Integration of Anti-oppressive Ideologies into Social Work Practice

COLORADO MESA UNIVERSITY

2021 Power Conference

REPOWER: Visiting Social Work
Best Practices in a Changing World
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CAPELLA UNIVERSITY

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Overview

- Presenter Backgrounds

- The Current Framework in Social Work Practice

- Introduction to Anti-oppressive Social Work Practice

- Understanding and Applying Critical Race Theory, Intersectionality, and Feminism into Practice

- The Power of the Lived Experience & the Counter-narrative in Practice

- Application of change, idea, concept, and practice

- Resources for new graduates and seasoned professionals

- Conclusion

- Q & A

Presenter Backgrounds

| Dr. Michelle Sunkel	Dr. Diana Franco

• DSW from Capella University
• MSW from San Diego State University
• Masters Bioethics / Fellowship
    Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium
    Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen, Netherlands
    Universita degli Studi di Padova, Italy
 	
• Forensic Social Work
• Psychiatric Social Work
• Ethics Consultation
 	
• Director MSW Program, Colorado Mesa University
	• DSW from New York University
	• MSW from Columbia University
	
	• NYC Public Schools, School Social Worker for 18 years; Faculty at Capella University for 2 years
	
	• Daughter of immigrants, first-generation immigrant; family with mixed immigration statuses and its impact
	
	• Experiences of oppression –social work student
	• DSW Faculty, Capella University

Social Work Practice– Literature Review
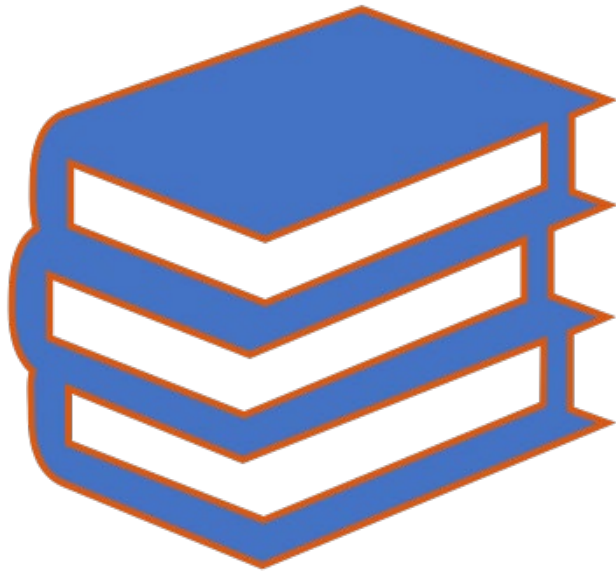
- "**Cultural Competence" Framework** – strengths and limitations
  - There has been some shift but this term is still widely used
  - What does it mean? What are its implications?

(Askeland & Payne, 2006;

Fisher-Borne et al., 2015; Pon, 2009, Sinclair, 2019)

- Anti-oppressive (AOP) social work is the complex practice of opposing oppression through everyday activities (Dumbrill & Yee, 2019, p. 1).

- Oppression - repeated harm that targets and holds back an entire group or members of a particular group, education is an example of ways in which privilege & oppression operate at systemic levels (Dumbrill & Yee, 2019, p. 2)

- AOP is an umbrella term that encompasses a variety of social justice-informed approaches and critical theories, such as, feminism, anti-racism, Marxism, critical poststructuralism, critical postmodernism, Indigenous, intersectionality, queer, anti-colonial, and anti-racist (Baines, 2017b, p. 5).

- AOP - Address how systems of inequality, power, and oppression impact the daily lives of service users (Baines, 2017b, p. 5; Bhuyan et al., 2017).

- AOP in SW Practice – transform existing knowledge into new ways of knowing such as lived experiences, interrogates/challenges mainstream forms of knowledge, asks critical questions about critical questions about systematic oppression (Massaquoi, 2017, p. 291).

Introduction to Anti-oppressive Social Work Practice

AOP - not prescriptive or formulaic!

Understanding and Applying Critical Race Theory, Intersectionality, and Feminism

Critical Race Theory –

Examines race, law, and power
*Recognizes that racism is engrained in the fabric and system of USA society. Institutional racism is pervasive in the dominant culture
CRT examines power structures – based on white privilege and white power; which perpetuates the marginalization of people of color
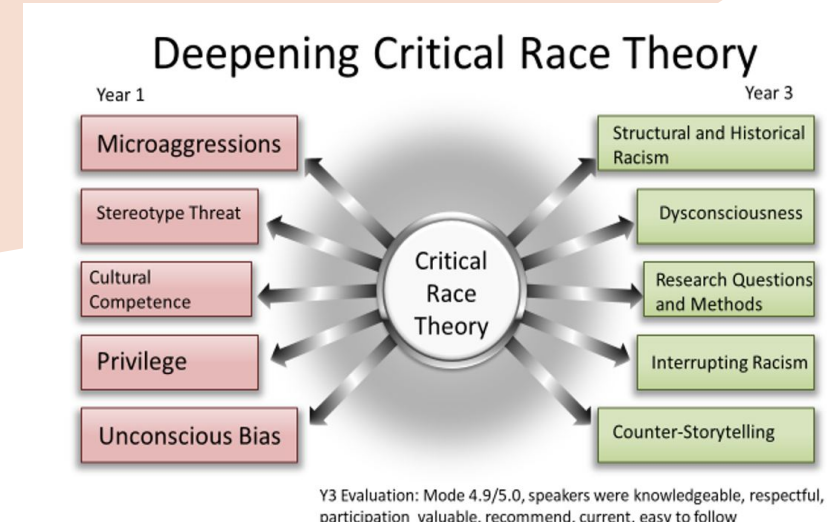
Intersectionality –

Defined by Prof. Crenshaw to reflect race and gender (combined) impacted Black women in the CJ system
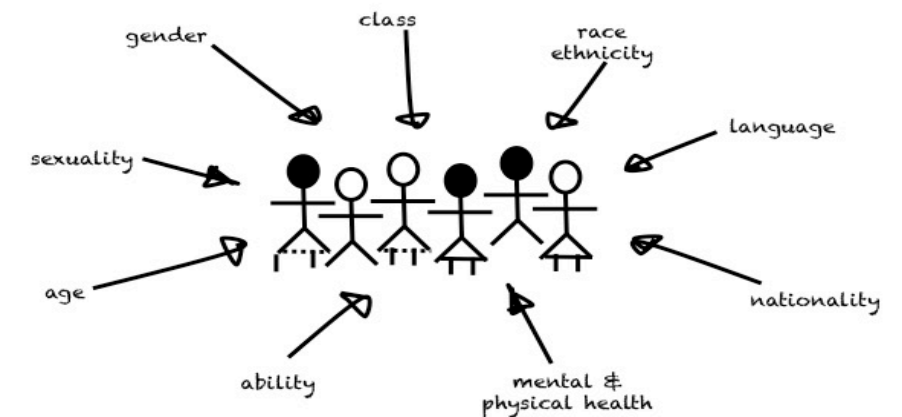
Crenshaw denoted how race/class/gender caused by intersecting systems created structural and political power and harm

* Black Feminist, explore oppression of women of color
*Now includes: race, gender, sexuality, class, ability, nationality, citizenship, religion, body type…

Deepening Critical Race Theory

Year 1 — Microaggressions, Stereotype Threat, Cultural Competence, Privilege, Unconscious Bias

Critical Race Theory

Year 3 — Structural and Historical Racism, Dysconsciousness, Research Questions and Methods, Interrupting Racism, Counter-Storytelling

Y3 Evaluation: Mode 4.9/5.0, speakers were knowledgeable, respectful, participation valuable, recommend, current, easy to follow

INTERSECTIONALITY

gender, class, race ethnicity, language, sexuality, age, ability, mental & physical health, nationality

Feminism

- **Feminism – Belief in social, economic, and political equality of the sexes; women's rights**

    1st Wave: Abolition Movement - 1920 Women's Right to Vote (first major triumph)

    2nd Wave: Civil Rights Movement – equality and justice

        *Separation of White Women/ Black Women (understanding race/oppression)

        *Globalization of Feminism: forced marriage, female infanticide, female genital mutilation

            White women "saving" the third world (developing) counties women

    3rd Wave: Economic and Professional Power – gender, racial, economic, and social justice

        *More inclusive of women of color

    4th Wave: Sexual harassment, body shaming, and rape culture   (Brunell & Burkett, 2020

- **Hood Feminism -**

    "Solidarity is for white women" – Kendall

    Real Feminists Issues: Poverty, inadequate wages, food insecurities, unaffordable and unsafe

        living conditions, poor health care, mediocre public education

    Hood Feminism Responds:

        Collectivism in communities, support in the moment

        Challenges white feminism – "are we missing empathy" for non cis, poor, and nonwhite women (Kendall, 2020)
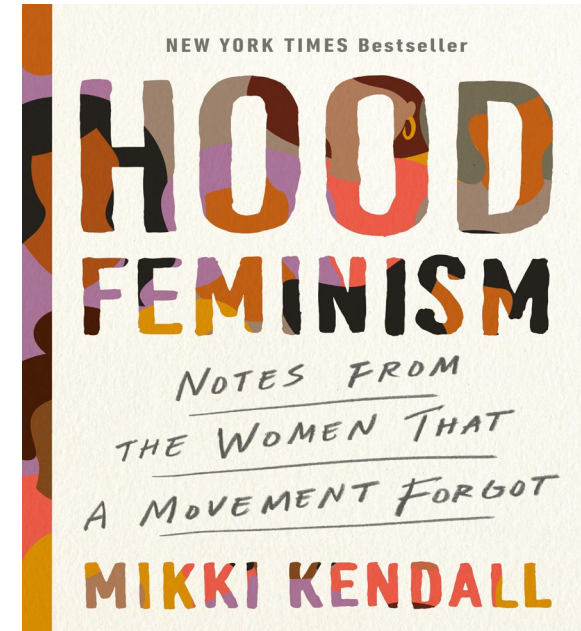
The Power of the Lived Experience & the Counter-narrative

Dr. Diana Franco
Dr. Michelle Sunkel

- What is the "lived experience"?

- What is a counter-narrative?

- How is this relevant to social work practice?

- How does it fit in / how to address with boundaries?

- How do we privilege the lived experience in the practice? In research?

- Dr. Diana Franco's story (Narrative from: **Franco, D.** (2020). Revisiting cultural diversity in social work education through Latino critical race theory testimonio. *Social Work Education,* doi:10.1080/02615479.2020.1740191)

- Dr. Michelle Sunkel's story

    Granddaughter Italian immigrants;

    Denied lineage/culture due to discrimination;

    Called "other" "in between people"

    Redefined: "Black Irish"; impact and identity of self

    2nd Generation White

- What does it mean?

- How does lived experience impact humility and lived experiences of others?

Application of Anti-Oppressive Social Work into Practice: Ideas, Concepts, and Application: Now What?
Moving from Micro to Macro Change

Is Cultural Humility Enough? - No.

Cultural Competency

⬇

Cultural Sensitivity

⬇

Cultural Humility

⬇

Structural Competency

Application: Cont'd

Structural Competency: One Step Further

Structural competency - calls for a new approach to the relationships among race, class, and symptom expression. It bridges research on social determinants of health to clinical interventions, and prepares clinical trainees to act on systemic causes of health inequalities (structuralcompetency.org, 2019).

Structural competency - aims to develop a language and set of interventions to reduce health inequalities at the level of neighborhoods, institutions and policies (structuralcompetency.org, 2019).

- Rubric used in U.S. medical education to address stressors encountered by service-users (Meztl & Hansen, 2014)

Application (Cont'd)

Structural Competency (cont'd)

- looks at ways in which social, economic, legal, and cultural structures impact health

- framework developed by anthropologists and only taught in a handful of U.S. medical schools

- redefines cultural competency model

- structural racism and systemic oppression

- "Systems change when people do."

- bureaucratic frameworks, socio-political forces, laws/policies, wealth imbalances, language, & attitudes may act as barriers to well-being

[Metzl & Hansen, 2014; Oregon Health & Science University Teaches How Societal Structures Impact Health; 2017]

From Understanding, to Training, to Practice – and to CHANGE!

- This is what we did…

- Now it's your turn. We challenge you to:
  - Think about how your agency engages in anti-oppressive work
  - Think critically about how you apply these concepts
  - How can you challenge your agency to be anti-oppressive and to continue to create change

Resources for Social Workers

- Books
  - Lola Olufemi – Feminist Interrupted
  - Mikki Kendall – Hood Feminism
  - Reni Eddo-Lodge – Why I'm no longer talking to white people about race
  - Beverly Tatum - Why are all the black kids sitting together in the cafeteria
  - Lawrence Hill – The book of Negroes (US title: Someone knows my name)
  - Debbie Irving – Waking up white
  - Michelle Alexander – The New Jim Crow
  - Trevor Noah – Born a crime
  - Rebecca Skloot – The immortal life of Henrietta Lacks
 - John Howard Griffin – Black like me

- TedTalks
  - Color blind or color brave – Mellody Hobson
  - The little problem I had renting a house – James A White
  - The danger of a single story – Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
  - We should all be feminist – Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
  - How to overcome biaes? Walk boldly toward them – Verna Myers
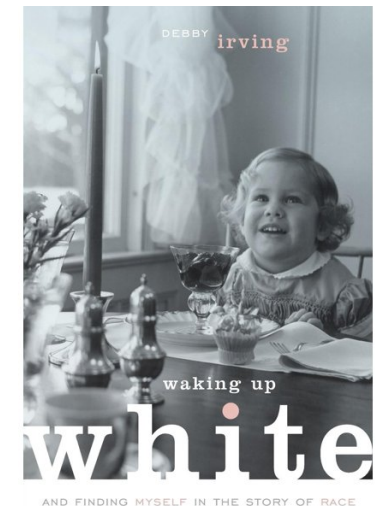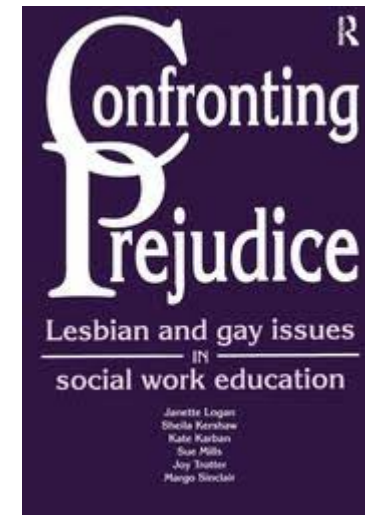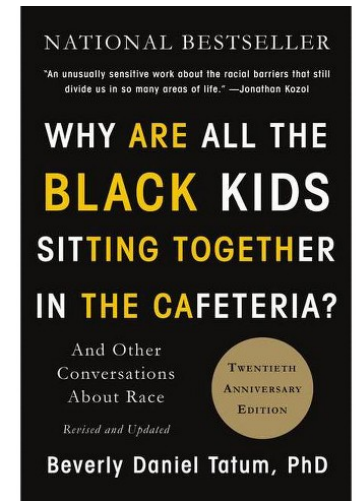
More Resources

- Terms
  - Berkeley: Center for Educational Justice and Community Engagement
    - https://cejce.berkeley.edu/geneq/resources/lgbtq-resources/definition-terms

- PodCast / Discussions
  - NPR Through line
  - NPR Code Switch
  - NPR Rough Translation
  - Driving the Green book
  - While Black
  - Identity Politics
  - Psych Essentials
  - Social Work Podcast
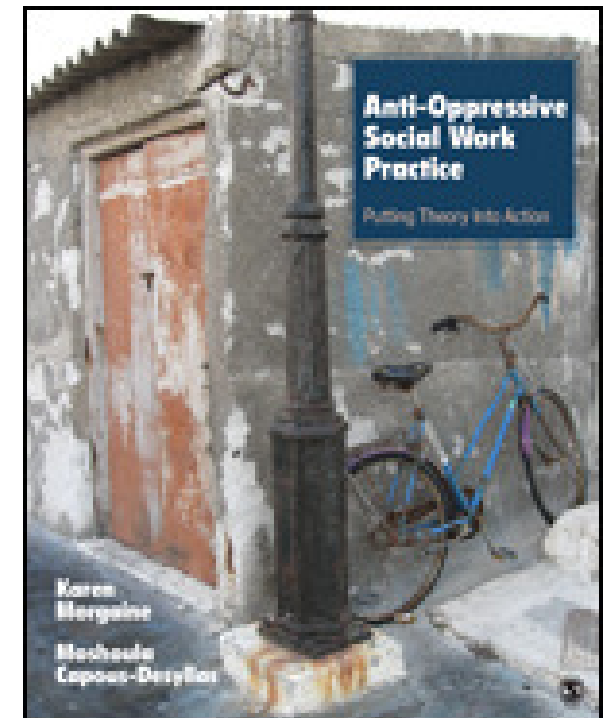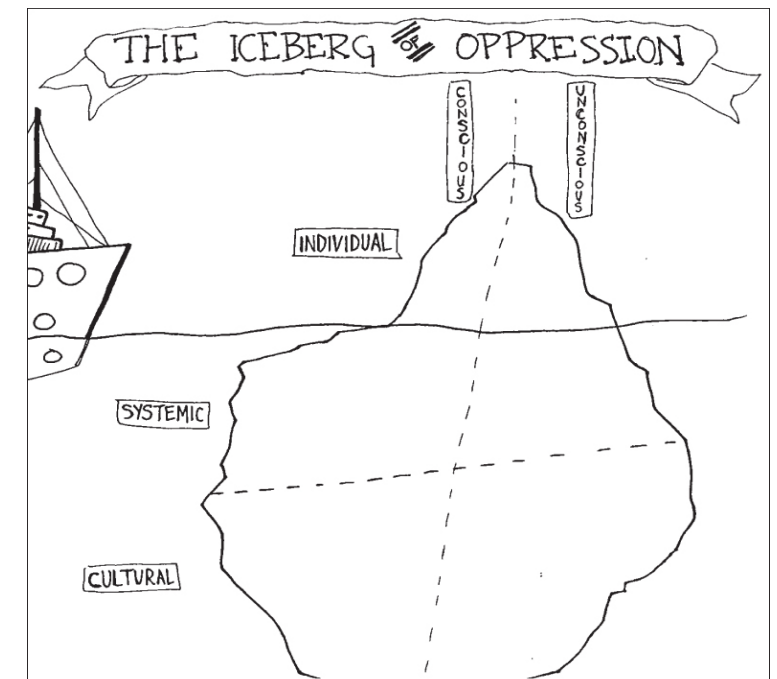
Conclusion

- Lean in and engage in new experiences
- Have real conversation
- Understand the History
- Listen to Lived Experience
- Be authentic and open

- Not to be afraid of change
- Challenge how things have always been
- Engage leadership in conversations / valuable

Evaluation Code:

ANTI-OPPRESSIVE SOCIAL WORK

Thank you!

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