"What does this mean? Why is it important? So what do we need to do about it? Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better.” --Maya Angelou. Now what? What implications are there for advising practice?

Communal Agreements
- Respect
- “I” Statements
- One voice, all ears
- Confidentiality

As white people, we are often more concerned with being perceived as a “good white person,” rather than striving towards social justice.

Definition of Terms

Anti-oppressive (Clifford, 1995, p. 65, as cited in Burke & Harrison, 2002): “An explicit evaluative position that constructs social divisions as matters of broad social structure, at the same time as being personal and organizational issues. It looks at the use and abuse of power not only in relation to individual or organizational behavior, which may be overtly, covertly, or indirectly racist, classist, sexist and so on, but also in relation to broader social structures for example, the health, educational, political and economic, media and cultural systems and their routine provision of services and rewards for powerful groups at local as well as national and international levels. These factors impinge on people’s life stories in unique ways that have to be understood in their socio-historical complexity” (p. 132).

Implicit bias: Positive or negative belief or attitude towards a person or group that is held on an unconscious or subconscious level

Multiple identities/intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989): “I argue that Black women are sometimes excluded from feminist theory and antiracist policy discourse because both are predicated on a discrete set of experiences that often does not accurately reflect the interaction of race and gender.... Because the intersectional experience is greater than the sum of racism and sexism, any analysis that does not take intersectionality into account cannot sufficiently address the particular manner in which Black women are subordinated” (p. 140).

Racial ignorance (Cabrera & Corces-Zimmerman, 2017): “This ignorance allows White people to dismiss claims of racism or view them as isolated and individualized. It also encourages White people to ignore and discredit claims of racism, as if closing their eyes and covering their ears to the possibility that systemic racism still exists will make it disappear” (p. 302).

Savior mentality (Aronson, 2017): “Ultimately, people are rewarded from ‘saving’ those less fortunate and are able to completely disregard the policies they have supported that have created/maintained systems of oppression” (p. 36).

Tokenism (Nieman, 2016): “Experientially, tokens are rare persons of their demographic groups within the context, especially in contrast with majority, numerical dominants.... Due to conscious and unconscious biases, including racial stereotypes, it may seem quite obvious and natural for white faculty peers, students, staff members, community at large members, and university administrators to believe that matters involving race and/or diversity are best handled by the nonwhite persons in the context” (pp. 452, 454).
White Fragility (DiAngelo, 2011): “White Fragility is a state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves” (p. 54).

White guilt (Iyer, Leach, & Crosby, 2003): “describes the dysphoria felt by European Americans who see their group as responsible for illegitimate advantage held over other racial groups.... The self-focused nature of White guilt leads to an overriding concern with making restitution to the disadvantaged. This limits White guilt as a basis of support for racial equality” (p. 118).

White privilege (DiAngelo, 2011): “White people in North America live in a social environment that protects and insulates them from race-based stress.... Whites are rarely without these ‘protective pillows,’ and when they are, it is usually temporary and by choice. This insulated environment of racial privilege builds white expectations for racial comfort while at the same time lowering the ability to tolerate racial stress” (p. 55).

Critical Race Theory (Solórzano & Yosso, 2016)
- Racism is ubiquitous.
- Challenge the dominant narrative.
- Welcome diverse perspectives to challenging racism.
- Racism is situated in a historical and contemporary context.
- Commit to social justice.

So What?

Guiding questions for personal reflection now and in the future:

1. How did you get into this work? Why does this matter to you?
2. Describe important moments and experiences that shaped your lens on social justice from a privileged perspective. What positive experiences and moments of struggle did you encounter?
3. Describe examples in your own daily work that you have changed, restructured, reframed, etc. as a result of your journey toward understanding social justice within higher education and advising.
4. What are the important lessons you learned along the way?
5. How do the theoretical frameworks that resonate with you apply to your examples, experiences, and lessons learned?

Notes and personal reflections:
Now What?

- Implications for the “advising as teaching” model and that advisors are “experts”
- Critical appreciative advising
- Advocacy as an advisor competency
- Impacts on understanding the power dynamics of the advisor-student relationship and implications for mandatory advising
- Advising is a political activity. Even though politics are not directly discussed, any discussion of racism is historically and currently rooted in major political events.

References and Resources


