Antiracism Training: What Works, What Doesn’t and How We Can Do Better

Leah Horvath, Ph.D., Taylor Levitt, M.A., Tina Luzzi, M.S., & Monica Zabinski, M.A.
Illinois School of Professional Psychology at National Louis University (ISPP at NLU)

Literature on Antiracism Training

What works:
- Reflexivity has been found to enhance learning in diversity training and lead to more flexible behaviours (Kowal, Franklin, & Paradies, 2013).
- Creating change within the structure, rather than expecting individuals to reflect change from a training (Dobbin & Kalev, 2018).

What doesn’t:
- Short-term trainings do not provide lasting change (Dobbin & Kalev, 2018).
- Mandatory trainings are not effective, as individuals tend to feel controlled and not receptive to the presented information (Dobbin & Kalev, 2018).
- May promote negative emotions, which discourages sustainable engagement & involvement (Kowal, Franklin, & Paradies, 2013).

Best Practices in Antiracism Training - AEWG Strengths

- Making the training voluntary (Devine et al., 2012; Legaut, Gutsell, & Inzlicht, 2011) and ongoing (Robinson et al., 2020).
- Increasing awareness of one’s own biases (Devine et al., 2012; Redfield, 2020) and targeting attitude change (Changa et al., 2019) as a prerequisite to behavior change.
- Approaching training from a position of “no blame” - we all have biases and internalized racism and we need to learn to see those (Redfield, 2020).
- Explicitly using the term antiracism (rather than diversity, multiculturalism, anti-oppression) to keep the focus on race and challenging racist structures (Ladhani & Sitter, 2020).

Best Practices in Antiracism Training - AEWG Growth Areas

- Based on our review of the literature, there are several practices that would be helpful to include in our group to strengthen our efforts toward antiracism training. Including:
  - Incorporating multiple ways of targeting bias and racism (Redfield, 2020).
  - -“using ideas, words, and actions to deliberately interrupt the norms supporting structural and institutional racism” (South, et al., 2020, p. 1039).
  - Increasing contact with members of BIPOC groups and increasing exposure to BIPOC in roles that are outside societal stereotypes (Devine et al., 2012; Paluk & Green, 2009; Plant, et al., 2009; Redfield, 2020).
  - Focusing on broader changes within the system. Attitude change alone is not enough to lessen discrimination (Dobbin & Kalev, 2018).

References

-Paradies, Y., Kowal, E., Franklin, H., & Legault, L. (2010). Reflexivity has been found to enhance learning in diversity training and lead to more flexible behaviours (Kowal, Franklin, & Paradies, 2013).