

Understanding Systemic Racism

Association of Paroling Authorities International Conference
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Land Acknowledgement

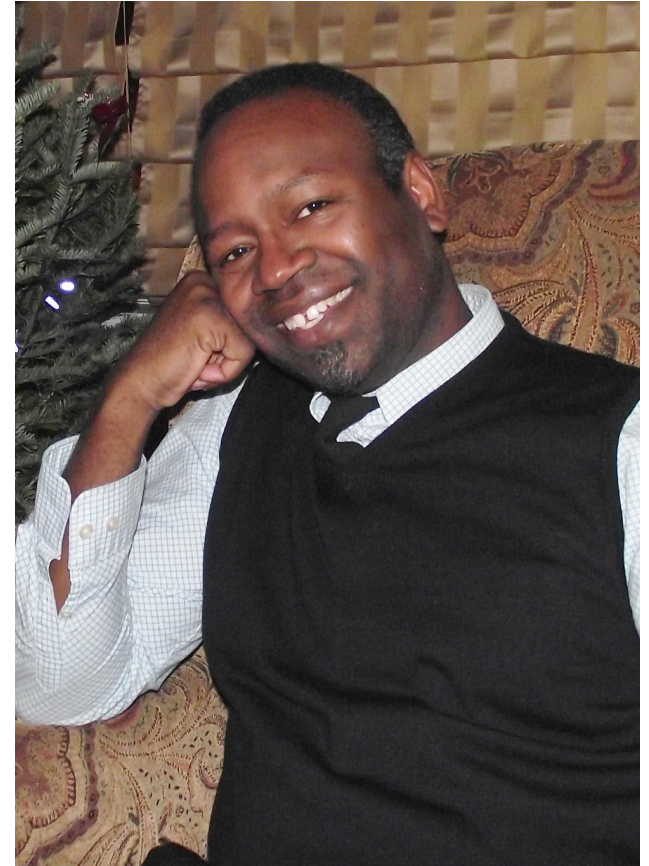


RSW

Patrick
Hunter 2015

Who is Robert Wright?

- Executive Director:
 - The Peoples' Counselling Clinic
 - African Nova Scotian Justice Institute
- Former:
 - Race Relations Coordinator DDSB
 - Correctional Mental Health Worker (WSP)
 - Child Welfare Administrator
 - Ex. Dir. Child & Youth Strategy
- Pioneer of Impact of Race and Culture Assessments



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Why This Topic

- There is an increasing understanding that overrepresentation of Indigenous, and racialized persons under correctional supervision is a result of systemic racism

Why This Topic

- Care, supervision, programming and services to Indigenous and racialized persons must become competent in addressing issues of race and racism

Systemic Racism

- Systemic racism is any practice or position that is driven by, or imbedded in the laws, regulations, programmes or conventions of a society or an organization that manifests as discrimination or differential treatment in areas such as criminal justice, employment, housing, health care, education, and political representation.

Principles of Addressing Systemic Racism

- Understand that it exists
- Know the history of the affected people
- Understand the impact on the individual
- Create individualized responses that address effects

Systemic Racism Exists



- Let us expose the racism and racial discrimination endemic to every society, around the globe. Let us press forward, to root out that discrimination and remove the rot from our foundations.”
 - U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Linda Thomas-Greenfield

Know the History

Dum Diversas – 1452
Papal Bull by Pope
Nicholas V authorizing
Portugal to conquer and
enslave Saracens and
North Africa



The Doctrine of Discovery Still Alive



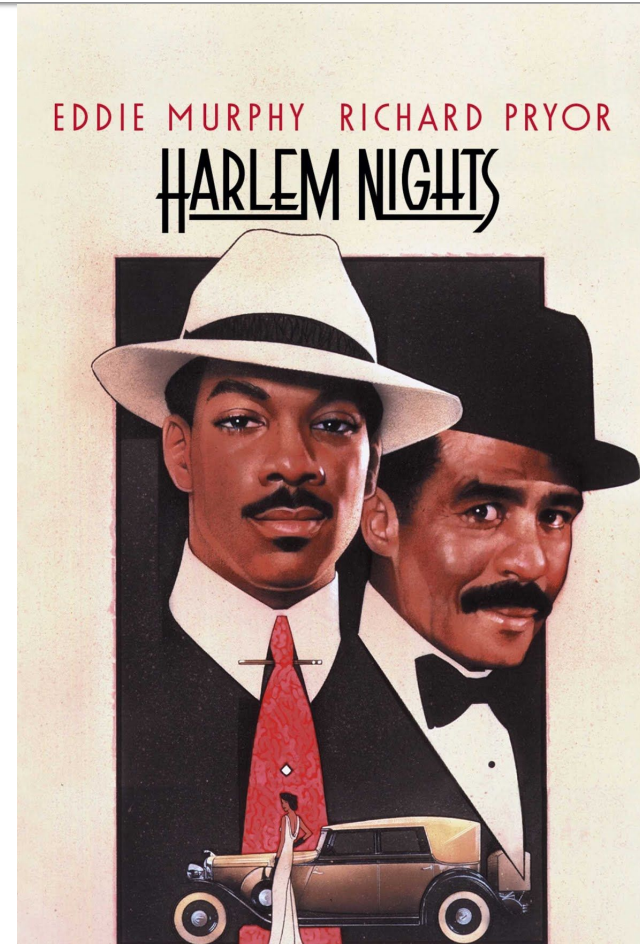
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Understand the Impact



Art Mirrors Life - Prohibition's Influence

- During prohibition, vice industries thrived in urban inner-cities
- Sugar to Quick - “We’re not gangsters, we’re club owners. Calhoun, he’s a stone cold killer.”



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Art Mirrors Life - Systematic Recruitment

- Gross underemployment, poverty, lack of access to education and other consequences of enslavement made communities vulnerable to systematic recruitment into drug trafficking and other criminality.



The History Matters

Patterns of policing follow historical perspectives on the marginal and criminal location of people of African descent.



Consider the George Floyd Case



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Correctional Outcomes & Systemic Racism

From OCI's 2013 year end report:

- 10 year period From March 2003 and March 2013,
- Incarcerated population increased by 16.5%.
- Aboriginal incarcerated population increased by 46.4%.
- Federally sentenced Aboriginal women increased by over 80%
- Visible minority increased by almost 75%
- As a subgroup, Black inmates increased by nearly 90%
- Caucasian inmates actually declined by 3%

Racism's Psychological Effect on Peoples

- ▶ On BIPOC Peoples
 - ▶ Historical Legacy of Economic Displacement
 - ▶ Intergenerational Trauma
 - ▶ Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome**

**Leary, J. (2017). Post traumatic slave syndrome : America's legacy of enduring injury and healing (Newly revised and updated ed.). Portland, Oregon]: Joy DeGruy Publications.

Racism's Psychological Effect on Peoples

▶ On White People

- ▶ White Privilege
- ▶ White Supremacist Acculturation
- ▶ White Empathy, White Guilt, White Fear*, White Fragility

*Spanierman, L. B., Todd, N. R., & Anderson, C. J. (2009). Psychosocial costs of racism to Whites: Understanding patterns among university students. *Journal of counseling psychology*, 56(2), 239–252.
<https://doi.org/10.1037/a0015432>

▶ On BIPOC Peoples

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White Supremacist Acculturation

The woman's response was clearly exaggerated. Her sense of the way the world is supposed to work was disrupted.



Racism is About Trauma

- The negative consequences to BIPOC person and white persons can be seen as a traumatic formulation
- Trauma exists when we experience things that overwhelm our capacity to think and feel about them
- If Black people's brains are overwhelmed by modern triggers to ancient racial trauma, then white people's brains are overwhelmed by claims of racism that challenge their innocence and incapacity to comprehend racism's legacy

Microaggressions

- Individuals with different worldviews and historical backgrounds will have differing opinions. **In the context of this history, differences will have discriminatory flair**
- A microaggression is any comment or gesture that has an “othering” or minimizing affect on a person who has experienced historical marginalization. Such comments may highlight or suggest that a person doesn’t belong; is different or odd; suggests that their experience with discrimination is imaginary or exaggerated; or offers a “false equivalency”.

Unconscious Bias is Neurological & Hostile

Today, another person did a massive double-take at the sign on the bathroom door after seeing me inside. I'd laugh if it wasn't so upsetting



Image



Unconscious Bias - The Racialized Gaze



<https://drewgihart.com/2012/03/25/the-hoodie-revisited-and-expanded-racialized-gaze-and-trayvon-martin/>

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The Challenge

- The Challenge
 - To support the integrity and legitimacy of and public confidence in the Criminal Justice System
 - To acknowledge systemic racism that affects all aspects of that system
 - To practice as probation and parole professionals in a manner that effectively engages racialized and Indigenous clients and reduces the effects of systemic racism on them

Tools for the Challenge

- IRCAs - Race focussed presentence reports
- Classification Assessments
- Culturally specific correctional/parole programming
- Culturally specific clinical supports
- Culturally responsive parole supervision
- Cultural community based community and residential services

IRCAs - Race Focussed Presentence Reports



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Supporting Impact of Race and Culture Assessments

Systemic racism and discrimination are a painful lived reality for too many Black and racialized Canadians. The Government of Canada understands that systemic racism can create disadvantages in education, employment, and other areas of life for Black and racialized Canadians, and is making investments to address systemic racism in the criminal justice system. Included among these investments is funding of \$6.64 million over five years, followed by \$1.6 million of annual ongoing funding, to support the implementation of Impact of Race and Culture Assessments (IRCAs) in all provinces and territories.

What are IRCAs?

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Towards Dismantling Systemic Racism

- What have you, your unit, your colleagues done to acknowledge the existence of systemic racism?
- What training have you had to help you understand the history of the populations you serve?
- What tools do you have to assess the effects of race and racism on your client?
- What culturally specific programmes and services to address racism are available to your clients?

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