

Identifying and Disrupting Your Whiteness: A Workshop Addressing Power & Privilege Toward Anti-Racist Spaces

EquiLearn Virtual Roundtable

Dr. Sharon I. Radd – MAP Center Equity Fellow – MN

TRANSCRIPTION

Robin J.:

Good afternoon and welcome to the *EquiLearn Virtual Roundtable*. My name is Robin Jackson, Products Lead here at the Midwest and Plains Equity Assistance Center, and I'm serving as your Host and Technical Director. Today's *Virtual Roundtable* is entitled *Identifying and Disrupting Your Whiteness: A Workshop Addressing Power and Privilege Toward Anti-racist Spaces*. The term whiteness refers to race privilege, a way of seeing the world and a set of cultural practices that are usually unmarked and unnamed. Whiteness is often unrecognized, particularly by people who identify as white, but pervasive in American society, and a barrier to inclusion and equity. This *EquiLearn Virtual Roundtable*, facilitated by Equity Fellow Dr. Sharon Radd, offers a space to examine one's personal, local, and immediate connections to whiteness and privilege, and consider how to identify and disrupt, rather than perpetuate them. I am your Host and Technical Director, again, my name is Robin and I am joined today by Erin Sanborn who will be serving as my Assistant Technical Director. I will turn it over to Erin.

Erin S.:

Hello, my name is Erin Sanborn. I'm a Doctoral Research Assistant here at the Midwest and Plains Equity Assistance Center. I will be serving as your Assistant Technical Director today. *EquiLearn Virtual Roundtables* are intended to be interactive. Participants are asked to interact in real time via our teleconferencing format. As to reduce noise, we ask that all participants mute their microphones when you are not speaking. Lastly, the video camera function has been turned on. If you have a webcam and you'd like to join us, please feel free to do so by clicking the camera icon at the lower right of your screen. Please feel free to send me any direct chat messages if you're having any kind of connectivity difficulties or have any questions, comments, or concerns. And again, please, if you are not speaking, just remember to mute your microphone. Thank you.

Erin S.:

As we begin today's *Roundtable*, please ensure that you make yourself comfortable, move about as needed, take breaks as needed. And also we want to let you know that alt text is used on all slide images throughout the presentation.

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EquiLearn Virtual Roundtable

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Robin J.:

Thank you, Erin. And one of our goals at the MAP Center is to engage participants in well-defined, content-rich technical assistance, such that knowledge and expertise are shared in a way that results in transformative systemic change, as well as personal reflection and growth. To this end, we aim to make this unique learning available on our website, via recording and transcription. Additionally, sharing photos of today's conversation on our social media platforms. We encourage participants to consider this disclaimer as they share and engage today.

Robin J.:

Lastly, during our Roundtable, we align to the Four Commitments when discussing the topic. First, stay engaged. Second, experience discomfort. Third, speak your truth. And lastly, expect and accept non-closure. It is my pleasure to introduce Dr. Radd, who is today's facilitator. Dr. Radd is an Associate Professor and Program Director for the MA Organizational Leadership Program at St. Catherine's University. She has also Founder and Lead with Conscious Praxis, partnering with education public and non-profit organizations and leaders to foster effective and inclusive leadership. Prior to her current work, Radd was a public-school administrator, professional development facilitator, and school social worker for 23 years. Her research centers on a unique practice of leadership that aims to advance social justice, particularly in the public and non-profit sectors. She explores this practice from the theoretical, conceptual, and empirical study of adult learning, organizational change, and discursive functioning of individuals, groups, organizations, and societies. Now, I will stop sharing and turn it over to Dr. Radd. You are muted.

Sharon R.:

There we go. There we go. Good afternoon, everyone. I—I almost said good morning, but it's afternoon and I'm glad to be here with you today. We're a small group, and that's going to allow us lots of opportunity to, to share reactions, interactions, thoughts, questions, et cetera. I'm going to go ahead and share my screen, which is jumping right into the presentation. If you just give me a moment here to kind of set things up. All right, so the, the slide that you see here is really personalized to me. And I'm going to ask you, as we're in this session, to think about your own self and your own experiences. Particularly as we're going to be talking about this context of whiteness. So I've been learning really ardently about race and racism and whiteness for about 30

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years now. Spent both from a personal perspective or professional perspective and as an academic, as part of my academic work. And as I've gone on--on that learning journey, I have found that my reactions to racism are in these four categories that I feel morally outraged at times, I get emotional. I am, you know, approach it from a cognitive standpoint. I want to learn everything I can and try to understand it. And then I'm really challenged around what do I do? What do I do about this? And so, I'm going to invite you to think about your own self from, from the ways that you react to racism and whiteness. And if you would in the chat today, share with the group why you came to this session and what you're hoping to gain from it. I'm going to give you a couple minutes to do that.

- Robin J.:** Since we are a small group, if you feel inclined to unmute your microphone and speak as well, we also welcome that.
- Sharon R.:** Yes, Thank you Robin. That's a great idea. Anybody want to share into the group? Or in the chat?
- Dinna W-A.:** I will, I'm Dinna Wade-Ardley. I'm always interested in educating and uplifting myself more and more in this area. I think it's very needed. And every chance I get to sit in, or to engage with, or read about it, I'm about that. So that's why I'm here.
- Sharon R.:** Thank you, Dinna. And you're here in the Twin Cities, right? I think we met a long time ago.
- Dinna W-A.:** A long time ago.
- Sharon R.:** You were one of the people I learned from really early in my career. Thank you so much for being here. I'm honored.
- Dinna W-A.:** It's good to see you.
- Sharon R.:** It's good to see you. Anyone else want to share?

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EquiLearn Virtual Roundtable

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Tiffany K.:

My name is Tiffany Kyser. I am a member of the MAP Center Team and also a long-term educator in the Midwest. And I'm here to just learn to understand more deeply with people across racial lines about this idea of disrupting whiteness.

Sharon R.:

Thank you, Tiffany. All right. So, for the other folks on the call, if you would, and you get a chance and you have thought, just share that in the chat. And certainly, as Robin said, we're a small group, so feel free to just chime in as well. So, our agenda for today is really, I'm going to go over some concepts. Then we're going to do some group discussion. And then we'll close with thinking about action steps and, and question and answer.

Sharon R.:

So this slide is one that's perhaps old and familiar to some of you. I'm guessing maybe the Dinna's seen this before. But the question here, what do you see? And often when I put this slide up in front of a group of people, or I'm in a room with people together and put, putting dots on a page. What I hear from people is what they see here is a black, a set of black dots. And they may even say they see some shape in the black dots or something. But often what escapes notice from people is the background against which those drops stand out. And in this context, as we're thinking about this, this notion of, of color does not exist without whiteness. Whiteness is the context in which this exists. And so I want to take us deeper into really "what is this notion of whiteness?"

Sharon R.:

There's been a lot written about whiteness in the academic literature over many, many years. And this is one of the earlier pieces in my own looking through the research. This is from Frankenberg, who defines whiteness as a privilege enjoyed, but not acknowledged, a reality lived in, but unknown. And I think this really, this quote speaks to the degree to which we collectively as a society in particular, people who identify and are identified as white, don't usually acknowledge whiteness. Instead, there's a tendency to focus on the difference. What stands out from the majority. But still the majority, the background, et cetera, is what has defined the context in this country and creates what Lindsey calls a "normalizing category." This sense that the whiteness is

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EquiLearn Virtual Roundtable

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quote unquote "normal," and something else is, is different from that. So we have to ask ourselves, "why is this" and "what does this have to do with race and racism?" And I want to acknowledge the chat that said, Robin shared, that James Baldwin said something similar. So thank you for sharing that Robin.

Sharon R.:

So there are some assumptions that I make when I come to this work and present on this that I want to share with you. And the first is that racism and inequality are systemic. And they operate with historical, structural, institutional, and individual and interpersonal origins and impacts. In this particular model of thinking about systemic racism and systems of inequality, is out of the book that I just coauthored with my colleagues Gretchen Givens Generett, Mark Anthony Gooden, and George Theoharis on *Five Practices for Equity-Focused School Leadership*. When we develop this model of, of thinking about inequity at these levels, because often when people are thinking about inequity, they think about it at that individual interpersonal level. And my co-author, Mark, really likes to talk about how at that level, we have a sense as a society that individual acts of racism, right, are bad, right? And that they're visible and they're unacceptable. And I recognize, I'm saying that in a context now where a lot of, a lot of things have happened in our contexts. And so we could question the degree to which even the idea right now that an individual act of racism is unacceptable, we could question whether or not that's universally accepted as a bad thing. But his point, what he's making is that the institutional, structural, and historical levels are really powerful. And yet they're usually unnoticed and they're poised as something that's neutral. So we don't recognize the way that whiteness plays out across these three levels, the other three levels.

Sharon R.:

The second assumption is that systems, because, because it's a system, racism and other forms of inequality are like a moving walkway. And this is, the year here is 2017, but actually Beverly Daniel Tatum coined this idea long before that. That's her second edition of her book. But the idea is that at the airport where you have the moving walkway, that it carries you along. And so, some people get on the moving walkway and they walk so they get there faster. And so, if we're thinking about how that plays out in this particular metaphor, that if racism is a moving walkway, some people get on

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EquiLearn Virtual Roundtable

Dr. Sharon I. Radd – MAP Center Equity Fellow – MN

the walkway and not only is the walkway moving them along, but they're actually actively moving it along as well. And, and perpetuating racism in a very active way. But Tatum's point here was that even if you just stand still, that society is organized as a racist structure. So even if you stand still, you're passively going in the direction of racism. And so in that way, whiteness is being perpetuated. And that the way to be anti-racist is to turn around and move against the moving walkway. So again, the point here is that the system will keep us moving unless we actively move against it. And in particular, if you think about again, that notion of whiteness at the beginning, with the white page with the black dots on it, the idea here is that often whiteness is not recognized as having a role in this, but it's, it's powerful and everywhere.

Sharon R.:

The third assumption here is that the nature of racism and systems of inequality are such that those with those privileges are encouraged and allowed to avoid and deny this reality. And this quote from Carl Jung has indicated, is intended to indicate that like the, the dominant thinking then is it that's just the way things are, right? But that we need to think about that differently. So even though there's a tendency to focus on the experience or impact of marginalization, discrimination, and oppression. In other words, if you think about, you know, a lot of the work that's been done around educational equity, for example, there's a focus on the, what is the experience and the impact of that marginalization, that discrimination and oppression? And in other words, that which has been constructed as quote unquote "different." We can't ignore that, that, that those things, the marginalization, discrimination, oppression, exist within a context of some things being considered normal and others being considered deficit on the one hand. And number two, that that all exists within that system that operates at the historical, institutionalized, structural, and individual level to create that, those, those experiences of marginalization, discrimination, and oppression. So we need to keep turning our eye towards that system of whiteness and white supremacy. And seeing the, the, the causes and the impacts of that. In other words, if we don't examine the system, we just assume it is the way things are. That it's normal, natural, right? That it's just fate.

Identifying and Disrupting Your Whiteness: A Workshop Addressing Power & Privilege Toward Anti-Racist Spaces

EquiLearn Virtual Roundtable

Dr. Sharon I. Radd – MAP Center Equity Fellow – MN

Sharon R.:

And the last assumption here is that, in particular for people who identify and are identified as white, is that rather than acknowledging race and racism and wrestling with our role in it in real time, those of us who are white have been conditioned to experience and display white fragility, right? So rather than recognizing the impact of whiteness, Robin DiAngelo writes about how instead of that, white people will have a tendency to really want to experience where she refers to as “race comfort.” And so, whenever race is talked about, and in particular white as a racial category, that white people will have a tendency to display this white fragility through tears, anger, et cetera. And so, we hear about white fragility responses across all those four dimensions that I mentioned at the beginning, moral, emotional, behavioral, cognitive, and that it can come out as disbelief, anger, hurt. DiAngelo writes about outward displays of emotion such as anger, guilt, fear, and crying when white people experience that racial discomfort. And also, that demonstrating behaviors such as argumentation, silence, withdrawal, and withdrawing physically, cognitively or relationally. But overall, Moore and Bell write about how in response to facing race, white people have a tendency to resist remedies that involve structural change. And I think this point is particularly important when we're thinking about racism and whiteness, because if you again, think about the triangle and the system of racism and white supremacy, structural changes are required at each level. And it's not just a matter of, even though it's important that each of us as individuals, think about how we can shift the system and change ourselves and keep learning. We won't really see change towards equity that's meaningful unless we engage in that sort of structural change.

Sharon R.:

So I want to just continue to kind of explore this notion of whiteness. But before I do I see there's couple more messages here, okay? And again, feel free to either unmute and ask a question or put something in the chat if you would like. This. This particular quote is from a work, from some work I did with a colleague of mine, Tanetha Grosland, who's at the University of South Florida. And we wrote about whiteness as a powerful construct with historical, institutionalized, structural, discursive, emotional and psychic dimensions that are embedded in a racialized structure of power, privilege, oppression, and exclusion. There's a lot of big words and a lot of big ideas in that

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Identifying and Disrupting Your Whiteness: A Workshop Addressing Power & Privilege Toward Anti-Racist Spaces

EquiLearn Virtual Roundtable

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quote. It's making the point about the system and the ways that whiteness, in particular, if you think about whiteness as a discursive concept, that it's embedded in our words, our actions, rules, et cetera. It's systemic and it's almost like a net.

Sharon R.:

So I want to turn your attention to this diagram here because I really like this definition, and this way of thinking about whiteness. First, that whiteness is an identity or a social position. And so for me as a white person, for example, I have an identity, right? And so we could assign whiteness to me. The second is that it's a, it's a cultural system. And Tiffany shared in our pre-session meeting, and I appreciated this, the work around white supremacy culture. And maybe Tiffany or someone else can put, there's some good links to the work that's been done on white supremacy culture. But in essence, the idea of culture is that a cultural system as a way of seeing things, a set of beliefs. What we see is right or wrong, natural or unnatural, logical or illogical. These judgments, right, about what's okay and what's not. And so, when it comes from a culture of whiteness, whiteness is determining these things, right? So whiteness is determining what's right versus wrong, natural versus unnatural, et cetera. But we have to remember if we're trying to disrupt whiteness, that these cultural norms that have been defined as a part of a system of whiteness are not universal, or they're not universal. And they should not be taken for granted, and need to be questioned. So if we're wanting to disrupt whiteness, we really want to look for what's the cultural system of, of whiteness and how might we disrupt it?

Sharon R.:

And then that bottom set, that bottom is that it's a structural system of advantage and disadvantage. And we really see this in, in public education, right? We see how, with some schools, have more resources and others more facilities, are able to retain higher quality teachers over more time, et cetera. And this is set up in Minnesota. I see it really profoundly here in the Twin Cities metro area. The way even in which different school systems have different sets of resources based upon property values and property taxes, et cetera, right? And that's a system that's setup and its structural, and it results in really predictable sets of advantages and disadvantages over time.

Identifying and Disrupting Your Whiteness: A Workshop Addressing Power & Privilege Toward Anti-Racist Spaces

EquiLearn Virtual Roundtable

Dr. Sharon I. Radd – MAP Center Equity Fellow – MN

Robin J.:

Sharon, as you're talking, the word that keeps going through my head is "standardized." So whiteness and white ways of being is so standardized, particularly in this country, that the, the concept of white folks racializing themselves, because the country has been used to racializing everyone who is Black or Brown, right? Everyone else is raced, and then we're white is a really interesting concept to me. I just recently saw this rant on social media. There was a white man who was upset that he was seeing less and less white people in commercials: "Like all of a sudden, we don't like cars and we don't like food, and we don't like going on vacations." Like you've been so used to seeing yourself, that the idea of seeing anyone else existing in this world doing the same things that you're doing is causing so much dissonance and anger and rage. And he probably doesn't even realize fully where that's coming from.

Robin J.:

And, and I also see this played out in education, like you just said. Particularly when we talk about the so-called like the, the, the gap in between white students and everyone else. As far as grades and things like that. We never stopped, we never stopped to ask the question, we talked about this in the Center. You never stop to ask the question, like really critically ask "why is it white students are the standard, and everyone else has to catch up?" Because I think interrogating that question leads down this road of realizing or accepting the fact that the whole system has been skewed, or at some point saying it's because white students are smarter, and then still not interrogating that idea. I know that was just a brain dump. But I was looking at your assumptions and how they just kind of all flow together. And really in this culminating, I think the idea on Assumption 3 of that's just the way it is. And I think that for me, not interrogating "why is that the way it is?" is at the foundation of a lot of the reason why we just haven't moved progressively much at all.

Sharon R.:

Yeah. There's a lot in what you just said.

Robin J.:

I know.

Sharon R.:

Robin, No, it's, it's really good. And I think if we think about the idea that the system was created, in particular, the system was created by white men for white men,

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Identifying and Disrupting Your Whiteness: A Workshop Addressing Power & Privilege Toward Anti-Racist Spaces

EquiLearn Virtual Roundtable

Dr. Sharon I. Radd – MAP Center Equity Fellow – MN

to have and maintain and build power and resources for themselves, and in particular, I'm talking about resources of wealth, we see that right? We see it over and over again. And then, and then the perpetuation of this sense, that it's the way that it's supposed to be. So the man that you're describing on social media is saying, wait a minute, right? It's not supposed to be that way. Somebody changed this on me. That's not right. And I think we see that really at a large scale with what's happening in our country politically, right? There are some really significant steps moving forward. And we're seeing, you know, Robin DiAngelo talked about white fragility, and you have this sense in the way that DiAngelo talked about it, as it's something that kind of happens in a setting like this, or you know what a professional learning.

Sharon R.:

But what we're seeing in the country with people not only defending their whiteness, but like really violently fighting for the maintenance of white supremacy. And going to extraordinary lengths politically, economically, etc., to maintain it is a whole new level of saying "you don't get to change this," right? And so I think what we're seeing right now, socially and politically, is of a tremendous scale that, that we haven't seen for quite a long time. And is really significant and requires us to stay in the battle. Thank you for sharing that Robin. Anybody else want to chime in?

Sharon R.:

So we've, we've made this point, but I'll just make it again here that whiteness has this invisibility to it. It's both multidimensional and omnipresent. In other words, it's everywhere and it's in every way. This sense that whiteness is everywhere also creates a feeling that it is nowhere, right? That it is the natural or the norm, or what has a priori defined the correct mode of living and being. And this is from Lindsey's work in 2007. And we were just talking about really that the more significant violent efforts to maintain white supremacy in the country. In this session, I really thought of as a way of, of thinking about how does, what are sort of the more micro ways that whiteness exists around us and that we, in particular, from a person with a white identity, how do we perpetuate it, right, and how might we disrupt that?

Identifying and Disrupting Your Whiteness: A Workshop Addressing Power & Privilege Toward Anti-Racist Spaces

EquiLearn Virtual Roundtable

Dr. Sharon I. Radd – MAP Center Equity Fellow – MN

Sharon R.:

So one aspect of addressing that is to start to examine the whiteness, right? Instead of looking at, at what is standing out as, as quote unquote, “different” from the whiteness, how do we start to examine the whiteness? And so, I'll share one more quote with you and then, and then we'll move into a way of thinking about how we can disrupt it. So, when aiming for inclusion, we want to think about how whiteness and white racialized spaces proclaim the espoused intent of promoting equality under the guise that whiteness and white racialized spaces are not in fact raced, but instead normal and neutral. And I think this kind of speaks to what Robin just was talking about in this idea, with the standard of whiteness, right? And, and the idea that that's, that's what sort of everything else and everybody else gets measured against, and the problematic nature of that. Did I represent your idea and decently well, Robin?

Robin J.:

Of course you did, Sharon.

Sharon R.:

Alright. So this, this, I think this helps us start to think about how do we disrupt this? So if we think about the idea that most white racial experience is dys-conscious, dys-conscious, right? And we think about it from these four different ways. The, the conscious *I know that I know*, right? Which for white people, we've been socialized to not notice our own sense of race, right? And, and how, and, and this, this context and experience of whiteness. And then that, *I don't know, that I don't know*, that whole area. And the semi-conscious *I know that I don't know*. But this whole big area and I see this in particular in doing equity work, this seems to come up. *I don't know, but I think that I know*, right? And this is really a difficult area because, you know, I, I, I've even spoken with people who've been really in support of some of the white supremacist activity that's gone on. And, and simultaneously say to me, “you know, like, I'm not racist.” And, and so this idea of, *I don't know, but I think I know* is really challenging because our society right now is so gripped in these positions of certainty.

Sharon R.:

So to examine and disrupt whiteness, we need to build our capacity and strengthen our willingness, right? So skill and will to see and acknowledge it. How do we do that and how do we disrupt it? So. Here we go and we're going to be doing participation

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Identifying and Disrupting Your Whiteness: A Workshop Addressing Power & Privilege Toward Anti-Racist Spaces

EquiLearn Virtual Roundtable

Dr. Sharon I. Radd – MAP Center Equity Fellow – MN

activity again. So either in the chat or by you can just actually unmute. You don't have to raise your hand. I would ask you to share your name if you haven't done so already, your pronouns and your racial identity. And then pick one of these prompts to share an experience that you had where you were dys-conscious of your white lens. One way you notice white culture in your local context, a way that structural arrangements favor whiteness. And then as you're thinking about those things, what's easiest for you to get your head around, like what's easiest to understand and to see, what's hardest. Where, if anywhere, do you tend to take action, and where is it hard for you to see or act? So this is really an opportunity to just share your own observations and experiences of the ways of thinking about whiteness that we've talked about to this point. And the things that you feel are, that you have more capacity or strength towards or that you struggle with.

Robin J.: We would love to hear some voices on this. I think this is really gonna be a rich conversation.

Dinna W-A.: And I'll start again to get us going. I'm Dina Wade-Ardley. I'm she/her. I like, "one way you notice white culture in your local contexts." Just recently, we have been questioned about why we even have, have equity in the schools. It's a new, it's not new, it's...we have groups, local groups, and I'm sure they're all over Minnesota and other places, that are getting together to rally against equity, and oh I forget what the other thing is. All of the critical race theory and all of that. People are really coming out against us having equity for everyone.

Sharon R.: Yeah. Thank you, Dinna. Go ahead, Laura. Thank you.

Laura G.: I'm Laura Gersib. I'm in Lincoln, Nebraska, she/her. I identify as a white woman. And I have two adopted daughters who are Black. And so, one thing that's, that I've been more aware of this past year is just awareness that I have an assumption that if I have something happen, and I go to tell an authority, that I would be believed. And seen through their lens, that that is not always their experience. And so, becoming more aware of that privilege in my own self, that someone would believe me if I said

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EquiLearn Virtual Roundtable

Dr. Sharon I. Radd – MAP Center Equity Fellow – MN

something had happened. And I guess I would echo that last part too, today our governor came out and made some statements against critical race theory and it's just so disheartening to see how actively people are against equity, and actively trying to push it down.

Sharon R.: Thank you, Laura.

Erin S.: I've recently, hi, I'm Erin Sanborn, am a Doctoral Research Assistant at the Midwest and Plains Equity Assistance Center. And I was a former seventh and eighth grade English teacher. And I've recently been thinking about, and reflecting back, just on who I was as a, as a teacher and what, how I would frame and determine what was allowed and not allowed, or what was perfect. Like I used the word "professional" a lot back in the day in my teaching career. And so, like what, what is professional? And then just also really reflecting and thinking back on times that I saw practices, because I was somebody who was in a position to facilitate a lot of learning surrounding equity. And I was on the district equity team, but also simultaneously stood silently a lot of times when I saw my students exposed to very violent practices. And I'm just kind of re-recognizing that, and just thinking through now that I know what I know and am who I am today, how I might do things differently if I was in the same position, or am I doing things differently right now, even?

Sharon R.: And do you have some ideas about that, that you want to share, Erin?

Erin S.: Um, yeah. Yes and no. I mean, I'm not exactly sure recently. Well, okay. One I'm not exactly sure recently why two particular incidents came up. And in order to kind of protect the individuals on the call that are persons of Color, I don't feel 100 percent exposing those individuals to the to the experiences, because they were pretty like pretty violent against both instances, against students who identify as Black, that I just I wasn't necessarily a part of it, but I was there witnessing it, and silently disagreeing with it within myself, but not actively doing anything. And or if I did stand, like speak out about something, it would be behind closed doors later in a way that wouldn't necessarily change anything. Yeah. So I think just more thinking through

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EquiLearn Virtual Roundtable

Dr. Sharon I. Radd – MAP Center Equity Fellow – MN

in the moment when the event is actually happening, how, how I would say and do things differently. And then I had another thought Dr. Radd on what you just asked about something recently, but it has escaped me. So I apologize. If it comes back to me, I'll come off.

Sharon R.:

Ok, great. Thank you, Erin. I think one of the important capacities for white people to develop, will and skill right, is to develop that capacity to speak up in those moments, and it's hard and we can do it. Yeah. Someone else, go ahead Tiffany.

Tiffany K.:

My name is Tiffany Kyser, my pronouns are she, her, and hers. I identify racially as Black, and I identify ethnically across a spectrum of ethnicities. It is hard for me to perceive or act in ways as a person of Color, where I notice whiteness and do not disrupt or take more of the labor. To, to move along as a classroom teacher, to move along the meeting in a grade level team discussion. Whereas an administrator, in an administrator discussion, it's important that for me to notice and name whiteness means to, at sometimes be okay with decentering the labor that I've been conditioned to provide as a woman, and also as a woman of Color. For male educators, and for educators that identify as white or perceived and benefit from, from whiteness. So being okay with seeing, caring for my colleague as not enabling their own growth, to recognize their own whiteness, and work in their own skill and will. But knowing, repositioning, the de-centering of my labor and the centering of their labor as a form of love and care. For my colleagues to grow in their, for my white colleagues to grow in their own racial awareness, racial identity formation, and cognition about themselves as a raced educator, and how their race is always in a room, and how their race is always a mediator to how they understand their pedagogy and practice.

Sharon R.:

Thank you, Tiffany. Really powerful and a lot there.

Evan G:

If I could add. So my name is Evan Glazer. I am, my pronouns are he, him, and his. My racial, I identify as white. Tiffany, your remarks really spoke to me. I have like a deep desire to carry the labor. When there are difficult moments where a white colleague is struggling with something. And sometimes, where I, where I struggle is

Identifying and Disrupting Your Whiteness: A Workshop Addressing Power & Privilege Toward Anti-Racist Spaces

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like I, I may not pick it up because my own privilege or my own implicit bias, recognizing that there is, you know, that someone might be marginalized and they may not recognize it. So I had this, and so I actually worry a lot about my colleagues of Color who tend to take a lot of the ownership of that, of pointing things out or even leading with certain statements. And I feel like oh, I feel like I always want to own a portion of that responsibility so that my colleagues of Color don't. I mean, it must be exhausting to feel like you always have to explain why something may be insulting. And I think to myself like, why is it a person of Color has to explain this? Why can't I explain this? How do I position myself in a way to, to, to recognize that more? So that, you know, that's part of my own growth. But I do, I do worry a lot about the emotional toll that my colleagues of Color carry with them because they are the ones who, that I observe attempt to do the laboring and to do the explaining. It just doesn't, I mean in some ways I'm grateful, but in other ways, it just doesn't sit well with me.

Sharon R.:

And Evan, can you just talk a little more, because I really appreciate the honesty with which you're sharing. Can you talk a little bit more about perhaps what keeps you from whatever feels like the barriers to you kind of speaking up?

Evan G.:

I think it's maybe my lack of awareness to step in like, honestly, if someone nudged me on the side and said, "Evan speak up," I would. So sometimes it just like goes right over my head. And the fact that it goes right over my head is like an acknowledged blind spot. Why does it go over my head? I should be able to just grab it and realize that's something's happening that isn't right. So it's not a fear, not a fear of speaking up. It's more of being able to capture it in the moment. And sometimes just not being able to capture it.

Sharon R.:

Yeah. Yeah. And I'm making an inference or assumption from there that it's not necessarily noticing that something happened, that could use you to stand up for it. And I think that, so, go ahead if I'm incorrect, there, or either way.

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EquiLearn Virtual Roundtable

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Evan G.:

Yeah, that's right. Yeah. Yeah. Exactly. So it's I mean, it could be my own ignorance or lack of observation of something that may feel hurtful to another colleague, that I wouldn't necessarily recognize due to my own whiteness and deep desire to want to be able to pick up on those things. Because they may not perceive, I may not perceive them to be hurtful for white people. But, but wanting to really see that it could be incredibly hurtful to a person of Color.

Sharon R.:

So, what you're speaking to really is what this session is about really, it's about the pervasiveness and the seeming invisibility of whiteness. And I, I, I can share that, that I absolutely, having been doing this work for a very long time, continue to be in situations where I only recognized later, or if someone else has pointed out, that there's whiteness. And I, I, you know, the strategy that I've been trying is just to try to keep noticing it all the time, because it is there all the time, and in so many ways. And so, and really working to notice it is, that's, that's work we have to do as white people.

Evan G.:

Yeah, absolutely. And I think, I look for lots of examples. I think that just makes it more concrete for me. Things, things that I've assumed in my, in my life to be okay because I grew up in white culture and society that was predominantly white people, or formed by predominantly white people. And yeah. And just be, it's almost like I'm looking for an encyclopedia of examples so that I have more, greater sense of conviction to know when something isn't, right?

Sharon R.:

Yeah. And that comes through learning and experience. And there's a tension there because the way that we learn is through hearing. In particular, hearing from people of Color what their experiences are, to help us sensitize. And we don't want to have to place labor, right, on people of Color to always be teaching we white people about what we don't see. I think one of the things that's, I think often technology is the challenge and not a gift to our generations in our current context. But one thing that, that I would recommend, I mean, there's just so much out there in terms of blogging now. And, and that's definitely a place where you can, you cannot add extra burden to someone or, or labor to someone, but learn from their experience. There's, there's just, it's, it's really pretty prolific. And even just through like

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EquiLearn Virtual Roundtable

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googling “white microaggressions,” you could probably be reading for days about things that happen in meeting rooms, and things like, that to find out what are those things that that you could start to pick up on? I want to see I have about four minutes left. And so, is there anyone else who before Robin's going to wrap up, Robin and Erin, but is there anyone who wants to share anything or add anything? Before I do that?

Amy S.:

I will share, I'm Amy Sekhar. I'm also part of the MAP Center. I'm Assistant Director of Technical Assistance, and I identify as a white disabled woman. And I think one of the things that's kind of been rolling around in my head is the way that I notice culture in my local context. And I think for me, the local part is the the community or the dominant identity that I associate the most with, and that's the disability community. And I think it took me a long time to see my whiteness in that space, because I was so used to navigating that space as a place where disability was really the thing. And it was I think there have been several moments where explicitly it spoke, usually a Black disabled woman to kind of call out racism in our own community. That it, it, it's take it, and I think that's one of the things that I'm working on the most now, is how to be at one with my whiteness and also my disability, as something that's distinct from other folks who are in the disability community, who have other intersectional identities and kind of knowing when to make space. And to know that white disability experience is very different from someone who experienced that as a racialized experience. And so, for me, that's a place that I think it's showing up. And then I'm, I've been grappling with over the past several years the most. And I'm trying to kind of figure out.

Sharon R.:

Thank you so much Amy. You brought up that really important word, intersectionality. That is such an important concept that Kimberlé Crenshaw developed, and helps us understand so many things. And so, thanks for bringing that up and we probably need a whole nother session, right, on intersectionality. But thank you for raising that. So, I'm just going to close out the content here with some to-do items for, for us. So as we're thinking about how we examine and disrupt whiteness, Delgado and Stefancic, who wrote the primer and several other pieces on critical race theory in this

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EquiLearn Virtual Roundtable

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book, is one that I turned to again and again, and continues to stand the test of time and be so informative. But they, they write that “[O]nly aggressive color-conscious efforts to change the way things are, will do much to ameliorate misery.” DiAngelo similarly argues that we need to foster psycho-social stamina to engage with race and racism. And with that said, I want to point to the comment that Erin shared in the chat, which is a quote from, I’m forgetting Matias’s first name, and I actually know her.

Erin S.: Cheryl.

Sharon R.: Dr. Cheryl Matias who is, who is a really incredible scholar. And Erin shared that she recently said there’s no such thing as white fragility. White people aren’t fragile. They just have just bought into a master cultural script. And Erin shares this, made her to consider the way white people lean into privilege and fragility in an intentional way, in order to continue to ensure benefits. And I appreciate that so much. So. So here’s some thoughts about, about developing critical consciousness around whiteness, and some questions to be thinking about. And Evan, perhaps you can use this in your meetings. Noticing what’s the racial makeup of the spaces that you’re in. And in those spaces, who has authority and who doesn’t. Assuming that race is a factor, and has influence, and that historical patterns continue. Becoming durable, and this is particularly speaking to white people to tap into your motivation, and to recognize your strength and power, and as Dr. Matias says, as not fragility, durability. And then last question, who is comfortable being centered and benefiting? And who is disadvantaged, marginalized, and absent, and, working to speak up in those spaces. So that is what I have for today. And with that, I offer you this blessing to stay grounded, receive openly, see clearly, and learn deeply. And I’m going to turn it back to Robin to conclude. And I need to stop sharing, correct?

Robin J.: Yes. Thank you, Sharon. Thank you everyone for sharing and being vulnerable today. As we mentioned at the beginning, we would like to take a group picture for our social media. So if you would like to be in that picture, you can come on camera and fix your hair and put on lip gloss, whatever you need to do. But you do not have to be a

Identifying and Disrupting Your Whiteness: A Workshop Addressing Power & Privilege Toward Anti-Racist Spaces

EquiLearn Virtual Roundtable

Dr. Sharon I. Radd – MAP Center Equity Fellow – MN

part of the picture. So you can also stay off camera. And Erin will be taking that picture for us.

Erin S.: All right. Everybody ready? Yes. But wait. Robin, get your pose on. Mallorie, thank you. Yeah. Thank you for joining us. Oh, yeah. 1, 2, 3. Thank you.

Robin J.: Thank you. We just have a couple of housekeeping things to do. Give me a few more minutes of your time and we will let you go here shortly. Give me a second to coordinate this here.

Sharon R.: Angela, thank you for joining us too.

Robin J.: All right. Let me go ahead and share my screen. I saw a post the other day that said “if you don't say you're about to share your screen, is it actually happening?” It is actually happening. Can you all see the slide? Is it visible? Cool. All right. Give me one second here. All right. We want to thank each of you for participating in today's *EquiLearn Virtual Roundtable, Identifying and Disrupting Your Whiteness. A Workshop Addressing Power and Privilege toward Anti-racist Spaces*. We also want to give a special thanks to Dr. Radd for taking the time to be with us today, and to share her expertise and insight. Additionally, we would like to highlight a resource located on our website, and Erin will be sharing that link here shortly. Episode 3 of the MAP Center's Antiracist Vodcast series focuses on a conversation with antiracist leaders. In this episode, we discuss with Dr. Jerry Anderson and Dr. Anthony Lewis how they define antiracist leadership, and the difference between traditional leadership practices and antiracist leadership practice. Also, Erin will drop this in the chat as well for you all to check out our dedicated website with special guest episode information at the *Antiracism Vodcast Series* web page. And also, to subscribe to our dedicated YouTube, and to also delve into all of our Equity Resource Library materials.

Robin J.: Additionally, the U.S. Department of Ed has published some new Covid-19 related guides earlier in the year, that we want to share with you so, you can share it in your networks. Volume one, is *Strategies for Safely Reopening Elementary and Secondary*

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EquiLearn Virtual Roundtable

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Schools. And volume two is the *Roadmap to Reopening Safely and Meeting All Students' Needs*. We encourage you to check them out in order to keep your students safe. And again, these guides are updated as new information comes out of the CDC, and Erin is posting those, or has posted those in the chat.

Robin J.:

Finally, please, please, please follow us on our social media. If you didn't join conversation, you can continue this conversation on social media, on Facebook, at Great Lakes Equity Center or on Twitter at Great Lakes EAC. Feel free to answer this question, "How are you going to apply what you learned today," with the hashtags, MAPEquity, and at GreatLakesEAC. And finally, the PSQ link has been posted a few times in the chat. We do take your feedback very seriously, and we incorporate it into all of our professional learnings. So please take a moment to fill out our PSQ for today's *Virtual Roundtable*. Thank you all for joining us.

Sharon R.:

Thanks, everyone for joining. It was really great to be with you today.

Tiffany K.:

Thank you, everyone.

Malorie M.:

Thank you, everyone.

Evan G.:

Thanks so much.

[End of Audio]