Framing the conversation

In order to change systems of oppression, we have to learn how they were created and how they're upheld. We also have to have shared language to talk about race and racism. Once we understand how these systems work and have the language to talk about them, we can do the work to be anti-racist and dismantle racist systems.

Below are some common words, phrases, and acronyms to develop a shared understanding of the language we're using and concepts we're talking about.

If you find yourself needing more information to understand the topic, you can click the hypelinks. These are articles, papers, and various media to provide context and additional information. You can also seek out additional information at various places on the internet.

Race, Racism, and Whiteness

Anti-Blackness or **anti-Black racism**: While racism is always discrimination against a group for the color of their skin, anti-Blackness and anti-Black racism are specific to Black folks. When talking about racism a specific group faces, it is important to make that distinction. For example, we see a lot of anti-Asian racist violence due to COVID-19. We see Black folks dying at high rates from COVID-19 because of anti-Black racist policies resulting in poor health for Black folks and lack of access to testing.

Microaggressions: According to Andrew Limbong, microaggressions are the "everyday, subtle, intentional – and oftentimes unintentional – interactions or behaviors that communicate some sort of bias toward historically marginalized groups." *An example of a racial microaggression via @thesconscioukid on Instagram.*

Privilege: In the context of society and advantages, privilege means you have a benefit from proximity to dominant culture. There are many types of privileges, and they are not inherently bad, they just mean that aspect of your life is made easier by proximity to the dominant group. Some examples are: white privilege, male privilege, class privilege, heterosexual privilege, able-bodied privilege.

Examples of Racial Microaggressions

Theme:
Color Evasiveness
Statements that indicate that a white person does not want to acknowledge race.

Microaggression:
"When I look at you, I don't see color."
"America is a melting pot."
"There is only one race, the human race."

Message:
Denying a person of color's racial/ethnic experiences.
Assimilate/acculturate to the dominant culture.
Denying the individual as a racial/cultural being.

Race: Race is a socially constructed classification of human beings, "created by Europeans (whites) which assigns human worth and social status using 'white' as the model of humanity and the height of human achievement for the purpose of establishing and maintaining privilege and power" (Keith Lawrence and Terry Keleher, *Structural Racism*).

Racism: According to Dr. Lauren Alfrey, "Racism is an elastic concept that has multiple meanings and expresses itself in a wide range of practices and outcomes, such as wealth inequality, education inequality, exposure to state violence, life expectancy and mortality rates, incarceration rates, and residential segregation. It can refer to beliefs and attitudes, or what we commonly call prejudice: attributing negative characteristics or values to members of a racially defined group. It also refers to various types of actions, such as discrimination." There are four dimensions of racism, institutional, structural, interpersonal, and internalized.

4 DIMENSIONS OF RACISM

INSTITUTIONAL
Policies & practices that reinforce racist standards within a workspace or organization

STRUCTURAL
Multiple institutions collectively upholding racist policies & practices, ie. society

INTERPERSONAL
Racist acts & microaggressions carried out from one person to another

INTERNALIZED
The subtle & overt messages that reinforce negative beliefs & self-hatred in individuals

INSPIRED BY
RACE FORWARD TRAININGS

White privilege: In 1988, Peggy McIntosh wrote an essay title *White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack*. Today, talk of 'white privilege' is met with defensiveness from white folks due to a lack of understanding. To clear things up, Cory Collins writes, "white privilege should be viewed as a built-in advantage, separate from one's level of income or effort."

White supremacy: In *Rethinking White Supremacy*, critical race theorist David Gillborn quotes Ansley: "[By] 'white supremacy' I do not mean to allude only to the self-conscious racism of white supremacist hate groups. I refer instead to a political, economic, and cultural system in which whites overwhelmingly control power and material resources, conscious and unconscious ideas of white superiority and entitlement are widespread, and relations of white dominance and non-white subordination are daily reenacted across a broad array of institutions and social settings. (Ansley, 1997: 592)."

The image below has examples of overt white supremacy and covert white supremacy. It is depicted as an iceberg because often the bulk of an iceberg is hidden below the surface. Similarly, a lot of white supremacy is not seen as such by larger society so it goes unnoticed.

University of Portland

Overt white supremacy (socially unacceptable)

Using the N-word

Lynching   Hate Crimes

Racial slurs   Burning crosses   KKK

Swastikas   Blackface   Neo-Nazis   Racist jokes

Covert white supremacy (socially acceptable)

Calling the police on Black people   White silence   Talk of being a "post-racial society"

Colorblindness

White parents self-segregating neighborhoods and schools   Eurocentric curriculum   White savior complex

Tone policing   Discriminatory lending   BIPOC as Halloween costumes

Denial of white privilege   "all lives matter" and "blue lives matter"   Racial profiling and "stop and frisk"

Inequitable healthcare

Police brutality   Considering AAVE "uneducated"   School-to-prison pipeline

Claiming revere-racism   Weaponizing whiteness

"There's only one human race"   Mass incarceration

Housing discrimination   English-only initiatives
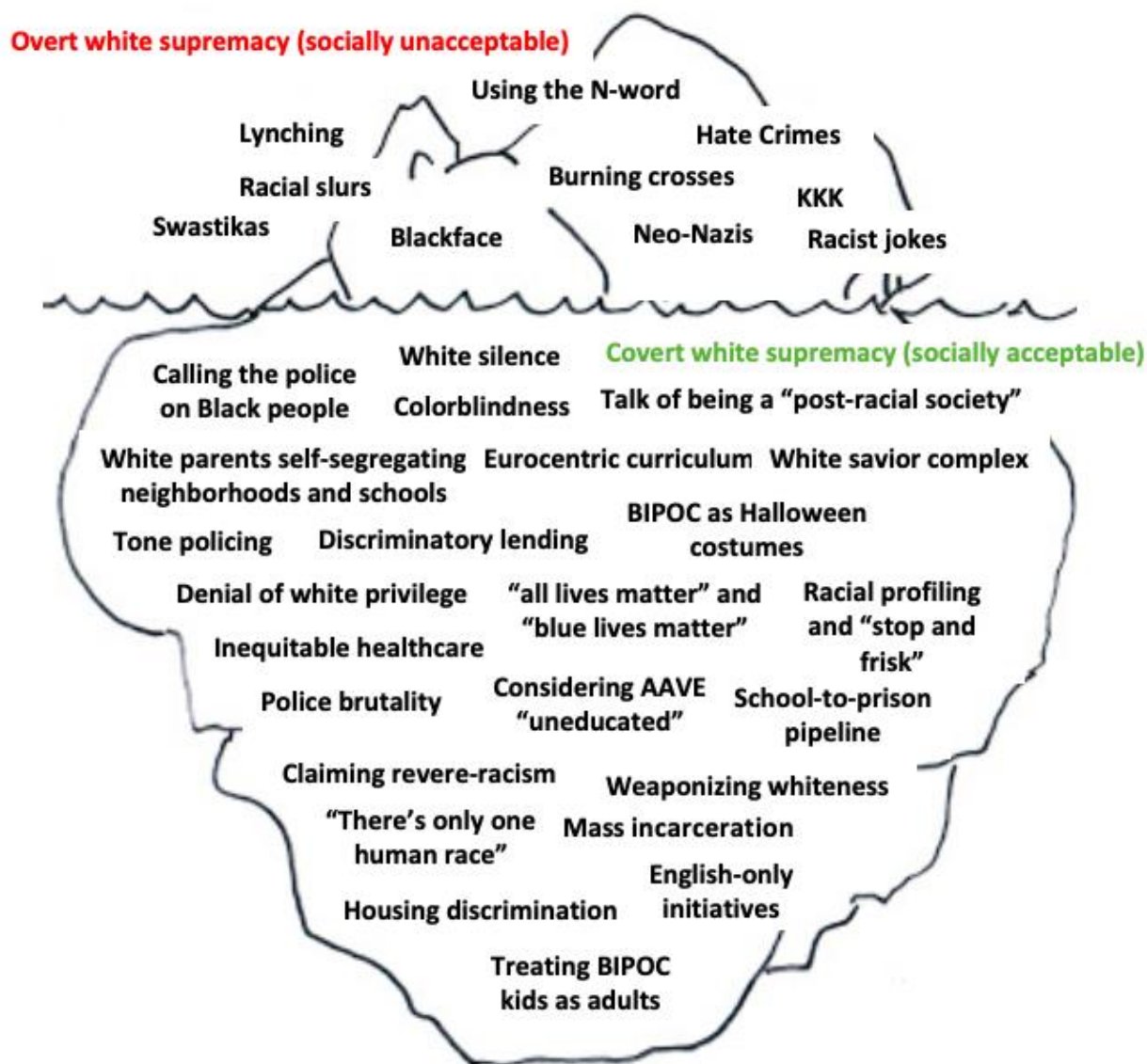
Treating BIPOC kids as adults

Image: Safehouse Progressive Alliance for Nonviolence (2005). Adapted: Ellen Tuzzolo (2016); Mary Julia Cooksey Cordero (@jewelspewels) (2019); The Conscious Kid (2020). Adapted: Olivia Bormann (2020).

Acronyms and Identity

BIPOC: An acronym used to mean "Black, Indigenous, People of Color".

Black vs African American: According to Dr. Gail Thompson, "Black is a general term that includes anyone of African descent, including indigenous Africans, African Americans, Caribbean Blacks, and immigrants. A Black person can live anywhere in the world." (Quoted in *"Black" or*

"African American?" by Stacy Brown).

Individuals will choose to identify differently, but for the sake of inclusivity we will use "Black" to refer to all folks who experience anti-Black racism.

Black vs black: When talking about Black folks, the B should be capitalized because you're talking about a group of people. Historically, the AP style guide has said to not capitalize the B, though Black and non-Black folks have made the case to capitalize. There are many pieces discussing whether or not to capitalize the B, this except from _Why we capitalize the 'Black' (and not 'white')_ in the Columbia Journalism review states:

> "I view the term _Black_ as both a recognition of an ethnic identity in the States that doesn't rely on hyphenated Americanness (and is more accurate than _African American_, which suggests recent ties to the continent) and is also transnational and inclusive of our Caribbean [and] Central/South American siblings." To capitalize _Black_, in her view, is to acknowledge that slavery "deliberately stripped" people forcibly shipped overseas "of all other ethnic/national ties." She added, "_African American_ is not wrong, and some prefer it, but if we are going to capitalize _Asian_ and _South Asian_ and _Indigenous_, for example, groups that include myriad ethnic identities united by shared race and geography and, to some degree, culture, then we also have to capitalize _Black_."

Non-Black POC: "Non-Black People of Color", this refers to people of color who are not Black.

Additional useful definitions

Gender-inclusive language: You'll see and hear the words "folks", "folx", "y'all", and "all" as gender-inclusive alternatives to addressing a crowd as "guys" (the American default is masculinity). Using gender-inclusive language honors the gender identities of all folks involved.

Intersectionality: Coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Intersectionality is a lens through which you can see where power comes and collides, where it interlocks and intersects. It's not simply that there's a race problem here, a gender problem here, and a class or LBGTQ problem there."

Performative allyship: Defined as when someone from a "nonmarginalized group professes support and solidarity with a marginalized group in a way that either isn't helpful or that actively harms that group. Performative allyship usually involves the 'ally' receiving some kind of reward — on social media, it's that virtual pat on the back for being a 'good person' or 'on the right side.'"

Weathering: A term coined by Arline Geronimus to describe the chronic stressors that impact BIPOC folks. The hypothesis states: "Blacks experience early health deterioration as a consequence of the cumulative impact of repeated experience with social or economic adversity and political marginalization." Black folks who can get pregnant are 243% more likely to die during pregnancy or childbirth than white folks. Evidence shows this is partly caused by

weathering, listen to a 31 minute episode of [Code Switch here](#).