Chapter 4: Racism and White Privilege

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Historical Foundations of Race and Racism

- Are race and ethnicity the same?

Historical Foundations of Race and Racism

- ## Social Construct of Race
  - Early racial classification systems based on physical characteristics paved the way for later forms of racism
  - Physical characteristics alone are insufficient to make distinctions among people
  - Race implies a common descent of heredity

Defining Racism

- Racism
  - Ongoing, multidimensional and dynamic process inherent in the development and maintenance of an institutionalized, hierarchical racial classification system
    - Individual, group and systemic levels
- Racism is built to maintain itself and enabled by racial worldview and institutional racial classification systems
  - Individual, institutional and internalized

Cost of Racism for People of Color

- Costs:
  - Cognitive Costs (mental energy, internalized racism
    - Affective Costs (frustration, irritation, hostility
    - Interpersonal Costs (segregation, misunderstanding, barriers, fear, suspicion and distrust)
    - Physical Costs (hypertension, fatigue, low birth weight, physical violence, outcomes related to healthcare)

White Privilege

- White privilege – positive ways in which Whites benefit from racism
  - Benefits may be unintentional or unconscious
  - May cause simultaneous comfort and guilty
  - Allows Whites the choice to acknowledge racism

- White supremacy – the belief that the superiority of Whites justifies disproportionate access to social and economic resources.

Cost of Racism for White People

- Costs:
  - Cognitive Costs (delusion of superiority, lack of awareness, inability to develop a full range of knowledge)
    - Affective Costs (vary depending on Whites' awareness of racial issues, may include irrational sense of fear of non-Whites, may include anxiety due to guilt)
    - Interpersonal Costs (loss of relationships, limited interactions with people of color, limited social competence)
    - Physiological Costs (emotional dissonance, denial, being "colorblind")

Color-Blind Racial Attitudes

- Color-Blind Racial Attitudes – distortion/minimization of race and racism
  - "I don't see a person's race. I only see them as a person."

Myth of Meritocracy and Focus on Exceptions

- Myth of Meritocracy – the notion that all individuals can succeed "if they work hard enough."
- Focus on Exceptions
  - Reverse discrimination – Whites may deflect their role in perpetuating racism by focusing on times when they were discriminated against by people of color.
  - Projection – the preoccupation of racism of others or the intellectualization of the problem

Eradicating Racism

- Systematic Approach
  - Counselor Self-Awareness:
    - Awareness of one's own attitudes and behaviors regarding racism and racial privilege
    - Counselors of all races are encouraged to reflect on the following areas:
      - Cultural tunnel vision
      - Victim-blaming
      - Limitations of consciousness raising
      - Race-based stereotyping