CIRCUIT BREAKER: Understanding Our Role in the Movement

September 24, 2019

POWER UP

The ACLU would like to

ACKNOWLEDGE THAT WE ARE ON INDIGENOUS LAND

of the traditional territories of the Coast Salish people, specifically the Duwamish Tribe.

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Why We Use Pronouns

- We recognize that gender is a spectrum and people might have a different gender identity than the one you perceive them to have. Sharing your pronouns shows respect for everyone's gender identity and creates a more welcoming space for all.
- If you didn't already grab one, pronoun stickers are available at the check-in table.

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Housekeeping

- WiFi
  - Nework: AJS
  - Passwords: *justice08* and *alliance4*
- All bathrooms are gender neutral. There is one stall located out the main doors to the right, and an additional three stalls downstairs (on the left).
- We will take a 5 minute break around 7pm. The training will end around 7:45pm.
- If you have any additional needs during the training, please check in with Jacqueline.

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Icebreaker

Please turn to the person next to you and introduce yourself.

1. Name
2. Pronouns
3. Location (city or neighborhood)
4. Share the meaning of your name and/or a story about how you got it.

Community Agreements

1. Observe the “Platinum” rule.
2. Acknowledge intent and address impact.
3. Be present and lean in.
4. Be mindful of technology use.
5. Hear and be heard.
6. Observe the “One mic, one voice” rule.
7. Avoid putting people on blast.
8. Care for yourself and others.
9. Commit to learning.
10. Have fun!

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Acknowledgments

- The ACLU is not an expert on race equity. We are all learning and growing together.
- This session is intended to establish a shared language and begin to introduce concepts of structural racism, implicit bias, and allyship.
- These terms will be new to some and very familiar to others.
- Please keep our community agreements in mind, particularly during this session, and feel free to excuse yourself at any time.
- Please see the list on page 15 of the handbook for additional readings and educational resources.

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Introduction to Racism & Implicit Bias

Goals

1. Share a framework to analyze institutional racism and implicit bias.
2. Identify implicit racial biases in our lives.
3. Identify how racism shows up in organizing and "progressive" spaces.
4. Apply these concepts to civil liberties issues.

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Why focus on race?

- We are focused on building a culture of equity and inclusion.
- We all have multiple facets of our identity, some of which may be experienced as privilege and others as oppression.
- Race intersects with every issue we work on.
- In a culture where racism continues to be rampant, we ensure equity across the board for all groups experiencing inequity by focusing on race.
- More education: Dr. Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw

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How do YOU define racism?

- We all need a common language to talk effectively about racism.

Racism ≠ Individual bigotry or prejudice

- Racial prejudice becomes racism when combined with the power of systems and institutions.

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Race Prejudice

+

Systemic/Institutional Power

=

RACISM

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Table Talk

Race prejudice + Systemic/institutional power = RACISM

- Share your reactions to this definition.

- Is it new?
- Does it (re-)affirm what you already know?
- Do you think it will be useful to you?
- What questions does this raise?

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Racism: Power to Shape Identity & Behavior

- Racism shapes us on the deepest level of our psyche.
- We did not ask for it, but it is an outcome of living in a race-based system.
- We are socialized to internalize racism and exhibit correlating behaviors.
- Our task is to identify these behaviors, disrupt power structures, and create new ways of being.

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What is implicit racial bias?

- Implicit biases are the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our actions, understanding of events, and decisions in an unconscious manner. (Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity)

Credit: Lo Wall

Explicit vs. Implicit Bias

Explicit bias	Implicit bias
Expressed directly	Expressed indirectly
Aware of bias	Unaware of bias
Operates consciously	Operates sub-consciously
Example -- "I like whites more than Latinos."	Example -- sitting further away from a Latino than a white individual.

Source: Unconscious (Implicit) Bias and Health Disparities: Where Do We Go from Here?

CSI CENTER FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION

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Implicit Bias: How You Learned It

- Turn & talk in pairs:
  - What was the first time you noticed racial difference? What meaning did you make of those differences?
  - What are some of the early messages you received about racial differences? Who taught you those messages?
  - How did these messages harm you? How did they harm others?

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Personal Identity Exercise

- Take 5 minutes to fill out the Personal Social Identity Profile worksheet.
- Under “Group Membership,” write the group(s) you most closely identify with for each social identity.
- Check off the columns as they apply to each of your identities.

- Pair share: How did it feel to fill out this form? (You do not need to share your answers, just your experience of the exercise.)

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Agent & Target Framework

- Developed by Dr. Leticia Nieto
- Tool to help individuals assess their own identities and behaviors
- "Because of our socially ascribed memberships in certain groups – based on gender, ethnicity, social class and other groups – we will experience either oppression or privilege. We don't sign up to join these groups, nor do we sign up for the system of oppression and privilege, yet they are part of our lives."

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What does it mean to be an Agent?

- Socially dominant memberships or identities
- Often the social identities we don't think about
- Agent skills:
  - Indifference (unconscious supremacy)
  - Distancing
  - Inclusion
  - Awareness
  - Allyship

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What does it mean to be a Target?

- Identities that are undervalued or oppressed in society
- Target skills:
  - Survival
  - Confusion
  - Empowerment
  - Strategy
  - Recentering

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Reflection & Pair Share

- Look back at your handout. In what ways do you identify as an Agent? In what ways do you identify as a Target?
- In what ways is this a useful framework for thinking about bias and oppression? In what ways is this confusing or unhelpful?

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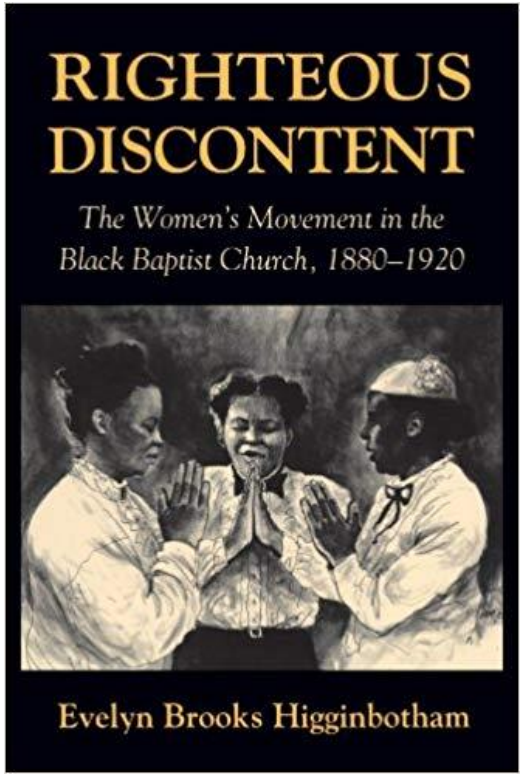
“Politics of Respectability” & Social Justice Movements

Thank you to Gabriela Rojas & Tessa D’Arcangelew (ACLU of California)

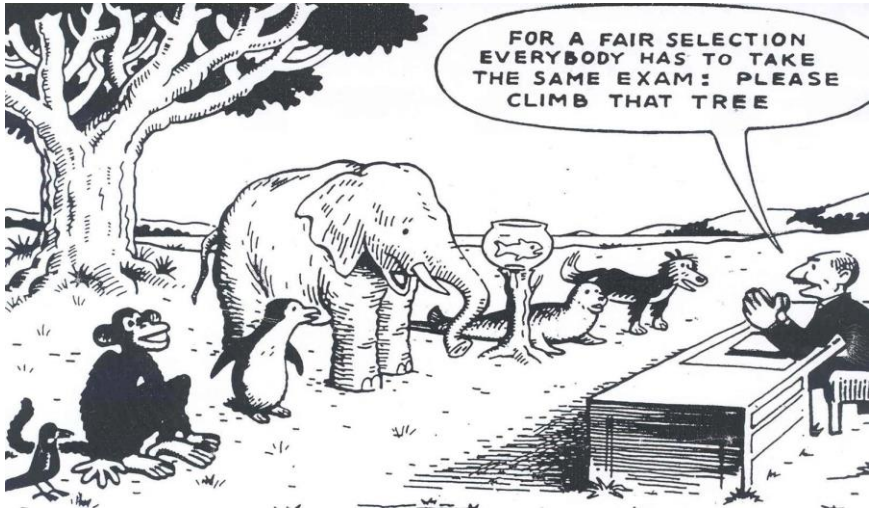
Politics of Respectability



- Dr. Evelyn Higginbotham, 1994
- Righteous Discontent: The Women's Movement in the Black Baptist Church, 1880 – 1920
- "Oppressed people must learn to represent the norms and expectations of the group with power (the oppressors) in order to achieve equality."

Meritocracy

- Political philosophy that economic resources or power should go to those with talent, effort, and achievement as opposed to:
  - Family status
  - Sexuality
  - Race
  - Gender
  - Age
  - Wealth



Institutional Racism

- For over a quarter of American history, the U.S. Constitution actively and intentionally legalized racism and sexism.
- As a result, white supremacy is deeply embedded in our laws and system of government.
- Profound racial disparities persist in health, education, employment, and income across the United States, and these outcomes reflect a combination of structural inequality, overt and covert discrimination, and implicit bias.

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Why does it matter?

- In the fight for social justice, it is our job to build power because power is what helps us win.
- If we only build power with a few groups and leave others out, we are ultimately less powerful.
- When we fail to address race and racism, our justice work will inevitably become racist.

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Good/Bad Dichotomy

- American Civil Rights Movement: Shift from racism being socially acceptable to socially unacceptable
- Created dichotomy of a good white person, the non-racist VS. a bad white person, the racist
- "To be a good, moral person and to be complicit with racism became mutually exclusive. You could not be a good person and participate in racism; only bad people were racist." – Robin DiAngelo

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~~Good/Bad Dichotomy~~

- The binary perspective of racist or not racist, good or bad, hides the institutional nature of racism and absolves well-meaning white people from taking any responsibility for interrupting racism or taking inventory of their own bias.
- It is often used as an excuse when white people or white systems perpetuate racism.
- For example: when boys and men of color are shot or killed by the police, common narratives emerge around their "bad behavior" or "bad look" to protect the "good cops."

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How do white people benefit from racism?

- Belonging
- Freedom from the burden of race and freedom of movement
- White people are often defined just as “people”
- Racial innocence
- Segregated lives

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How do we foster inclusion?

1. Experiencing discomfort
2. Calling in & interrupting bias

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Experience Discomfort

- Being insulated from the stress of racism in your personal experience can create an entitlement to a feeling of comfort.
- White fragility: Feelings of anger, fear, guilt, and behaviors such as argumentation, silence, and withdrawal when confronted with bias or complicity in racist systems.
- Allyship: Move away from comfort and towards reflection, apology, listening, processing, seeking clarity, grappling, engaging, and believing.

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Calling In/Interrupting Bias

- Dr. Evelyn Carter: Confronting bias is important, "because social norms are formed in group situations and subsequently serve as standards for the individual's perception and judgment when [they] are not in the group situation."

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Tools for Calling In

- Autonomy-supportive statements:
  - “I hear what you are saying, but you could take another perspective…”
  - “I get where you are coming from, in my experience though…”
- Question format:
  - “Can you understand when you say that how someone might feel ___?”
  - “Do you think it’s possible that…?”

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Tools for Calling In

- Provide evidence when possible:
  - "I know we value equality and fairness enough to think more carefully about how what we're saying affects others."
  - "Last week in that meeting we thought X wouldn't work, but then it mostly worked! Let's try it again and be more open to listening to others' ideas."
- Think of a time when someone behaved in a way you/others perceived as offensive. Share with a partner and discuss how you could have confronted them.

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Calling In/Interrupting Bias

- "One line of King's speech, in particular – that one day he might be judged by the content of his character and not the color of his skin – was seized upon by the white public because the words were seen to provide a simple and immediate solution to racial tensions; pretend that we don't see race, and racism will end. Color blindness was now promoted as the remedy for racism, with white people insisting that they didn't see race or, if they did, that it had no meaning to them."

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5 Minute Break

Root Causes & Systems Thinking

How ACLU-WA Approaches Race Equity

- What are the assumptions we bring to this decision that relate to racial equity?
- What are the outcomes we are hoping to create?
- How will we involve community members and other stakeholders in the decision-making process? How will we engage multiple and diverse perspectives?
- How will this project increase racial equity? How might it decrease racial equity?
- Are there potentially foreseeable unintended consequences?
- Who else can we engage to advance opportunities and minimize harm?
- How will we communicate our decisions to our allies and stakeholders?

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Root Cause Tree Tool

LEAVES

What problems have directly impacted community members identified?

TRUNK

What structures, practices, and policies institutionalize the problems? What role do public entities play? What role do private actors play?

ROOTS

What are the underlying historical, racial, social, or economic root causes of these problems? Why do these structures or policies exist? Whom do they benefit? Whom do they harm?

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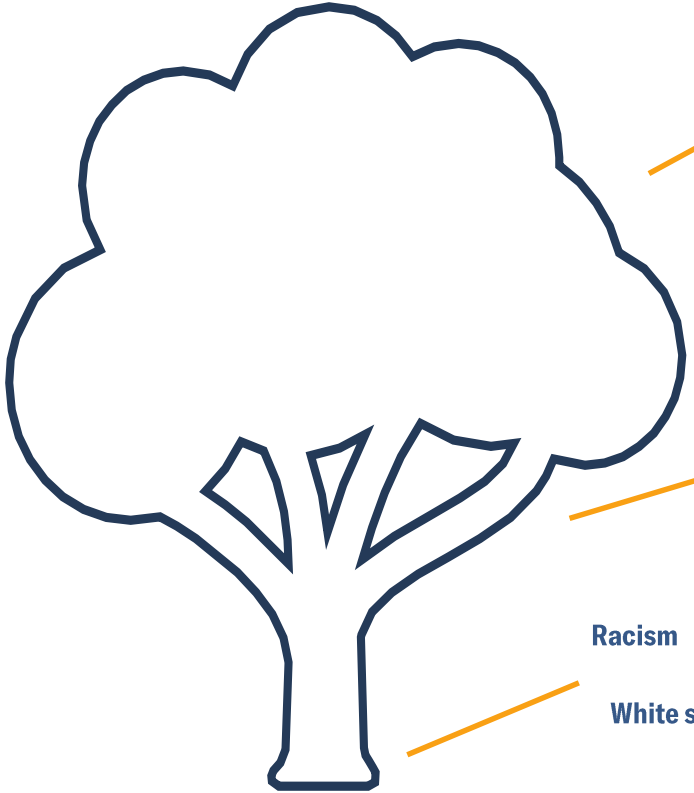
Root Cause Tree Example



Racial disproportionality in Washington's criminal justice system

Mandatory minimums

For-profit prison system

Discriminatory risk assessment tools

Suspensions & expulsions (school-to-prison pipeline)

Redlining & housing discrimination

Police profiling

Education access

Access to health care & drug treatment

Racism

Capitalism

White supremacy

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Group Exercise

- Find the table with the issue you picked for “Moving from Issue to Action” last time.
- If you’re new, choose an issue you are interested in and join the group!
- Spend 20 minutes creating a root cause tree for your issue.
  - Leaves: Visible problems
  - Trunk: Structures, practices, and policies
  - Roots: Underlying historical, racial, social, or economic root causes
  - Toolbox: What questions do you have? Whose perspectives do you need? What resources are you missing?

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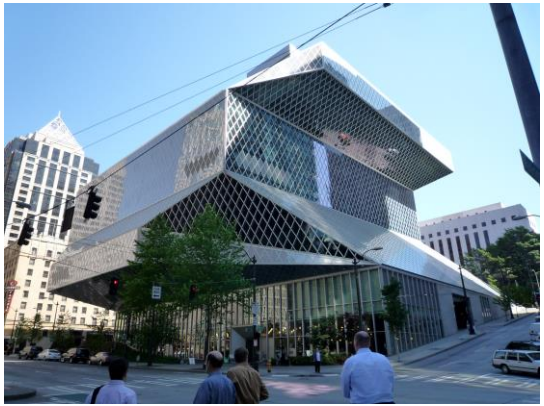
Wrap-Up

Next Session: Monday, October 7

- You will receive an email reminder on Friday, October 4.
- The next session will take place at:

Seattle Central Library – Level 4, Room 1
Washington Mutual Foundation Meeting Room
1000 4th Avenue
Seattle, WA 98104
5:30 – 8pm



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Get Out the Vote!

- Grab a stack of ACLU Voter postcards and an instruction sheet!
- Bring back completed postcards to Power Up by October 7.
- Returned postcards will be addressed and mailed out to low-propensity voters in Washington before the November general election.

For more information:

Rachel Gilchrist
rgilchrist@aclu-wa.org
www.aclu-wa.org

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Washington
WE THE PEOPLE