

Removing barriers to breastfeeding: a racial equity approach

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Personal reflection

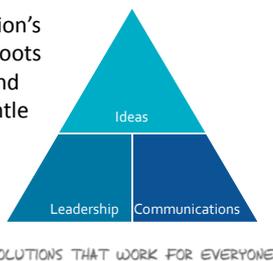
Do you believe race and social equity matter to your work? If so, how?

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Center for Social Inclusion

(TWEET: @thecsi @simranoo)

The Center for Social Inclusion's mission is to catalyze grassroots community, government, and other institutions to dismantle structural racial inequity.



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Government Alliance on Race and Equity

A national network of government working to achieve racial equity and advance opportunities for all.

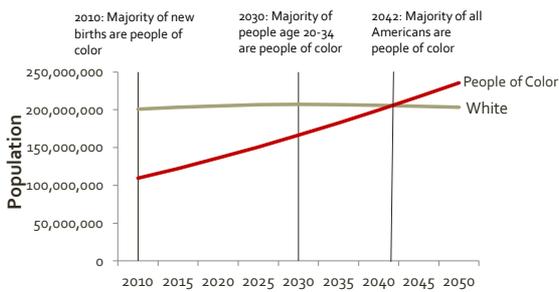
- ✓ Supporting jurisdictions at the forefront
- ✓ Expanding jurisdictions – in 30 states and over 100 cities – all levels of government
- ✓ Providing tools and resources to put theory into action

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- 1) Think of a number between 1 and 10
- 2) Multiply that number times 9
- 3) If it is a two digit number add them together (for example 32 would be 3+2=5)
- 4) Subtract 5
- 5) Convert to a letter (a is 1, b is 2, etc.)
- 6) **COUNTRY** starts with that letter.
- 7) Take the last letter in the county name and think of an **ANIMAL** that starts with that letter.
- 8) Take the last letter in the animal name and think of a **FRUIT** that starts with that letter.

WHY RACE?

A Growing New Majority:



Racial Inequity in the U.S.:

Education	Jobs	Housing	<p>100% Likelihood that race is a determinant for key health and social indicators in life.</p>
Criminal Justice	Arts and Culture		
Health	Environment	Equitable Development	<p>10 years Difference in life expectancy based on zip code in King County.</p>

Defining Key Terms

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Three Key Facts on Race:

- 1) **Race is a construct** and is not biologically determined. Race is a modern idea.
- 2) **Policy drives the social construction of race** and has contributed to changing ideas and definitions of race over time.
- 3) **We did not choose this system** but we have a responsibility to address it

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Explicit bias

Expressed directly

Aware of bias / operates consciously

Example – Sign in the window of an apartment building – “we don’t rent to _____”

Implicit bias

Expressed indirectly

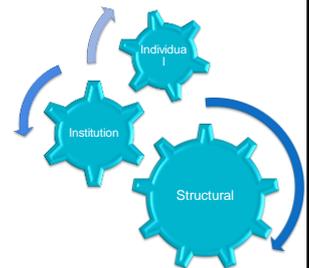
Unaware of bias / operates sub-consciously

Example – a property manager doing more criminal background checks on African Americans than whites.

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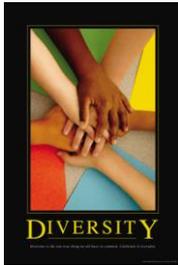
Different Kinds of Racism:

- **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. This combines to create a system that negatively impacts communities of color.



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A Word on Diversity:



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Structures are a part of our lives:



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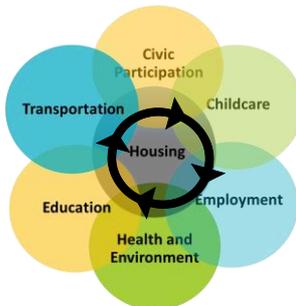
What We Mean by Structural Racial Inequity:

“Structural Racism” points to multiple institutions

The ways our public and private institutions interact to produce barriers to opportunity and racial disparities.

Intent to discriminate is irrelevant

Structures just do what they do, often invisibly, and reinforce disinvestment and disparities.



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Equity v. Equality: What’s the difference?



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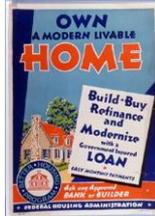
Defining “Racial Equity”:

Racial equity is when 1) **race no longer is a determinant of life outcomes** and 2) in addressing racial inequity directly, we improve outcomes for everyone, including White people

Racial equity is both **our process *and* the outcome we seek to achieve**. It is an *inclusive* approach to transform structures towards access, justice, self-determination, redistribution, and sharing of power and resources.

Race and policy

Federal Housing Administration



Location of city facilities



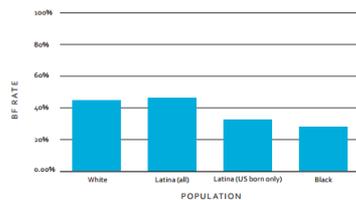
Streetlighting

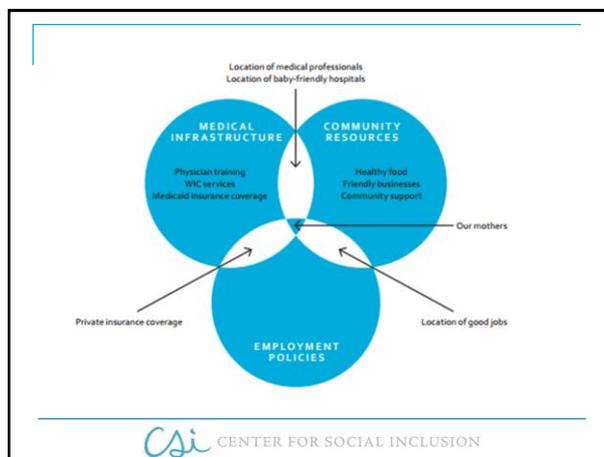


Birth & Breastfeeding

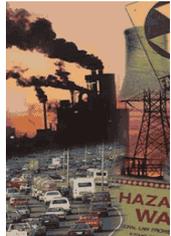
US Breastfeeding Rates

Six-Month Breastfeeding Rate by Population





Community Conditions



- **56%** of residents near hazardous waste facilities are people of color*
- Safe water supply and waste disposal facilities are lacking in about **12%** of Native American homes compared to **1%** of other U.S. homes**
- White Americans are **5x** more likely to live in census tracts with supermarkets than Black Americans***

**"Unequal Health Outcomes in the United States" CERD Working Group on Health and Environmental Health Report on Healthcare. January 2008
*** Indian Health Service "Facts on Indian Health Disparities", January 2006.
***"The Contextual Effect of the Local Food Environment on Residents' Diets: The Atherosclerosis Risk in Communities Study, Am. J. Pub. Health (2002).

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Affordable Care Act (ACA)

- ACA coverage for breastfeeding support and supplies does not include Medicaid or WIC.
- Only hourly workers are covered under the Break Time for Nursing Mothers policy.
- Because women of color hold the majority of service sector jobs (including fast food industries), allowing them space to nurse may prove difficult.
- There is no enforcement policy for Break Time.
- Break times do not have to be paid.

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Baby Friendly Hospitals

(As of August 2013)

- Less than 5% of baby friendly hospitals are in the 9 states (plus DC) with the highest concentrations of black Americans.
- There are only 2 baby friendly hospitals in NYC, but both are in Manhattan (rather than the outer boroughs where most African Americans and Latinos, for example, live).



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What can we do now?

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Changing minds

- Most importantly, the best way to change attitudes is to change behavior.
- Attitudinal change tends to follow behavior change.
- Requires both short and long-term approaches.

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As an individual...

- Surface your own assumptions.
- Check your own implicit bias.
- Interrogate your own commitment to equity.

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As an institution/organization... Use a Racial Equity Tool

- 1 • Desired results
- 2 • Analysis of data
- 3 • Community engagement
- 4 • Strategies for racial equity
- 5 • Implementation plan
- 6 • Communications and accountability

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What if I don't have enough time?



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As a partner....

- Start where communities of color are.
- Address tensions.
- Build trust.
- Start with community priorities.
Resource communities to engage.
- Engage strong constituency-based institutions.

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As a policy advocate, a strong approach informed by equity...

- ✓ Is structural (can cause ripple effects)
- ✓ Can have a wide impact (across communities, regions, nation)
- ✓ Takes advantage of political context (national healthcare reform)
- ✓ Creates coalitions between unlikely partners (across race, sector, etc.)
- ✓ Matches the capacity to work on it (power in room)

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Personal reflection

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