**agenda**

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**beyond booklists:**
family engagement through race & culture education at the library
meet our team

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**definitions**

**BIPOC.** Black, Indigenous, People of Color

**Racism.** Supporting a racist policy or practice through actions or inaction or expressing a racist idea.

**Antiracism.** Supporting an antiracist policy or practice through actions or expressing an antiracist idea.

**Identity.** How a person identifies themselves through their culture, country of origin, ethnicity, religion, etc.

**Race:** A power construct, within society, of collected or merged differences that lives socially.

**Ethnicity:** A group with similar traits like language, heritage and cultural similarities within that group.

**Diversity:** A more numeric representation of the different backgrounds, voices and perspectives represented in a group.

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**resources**

**Project READY**
www.ready.web.unc.edu/

**YWCA Evanston Equity Institute**
www.ywca-ens.org/

"The beauty of anti-racism is that you don’t have to pretend to be free of racism to be anti-racist.

Anti-racism is the commitment to fight racism wherever you find it, including in yourself.

And it’s the only way forward."

- Ijoema Oluo
our content and activities aim to:

- affirm all shades of skin
- explore our cultural & racial identities
- tell accurate history
- talk about what we’re learning & and how we’re feeling along the way

The truth is that people made up race & racism.

- There's no way to predict how closely related people are based on their skin color or other features.
- There's no way to predict a person's personality or character traits based on how they look.
- Racism is still here, and it won't magically go away.

The truth is that every person has equal, infinite worth

The truth is that we are all fully human
In the first 4 sessions, we sought to bring awareness to the process of identity and cultural identity formation, and to build identities based on interests & abilities, character traits, family history & culture - rather than on superiority & inferiority.

Workshop 1. Who am I?

Workshop 2. Can you make a match?

Workshop 3. Why are there different shades of skin? What does it mean?

Workshop 4. What do you mean, my family has a culture?

Browse the following pages in this booklet for more detailed information, or visit www.dedicatedtothedreamtogether.com

"So much of the story we tell about history is really about the story that we tell about ourselves, about our mothers and our fathers and their mothers and their fathers, as far back as our lineages will take us.

Throughout our lives we are told certain stories and they are stories that we choose to believe -- stories that become embedded in our identities in ways we are not always fully cognizant of."

- Clint Smith, page 172, emphasis added
workshop 1. who am i?

objectives

- Start building cultural awareness through exploration of individual and family identity
- Use language of mirrors, windows, and doors to relate to other experiences

activity summary

- Read *Weird* by Vanessa Brantley-Newton (*Just Like Me*); use poem as a model to write own poem
- Discuss and identify character traits
- Introduce & practice using language of windows, mirrors, and doors through video explanation, books (*This is How We Do It* by Matt LaMothe) and real-life examples
- Read *Going Down Home with Daddy* by Kelly Starling Lyons; illustrated by Daniel Minter. Discuss any found windows, mirrors, & doors.
- Inspired by Daddy's pronouncement that "We are a mighty family," work with family members to come up with a word that describes that individual family (based on an activity found on www.beautifulblackbird.com). Then build an assemblage - a family sculpture.
workshop 2. can you make a match?

objectives

- Learn how to mix paint to match skin tone
- Opportunity to think about shades of skin in a neutral or positive way
- Increase comfort level in noticing skin tones
- Appreciate and celebrate one's own unique shade of skin
- Appreciate different tones within the family

activities

- Paint alongside Cozbi A. Cabrera as she leads participants through an exercise to mix some paint to match skin tone
- Inspiration for skin tones through books & photographs (All the Colors of the Earth by Shelia Hamanaka)
- Name own unique skin tone
- Embrace skin & self through poetry or oriki

participant feedback

"I loved talking with my kids about the changes with each new addition-- like a science experiment-- and watching an amazing range of colors emerge and getting closer and closer to mine.

Also really viscerally reinforced the understanding that all of our skin colors are composed of different amounts of the same essential building blocks-- love that my family got to experience that truth in this way."
Watch the "Sun in our skin" video; explains the biology behind human’s different shades of skin

Encouragement to explore feelings

Read and discuss *Let's Talk About Race* by Julius Lester, illustrated by Karen Barbour

Create a family “truths” mobile of what your family learned, believes, and wants to remember about humanity, skin tone, race and racism

**objectives**

- Understand there is no biological basis for race
- Humans made up race and racism
- Understand that some humans benefited from the ideas of race and racism and some humans were harmed

**activities**

- Watch the "Sun in our skin" video; explains the biology behind human’s different shades of skin
- Encouragement to explore feelings
- Read and discuss *Let's Talk About Race* by Julius Lester, illustrated by Karen Barbour
- Create a family “truths” mobile of what your family learned, believes, and wants to remember about humanity, skin tone, race and racism

**participant feedback**

"I am in love with our mobile-- I think the pieces of artwork hanging in our home have become a familiar part of our environment in much the same way as our conversations have become a familiar part of our lives."

"I generally enter these conversations feeling on high alert... Then when the video started, I felt delight & wonder, opening up and learning alongside my kids."
workshop 4. what do you mean, my family has a culture?

objectives

- Question our penchant to define our own experiences as normal and everything else as other
- Understand that: all members of a common group are not the same; membership in a group is only one aspect of a person's life experience
- Understand that there are some parts of culture that are visible (surface culture), some that are partially visible (shallow culture), and some that are often invisible (deep culture)
- Understand that each family has their own unique surface, shallow, and deep cultures, as well as individual self-identify

activities

- "Game" that seeks to point out that belonging to a particular group is only one small piece of our identities, and that doesn't necessarily inform everything else about a person's experiences, interests, character traits, and identities
- Consider the visible parts of your family culture such as holidays and traditions, the values of your family, and your family's deep belief systems, and create a "family culture tree" to depict your family culture
- Use world map to inspire and track stories you read. Use windows, mirrors and doors language to discuss the visible and hidden parts of cultures you discover
One of the most meaningful activities we did was to mix up a batch of paint that matches our skin tones.

"In the past, and even in our present day, skin shading has been relegated to connotations of hierarchy...

What we’re looking to do here is to

RETHINK WHAT WE THINK ABOUT SKIN TONE

minus all of its negative baggage and distortion and control and hatred and dominion

and all of the things that have been brought into our present day conversation of what does it mean to be a person of a particular hue or skin tone and to just look at it in the same way that we look at all of nature from the amazing chroma that we find in flowers and we’re willing to have our breath taken away.

AND TO SEE IT FOR WHAT IT IS AS OPPOSED TO WHAT WE’VE MADE IT TO MEAN."

- Cozbi A. Cabrera

Paint alongside this 10-minute abridged instructional video featuring Cozbi A. Cabrera. rebrand.ly/paint-with-cac

- Use the paintbrush to grab little dollops of paint and scrape the paint into your white dish, where you'll be mixing your color.
- Use the paper towel to wipe the paintbrush before you dip into another color.
- If you notice the mixture is getting “too (color),” try locating the color on the color wheel, and adding a bit of that color’s opposite.
- You can try brushing a bit of the paint onto your skin to help you see where you are & know where to go next.
- Once you have a color "that reminds you of you," you can paint some onto the bookmark in your kit in whatever manner you like.
Questions to reflect on:

- What did you notice while you were creating your own shade?
- Did anything surprise you as you worked to create your own shade?
- What do you wonder, now that you've taken part in this activity?

It can be hard to try something new.

I want you guys to be willing to experiment a little bit! We don’t start out with all the answers. We just want to explore!

We’re not trying to go for an exact match -- we’re just going for a reminder of our skin.

What’s beautiful about this exercise is we really begin to see a little differently.... We begin to see a little more clearly.

No one’s skin tone is just one flat color. I think it’s important that people see the entire process. You don’t get it right away - you just keep working at it until you get closer...sometimes you take a few guesses here and there.

That’s the beauty of us humans...we can learn anything.

You stop when you’re kind of happy with it...

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part 2. notice + rethink

The last three workshops were all about trying to open our minds to the way our brains create invisible assumptions, bias, and racism. We introduced the history that causes continued bias, racism, and inequity we still see today.

Workshop 5. Can you find the invisible stories your brain is making up?

Workshop 6. How can I begin my anti-racist journey?

Workshop 7. Why are we still talking about race and racism?

Many times we would introduce an activity that we didn't have time to finish in the session, or offer between-session self-guided activities.

participant feedback

"The activities throughout the series have all been so lovely and multi-layered and meaningful, I like being able to save them for when our patience and reserves are back up-- makes a nice way to keep the conversation going between sessions."
Can you find the invisible stories your brain is making up?

Objectives

- Understand that we don’t know a person’s story by looking at them
- Become aware of the patterns and stories that our brains automatically generate
- Introduce the language of assumptions and stereotypes
- Offer a tangible reminder to look at stories & people from multiple perspectives - the view changes as we move

Activities

- Make color-changing slime using thermochromic pigment
- Guess Again! by Mac Barnett & Adam Rex
- Meet Christian Robinson video introducing Milo Imagines the World
- Milo Imagines the World by Matt de la Peña & Christian Robinson
- Introduce sculptor Barbara Hepworth as a way to think about the existence of multiple perspectives. Create a mini Barbara-Hepworth inspired clay sculpture to put on a chain or backpack as a reminder of the importance of moving our angle to see various possibilities.
workshop 6. How can I begin my anti-racist journey?

objectives

- Introduce the implicitly biased idea that "white is normal" and everything else is "other" - introduction to naming our white-centered world
- Introduce and define the language of racist ideas and anti-racist ideas

activities

- Observing mini iceberg in water; play with ice sphere with salt & colored watercolors
- Offer opportunities to critically think about whether ideas are racist or anti-racist
- Opportunities to think of ways to fight implicit bias
- Practice anti-racist ideas in your own family: all humans have infinite, equal value
- Read Beautiful Blackbird by Ashley Bryan to promote a different narrative about blackness, and the color black
- Paint blackbird "ornaments" that can be hung on the Family Truths Mobile or elsewhere

participant feedback

"The science was a huge hook for my kids. I was grateful for some language and practice around examining racism underlying statement that seem at first to be harmless—those are sometimes hard for me to get my arms around in talking with my kids, so the context of the iceberg is really useful."
Why are we still talking about race & racism?

objectives

- Begin to understand how implicit bias, generational wealth gaps, racist laws and the history of chattel slavery led to racial inequities in the United States
- Learn that enslavement and suffering are not the only narratives of the Black experience, just as there is no single "Black experience"
- Begin to discover that Black people used joy and resistance to reclaim their humanity

activities

- Aha! slides interactive slides
- Opportunity to contribute anti-racist ideas and thinking within the presentation
- "BINGO" game that summarizes many different learnings and topics throughout the session
- Decorate bag

participant feedback

"The race content was heavy, but necessary. It’s important to...educate folks on the joy and strength that Black enslaved persons had and brought here with them."
smaller bites: many options

- **offer the full experience for families, with facilitators.** Consider partnerships with community groups (YWCA, art studios)
- **offer printouts & supplies for parents & families.** This could include a parent check-in group or book group
- **link to these materials through our website** advertise through blog post or flyers at your library
- **single-session programs** thoughtful pairings - for example, workshops 2 + 3 together. more ideas on website

- **educational displays**
  offer windows, mirrors, doors display posters, video + prompts from workshop 1 with a booklist and display
- **booklists are fabulous**
  view options on our website, or make your own

**questions to consider**

- time, capacity, support
- your own racial journey
- racial identities of staff and participants
- awareness of potential for curricular trauma
- want to maintain integrity -- it’s not ok to include only the skin stuff without addressing what skin color is made to mean
- creating a safe community (agreements)
- affinity groups (a racial affinity group is a group of people who share the same race and/or ethnicity)
- partnerships

**thank you!**

**we welcome your feedback**

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