

*Promoting Racial Literacy
in Schools:
Differences That Make a Difference*

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Things to know about REC training

- It's going to get emotional
- Emotion not just good thing, it's Jedi Knight good
- Courageous noticing of racial elephants IS courage
- You will feel urge to hide or run away
- Do your best not to run away
- Don't stray into the future
- Stay in the present
- CLCBE through the stress- don't take a break
- I believe in you enough to challenge you
- It's going to get emotional

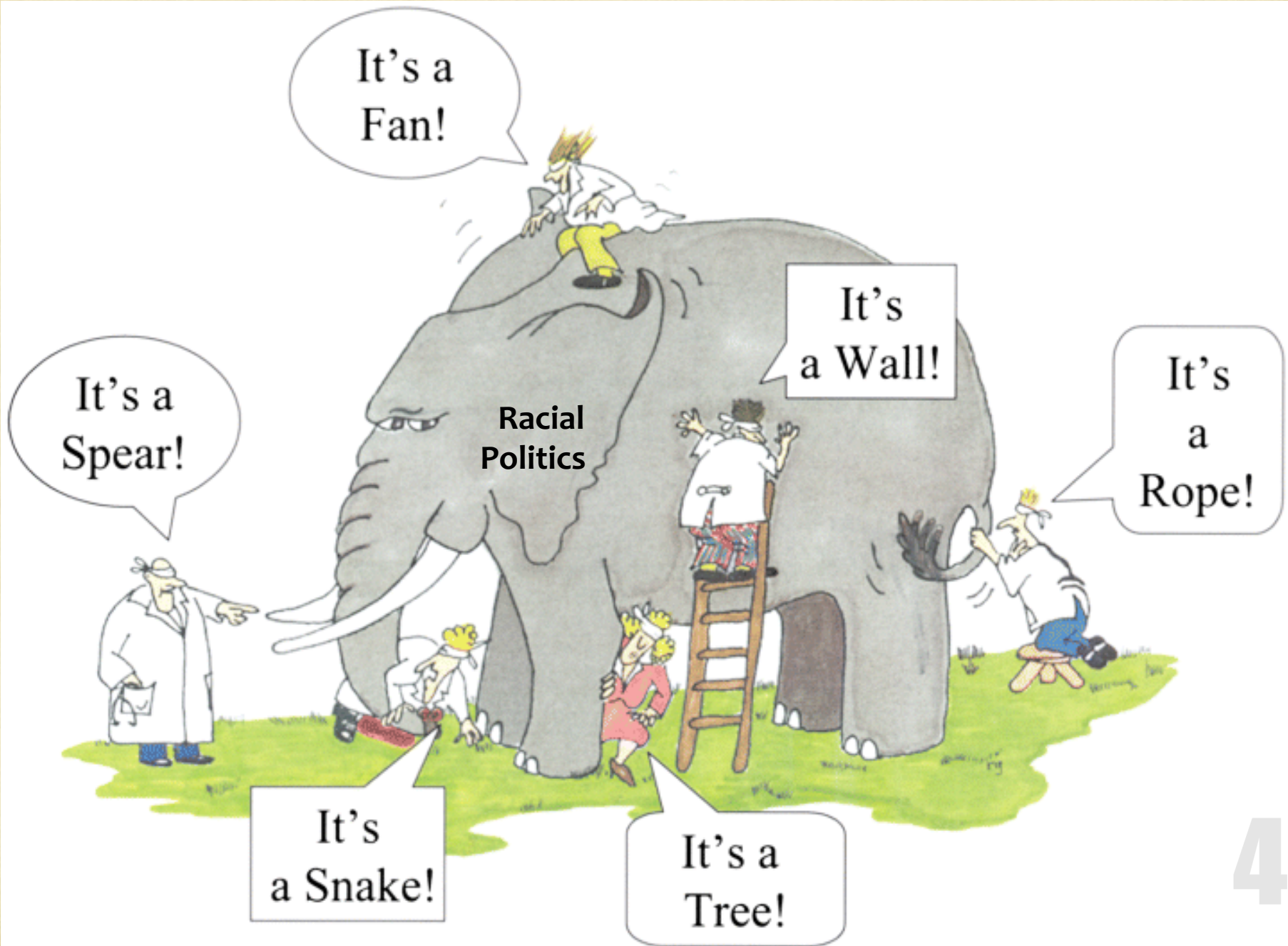
PROMOTING RACIAL LITERACY IN SCHOOLS

Differences
That Make a
Difference



HOWARD C. STEVENSON





It's a Fan!

It's a Snake!

It's a Wall!

It's a Rope!

It's a Snake!

It's a Tree!

Racial Politics

Seeing Diversity & Diversity of Stress- Elephant is Both-And

- We judge world from our unique perspective -“**My view, my study, my experience of Elephant**”
- *Understanding Elephant is **Both-And** re: sight*
 - unique blindness and special sight
- *Understanding Elephant Both-And re: stress*
 - My viewpoint is unique and differentially stressful
 - For some discovery is exciting, for others enormous stress
 - What do you see when you see the elephant in the room?
 - A reasonable definition of diversity- uniquely blind, uniquely visionary, and uniquely stressful

Racial Literacy- Assumptions

1. Racial Encounters (FTF) Matter, not Race Symbols
2. Racial Stress MATTERS, not just General Stress
3. Racial Competence, not Racial Character.
4. Teaching Contexts are Socialization Jungles of Avoidant Racial Coping
5. We Can Resolve Racial Stress in Everyday Life

TAKE HOME POINTS

1. Feeling overwhelmed (racial fight, flight, or fright) about what to do during a racial face-to-face encounter in our work is **human**.
2. Avoiding that feeling and pretending it doesn't affect your work is also human, but is still **incompetence**, unprofessional and **unethical**.
3. Racial **stress impairs** your thoughts, behaviors, and emotions, and thus your relationships with clients and colleagues
4. Racial stress is more **observable, manageable** and **resolvable** than systemic racism, but only if you face it.
5. Asking for help, seeking knowledge, and **practicing** how to manage racial stress makes you more smart, competent, ethical, confident, and **COURAGEOUS**.
6. Racial literacy is not about blaming others or myself, but about how well I can read, recast and resolve a racial conflict (and **not run away**).

Calculate it, Locate it, Communicate it:

Racial Stress Mindfulness & Management

- Calculate it
 - On a scale of 1-10, how stressful was it? Did it shift, spike?
- Locate it
 - Find in your body where you feel the stress, be detailed
- Communicate it
 - Tell yourself, “I’m feeling stressed at the level of 9 and I feel it in my left leg that’s twitching uncontrollably.”
 - Tell a trusted friend
 - Disclose appropriately within the dynamics of your work
- Breathe and Exhale

Calculate, Locate, and Communicate:

Self/Other-Observation Skills

- Did you notice anything about YOURSELF as you were drawing, sharing, listening?
 - Feelings, thoughts, body reactions, memories you were having?
 - about how other people see you?
- Did you notice anything about your PARTNER as he/she was sharing?

Racial Socialization, Trauma & Literacy Interventions (Stevenson, 2003-2014)



- **PLAAY project**
 - Movement and cultural style in-the-moment
 - Basketball, martial arts, parent coaching
 - CPR group therapy, barbershop passion
- **Shape-Up- Barbershop Project for Black Men**
 - HIV/AIDS Safe Sex Skills Building (L. & J. Jemmott)
 - Retaliation Violence Reduction Skills Building
- **The ViRUS Initiative- Villages Raising US**
 - So what if it takes a village to raise a child . . . ?
 - B-HURT- (Barbershops Healing Underlying Racial Trauma)
 - [Oldheads Schoolin' Youngboys Schoolin' Oldheads](#)
- [Forward Promise](#)
- All use in-the-moment interventions and racial literacy curricula

Racial Literacy Factors

-the ability to read, recast, and resolve racially stressful encounters, Stevenson, 2014

○ Racial stress

- “Race-related transactions between individuals or groups and their environment that emerge from the dynamics of racism, **and that are perceived to tax or exceed existing individual and collective resources** or threaten well-being” (Harrell, 2000)
 - intra- & interpersonal; anticipatory, in-the-moment & reflective;
 - **Vicarious** racial stress – witnessing others stress & need for protection
 - **Practicing** Appraisal/Reappraisal of racial stress (low, med, severe)

○ Racial encounters

- Past, in-the-moment or anticipated interactions that tax individual self-regulation of emotions, physiology, cognitions and voice
- **Encounters** occur between and within individuals

○ Racial Coping and Racial Coping Self-Efficacy

○ Racial Assertiveness

Affection (“Stickin’ To”-Affirmation)

- Physical nurturance (Touch to affirm)
- Emotional nurturance (Share/Teach to affirm)
- Cultural nurturance (Appreciate cultural legacy & supports)

Correction (“Gettin’ With”-Reconciliation and Reappraisal)

- Physical accountability (Touch to redirect and reconcile)
- Emotional accountability (Reconcile about surviving game)
- Cultural accountability (Teach reappraisal/negotiation of R/E stress /game)

Protection (“Watchin’ Over”)

- Physical monitoring (Touch to locate and defend)
- Emotional monitoring (Predict how youth might feel)
- Cultural monitoring (Track effects of R/E stereotyping/stress/game)

Connection (“Bonding and Bridging Across”)

- Physical networking (Physical presence in career & social mobility contexts)
- Emotional networking (Reframing social networking as emotionally meaningful)
- Cultural networking (Making social networking culturally congruent)

Racial Microaggressions

(Pierce, 1970; Sue, 2007; May–June American Psychologist 271Vol. 62, No. 4, 271–286)

- *Racial microaggressions are brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color (p. 271)*
- *Microassaults*
- *Microinsults*
- *Microinvalidations*

Which age group of children are most likely to be expelled from school the most?

- Elementary School
- Middle/Junior High School
- Upper/High School

Why do we need a racial literacy?

- We avoid or over-react to face-to-face racial conflicts
- Legal dismantling of racism won't heal trauma
- Skills to see and resolve racial conflicts are lacking
- Racial literacy demands *competence* not character
- Unaddressed racial conflicts hurt health and learning
- Resolving stress is easier than curing systemic racism

Courage is Seeing Yourself as the Racial Elephant

- What did I notice about myself in the moment?
- How stressed was I & where did it affect my body?
- What did I hold back out of fear?
- If I had a do-over, what would I say or do differently to read, recast, and resolve the encounter?
- Do I have healthy racial comeback lines?
- Am I prepared for the next face-to-face racial encounter?

Strategic Plan for an Applied Diversity Mission

- If leaders don't define racial literacy as core to canon, it will remain the rejected orphan of pedagogical interest
 - Subject to abuse, ridicule, hazing, avoidance, & inferiority
- Key Contexts of Racial Threat?
 - Hiring, Mentoring, Professional Development, Therapy Interactions, Parent-Counselor Conversations; Home Visits; Others?
 - Practice/Roleplay challenging & stressful diversity situations until you
 - define core coping competencies and tie them to mission statement
 - create evaluation form of personnel using core diversity competencies
 - give feedback to personnel based on those core competencies
- Why can't we include a case example of a common racial struggle going on in your organization in the hiring interview?
 - Expect candidate to describe how s/he will handle the situation
 - Judge their competency or potential for competence

Elephant Attention

Howard C. Stevenson

Its not about the blame.

Not trying to make you feel guilty.

It's not just about you. It's the filthy way we both ignore the elephant in the room.

I deplore the card games, the slurred names, and fanning the politically correct flames.

It's not even about the shames that we can't mention, 'cause the silencer on the racial tension is the doom, that we presume.

I'm not trying to build fences or get too intense, or bait your defensiveness; but my sixth sense says that it's senseless that we can't even mention or make reference to **that** boil waitin' to bloom,

or **that** cloud of "racist" that looms large over the elephant standing like a dusty heirloom in the corner of the dusty room.

Were we crazy thinking that we could polish away the rusty with a broom, or sweep away this mess, like it was the wind, tsunami or monsoon that blew in this unrest of the racial?

No. It was our musty elephant that exhumed up & dragged in the fume.

No broom can clean this spew up, that we all threw up.

We need a bigger tomb to bury the sorrow and the worry that years of fears have brewed up, pretending that the skin color didn't bother you or father me; didn't other me or mother you.

We both know that the dark will make you holler and bring out that other you.

We both know that you're afraid that the darker brother is gonna smother you 'til you're blue.

No need to sweat it, I get it.

Everybody in the lighter hue **and** the darker hue has got the same fear of the darker smother brother too.

So don't hate the player or the shame that the racial blame keeps wreaking. Hate the racial game.

Cause it's way too insane if you keep sneaking and freaking about every time the elephant wants a shout out.

Just say hello and ask if he wants to stay or go and then we'll all know whether it's okay to mention the tension or find the right intervention for our negative emotions.

Because ignoring the snoring in the corner is boring and elephants won't leave without attention.