

# Facilitating Racial Equity in Schools: Social Workers as Leaders

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## ABSTRACT

This presentation is designed to introduce the concept of racial equity in relation to social work practice in school settings. Through the use of state school systems data, research literature, and a professional code of ethics, a five-module training was developed. These modules taught school social workers how to confront inequities at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels of the school system. Data from training participants' feedback evaluations will also be highlighted.

## FACILITATING RACIAL EQUITY

This presentation is based on a training program titled, Facilitating Racial Equity in Schools: Social Workers as Leaders, designed to provide workshops to school social work professionals pertaining to the topics of racial equity and leadership. The training program consists of five learning modules, follow-up activities for practice, and debriefing of practice activities with trainers. Each module consists of three hours of content.

## TRAINING PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- ❖ To understand the need and obligations for school social workers to facilitate racial equity in schools,
- ❖ To analyze educational data through a lens of “racial equity,”
- ❖ To conceptualize school social workers as “leaders” in addressing racial inequities in schools, and
- ❖ To collaborate with school professionals of various disciplines to practice and implement evidence-based approaches to facilitating racial equity in schools.

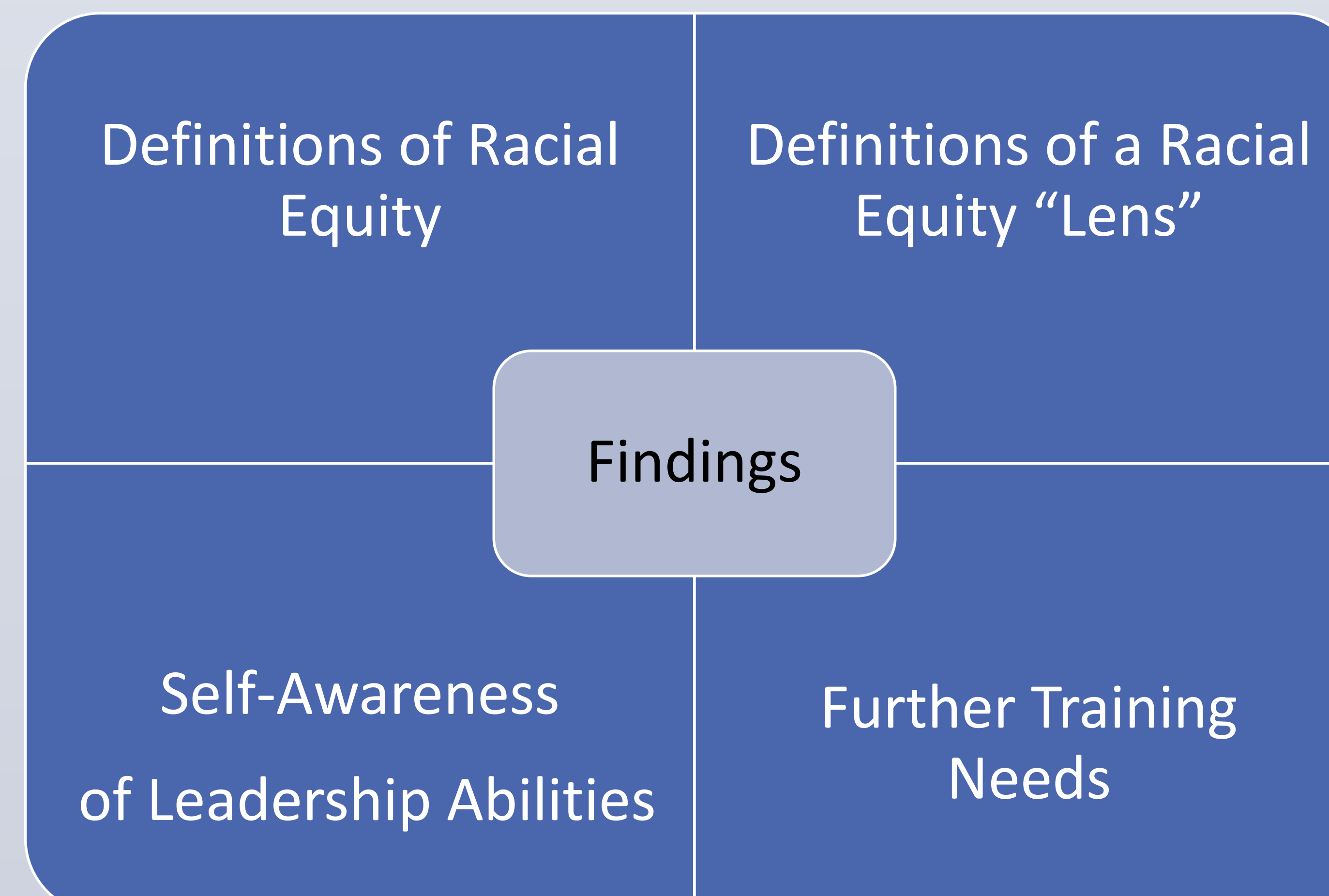
## DESIGN & PROCEDURES

Each learning module was presented to 8-9 social workers who held either BSW or MSW degrees and were employed as licensed school social workers or licensed school-based mental health practitioners in a rural school district serving approximately 6000 Pre-K-12<sup>th</sup> grade students. During each module participants engaged in a collaborative learning community that included diverse content, activities that promoted active learning related to their own school populations, short homework assignments to allow for implementation of skills, and a reflection component. Participants completed a pre-test prior to beginning Module 1, and a post-test upon completion of Module 5.

## LEARNING MODULES

Module	Title
1	Facilitating Racial Equity in Schools: Practice and Ethical Obligations
2	Facilitating Racial Equity in Schools: Assessment and Analysis
3	Facilitating Racial Equity in Schools: Broaching at the Micro Level
4	Facilitating Racial Equity in Schools: Broaching at the Mezzo and Macro Levels
5	Facilitating Racial Equity in Schools: Leading Change

## FINDINGS



## DISCUSSION

The training evaluations consisted of pre and post test items. Multiple respondents' answers transitioned from a general definition of equality to more specific post test responses that highlighted various components of racial equity including: (a) acknowledgement, (b) self-awareness, (c) the role of bias, (d) the element of prediction, and (e) knowledge of statistics.

Post test responses showed evidence of increased knowledge about racial equity. For example, pre test responses primarily communicated about viewpoint and seeing while post test responses showed an enhanced understanding of influential factors that affect perceptions and impact work performance. Further, post test results showed increased self-awareness of strengths in relation to leadership and promoting racial equity. Respondents identified further needs in order to promote racial equity in schools as additional training on data collection and presentation techniques.

## CONCLUSION

With professional expertise in education rights and advocacy, knowledge of data-based decision making, awareness of ethical guidelines and educational policy, and roles as the home-school-community linkages, school social workers are in prime positions to serve as leaders in addressing issues of racial inequity in public schools. Training specific to racial equity can raise self-awareness of social workers' confidence in assessing for racial inequity and facilitating change in school culture and climate through the use of micro, mezzo, and macro interventions.