

Racism is the Pandemic: The Importance of Advancing Racial Equity During COVID-19 & Beyond

Public Health Alliance Regional Equity Learning Collaborative
Thursday, February 24, 2022

Tracy Delaney, PhD
(she/her)

Founding Executive Director

Marley Williams,
MPAff, MSW (she/her)

Health Equity & Justice Manager

Ana I. Bonilla, MPH, MURP
(she/her/ella)

Health Equity & Justice Manager



Public Health Alliance[™]
OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Virtual Training Logistics

Try to Minimize Distractions

- Please mute your mic and try to reduce background noise
- Remember to mute yourself when you are not speaking

Engage and Participate

- The space is what we make it! We encourage keeping your camera on
- Ask questions and share comments/feedback in the **chat**
- Utilize the **Raise Hand** feature if you would like to be unmuted during the discussion portion of the agenda
- Utilize the feedback reactions

Additional Questions

- Contact Marley or Ana at mwilliams@phi.org or abonilla@phi.org



Let Us Know If You Need to Step Away!

Beyond Land Acknowledgment: Becoming Better Settlers

- **What does it mean to go beyond land acknowledgment?**
 - Land acknowledgment without a call to action and next steps can feel and be seen as hollow or performative
- **Creating an action plan**
 - ❖ Resource Assessment
 - Time, Money, Land
 - Organization: Resource Scan
 - ❖ Do Your Research
 - Voluntary Land Tax
 - Land Return
 - Showing Up
 - Other Steps?

“It is important to understand the longstanding history that has brought you to reside on the land, and to seek to understand your place within that history. Land acknowledgements do not exist in a past tense, or historical context: **colonialism is a current ongoing process, and we need to build our mindfulness of our present participation.**”

Welcome Padlet

Name,
Preferred Pronouns,
Jurisdiction

Describe
Your
Intention for
Today's
Session in
One Word

One Fun Fact
About You
That Others
May Not
Know

Session 1: Refresher

Building Institutional Capacity to Advance Equity

- ❖ What did we learn?
 - Shared language and terminology:
 - Moving from equality to equity to justice
 - The importance of leading explicitly, though not exclusively, with race
 - Discussed strategies and approaches for building institutional capacity to advance health equity:
 - Leveraging equity positions and strategies for institutionalizing equity
 - Tools, resources, and approaches for building our institutional and regional capacity to advance health equity and racial justice



Session 2: What to Expect?

Building Capacity to Advance Racial Equity

- ❖ What can you expect from today's session?
 - Develop a shared understanding of the LHJ role in addressing racism as a public health crisis
 - Build a better understanding of how to strengthen departmental capacity to advance racial equity as a core component of health equity
 - Identify best and promising practices for LHJs to support jurisdiction-wide commitments to address racism as a public health crisis.

- ❖ **NOTE: In 3.5 hours, we will only scratch the surface → equity, especially racial equity and justice, is a lifelong process of continuous learning and “unlearning”**



Addressing Racism as a Public Health Crisis: The Urgency of Now

Ventura County declares racism a public health crisis



Los Angeles Times

CALIFORNIA

San Bernardino County declares racism a 'public health crisis'



LOCAL NEWS • News

Long Beach City Council approves first Racial Equity and Reconciliation Initiative report



LA County's Groundbreaking Anti-Racism Initiative Moves Forward

Supervisor Mitchell lauds progress and notes ambitious work ahead

Supervisors Pa
Racism Is a Pul

Santa Barbara County Works Toward Racial Equity

declares racism a public health crisis



Addressing Racism as a Public Health Crisis: The Urgency of Now



Dr. Marshare Penny, DrPH, MPH
Deputy Director of Public Health & Equity
Riverside University Health System-Public Health

What Do We Know



- The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed and exacerbated deep, underlying racial inequities that have existed in our country for centuries
- **Well over 900,000 Americans have lost their lives to COVID-19; Nationally (adjusted for age):**
 - Indigenous Americans are **~2.6 times as likely** as White Americans to have died of COVID-19
 - Latinx and Pacific Islander Americans are **2.4 times and 2.6 times** as likely to have died of COVID-19 as White Americans (respectively).
 - Black Americans are **2 times** as likely to have died of COVID-19 as White Americans

Source: [APM Research Lab](#)

What Do We Know

People of color in the United States Experience Significant, Persistent Health Inequities

- Hispanic women contract cervical cancer at twice the rate of white women (*Center for American Progress*)
- Black women are less likely to be diagnosed with breast cancer, but have higher incidences of mortality than white women (*The Oncologist*)
- Asthma is prevalent highest among Black and Native American Communities (*U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Minority Health*)
- American Indian and Alaska Native adults are 60 percent more likely to have a stroke than their white adult counterparts (*Center for American Progress*)

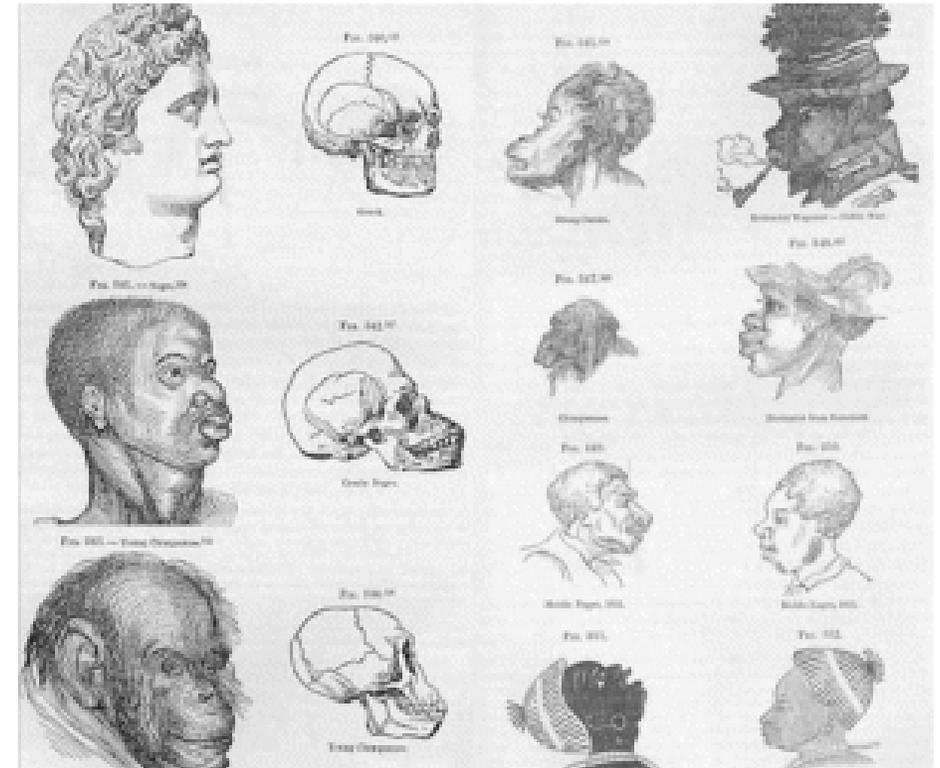
Is an Understanding of Social Determinants Sufficient Without An Understanding of Structural Racism?

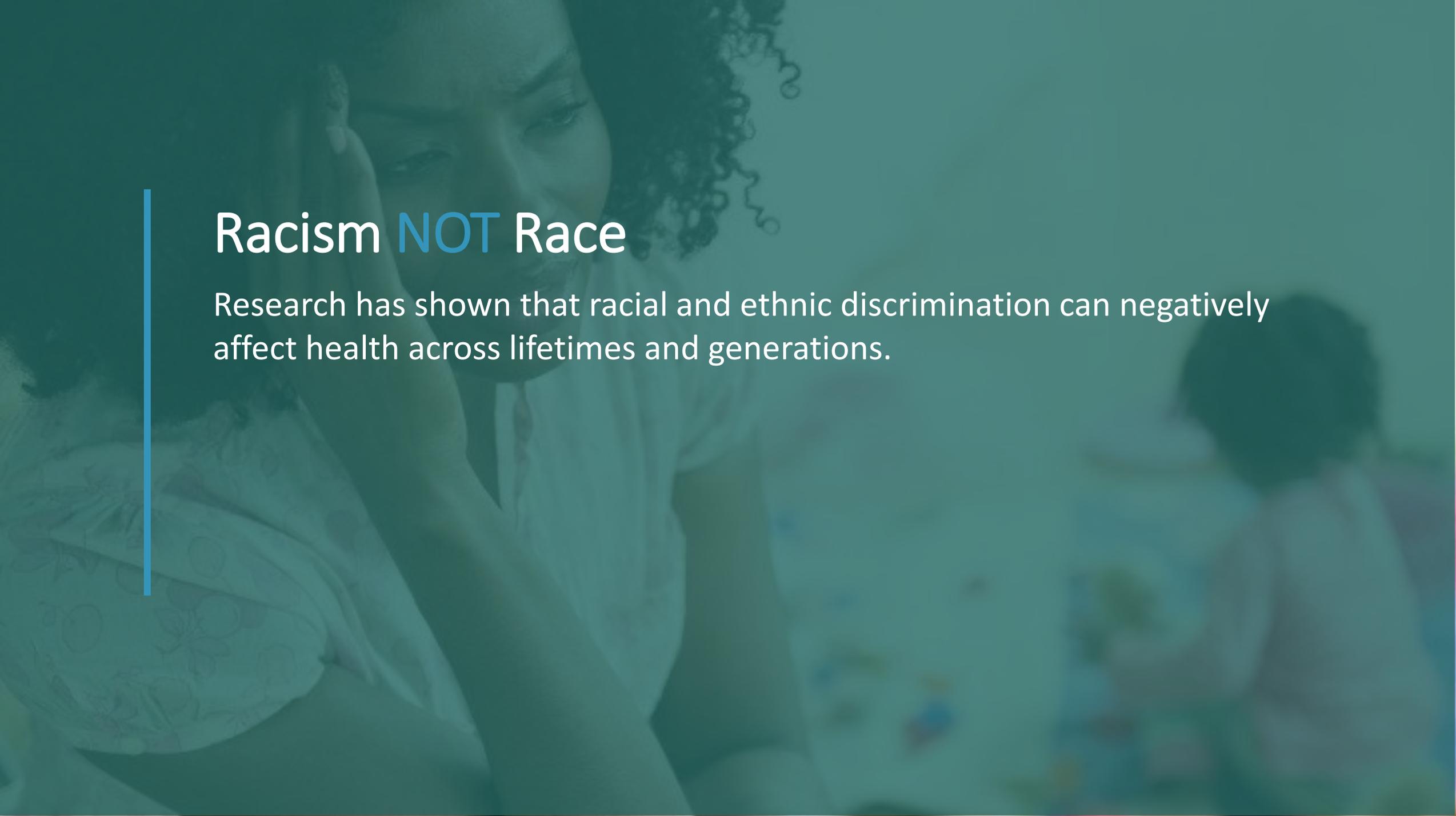


“The elimination of [inequities]—the magnificently democratic goal of Healthy People 2010— cannot be achieved without first undoing racism”-Sherman James, 2008.

Race: The Power of an Illusion

“Genetic studies have demonstrated conclusively that race is not a biologic or genetic construct....even though there is no biologic basis for the concept of race, race remains very real because socially, politically and culturally it is of great consequence.” (Race: The Power of An Illusion: What Is Race?)





Racism **NOT** Race

Research has shown that racial and ethnic discrimination can negatively affect health across lifetimes and generations.

Racism



Racism Is:

A **system** of structuring opportunity and assigning value based on the social interpretation of how one looks (which is what we call “race”):

- Unfairly disadvantages some individuals and communities
- Unfairly advantages other individuals and communities
- Saps the strength of the whole society through the waste of human resources

Levels of Racism



4 Levels of Racism

The Role of Senior Leaders in Building a Race Equity Culture
Kerrien Suarez Director at Equity in the Center

Personal & Interpersonal Racism

- ❖ **Personal/Internalized – Private beliefs, prejudices, and ideas that individuals hold.**
 - For people of color can manifest as internalized racism
 - For White people, can manifest as racial superiority
 - ❖ **Interpersonal – racially discriminatory actions perpetrated by one or more individuals against one or more other individuals—whether consciously or intentionally discriminatory.**
 - The type of racism folks are most familiar with
 - Examples include (but are not limited to): Racial slurs, offensive jokes, etc.
- *When acts of interpersonal racism are not isolated-widespread, repeated, established practice-they are manifestation of systemic racism***

Institutional Racism

- ❖ **Institutional racism - refers to the policies and practices within and across institutions that, intentionally or not, produce outcomes that chronically favor, or put a racial group at a disadvantage**
 - School disciplinary policies
 - Criminal justice system
 - Employment

Source: Aspen Institute

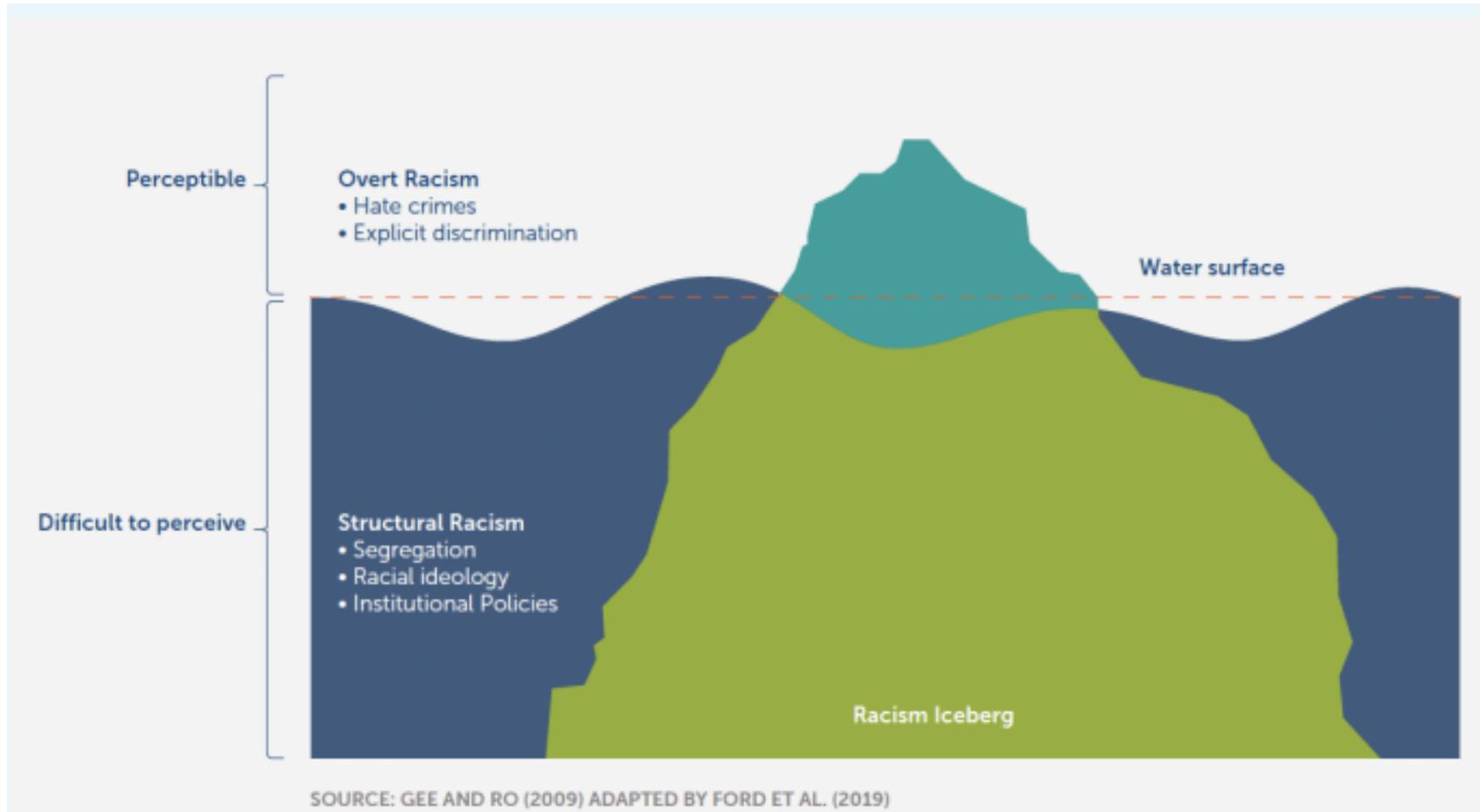
Systemic/Structural Racism

❖ **Systemic/Structural Racism-a system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing ways to perpetuate racial group inequity.**

- It identifies dimensions of our history and culture that have allowed privileges associated with “whiteness” and disadvantages associated with “color” to endure and adapt over time.
- *Structural racism is not something that a few people or institutions **choose** to practice. Instead it has been a feature of the social, economic and political systems in which we all exist

Source: Dr. Camara Jones. “A Gardener’s Tale.”

The Racism Iceberg: Structural Racism as the Hidden Base



The Role of Government in Creating and Maintaining Inequities

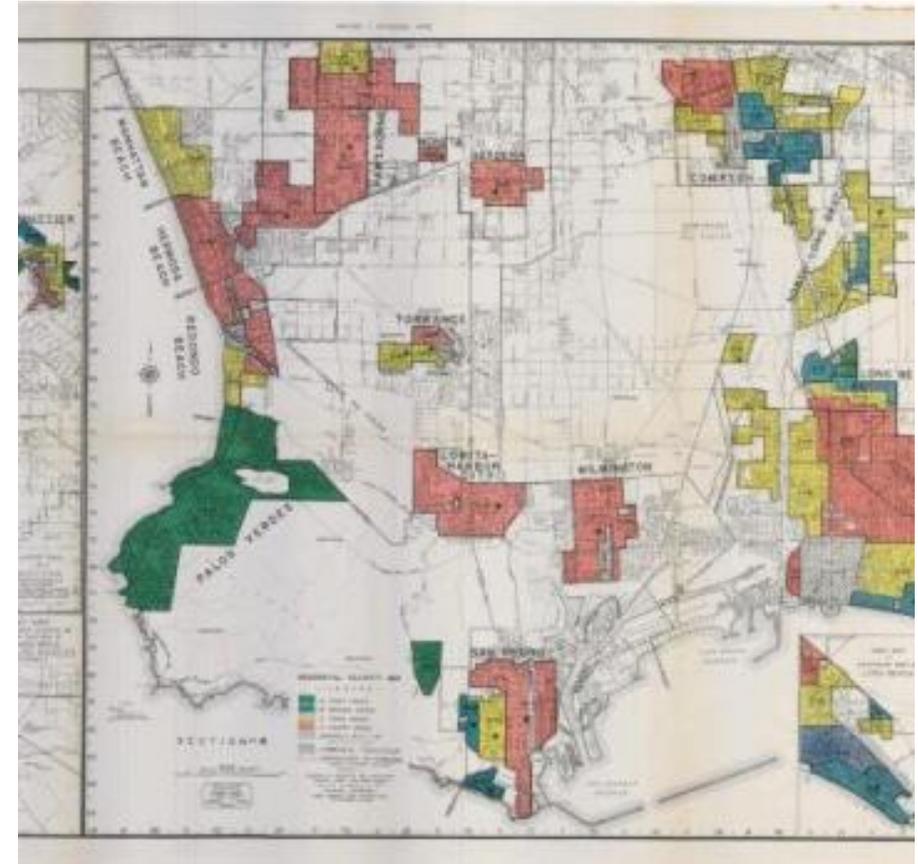


- From the inception of this country, the government has played a significant role in creating and maintaining racial inequities.
- Through decisions about who could gain **citizenship**, who could **vote**, who could own **property**, who **was property** and who could **live where**.
- Governments at every level has influenced the distribution of advantage and disadvantage in American society.

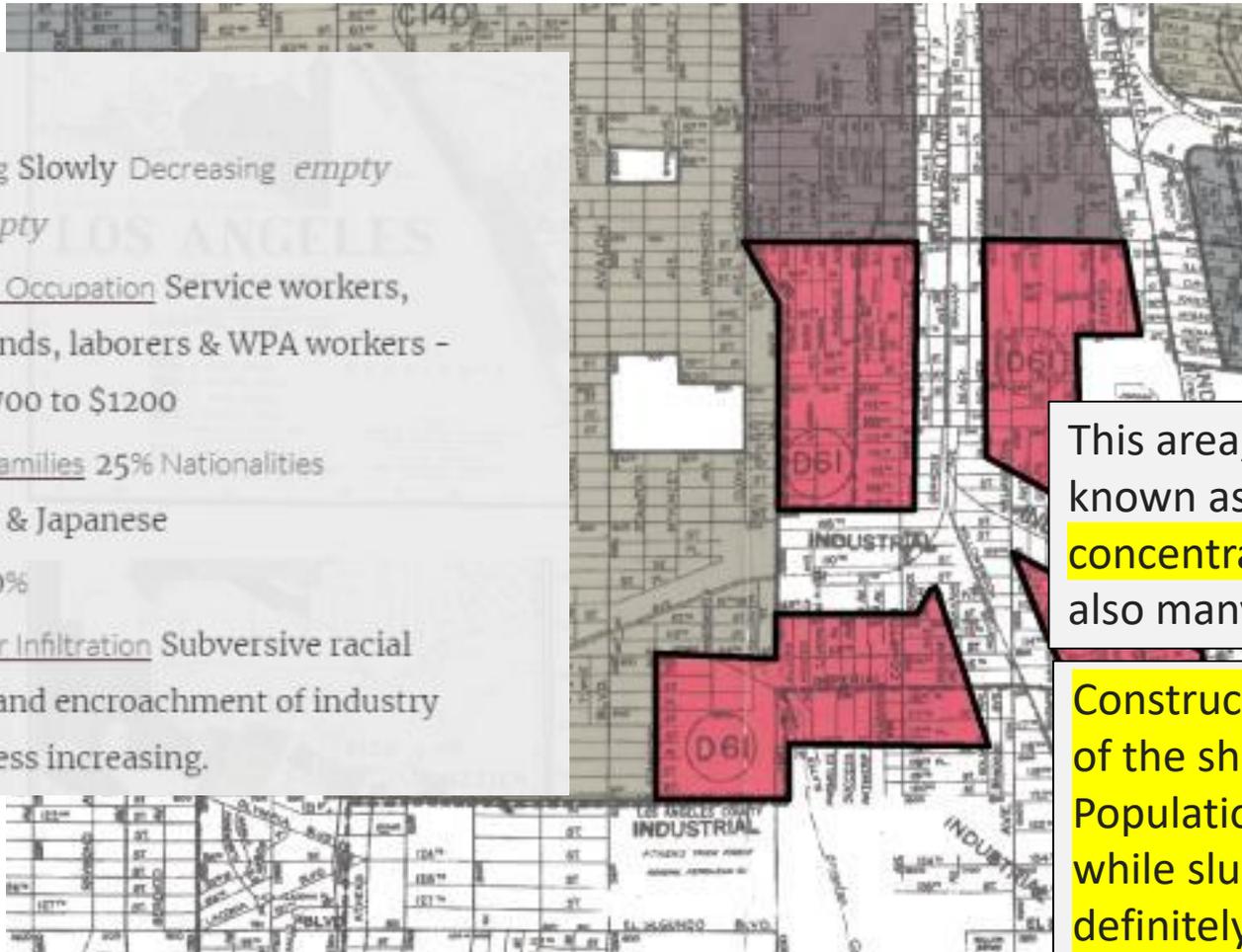
The Role of Government Example: A History of Redlining

In 1933, the federal government began a program explicitly designed to increase – and segregate – America’s housing stock

- The federal government created maps of every metropolitan area in the country, color-coded;
- Anywhere where African-Americans lived or was nearby was colored red to indicate to appraisers these neighborhoods were too risky to insure mortgages
- Deed Restrictions further codified segregation, especially in the suburbs



Redlining: Los Angeles County



1. Population

a. Increasing Slowly Decreasing *empty*
Static *empty*

b. Class and Occupation Service workers,
factory hands, laborers & WPA workers -
Income \$700 to \$1200

c. Foreign Families 25% Nationalities
Mexicans & Japanese

d. Negro 50%

e. Shifting or Infiltration Subversive racial
elements and encroachment of industry
and business increasing.

8. DESCRIPTION AND CHARACTERISTICS OF AREA:

Terrain: Level with some low swampy land. Some construction hazards. Land improved 50%. There are no deed restrictions and zoning is mixed, ranging from single family residential to heavy industrial; and also being partly County and partly City controlled. Schools, churches and trading centers are reasonably available, but transportation is inadequate and expensive. Many streets are unimproved and many have dead ends. Sewers are largely lacking. This area, which is located in both County and City territory, is known as the Watts district. It contains one of the largest concentrations of Negroes in Los Angeles County. There are also many Mexicans and Japanese residents, the latter usually occupying garden tracts, largely located in the southern portion. Construction is preponderantly substandard and much of it is of the shack variety. Maintenance is of poor character.

This area, which is located in both County and City territory, is known as the Watts district. It contains one of the largest concentrations of Negroes in Los Angeles County. There are also many Mexicans and Japanese residents,

Construction is preponderantly substandard and much of it is of the shack variety. Maintenance is of poor character. Population and improvements are highly heterogeneous and, while slum conditions do not as yet prevail, the trend is definitely in that direction.

How Redlining Continues to Impact Health

- Best known examples of redlining have involved denial of financial services such as banking or insurance, but redlining also impacted:
 - 1) Homeownership
 - 2) Racial Wealth Gap
 - ❖ 60% Income, 10% Wealth
 - 3) Community Investment
 - 4) Community Conditions
 - 5) Health

The effects of redlining & discrimination can be seen in nearly every system we have today



Key Takeaways: The Role of Government in Addressing Structural Racism



- Systemic racism often and deeply harms health by placing people of color at socioeconomic disadvantage, depriving them of access to key resources and opportunities needed to enjoy good health.
- Current inequities continue to manifest in our institutions and systems that create barriers for certain communities in government decisions, policies, practices, and processes.
- As government staff, we must acknowledge and understand the historical/current root causes of the inequities and institutional and systemic barriers.
 - → **Laws, policies, and practices created racial inequities; laws, policies, and practices can eliminate them.**

What Does This Mean for Me? (Small Group Share)

❖ In What Ways Are Your Current Actions Advancing Racial Equity:

- At Work (In Your Role in Public Health/Government)
- At Home (As an Individual/Family Member)
- In Your Community

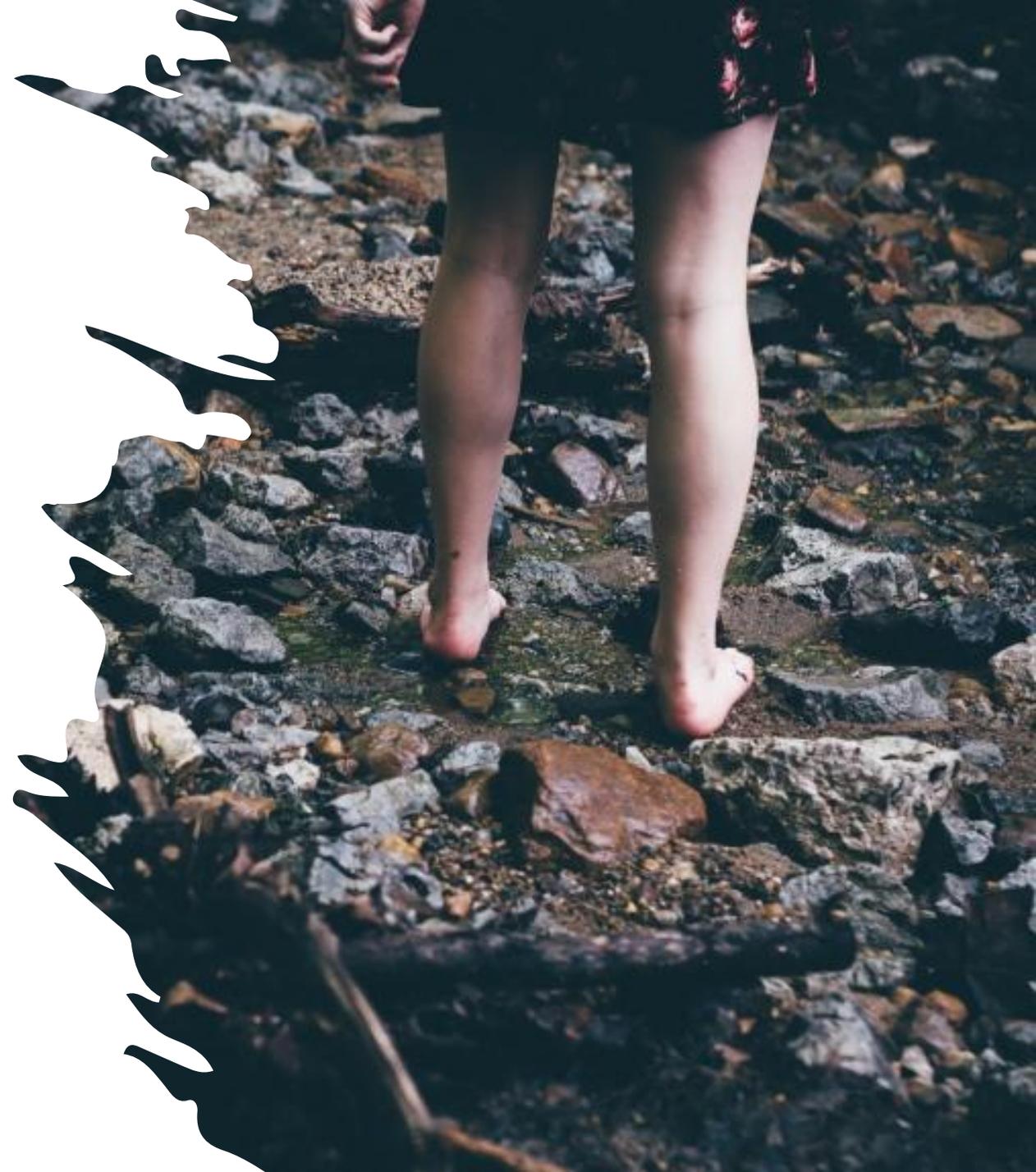


Image Source: unsplash.com

Break
5 minutes



Grounding Ourselves in the Work...



Addressing Racism as a Public Health Crisis: Strategies for LHJs to Build Capacity to Advance Racial Equity





Dr. Ayanna Bennett, MD

**Chief Health Equity Officer & Director,
Office of Health Equity**

San Francisco Department of Public Health



Matias Valenzuela, Ph.D.

Director,

Office of Equity & Community Partnerships

Seattle & King County Public Health

Break
10 minutes



Poll

Based on what we have discussed so far in today's session, can you see some areas of improvement for your own work and/or department?



= I can definitely see some areas for improvement and I'm ready to discuss!



= I'm sure there are plenty of areas, but I'd love some help from my team to explore further



= Things are going great-I see limited to no areas of improvement.

Change Team Breakouts: Diving Deeper

❖ Change Team Breakouts:

- What is one thing that really resonated with you?
- What steps has your department taken to build capacity to advance racial equity?
- Identify at least one concrete step your department/agency can take to advance racial equity
- What role do you see for your department/agency to address racism as a public health crisis?



Closing & Next Steps

- Next Steps:
 - Identify 1-2 places to enhance departmental capacity
 - Session 2 Office Hours:
Wednesday, March 16th: 1pm-2:30pm
- Regional Equity Learning Collaborative:
Session 3
 - Thursday, May 5th: 1pm-4:30pm

