



# Embracing Inclusion for One King County: Addressing Implicit Bias, Racial Anxiety and Stereotype Threat

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# Achieving Equity and Social Justice in King County

Addressing Implicit Bias, Racial Anxiety and  
Stereotype Threat

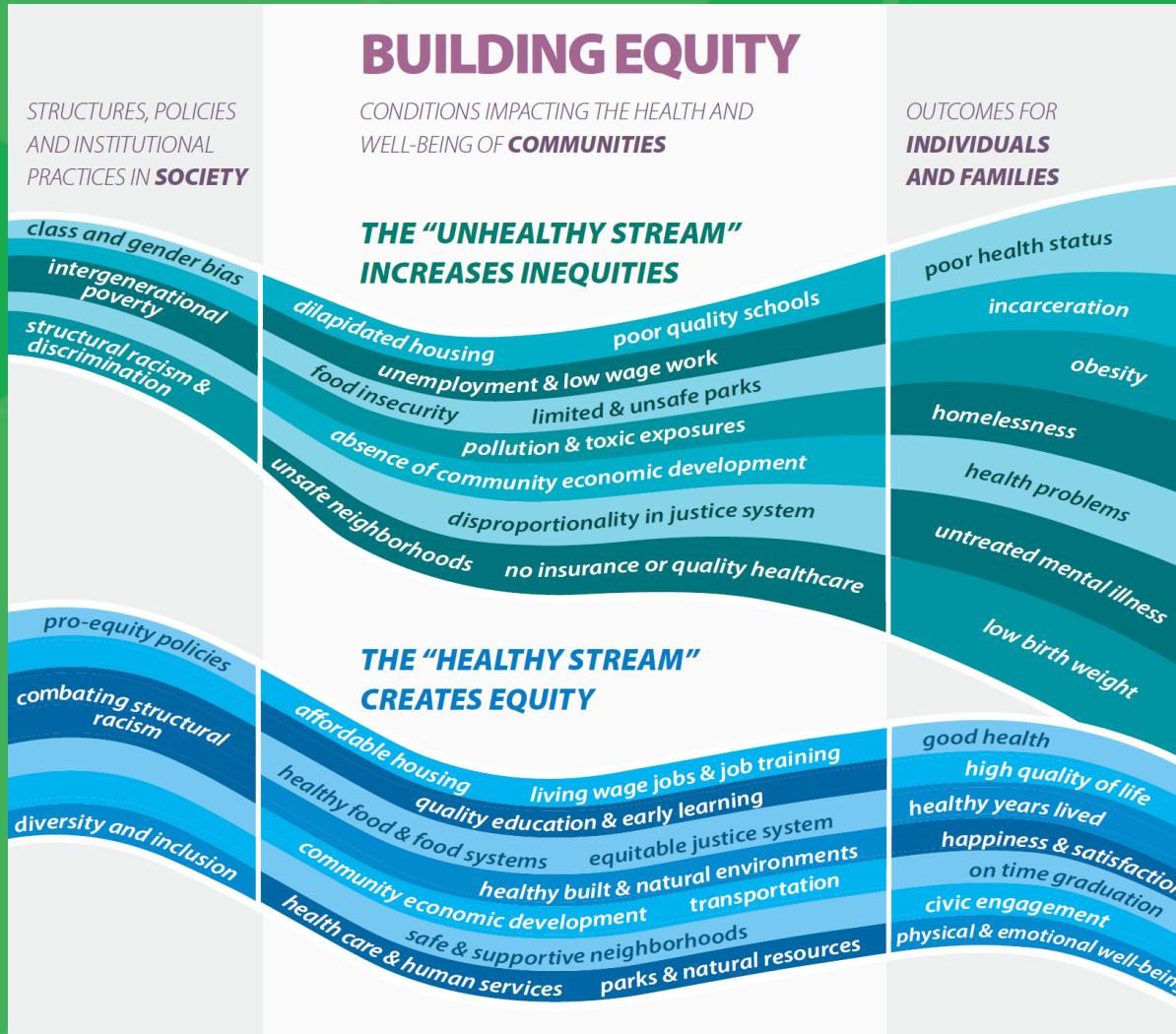
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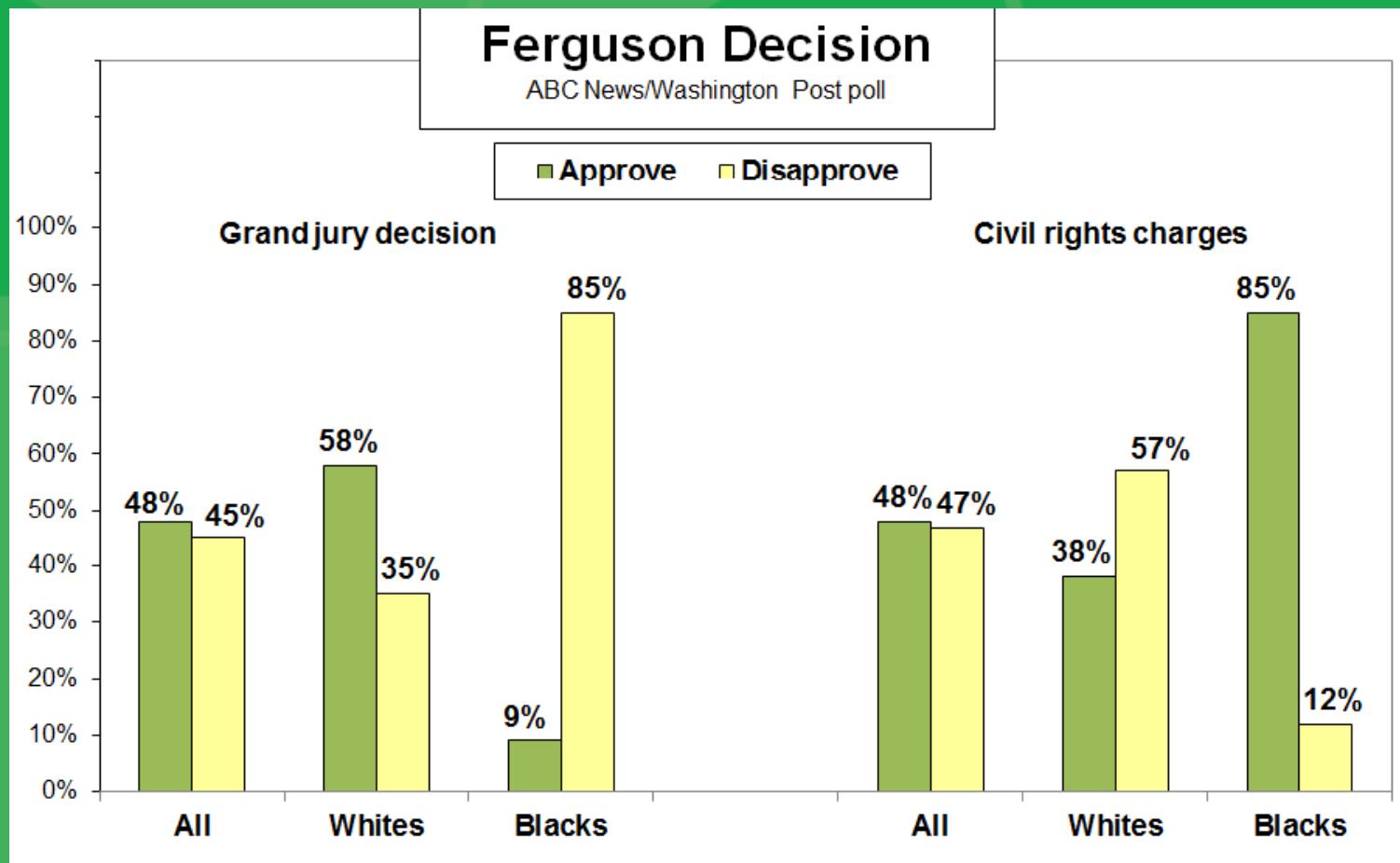


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# King County Commitment to Equity and Social Justice



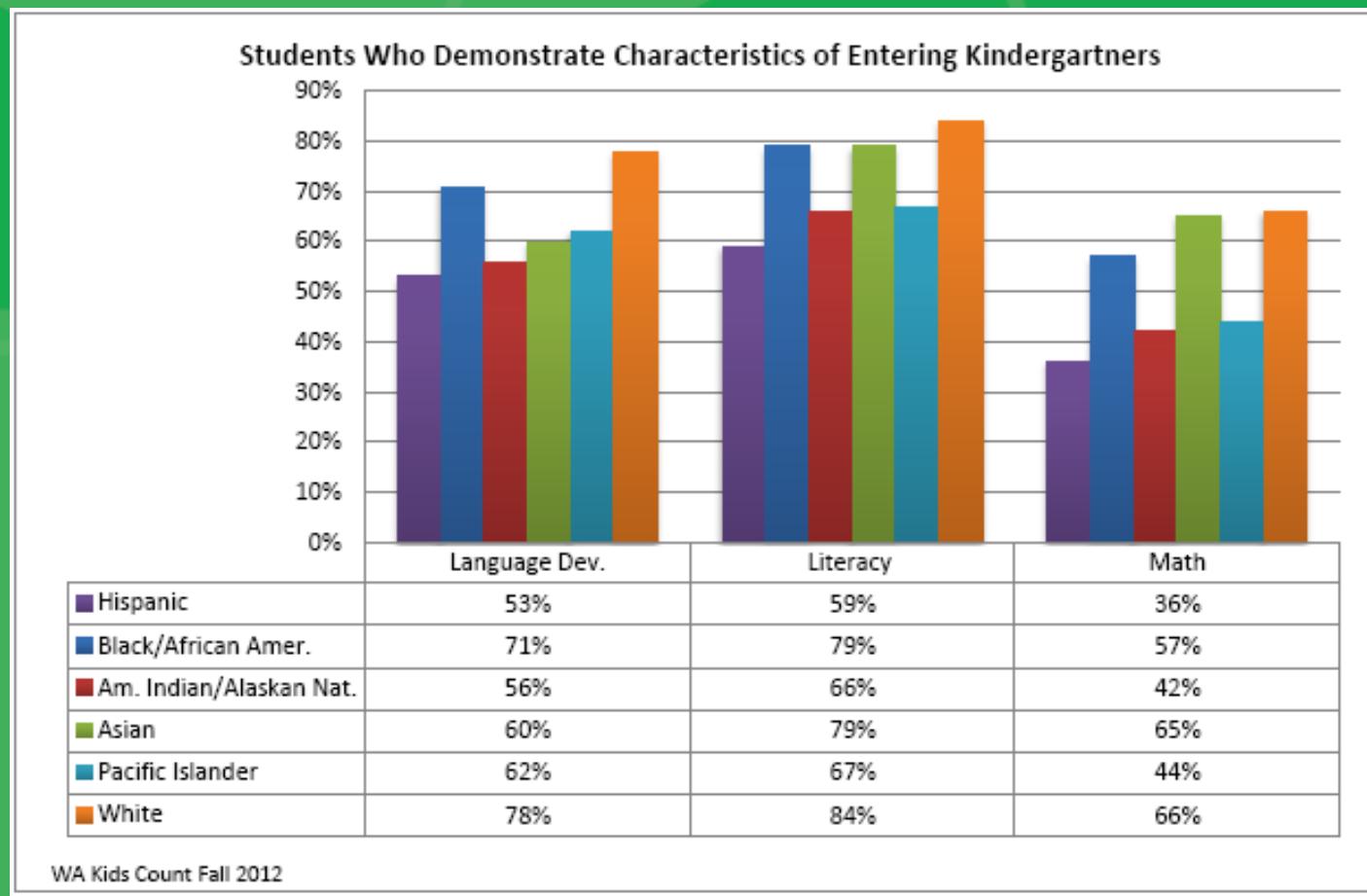
# Polarization



# Educational Equity

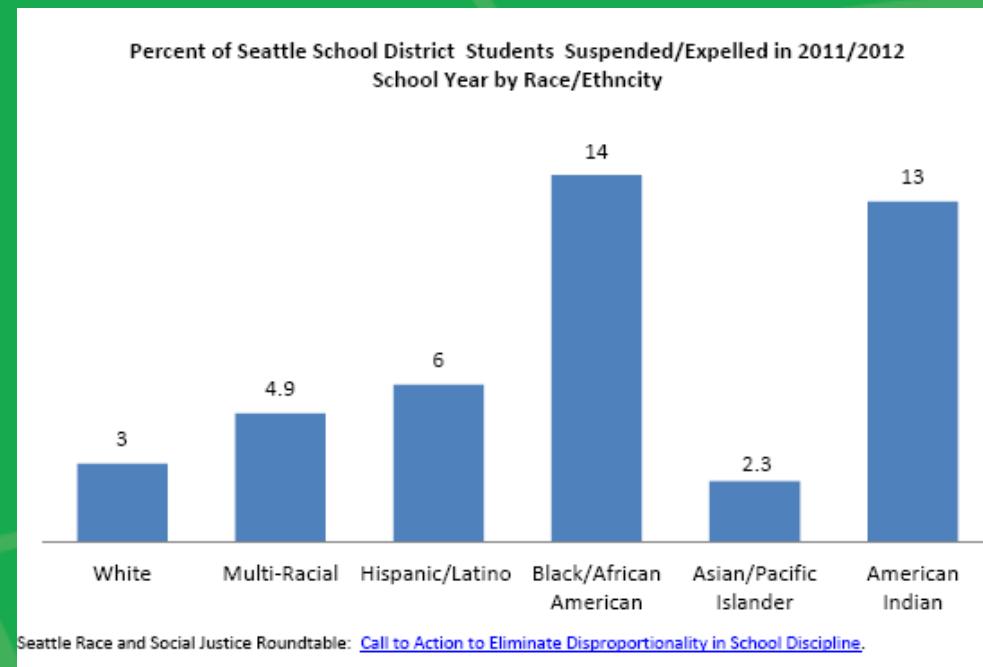


# King County Children



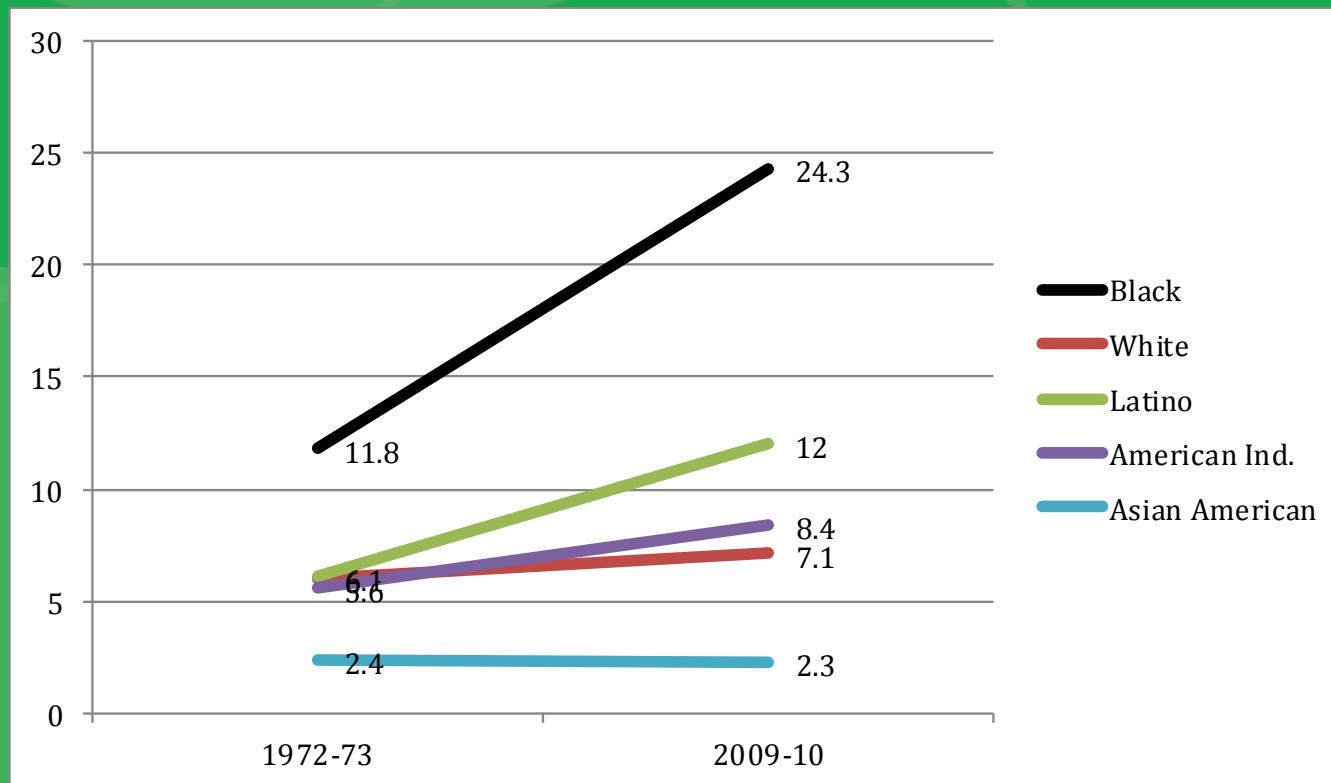
# Mixed Picture of Success

- Percentages of high school graduates from King County who go to college:
  - 75.6% Asian/Pacific Islander
  - 62.8% White
  - 61.2% African American
  - 49.5% Latino
  - 42.7% American Indian/Alaska Native



# Race and Suspension

(Losen & Martinez, 2013)

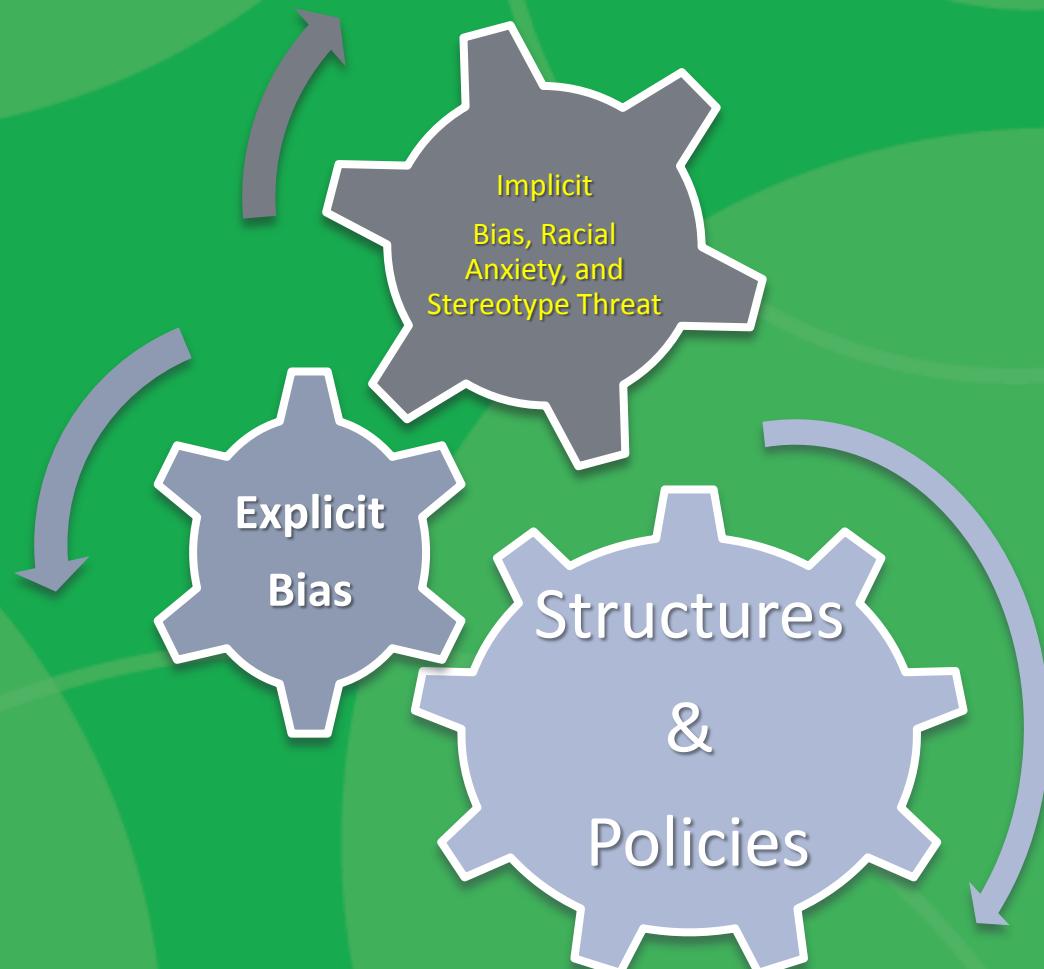


# We know teachers want to be fair



- “*disrespect or loitering.*”
- 62 points on the SAT
- *less critical feedback and over-praise.*

# Obstacles to Equity



john a. powell

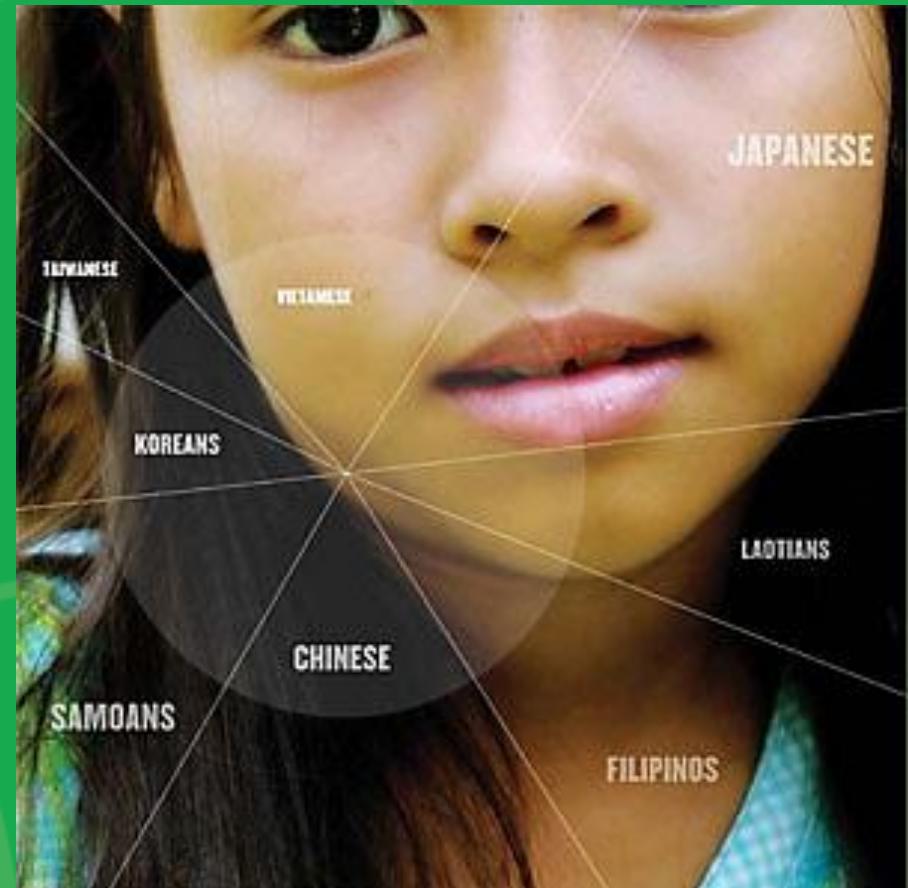
Health and Racial Equity in Turbulent Times: *Implicit Bias Examined*

# Multiple Racial Dynamics

Implicit Biases

Racial Anxieties

Stereotype Threats



# Our Brains in Action

Please state the *color of the text*

Blue

Red

Green

Black

Green

Red

Blue

Black

Black

Blue

Green

Red

Green

Green

Black

Blue

# The Role of the Unconscious Mind



1. Sorting into categories
2. Creating associations between things
3. Filling in the gaps when we only receive partial information

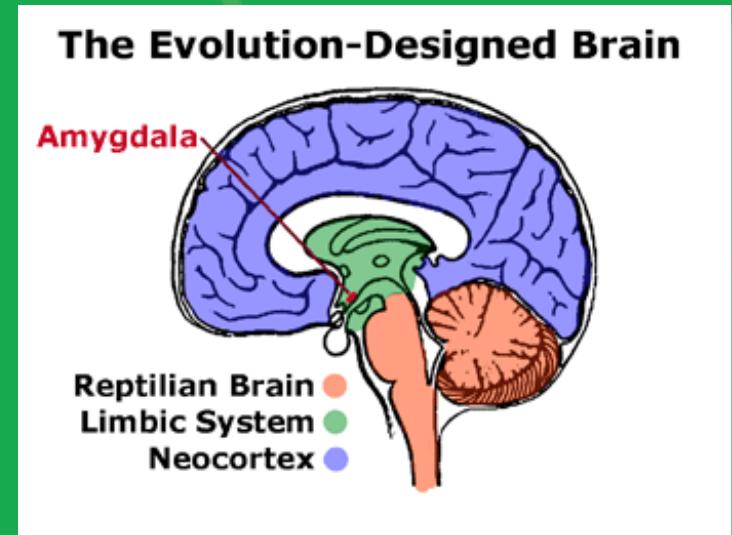
These three processes together add up to **schemas**: the “frames” through which our brains help us understand and navigate the world

# Neurological Origins

Limbic system – categorizes what we perceive

The limbic system is a very old part of the brain; it can be found in animals.

It is also very fast.



One part of the limbic system, the **amygdala**, is responsible for strong emotional responses (i.e., fight or flight)

*The Art of Happiness in a Troubled World. By the Dalai Lama and Howard Cutler. (2009). Graphic - <[www.buzzle.com/articles/the-role-of-values-in-wisdom.html](http://www.buzzle.com/articles/the-role-of-values-in-wisdom.html)>*

# Schemas and People

## Preference v. Bias

1) Schemas That Categorize People , e.g. child, elder, man, woman, White, Black, Catholic.  
Associations that are generalized about those schemas = **Stereotypes**

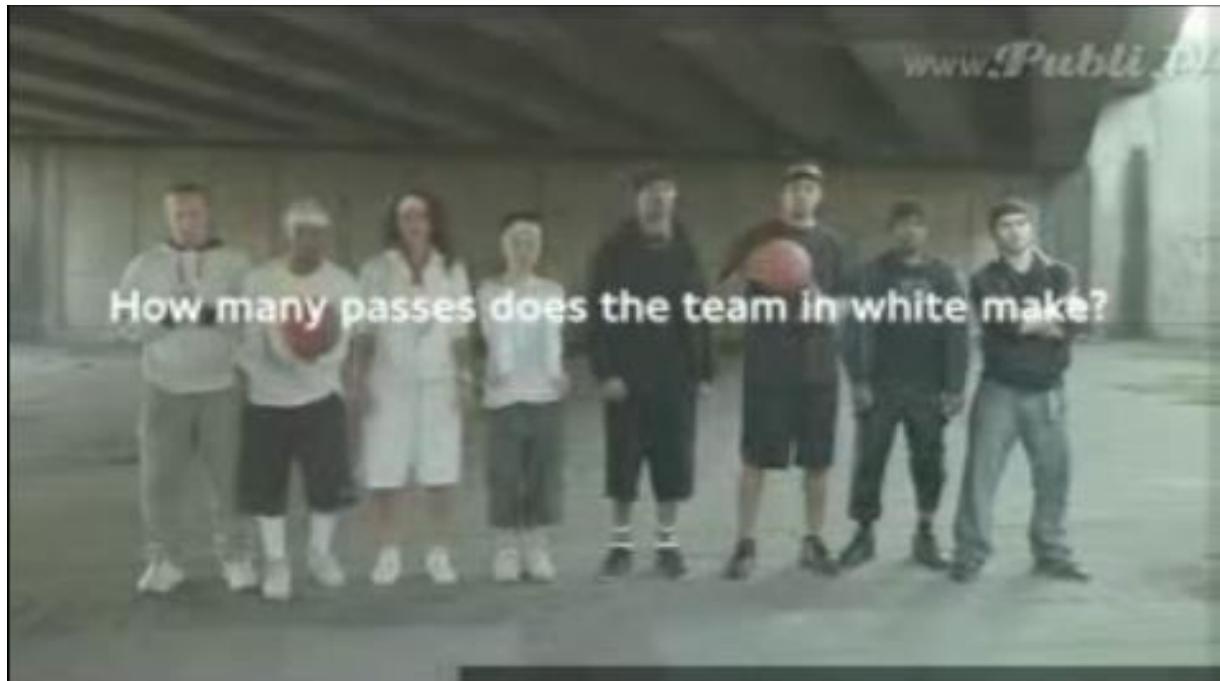
2) Positive Associations With Stereotypes = **Preferences**

3) Negative Associations With Stereotypes = **Prejudices**

## Stereotypes



# Awareness Test



<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yrqrkahlw-s>

# Definitions

**Bias** – the evaluation of one group and its members relative to another

Expressed directly/explicitly: “I like whites more than Latinos.”

Expressed indirectly: E.g., Sitting further away from a Latino than a white individual.

**Explicit** = Person is aware of his/her evaluation

**Implicit** = The evaluation is automatic and not known to the person.

**Implicit Bias** – automatic association of stereotypes or attitudes with a particular group and its members.

# Stereotypes and Attitudes

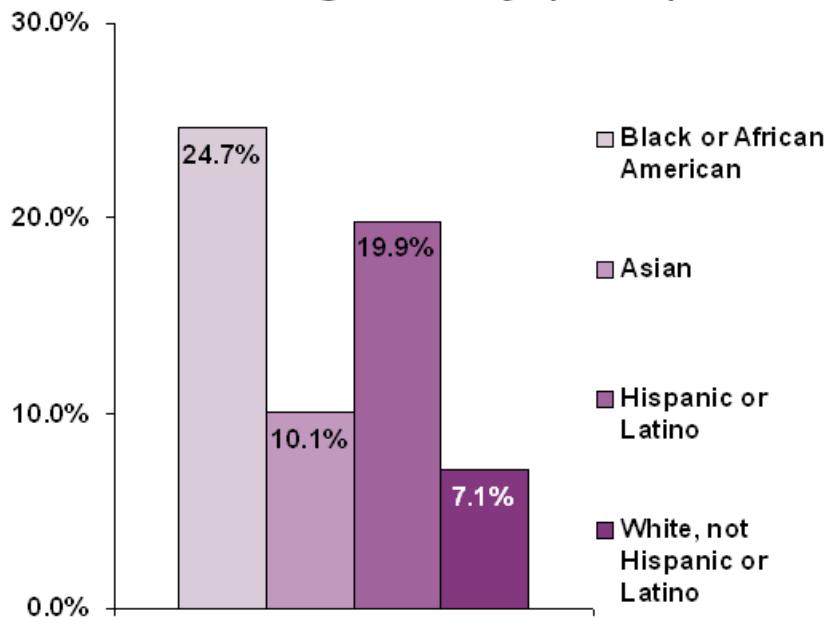


- Stereotypes: traits associated with a particular group.
- Attitudes: warmth or coldness toward a particular group.
- We can have positive stereotypes and negative attitudes about particular group.



# What do tables tell us?

**Percent of racial or ethnic group below poverty level in King County (2009)**



- What race or ethnicity of most poor people in King County?
  - 88,200 (white)
  - 37,200 (Latino)
  - 33,000 (black or African-American)
  - 32,000 (Asian-American)

# How do we measure bias?

- Implicit Association Test  
(found at Project Implicit)
- Measures time differences  
between “schema consistent  
pairings” and “schema  
inconsistent pairings”
- Most people perform  
second task more slowly.



# What does the IAT tell us?

- It is *not* a DNA test – social scientists do not recommend it as a mechanism to “diagnose” an individual.
- As a tool to be used for research purposes, with millions of users over time, it is of great value in telling us about societal trends.

**A Stereotype Congruent (easy/fast)**

A cartoon illustration of a young girl with blonde hair in a ponytail, wearing a blue shirt and red sleeves, sitting at a desk and interacting with a computer monitor. The monitor displays a task where 'Boy' and 'math' are associated with a left arrow, while 'Girl' and 'reading' are associated with a right arrow. Below the monitor, there is a keyboard-like input device with arrows. To the right of the monitor is a list of items:

Item List:

- story
- Emily
- graph
- David
- numbers**
- Hannah

**B Stereotype Incongruent (difficult/slow)**

A cartoon illustration of the same young girl at a computer. The monitor now shows a task where 'Boy' and 'reading' are associated with a left arrow, while 'Girl' and 'math' are associated with a right arrow. The input device below the monitor has different arrow configurations. To the right of the monitor is a list of items:

Item List:

- books
- Sarah
- addition
- Michael
- numbers**
- Jessica

# Findings

- Implicit bias is pervasive.
- Judges from three districts were given the IAT.
- 87.1% of white judges showed implicit preference for whites.
- 44.2% of black judges showed implicit preference for blacks.  
(Rachlinski et al, 2009)



# The Race Effect

(2014 Nextions study)

## Tom Meyer (White)

- ❑ “generally good writer but needs to work on”
- ❑ “has potential”
- ❑ “good analytic skills”
- ❑ 2.9/7 spelling grammar errors were found
- ❑ 4.1/6 technical writing errors found

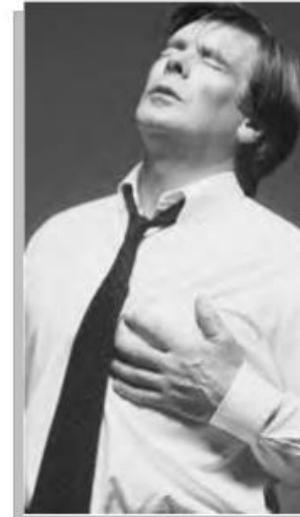
## Tom Meyer (Black)

- ❑ “needs lots of work”
- ❑ “can’t believe he went to NYU”
- ❑ “average at best”
- ❑ 5.8/7 spelling grammar errors found
- ❑ 4.9/6 technical writing errors found

# Race and heart disease treatment

## Acute CHD Presentations

- Unstable Angina
- “Wee heart attack!”
  - (subendocardial or partial thickness MI)
  - non-ST elevation MI
- “Big heart attack!”
  - (transmural or full thickness MI)
  - ST elevation MI



# How are Native Americans seen?

- We don't know as much as we should.
- Very few studies measure attitudes toward Native Americans and so academia is contributing to invisibility.
- Recent study measured implicit attitudes toward mascots: the “Fighting Irish” versus the “Fighting Sioux” and found these correlated with anti-Indian bias and bias translated toward people (Chaney et al, 2011).

# Implicit Associations and Asian Americans

- Model minority myth has many inaccuracies.
- Any set of stereotypes kind be constricting.
- Implicit associations show a strong set of assumptions.





# Examples of implicit bias

- When conductors were placed behind a screen, the percentage of female new hires for orchestral jobs increased 25% – 46%.



# Confirmation Bias

We judge behavior differently depending upon the stereotypes or negative associations.



# Displaying Implicit Bias

- Implicit bias affects more than our cognitive decision-making.

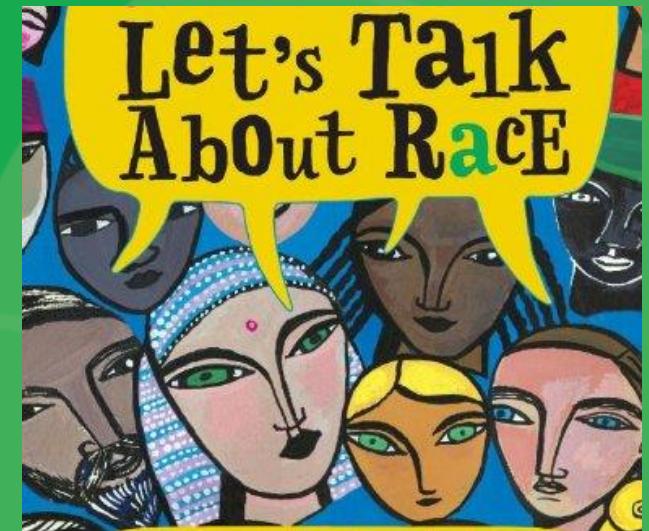


- Research has shown that body language is far more affected by implicit bias than verbal statements – but that most people cue in and respond more to nonverbal than to verbal cues.

- Particularly from people in power.

# Internalized Perceptions

- We unconsciously think about race even when we do not explicitly discuss it.
- You cannot avoid bias by avoiding race; it does not work.
- Conversations about race are not easy, but they are vital.
- Environments & narratives matter



Source: Lester, Julius. *Let's Talk About Race*

# Does race affect sentencing?

## Scenario 1

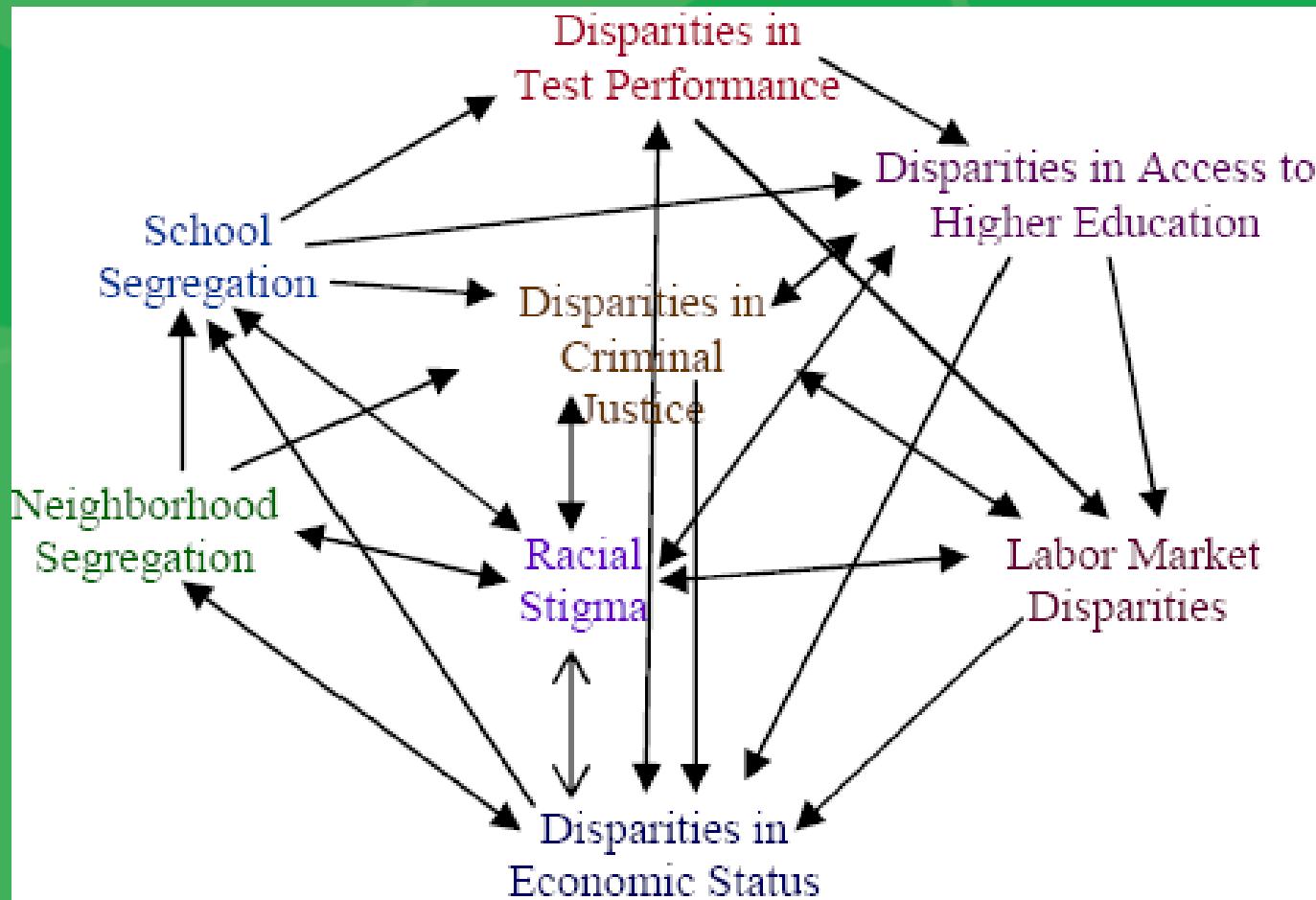
- A white boyfriend and black girlfriend are in a bar. They argue quietly. He hits her.
- A black boyfriend and a white girlfriend are in a bar. They argue quietly. He hits her.

## Scenario 2

- A white boyfriend and black girlfriend are in a bar. They argue. He is heard yelling: “how dare you talk about a white man in public.”
- A black boyfriend and white girlfriend are in a bar. They argue. He is heard yelling: “how dare you talk about a white man in public.”

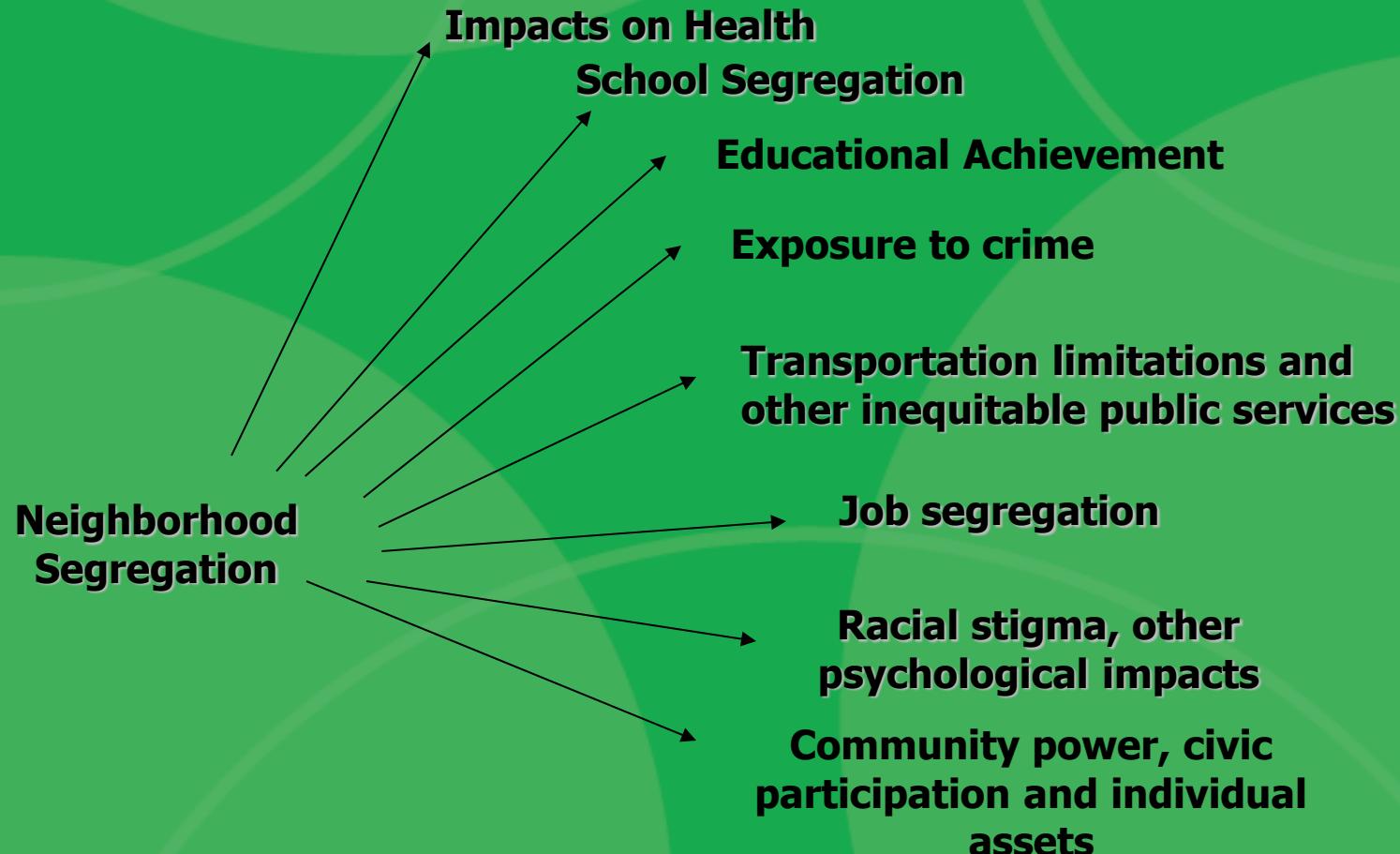
... but it is not enough.

# Implicit Bias Interacts with External Structures and Networks



# E.g., Implicit Bias Increases Neighborhood Segregation and Neighborhood Segregation Creates Implicit Bias

Segregation impacts a number of life-opportunities



# What can be done?

- “Debiasing”
  - Research shows people can reduce their implicit bias levels.
  - Challenging in light of the prevalence of stereotyping in the media and culture.
  - So – need behavioral approaches as well.
- Bias Over-ride
  - Institutions like schools can develop practices that help teachers override the behavioral effects of implicit bias.
  - Requires effort and thoughtful approaches that are context dependent.

# Overcoming Implicit Bias

- Promote counter-stereotypic images
- Promote Individuation
- Promote empathic perspective-taking
- Promote inter-racial engagement (Devine, 2012)



# Outcomes

- After 4 weeks, participants IAT scores were lower, they expressed more concern and awareness of discrimination, and they sought more inter-group contact.
- The effects held after 8 weeks.
- Required conscious effort, but the participants were generally positive about the outcomes of their efforts.

# Rebound Effects

It is crucial to be aware of possible unintended consequences of focusing only on implicit bias as relevant racial dynamic.

Awareness will avoid rebound effects.

- Racial Anxiety – worry or concern that people have about or during inter-racial interactions.
- Stereotype Threat – concern about confirming negative stereotype about group.

# Racial Anxiety

- Experienced by people of color as anxiety that they will be the subject of discrimination and hostile or distant treatment.
- Experienced by whites as anxiety that they will be assumed to be racist and will be met with distrust or hostility.

# How we expect others to see us

When we anticipate that we will be judged or rejected because of our race, ethnicity, gender, or other identity characteristic, we are experiencing “racial anxiety.”



# Effects



- People experiencing racial anxiety often engage in less eye contact, have shorter interactions, and generally seem awkward.
- If a teacher behaves that way with a child, the child feels like an outsider.

# Effects on the brain?

- Heart rate goes up, cortisol (stress level) increases, and cognitive capacities go down.



# Interventions

- Promote the recognition that increased inter-racial contact leads to less anxiety.
- Noticing race is not racist – it is seeing part of a person's identity.
- Facilitate cross-racial ally groups to help people recognize that obstacles and challenges may not be linked to race, ethnicity, or gender difference (Walton & Cohen, 2011).

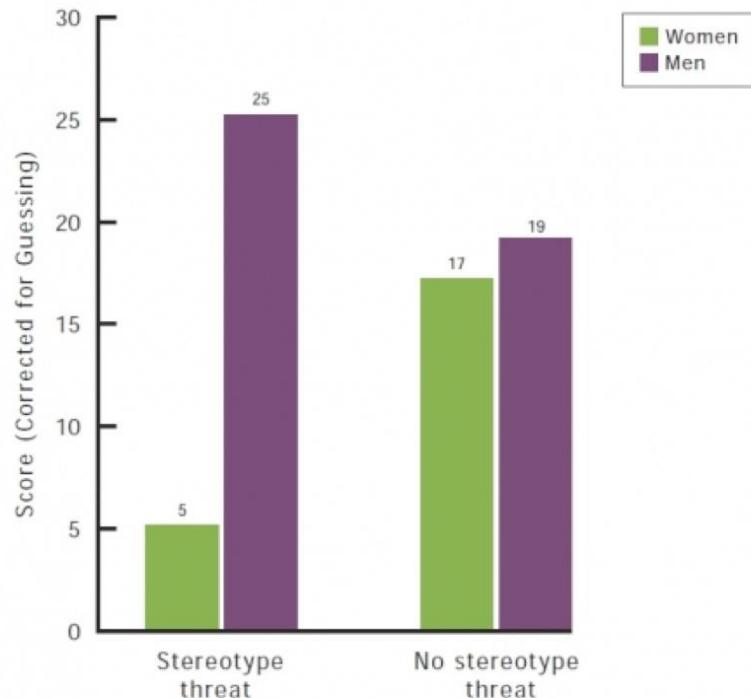
# Stereotype Threat

Apprehension arising from the awareness of a negative stereotype or personal reputation in a situation where the stereotype or identity is relevant, and thus confirmable



# Evidence of Stereotype Threat

**Figure 15. Performance on a Challenging Math Test, by Stereotype Threat Condition and Gender**



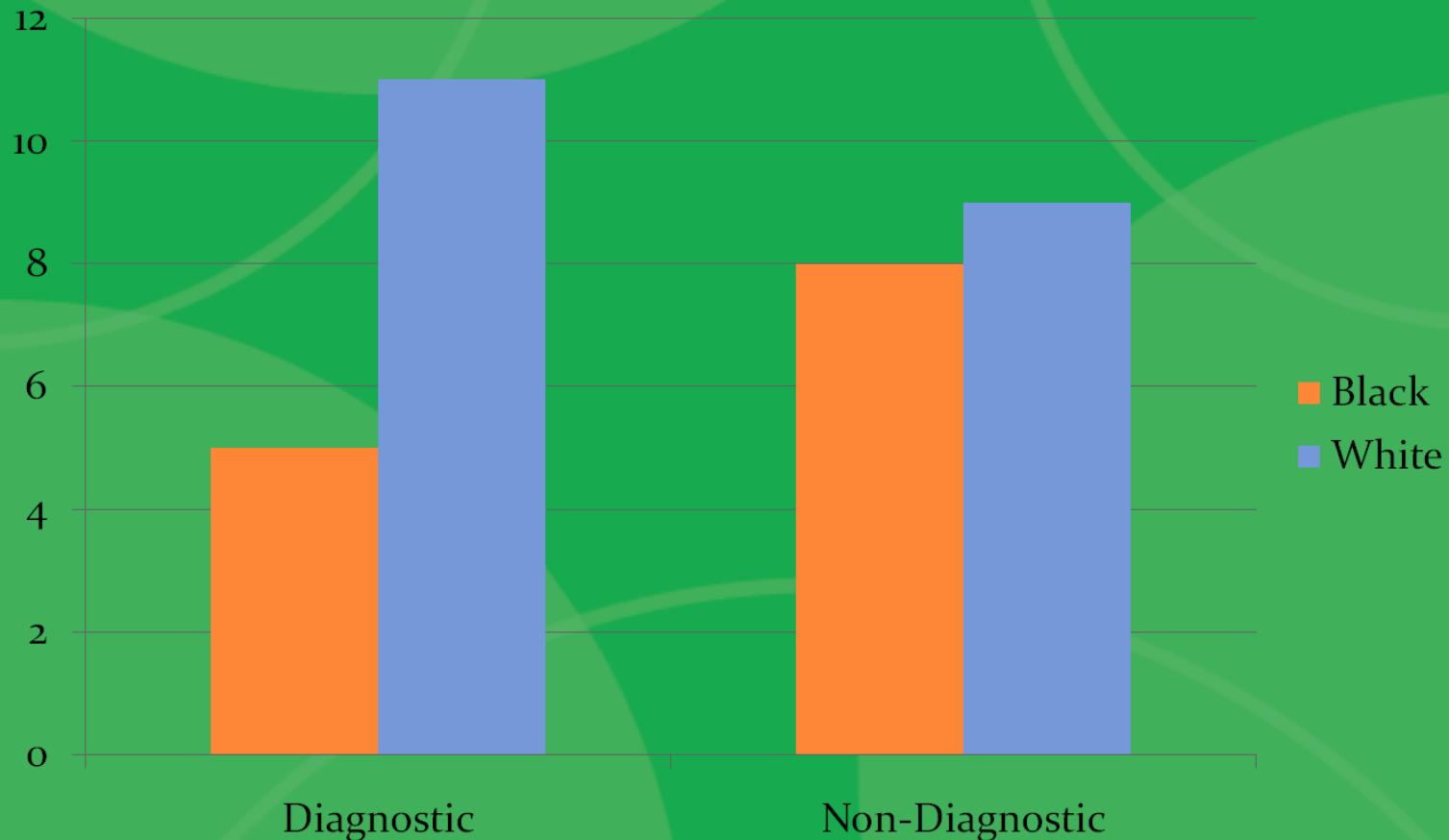
**Stereotype threat:** if participants are told that women are worse than men at mathematics, the women's scores worsen, men's improve...

Source: Spencer et al., 1999, "Stereotype threat and women's math performance," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 35(1), p. 13.



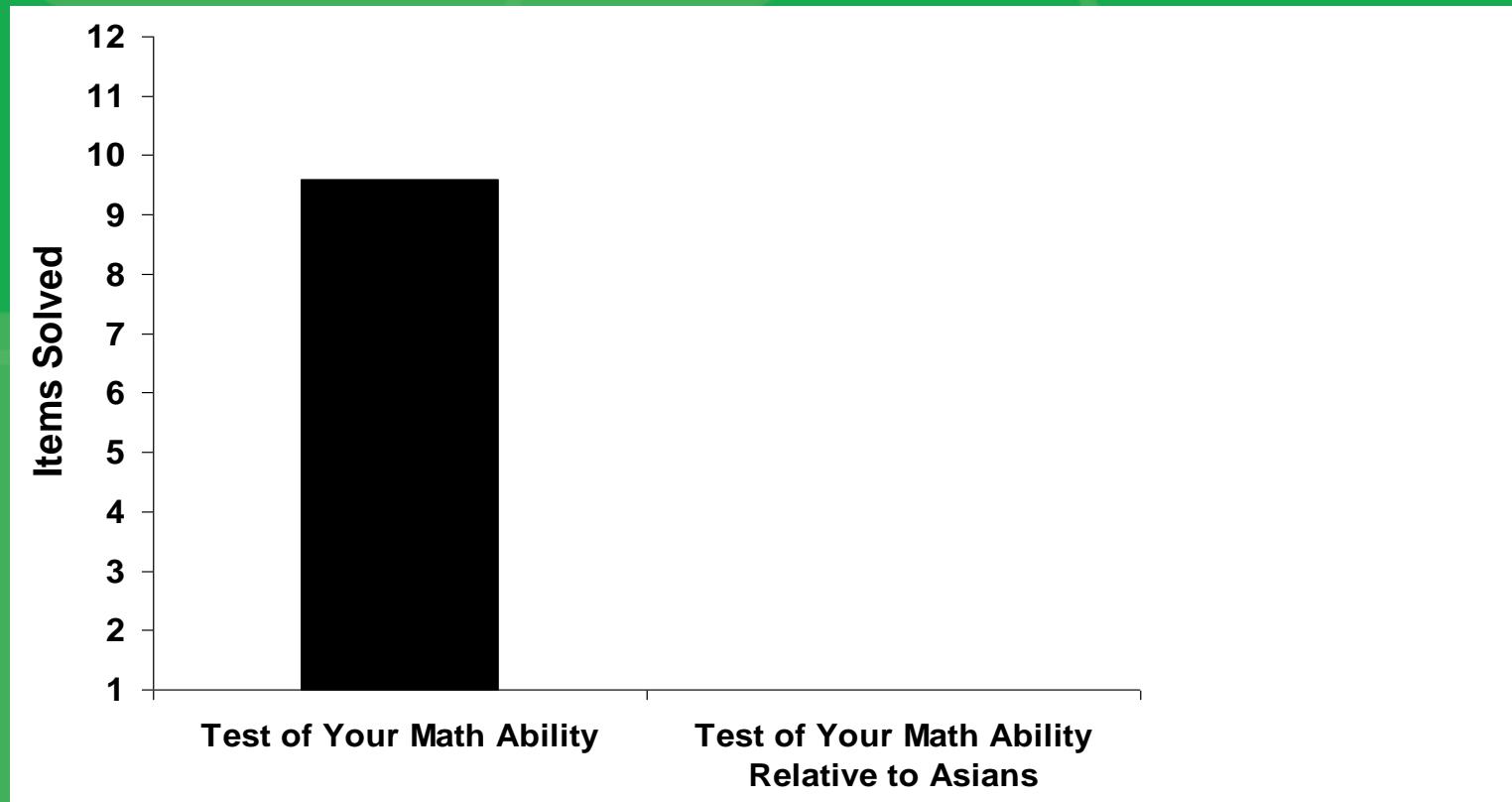
# Proof of Stereotype Threat

(Steele & Aronson)



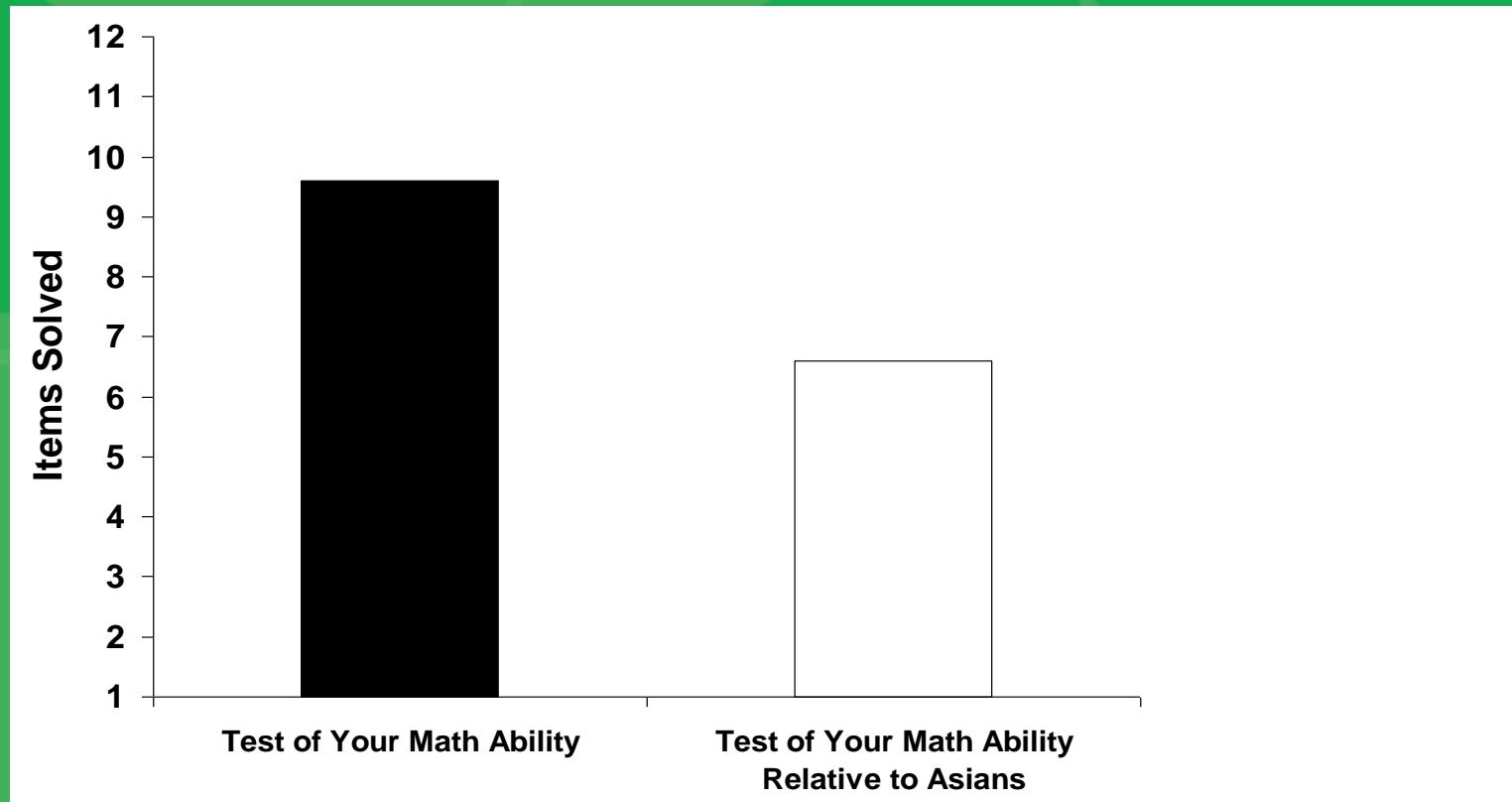
# When White Men Can't Do Math

Aronson, et al., (1999). *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*.



# When White Men Can't Do Math

Aronson, et al., (1999). *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*.



# “White” Stereotype Threat

- The concern many whites feel that they will confirm that stereotype that they are racist.



# Consequences of “kindness”

## Failure to Warn (Cronin et al, 2006)

- Calculus and Chemistry
  - Best subjects history and biology/worst is math
  - Tutoring?
  - Time for other activities?
  - How difficult?
- Too hard?
- For White students but not for Black students (if the peer advisor is worried about seeming racist)

## Unwarranted Praise (Harber, 2012)

- Poorly written essay – what kind of feedback
  - Praise and little criticism to Black and Latino students.
  - Critiques for White students.
  - Except if teacher feels supported by principal – then Black and White students treated the same.
  - Latino students still overly praised.

# Mindset Matters



- Recognizing that both our IQ and our EQ are malleable allows change on both dimensions.

# Institutional Interventions

- Contextual cues: ensure that the environment does not have race or gender-based triggers.
- Individuate: encourage people to recognize others' unique characteristics.
- Affirm important values: when people focus on values outside of themselves, identities are not as salient.
- Create an “in-group” identity: that includes men and women of every race and ethnicity.
- Allow for different identity characteristics: Recognize color-blindness doesn’t work.
- Convey high expectations and belief in capacity to meet them.

<http://www.reducingstereotypethreat.org/reduce.html>



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# Application

- 1) Have you ever felt like people make assumptions about you that are not true?
- 2) How do you handle that experience?
- 3) How may implicit bias, racial anxiety, or stereotype threat interfere with equity goals in your department?
- 4) Brainstorm!

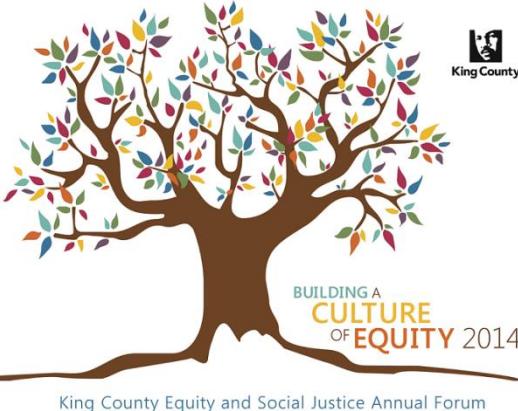
# Thank You!!!



King County Equity and Social Justice Annual Forum

# Follow up

- Take ownership for continuing the dialogue and work towards Building a Culture of Equity in King County
  - Join the Within our Lifetime Campaign @ [www.withinourlifetime.net](http://www.withinourlifetime.net)
  - Yammer – Sign up and join the Equity and Social Justice Group @ [www.yammer.com/kingcounty.gov](http://www.yammer.com/kingcounty.gov)
  - Contact an ESJ IBT or Forum Planning Committee Member (details available in the program)
- Presentation and other resources from today can be found at [www.kingcounty.gov/equity](http://www.kingcounty.gov/equity) under Tools & resources (info available in the program)



# Special Thanks To

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