Allies in the struggle: intersectional work as trauma-informed response and prevention

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Welcome

We’ll be talking about:
Trauma
Privilege and oppression (specifically racism and white privilege)
Current disparities
Examples from Action Alliance
The work of allies
Objectives

• Deepen understanding of systemic and institutional racism in America and its impact on people of color experiencing sexual and intimate partner violence.

• Discuss ways that allies can integrate a racial justice lens in our daily work as a critical component of trauma-informed response and prevention.
“Survivors of color live at the intersections of racism, sexism, and other oppressions.”

The work of allies is to understand these intersections, integrate this understanding into our trauma response, and work to dismantle these forms of violence at the individual, community, and societal level.

Source: INCITE! Women, Gender Non-Conforming, and Trans people of Color Against Violence
Understanding the great harm racism has created for individuals, families and our communities in Virginia, we commit to building within the coalition an anti-racist framework from which to address sexual and domestic violence.

Excerpt from Action Alliance mission statement
This is hard to talk about.
A few working assumptions...
Let's dig in...
understanding trauma
What is Trauma?

• An incident or event that is threatening or is perceived as threatening and overwhelms a person’s normal coping skills.

• Trauma can take many forms:
  – Emotional, physical, sexual abuse
  – Neglect
  – Abandonment
  – Natural disaster
  – Assault
  – Catastrophic injury or illness
  – Historical trauma

• Historical trauma is cumulative and collective.
Trauma May Be Woven Into DNA of Native Americans

Trauma is big news these days. Mainstream media is full of stories about the dramatic improvements allowing science to see more clearly how trauma affects our bodies, minds and even our genes. Much of the coverage hails the scientific connection between trauma and illness as a breakthrough for modern medicine. The next breakthrough will be how trauma affects our offspring.

The science of epigenetics, literally “above the gene,” proposes that we pass along more than DNA in our genes; it suggests that our genes can carry memories of trauma experienced by our ancestors and can influence how we react to trauma and stress. The Academy of Pediatrics reports that the way genes work in our bodies determines neuroendocrine structure and is strongly influenced by experience. [Neuroendocrine cells help the nervous and endocrine (hormonal) system work together to produce substances such as adrenaline (the hormone associated with the fight or flight response.)] Trauma experienced by earlier generations can influence the structure of our genes, making them more likely to “switch on” negative responses to stress and trauma.

In light of this emerging science and how it works with the way we react to trauma, the AAP stated in its publication, Adverse Childhood Experiences and the Lifelong Consequences of

Source: http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com
Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) is the term given to describe all types of abuse, neglect, and other traumatic experiences that occur to individuals under the age of 18. The landmark Kaiser ACE Study examined the relationships between these experiences during childhood and reduced health and well-being later in life.
Almost two-thirds of adults surveyed reported at least one Adverse Childhood Experience – and the majority of respondents who reported at least one ACE reported more than one.
Childhood trauma affects health across a lifetime

Nadine Burke Harris
Pediatrician
How we define the problem determines how we work on the problem.
How “ISMs” Connect
a few examples...

Racism/White Supremacy

Violence against women has been used historically to maintain white supremacy. One example is the frequent rape of African slaves by white plantation owners.

Women of color who experience violence may experience rejection from advocates or allied professionals when they seek help, making them less likely to seek help and therefore more vulnerable to continuing abuse. In particular, racism within the criminal justice system, such as higher conviction rates and average sentences of people of color, makes many women of color reluctant to call the police.

Violence Against Women

All oppressions are perpetuated by the belief that power must be power over, rather than shared power. Layers of oppression make some people more vulnerable to sexual and intimate partner violence.

Heterosexism

Lesbians, bisexuals, and transwomen frequently experience harassment and violence from homophobic men. Heterosexism also contributes to the violence many women experience at the hands of abusive partners (e.g., accusing her of being a lesbian because she wants to spend time with her female friends).

Capitalism

In media/advertising, women are frequently objectified, their sexuality and body parts used to sell products. This sexualization makes it easier for people to commit violent acts against women.

Sexism/Male Supremacy

Young people growing up in homes where men abuse women learn that it is acceptable for men to dominate women, reinforcing a sexist belief system.

Sexist beliefs about the role of women (e.g., women should always be available sexually, women should submit, women should be passive and agreeable, etc.) influence the behavior of many perpetrators.
Tactics of Oppression

Power and control look alike whether perpetrated against an intimate partner or an entire cultural/ethnic group.

Whether we are talking about power and control within an intimate relationship, or within the whole of U.S. society, we see the same tactics used to maintain an unequal distribution of power, control and access to resources.

Collective/Societal Level
- Using physical & sexual violence
  - Genocide of Native people; police brutality towards African Americans; rape and sexual assault of women; abuse & harassment of people of disabilities; hate crimes against LGBTQ folks.
- Using economic abuse
  - Preventing oppressed group from gaining employment/education; making group members ask for and justify need for resources; requiring loop-jumping in order to maintain inadequate financial supports.
- Using children
  - Forced removal of children from communities (boating schools, foster care system); forced sterilization/restricted access to reproductive health services for poor communities & communities of color; racial disporportionals in CPS investigations.

Individual/Interpersonal Level
- Using physical & sexual violence
  - Slapping, kicking, pulling hair, raping, choking, punching, grabbing, feeding, restraining, biting, tripping, assaulting, hitting, shoving, pinching, grabbing, twisting arms.
- Using economic abuse
  - Preventing survivor from getting or keeping a job; forcing survivor to ask for money; using survivor's credit cards without permission; requiring survivor to provide support, taking survivor's name off joint assets.
- Using children
  - Making survivors feel guilty about children; denying custody or access to children (or threatening it); survivor leaves; threatening to tell authorities that survivor is LGBT so they will remove children from home.

Collective/Societal Level
- Using psychological abuse
  - Pervasive negative depictions and portrayals of group reinforcing ideas of being “less than”; manipulating target groups with lies and false promises; pathologizing cultural truths and practices.
- Using isolation
  - Controlling who survivor sees or talks to; what survivor does with other people; limiting survivor’s outside activities; making survivor account for their whereabouts; not letting survivor go anywhere alone; depriving survivor access to vehicles/transportation.
- Using intimidation, coercion & threats
  - Creating a culture of fear and unpredictability through cultural messages which condone harm and violence towards certain social groups; leveraging access to authority (law enforcement, child protective services, immigration) surveillance of community.

Individual/Interpersonal Level
- Minimizing, denying, & blaming
  - Minimizing impacts of slavery, colonization, genocide; blaming people of color/women for achievement gap, wage gap, health disparities; denying prevalence of sexual assault and rape and survivors telling targeted communities that oppression they experience is historical.
- Using physical & sexual violence
  - Making survivors feel guilty about their bodies; blaming them for the abuse; saying everything is survivor’s fault or that survivor deserved it; abusive partner saying “women can’t abuse women” or “men can’t abuse men”; saying it’s just “fighting,” not abuse; blaming alcohol/drugs.
Source: Center for Substance Abuse Treatment. “Trauma informed care in behavioral health services”. SAMHSA
What is racism?
A Few Terms...

• Prejudice
• Power
• Oppression
• Racism
• Privilege
Racism Is...

• Power + Race Prejudice

• A system of advantage based on race

• A system of oppression based on race
Expressions of racism

Individual
- Attitudes
- Behaviors
- Socialization
- Self-interest

Institutional
- Legal
- Economics
- Health
- Educational
- Political
- Housing

Cultural
- Aesthetics
- Religion
- Music
- Values
- Philosophy
- Beliefs

Systemic
AVERAGE FAMILY WEALTH, BY RACE
1983-2010

Figures from the Urban Institute. (Chart: John Light/Moyers & Company)
PERCENTAGE OF HIGHER-RATE MORTGAGES GIVEN TO BORROWERS WITH GOOD CREDIT, BY RACE
2004-2008

Data includes only borrowers with a FICO score of 660 or higher. Figures from the Center for Responsible Lending via the Economic Policy Institute. (Chart: John Light/Moyers & Company)
Figure 9. Racial disparities in marijuana use in past month and marijuana possession arrests, 2010

Usage rates

1.3
Blacks used marijuana at 1.3 times the rate of whites.

 Arrest rates

3.7
Blacks were arrested for marijuana possession at 3.7 times the rate of whites.

Theater Shooting Suspect Was Brilliant Science Student

July 21, 2012 19:27 AM

Police: Michael Brown Struggled With Officer Before Shooting

Brian Kelly (Twitter: @brpkelly)
August 13, 2014 11:31 AM
This Fox News headline quoted friends shocked that 15-year-old Jared Michael Padgett had entered his high school heavily armed and killed a classmate, injured a teacher and took his own life.
WHITE SUSPECT

Santa Barbara shooting: Suspect was ‘soft-spoken, polite, a gentleman’, ex-principal says

In the wake of the mass shooting in Santa Barbara, California, earlier this year, the Whittier Daily News offered a headline showing one man’s disbelief that Elliot Rodger could have committed such a crime.

BLACK VICTIM

Deputy killed Marine out of fear for children's safety, officials say

An unarmed father of two was killed by a police officer while entering a vehicle that contained his own children, the Los Angeles Times served up this claim from officials.
PARTICIPANTS WHO CONTACTED THE POLICE

Fear of Calling Police Because of Their Response

2 in 5 (43%) felt police had discriminated against them. Of that 43%, the following responses indicated discrimination due to:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Reason</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>53%</td>
<td>Not being a “perfect” victim (income, reputation, disability, sexual identity)</td>
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<tr>
<td>46%</td>
<td>Gender (men side with men and won’t believe me)</td>
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<tr>
<td>24%</td>
<td>Lack of understanding by police about partner abuse and sexual assault</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22%</td>
<td>Race / ethnicity or immigration status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Politics, offender connections</td>
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IN THEIR WORDS

“I live in a poor building, they stood there criticizing my apartment and talked down to me. I know if I lived in a nice neighborhood, they wouldn’t have said the things they did.”

“I am a black female so I felt like they automatically saw me as dumb, poor and ignorant... I didn’t have any marks besides a swollen lip, so I felt like they didn’t take it as an immediate threat.”

“I felt the police were buddy-buddy with my partner and ignored what I had to say and the reality of the situation. I was scared and they ignored me.”
Connecting this to our work...

• What are some ways that systemic racism creates barriers for survivors of sexual and intimate partner violence?
“Once you know some things, you can’t un-know them. It’s a burden that can never be given away.”

Alice Hoffman
Our lenses:
Racial Justice
Trauma-Informed
Asset-Building
Enhancing Safety & Justice: Promoting Racial Equality in Our Work

A Toolkit for Sexual and Domestic Violence Agencies

Organizational:
- Job ads
- Interview questions
- Staff orientation
- Mentoring
- Ongoing education
- Discussion groups
Privilege and oppression often shape access to help and safety. The Action Alliance strives to do its work through a racial justice lens.
STATEMENT: The Action Alliance mourns the death of Sandra Bland, 28, who was found asphyxiated in a cell at the Waller County Jail (Texas) three days after being arrested during a traffic stop.

Following yesterday's release by Waller County Sheriff's Office of the dashcam video of Ms. Bland's traffic stop, we are deeply disturbed by the behavior displayed by the arresting officer in said video. We condemn the actions of Texas Trooper Encinia toward Ms. Bland, and call on law enforcement professionals, advocates, and others to do the same.

The Action Alliance has a commitment to engage in sexual and domestic violence intervention and prevention through a racial justice lens. Our racial justice work compels us to consider how privilege and oppression operate through violence and to examine how violence maintains unequal distribution of power.

If you find yourself questioning Ms. Bland's actions, we ask you to shift your focus to where professional responsibility lies—on the person in this situation holding the power, authority, and professional training.

As you view the video and follow the investigation of Ms. Bland's death as a possible homicide, please consider how Trooper Encinia's behavior on the video and subsequent investigations may impact people of color who are survivors of trauma and violence who are thinking about calling law enforcement for help.

#blacklivesmatter #SandraBland

Communications: Social media
Training:
- Curricula
- Philosophical framework
THE RED FLAG CAMPAIGN

He said if I really loved him, I’d have sex with him.

If he really loved you, he wouldn’t push you.

If he really loved you, he wouldn’t push you.

Using emotional pressure or physical threats to engage in sexual acts is coercion. When you see a red flag in your friend’s relationship, say something.

TheRedFlagCampaign.org

Campus Work
Building Youth Resilience Through Creative Expression
Prevention
“She knows I'm not out at my job. Whenever we get in a fight, she threatens to out me.”

You deserve respect, not threats.

866.356.6998
#CallTheHelpline | text: (804) 793-9999 | chat: www.vsdvalliance.org
“Most of the time he uses my preferred pronoun. But when he is angry he messes it up. It feels like an attack.”

You deserve respect, not a put down.

866.356.6998

#CallTheHelpline | text: (804) 793-9999 | chat: www.vsdvalliance.org
I deserve: 

**respect.**

That’s why I called.

Family Violence & Sexual Assault Virginia Hotline

1.800.838.8238

free. confidential. 24 hours a day

Text: 804.793.9999 | Chat: vstdvaliance.org

#ideserve

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This publication was funded by the Virginia Department of Health and the Preventive Health & Health Services Block Grant #13041DP0090555. This project was supported by the Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) award no. 14-C03476SAL3 from funds made available to Virginia by the Office for Victims of Crime of the Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice. The opinions, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of DCJS or the U.S. Department of Justice.
I deserve: to be heard

That’s why I called.

Family Violence & Sexual Assault Virginia Hotline

1.800.838.8238

Free, confidential. 24 hours a day
Text: 804.793.9999 | Chat: vsdvalliance.org

#ideserve

Advocacy
Doesn’t just wish for peace. He works for it.

HOPE
Pass It On.

THE FOUNDATION FOR A BETTER LIFE
www.hopelife.org

Doing the work
Addressing **White Privilege**
Ten Action Steps for Individuals & Programs

**Be present for the struggle.**
Don't avoid the hard work of dismantling racism, though it is often painful and frustrating.

**Expand your understanding.**
Racism is prejudice against people of a certain race combined with the power of privilege. Any person can be prejudiced, but only a person of privilege can be racist. Racism is interconnected with other oppressions, such as classism, homophobia, and sexism.

**Listen.**
Allow yourself to hear stories of racism without rushing to judgment or immediately making statements that distance you from the racist acts and make you feel better.

**Educate yourself.**
Learn about the history of oppression and efforts, like the Civil Rights Movement and Gandhi's work in India, to effect change. Seek out information about people of color who have not been widely acknowledged for their achievements. Expose yourself to the art, history, music, language, and literature of people of color.

**Recognize the reality of white privilege.**
In this country, white people take for granted many unearned privileges based solely on the color of their skin. For example, a white person can assume that when she applies for a job or hunts for an apartment, she will probably be evaluated by people of her own race. And if she makes a mistake at work, nobody will assume that she was hired just because of her skin color.

**Look at yourself.**
“Where there is no vision, people perish.” — James Baldwin
How have you been shaped by the racist culture in which we live? How often do you make assumptions about people based on the color of their skin? Do you even use language that excludes or devalues people of color? It is important to challenge your assumptions and work on undoing your learned reactions.

**Look at the institutions and organizations around you.**
Does your workplace value diversity and actively work to confront racism? What about your religious community, school, and/or local government, just to name a few? Be sensitive to any conflict between official policy and actual practice.

**Avoid hatred.**
“We must be the change we wish to see in the world.” — Mahatma Gandhi
Most racism is a product of fear or ignorance. Try not to waste time hating yourself or others for being racist. Hatred can paralyze you and delay real change. Cultivate hope, but demand change. If we want to live in a world where every person is respected and valued, we must begin by practicing compassion in our own lives.

**Take action.**
Never ignore or excuse a racist act, even if you believe the perpetrator “didn’t mean it.” Challenge yourself to find constructive ways to confront and dismantle racism, even if it is in yourself or your family. For example, you can avoid laughing at racist jokes and tell those who share that kind of humor how it makes you feel.

**Talk about racism with others.**
To dismantle racism means to take down the structure of racism one piece at a time. Each time you step outside your comfort zone to engage in open and compassionate dialogue about race with another person, you are dismantling racism. Only in community with each other can we truly confront oppression and our role in its continuation.
I can dress how I want to dress without it being attributed to my race...
I can go shopping and not be followed because of my race...
I can see my race represented positively in the media...

"White privilege is an invisible knapsack of unearned advantages given at birth to white people"

--Peggy McIntosh,
Wellesley College Center for Research on Women*
*Full text available at www.vcweb.com/whiteprivilege

Unpacking White Privilege

What is white privilege?
White privilege means, whether we are overtly racist or not, all white people benefit from living in a world run by white people. For the most part, white people write the laws that govern our country, own the stores we shop in, assess our credit scores, etc. White privilege means that we are given the benefit of the doubt more often than people of color when we are being evaluated, such as for an apartment, a job, or a financial loan.

As white people, we are conditioned to deny that this privilege exists. We are taught that "privileges are earned." Even though we may not have asked for it or want it, white privilege is real and it is harmful.

What harm does it do?
While racism puts people of color at an unfair disadvantage, white privilege puts white people at an unfair advantage over people of color. Many doors open to white people through no effort of our own. Even though you may have worked hard to get where you are today, white privilege means that a person of color born to similar circumstances would need to overcome more obstacles to achieve the same goals.

What can you do about it?
You can start by evaluating your own privilege and how you have benefited from it. Think about how those in power (white people) have maintained privileges for white people at the expense of others—both historically and in present day. Talk to your white friends and colleagues about it. Start working toward a more just world in which we all share the same basic human rights.
Yes let’s do that: Which photo does the media use if the police shot me down?
#IfTheyGunnedMeDown
King Ghidrah @__TrillClinton · 2h

#IfTheyGunnedMeDown what picture would they use

pic.twitter.com/1J3k3tT63n
IfTheyGunnedMeDown they'd say i was a thug pic.twitter.com/JsLxga0uwv
About

Research
- Cutting edge, original research on pressing racial justice issues.
- Intersectional approach to how race compounds and intersects with other societal issues, which can be described as "race and..."
- Strong social change practice.

Media
- Colorlines, a daily news site where race matters with award winning investigative reporting and news analysis.
- Use of storytelling and multimedia to amplify key issues we cover.
- Pushing key race stories into the mainstream media.

Practice
- Facing Race, the largest conference for racial justice movement-making, focused on alliance-building, issue framing, and advancing solutions.
- Speakers, training, consulting services.
- Action-oriented campaigns, such as Drop the I-Word, which seeks to eliminate the derogatory term "illegal."
Racial Equity Tools is designed to support individuals and groups working to achieve racial equity. This site offers tools, research, tips, curricula and ideas for people who want to increase their own understanding and to help those working toward justice at every level—in systems, organizations, communities and the culture at large.
Key elements of a trauma-informed response

- Safety
- Trustworthiness
- Choice
- Collaboration
- Empowerment
We need you defecting from White supremacy and changing the narrative of White supremacy by breaking White silence.

Alicia Garza, co-founder
Black Lives Matter
Key elements for racial justice work

• Practice compassion and accountability for ourselves and others

• Call people IN

• Focus on relationships
Vulnerability
is the birthplace
of innovation,
creativity, & change.

BRENE BROWN
When you know better, you do better.

Maya Angelou, poet, author, civil rights activist, survivor
Thank you!

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