

# Anti-Racism in Child Welfare: Moving from Awareness to Action

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**Center for the  
Study of  
Social Policy**  
Ideas into Action



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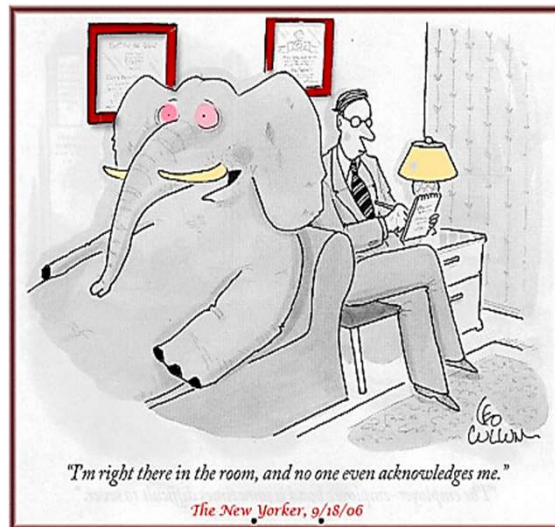
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## Why Do We Need to Talk About Racism?

**“Policies, laws and practices have conferred advantages and disadvantages along racial lines—including in education, jobs, housing, public infrastructure and health. As a result, racial disparities exist across all indicators of success.”**

McGlinchey, M., Smaldino, A. (2020). Racial Wealth Gap: A Timeline. Living Cities.  
<https://livingcities.org/resources/500-years-of-the-racial-wealth-gap-a-timeline/>



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## Racial Disparities in Child Welfare

Black and Indigenous Children are **more likely** than White children to be:

- Reported
- Substantiated
- Separated from their families
- Spend more time in foster care

Black and Indigenous Children are **less likely** than White children to exit foster care to reunification



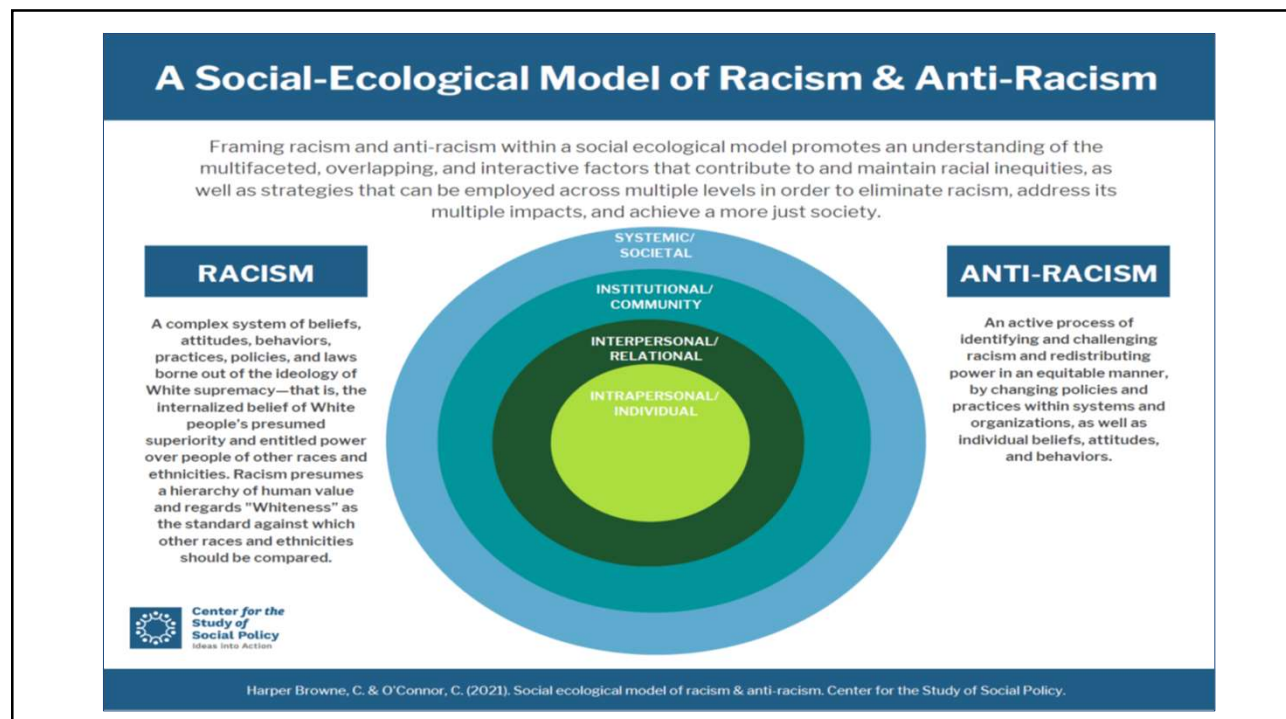
## What We Know

- Systems are operating ***exactly as they were designed***
- There is a ***history of racism*** in ***all*** our ***systems***
- Policies ***aren't race neutral***
- To advance equity, we ***must be intentional*** about the work
- Need to always ask ***how decisions either advance equity or perpetuate disparities***

**When a flower doesn't bloom  
you fix the environment in  
which it grows, not the flower.**

Alexander den Heijer

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## Social Ecological Model of Racism

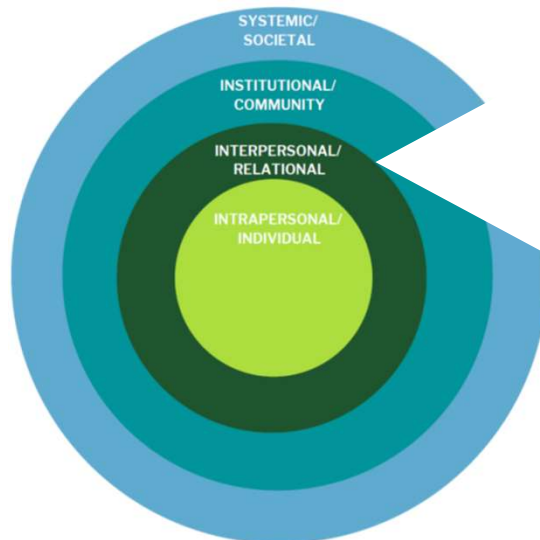


### INTRAPERSONAL / INDIVIDUAL RACISM

Negative racialized ideas, feelings, and attitudes, such as:

- **Personal racism** - Stereotypical, prejudiced, or biased beliefs & feelings about other races and ethnicities
- **Internalized racism** - Acceptance of racist ideas, feelings, and attitudes about one's own group

## Social Ecological Model of Racism



### INTERPERSONAL / RELATIONAL RACISM

Verbal & non-verbal prejudiced and discriminatory interactions between individuals, such as:

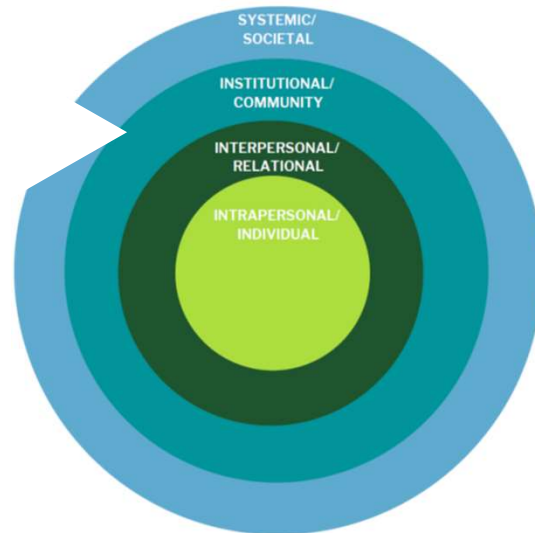
- Stigmatization
- Social exclusion/ostracism
- Microaggressions
- Racial profiling
- Police brutality

## Social Ecological Model of Racism

### INSTITUTIONAL / COMMUNITY RACISM

Discriminatory policies, procedures, and practices in organizational and community contexts that create, result in, and sustain differential access to power, privilege, opportunity, & resources, such as:

- Adultification bias—perceiving Black, Indigenous & Latine children as less innocent and treating them more harshly than their White peers
- Lack of availability or access to quality goods, services, & resources
- Constant threat of harassment, danger, or assault

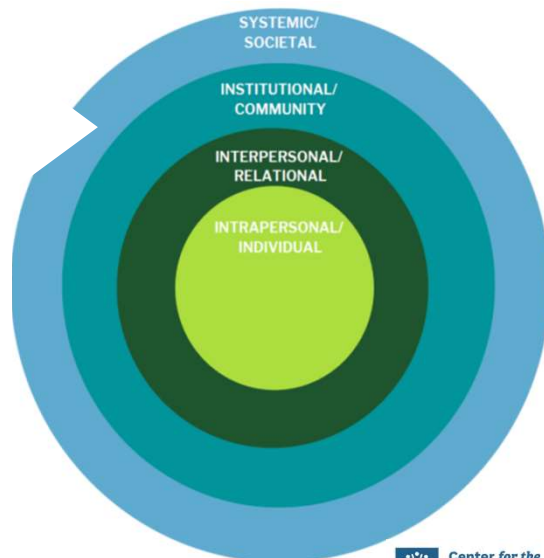


## Social Ecological Model of Racism

### SYSTEMIC / SOCIETAL RACISM

Historical and current macro-level ideology, values, laws, policies, & practices that create and sustain differential access to power, privilege, opportunity, and resources within and across systems and that result in inequitable outcomes, such as:

- state and local statutes that legalized racial segregation which were meant to marginalize Black people by denying them the right to vote, hold jobs, get an education, or other opportunities
- Longer sentences for Black people than White people when convicted of similar crimes
- Political disenfranchisement and disempowerment through voter suppression and gerrymandering





## How Can We Embody Anti-racism?

- Acknowledge and address harm done by systems
- Reject pathological explanations of behaviors and outcomes that focus on individual behavior and mask the role of institutional structures in affecting outcomes
- Engage in radical imagination
- Disrupt and change harmful narratives about families
- Share and re-distribute power to those most impacted
- Advocate for community led resources outside of the system



## Selected CSSP Equity Resources

- inSIGHT: A Workshop on Implicit Racial Bias for Child Protection Workers: <https://cssp.org/resource/insight-a-workshop-on-implicit-racial-bias-for-child-protection-workers/>
- Supporting the First 1,000 Days of A Child's Life: An Anti-Racist Blueprint for Early Childhood Well-Being and Child Welfare Prevention: <https://cssp.org/resource/supporting-first-1000-days-blueprint-early-childhood-wellbeing-child-welfare-prevention/>
- Key Equity Terms and Concepts: A Glossary for Shared Understanding: <https://cssp.org/resource/key-equity-terms-and-concepts-a-glossary-for-shared-understanding/>
- Institutional Analysis: <https://cssp.org/our-work/projects/institutional-analysis/>
- Entangled Roots: <https://cssp.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/CSSP-Entangled-Roots.pdf>
- Achieving Racial Equity: Child Welfare Policy Strategies: <https://cssp.org/resource/achieving-racial-equity-child-welfare-policy-strategies-improve-outcomes-children-color/>
- Systemically Neglected: How Racism Structures Public Systems to Produce Child Neglect: <https://cssp.org/resource/systemically-neglected/>
- Applying CSSP's Anti-Racist Intersectional Frame to Our Work: <https://cssp.org/resource/applying-anti-racist-intersectional-frame/>
- Our Identities, Ourselves: An Anti-Racist Review on Collecting Accurate Data on Race and Ethnicity: <https://cssp.org/resource/our-identities-ourselves/>

**What is one anti-racist thing you can do  
that you haven't already been doing?**



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