

Introduction to Race Equity

Clerks Institute





Presenting Today

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This presentation is adapted from the Government Alliance on Race & Equity, part of the Center for Social Inclusion. We offer our deep appreciation for their work and for allowing us to adapt this content.



LOCAL AND REGIONAL
GOVERNMENT ALLIANCE ON
RACE & EQUITY

A group of people are seated around a large table in a meeting room, engaged in discussion. The room has wood-paneled walls and several tables with white tablecloths. The text is overlaid on a semi-transparent white background.

Objectives

Gain awareness

Develop skills

Be motivated to take action

Creating a learning environment:

- Take space, make space
- What is said here, stays here; what is learned here, leaves here
- Brave space
- Offer what you can, ask for what you need
- One at a time

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Overview and Assumptions

- Race matters
- We aren't just talking about individual acts of bigotry; we are talking about institutions and systems that perpetuate inequity. We are all a part of institutions and systems.
- We have a responsibility for advancing racial equity.



Values and realities

All men are created equal

With liberty and justice for all

**Government of the people, by the people, for
the people, shall not perish from the earth**





Activity: Early Experiences with Race



Early Experiences with Race

1. How racially diverse was your neighborhood growing up? What message(s) did you get about race from living there?
2. When was the first time you had a teacher of a different race? How often did this occur? When was the first time you had a teacher of the same race? How often did this occur?
3. When / how did you first realize that races were treated differently in society? Who helped you make sense of that difference in treatment, and how did they do so?
4. When did you first work in a community that was racially different from the one you grew up in?

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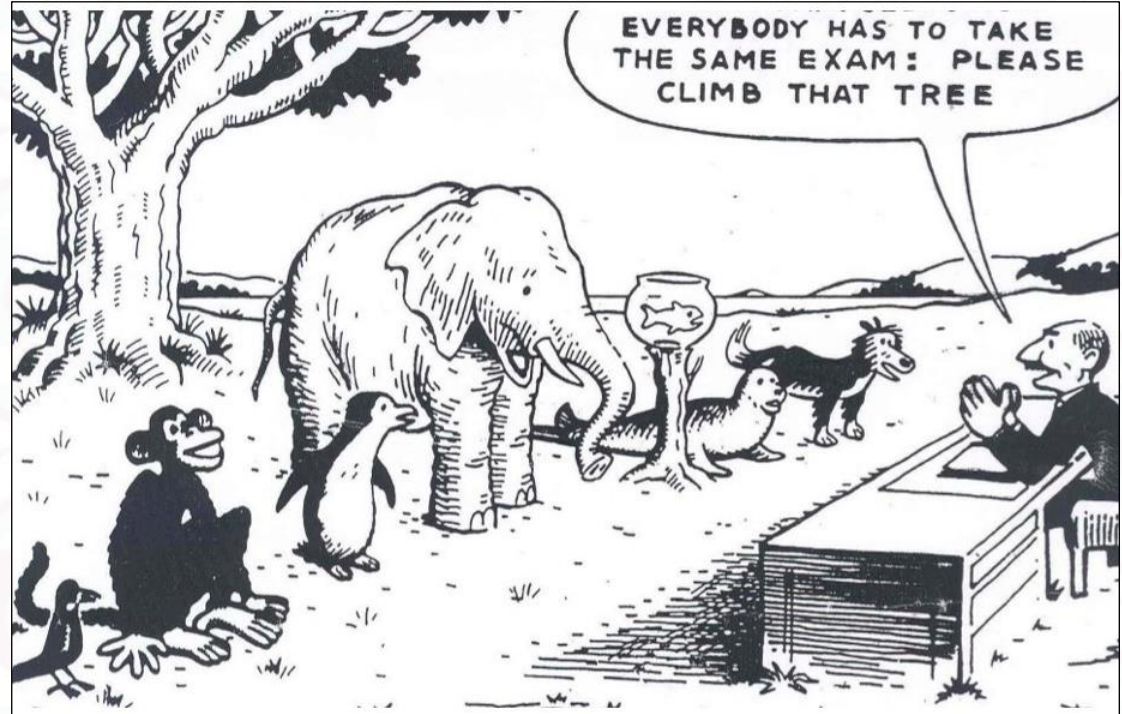
Race equity means:

- **Closing the gaps** so that race does not predict one's success, while also **improving outcomes for all**.
- To do so, we have to:
 - ✓ Target strategies to focus improvements for those worse off.
 - ✓ Move beyond “services” and focus on changing policies, institutions and structures.

Equality?



Equity?



What's the difference?

Racial inequity in the United States

From infant mortality to life expectancy, race predicts how well you will do...



Racial inequity in Minnesota



Unemployment rate

White 2.3%
Black 3.9%



Incarceration rate (per 100,000)

White 111
Black 1,219

Homeownership

White 77.5%
Black 30.5%



Median household income

White \$80,900
Black \$47,700





Discussion



The Unconscious Mind



The “frames” through which our brains help us understand and navigate the world:

1. Sort into categories
2. Create associations
3. Fill in the gaps



“Frames”

- Help us organize information into broader categories. They largely reside in the sub-conscious.
 - Objects
 - Human beings (e.g., “the elderly”)
- Schemas and the unconscious are social. They exist in and are shaped by our environment.

What color are the following lines of text?

- **Cvur zxyq brmm**
- **Xoc jbnioew mne**
- **Vqeb peow ytro**
- **Vqeb peow ytro**

What color are the following lines of text?

- **Black**
- **Red**
- **Blue**
- **Green**

What color are the following lines of text?

- **Green**
- **Black**
- **Yellow**
- **Blue**

How we think



Humans need meaning.

- Individual meaning
- Collective meaning

Only **2%** of emotional cognition is available consciously.

Racial bias tends to reside in the **unconscious** network.

We unconsciously think about race even when we do not explicitly discuss it.

BIAS

Explicit

Expressed directly

Aware of bias / operates
consciously

Example:

Sign in the window of an
apartment building saying
“whites only”

Implicit

Expressed indirectly

Unaware of bias / operates
sub-consciously

Example:

A property manager doing more
criminal and credit background
checks on Native Americans than
whites

Examples of implicit bias

Screened auditions account for up to 46% of the increase in the percentage of females in symphony orchestras since 1970.



Claudia Goldin, Cecilia Rouse:
The Impact of "Blind" Auditions on Female Musicians (1997)

Examples of implicit bias

Job search – Identical resumes, apart from names.

White-sounding names – 50% more callbacks than African-American sounding names.

LaKeshia Washington



Susan Smith



What to do with bias?

Suppressing or denying biased thoughts can actually increase prejudice rather than eradicate it.

Openly acknowledging and challenging biases allows us to develop strategic interventions.



Activity: Laying it on the Line



Laying it on the Line:

1. People who engage in public meetings are the ones who care most about the issues.
2. I believe we can end racial inequity.
3. Hiring and promotion decisions should be based solely on merit.

A large group of people, mostly men in business attire, are seated at round tables in a conference room. They appear to be engaged in a meeting or discussion. The room has large windows on the left and several ornate chandeliers hanging from the ceiling. The overall atmosphere is professional and collaborative.

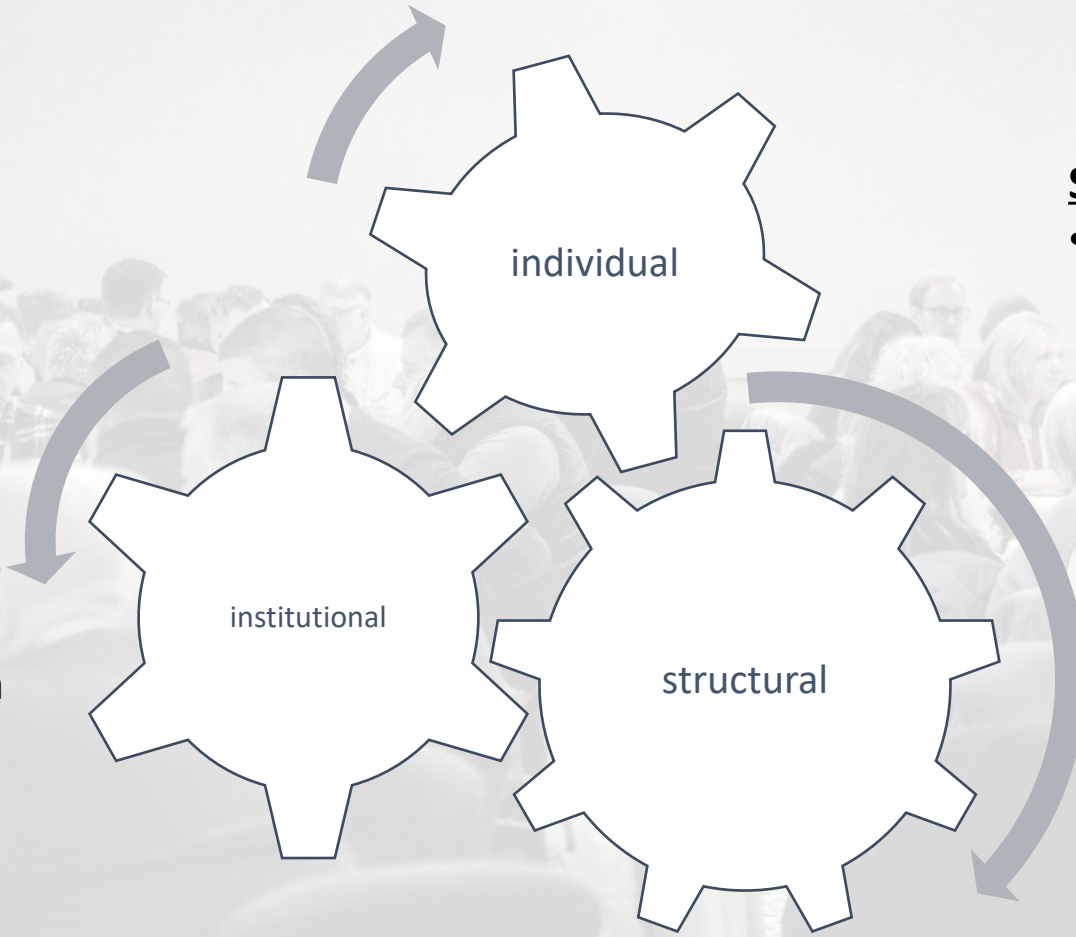
What creates different outcomes?

Individual racism:

- Pre-judgment, bias, or discrimination by an individual based on race.

Institutional racism:

- Policies, practices and procedures that work better for white people than for people of color, often unintentionally or inadvertently.

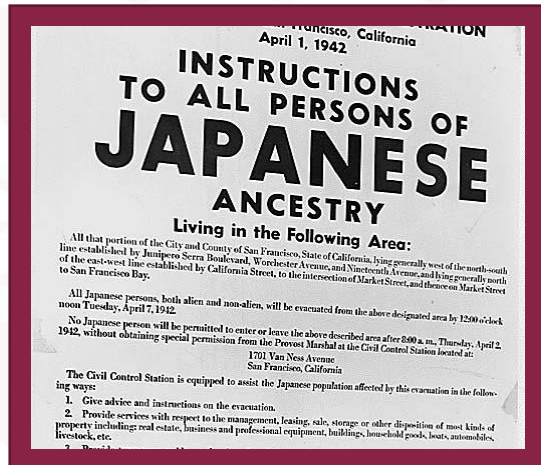


Structural racism:

- A history and current reality of institutional racism across all institutions, combining to create a system that negatively impacts communities of color.

History of government and race

Explicit



Government explicitly creates and maintains racial inequity.

Implicit



Discrimination illegal, but “race-neutral” policies and practices perpetuate inequity.

Institutional
Explicit

Institutional
Implicit

Individual
Explicit

Individual
Implicit

Bias at work

Institutional Explicit

Policies which explicitly discriminate against a group.

People of color historically prohibited from using libraries by force of law (this occurred in the South and North)

Institutional Implicit

Policies that negatively impact one group unintentionally.

Library's strict enforcement of fine collection disproportionately creates barriers to people of color, who are overrepresented among low-income populations

Individual Explicit

Prejudice in action – discrimination.

Library staff person lets a patron know that they are not being served because they are a different race

Individual Implicit

Unconscious attitudes and beliefs.

Staff decides to renew a lost item, extend return date, mark as "claims returned" or waive charges more often for white patrons than for patrons of color



Share about your city

1. What is something your city has done to advance race equity that has been successful?
2. What are some challenges to advancing race equity in your city?
3. What are some areas or departments in your city where you think race equity can be implemented? What could that look like? (e.g., parks & rec, utilities, street maintenance)

A group of diverse people are seated around a large table in a meeting room, engaged in discussion. The room has wood-paneled walls and a large window in the background. The text is overlaid on a semi-transparent white box.

Call to Action

On the last page of your packet, please put one action that you can take to help advance racial equity.



Resources

LMC: <https://www.lmc.org/equity>

PBS: www.pbs.org/race

GARE: www.racialequityalliance.org

Jim Crow of the North:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XWQfDbbQv9E>

Explicit v. Implicit Bias:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5S7Je6kbGDY>

Implicit Association Test (IAT):

<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>

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