



Syah B. Consulting

Authenticity | Joy | Collaboration | Leadership

Transforming Workplace Culture

Identity, Empathy, and
Oppression Foundations

Intro to
Anti-Racism

Mirroring Steps: & ACTIVITY

- 1) Actively listen
- 2) ... What I heard you say was
- 3) Is that correct?
- 4) Is there anything else?

MIRRORING

EXERCISE



Empathy

- *The ability to understand and share the feelings of another.*
- Requires the suspension of personal beliefs and values to understand it from a potentially different perspective
- Focuses on understanding and validating the other person's emotions
- Fuels connection and deeper understanding of unmet needs

Sympathy

- *Feelings of pity and sorrow for someone else's misfortune.*
- Relies on psychological projection & cultural norms
- Centers our own emotions
- Fuels feelings of guilt, potentially fulfilling the trauma cycle (Hero/Villain/Victim)



What has your experience with empathy been?

What do you
consider to be
disrespectful?



Construct *(noun)*

An idea or theory containing various conceptual elements, typically one considered to be subjective and not based on empirical evidence.

- They have no objective truth
 - We redefine constructs over time
- Normalized definitions of constructs are decided by people with power
- *What other constructs can you think of?*



Culture

The customs, arts, social institutions, and achievements of a particular nation, people, or other social group.

Includes 5 elements:

1. Symbols
2. Language
3. Norms
4. Values
5. Artifacts



Origins of Race

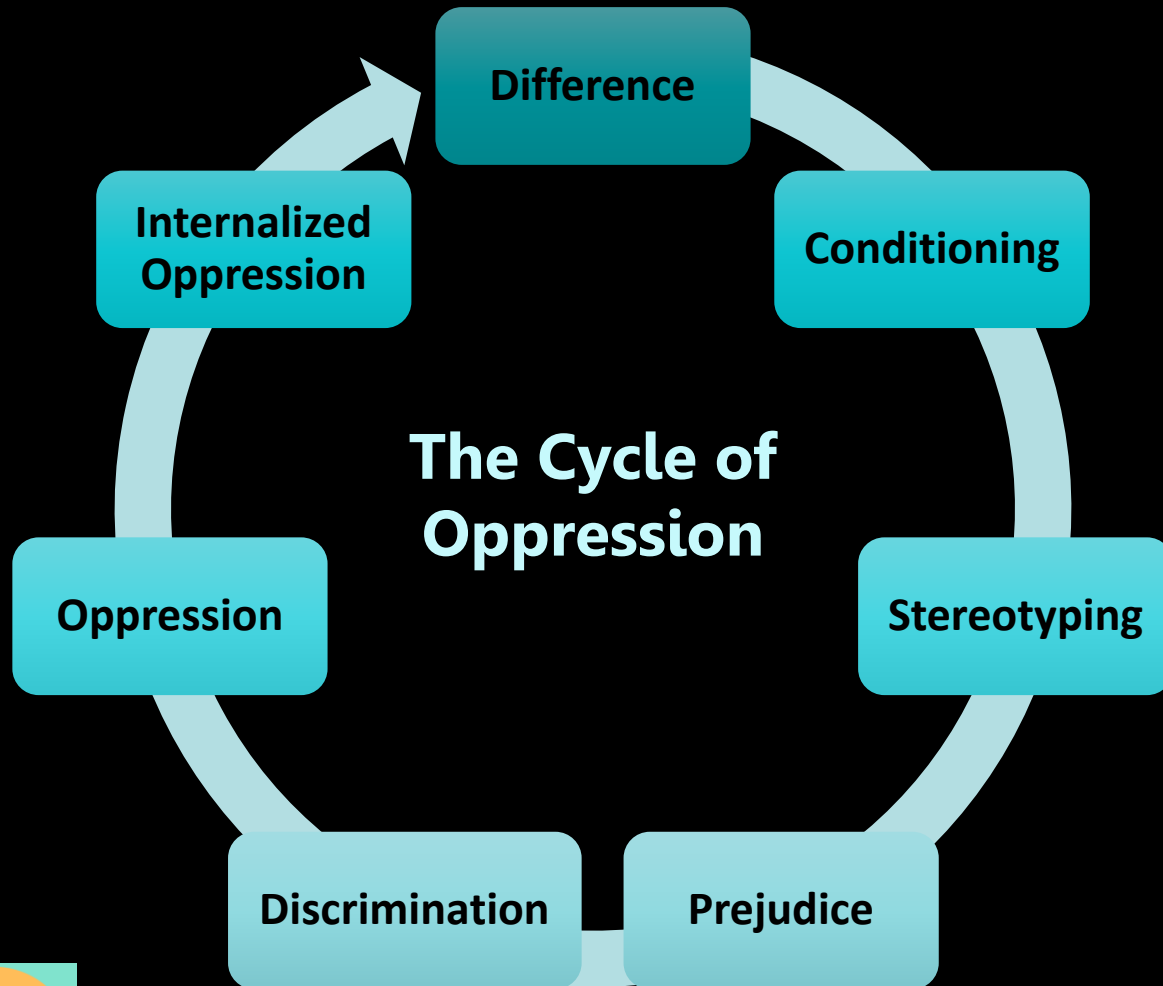
Where does race
come from?

Carl Linnaeus Systema Naturae (1735)

- The **'red'** Indigenous Americans were choleric– irascible and free, and described as having straight black hair, harsh appearance, and ruled by custom.
- **'Yellow'** Asians were melancholic- melancholy, strict, and greedy, having black hair and dark eyes, and ruled by opinion.
- **'Black'** Africans were phlegmatic– lazy and careless, and described as having black kinky hair, silky skin, with special attention to descriptions of the women's breasts and genitals.
- **'White'** Europeans were sanguine- vigorous, smart and creative, with long blond hair and blue eyes, and governed by law.



History of Black Trauma in America (400+ Years) & The Cycle of Oppression



- **Slavery (1619 – 1865, 246 years)**
 - Extreme physical, emotional, and sexual abuse
 - Forced familial separation
 - Beginnings of policing
- **Reconstruction (1865 – 1876, 11 years)**
 - Voter Suppression
 - Beginnings of terroristic attacks
- **Jim Crow (1885 – 1964, 79 years)**
 - Normalization of gross inequality
 - Public displays of murder
 - Misdistribution of resources
- **Mass Incarceration (Present)**
 - Disenfranchisement
 - Prison industrial complex
 - Racial Profiling & Brutality



Power

the capacity or ability to direct or influence the behavior of others or the course of events

- People who hold power set the standards for a certain construct.
 - Ex. Professionalism.
- People with power are less likely to have accountability factors, while having the authority to keep other people accountable to their standards.
- People with power don't have to be transparent.
- People with power get to decide who gets rewarded and who gets punished.
- Historical standards of good and bad, they create systemic benefits for those who are historically rewarded and systemic disadvantages for those who were historically punished.



Common Examples of White Supremacist Cultural Traits

(This list, created by Debby Irving, was inspired by the work of Tema Okun, Peggy McIntosh, Milton & Janet Bennett, Margo Adair and Sharon Howell)



THE LONGER YOU SWIM
IN A CULTURE, THE MORE
INVISIBLE IT BECOMES

1. Perfectionism
2. Sense of Urgency
3. Right to comfort
4. Either/or thinking
5. Fear of open conflict

How do these concepts show up in your life?

Do you believe they help or hinder you?



Allyship

Performative Allyship

- ✓ Centers the self rather than the needs of a community
- ✓ Expects to be rewarded
- ✓ Takes up the space and voice from impacted communities
- ✓ Tokenizes community members to "prove" allyship
- ✓ Lack of self-awareness and ongoing learning

Radical Allyship

- ✓ Centers the need of a community
- ✓ Speaks up because its the right thing to do
- ✓ Willingness to sacrifice privilege or power to uplift others
- ✓ Builds genuine connection with a community
- ✓ Continuous learning and self-correction



**We appreciate all
feedback!**

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