Belonging
Acceptance of me, my difference and my competence

- **Embracing** my difference, my story, my culture
- **Belonging** internalizing my story

Fitting In
Dependence on others’ acceptance of my difference, competence

- **Shapeshifting** my difference, culture, **VOICE** to fit others narrative of me
- “internalizing hunter’s story”
Everybody has a powerful and important racial story . . .

“The Lion’s Story will Never Be Known As Long as the Hunter is the One to Tell It”

African proverb
Some people when they hear your story contract. others upon hearing expand. And this is how you know

Nayyirah Waheed
Racial Encounters

Past, present, or anticipated interactions that tax self-regulation of *emotions, physiology, cognitions* and *voice* (Harrell, 2000)

*Encounters* occur between and within individuals:

- Face-to-Face (FTF)
- Before, during, and after ITM (in the moment)
- **Racial encounters are stressful & threatening**
Racial Threat Distorts Our Perceptions

- “A Racing Mind” (Steele, 2011)
- White Rage (Anderson, 2016)
- “Racial Battle Fatigue” (Smith et al, 2020)
- Perseveration of Past Racism (Utsey et al., 2013)
- Vigilance of Future Trauma (Hicken et al., 2019)
- Presumed Dangerous
- Larger & Blacker (Wilson et al, 2017)
Racial Stress Harms our Health

- John Henryism (James, 2016)
- Cardiovascular Disease
- Breast Cancer in Black Women
- Poor Sleep Quality in Teens
Racial Stress harms our healing & healers

“Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.”
- Martin L. King, Jr.
Racial Encounter Coping Appraisal and Socialization Theory (RECAST)

Anderson & Stevenson, 2019; Stevenson, 2014

↓ RACIAL STRESS → RACIAL CONFIDENCE

Racial socialization - Being prepared for racial hate reduces racial stress by improving racial confidence
Benefits of “THE TALK” are linked to

• Improved Thinking and Behavioral Competence in Preschoolers
  • Caughy et al., 2002; Caughy, Nettles, & Lima, 2011)

• Greater Youth Self-Esteem, Anger Management, Racial Identity, & Academic Achievement in Youth & Adults

• Increased Parenting Competence and Reduction in Parental Racial Worries
  • (Anderson, Jones, & Stevenson, 2021; Coard, et al., 2004; 2007; Fagan & Stevenson, 2002; McKay, et al., 2003)

• Better Family Racial Communication
  • (Anderson & Stevenson, 2019; Bentley-Edwards et al., 2020; Anderson, McKenny, Stevenson, 2019)
Racial Literacy Skills


Racial literacy is the ability to read, recast and resolve racially stressful encounters (RSE).

Reading  
Recasting  
Resolving
Reading RSE:

*Notice & Appraise*

is the ability to:

• **See** “Racial Elephant in the Room”
• **Decode** verbal and nonverbal
• **Interpret** meaning accurately
  • Interactions, text, social media
Recasting RSE

Breathe & Reframe

• The ability to
  • Reduce stress via mindfulness (CLCBE)
  • Positively reframe
  • Breathe
CLCBE is a mindfulness approach to help you positively reframe racial threats. (Stevenson, 2014).
“Resolving” racial encounters is the ability to:

• Engage rather than ignore or run
• Negotiate to a healthy conclusion
• Assertively speak up
• Match Social Justice Beliefs → Actions
Racial Literacy Training Projects

- **Can We Talk Project:**
  - Prepare Teachers/Students to Resolve School Racial Conflict
    - (Bentley-Edwards, Stevenson, et al., 2020)

- **Shape-Up Project:**
  - Prepare Barbers/Patrons to Restrain Retaliation & Unsafe Sex
    - (Baker, et al, 2018; Stevenson, Jemmott, et al., 2021)

- **PLAAY Project:**
  - Prepare Coaches/Youth to Manage Stress In-The-Moment of Play
    - Thomas et al., 2009; Cassidy & Stevenson, 2005; Stevenson, 2003; 2014)

- **EMBRace Project:**
  - Prepare Parent/Children to Build Racial Communication Skills
    - Anderson, McKinney, & Stevenson, 2019; Anderson et al., 2018a; 2018b)

- **The Lion’s Story Village:**
  - Prepare Professionals to Create Racial Climate Change
Sesame Street Racial Justice Initiative

https://sesamestreetincommunities.org/subtopics/dealing-with-racial-hurt/
Racial Literacy
Take Home Points

1. Racial stress affects our bodies, feelings, thoughts
2. Racial threat impairs our perceptions, decisions, behaviors and relationships
3. Feeling threatened (fight, flight, or fright) is HUMAN
4. Avoidance → Unethical and INCOMPETENT
5. Racial stress is observable/resolvable, IF you face it
6. Seeking help, knowledge, & practice is COURAGEOUS
7. Racial literacy is not about BLAME but PREPARATION
Are you prepared?

Fright, Flight, or Fight?
So, What’s Your Racial Story?
“The **lion’s story** will never be known as long as the hunter is the one to tell it.”

- *West African Proverb*

*Tell your story, heal the village*