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“Racial trauma :What teachers need to know and do”

Agenda

- What is it? Defining racial trauma
- Racial trauma in young children
- What to look for? Manifestations of racial trauma in young children
- Anti-racist ECE-Trauma informed Teaching

Racial trauma: What is it?

Racial trauma refers to the psychological distress experienced by racialized groups (Black, Indigenous, Latino/a) as a result of either direct or indirect exposure to racism (Comas-Diaz, Hall, & Neville, 2019).

- “Such experiences may include threats of harm and injury, humiliating and shaming events, and witnessing racial discrimination toward other POCI” (Comas-Diaz, Hall, & Neville, 2019, p. 1).

The bulk of research on racial trauma, however, has focused on adults (Saleem, Anderson, & Williams, 2019).

Racial trauma in Young Children

- Racial trauma in young children manifests as fear, self-rejection/hatred, helplessness and worry (Jernigan & Henderson, 2011; Saleem, Anderson, & Williams, 2019)
- Contexts such as schools as well as the broader society contribute to racial trauma in young children (Jernigan & Henderson, 2011)
- Similar to adults, observing racism as well as experiencing racism can elicit trauma symptoms in young children.

Racial trauma in young children:

- **Contextual** (society): Anti-black racism
- **School:** Teacher-child interactions, child-child interactions, curriculum, school environment
- **Outcomes:** Self-rejection/internalized racism (Jernigan & Henderson, 2011) Racial socialization is a buffer against such outcomes, however.

Other potential outcomes include anxiety and anger

- **Contextual** : police brutality, violence
- **Outcome**=Fear (hooks, 1992), anxiety

Anti-racist ECE: Racial-trauma informed teaching

Recognize the impact of racism, including the psychological impact (this will require training and more PD opportunities)

2) Establish a positive relationship with students and create a safe learning environment (offset fear, anxiety)

3) Ensure classroom materials, teaching, and curriculum promote positive racial identity development (offset internalized racism, self-rejection/hatred)

4). Do not dismiss students' feelings. Instead, validate their emotions.

Resources: List of readings on racial trauma

- <http://www.monnicawilliams.com/racial-trauma-readings.php>

References

- Comas-Díaz, L., Hall, G. N., & Neville, H. A. (2019). Racial trauma: Theory, research, and healing: Introduction to the special issue. *American Psychologist*, 74(1), 1-5. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/amp0000442>
- hooks, b. (1992). *Black looks: Race and representation*. Boston, MA: South End.
- Jernigan, M. M., & Daniel, J. H. (2011). Racial trauma in the lives of Black children and adolescents: Challenges and clinical implications. *Journal of Child & Adolescent Trauma*, 4(2), 123-141.
- Saleem, F. T., Anderson, R. E., & Williams, M. (2020). Addressing the “myth” of racial trauma: Developmental and ecological considerations for youth of color. *Clinical child and family psychology review*, 23(1), 1-14.