With Appreciation

Because trees are important to equity as well as to human health, this work is supported by the US Forest Service and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources Urban and Community Forestry Program. The funding supports assessment workshops and training so Chicago Wilderness can help more communities improve urban tree canopy forests across the region, including through participation in Tree City USA. For more information, see the Tree City USA manual and this summary of Tree City USA. These institutions are an equal opportunity provider.
FOUNDATIONS OF INTERNALIZED RACISM

AUGUST M. BALL
www.creamcityconservation.org
august@creamcityconservation.org
414.322.8482
Our Learning Framework

• The purpose of this workshop is not to tell you what to think, feel or believe...

• ...Rather, it is to challenge you to think about your existing attitudes, beliefs and experiences and behaviors in light of new information being presented.
• Help people understand why these power dynamics exist: *Explain the historical construction of race and show how the system of racism drives the inequitable outcomes we see across systems.*

• Help people/organizations understand the implications of race in their identity development: *Assess the impact of race on our socialization, examining our role and agency.*

• Help people/organizations understand the implications of race in their work: *Assess the ways we unintentionally uphold these dynamics in our policies, practices, organizational culture, partnerships, funding, decision-making, etc.*

• Help people create change: *Build a learning community grounded in vulnerability and trust that allows us to collectively reflect, strategize & change.*
GROUP AGREEMENTS

• Stay in Relationship
  Pay attention to when you are shutting down

• Experience Discomfort
  Discomfort is catalytic to growth

• Expect & Accept Non-Closure
  This work is on-going. You will not always leave feeling like everything turned out the way you hoped.

• Listen to Understand
  Be careful not to compare your experience with someone else’s. Take note when you feel called to debate over listening.

• Speak Your Truth & Be Open to the Truths of Others
  We are all in difference places in this work. Be accountable to your own growth.
OBJECTIVES

• Continue building a learning community that fosters vulnerability, openness and accountability

• Reflect on our socialization and the people, norms, environments and encounters that have shaped our sense of self and others.

• Examine our personal encounters and relationships with Internalized Racial Oppression or Internalized Racial Superiority

• Begin developing strategies and new mindsets for disrupting the unintended consequences of internalized racism.
AGENDA

Quick Review

Racial Identity Development
AGENDA

1. Understanding Internalized Racism
2. Racial Identity Development
3. Quick Review
AGENDA

Racial Caucusing

Understanding
Internalized Racism

Racial Identity Development

Quick Review
WHAT IS RACISM?
A system of advantage and disadvantage based on the idea of race

SYSTEM: an established way of doing something, such that things get done that way regularly and are assumed to be the “normal” way of getting things done.

The system of racism functions because both members of the oppressed and privileged groups are socialized to play their roles as normal & correct.

RACISM = race prejudice + social & institutional power

- Access to resources
- The ability to influence others
- Access to decision-makers to get what you want done.
- The ability to define reality for yourself and others.
op·pres·sion

/aˈpreʃən/

noun

prolonged cruel or unjust treatment or control.
"a region shattered by oppression and killing"

Similar: persecution, abuse, maltreatment, ill treatment, tyranny, despotism

- the state of being subject to unjust treatment or control.
  "a response to collective poverty and oppression"

Similar: persecution, abuse, maltreatment, ill treatment, tyranny, despotism

- mental pressure or distress.
  "her mood had initially been alarm and a sense of oppression"
superiority

/ˌsoʊˈpɪrɪərɪtɪ/

noun

the state of being superior.  
"an attempt to establish superiority over others"

Similar: supremacy, advantage, lead, dominance, primacy, ascendency

- a supercilious manner or attitude.  
  "he attacked the media’s smug superiority"
• Internalized Oppression

is a concept in which an oppressed group uses the methods of the oppressing group against itself. It occurs when one group perceives an inequality of value relative to another group, and desires to be like the more highly-valued group.

Internalized Superiority

Internalized racial superiority is a complex multi generational socialization process that teaches white people to believe, accept and or live superior societal definitions of self.

RACIAL IDENTITY MODELS
Racial Identity in the United States is not shaped in a neutral environment. The identities of People of Color form in response to racial oppression, and the identities of whites form in response to racial superiority.

Crossroads Anti-Racism Organizing and Training
Stages of Racial Identity Development

- Not every person will go through each stage
- Stages might be cyclical – you may revisit different stages at different points in your life.
- These stages do not describe all possibilities, rather, should be used to fuel reflection.

Models for:
- Black/African American
- Asian American (Specifically based on Filipino Americans)
- Ethnic Minority
- Multi-Racial
- White
Example: My personal experience

Multi-Racial American Racial Identity

Blend with primary emphasis on one identity and secondary emphasis on others.
Ex. Primarily Black, secondary (White, Native American)
Reflect on your own racial identity development

• What stage of development do you find yourself in currently? What experiences, behaviors or mindsets lead you to believe this is the case?

• What stages have you experienced in the past, and/or have cycled back and forth between? What specific encounters, environments or individuals come to mind as you reflect on previous stages you’ve experienced?

• What have you experienced related to your personal racial identity development that is not represented through these models?

15 Minutes Partner Discussion
Full Group Reflections

• How did it feel to reflect on your racial identity in this way?
• What did you learn about yourself & others?
Socialization

Socialization is the process of internalizing the norms of society.
“Books, computer games, the web, television...there are so many places that we can be exposed to stereotypes, that we can be exposed to distorted information. And there is a whole universe of information that we’re not getting. Think about these stereotypes, these omissions, these distortions as a kind of environment that surround us, like smog in the air. We don’t breathe it because we like it. We don’t breathe it because we think it’s good for us.

We breathe it because it’s the only air that’s available. “

- Dr. Beverly Tatum
The Cycle of Racial Oppression

"Learning Racism"
- Misinformation
- Missing History
- Biased history
- Stereotypes

Graphic adapted from the Dismantling Racism workbook
The Cycle of Racial Oppression

“Reinforcing Racism”
- Experiences in racist institutions
- White Supremacy Culture
- Personal Interactions

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Colluding in Racism – white people
- Internalized Racial Superiority
- Benefiting from Racial inequality

Surviving Racism – People of Color
- Internalized Racial Oppression
- Horizontal Oppression

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Socialization
Internalization
Daily Re-creation of Racism

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“Dissonance”
The path to liberation

Graphic adapted from the Dismantling Racism workbook
Internalized Racial Superiority

“The acceptance of and acting out of a superior definition is rooted in the historical designation of one’s race. Over many generations, this process of empowerment and access expresses itself as unearned privileges, access to institutional power and invisible advantages based upon race.”

- The People’s Institute

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“The problem with internalized racial superiority is not that white people are prevented from ever having hardships; rather, the problem is that we don’t see the ways in which our hardships are disproportionately easier because of our skin color.” - Francesca Moroney

“The process where people of color develop beliefs and behaviors that collude or support the institution of racism. Internalized racism is a form of systemic oppression where people and communities of color **unconsciously support white privilege and power**. Because the system of power **consistently rewards those who support the racial hierarchy through a false sense of acceptance**, communities of color are **encouraged to perpetuate a culture that oppresses them**. Because of this cycle, internalized racism can have deep psychological effects on communities of color.” - Donna Bivens

**Thoughts & feelings about ourselves, people of our own racial group, or other people of color are based on the racist messages we receive from the broader system.**
Common Patterns of Internalized Racial Superiority

- Believing you have earned what you have, rather than acknowledging the extensive white privilege and unearned advantages you receive
- Not noticing the daily indignities that people of color experience; deny them and rationalize them away
- Working to maintain the status quo to protect the advantages and privileges you receive
- Believing (consciously or unconsciously) that white cultural norms, practices and values are superior/better/“normal”
- Internalizing negative stereotypes about people of color
- Wanting people of color to conform and assimilate to white cultural norms/practices
- Walking on eggshells/being afraid to say the “wrong thing” around people of color/worried about “being seen as racist”
- Accepting/feeling safer around people of color who have assimilated and are “closer to white”
- Blaming people of color for the barriers and challenges they experience; believing that if they “worked harder” they could “pull themselves up”
- Believing that people of color are only hired/promoted to fill quotas
- Resenting/being hesitant to take direction from people of color
- Dismissing/minimizing frustrations of people of color and categorizing the person raising issues as militant, angry, having an “attitude”
- Focusing on how much progress we have made, rather than on how much more needs to change
- Getting defensive when people of color express their frustrations with current organizational and societal dynamics.

Common Patterns of Internalized Racial Oppression

- Codeswitching, putting on a different persona around white people
- Attacking, finding fault, criticizing, or maintaining unrealistic expectations of leaders of color
- Isolation from other people of color; beginning to feel safer or more trustful of white people
- Feeling intolerant, irritated by, impatient with, embarrassed by, ashamed of people in your racial group when they embody their authentic culture
- Comparing/pitting members of your racial group against one another
- Accepting stereotypes created by oppressive majority society (being angry at/ashamed of/embarrassed of anything that differs from white, middle class majority culture)
- Accusing or categorizing others in your racial group as “acting white” or “wanting to be white”
- Mistrusting your own thinking/carrying doubts about your own and other people of color’s abilities
- Being a harsher critic of the choices/behaviors of other people of color than white people
- Overcompensating to disprove stereotypes that you think white people may hold about you or others in your racial group
- Thinking “we are our own worst enemy” about your own racial group/faulting your racial group for the oppression you experience.
Racial Identity Caucusing

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When groups come back together, they are better able to understand, confront & dismantle racism.

Working in caucuses creates collective power around deconstructing IRO & IRS in safe & liberated environments.

In order to dismantle racism, whites & POC must understand how these dynamics operate in specific settings & devise strategies.

The purpose of both caucus groups is to surface and begin to address the mindsets and behaviors that we engage in that uphold individual, institutional and cultural racism, and keep us on the cycle of racial oppression.

Select a caucus to join based on how you identify

Instructions: Edit your name to let me know which caucus you will be joining. Hover over your picture. Click the image. There is an option to edit name. Add one of the following before your name to indicate your caucus:

- W for white
- POC for Person of Color
- MR for Multi-Racial

Example: MR – Jane Smith
Internalized Racism Reflection

**White People**
- Read & Reflect on Racial Superiority as an Addiction” and “The Invisible Knapsack”
- What observations about internalized racial superiority resonate most with your lived experiences?
- How many daily effects of “white privilege” could you pinpoint experiencing?

**People of Color**
- Read & Reflect on Internalized Racial Oppression (Different articles for Black, Latinx, Asian American, and Native communities) and take the “Internalized Racism Inventory”
- What observations about internal racial oppression resonate most with your lived experiences?
- How many items on the internalized racism inventory could you pinpoint experiencing?

5 mins reflection independently & silently
Reflect in Caucuses
Make space, take space

• What were your initial & current reactions to these readings/exercises?
• What IRO or IRS behaviors do you personally perpetuate?
• What behaviors do you commonly see perpetuated in your racial community?
• What specific pivots in behavior or mindset do you personally want to commit to? What shifts do you collectively want to work towards?

(Think about what is within your scope of power/influence)

Assign a notetaker to capture your perpetuated behaviors and proposed pivots in your caucus.
Caucus Share-Outs

**SHARE**
- Take a moment to share the reflections from your caucus

**Evaluate**
- What behaviors, mindsets, and experiences were surfaced in your caucus that perpetuate racism?
- What shifts will you collectively hold yourselves accountable to?

**Strategize**
- How can we work in coalition (i.e. across caucuses) to disrupt racism?
THANK YOU!

August M. Ball

www.creamcityconservation.org
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