Advancing Racial Equity: opportunities for outdoor recreation

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Today’s objectives

• Increase understanding of and commitment to racial equity and the role that outdoor recreation professionals can play to advance equity

• Gain understanding of tools that can be used to advance racial equity

• Share local and national racial equity effective practices
Are conversations regarding relevancy, diversity, inclusion and equity... 

...Toxic/Pathological?
• Anger
• Sadness
• Fear
• Frustration
• Anxiety
• Resentment
• Blame
• Guilt
• Confusion
• Conflict

...Aspirational?
• Joyous
• Courageous
• Exciting
• Compassion
• Satisfying
• Enriching
• Educational
• Hopeful
• Trusting
• Open
Challenges

• IQ Drop
• This is messy, expensive, work
• Resistance and ignorance
• Inability to calculate the cost of racism and how the society would benefit from its elimination
• Perception that this is outside of our core line of business
A means or an end?

Relevancy, diversity and inclusion work doesn’t matter if it does it doesn’t change the way you design, deliver and evaluate programs and services and engage differently with ethnic and cultural communities!
Phases of diversity

- Compliance/EEO
- Focus on HR transactions
- Building capacity for RDI
- Respectful workplace
- Cultural Competence
- Building organization culture that understands and uses ethnic and cultural difference as an asset
- Redistribution of power and decision making authority
- Dismantling systems (policies, practices, and procedures) that sustain privilege and restrict access
- Expanded relevancy of programs and services
- Inclusive public engagement
About GARE

- Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) is a national network of government working to achieve racial equity and advance opportunities for all.
National best practice

Normalize
- A shared analysis and definitions
- Urgency / prioritize

Organize
- Internal infrastructure
- Partnerships

Operationalize
- Racial equity tools
- Data to develop strategies and drive results

Visualize
Realize our Values

• All men are created equal
• With liberty and justice for all
• Government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth
History of government and equity

Initially explicit
Government explicitly creates and maintains inequity.

Became implicit
Discrimination illegal, but "neutral" policies and practices perpetuate inequity.

Government for racial equity
Proactive policies, practices and procedures that advance equity.
Current context:
Racial inequity in the U.S.

From infant mortality to life expectancy, race predicts how well you will do...
Equity? Equality?

What’s the difference?
Racial equity means:

• “Closing the gaps” so that race does not predict one’s success, while also improving outcomes for all

• To do so, have to:
  ✓ Target strategies to focus improvements for those worse off
  ✓ Move beyond “services” and focus on changing policies, institutions and structures
Bias
How We Think

**Schemas**: the “frames” through which our brains help us understand and navigate the world:
1. Sort into categories
2. Create associations
3. Fill in the gaps

Schemas and the unconscious are social. They exist in and are shaped by our environment.

Racial bias tends to reside in the **unconscious** network.

*We unconsciously think about race even when we do not explicitly discuss it.*
Explicit bias

Expressed directly

Aware of bias / operates consciously

Example – Sign in the window of an apartment building – “we don’t rent to _____”

Implicit bias

Expressed indirectly

Unaware of bias / operates sub-consciously

Example – a property manager doing more criminal background checks on African Americans than whites.
Examples of Implicit Bias

Job search

- Identical resumes, apart from names.
- White-sounding names – 50% more callbacks than African-American sounding names.
What to do with bias?

- Suppressing or denying biased thoughts can actually increase prejudice rather than eradicate it.

- Openly acknowledging and challenging biases allows us to develop strategic interventions.
Institutional / Explicit

Policies which explicitly discriminate against a group.

Example:
Segregated swimming pools

Institutional / Implicit

Policies that negatively impact one group unintentionally.

Example:
Recreational programming that is more responsive to some communities.

Individual / Explicit

Prejudice in action – discrimination.

Example:
A Parks and Rec staff person refusing to rent space to a group based on racial bias.

Individual / Implicit

Unconscious attitudes and beliefs.

Example:
Staff person limiting access to a swimming pool because of “inappropriate attire”
Individual racism:
• Pre-judgment, bias, or discrimination by an individual based on race.

Institutional racism:
• Policies, practices and procedures that work better for white people than for people of color, often unintentionally or inadvertently.

Structural racism:
• A history and current reality of institutional racism across all institutions, combining to create a system that negatively impacts communities of color.
White collar jobs requiring a significant investment of time, money and education, and the ability to negotiate through traditional systems

The Upper Class

The Middle Class

The Lower Class

Communities of Despair

Institutionalized racism has created a culture of low expectations disproportionately populated by single women and people of color.

The Systemic Problem

Criminal Justice System

The Public Assistance System
AMERICA, 1968

WHAT HAS CHANGED.
WHAT HASN'T.

BY DAVID VON DREHLE

MAY 11, 2015
Interlocking Social Maladies

- High unemployment
- Underemployment
- Low incomes
- Low educational attainment
- Health problems
- High dropout rates
- Family instability

- High rates of delinquency
- Substandard housing
- Unresponsive government service
- Reliance on government employment as a primary employer
Complexity

Skills, Habits, Beliefs, Assumptions, Predispositions, Systems, Traditional ways of doing business
The homogenization of diversity!
We can’t use our values to understand or motivate people whose culture, lifestyles, and choices have emerged from different cultures and values system. We have to understand how they experience us and what relevancy we have in their world.
There is no such thing as normal

The world in which you were born is just one model of reality. Other cultures are not failed attempts at being you: they are unique manifestations of the human spirit. - Wade Davis
Relevancy

We are relevant when our organizations’ programs, products, services establish a personal connection between traditional, and new users, internal and external stakeholders -- and when what we do has undeniable value and meaning in their lives.
Why does race matter to outdoor recreation agencies?

By 2055, the U.S. will not have a single racial or ethnic majority

People of color will be a majority of the American working class in 2032
Why Recreation?

No public agency has greater potential for addressing and overcoming inclusion and equity challenges than departments of Parks and Recreation.
Recreation organizations have the unique opportunity to...

- Help people develop the abilities required to live powerfully and civilly in diverse communities
- Break the restrictive cycles of poverty, racism, and low expectations that current limit their career choices and recreation inventories
- Provide democratic spaces in which residents learn about each other and to care for each other
- Experience and share their cultural and natural heritage
- Implement inclusive public engagement
- Expand the options
Using a Racial Equity Tool
What is a Racial Equity Tool?

Racial Equity Toolkits lay out a process to *guide* the development, implementation and evaluation of policies, programs, and budget issues to address the impacts on racial equity.

Toolkits:
- Proactively seeks to eliminate racial inequities and advance equity.
- Identify clear goals, objectives and measurable outcomes.
- Engage community in decision-making processes.
- Examine potential unintended consequences of a decision, and develop strategies to advance racial equity and mitigate unintended negative consequences.
Who should use a Racial Equity Tool?

- Elected officials
- Government staff
- Community

CSI CENTER FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION

LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT ALLIANCE ON RACE & EQUITY
What is a Racial Equity Tool process?

1. Desired results
2. Analysis of data
3. Community engagement
4. Strategies for racial equity
5. Implementation plan
6. Communications and accountability

http://racialequityalliance.org/2015/10/30/racial-equity-toolkit/
Use of a Racial Equity Tool: Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board case study
Case Study: Minneapolis - Bossen Field Master Plan

Background:
• $3+ million allocated for ‘Athletic field, playground, and site improvements’
• Two main user groups: neighbors and athletic league participants

Why this project?
• Small-scale
• Immediate impacts
• Opportunity to better serve neighborhood
• Critical relationships already in place
Step 1: What is your proposal and what are the desired results and outcomes?
Goal: Develop a master plan that balances city-wide athletic and neighborhood needs

Step 2: What does the data tell us?
- Neighborhood demographics
- Athletic user demographics
- Field use data (including policies that impact use)
- Expenses (operations) and revenue (athletic leagues)

Step 3: How have communities (and other stakeholders) been engaged?
Are there opportunities to expand engagement?
- Different tools to reach different groups
- Balancing qualitative and quantitative feedback
**Step 4: Who will benefit or be burdened? How are you advancing racial equity or mitigating unintended consequences?**

**Athletics users**
Concept B was strongly preferred. Thought location “impacted people less.”

**Neighborhood**
Concept C was strongly preferred. Location of open field space close to residents was key. Also desired walkways through park, two basketball courts, location of picnic shelter.
Step 5: What is your plan for implementation?
   Communication about phasing and impacts
   Ongoing community engagement
   Programming considerations

Step 6: How will you ensure accountability, communicate, and evaluate results
   Developing plan to hold ourselves accountable
   Data to evaluate impacts over time
   Incorporating lessons learned into future projects
Key takeaways

• Racial equity is an ongoing process

• Inequities are often unintentional- result of systems and cycles

• By working to address racial equity, we are improving systems for all

• Need both short-term and long-term approaches

• Transactional vs. transformational change

• Start somewhere- just start
In order to do this work, we must be constantly mindful of our personal and individual...

- Expectations
- Predispositions
- Ethnocentricity
- Egocentricity
- Defensive emotions
Questions?
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Resources:
www.centerforsocialinclusion.org
www.racialequityalliance.org