they see in the world around them. "Once they get to age 4 and 5, it's a critical time when White children, for example, begin to exhibit obvious bias," says Dr. White. "And Black children or children of color begin to feel discriminated against because of their skin color."

-Dr. Aisha White, Director of the P.R.I.D.E Program within the Office of Child Development at University of Pittsburgh

Parents, Caregivers, Educators...etc.

- **Important to have awareness of our own privileged and marginalized identities**
 - We exist and operate in the world through these lenses because of societal systems
 - These identities exist within the spaces we occupy with the youth
 - We may hold biases or beliefs that may translate onto the youth
- **Extend this awareness to our youth**
 - A colorblind attitude is HARMFUL
 - Although the youth may not be fully aware of their identities, they still do exist

Pamela Hays ADDRESSING model

Cultural Influences	Dominant Group	Nondominant/Minority Group
Age and generational influences	Young/middle aged adults	Children, older adults
Developmental disabilities & other Disabilities	Nondisabled people	People with cognitive, sensory, physical, and/or psychiatric disabilities
Religion and spirituality	Christian & secular	Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists, & other minority religions
Ethnic and racial identity	European Americans	Asian, South Asian, Latino, Pacific Island, African, Arab, African American, & Middle Eastern people
Socioeconomic status	Upper & middle class	People of lower status by occupation, education, income, or inner-city/rural habitat
Sexual orientation	Heterosexuals	People who identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual

Cultural Influences	Dominant Group	Nondominant/Minority Group
Indigenous heritage	European Americans	American Indians, Iñuit, Alaska Natives, Métis, Native Hawaiians
National origin	U.S.-born Americans	Immigrants, refugees, & international students
Gender	Men	Women and people who identify as transgender

“Recognizing where you hold privilege is important because the areas in which you have privilege are those in which you are most likely to lack awareness and knowledge regarding members of the related minority groups that do not have such privileges.”

- There is also a complexity of holding both marginalized and privileged identities.

Understanding our blind spots, biases, etc.

- Understand that shame, guilt, embarrassment, anger, confusion, etc.

may occur when examining your
identities

- Socialization impacts our
self-examination
- This process takes time

- Personal therapy
- Process in groups
- Self-compassion
- Trainings, workshops, etc.
- Journaling

What is Racial Self-esteem?

- Racial Identity- Identification with people in a racialized group
 - Important to understand that race is a social construct which is not based on any biological factors. It was used to categorise phenotypical differences between humans, but has evolved into a tool for oppression and violence.
- Self-esteem- Based on our own personal values, internal judgements, and external sources
- **Racial Self-esteem**- How we feel about our membership within a given racial group
 - Positive identification reduces negative psychological symptoms such as depression and anxiety
 - Higher levels of racial self-esteem have been linked to positive academic performance

Tips to foster a healthy sense of racial self-esteem

1. Exposure to historical information and literature that highlights the positive contribution of members of differing racialized groups
 - a. Decolonize the content
2. Discuss how they feel about their racialized identity
 - a. Explore beliefs they hold about their grouping
3. Incorporate affirmations that emphasize personal strengths and characteristics
 - a. Consistent positive messages about oneself can help boost self-esteem
4. Help them explore and process their own experiences of discrimination
 - a. Remind them that these experiences are not due to personal deficiency, but are a symptom of societal injustice

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