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Uncomfortable but Necessary: White Faculty Identity Development and Race Conversations

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Masters in Higher Education Leadership

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Abstract

In recent years, diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives have been highlighted in college mission statements, but there is a gap between college-wide initiatives and classroom practices. Research shows that White Americans, in particular, remain silent, express colorblindness, and incorporate avoidance strategies when discussing race (Bryan et al., 2012). As classrooms become increasingly diverse, White faculty must be equipped to serve all students equitably. To address White faculty discomfort with discussing race in their courses, I provided educational resources and used restorative justice circle practice to create a safe, low stakes environment for faculty to explore this topic. Through circle practices, faculty were able to reflect on their White identity, engage in role-playing, share ideas, and learn alongside one another. White faculty reported being more comfortable engaging in race conversations with students. They also moved beyond conversations to implementation by incorporating diverse authors and identity statements into their syllabi and created plans to adjust class practices to be more inviting and equitable.

Keywords: White faculty, White identity development, diversity, equity, equitable pedagogy, restorative justice, circle practice, race conversations, equity-mindedness

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The pursuit of my research and master's degree is dedicated to my grandparents, Julian Aguirre, Lucille Aguirre, Conrado Muñoz, and Silveria Muñoz. The culmination of my efforts are a result of their love and sacrifice, which created opportunities for me to pursue higher education. I will continue to love and uplift future generations to pursue their dreams.

Nobody has been more supportive than my family and friends. Thank you for allowing me to speak from the heart, challenging my ideas, and creating new questions for me to mull over. Thank you to my husband, whose patience, love, and laughter helped see me through long days. My mom is and will always be my number one supporter. Te amo mas de lo que puedes imaginar.

To my sisters, future children, Hispanic, and underrepresented students, come as you are. You are worthy and belong here. And to all that are ready and willing to challenge the status quo and create an equitable world for all, it will be a difficult fight but one that is worthy of our time and efforts.

Uncomfortable but Necessary: White Faculty Identity Development and Race Conversations

Set against the backdrop of a global pandemic, Summer 2020 was strife with Black Lives Matter protests in response to the murder of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade and countless other Black citizens. Fueled by country's leaders, racist, antiimmigrant sentiments and Asian and Jewish hate were on full display for the world to see. Systemic inequities combined with physical and social isolation during the pandemic was overwhelming. I started the Higher Education Leadership program in Fall 2020. I was disappointed to start my master's program from home but I was pleasantly surprised that my classes provided language, context, and support to discuss the world's chaos. I was struck by the welcoming tone and inclusive discussions in course content. It was clear that topics like race, White privilege, and intersectionality were welcomed into class conversations.

Statements of inclusion and cultural capital such as, "This course will not operate on the banking system of education and instruction," and "We believe that we come to learn through social, cultural, and other forms of interaction" (Sánchez & Bae, 2020, p. 2) struck me as radical. Professors emphasized collective goals and growth, but not at the detriment of quality work. Reminders that my cohort and I are investing in our education not merely for ourselves but for future generations allowed us to insert deep value and meaning into our learning. Faculty acknowledged the "sociopolitical tumult and health crises" (Brown, 2021, p. 1) we were experiencing. Although the nature of my program warrants conversations on racism and privilege, I believe these topics can be embedded in all curriculum.

Faculty encouraged students to apply higher education and leadership theories to real world events. The holistic approach that decentered whiteness and hierarchal learning aided in creating connection to course material and acknowledged unrepresented students' realities. Throughout my undergraduate career, courses separated race topics and addressed different perspectives during cultural weeks. Race was not a lens embedded into the fabric of my courses, instead it was "othered" and discussed with little context.

Discomfort in the Department of Psychological Sciences

I am the executive assistant to the Department of Psychological Sciences at the University of San Diego (USD). In Spring 2020, the department formed a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee in response to current events and a letter to the university from Black Faculty at USD. The DEI committee held an antiracist teaching meeting with faculty in the department and it was during this meeting that I became aware of the underlying discomfort and avoidance when discussing race. Studies show that avoiding conversations on race and engaging in colorblind teaching practices can make Black, Indigenous, and persons of color (BIPOC) feel invisible and marginalized and avoidance further exacerbates inequitable class practices (Diggles, 2014; Haviland, 2008; Hurtado et al., 1999). Race cannot be ignored in class, especially psychological science courses that lend themselves to analyzing human behavior, biases, and the functioning of our brains and society. White faculty need time and support to understand how their identity plays a role in their understanding of race and where their discomfort stems from but few are given opportunities to do so.

Before White faculty dive into race conversations in class, it is important they explore their identity and review their curriculum and class practices through an equity lens (Sue, 2015; Heinz, 2008). My Action Research project will facilitate identity and equity work with faculty to increase comfort in race conversations and identify ways they can make curriculum and class practices more equitable and diverse. My research questions ask: Will participating in identity development and equity conversations make White faculty more comfortable discussing race in the classroom? And, will participating in this work compel White faculty to diversify their curriculum or class practices?

Literature Review

Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.

– James Baldwin (1962)

Social justice, equity, diversity, inclusion, and antiracist are major buzzwords in higher education at the moment. Many institutions have created diversity and inclusion centers, statements, and goals but because of academic freedom, explicit actions in the classroom are left to faculty's discretion. Most faculty value diversity but make little effort to diversify to curriculum or class practices (Maruyama & Moreno, 2000). I believe faculty need time and space to practice race conversations to feel more comfortable addressing race talk in the classroom.

What is Race Talk and Why is it Important?

Counseling professor and prominent voice in cross cultural studies, Derald Wing Sue, has studied the psychology of racism, cultural diversity and multicultural counseling since the early 70s. Sue (2015) compiled a list of several attributes of race talk or race conversations, which I will use interchangeably throughout my paper, that help explain why they are typically avoided:

- Race talk has the potential for conflict because individuals' racial realities are different.
- Race talk evokes strong emotions such as defensiveness, anger, guilt, and hurt.
- People develop avoidance strategies to brush off or evade race talk.

But, race conversations are important because they can create opportunities to learn from different perspectives, increase cultural competency, create appreciation for people of all backgrounds, and open opportunities for counter-storytelling (Delgado, 1989; Kupenda, 2007; Sue, 2015).

Critical Race Theory and Equity-mindedness

The theoretical framework guiding my research is critical race theory (CRT; Delgado & Stefancic, 1993). Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) applied CRT to education by enlisting three propositions:

1. Race continues to be a significant factor in determining inequity in the United States. If we apply this proposition to higher education we see that Black and Hispanic students graduate at much lower rates than White or Asian students (Shapiro et al., 2017). Inequities also extend to

student loans, Black and African American college graduates owe an average of \$25,000 more in student loan debt than White college graduates (Hanson, 2022).

2. U.S. society is based on property rights rather than human rights. The 1862 and 1890 Morrill Land Act signed by President Abraham Lincoln stole 10.7 million acres of Indigenous lands and distributed them to states to create funding for universities (Lee & Ahtone, 2020). Universities are now attempting to acknowledge the history by adding Land Acknowledgements to syllabi but more equitable and financial steps are necessary.

3. The intersection of race and property creates an analytical tool for understanding inequity. Utilizing the CRT lens, we can recognize that the goal of racial equity in higher education requires acknowledging and changing the systemic policies that make opportunities and success inequitable for specific populations of students.

Rooted in CRT is the importance of counter-storytelling and voice which contrasts from the academic protocol of objectivity and empiricism. CRT's argument is that the personal stories and lived realities shape the way individuals see the world and vice versa, this is especially true for historically marginalized populations whose stories are often silenced or ignored (Delgado, 1989). Asking students to reflect on their unique perspectives requires complex thought processes and creates opportunities for them to interpret and apply their lived experiences to course material. Sharing cultural wealth and stories benefits all class participants, especially those who have not been exposed to different perspectives (Kupenda, 2007).

The Center for Urban Education (CUE) at the University of Southern California has been at the forefront of research and practice for racial equity work in higher education. Founder and Director of CUE, Estela Mara Bensimon, developed the cognitive frame *equity-mindedness*. Equity-mindedness asserts that unequal educational outcomes are not the result of underrepresented students' race, culture, or ethnicity but rather the higher education system as a whole (CUE, 2020). Equity in higher

education means “creating opportunities for equal access and success among historically underserved student populations” (CUE, 2020, p. 3). Equity-mindedness aligns with the CRT theory and can provide faculty with a framework to construct curriculum and class practices.

I use CRT and Equity-mindedness to examine, question and apply a critical framework to an educational setting. Faculty and students are encouraged to use CRT and Equity-mindedness as a lens to examine how race and U.S. systems affect their individual lives and institutional structures (Guy, 1999). Closson (2010) argued that CRT is not solely a theory but also pedagogy, movement, and a “collection of related premises” (p. 265).

Race in the Classroom

When accounting for inequities in higher education, socioeconomic status, gender, and age are not as significant factors as race (Carnevale & Strohl, 2013). Race in higher education matters. Throughout the paper I will use the terms BIPOC or underrepresented to refer to students that are racially underrepresented in higher education, like, Black/African American, Hispanic, Latinx, Native American, Pacific Islander. Race as defined by the American Psychological Association (APA) and Suyemoto (2019) is:

The social construction and categorization of people based on perceived shared physical traits that result in the maintenance of a sociopolitical hierarchy, while ethnicity is a particular type of culture (e.g., language, food, music, values, and beliefs) related to common ancestry and shared history. (p. 5)

Although uncomfortable, faculty may find it easier to talk about issues of race and privilege with a diverse group of students than with a predominately White class. It is easier to gloss over issues of race when the majority of students are White (Haviland, 2008). Predominately White institutions (PWI) often claim to value diversity but ignore concepts like White privilege and view racism as an aspect of

the past (Jones, 2020). Haviland (2008) coined the term “White educational discourse”, which they described as:

A constellation of ways of speaking, interacting, and thinking in which White teachers gloss over issues of race, racism, and White supremacy in ways that reinforce the status quo, even when they have a stated desire to do the opposite (p. 41).

If White faculty have not taken an in-depth look at their own identities, it can be revealed in curriculum and syllabi to the detriment of students. Consistent with Helms’s White racial identity model (1995), Diggles (2014) stated that only when White faculty have racial awareness and accept that systemic racism exists are they able to move forward and address racial inequities. Colorblindness or race neutrality masks and subsequently upholds White supremacy culture (Jones, 2020). PWI’s often judge BIPOC students on White norms and culture, when BIPOC students do not act according to White norms or assimilate they are judged as inferior through a deficit lens (Gusa, 2010). Faculty also express colorblind mindsets through microaggressions or deficit-based teaching practices (Diggles, 2014). Deficit-based teaching does not mean professors are outwardly racist toward students, but it can show up in small ways by focusing on BIPOC students’ shortcomings instead of strengths (CUE, 2020). Faculty may value diversity but through a deficit-based cognitive frame, they attribute lower educational outcomes to students’ race and do not see it as a personal or systemic failing (Bensimon, 2005). A deficit-based framework leaves little room for faculty to learn and celebrate their students as unique individuals.

White Identity Development

Because most faculty in higher education are White, it is imperative to equip them with the tools to examine their racial identity and question how their identity impacts curriculum, class practices and teaching pedagogy. APA’s 2002 Multicultural [Race and Ethnicity] guidelines list “awareness and deep exploration of one’s cultural values, biases, and assumptions” as a top priority (p. 2). Research

shows that a lack of awareness of one's identity and ethnoculture leads to colorblind mindsets (Neville et al., 2006; Spanierman et al., 2009).

Ethnoculture is used to describe one's culture shared among an ethnic group, including identity and traditions, history, and shared ancestry (APA & Suyemoto, 2019). Like a fish in water, White individuals may not be aware of their culture because it is the dominant and accepted culture. Unlike non-White cultures, White culture is displayed and celebrated in media, politics, education etc. When White people are not attuned to their culture they are more likely to habituate microaggressions (APA & Suyemoto, 2019). One reason why White faculty may experience discomfort discussing race is the lack of racial discussions during childhood. White American families tend to avoid conversations about race and ingrain colorblind mindset in their children (Katz, 2003; Pahlke et al., 2012). White faculty may not have the tools to address race in their class if conversations on race were typically avoided growing up. Responsible teaching in the psychology field requires faculty to teach with cultural sensitivity and awareness, understand one's own beliefs and implicit biases toward underrepresented students, and accept honest assessment of teaching effectiveness (APA & Suyemoto, 2019).

Class Practices and Syllabi

For far too long, undergraduate courses have been taught by the authority on the pulpit which has been historically and presently, White males (Zidani, 2020). Most racially underrepresented students understand White culture because it is the dominant culture perpetuated through every aspect of life, especially higher education; still, most White students do not understand other cultures (Drakeford, 2015). Faculty members of color disproportionately implement diversity work's "invisible labor" which includes, diversifying curriculum, mentoring underrepresented students, and service work (Social Sciences Feminist Network Research Interest Group, 2017). As higher education's demographics change, institutions must ask themselves if they are equipped to serve all students equitably.

Lott and Rogers (2011) interviewed more than 1,800 undergraduate psychology majors and found that only 35.3% of students of color perceived their racial/ethnic group was represented fairly and accurately in psychology compared to 81.2% of White students. They also found that students of color saw “psychology as representing their ethnic groups stereotypically or not at all; felt a lack of respect from their professors; viewed challenges they experienced as related to their ethnicity; and were less satisfied with their psychology studies than White students” (Lott & Rogers, 2011, p. 208). If psychological science books do not embed accurate examples of diversity in texts then it becomes the professor’s responsibility to search for examples elsewhere. The empirical study of Smolen et al. (2006) at four different urban universities suggested that simply teaching diverse students does not lead to a commitment to teach or promote diversity. Congruent with other research (Diggles, 2014), ethnic and racial self-identification by faculty is a factor in their perceptions on how much diversity was incorporated into their course work. Smolen et al. (2006) also found strong support for diversity training and less commitment to implementing training.

A step toward an equitable class can start with the syllabus. CUE created a Syllabus Review Guide that helps instructors review their syllabi through a race conscious lens to better support underrepresented, BIPOC students (2017). The tool helps identify often overlooked practices that are detrimental to underrepresented students. When students, especially underrepresented students at PWIs, perceive the class environment as intimidating or discriminatory, it negatively impacts their academic performance (King & Ford, 2003). Creating a syllabus with an emphasis on diverse perspectives can create a welcoming and inclusive environment for all students (Taylor et al., 2019). Equitable teaching calls for more than a week or section of the course dedicated to diverse scholars; it should be interwoven in the fabric of the course. Differentiating Black, Indigenous, and Persons of Color (BIPOC) scholars only perpetuates the notion that White culture is the norm.

Unprepared and Uncomfortable

It is imperative for White faculty to examine their identities, curriculum, and class practices to foster an equitable class environment. Part of an equitable environment is talking about systemic racism. Conversations on race, sex, class, and gender will inevitably bring up discomfort and disagreements, but conflict is not necessarily bad. It is good practice for students to engage in conversations with people who disagree with them. Simpson et al. (2007) reported that students understood that discomfort was inevitable and could lead to deeper conversations, but the class and professor's response was important. If the professor did not correct a problematic statement, then tensions rose. In a PWI faculty are bound to encounter hesitancy and possibly blatant objections from students to discuss race and privilege which is why White faculty must be educated on *why* race is salient to their courses and practice responding to students' resistance (Cokley, 2009).

Williams (2004) talks about two myths that still perpetuate resistance to talking about race. One is the myth, often perpetuated in the United States, that racism is an individual moral issue. Students do not have a problem acknowledging someone as racist if it is blatant, but it is difficult for White students to view racism as systemic. Another myth is that White is not recognized as a race when discussing race because it is the dominant culture (Williams, 2004).

One of the risks of open conversations is that racially underrepresented students can be seen as tokens for their race (Hurtado et al., 1999). When race is discussed more openly students of color are often looked to as educators and although it is important for students of color to be able to discuss their lived experiences, there is a fine line between sharing their personal experiences and being tokenized. Race talk is often sparked in response to microaggressions (Sue et al., 2010). Microaggressions are indirect, subtle, or unintentional discrimination against members of a marginalized group. Professors have an ethical responsibility to address microaggressions or interject in conversations if they become harmful to students but faculty receive little to no training on how to deal with racial conflict.

Summary

As the world continues to uphold White supremacy and systemic inequities it is imperative for faculty to give students opportunities to make sense of their experiences to challenge the status quo. Validating students' identities and addressing systemic racism and microaggressions are imperative to display White faculty's commitment to equity-mindedness. Subjective storytelling opportunities for BIPOC students should not be seen as irrelevant but should be used in tandem with curriculum that celebrates diverse researchers, authors, and ways of thinking. PWIs cannot rely on underrepresented students to teach them, they must embed diversity into the culture and fabric of courses and class practices. Avoidance due to discomfort is not a valid excuse for White faculty to ignore race conversations but before doing so, it is crucial they reflect on their identity, discuss race and White privilege, and be able to address student resistance and potential conflicts. If White faculty do not do the vulnerable and uncomfortable preparation required of race talk, their efforts may result in microaggressions or deficit-based thinking in the class. Taking responsibility to ensure courses represent diverse perspectives and offer equitable outcomes for all students is a necessary step to ensuring an inclusive classroom that values all students.

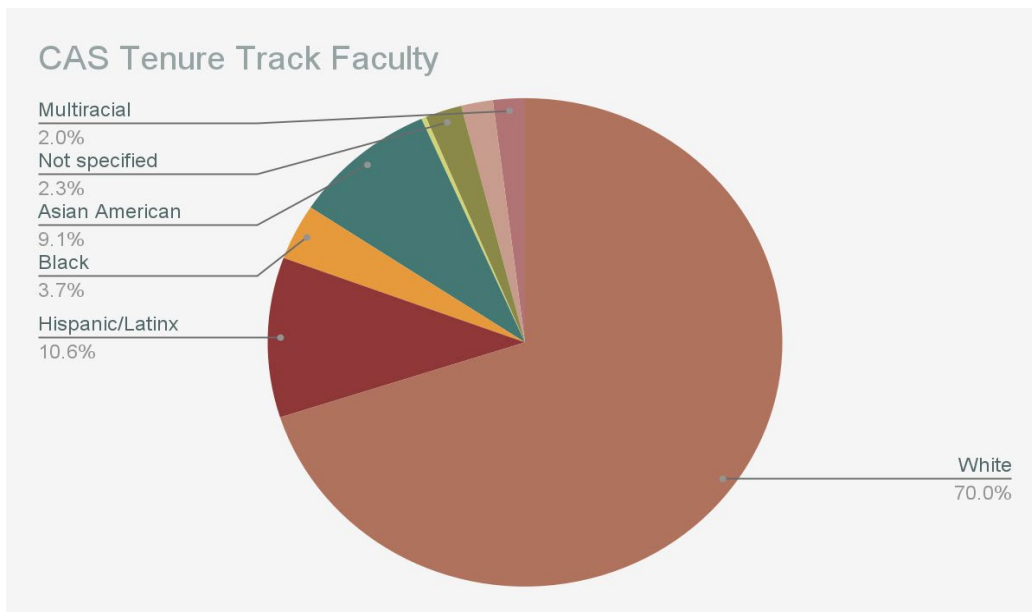
Context

The University of San Diego is a private Roman Catholic university grounded in the liberal arts tradition. It resides in San Diego, California on traditional and unceded territory of the Kumeyaay Nation. USD has 89 undergraduate and graduate programs, and enrolls approximately 9,000 undergraduate, paralegal, graduate and law students. USD's mission is "committed to advancing academic excellence, expanding liberal and professional knowledge, creating a diverse and inclusive community and preparing leaders who are dedicated to ethical conduct and compassionate service" (USD, 2004). The Psychological Sciences Department is housed in the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS). CAS has 165 tenured faculty members. As of Fall 2020, 70% of the faculty members are White, 10% Hispanic/Latinx,

3.7% Black, and 9.1% Asian American, 3% American Indian or Alaska Native, 2% Multiracial, and there are not any Hawaiian or Pacific Islander faculty (Institutional Research and Planning, 2020; see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Tenure Track Faculty Ethnic Demographics – College of Arts and Sciences



In the psychology major, 37% of students are racially underrepresented and 60% are White (Institutional Research and Planning, 2020). In the behavioral neuroscience major, 54% are racially underrepresented students, 43% White.

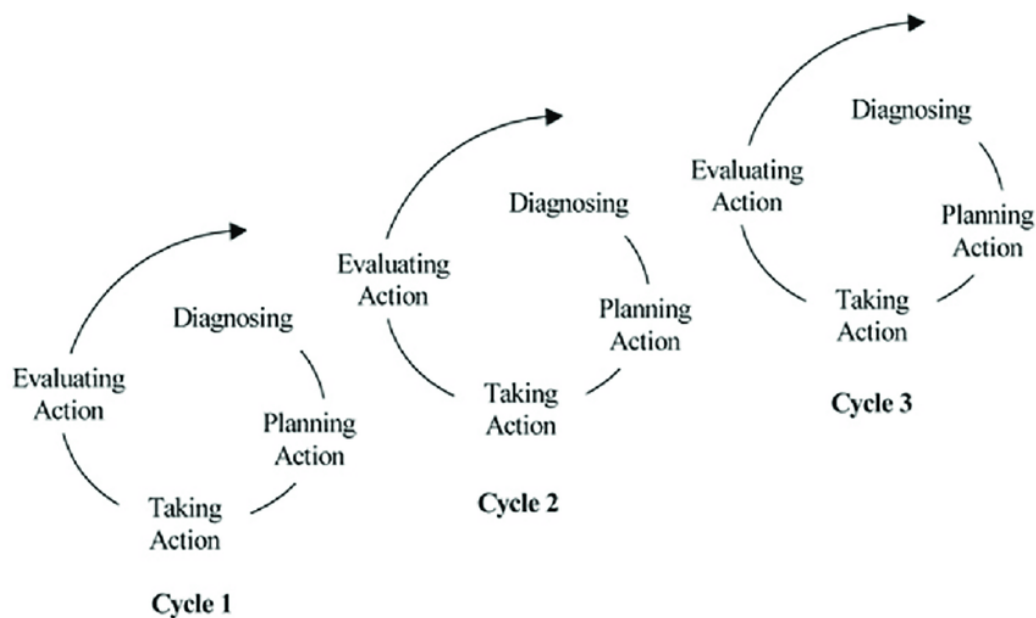
Research Design

Action research is a specific type of research that involves “commitment to reflection, knowledge generation, participative and collaborative working and practice transformation” (McNiff, 2016, p. 20) The goal of action research is unique in that its main concern is not the final product but rather the personal and collective process of learning and improving (McNiff, 2016).

I draw from the spiral action research framework that repeats four different steps: diagnose, plan, action, and evaluate (Coughlan & Brannick, 2001). The spiral framework emphasizes a cyclical cycle of continuous evaluation and improvement (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

Spiral of Action Research Cycles (Coughlin & Brannick, 2001)



Restorative Justice Circles

I used restorative justice (RJ) circles to facilitate conversations with faculty. The circle process is rooted in indigenous practices from First Nations, Plains Indians, the Maori in New Zealand, and a variety of African communities. The circle process is designed to create a safe space for all voices to be heard (Boyes-Watson & Pranis, 2020). I chose the circle process because circles serve as a container to hold conversations in a safe, low stake environment that can better equip faculty to discuss race with students. Universities are increasingly implementing restorative practices for activities such as community-building and repairing harm when conflicts arise (O'Connell et al., 1999). The circle process encourages vulnerability and speaking from the heart. I wanted to challenge faculty to move beyond Western centered approaches of solely valuing empirical evidence by speaking about their experiences and modeling a process they could use in their classes. If done correctly, circles create an environment that supports participants to authentically engage in difficult and uncomfortable topics.

Circles begin with describing the purpose for convening. It's also important to acknowledge the land and the indigenous peoples who created and shaped the practice. Facilitators describe the process and guidelines of the circles and construct group agreements. Group agreements vary from circle to circle but they often emphasize the importance of speaking from the heart and respecting individuals by intently listening. I added a group agreement to "expect and accept discomfort" because I wanted to prepare participants for discomfort and acknowledge that discomfort isn't necessarily bad. Typically, participants are arranged in a circle and a talking piece is passed around but due to COVID and the desire to have a White cofacilitator I chose to facilitate circles through Zoom. Zoom allowed me to imitate the circle process because everyone was still visibly facing one another and the same rules of only speaking when it is your turn were adhered to.

Cofacilitator

Action research and restorative justice also require reflection and inviting the critique of others to keep researchers/facilitators accountable (Boyes-Watson & Pranis, 2020; McNiff, 2016). I conducted my research with a cofacilitator Leslie Henderson, PhD. Dr. Henderson identifies as White, is a professor of Physiology and Neurobiology, and is former Dean of Faculty Affairs at The Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth. As an Executive Assistant, I often work *for* faculty and not alongside them, to balance the hierarchy and power dynamic I knew a cofacilitator with similar identities (White faculty member) as my participants was necessary for buy-in. I also I relied on Dr. Henderson to serve as my White eyes and assess material from participants' perspectives. She reviewed material and offered suggestions and critiques to my scripts, reading material, questionnaire, and facilitation.

Methodology and Cycle Composition

The Administrators and Staff for Racial Justice (ASRJ) pilot I participated in during Spring 2021 at USD influenced the design of my circles (University of San Diego, 2021). I implemented a similar design

of meeting in race alike groups and assigning reading materials before each circle. It was through ASRJ that I understood the importance of affinity groups.

I planned four cycles and three circles that built upon each other in depth and topic. Each cycle focused on specific topics ranging from White identity to examination of curriculum. The first two cycles were broken down into two parts to provide a physical break between topics. Before each circle I prompted participants on the topics we would be discussing by providing homework assignments to complete before we met in circle. Readings, podcasts, videos, and reflective questions were included in the assignments (see Appendix B-D). The reason for this was two-fold. First, I wanted participants to prepare themselves and not enter the circle with anxiety on what would be discussed. I felt it was necessary to provide them with educational material for context and use the circle to discuss their thoughts and feelings. Second, I wanted participants to take on a student role, by assigning homework for them to read I flipped the script on the typical role they hold in the classroom. The practice itself was used to show they could implement this with their students as well. I sent participants reflective questions to answer after each cycle to encourage reflection outside of the circle setting.

I used multiple sources to create the scripts I and my cofacilitator followed for each circle (see Appendix B-D). Circle practice encourages spontaneity, scripts were used as a semi-structured template and adapted as conversations developed.

Cycle One – Community Building and White Identity

I started my first cycle by distributing a Likert scale questionnaire that measured participants' beliefs, attitudes, perceptions on race and how it pertains to their courses (see Appendix F Table 6). Restorative Justice emphasizes building trust with community as a foundation to explore deeper issues. The beginning of my first circle was dedicated to building community, modeling vulnerability, and creating a brave space (see Appendix B). Brave space is used in lieu of safe space because it emphasizes possibilities of discomfort, vulnerability, and challenging beliefs (Boostrom, 1998).

- Pre-circle 14 question Likert scale questionnaire
- Part one - Community Building and Personal History
- Part two- White Identity and Privilege
 - Google survey anonymous reflection questions (see Appendix E)

Cycle Two - Implicit Bias and Roleplay Race Conversations

The second cycle dove a bit further by addressing implicit biases faculty may have toward underrepresented students in their classes (see Appendix C). It was important to discuss personal examples and also frame it in the context of equity mindedness which emphasizes systemic racism in higher education. It was crucial to provide faculty with the opportunity to respond to student microaggressions in class and this cycle served as a roleplaying exercise.

- Part one - Implicit Bias and Equity-Mindedness
- Part two - Race Conversations Roleplay
 - Google survey anonymous reflection questions (see Appendix E)

Cycle Three: Curriculum and Institutional Transformation

The third cycle was designed to discuss changes faculty had made or were going to make to their syllabus, curriculum, or class practices (see Appendix D). My hope was this cycle would serve as an idea generator for those who were still contemplating editing their syllabus, curriculum or class practices. This cycle also emphasized the importance of becoming involved with institutional and systemic issues in higher education.

- Curriculum and Institutional Transformation
- Google survey anonymous reflection questions (see Appendix E)

Cycle Four: Post-circle Survey

- Post-circle Likert scale questionnaire
- Post-circle open ended questions

The final cycle was a survey with the same 14 questions I asked in the first cycle (see Appendix Table 7). I wanted to measure changes in attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions about White identity and pedagogy. I also added open ended questions to the survey to gather a bigger picture of participants thoughts after the completion of our circles.

Data Collection

I created a Likert scale questionnaire that I distributed to faculty before the first cycle and after the last cycle to measure changes in comfort, beliefs and attitudes. I also gathered participants' anonymous responses to google survey questions after each circle. I used transcripts from circle conversations to identify themes. I analyzed transcripts with a word counter to see if the repetition of specific words correlated to themes and ideas participants emphasized. I also used the work of several researchers to identify what type of discomfort faculty felt in engaging in race conversations in the classroom (Neville et al., 2006; Spanierman et al., 2006). I use data from circles to articulate participants' feelings of their White identity, discomfort and fear of discussing race, frustrations with institutional and systemic issues and growth from the first to last cycle.

Cycle One - Community Building and White Identity

Restorative Justice emphasizes creating connections and community (Karp, 2019). To dive into deep emotional topics, it is necessary to develop trust among participants. For the first circle, it was crucial to create a space that participants felt they could share honestly and not be judged or admonished for their ideas and experiences. The script was created with the framework of the five C's of circles. The five C's are convene, connect, concern, collaborate, and close (Karp, 2019). Each circle script followed the five C's. The first circle was focused on building community and White identity. I wanted to start from the beginning and get a glimpse into their lives and history outside of the academic setting. The second part of the circle was focused on diving deeper into their salient identities and trying to get them to focus on their White identity and privilege. I assigned readings and podcasts related to White

Racial Identity Development (Helms, 1995) White privilege, and a podcast that discusses Whiteness in the United States. I added questions for them to reflect on while going through the material (see Appendix B-D).

First Cycle Participants and Analysis

My first cycle was held December 15, 2021 and was 2 hours and 16 minutes long. I started the cycle with a 16 question Likert scale questionnaire (see Appendix Table 6). An example of questions asked is, "How comfortable are you discussing race in your courses?" and options ranged from extremely uncomfortable to extremely comfortable, with four options available. Participants had time before the circle started to complete the questionnaire. Of the nine participants, eight attended the first circle and completed the pre-circle questionnaire. I used a word counter to analyze the transcript to see what words were used the most. After quantitatively analyzing the words, I qualitatively discovered themes that emerged from the circle.

First Cycle Context

I started the circle by providing a purpose, land acknowledgement, guidelines of the circle process, and group agreements. The first circle modeled how the following circles would be conducted. An important part of circle practice is modeling. For every question that was asked in the circle, I or Leslie would model an answer. As an ice breaker, I asked participants to bring a show-and-tell item that "tells a story of who you are/the values you hold." I wanted to start from the beginning by addressing participants' personal and family history. We then addressed what the hardest part of talking about race was. After a 5-minute break, the second half of the circle focused on their identities and White privilege.

First Cycle Themes

White Identity and Privilege

The word *White* was mentioned 84 times, *privilege* 38 times, and *White Privilege* 16 times in our conversation. In the questionnaire, in response to the statement "I am comfortable with my White

identity,” six out of eight participants reported they “somewhat agree,” two reported “somewhat disagree.” All eight participants “strongly agreed” that being White comes with privileges (see Appendix F Table 6). When discussing their background, family history, White identity and White privilege, faculty were simultaneously aware and acknowledged their privileges and held onto deeply ingrained beliefs of “rugged individualism” (Helms, 1995). However, they were able to differentiate White privilege from socioeconomic privilege. I believe participants focused on socioeconomic differences and hierarchies within White privilege because an assigned reading by Paul Gorski emphasized these concepts (2011). It is important to acknowledge that faculty backgrounds are not homogeneous, some grew up in diverse areas, others in majority White neighborhoods, there was a range in socioeconomic status, and generational differences.

I didn't grow up feeling like I was very wealthy, but I knew that I was very privileged. It really wasn't until Black Lives Matter ... so 2 or 3 years ago that I really started to think about what it what it meant to be White. I feel like I'm in the middle of this journey.

This particular faculty member differentiated between White privilege and economic privileges. They discussed a phenomenon that swept across the United States after the murder of George Floyd and subsequent national protests; White people started to question and examine their privilege. Antiracist books that centered the Black experience like Robin DiAngelo's *White Fragility* and Ibram X. Kendi's *How to be an Antiracist* topped the New York Times Best Seller's list.

I feel like that emphasis on just persevering ... [and overcoming] whatever obstacles are in front of you, you just keep going, you go around it, you go over it ... I think that really set the tone for our family.

This statement highlights the ingrained Western centered belief that the American Dream simply requires hard work and perseverance. The American Dream and pull yourself up by your bootstrap's

mentality does not take systemic racism into account. The mantra that if you work hard you can overcome obstacles was passed down from previous generations continues to be part of this family's ideology. I saw a theme of participants' families valuing education and being racially privileged but less socioeconomically privileged.

Difficulty Discussing Race

In *Race Talk and The Conspiracy of Silence: Understanding and Facilitating Difficult Dialogues on Race*, Wing stated that race talk violates the academic protocol (2015). Western tradition of analyzing measurable data, objectivity, and unemotional classroom conduct is frequently suspended when engaging in conversations on race. Because race talk evokes strong emotions and encourages anecdotes, it does not follow the objective, sterile academic protocol faculty are accustomed to. Where typical classrooms and academic settings discuss objective data, race conversations embed storytelling and lived experiences. I asked faculty "What do you find is the hardest thing about talking about race?" Answers varied between faculty but the most salient themes that emerged was fear or discomfort with conflict, fear of causing harm to BIPOC students, and difficulties intellectualizing or discussing race in a nonacademic or sterile way.

High Emotions

Similar to previous research, faculty reported fear that race conversations would result in conflict and high emotions that they did not feel prepared to mitigate (Pasque et al., 2013; Sue et al., 2009). They were not only uncomfortable with student's emotions but fearful of what emotions *they* may elicit when addressing racist or emotional comments from students. They understood that it would not be beneficial to argue emotions with data. Sue noted that "the prevailing implicit assumption in

academic circles is that emotions are antagonistic to reason, that learning occurs when topics are discussed calmly” (2015, p. 69).

So much ... of my upbringing has guided me to shut out ... emotional challenge and move on. Doing some of this work, or even having conversations with people as soon as it becomes emotional on either side, I have the tendency to sort of want to shut it out.

This particular experience is a good example of White fragility (DiAngelo, 2011). White Fragility is “a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves” (DiAngelo, 2011, p. 54). Leaving or ending a stressful situation is a type of behavior associated with White fragility. Avoiding conversations about race because of fear of strong emotions is not conducive to constructive discussions and can portray indifference even when faculty are attempting to do the opposite.

Harm to BIPOC Students

Faculty were highly aware of the difficulties of discussing race in multicultural settings. A lot of their reasons for avoiding discussions on race was because they believed avoidance was a better option than opening up opportunities to cause harm to BIPOC students. I believe their intentions are well meaning, they do not want to be perceived as the White faculty member who has all the answers on race but it may also be that they don't want to appear racist themselves or make a mistake that BIPOC students would call out. Faculty did not explicitly state these sentiments but there are four intersecting layers of fears that many White Americans possess when it comes to engaging in race talk; fear of appearing racist, fear of realizing racism, fear of confronting White privilege, and fear of taking personal responsibility to end racism (Bell, 2002; Frankenberg, 1997, Neville et al., 2006; Spanierman et al., 2006; Sue, 2015).

The hardest part for me in terms of talking about race is ... the worry about doing it wrong ... I mean, of course I don't like doing something that I feel I'm [going to] mess up

but I'm really worried about doing something that causes harm. Especially in spaces, where not all students are White.

This statement is interesting because research shows that it is easier for Faculty to gloss over race issues in predominately White classes but this participant has difficulty with addressing race when their class is more diverse (Haviland, 2008). Along with the fear of causing harm, they feared messing up. This fear supports the typical hierarchical class setting where faculty are all knowing and are not able to make mistakes.

Let's say there's only one person of color in the classroom and say there's 20 people, I don't want to put that person on the spot for being the spokesperson for Black people so I will purposely not ask questions.

Although well intentioned, by avoiding addressing racial microaggressions or race topics, faculty create an elephant in the room that can distract students from learning (Solórzano et al., 2000). Although this participant did not want to tokenize their Black student, they also denied them the opportunity for counter-storytelling. The desire to package discussions on race with a neat bow ignores the reality that conversations will be messy and uncomfortable. Mistakes will be made but when they are, it's important to acknowledge and learn from them.

Academic Setting

Some faculty found it challenging to move beyond data and empirical evidence of racism to counter-storytelling and highlighting lived experiences of people of color. This is consistent with Western science and education that values empiricism, reason, and reductionism (Sue, 2015). Again, race talk violates the academic protocol of objectivity (Sue, 2015). Faculty are accustomed to discussing race, sex, and gender in a scientific and objective way. Opening up conversations to students creates opportunities to disrupt objectivity. Sue addresses the irony in social sciences that try to recreate

objective research similar to the “hard sciences” and in doing so, dilute or disconnect from lived realities (2015).

I struggle in class, because I can talk about race in an academic way ... I can tell you ... what the research tells us about that situation, but then that doesn't take into account people's lived experiences.

It was clear that faculty understood the importance of context and coupling empirical evidence with stories but they were afraid to do so because it would open conversation they were not prepared to facilitate.

When I have tried to talk about it, I seem to be okay, when I have used in an academic setting ... if I can keep it defined then I'm okay, but then, if we try to expand into any kind of discussion I get emotional and uncomfortable ... and I hate that it makes me just want to retreat and say ‘forget it I'm not going to do it’

The classroom setting is historically objective and sterile so when faculty feel their emotions rising their first instinct is to shut it down. Race talk is very different than typical class conversations and emotions are naturally a part of the process, accepting this will help faculty understand how to facilitate discussions even when they experience emotions.

It's imperative that faculty understand how to couple objective empirical data with storytelling. Faculty should acknowledge the uncomfortable feelings that may arise during conversations and validate emotions instead of shying away from them. Race talk is vulnerable and coupled with strong emotions. Adding a trigger warning on syllabi or before discussions occur can be beneficial but when conversations occur organically it is crucial for faculty to control the process not the content (Sue, 2015).

Intersectionality and Identity

When discussing intersectionality and identity, faculty tended to avoid discussing their White race. Although, I believe part of the avoidance is due in part to how I posed the question. I asked

participants “what are three salient identities you lead with often and how do each of them come with both privileges or disadvantages?” Many of them did not say that White was a salient identity but tacked their White identity on, after discussing different identities. My cofacilitator and I discussed that there was a tendency for faculty to address the disadvantages or prejudices that come from their identities. We hypothesized participants may have done this to empathize with people of color.

I think my identity as an older woman now is very different than my identity as a younger woman and it's something that I feel like gives me a little bit of insight into people of color in the sense that ... when I was in my 20s I had ... a fear of walking alone at night ... I cannot tell you the privilege of age to be able to go running and not get cat called.

Although specific White culture and White identity examples were not discussed, faculty explicitly discussed White privilege. Participants were asked to “Share a specific moment of when White privilege benefitted [them] either unconsciously or consciously” or “What is a moment where [they] found [themselves] complicit or colluding in racial oppression?” In response, they were able to provide specific examples of how moving through the world as a White person was very different than other races. They also provided specific examples of microaggressions they committed. Out of all their experiences and examples, they focused their stories outside of the classroom. They may have felt too uncomfortable to discuss specific teaching experiences.

A participant discusses her experience inviting her BIPOC friend to a family event.

It wasn't until I was there with her that I looked around at all of these White people and listened to what they were really saying and ... moved in that space, not as myself, but with the person I was with and realized that I've been complicit in their behavior for a decade. Just being okay ... or just brushing off racist comments, sexist comments ... I did

harm to my friend by just assuming she would be okay, and not even thinking of her perspective in that situation.

In the dissonance stage of Helm's White identity model, White individuals are "forced to acknowledge their Whiteness at some level, to examine their own cultural values, and to see the conflict between upholding humanistic nonracist values and their contradictory behaviors" (Sue, 2015). I observed guilt and shame when faculty described their stories but as previously mentioned, admitting to racial biases or instances of microaggressions or racism is a crucial process of facilitating race talk (Sue, 2015).

First Cycle Outcomes and Evaluation of Actions

I had originally planned to ask a lot more questions in my circle, but very quickly realized I was too ambitious with the amount planned. Going forward, I knew I needed to cut my script to include only two to three questions. During the circle and in debriefing, I realized we needed to emphasize that the topic of discussion was race. Although intersectionality is important, the identity question pulled us away from race and faculty focused a lot on gender and age. I believe this was because faculty have not historically considered their White identity as a race or culture. A participant said sexism was more of an issue than racism. As facilitators and modelers, it was important to acknowledge the statement tactfully and with respect. We emphasized that accepting racism as an issue does not discount sexism. Many BIPOC people experience multiple prejudices, being a Mexican woman, I experience both but one is not more hurtful than the other.

During the circle I had originally thought faculty were shying away from discussing their White privilege or incidents of being complicit or colluding in racial oppression but after analyzing the data I realized they grappled this question head-on. The first cycle solidified the power circles have to encourage vulnerability and storytelling. A participant teared up and was visibly emotional, there were feelings of frustration and anxiety but the circle was able to hold the emotions and propel conversation forward. The questions posed in the circle process allowed faculty to share their history, struggles, and

identity in ways that typical workshops or water cooler conversations do not. I was pleasantly surprised and humbled that faculty opened up and were able to be honest and vulnerable with the group. I was happy with the foundation that was laid to continue the work we had before us in the next two cycles. I wanted to hone in on the classroom environment for the second circle since a lot of the conversation focused on events and experiences outside the class.

Cycle Two - Implicit Bias and Roleplay Race Conversations

Second Cycle Participants and Analysis

My second circle was held on January 10, 2022, and lasted 2 hours and 10 minutes. Six of nine participants attended, and one participant left during the midpoint break. The word counter was not an appropriate tool to analyze this circle as the words most used did not fully capture the nuances of the conversation. The themes that emerged were based on what was not said, the gaps in between words. I reviewed the transcription and discovered themes that word searches could not account for.

Second Cycle Context

One of APA's Multicultural Race and Ethnicity Guidelines (2002) is understanding and acknowledging personal biases so I dedicated the first half of the circle to implicit bias. Participants read articles relating to implicit bias and equity-mindedness. Although equity-mindedness emphasizes institutional and structural change, it also highlights personal development and eliminating a deficit-based mindset. After the icebreaker, one of the first questions asked was whether they have taken the Harvard Implicit Association Test (IAT). The IAT is a test that measures automatic associations for race, gender, and other categories to reveal unconscious bias. In a study conducted by Baron and Banaji (2006), they found that explicit biases changes with age and implicit biases remained the same. Most adults understand that being explicitly racist is frowned upon but they still unconsciously hold racist attitudes. My goal was to try and name and address implicit biases in order to move towards developing a more equity-minded cognitive frame.

Second Cycle Themes

Implicit Association Test

Most of the participants were knowledgeable of the IAT test but only half had taken the test. Of who had taken the IAT, only one participant specifically mentioned what their results were. I anticipated participants would be nervous sharing their implicit biases with each other so I created a way for them to share responses anonymously. I used Jamboard and asked participants to write an example of when they made a negative assumption about a student based on their racial identity or have exhibited deficit-minded thinking. Only two participants responded and only one of the responses focused on race specifically.

I do try to judge students based on their objective performance, but I know that I am certainly not immune to implicit bias. Sometimes when I do have a student that is a racial/ethnic minority and also struggling in class, I have a tough time finding a fair way to think about it. I know that I have had a deficit model at those times, and the thought occurs to me that the student likely was underprepared due to lack of opportunity.

This specific faculty member was able to identify their deficit-based thinking but also alluded to equity-mindedness with systems thinking.

I believe the hesitancy to respond, even anonymously to implicit bias questions was two-fold. First, White faculty feared appearing racist and realizing their racism (Bell, 2002, 2003; Frankenberg, 1997, Neville et al., 2006; Spanierman et al., 2006; Sue, 2015). Attributes of fear of appearing racist are “guarded and deliberate in their responses”, “anxious, constructed, and cautious in what they say”, and “remaining silent or consciously screening and censoring out anything they consider to be racially offensive” (Sue, 2015, p. 31). All of these responses were displayed in our conversation. Realizing their own racism is difficult and uncomfortable because it threatens perceptions of the self as being “good

moral and fair-minded human beings who actively stand against overt acts of discrimination” (Sue, 2015).

The second assumption as to why faculty were not able to share specific examples is due to the unconscious and implicit aspect, it could be that they were simply not aware of any instances when they exhibited any behaviors that could be deemed racist. White students and faculty are often unable to identify microaggressions, so it would make sense that they could not pinpoint a specific classroom incident (Sue, et al., 2009; Sue et al., 2010). It was probably difficult to discuss specific incidents because if they still have not identified what their implicit biases are, they would not be able to share a specific experience.

Frustrations with Systemic and Institutional Support

I tried to push the conversation further by asking them to share where they thought the origins of their implicit biases come from, whether that be media, family, parents etc. This is where faculty embraced the equity-mindedness approach. It was a lot easier for them to point to the systems in place that make education inequitable than it was to specifically share an example of when they had implicit bias or displayed deficit-minded assumptions. There was a theme of frustration with department and institutional systems.

When you think about individually helping students, the academic institution is not built that way and I have a lot of conflicting feelings of what I am even supposed to do if the institutions above me are not going to add or provide any support for students or change anything ... I end up feeling really helpless.

Sue (2015) describes the difference between helpless and hopeless. Helplessness is malleable and can be altered with action when strategies are introduced. Hopelessness on the other hand means giving up. What the two feelings have in common is the opportunity for them to be used as an excuse for inaction.

Are we setting them up for success in our neuroscience major? For sure no. None of the STEM fields at USD are ... because we're requiring these very rigid sequences that set them up so behind in our curriculum that they are at a profound disadvantage from the start ... this isn't true with everything, but one thing I've been thinking about in taking more of an equity-mindedness approach is the systems in place at our institution.

The participant was able to identify specific areas that could be improved in their department and beyond. This statement demonstrated that faculty are aware of issues that need to be addressed to make their institution more equitable. Participants were already practicing an equity-minded approach to addressing concerns in their department.

Not My Students

The second half of the circle focused on roleplaying and student responses. In the first circle faculty noted that they were uncomfortable with conflict and responding to students' inappropriate comments or microaggressions. It was important to me that faculty practice answering student responses in a safe, low-stakes environment. I also thought it would be beneficial to learn how others would handle conflict in class. Participants read an article before the circle which provided tips on how to facilitate race conversations (see Appendix C). I wanted participants to use the tools to respond to uncomfortable statements students made so I added a reminder of different techniques to the chat box for them to reflect on.

The Whiteness Project conducted interviews with White Americans around the country and they were "asked about their relationship to, and their understanding of, their own whiteness." The interviews are posted on the website as short clips. I played three clips and used them to model student responses in class. I broke up the typical circle model for this part of the conversation and asked for two to three participants to respond to each one. The videos addressed different topics I thought students

may broach during class discussions, this included: overestimating the crimes committed by Black people, admonishing immigrants, colorblindness, and discrimination of White Christian men.

There were a number of faculty who thought that the videos were not indicative of USD students. The belief that USD students in particular are more enlightened or liberal than others was an interesting reflection.

I think there is a huge gap between people who are voicing these opinions and our students ... I'm sure that that we have students that think like that but they would not express it ... I think a lot of people outside of the university think similarly and would feel very at ease expressing it.

The belief that USD or college campuses are liberal islands points to an interesting facet of how participants view their institution. The idea that students would not outwardly reveal racist attitudes falls in line with IAT tests conducted by Baron and Banaji's (2006) research, which showed that as people age their implicit biases stay the same but they learn what is socially acceptable to say. Not all participants agreed with this statement. Some thought the reasons students may not voice their opinions is because they make their perspective on race very clear.

I think I make my opinions on certain topics pretty clear to my students, so I wonder ... how comfortable anybody would feel in my class specifically saying something like that. I want to encourage conversation, but I definitely make it clear of where I stand on these topics.

I would argue that if given the opportunity to voice their opinions in a supportive environment, students would surprise their faculty with their responses. Participants were receptive to trying different types of techniques to respond to students. Perspective taking, asking follow up questions, sharing stories or anecdotes, and pointing to data were among some of their responses. They also relied on each other and asked others for help when they were not sure which response would be most beneficial.

Too Emotional

A similar theme that continued to emerge from the first cycle was the fear of emotions. This time, it was mostly a fear of displaying their own emotions. A strategy for combating their emotions was using data or articles instead of their own thoughts. Although this strategy is well intentioned, it is not likely to be effective. The need to be objective, even keeled, or emotionless has long dominated the academic protocol (Sue et al., 2010; Sue et al., 2009). Part of the discomfort of emotions surrounding race talk is that it is rarely a positive or happy conversation, there are deep and heavy emotions associated with race and that can be difficult to shoulder.

If anyone has any ideas, how you emotionally deescalate after comments like that I'd be happy to hear ... I'm mad at the video right now ... I just I have such a hard time, where do I even start?

Of course, it would not be beneficial for faculty to be overly angry or upset but successful race talk requires free expression of feelings. It would be beneficial for them to name their emotions in class instead of acting on them, "your statement upsets me because ..." Instead of allowing feelings to bubble and turn into anger, release is necessary. The classroom is not the space for faculty to become overly upset but expressing their emotions in a setting outside the classroom by conversing with colleagues, family, or friends could be helpful.

Second Cycle Outcomes and Evaluation of Actions

The beginning of the circle was a rocky start because I assumed that as psychologists and neuroscientists my participants had taken an implicit bias test prior to our meeting. The first part of the circle would have been more fruitful had I given them the IAT as homework and discussed results together in circle. This way everyone would have been working with the same information and chances are there would not fear being singled out as racist or deficit-minded. Even after facilitators modeled responses and shared specific implicit bias examples, participants did not participate with their own

examples. It was a bit frustrating that even in an anonymous format, participants did not share a deficit-based example. Upon reflection I see these were difficult questions to pose to my participants. I was asking them to pinpoint something unconscious. Many of them could have probably told me about a past incident they now realize was a microaggression after they had done some learning and research. It would have been better to scaffold and asked if they had observed a microaggression or biases toward students and then asked if they had done the same.

For the roleplay section, I believe faculty found it beneficial to bounce ideas off one another. They were complimenting each other's responses and asking for help when they did not know how to respond. I felt a sense of camaraderie when addressing responses they found difficult. Although some participants believed their students would not respond in the way the videos had, they thought the exercise would good practice for real world conversations.

Although we had already spent 4 hours with one another in circle, I felt a time crunch. I wanted to address so many things in a very short time. I had to temper my expectations and remind myself that antiracist education is ongoing and would need to continue beyond my time with them. I did not want helplessness in systemic and institutional issues to turn to hopelessness, so addressing actionable steps they could personally take in the last cycle was crucial.

Cycle Three - Curriculum and Institutional Transformation

Third Cycle Participants and Analysis

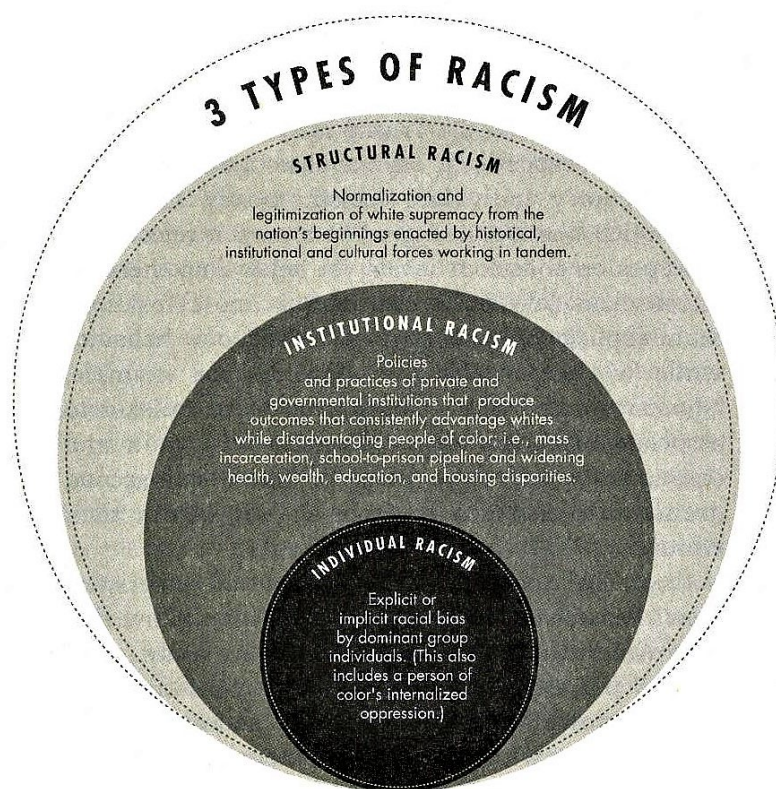
I held the final circle on January, 19 2022. Six participants attended the 1 hour and 27 minute circle, the shortest circle of all. Faculty centered student success in their responses. The word "students" was mentioned 53 times. "Need" was mentioned 43 times, which correlated to needs for students and needs faculty required to implement change. "Diversity" was mentioned 39 times and "diverse" 28 times, highlighting the attention participants gave to diverse students and diversity initiatives within their class, department, and institution.

Third Cycle Context

The final circle theme was “Curriculum and institutional transformation” (see Appendix D). Similar to Fania Davis’s (2019) illustration of different types of racism (see Figure 4), I scaffolded the last circle from personal to departmental and institutional/systemic changes. The cycle focused on actionable steps toward equitable education.

Figure 4

Three Types of Racism (Davis, F. 2019)



Personal Changes

I am happy to report that faculty changed their curriculum and class practices. Some of the changes had been implemented during our circles, and others reported future changes they wanted to implement in their syllabus and classes for the 2022 Spring and Fall semester. One addition a participant reported adding was an identity statement to their syllabus. The identity statement acknowledged their

White identity and White privilege and emphasized their commitment to social justice. Faculty also reported creating a more welcoming and inviting tone in their syllabus and adding gender-inclusive language. When syllabi have a friendly and welcoming tone students view professors as approachable. Syllabi can also encourage and motivate students when learning is difficult (Harnish et al., 2011; Littlefield, 1991). Focus on adding diverse authors and racial context was another aspect faculty felt was important to address in their syllabus.

I was already aware of the readings I was picking to make sure they were coming from diverse authors ... but I want to [add] some writings from Hispanic or Latino authors because that's more of our student demographic, so they might be able to see themselves reflected a little bit better.

Taking into consideration student demographics is a step toward being more representative and culturally aware. USD is in the process of becoming a Hispanic Serving Institution and creating opportunities for students to see themselves reflected in their curriculum is a step towards being more culturally competent.

Resistance to Change

Not all participants felt the need to make edits or change their syllabi. I saw the most hesitancy with this prompt. Faculty have academic freedom, and I was prepared for some to be protective of their curriculum, syllabus, and class practices. Half of the faculty were resistant to making any changes to syllabi. Their reasoning was not because they disagreed that diversity was important but because they did not see syllabi as a tool to prompt conversation or set a tone for the class.

I haven't made any changes to my syllabus and I'm not sure that I'm going to. My biggest issue is that the syllabi are too long these days ... and I became aware last term that that nobody reads the syllabus anymore ... I really am doubtful that changing

anything on the syllabus will make any difference. I'm very empirically oriented, and so I would like to see studies that [show] this actually does anything.

The need for more data and facts highlights the empirically oriented academic protocol and although there are studies that show that creating an inviting tone and diversifying curriculum is beneficial to all students, I had not sent the research articles to participants ahead of circle. However, not all faculty agreed with the short syllabus mindset.

Unlike some of my colleagues, I don't really worry so much about the length of my syllabus because if it's three pages or 20 pages they're not reading it anyway unless you're explicitly having them read parts of it. The way I see it is, once it's in the syllabus, it has been provided to them in some way ... I feel like then they've been introduced to the fact that these are things we're discussing.

This particular participant viewed their syllabus as a tool to introduce racial concepts to their students. They also saw the syllabus as a resource to reference throughout the semester. The syllabus is not only an introduction to the course but an introduction to faculty. There is a lot students can glean from syllabi but there are differences in how faculty use and perceive their syllabus.

Departmental Changes

I wanted to move faculty beyond class practices to departmental goals. Scaffolding actions to departmental changes were necessary because faculty affect students in their classes, but department changes affect *all* psychology and behavioral neuroscience majors. All faculty identified the need for the department to be more diverse by hiring non-White faculty. Diversifying the department's demographics was at the top of everyone's list, but there was nervousness about bringing a diverse candidate to the department without institutional or departmental support.

We really have to change our search process and be more thoughtful in how we're looking at new hires, but how do we create the most supportive environment ... are we

as a university, as a college, as a department doing enough to support people once they come? It would be great for our department to be more diverse, but is it best for them and are we creating an environment that's best for their development?

Although the need for diverse faculty in the department is dire, faculty want their potential colleagues to thrive, not just survive at the institution. I believe their hesitancy is due to the White culture at PWIs and USD in particular. In June 2020, Black faculty at USD wrote a letter to their community that addressed how USD contributes to racism and White supremacy. They called for a cultural shift and valuing of their burdensome and indispensable work. USD has made strides to work toward addressing the letter's call-to-actions, but there is still a lot of work to be done, and the participant's apprehensions were valid and displayed their care and concern for future colleagues.

Student Needs and Voice

Student needs were also centered in this circle. "Students" was the most mentioned word, 53 times. The need for students to succeed highlighted the reason faculty took part in the circles. They wanted to alter department procedures to support underrepresented students who are often forgotten or lost in the shuffle of day-to-day operations. When asked what department goals they thought should be implemented, a participant mentioned,

Bringing in student voices and and listening to...diverse students that we have in the department. Listening to their voices and bringing into the conversation more often because we often don't do that.

This statement highlights one of the crucial aspects of restorative justice, bringing all affected parties together to move forward as a community. A simple yet strong change to the department is listening to students. Moving more towards a systems approach, this faculty member embraced equity-mindedness by addressing transfer student barriers.

I think we need to help remove some of the barriers for them ... They get hung up in a lot of the math courses and things like that when they're transferring in from other institutions ... Some departments restructured their lower division classes that don't align with any community colleges now. So, you can't get a one to one transfer ... I think there are some key things that are making it really hard for students to get a leg up in these majors.

There were a lot of departmental changes faculty thought were necessary to increase equity in their department. They did not shy away from pinpointing areas that could be improved. They addressed research participation, hiring diverse faculty, increasing student financial support, removing transfer barriers and more.

Institutional Changes

Participants were able to take responsibility for personal and departmental changes but they found it difficult to identify ways they could take part in institutional and systemic changes. My hope was for participants to view large scale change as areas they could improve and take part of. I asked, "What are or two institutional changes you think should be addressed at USD and how do you become involved [in making that change]?" Responses varied, but it was clear that they viewed large scale change at their institution as administrators' responsibility and were in the dark on how decisions were made.

I'm not so well versed in what the USD is doing at an institutional level except to know that they don't really support diverse students very well. And I don't know what they should do more or better of. Sometimes I think it's the same things we want, like more funding for internships or for research experiences or scholarships. We want that within the department and we need that at the university level for all students ... We make so

many decisions at the department level. It's hard to know how to get involved at the institutional level sometimes.

Creating institutional change requires an understanding of institutional procedures. In hierarchical organizations like universities, it is difficult for individuals to understand how to enact transformational leadership (Astin & Astin, 2000). The participant's statement exemplifies confusion and frustration with institutional decisions. Faculty often find themselves feeling disempowered and these beliefs "are often manifested in behaviors that prevent faculty from exercising leadership on campus and fully contributing to the institution's development" (Astin & Astin, 2000, p. 42). Becoming involved in institutional change is also difficult when faculty feel their voices are not heard.

We're having our DEI meetings ... and we had all these great goals but at the end of the day, we need some support. We need some resources if we're going to actually make these goals into a reality. So I don't know if we [need to] think more creatively about how to organize ourselves so we are a louder voice to the administration. We actually have plans that could further the university's larger mission, which I assume include promoting issues of diversity and helping our students feel comfortable and heard on campus.

Astin & Astin (2000) argued that it is often difficult for faculty to take part in institutional change because they are constantly competing with other departments for financial resources. A constant state of competition and scraping for resources does not breed a collaborative environment. Unfortunately, because faculty have so many competing interests like, student advising, teaching, and committee obligations they often feel under-valued and these feelings can lead to mistrust and animosity towards administration, creating an "us-them" mentality (Astin & Astin, 2000).

Only one of six participants could specifically pinpoint personal involvement in large scale institutional change. They felt empowered by their involvement and encouraged others to branch

outside the department to enact change. Collaboration and a shared mission and vision are necessary to advance institutional change. Large scale change requires *all* constituents taking responsibility and understanding their leadership roles (Astin & Astin, 2000).

What Gives You Hope?

I pushed participants to discuss uncomfortable and difficult topics. Although illuminating, the conversations we had were heavy. It was important to close the circle on a hopeful note. The final question was, “what was the most important or meaningful lesson that you've learned from our time together and what gives you hope?” Many participants enjoyed the material I compiled for each session. They also appreciated the intentional space given to reflect on their identities and race. Although it was not my intention, participants got to know one another in a different way. Faculty that have been working together for 10+ years shared family histories, intersectional identities, and struggles in class, all very vulnerable information that they may have never shared in a different setting. Although not everyone was hopeful, all but one participant shared meaningful lessons they took away from our time together. This participant appreciated,

Spending some time thinking about our own identities, the parts that we think about and the parts that we overlook and what that says and means ... confronting that was really valuable.

Providing questions and time for reflection on their White identity is something participants may have not done in the past. *Confrontation* was a powerful word to use because identity work truly requires vulnerability and bravery to confront espoused ideas of ourselves.

It's given me hope seeing this community of other people who are thinking about the same things. That's giving me hope that I can do this and I can hopefully reach out to others and work to make change

Restorative Justice circles have the power to create community and solidarity within that community. Although our time together was officially ending, participants understood they could reach out to one another for help. This participant also emphasized the importance of doing DEI work in community with others. It can be lonely and difficult confronting racism in a silo, having a community to turn to is critical. Community also creates accountability, which is another aspect of the circles that participants appreciated.

I knew I just was going to have to sit and do the readings, think about it and come and talk. I couldn't get out of it. I couldn't say 'I'll do that tomorrow, I'm too busy'. Making me make the space for that was really helpful and making me think about my own classes and my own approach to talk of my racial issues.

Similar to class discussions, participants felt more equipped to discuss topics when they had engaged with the material beforehand. There is so much work we tend to put on the backburner and address later but the time we allotted in circle together was set aside for all of us to do the crucial and uncomfortable work necessary for race conversations.

Third Cycle Evaluation of Actions

None of us alone can save the nation or the world, but each of us can make a positive difference if we commit ourselves to do so.

—Cornel West

This cycle took me back to “why” for doing this work. My “why” is I want all students to feel included and represented in their course work. I want to inspire others to take responsibility and ownership of making higher education more inclusive, diverse, and equitable. As a researcher, facilitator, and participant my roles were intertwined and often overlapped. Balancing different roles was difficult. Because I had essentially flipped the classroom and put participants in student roles I inadvertently put myself into a teacher or professor role; this was something I had not realized until the

final cycle. In hindsight, wish I had emotionally supported participants when they expressed frustrations with institutional issues.

A lot of DEI work is shouldered by people of color but equity cannot be achieved if White individuals do not use their privileges and roles to challenge the status quo. I have often fallen into a role of disempowerment and hopelessness when attempting to untangle the complexities of institutional and systemic racism but honing in the power I do have has helped alleviate the hopeless feelings. If I had the opportunity to go back to this conversation I would remind faculty of their power. Faculty work with administration to create change that directly impacts students, procedures and culture. They create admissions standards, decide what and how to teach, set course requirements, advise and mentor students, investigate valuable research, participate in shared governance, set hiring criteria and more (Astin & Astin, 2000). Faculty have a lot more power than they realize.

Ending the circle was bittersweet. I was often nervous to start each circle but somber when it ended. Although each circle went over the allotted time by a few minutes, it still felt like there was not enough time. This circle solidified that social justice, antiracist work is never finished, which is simultaneously daunting and relieving. Working in circle with faculty and a cofacilitator who dedicated more than seven hours of their time was humbling. I viewed the culmination of our time together as the planting of seeds. I may not see what grows from it but I believe there are ideas and actions germinating.

Cycle Four – Post-Circle Survey

I used a Likert scale questionnaire to measure changes in participant's comfort, beliefs, and perceptions before and after the three circle discussions. I had a very small sample size for my surveys. Seven participants completed pre and post surveys, two participants only completed one of the surveys

so analysis is not 1:1. I did not collect demographic information from participants because identifying information could have resulted in a breach of anonymity.

Engaging in Race Talk

Participants reported being slightly more comfortable discussing race (Q1) but less comfortable addressing prejudiced responses (Q3) (see Appendix F Table 1). This could be because among the strategies for facilitating race talk, Sue (2015) emphasized understanding one's racial and cultural identity, being open to admitting racial biases, understanding the meaning of emotions, and addressing controversy, which were all strategies participants expressed difficulty with during circle conversations. The strategies mentioned are incompatible with the academic protocol that is ingrained in higher education.

I believe comfort levels discussing race increased (Q1) because they were able to intentionally spend time exploring their identity, practice responses, and share ideas with one another. The circle created a brave space where it was okay to be uncomfortable. One of our guidelines repeated before each circle was "expect and accept discomfort." Practicing race conversations outside of the class prepares facilitators for the classroom setting (Sue, 2015). When asked what was the most beneficial in preparing them to discuss race in courses (Q16) a participant responded, "Spending time reflecting on my own identity and hearing about tools/resources for checking syllabi and finding materials related to race for each discipline (last session)."

White Identity Development

Although there was a slight decrease in exploration of White identity (Q11), comfort with White identity slightly increased (Q9) (see Appendix F Table 1). In the Immersion stage of Helms's White Racial Identity model (1995), White individuals actively seek to redefine whiteness and develop a positive White identity that is not based on superiority. In this phase individuals also focus on antiracism. As a group, participants may be in the immersion stage because more participants viewed themselves as

social justice advocates (Q13) and belief that it was their responsibility to diversify their curriculum (Q6) increased after participating in the circle process. It makes sense that participants did not strongly agree that they had explored or strongly agreed that they were comfortable with their White identity because they understand that identity work is ongoing and will require lifelong learning. Antiracism, social justice, and activism all require active participation and commitment that cannot be checked off with a few circle discussions. In the final circle, when a participant was asked what their most meaningful lesson was they responded, “I learn not to be surprised at how surprised I can be about how little I know ... Not only how little I know, [but also] how little I thought about.”

All participants reported a change in the perception of their White identity as a result of our conversations (Q17). Viewing whiteness as a part of their identity is something participants struggled with in the circle sessions but it seems that by the end of our time together they were able to begin to understand that White is a racial and cultural identity just as Black, Latinx, Asian etc. The slight increase in comfort to discussing race in class could be attributed to understanding that they can teach from a White racial identity and also incorporate other perspectives by decentralizing Whiteness.

From Discussion to Action

The highest reported change was the belief that faculty should work to include a diverse complement of assignments, authors, and speakers in the material/courses (Q6) (see Appendix F Table 1). Relevance of race to course increased as well (Q2). All but one participant diversified their syllabus, curriculum or class practice in some way (Q19). This participant’s statement encompasses the intentionality of diversifying material, “I am thinking harder about some of the assignments in my class that deal with intersectionality and how best to approach them and talk about privilege in class.” It takes time, effort, and intentionality to add diverse perspectives because the dominant discourse is White centered.

It is interesting that both belief of responsibility to diversify material (Q6) and relevance (Q2) increased but the belief that course material allows discussion of race decreased (Q4). It could be that participants still need time to edit and research how to incorporate diversity and race conversations into their classes. Once race conversations are embedded into courses there will be possibilities of students responding with prejudiced comments that faculty will need to address, and if they are still uncomfortable doing so, opening discussions can be daunting. Cognitively participants agreed that they should do the work, they understand the importance of incorporating diversity into the curriculum but they have not discovered how to move from presentation of material to open discussion of race with students.

Equity-mindedness and Engaging with Underrepresented Students

In circle conversations participants explained that one of their hesitations to discussing race in class was because they did not want to cause harm to BIPOC students. Faculty wanted to avoid making students the token or representation of their race. There was a slight increase in belief that their syllabus was inclusive to all students (Q5) and that underrepresented/marginalized students are comfortable approaching them (Q7) but there was not a change in giving underrepresented students opportunities outside of class (see Appendix F Table 1). Although the Equity-mindedness reading somewhat addressed the importance of language in syllabi we did not go into detail as to how it alters student's perception of approachability of faculty outside the class (Harnish et al., 2011). Most of our discussions and the questions asked were about class participation so the survey question may have been confusing and irrelevant because I did not provide context during circle discussions. Regardless, faculty were able to understand how an equity-minded approach values underrepresented students and does not adhere to deficit-minded thinking.

Limitations

Prior Relationships

My sample of participants can be labeled as a convenience or opportunity sample because I drew from a population that was close to me. Restorative Justice and ethical research require voluntary participation (Karp, 2019; McNiff, 2016). However, the established relationships between myself and faculty could have been a driving force for participation, even more than wanting to delve into anti-racist work. It was also a convenient sample because the topic of race can conveniently be addressed in psychology and neuroscience as opposed to mathematics or engineering where more creative applications would need to be addressed. I worked with White faculty in the department of psychological sciences because I saw a desire for faculty in the department to implement DEI work. As a member of the department, DEI practitioner, and member of an underserved population I wanted to lend a hand in the department's efforts.

Personal Identity

As a Mexican woman who was the only non-faculty member in the group I was an outlier. Whether at work or in public spaces I often find myself as the only person of color so I am accustomed to navigating White spaces. I recognized the importance of race-like or affinity groups because of my participation in one prior to creating my research. I tried to balance my identity with my cofacilitator who is a White faculty member. Leslie served as my buy-in to a group I was not part of. Although there were limitations of my identity, I also think having a different identity allowed me to pick up on certain idiosyncrasies that a member of the ingroup would not have noticed.

Participant and Observer

Restorative Justice and Action research have unique roles for researchers/facilitators because objectivity and sterile analysis is not appropriate. In action research, researchers are the author and focus of their own research (McNiff, 2016). I was not looking at my subjects from a 1000-foot view, I was on the ground floor, tackling the same questions with them. Inherent in restorative justice circles is setting the space for intentional listening, which lends itself well for action research. My cofacilitator

and I would meet 15 minutes before each session to comb through the script and discuss any edits I made, this is when I would be in the researcher/facilitator role. Once the session started, the circle process allowed me to step into a participant and facilitator role. To be fully engaged, I recorded the sessions because I wanted to intentionally listen. Although I did add specific notes to my research journal, I did not feel rushed to capture each important comment. After each session my cofacilitator and I would debrief and I would once again step out of my participant role into a researcher role to evaluate the circle process. I held a number of different roles as researcher, participant, facilitator, and BIPOC representation but navigating multiple roles was not new to me as I had conducted restorative justice circles prior to my action research.

Internal Validation and Confirmation Bias

Although I was able to debrief with my cofacilitator I did not use a systematic deductive codebook to analyze my data. I also did not have a collaborator or coresearcher to analyze data with me. To combat confirmation bias, I relied on previous research, particularly research from *Race Talk and The Conspiracy of Silence: Understanding and Facilitating Difficult Dialogues on Race* to compare and analyze my findings (Sue, 2015). I also used other pedagogical research to confirm the themes I saw emerge throughout my cycles. I discussed findings with my faculty advisor to help minimize biases.

Small Sample Size

I had nine total faculty members participate but none of the sessions had all nine participants in attendance at once. Six faculty members was the average for each session. Because of the small sample size, I did not collect demographic data. The small sample size and unique characteristics of the psychological sciences department itself is a very niche group. Although I believe all faculty and subject types would benefit from discussing race in a circle setting, psychology and behavioral neuroscience

research lend themselves well to antiracist work. Most, but not all faculty were receptive to DEI work and had prior knowledge of the introduced concepts.

I had originally planned to use the anonymous reflective questions as comparative data but after reviewing them I could not analyze growth or change because I did not know who the answers came from. Instead I used responses to support data from questionnaire and circle findings. I thought anonymous questions would prompt participants to be more honest but I should have edited this section after realizing that the circle process was effective enough to elicit honest responses (Appendix E).

Recommendations

My first research question asked if participating in identity development and equity conversations would make White faculty more comfortable discussing race in the classroom. Overall, there was a slight increase. My second research question asked whether participating in identity development and equity conversations would compel White faculty to diversify their curriculum or class practices. Seven out of eight participants who responded to the survey changed curriculum or class practices. To continue improving the classroom setting for students, especially underrepresented students, I encourage White faculty and administrators to pursue the following recommendations.

Disrupting the Academic Protocol by Utilizing Restorative Justice

A central theme of my findings was faculty's difficulty navigating race talk and attempting to stick to traditional academic protocols. Although faculty became more comfortable discussing race in class, there was a decrease in comfort in addressing prejudiced comments. Faculty also expressed discomfort with emotions and controversy, which are dynamics of race talk. The academic setting is not conducive to the emotional intricacies of race talk. Respect for one another is crucial, but admonishing emotions when discussing race does not allow students of different backgrounds to express their lived experiences or be authentic in the class. "To close off expression of these feelings leads to a sterile

discussion that separates the head from the body and soul” (Sue, 2015, p. 70). If faculty are to engage in race talk with students, they must be prepared to address defensiveness, microaggressions, intense emotions, indifference, etc. Solely introducing race talk as empirical data invalidates underrepresented students’ lived realities.

I believe that if faculty are to engage in race talk in the classroom, they must learn how to introduce empirical data and use student voices and counter-storytelling as a tool to provide context. Restorative Justice training would benefit White faculty who plan to incorporate race conversations in class. The restorative circle process allows for a combination of objective data and emotions; the very issue participants struggled incorporating in class. Restorative Justice and race talk require facilitators to control the process, not the content; this means allowing students to share their personal stories in a respectful and vulnerable environment (Boyes-Watson & Pranis, 2020; Sue, 2015). Because restorative justice emphasizes healing, using the circle process to discuss race or any difficult topic that has the potential to cause harm can be beneficial. The circle process diminishes opportunities for students to reactively respond to comments because participants can only speak when it is their turn to do so; this encourages listening rather than reacting. The incorporation of restorative justice in higher education primarily relates to student conduct, but my research shows that the circle process can facilitate race conversations. Utilizing restorative practices in higher education settings can help promote a culture that values healing, communication, and connection (Karp, 2019).

Faculty have specific areas of expertise and are often viewed by students as individuals who have *all* the answers (Heinz, 2008); normalizing making mistakes, admitting when they are wrong, and creating collective knowledge alleviate faculty of the all-knowing burden. Faculty do not need to be perfect to begin discussing race. Being vulnerable enough to tell students, *this upsets me* or *I don’t know* can help support race discussions. Fear of discomfort is not a valid excuse to ignore race talk. White faculty need to accept discomfort as part of race talk but not let discomfort debilitate them. Counter-

storytelling, messiness, and emotions coupled with empirical and objective data can elicit race talk if faculty are willing to do the vulnerable and intentional DEI work to increase their comfort.

White Identity Exploration

All participants reported that their perception of their White identity changed, and circle conversations and survey responses demonstrate that faculty appreciated intentional time and space to explore their White identity. Viewing themselves as racial and cultural persons is necessary for meaningful and effective race talk (Sue, 2015). Ignoring White as a race rejects White privilege and further upholds White supremacy (McIntosh, 1989). Unless White faculty can view their White identity as a race, then discomfort and harm will persist in the classroom and beyond. I recommend identity workshops for all White faculty ready and willing to explore what it means to be White in the United States, in higher education, and in the classroom. Understanding that White is a race allows faculty to frame knowledge and lessons as *a* perspective and not *the* perspective.

Affinity and race-alike groups are typically used for non-dominant groups like people of color and LGBTQIA individuals because they create a shelter from White cultural norms. I argue that affinity spaces are also necessary for White individuals to explore race. First, affinity groups for White individuals provide a brainstorming-like space to ask questions and explore topics they would be too fearful or embarrassed to discuss with persons of color. Secondly, it is important to provide this space as a protective buffer for underrepresented folx who microaggressions may harm. Affinity spaces for White faculty should also encourage admitting racial biases. Ignoring one's own biases negates the social conditioning inherent in all human beings and can obstruct honest conversations and hinder race talk (Sue, 2015).

Most importantly, when White individuals understand themselves as cultural beings, they can begin their journey to social activism and antiracism (Helms, 1995). We can view White affinity spaces as the pre-work to multicultural spaces. Eventually, after graduating from affinity spaces, I would

encourage White faculty to engage in multicultural spaces so they can hear and learn from different perspectives.

Institutional Support and Equity-minded Practices

There was a theme of frustration with institutional and systemic practices. It was easier for faculty to pinpoint areas of improvement than to identify ways to become involved. It was also difficult for faculty to challenge institutional procedures that breed inequities, like grading on a curve. For faculty to continuously improve equity-minded practices, institutions must value DEI work.

Equity-minded practices use “quantitative and qualitative data to identify racialized patterns of practice and outcomes” (CUE, 2020, p.26). Aggregating student data provides opportunities to see if class instruction creates equitable outcomes for all students. I would have loved incorporating classroom data in circle conversations to create classroom interventions. For example, the Community College of Aurora, redesigned a math sequence that resulted in a 21 percent increase in student success rate over two years, but when they aggregated the data by race, they saw that White students were the main beneficiary of the redesign (CUE, 2020). Taking the data into account CUE worked with faculty and implemented equity-minded practices. Part of the process included uncovering faculty’s assumptions, biases, and motivations (along with changes in communication style and class structure) which resulted in success rates for *all* students and the elimination of equity gaps (CUE, 2020). We cannot address issues if we do not collect data. Simply looking at retention and graduation rates ignores student outcomes in specific classes. If institutions want to create equitable outcomes for all students, they need to aggregate data and incorporate student voices at an institutional level, not solely in specific classrooms.

As previously mentioned, a lot of DEI work is undervalued and shouldered by BIPOC faculty. As allies, it is imperative White faculty search for ways they can help create equity at their institutions. Professional development for faculty that centers equitable education and values *all* students are

necessary for future success. An equitable cultural shift means decentering whiteness by, formally incorporating DEI work in tenure processes, issuing course releases for faculty to dedicate time to attending DEI workshops or diversifying curriculum, recognizing and rewarding faculty who are already engaged in diversity work, analyzing student success through an equity-minded lens and supporting all of the aforementioned practices by reallocating funding (CUE, 2020; Whittaker & Montgomery, 2013; Zidani, 2020). Ultimately a cultural shift requires all administrators, staff, and faculty taking responsibility for supporting equitable outcomes and education for all students (Astin & Astin, 2000).

Personal Reflection

I have struggled with imposter syndrome as a student and higher education practitioner, which is typical of many underrepresented students. It was difficult for me to accept that I had created an entire research project that was beneficial and acceptable to the academy, which I now realize is my own internalized racism. It did not occur to me until recently that my imposter syndrome was a catalyst for encouraging faculty to listen to and validate underrepresented student voices.

Throughout the process, my co-facilitator, Leslie Henderson's reassurance and support helped squelch my insecurities and kept me committed to the process. Receiving positive feedback after presenting preliminary findings at NASPA, the Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education conference, encouraged me to engage with other practitioners in the field. The participants' supportive feedback and continuous conversations helped me realize that I started a conversation that will continue long after the research is complete. All that to say that one of the main areas of growth for me was internal. My research process helped me realize that I have a unique perspective and knowledge that others can benefit from.

Professional Goals

Although race conversations can be difficult, they are necessary for growth. My role is to encourage individuals to deeply engage with and challenge White cultural norms to inspire equitable

actions. Although I worked solely with White faculty, I believe all constituents on college campuses would benefit from this work. As institutions include DEI work into their mission and goals, they must encourage, acknowledge, and reward equitable efforts.

My research also solidified my desire to integrate restorative justice practices in higher education. The four principles of restorative justice, inclusive decision making, active accountability, repairing harm, and rebuilding trust, align with the values I hope to see in higher education's future (Karp, 2019). I would like to facilitate difficult discussions utilizing restorative justice circles as professional development for student affairs practitioners, staff, administrators, and students. Antiracism, identity development, and DEI work are lifelong practices. It will take intentional work every day to combat inequities deeply embedded in class practices and institutional procedures, but it is work worth pursuing. Ultimately, each successful race dialogue can lead to changes that address equitable outcomes for all students.

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Appendix A
Recruitment Email and Consent Form

Uncomfortable but Necessary: White Faculty Identity Development and Race Conversations

Hello,

My name is Monique Appel. I am a student in the Master of Arts in Higher Education Leadership (MAHE) program at the University of San Diego, San Diego, CA. I am conducting a research study about White faculty identity development and equitable teaching practices and I would like to invite you to participate.

The purpose of this study is to find out if examining your White identity and pedagogical practices will make you more comfortable discussing race and racism in class and if participation compels you to add diverse curriculum and inclusive language in your syllabi. You are being asked to participate because you identify as a White faculty member in the department of psychological sciences.

If you decide to participate, you will be asked to:

- Attend three online focus groups
- Consent to audio/video recording – only audio transcripts will be used
- Complete two online surveys – You will be asked things like: “I believe BIPOC students are comfortable approaching me with questions.”
- Read handouts outside of sessions
- Reflect outside of the sessions in a private journal – will not be collecting this data
- Submit five short answer responses to anonymous google survey questions
- Report any changes to syllabi that align with our work in in focus group sessions

Time Commitment:

- Three focus group sessions 2 meetings (2.5 hours) 1 meeting (1.15) hours
- Thirty minutes – private journaling and five anonymous google survey questions
- Thirty minutes - reading required materials before sessions

Total of approximately 13 hours from Fall 21 – Intersession 22 semester.

The research may challenge you emotionally, mentally, and even physically as we are tackling topics that address racism, White privilege, antiracist teaching, and inequity in higher education. The researcher will attempt to create a space that allows individuals to explore and mitigate negative feelings in a safe and confidential environment.

Taking part in this study is entirely optional. ***Choosing not to participate will have no effect on your employment status or any other benefits to which you are entitled.*** You may also quit being in the study at any time or decide not to answer any specific questions. Should you decide to participate, ***please print out a copy of this page for future reference.***

You will receive no compensation for your participation in the study.

I will be happy to answer any questions you have about the study. You may contact me at (moniqueaguirre@sandiego.edu).

Thank you for your consideration, Monique
Appel

If you would like to participate, please email me at (moniqueaguirre@sandiego.edu) and I will respond with a consent form and supplemental information.

Adult Consent Form

University of San Diego Institutional Review Board

Research Participant Consent Form

For the research study entitled:
Uncomfortable but Necessary: White Faculty Identity Development and Race
Conversations

I. Purpose of the research study

Monique Appel is a student in the School of Leadership and Education Sciences at the University of San Diego. You are invited to participate in a research study she is conducting. The purpose of this research study is to examine your White identity and how it effects your pedagogical practices.

II. What you will be asked to do

If you decide to be in this study, you will be asked to:

- Attend three focus group sessions – 2 sessions will be 2.5 hours, one session 1.15 hours
- You will be audio/video recorded during focus groups
- Complete two online surveys – You will be asked things like: “I believe BIPOC students are comfortable approaching me with questions.”
- Read handouts outside of sessions
- Reflect outside of the sessions in a private journal – data will not be collected
- Submit five short answer responses to anonymous google survey questions
- Report syllabi changes (if any) made after session

Your participation in this study will take a total of 10 hours during Fall 2021 and Intersession 2022 semester.

III. Foreseeable risks or discomforts

Sometimes when people are asked to think about their feelings, they feel sad or anxious. If you would like to talk to someone about your feelings at any time, you can call toll-free, 24 hours a day:

- **San Diego Mental Health Hotline at 1-800-479-3339**
- **USD’s Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**
 - **Website: www.mylifevalues.com**
 - **Login ID: USD**
 - **Password: eap**

The research may challenge you emotionally, mentally, and even physically as we are tackling topics that address racism, White privilege, antiracist teaching, and inequity in higher education. The researcher will attempt to create a space that allows individuals to explore and mitigate negative feelings in a safe and confidential environment.

IV. Benefits

While there may be no direct benefit to you from participating in this study, the indirect benefit of participating will be knowing that you helped researchers better understand your White identity and how it effects your pedagogical teaching practices.

V. Confidentiality

Any information provided and/or identifying records will remain confidential and kept in a locked file and/or password-protected computer file in the researcher's office for a minimum of five years. All data collected from you will be coded with a number or pseudonym (fake name). Your real name will not be used. The results of this research project may be made public and information quoted in professional journals and meetings, but information from this study will only be reported as a group, and not individually.

The information or materials you provide will be cleansed of all identifiers (like your name) and may be used in future research.

VI. Compensation

You will receive no compensation for your participation in the study.

VII. Voluntary Nature of this Research

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You do not have to do this, and you can refuse to answer any question or quit at any time. Deciding not to participate or not answering any of the questions will have no effect on any benefits you're entitled to, like your health care, or your employment or grades. **You can withdraw from this study at any time without penalty.**

VIII. Contact Information

If you have any questions about this research, you may contact:

Monique Appel

Email: moniqueaguirre@sandiego.edu Phone:

(619) 260-4511

David Karp

Email: dkarp@sandiego.edu Phone:

(619) 260-4760

I have read and understand this form, and consent to the research it describes to me. I have received a copy of this consent form for my records.

Signature of Participant

Date

Name of Participant (**Printed**)

Signature of Investigator

Date

Appendix B
First Circle Scripts and Reading Material
See below

Circle One Part One - Reading Materials and Script

Readings:

Born to Belonging - Tim Wise (2008). Tim Wise is a White anti-racist writer and educator in the United States.

Stages of White Racial Identity Development - Janet Helms summarized by Beverly Daniel Tatum and Ali Michael (2019). Janet Helms is an African American research psychologist known for her study of ethnic minority issues. She is an acknowledged scholar, author, and educator who is well known for her racial identity theory that is applied to multiple disciplines such as education and law. Helms was the recipient of the 2006 Award for Distinguished Contributions to Education and Training in Psychology given by the American Psychological Association.

Why White Instructors Should Explore Their White Racial Identity - Stephen D. Brookfield (2019). Stephen is a White scholar who teaches and consults in a variety of adult, community, organizational and higher education settings. His overall project is to help people learn to think critically about the dominant ideologies they have internalized and how these can be challenged. He is particularly interested in methodologies of critical thinking, discussion and dialog, critical reflection, leadership, and the exploration of power dynamics, particularly around racial identity and White supremacy.

As you read, think about:

- The White identity stages and specific incidents/moments that parallel descriptions Note that the White Racial Identity model is used as a tool for conversation, not as measurable data.
- Why is it important for you to explore your White identity?
- After reading Tim Wise, how would you start to trace the story of your life? ● How can you take care of yourself while doing this work?

Homework: *Bring an item that tells a story of who you are/the values you hold

Goals:

- **What is the purpose of this circle?** To lay a foundation for the rest of the circles. To start exploring your upbringing and your first messages about your white identity and other
- **What outcomes would you like to see emerge from this circle?** Build community and lay a foundation of trust and open dialogue for the rest of our time together.

Convening

Before we begin, I want to give you a few minutes to fill out a survey I sent.

Purpose: Build community, lay a foundation of trust and open dialogue for the rest of our time together and to begin to explore our feelings about our identities and race.

Acknowledgements: We stand upon a land that carries the footsteps of millennia of Kumeyaay people. They are a people whose traditional lifeways intertwine with a worldview of earth and sky in a community of living beings. It is part of a world view founded in the harmony of the cycles of the sky and balance in the forces of life. We promote this balance in life as we pursue our goals of knowledge and understanding. We find inspiration in the Kumeyaay spirit to open our minds and hearts. We also want to pay homage to the circle practice we are engaging in which is rooted in indigenous practices from First Nations, Plains Indians, the Maori in New Zealand, and a variety of African communities.

Guidelines of circle:

If we were in person we would have a talking piece that we would pass around but virtually we will only speak when it is our turn to do so. You always have the option to pass if you do not want to speak or if you're not ready and we can come back to you. Our hope for this space is that we can come together to understand and discuss our identities, race, white supremacy, oppression, and how it impacts your life and your teaching.

Two questions lie at the heart of meaningful conversations about race and racism Empowerment -

Are you willing to say things you don't want to say?

Recognition - Are you willing to hear things you don't want to hear?

With that, we aspire to co-create a brave space where:
 we hold one another accountable and help each other grow we can be
 vulnerable, make mistakes, and continue our inner-work we look for ways
 to apply this learning beyond the life of the program

Everyone will have a chance to speak but you can always skip if you do not want to answer a
 question. Do you have any questions?

Group Agreements:

- Be present & curious
- Speak & listen from the heart
- Speak & listen with respect
- Assume best intentions, and own your impact
- Take the learning, leave the stories (explain)
- Use “I” statements
- Expect and accept discomfort

Are there other agreements specific to our community of practice that will support our participation?

Encourage you to think about personal learning goals

Connecting

Opening Quote - To bring about change, you must not be afraid to take the first step. We will fail
 when we fail to try. Rosa Parks

Check-in/Question - Introduce yourself and share your item and how it represents you/your values
 or similar to Tim Wise, your personal and family history?

Synthesize responses

L

<p><u>Concern</u></p> <p>In the article we read by Stephen Brookfield he said, The most helpful thing white people can do in terms of fighting racism is to become aware of what it means to be white. As we move deeper into this conversation, we will be talking about our upbringings and socializations around racial and/or ethnic identity(ies).</p> <p>Round One: give an example where you recognized your white privilege interfered with your ability to make a fair/rational judgement or had a negative impact on a person of color? Doesn't have to be childhood. (REMOVED)</p> <p><i>Facilitator will synthesize responses</i></p>	M
<p>Round Three: What do you find is the hardest thing about talking about race?</p>	L
<p><u>Collaboration</u></p> <p>What can you do to make the department or your class a place where people feel comfortable to talk about race? (REMOVED)</p> <p><i>Facilitator will synthesize responses</i></p>	M
<p>Closing</p> <p>Racial healing calls us to be aware of our stories of race and those of others. It calls us to acknowledge the trauma of individuals that affects generations, challenges communities, and becomes woven into the fabric of history. The scars run deep for those who received the bite of the lash and those who held the whip. However, when we tell our stories, build relationships, stand together, and acknowledge our past...we can dismantle the fear and the pain - Thomas DeWolf and Jodies Geddes, The little Book of Racial Healing p. 47</p> <p>(Enter in chat) In a few words, what outcomes would you like to see emerge from our time together?</p> <p>5-10 minute Break</p>	L

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Journal Homework: Take some time to analyze your upbringing. Write a personal account of the ways White privilege may have played a role in how you grew up. How does White privilege play a role in your life currently?

Stephen Brookfield said, the most helpful thing white people can do in terms of fighting racism is to become aware of what it means to be white. What are actionable steps you can take to become aware of your Whiteness? Why is this important?

Google Survey: Describe your personal and professional goal(s) for participating in these sessions? What do you hope will be different at the end of our time together?

Circle One Part Two Reading Materials and Script

Readings:

White Supremacy, White Exceptionalism and a Glossary of Terms - Layla F. Saad (2020). *Me and White Supremacy Workbook*. Layla is an author, speaker & teacher on the topics of race, identity, leadership, personal transformation & social change. Layla is an East African, Arab, British, Black, Muslim woman who was born and grew up in the West, and lives in Middle East. Layla has always sat at a unique intersection of identities from which she is able to draw rich and intriguing perspectives.

[Complicating White Privilege](#) - Paul Gorski (2011). Paul is the founder of the Equity Literacy Institute and EdChange. He is a White author and scholar with more than 20 years of experience helping educators, nonprofit workers, and others strengthen their equity efforts.

Listen to: [S2 E1: Turning the Lens](#) - John Biewen (2017). Scene on Radio comes from the Center for Documentary Studies (CDS) at Duke University and is distributed by PRX. John grew up in Mankato, Minnesota, and studied philosophy at Gustavus Adolphus College. He began his radio career as a 22-year-old reporter at Minnesota Public Radio. He later reported from the Rocky Mountain West for NPR and spent eight years producing long-form documentaries for American RadioWorks (ARW). He is a White educator and teaches undergrad and continuing education students, and his work for CDS has aired on programs such as All Things Considered, This American Life, and the BBC World Service.

Privileged Group Dynamics: Common Patterns of Whites - Kathy Obear. Kathy is a leading expert in helping to establish socially just environments where everyone feels valued and respected. She is the author of *...But I'm Not Racist!: Tools For Well Meaning Whites* (2018).

Definition of Anti-Racism

Anti-Racism is defined as the work of actively opposing racism by advocating for changes in political, economic, and social life. Anti-racism tends to be an individualized approach and set up in opposition to individual racist behaviors and impacts.

SOURCE: Race Forward, "Race Reporting Guide" (2015).

As you read/listen, think about:

- What feelings come up for you as you're reading definitions and terms. Do you agree with them?
- Did the Turning the Lens episode surprise you?
- What type of White privilege do you have compared to your parents or other family members?
- What are salient identities you lead with often? How does each of them come with privileges and disadvantages?
 - Race, Socioeconomic class, religion, physical ability, gender, sexual orientation, age, etc,

Optional[Racial Equity Tools Glossary](#)

['Not Racist' Is Not Enough: Putting In The Work To Be Anti-Racist](#) - Eric Deggans. Eric is NPR's first full-time TV critic. In 2019, Deggans served as the first African American chairman of the board of educators, journalists and media experts who select the George Foster Peabody Awards for excellence in electronic media.

Goals:

- **What is the purpose of this circle?** To explore White identity, privilege, White supremacy and how it contributes to racism and inequity.
- **What outcomes would you like to see emerge from this circle?** Understanding that White privilege plays a role in our everyday lives. White privilege is embedded in the classroom through hierarchy, practices, and higher education.

<p><u>Convening</u></p> <p>Purpose: To explore your White identity, privilege, White supremacy and how it contributes to racism and inequity.</p>	L
<p><u>Connecting</u></p> <p>Check-in: Does everyone feel okay, are there any concerns, questions or are we ready to move forward?</p> <p>Question - What are three salient identities you lead with often? How do each of them come with privileges and disadvantages?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Race, socioeconomic class, religion, physical ability, gender, sexual orientation, age etc, <p><i>Synthesize responses</i></p>	M

<p><u>Concern</u></p> <p>Round One: Two-Part question</p> <p>Share a specific moment of when White privilege benefitted you (either unconsciously or consciously) or what is a moment where you found yourself complicit or colluding in racial oppression?</p> <p><i>Facilitator will synthesize responses</i></p>	L
<p><u>Collaboration</u></p> <p>Considering the breadth and depth of racism, committing to being antiracist may feel overwhelming yet small choices made daily can add up to big changes. Reflect on choices you make in your daily life (i.e., who you build relationships with, what media you follow, where you shop). How do these choices reflect being antiracist or not?</p> <p>Round One: What does antiracism mean to you? (REMOVED)</p> <p>Round Two: How can we practice antiracism in our classes/the department? (REMOVED) Round Three: How does White privilege show up in your class, office hours, on campus? (REMOVED)</p> <p><i>Facilitator will synthesize responses</i></p>	M
<p><u>Closing</u></p> <p>In Chat:</p> <p>What was challenging about this conversation? What was rewarding?</p> <p><i>Facilitator will synthesize responses</i></p>	L

Closing quote Invite participants to take 3 deep breaths to center and mark the end of this circle space.	M
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Journal Question: How has your White fragility prevented you, through fear and discomfort, from doing meaningful work around your own personal antiracism to date?

Google Survey: Stephen Brookfield said, the most helpful thing white people can do in terms of fighting racism is to become aware of what it means to be white. What are actionable steps you can take to become aware of your Whiteness? Why is this important?

Appendix C
Second Circle Scripts and Reading Material

See below

Circle Two Part One - Reading Materials and Script

Readings:

Being an Agent of Change: Guidelines for Educators, Parents, and Trainers - Derald Wing Sue (2015), *Race Talk and The Conspiracy of Silence: Understanding and Facilitating Difficult Dialogues on Race*. Dr. Sue received a bachelor's degree from Oregon State University, and a PhD in counseling psychology from the University of Oregon. The Civil Rights Movement sparked an interest in him and was the foundation for his interest in multicultural studies. Born in Portland, Ore., Dr. Sue is the son of parents who emigrated from China. Early childhood memories of being teased due to his ethnicity lead to his fascination with human behavior. His deep interest and passion led him to becoming one of the most prominent voices in cross cultural studies.

Why Equity-mindedness? - Center for Urban Education. (2020). *Laying the groundwork: Concepts and activities for racial equity work*. Rossier School of Education, University of Southern California

Living in a Racialized Society - Carolyn Boyes-Watson & Kay Pranis. (2015). *Circle Forward: Building a Restorative School Community*. Living Justice Press

- Carolyn Boyes-Watson is the founding director of Suffolk University's Center for Restorative Justice and an associate professor of sociology at Suffolk University. Carolyn is a White woman in her mid-sixties raised in a Jewish suburban community outside New York city. Professor Boyes-Watson has been on the faculty since 1993. She holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Pennsylvania and a master's and Ph.D. in sociology from Harvard University.
- Kay Pranis is a national leader in restorative justice, specializing in peacemaking circles. Kay is a White woman, over 70 years old, raised in a poor rural community on the USD/Canadian border in New York State with very limited exposure to culture or racial differences. She served as the Restorative Justice Planner for the Minnesota Department of Corrections from 1994 to 2003. Before that, she worked six years as the Director of Research Services at the Citizen's Council on Crime and Justice. She has written and presented papers on peacemaking circles and restorative justice worldwide. Since 1998, Kay has conducted circle trainings in a diverse range of communities—from schools to prisons to workplaces to churches, from rural farm towns in Minnesota to Chicago's South Side

As you read/watch, think about:

- What are some assumptions about how a “good student” behaves and looks?
- How do privileges create blind spots in your awareness of other people’s experiences?
- What are concrete examples of how you can learn from another culture? (Sue), Books, community events, friends etc.

Goals:

What is the purpose of this circle? to acknowledge implicit/unconscious bias practices in our everyday lives and in the classroom and to consciously and intentionally work towards equity-mindedness.

What outcomes would you like to see emerge from this circle? To have faculty reflect on implicit biases in the class in order to address them through concrete changes

<p>Convening</p> <p>Purpose: To acknowledge implicit/unconscious bias practices in our everyday lives and in the classroom and to consciously and intentionally work towards equity-mindedness.</p> <p>Acknowledgements: I want to acknowledge that the land on which we gather is the traditional and unceded territory of the Kumeyaay Nation. I want to pay respect to the citizens of the Kumeyaay Nation, both past and present, and their continuing relationship to their ancestral lands. The practice we are engaging in today and future sessions are also rooted in shared origins in indigenous practices from First Nations, Plains Indians, the Maori in New Zealand, and a variety of African communities</p> <p>Mindfulness: We’re going to start with 3 breaths to ground ourselves and get in the right headspace.</p> <p>Group Agreements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Be present & curious ● Speak & listen from the heart ● Speak & listen with respect ● Assume best intentions, and own your impact ● Take the learning, leave the stories (i.e., names, specifics do not leave the room) ● Expect and accept discomfort ● Decenter Whiteness by privileging emotional over the intellectual 	M
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<p>Connecting</p> <p>Opening Quote - “Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced” - James Baldwin</p> <p>Check-in/Question - (reintroduce yourselves, some people were not at the last session) How are you doing today? Share a high and low of your holidays</p>	M
<p><u>Concern</u></p> <p><i>Can make White identity statement here</i></p> <p>Although you are all psychologists and neuroscientists and know about implicit bias, you are not immune to imparting it and receiving it.</p> <p>Have you taken an implicit bias test? If so, which one? What were your results? Were you surprised? Were you conscious of thoughts afterward?</p> <p><i>Synthesize</i></p>	L

<p><u>Collaboration</u></p> <p>Derald Wing Sue said that most teachers are quick to ask for techniques and strategies to deal with racial situations or topics that they realize should be addressed but they are paralyzed in deciding what type of action to take. Providing strategies of race talk will do little good without knowledge and understanding of the real issues and goals they hope to achieve. Becoming culturally competent in facilitating difficult dialogues on race presupposes that they must first do the necessary work of confronting their own biases, prejudices, and assumptions about human behavior.</p> <p>Round One: Jamboard (anonymous)- Give an example of when you made negative assumptions about students based on their racial identity e.g. deficit-minded thinking? Are those assumptions consciously chosen or arising without intention?</p> <p>Read through answers</p> <p><i>Facilitator will synthesize responses</i></p> <p>Round Two: What feelings and thoughts come up for you in reflecting on the assumptions? Where do you think the origins of your implicit biases come from?</p>	M
<p>Closing</p> <p>In chat - What is a takeaway/lesson or insight from today's circle?</p>	L
<p><i>Facilitator will synthesize responses</i></p> <p>5-10 minute break</p>	

Journal Question: Have you assumed that the students of color or transfer students coming to school are full of problems that need to be fixed (deficit mindedness) or do you see students as bearers of gifts and talents that need to be recognized and cultivated (equity-mindedness)? How can you begin to shift your perspective?

Can you share a time when someone had a negative assumption about you? What was it? How did it make you feel?

Google Survey: Equity-mindedness states that "Equitable policies and practices must target educational institutions and systems, not the students those institutions and systems have not served well." Can you give an example of an institutional system you think should be addressed or fixed at USD?

Circle Two Part Two - Reading Materials and Script

<p><u>Concern</u></p> <p>Sue emphasized successful strategies for effective intervention</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understanding one's racial and cultural identity 2. Acknowledge and be open to admitting one's racial biases 3. Be comfortable and open to discussing topics of race and racism 4. Understand the meaning of emotions 5. Validate and facilitate discussion of feelings 6. Control the process and not the content 7. Unmask difficult dialogue through observation and interventions 8. Do not allow a difficulty dialogue to be brewed in silence 9. Understand differences in communication styles 10. Forewarn plan, and purposeful instigate race talk 11. Validate, encourage, and express admiration and appreciation to participants who speak when it is unsafe to do so. <p>We're going to do a bit of roleplaying. Everyone will have a chance to respond, as always you can pass if you are not ready or comfortable speaking.</p> <p>Round One:</p> <p>https://whitenessproject.org/millennials/bryan-21 - (ask 3 faculty to address video) ● What did you notice about his statement? How would you respond?</p> <p>Statistics may not work - asking more questions? Where are you getting your news and information from? You're more comfortable around people of your race because other races are committing crimes?</p> <p><i>Facilitator will synthesize responses</i></p>	M
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<p>Round Two: https://whitenessproject.org/millennials/leilani-17 (ask next 3 faculty in order to respond) What would your response to Leilani be?</p> <p>Round Three: https://whitenessproject.org/millennials/nathan-17 (ask next 3 faculty in order to respond) How would you respond? How can you appeal to Nathan's emotions?</p>	L
<p><u>Collaboration</u></p> <p>Round One: Can you describe a time when you participated in race talk and wish it would have gone differently? In hindsight what would you have done differently?</p>	M
<p>Closing</p> <p>In Chat - Share one thing you understood about the topic/activities today and one thing that continues to confuse or puzzle you.</p>	L

Journal: When are times you have felt guilty or defensive when engaging in conversations on race? Where did these emotions stem from?

Google Survey: What tools did you learn that you believe will be beneficial in addressing race conversations in class?

Appendix D
Third Circle Script and Reading Material
See below

In our final session, we will examine syllabi, curriculum, and the larger higher education system. Consider both individual commitments and structural change.

Readings:

You and White Centering - Layla F. Saad (2020). *Me and White Supremacy*. Layla is an author, speaker & teacher on the topics of race, identity, leadership, personal transformation & social change. Layla is an East African, Arab, British, Black, Muslim woman who was born and grew up in the West, and lives in Middle East. Layla has always sat at a unique intersection of identities from which she is able to draw rich and intriguing perspectives.

How to Incorporate Diversity Into the Curriculum - Rebecca Mark, Ph. D.: Chapter from *Everyday Antiracism: Getting Real about Race in School* (2008). Diversity is not a side issue for Dr. Mark, rather, she sees it as a primary issue in everything she teaches. In her nearly 25 years in academia, Dr. Mark has taught courses covering topics including the Holocaust, queer literature, civil rights, black female writers and lynching "When you teach those kinds of courses, you're committed not only to the topics, but to the best way of teaching about these difficult subjects," she says. Diversity is a personal issue for Dr. Mark as well. She brings to the classroom her identity as a Jewish, gay woman who grew up during the civil rights movement. And as Faculty Director for the Community Engagement Advocates Program at Tulane, and the CELT-CE Distinguished Teaching Fellow she aims to engage students and fellow teaching fellows in conversations on issues of diversity and inclusion.

[Colleges Must Take a New Approach to Systemic Racism](#) (2020, June 9)- Christiane Warren, Ph.D.

Christiane Warren is an educational consultant and community advocate with Anna J. Cooper Education Advocacy Consultants, a member of the New Jersey Association of Black Educators and an adjunct instructor in history at Saint Peter's University. She previously served as academic dean and full-time faculty at Hudson County Community College and the State University of New York.

The Diversity Scorecard (2004) - Estela Mara Bensimon, Ph.D.. Dr. Bensimon is a professor of higher education at the USC Rossier School of Education and Director of the Center for Urban Education, which she founded in 1999. With a singular focus on increasing racial equity in higher education outcomes for students of color, she developed the Equity Scorecard—a process for using inquiry to drive changes in institutional practice and culture.

Optional:

[Diversifying the Curriculum](#)

As you read think about:

Curriculum

- What scholars make up the canon? What are their social identities?
- How can diversity change or enrich the subject matter I am already researching or teaching?
- What perspectives am I prioritizing? What perspectives are missing?
- How will I decenter whiteness in my courses?

Structural

- What does it look like to build a positive community at USD with other White people in working towards racial equity? How do I build community with BIPOC faculty?
- What roles do laws and policies have in perpetuating educational inequity at USD?
- Are the rules and policies in place at USD equitable?
- What would it look like to “fully integrate truly diverse and inclusive subject matter into all applicable survey courses as well as required course work in a major?” ● Do you think we could or should apply the diversity scorecard at USD

Goals:

- **What is the purpose of this circle?** To examine curriculum, syllabi and class practices and what role they play in educational equity in the class. To address cultural, structural, and systemic racism at USD, Higher Education.
- **What outcomes would you like to see emerge from this circle?** For example, to make concrete anti-racist commitments. Diversify curriculum and move beyond class practices to structural change.

<p>Convening</p> <p>Purpose: To examine curricula, syllabi and class practices and what role they play in educational equity in the class. To address cultural, structural, and systemic racism at USD, Higher Education.</p>	<p>M</p>
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<p>Acknowledgments: I want to acknowledge that the land on which we gather is the traditional and unceded territory of the Kumeyaay Nation. I want to pay respect to the citizens of the Kumeyaay Nation, both past and present, and their continuing relationship to their ancestral lands. The practice we are engaging in today and future sessions are also rooted in shared origins in indigenous practices from First Nations, Plains Indians, the Maori in New Zealand, and a variety of African communities</p> <p>Mindfulness: We're going to start with 3 breaths to ground ourselves and get in the right headspace.</p> <p>Group Agreements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Be present & curious ● Speak & listen from the heart ● Speak & listen with respect ● Assume best intentions, and own your impact ● Take the learning, leave the stories ● Expect and accept discomfort 	
<p>Connecting</p> <p>Opening Quote - Structural racism is not something present-day White people chose or created. They benefit from it, however, and are responsible for changing it, because the status quo is racism. Good intentions notwithstanding, doing nothing about racism necessarily reproduces it; to fail to take action is to be complicit. - Fania Davis, The Little Book of Race and Restorative Justice p. 35</p> <p>Check-in/Question - What are you grateful for in your life right now and why?</p>	L

<p><u>Concern</u></p> <p>Round One - Individual: After reviewing the White Centering reading, diversifying the curriculum and the syllabus review tool... Are there any changes or edits you're making to your syllabus? How can your syllabus serve as a tool to prepare students to think and talk about race?</p> <p><i>Facilitator will synthesize responses</i></p>	L
<p>Round Two - Departmental: We have our 6-year review coming up: what are some curricular or operational goals you would like to address within the department?</p> <p>Round Three - Institutional Change: What is one institutional change you believe should be addressed at USD? How can you become involved?</p> <p><i>Facilitator will synthesize responses</i></p>	M
<p>Closing</p> <p>Closing thoughts: What is the most important or meaningful lesson you have learned/will remember about our time together? What gives you hope?</p> <p><i>Facilitator will synthesize responses</i></p>	L
<p>Closing quote</p> <p>None of us alone can save the nation or the world. But each of us can make a positive difference if we commit ourselves to do so. - Cornel West</p> <p>Thank you</p>	M

Journal: What commitments will you make to yourself, your community, the department, USD etc. to implement antiracist practices? How will you do this? Whom do you need to ask for help or accountability?

Google Survey: What is becoming clearer to you about educational equity, diversity, racial justice and your role at USD?

Appendix E

Google Survey Anonymous Reflection Questions and Responses

Circle 1 - Personal History and White Identity

Describe your personal and professional goal(s) for participating in these sessions? What do you hope will be different at the end of our time together?

- Personally I would like to more deeply explore my own internalized white supremacy and commit to doing more antiracist work. Professionally, I would like to become more comfortable and consistent with broaching topics of racism on campus and actively seeking out opportunities to create antiracist lectures and education for our students.
- My goal is to practice having conversations about race and talk about ideas about how to include these discussions in the classroom and ideas for how to respond to the types of comments and reactions that might come out of these conversations. That is, strategies or phrases that can help to manage the conversations so that I feel prepared. I hope that I will feel a little more comfortable talking about race and feel more confident that I can manage these conversations in terms of addressing inappropriate comments and allowing for different emotions from White and POC students.
- I can't remember if I already answered these, so if I did, you can replace the previous answers with these. If not, I am sorry! I am hoping that these sessions help me come to terms with my white privilege and be more comfortable talking with students, colleagues, family, friends and even those who I don't know yet about it. I also want to become more skilled and at ease in asking others for their thoughts, experiences and opinions in order to move beyond my "safe, white, don't make others uncomfortable" passive position, which I realize is a large part of the problem. I hope that at the end of the session I will be more confident in accepting and expressing my own identity and will have further clarity in what my future actions/goals for helping other white people embrace their own identities so that we can all be more effective anti-racists.
- Continue working on being antiracist, learn more about what it means to have a white identity, reflect on how to create a more inclusive classroom, become more comfortable with discussing race and racism in classes.

Stephen Brookfield said, the most helpful thing white people can do in terms of fighting racism is to become aware of what it means to be white. What are actionable steps you can take to become aware of your Whiteness? Why is this important?

- Do more readings, journaling and work exploring my own white identity. Bring up conversations about white identity with my white friends. Confront the uncomfortable situations that threaten my white identity. Seek to educate myself more, and listen more. Create the antiracist course materials and lectures I want to do. Push myself to keep up the work and not avoid it because its

too emotional or hard. Commit to conversing with family members this holiday season when racist or inappropriate comments are made.

- I think that thinking about Whiteness and race is important because it encourages perspective taking. One actionable step is that when in a new situation, think about how race might impact how people feel in that space or context - whether certain types of people might feel more safe or more privileged in that context. With practice, it could become automatic to assess contexts for racial bias. Thinking about the world in this way is important because it not only generates empathy, but also removes the burden of thinking about race from POC - making race is something everyone possesses. (I would love to hear more actionable steps!)
- 1. I can write down the ways in which my whiteness has shaped my life. 2. I can commit to spending time and resources processing the emotional impacts of what comes up as I acknowledge and accept this perspective so that the feelings of guilt do not cloud my view or impede me from listening and being open. 3. I can embrace and share with others my white identity in an effort to de-prioritize and break down the white societal assumptions that white is normal/superior.
- Reflect on and recognize the unearned privilege given to white people and then be intentional in working against this.

Circle 2 Questions - Implicit Bias and Race Conversations

Equity-mindedness states that "Equitable policies and practices must target educational institutions and systems, not the students those institutions and systems have not served well." Can you give an example of an institutional system you think should be addressed or fixed at USD?

- going beyond the classroom as a learning space to a community learning space
- Vastly expanded McNair program
- The transfer process - making it easier for students to petition for classes to count, being more lenient in how classes transfer.
- More representation in faculty (hiring practices). Also DEI training requirements for faculty and staff. More financial aide and programs that draw from high schools to recruit and retain underserved students.
- Support for transfer students, inflexible curricular requirements, inadequate funding to support student summer research (leading to inequitable access to unpaid volunteer positions), enforced grade distributions, focus on rigid and individualistic assessments, reliance on non-tenure track faculty who often are working in multiple institutions and may not have the time flexibility to meet with students outside of class, hiring and retention (and continued support) of faculty and admin of color

What tools did you learn that you believe will be beneficial in addressing race conversations in class?

- recognizing that it's ok not to (and that I don't) have the answers

- Provide opportunities to learn about others (perspective taking also) as well as promote empathy.
- Trying to talk more about emotions and process than content, questioning people why they believe something or why they are feeling this way; Making sure to point out that you understand why the student might think that and show empathy for those who speak up
- To have some resources ready and be prepared to follow up on the conversation at another time
- How to introduce the topics, follow up questions and reflections, importance of not being silent, importance of addressing an issue when it comes up

Circle 3 Questions - Individual and Institutional Change

What is becoming clearer to you about educational equity, diversity, racial justice and your role at USD?

- The underlying systems and structures in higher education support the groups that have historically had privilege and power- people who are white. While there are individual steps we can all take to make our classes and labs more inclusive and equitable, in order to work towards racial justice, we also need to challenge the systems and structures that uphold white supremacy. Engaging in this work involves an ongoing commitment and openness to learning and growing and isn't a workshop or training that is then complete.
- I now have a clearer picture of the concentric circles or different places where my actions will make positive impacts on EDRJ. Starting with myself, I see that I can decentralize whiteness by naming and identifying with my own ethnicity and sharing that with students and colleagues. Moving outward, I can now think of further changes that I can make to the content and feel of my syllabi, scanning it for racially sensitive/ non-inclusive language. I will also be looking for content additions from non-canonical sources/authors of different backgrounds, or in the case of historical discoveries - are there non-European discoveries that have been overlooked? I plan to ask students to contribute to this too. In addition to teaching, I am aware of the other ways that I can support students by forging connections, looking for paid opportunities, writing letters of recommendation, serving as a thesis advisor and generally making myself available to support BIPOC students. At the institutional level, I am aware that I can make a difference by reaching out to members of different administrative groups to ask what I can do to support their efforts in EDRJ. I can work to promote the department of Psychological Sciences as an equitable and welcoming place wherever possible. Finally, I can find opportunities to work with the local community to both give and receive support in areas related to EDSJ.
- It is becoming clearer that we need to look closely at institutional structures and push for change if we want to see progress. It can be difficult to have these conversations and we often feel like there is not enough time to take on these projects, but someone (many someones) need to speak up to draw attention to DEI issues or they are overlooked.

Appendix F

Likert Scale Questionnaire Data

See below

Pre and Post Likert Scale Questionnaire Data

Table 1

Scale		1	2	3	4	Mean	Difference
		Extremely uncomfortable	Somewhat uncomfortable	Somewhat comfortable	Extremely comfortable		
Q1 - How comfortable are you discussing race in your courses?	Pre	0	3	5	0	2.63	0.25
	Post	0	1	7	0	2.88	
Q3 - How comfortable are you responding to prejudiced comments made by students in your courses?	Pre	0	4	4	0	2.5	-0.12
	Post	0	5	3	0	2.38	
		Extremely irrelevant	Somewhat irrelevant	Somewhat relevant	Extremely relevant		
Q2 - How relevant is the topic of race to your courses?	Pre	1	0	6	0	2.88	0.5
	Post	0	0	5	3	3.38	
		Strongly disbelieve	Somewhat disbelieve	Somewhat believe	Strongly believe		
Q4 - Do you believe that your course material allows you to incorporate a discussion of race in the course?	Pre	0	1	0	7	3.75	-0.12
	Post	0	0	3	5	3.63	
		Strongly exclusive	Somewhat exclusive	Somewhat inclusive	Strongly inclusive		
Q5 - How inclusive is your syllabus to all students?	Pre	0	0	7	1	3.13	0.12
	Post	0	1	4	3	3.25	

		Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree		
Q6 - Do you believe you should work to include a diverse complement of assignments, authors, and speakers in the material/courses you present?	Pre	0	0	4	4	2.5	1.38
	Post	0	0	1	7	3.88	
Q7 - I believe unrepresented/marginalized students are comfortable approaching me	Pre	0	1	6	1	3	0.13
	Post	0	0	7	1	3.13	
Q8 - Providing unrepresented/marginalized students with academic opportunities outside of class is a priority to me	Pre	1	0	1	6	3.5	0
	Post	0	1	2	5	3.5	
Q9 - I am comfortable with my White identity	Pre	0	2	6	0	2.75	0.13
	Post	0	1	7	0	2.88	
Q10 - I believe being White comes with privileges	Pre	0	0	0	8	4	0
	Post	0	0	0	8	4	
Q11 - I have explored my White identity and intersectionality	Pre	0	0	6	2	3.25	-0.12
	Post	0	1	5	2	3.13	
Q12 - I advocate for institutional changes to recognize and address systemic racism at USD	Pre	0	2	4	2	3	0.13
	Post	0	2	3	3	3.13	
Q13 - I would describe myself as a social justice advocate	Pre	1	1	4	2	2.88	0.25
	Post	0	2	3	3	3.13	

Post-Circle Open Ended Questions

Table 2

Q16 - What was most beneficial in preparing you to discuss race in your courses?
It was helpful to be encouraged not to shy away from the topic.
Having time to think about how to make conscious decisions about how to approach it in class and hearing from other people what their experiences have been - not only in the classroom but in general. This helped to highlight the importance of this work.
Spending time reflecting on my own identity and hearing about tools/resources for checking syllabi and finding materials related to race for each discipline (last session).
Ideas on how to approach the discussion without making students of color uncomfortable.
Both the readings and discussions were very beneficial. I plan to continue these practices so I can improve my courses.
Videos to share. Ideas from others.
The readings and the practice.
Thinking about my White identity.

Table 3

Q17 - Has your perception of your White identity changed as a result of our sessions	
Yes - 7	No - 0

Q18 - What perceptions of your White identity have changed?
I have recognized that my privilege makes it difficult to know how to help students when they struggle academically because I have not had the same experiences.
I knew being White provided privileges, but now I am more aware of it in everyday situations.
I can see the value of decentralizing whiteness and of making efforts to reduce the normality of whiteness.
The discussion reminded me of my responsibility to be an activist.

Realizing that I do have a racial identity and that it influences how I experience the world and how others perceive me.
Thought about as an identity (which I really hadn't before)
Seeing myself as such and not curving a niche within

Table 4

Q19 - As a result of our sessions have you made changes to your curriculum, content, class practices or syllabi?	
Yes - 6	No - 1

Q20 - What specific changes have you implemented to your curriculum, content, class practices or syllabi?
Finding ways to make sure a wider range of students feel comfortable participating in class.
I have looked up readings by diverse authors and am including pictures of the authors when discussing the readings. I am thinking harder about some of the assignments in my class that deal with intersectionality and how best to approach them and talk about privilege in class.
I will include at least one lecture, reading or discussion of race in my classes. I have worked to make sure that the language in my syllabi is inclusive. I am planning to spend time this summer looking for more global historical neuroscience research to balance the Eurocentric view of neuroscience.
I added the Land Acknowledgement
Updated syllabi, readings, assignments and topics discussed
Moving discussions into deeper discussions
Added more inclusive examples

Table 5

Q21 - What concrete action will you take to commit to equity-mindedness in your courses?
Develop a lecture on the effect of racism on mental health that is highly relevant to my class.
Avoid making assumptions about people and trying to be fair
I will continue to educate myself in DEISJ issues so that I can keep improving equity in my courses.

Incorporating and discussing more readings by BIPOC authors and discussing positive contributions by BIPOC scholars and scientists.

Actively value diversity of individuals and perspectives.

Not sure.

Note: Q14 question did not measure what was intended to measure, Q15 Survey did not collect responses