

EGPS Work Group for Racial Equity Resources

Purpose

To provide resources about racism to professionals who work with groups

Websites recommended by the Work Group for Racial Equity

- **Anti-Racist Alliance** www.antiracistalliance.com is a collective of human service practitioners and educators committed to bring a clear and deliberate anti-racist structural power analysis to social service education and practice. Group practitioners could benefit from explanations of how racism formed historically and is manifest currently in society and in interpersonal relationships
- **People's Institute for Survival and Beyond** www.pisab.org offers Undoing Racism programs and workshops to help individuals, communities, and institutions “move beyond addressing the symptoms of racism to undoing the causes so as to create a more just and equitable society.” Group practitioners could benefit from the organization's principles and workshops.
- **The Aspen Institute** www.aspeninstitute.org is an educational and policy studies organization that fosters non-partisan leadership on critical societal issues such as race. Group practitioners could learn how to assess racism within organizational structures.
- **The Movement for Black Lives** <http://policy.m4bl.org/> is a coalition of groups across the United States representing the interesting of Black communities, created in 2016 in response to sustained and increasingly visible violence against Black communities, with the purpose of creating a united front and establishing a political platform.

The Movement for Black Lives collective is made up of more than 50 organizations, with members such as the Black Lives Matter Network, The National Conference of Black Lawyers, and the Ella Baker Center for Human Rights. Group leaders could use this site to better understand the six key demands that the organization sees as part of the problems Black people must address at local, state, and federal levels.

- Colorlines <http://www.colorlines.com> is a daily news site about racial equity. It publishes Race Forward www.raceforward.org to advance racial justice through research, media, and practice. Group practitioners can examine the pervasiveness of racism in social institutions and how to challenge colorblind racism.
- Equal Justice Initiative <http://eji.org> , founded by death row lawyer and human rights activist Bryan Stevenson, includes reports on the history of Slavery and Lynching in America. Group practitioners could learn about the direct links from American slavery to mass incarceration and capital punishment.

Online Articles, Essays, Podcasts, Blogs, Videos recommended by the Work Group for Racial Equity

- The Brian Lehrer Show Thirty Election Issues: Issue 23-Facing Whiteness <http://www.wnyc.org/shows/bl> (Search under Topics. Click on Politics, then click on “Facing Whiteness”). Group practitioners could learn about political, educational, and social issues surrounding race and Whiteness.

- Neuroscience and Racism, <http://www.agpa.org> (Search under Continuing Education. Click on E-Learning, then click on Free AGPA Member Library) by Dr. Alexis D. Abernethy, Ph.D., and Dr. Francis L. Stevens about how race-related stimuli is processed in the brain. Group practitioners could learn how to address implicit racism in groups.
- Robin DiAngelo, Ph.D. Anti-Racist Teacher and Writer <http://www.robindiangelo.com> includes copyrighted handouts and bibliography of her work on whiteness and white fragility. Group practitioners could access valuable articles and strategies about unpacking whiteness in group.
- Jay Smooth 2011: TED Talk at Hampshire College, “How I learned to Stop Worrying and Love Discussing Race” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MbdxeFcQtaU> . Group practitioners could learn about the value of talking about race in group.
- White Awake www.whiteawake.org is an organization with a spiritual orientation, dedicated to promoting racial awareness for individuals and organizations. Group practitioners could utilize their workbook and process.
- “White Debt” by Eula Biss www.NYTimes.com/2015/12/06/magazine/white-debt.html?_r=0 grapples with issues of moral and material debt. Group practitioners could acquire language to raise these issues within their groups.
- Tim Wise, White Anti-Racist Activist Speaker, Writer, Author, Documentarian www.timwise.org provides an archive of essays and videos. Group practitioners could deepen their understanding of structural racism and whiteness.
- Rudy Lucas, LCSW, CASAC and Christine Schmidt, LCSW-R, New York therapists and co-facilitators of the EGPS Work Group for Racial Equity and many groups focusing on racial identity, awareness, and undoing racism, are interviewed by two Austin therapists Patty Orwell and Sue Marriott in a podcast on racial identity development. See: <http://www.therapistuncensored.com/racial-identity>

Readings about Race Recommended by EGPS Members

- DiAngelo, Robin (2011), White Fragility. *International Journal of Clinical Pedagogy*, 3 (3) 54-70

This article describes White Fragility as a psychological state that White people often experience when exposed to minimal amount of racial stress. White Fragility is a defensive reaction that triggers both emotional reactions (fear, anger, guilt) and behavioral responses (unresponsive silence or flight). Because White people have been insulated from racial stress the expectation for racial comfort is experienced as a social norm. Learning to sit with racial discomfort and to engage in dialogue about racial situations is essential to building a non-racist society.

Group professionals will better recognize and respond to racial stress when we are aware of the defenses that arise from white fragility that cause us to avoid race talk.

Christine Schmidt, LCSW-R

- *The Souls of Black Folk* by W.E.B. DuBois (1903) and (1994)

Published by A.C. McClure & Co and Republished by Dover Publications

This classic work contains the short stories and essays that form the basis for the modern Civil Rights Movement. He began a thorough sociological thesis on why blacks in the South had the right to a good education, to be treated with equity and justice and had the right to vote. His concept of “double consciousness” is a seminal contribution to all disciplines who examine the notions of Consciousness. His essays offer a unique insight into the state of mind of an intellectually gifted Black man at the turn of the 20th century as he delivers his eloquent expression of as he says... “What it’s like to be THE PROBLEM.” DuBois fought to resist the eradication of Negro Spirituals by fighting to retain as a vital cultural contribution what he called the “authentic message from the slave to the world.”

Group leaders who have a wish to better understand the “unique” feature of transference/resistance in their patients-of-color will be well served to understand DuBois’ explanation of DOUBLE CONSCIOUSNESS as a “sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others, of measuring one’s soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity.”

Rudy Lucas, LCSW, CASAC

- *The Fire Next Time* by James Baldwin (1962)

Published by Vintage International

Baldwin wrote the eloquent essays contained in this book in the early days of the civil rights movement. He exposes the physical, emotional, and spiritual toll racial injustice claims on lives of Americans - both Black and White. Rather than indicting White people for the racial violence of white supremacy, he showers pity on the white innocence that leads White people, unable to take responsibility for historical racial violence, to live in fear of Black people. Baldwin shatters the myth of whiteness that espouses Christian love, democracy and fairness and reminds us that White people can learn love from Black people who have survived centuries of racial oppression.

Group practitioners would gain insight into the spiritual, emotional, and physical impact of racial injustice.

Christine Schmidt, LCSW-R

- *How the Irish Became White* by Noel Ignatiev (1995) Routledge

As a White female of Irish-American heritage, I found this book important, challenging, and saddening. Using historical facts, individual profiles, and descriptions of the racialized politics, Ignatiev effectively traces the roots of the conflicts between Irish and Blacks. He shows the beginnings of the Irish Involvement in journalism, politics, union organizing, firefighting and policing. I learned about the choices the Irish made in a racialized New World, where to be aligned with Whites, they separated themselves from the Abolitionist movement. In America, the Irish were quick to react, fight and identify themselves White to escape the fate of the Blacks.

Group discussions of this book may evoke many emotions for Irish-Americans previously unaware of their racist history.

Julie Sullivan-Redmond, LCSW-R

- ***Are Italians White? How Race is made in America* (2003) Edited by Jennifer Guglielmo & Salvatore Salerno Routledge**

This book is a collection of sixteen essays written by mostly Italian-American authors. It is divided into four sections that cover the full range of the Italian immigrant experience from the 19th century to the present. During their work together, the two Italian-American scholars Jennifer Guglielmo and Salvatore Salerno, were deeply affected by the murder of an African-American young man by an Italian-American man in Chicago, and the murders of African-American men in Howard Beach, Queens, and Bensonhurst, Brooklyn. They asked the question, “What are we going to do about racism in our communities?” The book gives the reader a deeper understanding of the complexity of the relationships between African-Americans and Italian-Americans. Jennifer Guglielmo wrote that Italian-Americans, who in addition to discrimination had the privilege of whiteness, objectified African-American with the stigma of criminality and distanced themselves to legitimate racist violence and to focus on their own fear. She notes that Italian-Americans relationships with African-Americans have been complicated by a history of “collaboration, intimacy, hostility, and distancing.”

Reading this book helps the facilitator understand that developing cohesion in a group with people who have a complicated history, requires a focus on identifying and respecting where each person is in the process.

Julie Sullivan-Redmond, LCSW-R

- *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* by Toni Morrison (1992)

Vintage Books, A division of Random House

Based on a series of lectures given as a visiting professor at Harvard, Morrison's *Playing in the Dark* argues that the American literary imagination was formed (and deformed) by racial ideology. Exploring works by Poe, Faulkner, Twain, and Hemingway, Toni Morrison illustrates how omnipresent are themes, tropes, and language associated with what she calls "Africanism", a dynamic discourse by which "whiteness" emerges as a contradistinction to the subjugated, savage, and sexualized black American presence. As compelling and creative as her discussions of authors' works are, it is her observations of literary criticism that chillingly find form in the flesh-and-blood "real world". *Playing in the Dark* is remarkable for its relevance and power beyond Morrison's beautiful and subversive words - she demonstrates how privileging a way of seeing "white" is a mindless mimic of a racial superiority. This was an eye-opening read from the beginnings of the "cultural wars" that continue today.

Playing in the Dark reminds group practitioners how deftly projection and disavowal can occupy/oppress a group. While this short read may not offer up direct application or direction in clinical work, it did highlight how literature — like group—offer opportunities to "meet the world".

Libby O'Connor, LCSW

- *White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide* by Carol Anderson, Ph.D. (2016)

Published by Bloomsbury Publishing

Carol Anderson, an African-American Professor at Emory University, draws a compelling conclusion that white rage is what keeps the embers of racism burning in the United States today. She draws from her vast and exceptionally well-documented historical knowledge to make a clear and convincing argument. There is no rhetoric, no melodrama, no righteous indignation. It is just plain and simple facts told in an easy to read, compassionate, and powerful narrative.

This work will enable group therapists to be more aware and sensitive to the many and subtle ways in which racism is expressed, and the impact it must undermine trust in the therapeutic relationship.

Kathleen Ault, PMHNP-BC, PMHCS-BC, CGP

- ***Between the World and Me* by Ta-Nehisi Coates (2015)**

Published by Spiegel and Grau

It is no surprise that James Baldwin inspired Ta-Nehisi Coates. When interviewed during a New York Public Library Podcast, Coates acknowledged that he wanted to write like the master himself. Following in Baldwin's style, Coates writes an epistle to his adolescent son. He wishes to enlighten, educate, and protect his son. He shares his knowledge about the world, his life experiences, and his understanding about what it means to be a Black man in a very dangerous world.

I found myself wanting to understand more about his world - a world I know little about. I quote his words to his son: "Here is what I would like for you to know: In America it is tradition to destroy the black body – it is heritage." These sobering, insightful words awaken something deep inside me. I am horrified by the reality in which many people must live their daily lives. No other writing has made me more aware of the plight of the Black man, woman, and children in this country. Coates is engaging entertaining, provocative and has a powerful narrative style. This is a book I kept returning to, each time determined to better understand his message.

This award-winning work will empower the group therapist to work more effectively with all African-Americans and to be more compassionate and understanding of the barriers that might arise during treatment.

Kathleen Ault PMHNP-BC, PMHCS-BC, CGP

- ***Small Great Things* by Jodi Picoult (2016)**

Published by Ballantine Books

Jodi Picoult's latest novel is about an African-American woman, Ruth Jefferson, whose husband is killed while serving in Afghanistan. Picoult opens the first chapter of the book with a quote from Benjamin Franklin, "Justice will not be served until those who are unaffected are as outraged as those who are." This is a thread woven throughout the novel. Ms. Jefferson is struggling to raise her adolescent son while working as a labor and delivery room nurse. She has had a stellar nursing career for over 20 years until a white supremacist asserts that he does not want any African-American caring for his wife and child. This one hate-inspired, irrational, racist assertion wreaks havoc on Ruth Jefferson's life. During the twists and turns of the narrative, Ruth Jefferson's experience clearly illustrates the impact and consequences of racism. The novel is easy to read, a page-turner, and gut-wrenching. I strongly recommend it for any book club selection.

This book will touch the soul of the group therapist. It gets you to experience the subtle and not so subtle dilemmas, and indecencies that any African-American might have to face because of institutionalized racism in our country.

Kathleen Ault PMHNP-BC, PMHCS-BC, CGP

- ***The New Jim Crow Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* by Michelle Alexander (2010)**

Published by The New Press

When I was a college student in the late 1960's and reading a classic text about social stratification in the U.S., I maintained that racial segregation of African-Americans created a caste system for black people in this country. While the laws that legalized racial segregation and Jim Crow practices have been abolished, Alexander discusses the creation of a New Jim Crow.

Michelle Alexander's extensive research illustrates how a permanent social caste system has been created without defining it on the basis of race. "In the era of color blindness" ...we use our criminal justice system to label black and brown men "criminals". We now discriminate against criminals in the same ways that we discriminated against African-Americans during the era of Jim Crow. When you are labeled a felon, you face discrimination in employment, housing, and denial of the right to vote, the right to serve on a jury and even the right to food stamps.

Michelle Alexander's historic book documented the mass incarceration of black and brown people in the United States. This country has the highest rates of incarceration of any country in the world. Alexander demonstrates that mass incarceration in the U.S. is a system of racial and social control and not crime prevention. Mass incarceration has not been driven by crime rates. Black incarceration rates soared whether crime rates were up or down.

Drug convictions accounted for most of the explosion of the incarceration rates. A drug war was waged on black and brown communities. Those arrested during the “drug war” were generally for possession and “those in state prisons for drug offenses had no history of violence or significant selling activity.” Those arrested were not major dealers nor were they arrested for dangerous drugs. 80% of those arrested in the 1990’s were for marijuana use.

The New Jim Crow Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness by Michelle Alexander (continued)

“Studies show that people of all colors use and sell illegal drugs at remarkably similar rates. If there are significant difference in the surveys..., they frequently suggest that white youth, are more likely to engage in drug crimes than people of color.” However, in some states, black men have been imprisoned on drug charges twenty to fifty times greater than white men.

Alexander maintains that nothing short of a social movement will end mass incarceration. This social movement must address the racial divisions that have given rise to mass incarceration. Historically, “poor white and working class whites chose their racial status over their common economic interests with blacks,” which maintained a racial caste system which barely benefited whites but devastated blacks.

Alexander echoes Martin Luther King’s message of building a human rights movement; a movement that would include all people. We would create a society in which all people are valued and have the right to food, housing, health care, and education. We would create a society that values education over incarceration; jobs over jails.

By reading this book, the Bible of the movement to end mass incarceration, group therapists will learn how mass incarceration has maintained this nation’s racial divide and learn about the movement to end this divide.

Judith, C. White, LCSW

- “13th” a documentary film by Ava DuVernay, published by Netflix, 2016

Why I would recommend this movie?

I highly recommend the film, as a way to integrate one’s understanding of history along racial lines from the time of slavery to the present. The movie spells out the various iterations of the oppression of African-Americans in economic, political, social, and legislative terms.

“13th” delves into the intersection of race, justice, and mass incarceration of black men in the United States. After slavery was “abolished,” post-Civil War racist legislation criminalized minor behaviors. When fines could not be paid by the black men, they were sentenced to forced labor. “Convict leasing” became the new form of institutionalized slavery, leading to an economic incentive to criminalize more behavior. At the turn of the century and for decades after, lynching of blacks by white mobs became commonplace. Jim Crow legislation legalized segregation and the suppression of an entire minority.

I learned a tremendous amount about the intricacies of the late 20th century “war on drugs,” which was essentially a war on poor, desperate people, economically marginalized and then imprisoned for long terms for possession of marijuana as their only crime. Despite gradually falling crime statistics through the later 1900’s, the mass incarceration of predominantly black men grew, especially as private prisons expanded and there were, once again economic incentives to criminalize minor infractions.

“13th” a documentary film by Ava Defray continued

I had not known much about ALEC before watching this film, which is another reason to recommend it strongly. ALEC stands for the American Legislative Exchange Council and is backed by many big corporations that support federal legislators in writing laws to feed the prison system and keep its thriving business. Hispanics were also deeply affected in this demonization of the minority poor. Images of these men along with African-Americans as dangerous, beastly threats to society have prevailed in the media. The use of cellphone videos, demonstrating police prejudice and brutality in minority neighborhoods, has not been able to win convictions of police misconduct, yet another iteration of oppression. The film has won multiple awards, including Best Documentary Feature at the Academy Awards. It spotlights knowledgeable spokesmen from both sides: Van Jones, Angela Davis, Newt Gingrich, Bryan Stevenson, Cory Booker, Henry Louis Gates Jr., etc.

How this movie would work in groups?

This film teaches in detail the long history of oppression for minorities. It has the power to sensitize others, to the fury, hopelessness, and other emotions emerging from a vastly different life experience.

Robin Good, Ph.D., CGP, FAGPA

Books, Articles, and Videos being reviewed by Work Group for Racial Equity Members

- Brodtkin, Karen, (2010) *How Jews Became White Folks & What that Says about Race in America*, Rutgers University Press
- Foldy, Erica Gabrielle, and Buckley, Tamara R., (2014), *The Color Bind Talking (and Not Talking) About Race at Work*, New York: Russell Sage Foundation
- Goldstein, Eric L. (2006) *The Price of Whiteness, Jews, Race and American Identity*, Princeton University
- Smooth, Jay (2011): TED Talk at Hampshire College “*How I learned to stop worrying and love discussing race.*” Available on You Tube
- Stevenson, Bryan, (2014), *Just Mercy, A Story of Justice and Redemption*, New York: Spiegel & Grau, an imprint of Random House, a division of Random House, LLC, a Penguin Random House Company