Somatics of being a racial being

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Notice where you are in your body
Sensations
Images
Feelings
Thoughts
Vibrations
Behaviors/Movement

6 organizers of experience

Wheel of Power/Privilege

Adapted from ccrweb.ca
@sylviaduckworth
What is racial hierarchy in U.S.?

- White body supremacy and antiblackness are foundations of US (every institution)
- rule rather than the exception
- Colorblindness tries to mask the air that we are breathing.

While the concept of in group and out groups may be natural, the effects of racism are artificial, socially constructed, and intentionally maintained
Social defeat of black people, disappearing of indigenous people, ignoring other POC, white people as superior or standard (David Archer)

Continuum for Whites and BIPOC by Sherryl N Weston

"White" continuum

Racist Ethnocentric Non-Racist (the enabler) Anti-Racist (the pro-active and humble ally)

Persons of Color continuum

Accommodating Awakening Affirming of Self
(operating from internalized oppression) (healing from internalized oppression)
Racial Trauma in White bodies (r. menakem, 2022)

Lack of racial acuity and agility
High anxiety and/or defensiveness around race
Extremely low trauma response threshold in any discussion around race
Intense denial of the above
Devout and vehement variants of white body supremacy

Racial Trauma in people of color (r. menakem, 2022)

sleep problems, obesity, heart palpitations, digestive issues, high blood pressure, fatigue or exhaustion, jaw or mouth pain, menstrual cramps, muscle tension, headaches, intense sweating, nausea,
-general weathering of the cardiovascular, endocrine, reproductive, and musculoskeletal systems
-intense fear or anxiety
-a sense of helplessness
-a sense of being an impostor, or inherently unworthy or inferior
-bouts of racialized shame
-less common: uterine fibroids and an ongoing sense of urgency are often not recognized as having racialized trauma as a source
-lower life expectancy and higher infant mortality rates
Somatics of whiteness (carlin Quinn, 2022)

Oblivious entitlement
Physical entitlement to space; not seeing bodies of culture/color
White nepotism- promoting people who look, think, act and feel “right” “comfortable”
Holding anger in the body; communicating it passive-aggressively or energetically
Flat affect, lack of emotional availability, inability to be in authentic contact
Dishonest facial expressions- we do no show what we think or feel

Somatics of whiteness (carlin Quinn, 2022)

Internalized superiority as it relates to thinking and speaking- valid and right thoughts
Offering thoughts and opinions whenever we want, whether solicited or not
General belief that white consciousness is inherently a higher consciousness (more educated, proven, logical, right)
Having low window of tolerance when whiteness and power dynamics are being confronted
Being energetically irresponsible- when we feel anxious, afraid, or victimized, we transmit this into relationships without consent or consciousness of impact (dirty pain)
Somatics of whiteness (Carlin Quinn, 2022)

Setting group “norms” based on what feels “right” to white bodies and determining standards based on white western colonial culture

Valuing and rewarding thought and verbal articulation over other forms of communication

Habitually creating spaces of hierarchy and linear power structures informed by patriarchy (reinforcing white supremacy)

Speed- white people tend to harness control by being fast. Make quick decisions and not give space to nonwhite perspectives or doing things differently

Hypersensitive nervous systems- don’t have inner resources to manage racial accountability. Utilize dissociation, apathy and numbness as safety exit

Willful ignorance- become easily overwhelmed by what we don’t know and by how much is needed and we choose to remain ignorant

Expectation that BIPOC should and will assimilate into white culture- white is right

Apathy- ability to carry on with “business as usual” when BIPOC communities are taken over by grief in the face of brutality and violence. This allows preservation of energy and stay focused on individual success and security
To be antiracist is a radical choice in the face of history, requiring a radical reorientation of our consciousness. ~ Ibram X Kendi

No one is born racist or antiracist; these result from the choices we make. Being antiracist results from a conscious decision to make frequent, consistent, equitable choices daily. These choices require ongoing self-awareness and self-reflection as we move through life. In the absence of making antiracist choices, we (un)consciously uphold aspects of white supremacy, white-dominant culture, and unequal institutions and society. Being racist or antiracist is not about who you are; it is about what you do.

~Smithsonian African American museum
Resources/ Keep in touch

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