

Mendell Affinity Group for White Staff and Parents Challenging Racism
Meeting 1: November 18, 2019

Agenda

Welcome and Objectives for today; Scheduling plan

Introductions:

- Name
- Role at the Mendell
- One hope for this group
- One fear (optional)

Norms – any additions or changes?

- **Be Present:** We know that when we are together, the time is precious
- **Be Engaged:** We know we are stronger as a team when we engage in productive conflict and all bring our voices to the table
- **Be Respectful:** We know we are all responsible for creating a safe space to share; create an atmosphere of warm invitation (not blame)
- **Be Mindful:** We know that each of our views are important and we will approach each other with a spirit of generosity
- **Dare to Be Open and Welcome Discomfort:** Moments of vulnerability and humility are often the greatest teachers; lean into discomfort - try it on
- **Maintain Confidentiality:** What's learned, leaves; what's said, stays. If we are sharing others' experiences who are not part of the group, ask their permission first or share in a way that maintains their anonymity.

Additions from the Group:

- Assume we are good people.
- Challenge each other, starting with inquiry.
- Use I statements.

Learning More about Each Other as White People

Up to 5 minutes each to answer any or all of these questions:

1. How would you describe your ethnic heritage?
2. Are there other key identities that influence your experience as a White person and an ally to people of color, such as your religion, class background, or the part of the country (or other country) where you grew up?
3. What was the racial/ethnic composition of your neighborhood and/or schools growing up?
4. What is the racial/ethnic composition of your children's schools, neighborhood, family, and/or social circle now? For example, if you had a party with 20 people this weekend, including your closest family and friends, what would the racial/ethnic composition of that party be?

5. What past opportunities, if any, have you had to learn about the history or current realities of racism in the United States, and Boston in particular?
6. What past opportunities, if any, have you had to gather with other White folks to enhance your effectiveness as an ally to people of color?

Closing: Highlight of today's conversation (something that touched you or was helpful)

Mendell Affinity Group for White Staff and Parents Challenging Racism
Meeting 2: November 25, 2019

Agenda

Welcome and Objectives for Today

Reminder of Norms

- **Be Present:** We know that when we are together, the time is precious
- **Be Engaged:** We know we are stronger as a team when we engage in productive conflict and all bring our voices to the table
- **Be Respectful:** We know we are all responsible for creating a safe space to share; create an atmosphere of warm invitation (not blame)
- **Be Mindful:** We know that each of our views are important and we will approach each other with a spirit of generosity
- **Dare to Be Open and Welcome Discomfort:** Moments of vulnerability and humility are often the greatest teachers; lean into discomfort - try it on
- **Maintain Confidentiality:** What's learned, leaves; what's said, stays. If we are sharing others' experiences who are not part of the group, ask their permission first or share in a way that maintains their anonymity.

Additions from the group's first meeting:

- Assume we are good people.
- Challenge each other, starting with inquiry.
- Use I statements.

Learning More about Each Other as White People - those who did not take a turn last time

Up to 5 minutes each to answer any or all of these questions:

1. How would you describe your ethnic heritage?
2. Are there other key identities that influence your experience as a White person and an ally to people of color, such as your religion, class background, or the part of the country (or other country) where you grew up?
3. What was the racial/ethnic composition of your neighborhood and/or schools growing up?
4. What is the racial/ethnic composition of your children's schools, neighborhood, family, and/or social circle now? For example, if you had a party with 20 people this weekend, including your closest family and friends, what would the racial/ethnic composition of that party be?
5. What past opportunities, if any, have you had to learn about the history or current realities of racism in the United States, and Boston in particular?
6. What past opportunities, if any, have you had to gather with other White folks to enhance your effectiveness as an ally to people of color?

What themes did you notice? What surprised you, touched you, or struck you?

Developing a Common Framework about Race and Racism
(Elbow partners or full group: reactions, disagreements, additions, other examples)

Moving the Race Conversation Forward (systemic racism, 4 minute video)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LjGQaz1u3V4>

Terminology and Definitions: Read sheet individually

Aamer Rahman (Fear of a Brown Planet) - Reverse Racism (3 minute video)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dw_mRaIHb-M

Handout on Continuum of Anti-Racist Organizations
<https://racc.org/wp-content/uploads/buildingblocks/foundation/Continuum%20on%20Becoming%20an%20Anti-Racist.%20Multicultural%20Institution.pdf>

Handout on Microaggressions
<https://www.sph.umn.edu/site/docs/hewg/microaggressions.pdf>

Closing: Highlight of today's conversation (something that touched you or was helpful)
Invitation to share ideas for future meetings

Terminology and Definitions

Institutional racism - When societal institutions, such as educational, criminal justice, political, or economic institutions provide more resources, rights, and other advantages to people of one race than another. Example: When charged with the same crime, a black male is six times more likely to go to jail than a white male.

Systemic racism - Inequities across multiple institutions that allocate advantage and power based on race or ethnicity. Example: The school to prison pipeline.

Interpersonal racism - When a White person mistreats a person who is or they perceive to be a person of color, intentionally or unintentionally, based on race or ethnicity. Example: Calling a person of color a racial or ethnic slur.

Internalized racism - When an individual of color comes to believe prejudiced ideas about himself or herself, or others who share his or her race or ethnicity, and even actively participate in institutionalized racism. Example: A police officer of color who shoots an unarmed African-American man (and not others).

Racist microaggressions - The verbal and nonverbal slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate White people's stereotyped assumptions about people of color and/or that White people are more important or valuable than people of color. Examples: Mistaking a Latino manager for a custodian; a White customer getting more attentive service in a store than a customer of color (see <http://sph.umn.edu/site/docs/hewg/microaggressions.pdf>)

Reverse racism - A term generally used by White people to describe acts of prejudice by people of color against White people. While such behaviors occur, they are not racism because they are not connected to a larger system of oppression. Examples: None.

Race - Human categories created to justify disparate treatment, including slavery, colonialism, and other economic exploitation. The categories are based on appearance (skin color, hair texture, the shape of eyes, nose, and mouth, etc.) and ethnicity.

Racial identities may include: African heritage (Black), Asian heritage (including Arab), Latina/Hispanic heritage, European heritage (White), and Indigenous heritage (in the U.S., Native American).

Everyone who is not European heritage may be called people of color, people of the global majority, or people targeted by racism (and genocide).

Ethnicity - The national origin(s) of one's parents, grandparents, and other ancestors.

Mendell Affinity Group for White Staff and Parents Challenging Racism
Meeting 3: December 2, 2019

Agenda

Welcome Back - any questions or reflections from last week

Handout on [8 White Identities](#) by Barnor Hesse and [Summary of Stages of Racial Identity Development](#) based on Joy and John Hoffman's and others' work
Discuss in pairs and then in full group

Watch and discuss "Eyes on the Prize" episode about school desegregation in Boston ("busing")
<https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/video/eyes-prize-keys-kingdom-1974-1980>
How does this history continue to impact our city, BPS in general, and the Mendell?

Recommendation if you want to learn more:
<https://truthlearningchange.com/can-we-talk/> This video offers in-depth interviews with individuals who were personally impacted by school desegregation and busing in Boston in the 1970's.

Closing: Highlight of today's conversation (something that touched you or was helpful)

Meeting 4: December 9, 2019

Agenda

Welcome Back - any questions or reflections from last week

Update on attendance policy discussion

Watch and discuss, "How to Overcome Your Biases: Walk Boldly Toward Them" TED Talk by Vernā Myers

https://www.ted.com/talks/verna_myers_how_to_overcome_our_biases_walk_boldly_toward_them?language=en

Pairs: How can we walk boldly toward staff, parents, and students of color at the Mendell?

Full group discussion

Think about the relationships you currently have with people of color, particularly students, families, and staff in the Mendell community.

What is going well in those relationships?

What challenges do you experience in those relationships?

How does your personal history as a White person influence your strengths and challenges as you build those relationships?

Pair discussions followed by full group discussion

Current issues of race in the Mendell community more broadly: pair conversations

- 1) How do issues of race impact your school, including:
 - a) relationships with staff, students, and families; and
 - b) specific areas such as instruction, opportunity gaps, before and after school programming, discipline, family engagement, hiring and retention, decision-making, etc.?
- 2) What successes and challenges have you observed in addressing issues of race at the Mendell?
- 3) When you think about playing a leadership role in addressing issues of race at the Mendell, what strengths and challenges do you have rooted in your personal history as a White person?

Notes regarding shared issues

Closing

Meeting 5: January 6, 2020

Welcome - any thoughts from last week?

Current issues of race in the Mendell community more broadly: full group discussion

- 1) How do issues of race impact your school, including:
 - a) relationships with staff, students, and families; and
 - b) specific areas such as instruction, opportunity gaps, before and after school programming, discipline, family engagement, hiring and retention, decision-making, etc.?
- 2) What successes and challenges have you observed in addressing issues of race at the Mendell?
- 3) When you think about playing a leadership role in addressing issues of race at the Mendell, what strengths and challenges do you have rooted in your personal history as a White person?

Priority issues:

Family engagement team - Stand Against Racism Week, Black Lives Matter - making that work more intentional, and involve more adults in the work with students, supporting staff with student activities and conversations

*Continue to create spaces like this one: another affinity group? Invite community into a learners' stance

*Follow up for this group

Connection between these issues at the Mendell and more broadly: e.g. another school

*(Curley?) and/or a JP community group

All adults by last name or by first name

Intersection between disability and race - how to treasure every student, and teach children to treasure one another

Self-segregation by White (and possibly other) students

*As White parents, how do we talk with our children about race (our White children and our children of Color) - reach out to other affinity group about whether it should be a full community event (help from Wee the People?)

Supporting families that are less involved at school to become more involved

"Not My Idea" - children's book about a White child with questions about race

Book group: "White Kids: Growing Up with Privilege in the U.S."

Share out from the affinity group for parents and staff of color - Julia

Pairs: Brainstorm ideas for next steps

Full group discussion and notes

Choose at least one to implement now

Complete evaluation form

Closing:

- Name
- What was most helpful or meaningful in our 5 weeks together?
- What is one next step you personally plan to take?

January 6, 2020

Name (optional) _____

Parent or Staff Member? (optional) _____

1. What was most useful about the affinity group?

2. What could be improved about the affinity group?

3. Please respond to these statements on a scale from 1 to 10 (1 = strongly disagree; 10 = strongly agree):

Statement	Rating (1 to 10)
a. Because of my participation in this group, I feel more able to take initiative to address issues of race at the Mendell.	
b. Based on my observations, I feel that most or all group participants are now better able to take initiative to address issues of race at the Mendell.	
c. I would recommend that other BPS schools conduct a similar group.	
d. If a friend or colleague asked my opinion, I would recommend that they participate in a similar affinity group at their school.	

4. I would be interested in being trained to conduct similar affinity groups at the Mendell and/or for other BPS school communities. If yes, be sure to include your name on this form, or reach out to Becky Shuster separately (rshuster@bostonpublicschools.org).

If yes, provide your name here (optional): _____