



# ANTI-BLACK RACISM PRO-BLACK CELEBRATION

OAR Anti-Racism and Racial Justice Cohort

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**Although the information presented in this presentation has been compiled from a number of different sources, this presentation was specifically created for OAR's Racial Justice Cohorts and programs.**

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**Thank you**

# TRIGGER WARNING

**The topics we will be covering today, including some of the images and videos that will be shown may be triggering.**

**If at any point during the session you feel like you need to step away, turn off your camera, or mute yourselves, please feel free to do so.**



# WHAT IS ANTI-BLACK RACISM?

- **Anti-Black racism, or anti-Blackness, is the name of the specific kind of racial prejudice directed towards Black people and it infiltrates every system in the US (United States).**
- **Anti-Blackness devalues Blackness, systematically marginalizes Black people, the issues that affect Black people, and the institutions created to support Black people.**
- **One form of anti-Blackness is the unethical disregard for Black people as commonly seen in the criminal justice system, the media, the school system, and the history of brutality against Black bodies in the US.**

# WHAT IS ANTI-BLACK RACISM? CONT.

- **The concept of anti-Blackness pushes back against the idea that all People of Color have the same lived experiences, experience the same kind of racism and prejudices, and can be shoved under a single umbrella.**
- **It's also important to note that not only White people (WP) are capable of anti-Black racism, but people from other ethnic and cultural groups can enact anti-Black policies and hold anti-Black beliefs as well.**
- **To be clear- all racism across the board is never okay. However, it is still important to recognize that racism in America was rooted in anti-Blackness and also disproportionately affects the Black community**

# ANTI-BLACKNESS IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF SYSTEMIC RACISM

- **Anti-Blackness is seen in the construction of systemic racism in America, where policies were deliberately designed and put in place to oppress Black people while centering and upholding whiteness. While many of these policies also certainly negatively impacted all communities of color, the people that were hurt the most by these policies is the Black community.**

- **Some examples of this from past to present include the Jim Crow policies, redlining, the "separate-but-equal" doctrine, over-policing, mass incarceration, employment discrimination, voter disenfranchisement, housing discrimination, differential access to healthcare, and many more.**

# ANTI-BLACKNESS IN SYMBOLISM

- **Black vs. White dualism is shown in symbolism everywhere - literature, the arts, movies, books, language, sayings/phrases, and more.**
- **Black almost always has a negative connotation associated with it, while White is poses as the exact opposite and almost always has a positive connotation associated with it.**
- **This perpetuates the concept of anti-Blackness and how we are conditioned to consistently view Black as "bad" or "inferior" and White as "good" or "superior."**

# ANTI-BLACKNESS IN SYMBOLISM: EXAMPLES

## BLACK

Bad

Dark

Evil

"Black sheep of the family"

Villains

Death



## WHITE

Good

Light

Pure

"Innocent white lie"

Heroes

Life



# DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. I'M BLACK AND BEAUTIFUL



**Somebody told a lie one day. They couched it in language. They made everything Black ugly and evil. Look in your dictionaries and see the synonyms of the word Black. It's always something degrading and low and sinister. Look at the word White, it's always something pure, high and clean. Well I want to get the language right tonight. I want to get the language so right that everyone here will cry out: Yes, I'm Black, I'm proud of it. I'm Black and I'm beautiful!**

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. "I'm Black and Beautiful" Full Video Clip:  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XNCSIWCyvTY&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XNCSIWCyvTY&feature=emb_logo)



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# ANTI-BLACKNESS IN EDUCATION

- **Anti-Blackness is rooted in the United States' education system. Despite the Brown v. Board of Education ruling over 60 years ago, many school systems remain segregated and there are still gross inequities in the US school systems disproportionately affecting Black students starting from pre-K through post secondary and beyond. Schools attended predominately by people of color, specifically Black and Brown students, are also chronically underfunded and with lack of resources.**
- **An example of how anti-Blackness is deep-rooted in the United States' education system is the school-to-prison pipeline.**

# SCHOOL TO PRISON PIPELINE

- According to the African American Policy Forum (AAPF), the "School to Prison Pipeline" refers to the interaction of national, state, and local policies and practices that serve to push young people, disproportionately youth of color (specifically Black and Brown students), out of schools and into the criminal justice system.

- Some examples of how schools introduce youth into the juvenile justice system are through "zero tolerance policies," the involvement of police in minor disciplinary incidents, referrals to the juvenile justice system, excluding students of color from the learning environment through suspensions, expulsions, and racialized tracking into special education or remedial programs.

Source: <https://aapf.org/school-to-prison-pipeline>



# SCHOOL TO PRISON PIPELINE CONT.

- **Zero Tolerance Policies** - refer to harsh forms of discipline that are supposedly meant to prevent violence in schools. However, the concept of zero tolerance has expanded to involve more extreme discipline, particularly expulsions, for more minor offenses, and for non-violent behavior.

- **Suspensions & Expulsions** - In-school suspensions and expulsions are racially disproportionate. Students of color, particularly Black and Brown students, are more likely to be sent to the principal's office by teachers, based on the perception that their behavior is worse.

Source: <https://aapf.org/school-to-prison-pipeline>



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# SCHOOL TO PRISON PIPELINE CONT.

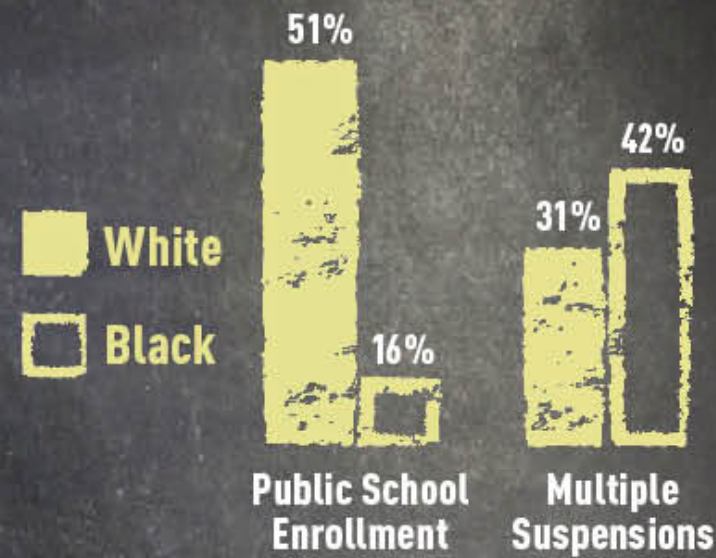
- **Tracking - refers to the diversion of students of color into particular education programs, such as “remedial” education, often based on the racial stereotype that students of color are less intelligent or capable of learning than their white counterparts. In recent decades, tracking has sometimes taken the form of the misdiagnosis of students of color as having disabilities that are not actually present.**

Source: <https://aapf.org/school-to-prison-pipeline>

# SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE

School disciplinary policies disproportionately affect Black students.

Zero-tolerance discipline has resulted in Black students facing disproportionately harsher punishment than white students in public schools.<sup>1</sup>



Black students represent

31%

of school-related arrests<sup>2</sup>

Black students are suspended and expelled

3x

more than white students.<sup>3</sup>



Students suspended or expelled for a discretionary violation are nearly three times more likely to be in contact with the juvenile justice system the following year.<sup>4</sup>



BROWN AT 60: STILL SEPARATE. STILL UNEQUAL.



<sup>1</sup> Data Snapshot: <http://ocrdata.ed.gov/Downloads/CRDC-School-Discipline-Snapshot.pdf>  
<sup>2</sup> Ibid.  
<sup>3</sup> Ibid.  
<sup>4</sup> Breaking School Rules [http://csgjusticecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Breaking\\_Schools\\_Rules\\_Report\\_Final.pdf](http://csgjusticecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/Breaking_Schools_Rules_Report_Final.pdf)

# ANTI-BLACKNESS IN THE MEDIA

- **Media is just one of the systems that work alongside all other systems to perpetuate anti-Blackness in the US. We see patterns of media injustice targeted towards the Black community in mainstream media all the time.**
- **The dehumanizing portrayals of Black people in media are part of a historical lineage that continues to support a white supremacist agenda that leads to anti-Blackness. It desensitizes society to Black suffering and Black humanity.**

Source: <http://news.unm.edu/news/recognizing-anti-blackness-in-media-and-other-institutions>



[www.OARonline.org](http://www.OARonline.org)

# PATTERNS OF MEDIA INJUSTICES

## **#1: Humanizing White Criminals—Dehumanizing Black Victims**

- **Ex. The media is careful about how they represent WP's who are suspects of crime, usually portraying them sympathetically. In contrast, Black people, suspects or not, are not given these same considerations.**

## **#2: Compromising Photos of Black Victims**

- **Ex. Mainstream media is biased when it comes to the kinds of photos they use to portray Black victims in comparison to White victims. When the victim or suspect is White, the media tends to use photos that paint a positive picture in the person's life. When the victim or suspect is Black, the media tends to use compromising and damaging photos portraying the person in a negative light.**



# PATTERNS OF MEDIA INJUSTICES

## **#3: Lone Wolf Characterization of WP's Who Have Committed Crimes**

- **Ex. Mainstream media humanizing the reasons behind a WP who has committed a crime (i.e. he was bullied, suffered from mental health issues, has a hard home life, etc). Isolating the WP as a "lone wolf" and not representative of their entire community.**

## **#4: Black Children Represented as Adults**

- **Ex. Black children, particularly Black boys, tend to be presented as guilty adults in mainstream media. Black children are hardly ever portrayed with the titles "child," "boy," or "girl," but instead with titles such as "juvenile," "suspect," "delinquent," or "big for his/her/their age."**

# PATTERNS OF MEDIA INJUSTICES

## #5: Self-Defense vs. "Guilty Until Proven Innocent"

- Ex. Mainstream media frequently describes a White victim or suspect as (re)acting in self-defense for their violent acts. In contrast, a Black victim or suspect is viewed through a lens of "guilty until proven innocent."



## #6: Double Standard Depictions of Justice Movements

- Ex. Black protestors described by mainstream media as "thugs" and "animals." These same adjectives are not typically coupled with White protestors who engage in riots and violent uprisings following sports events and other festivities.

# ANTI-BLACKNESS IN BEAUTY

- **The beauty industry has a history of failing the Black community in a number of ways, perpetuating anti-Blackness within the beauty industry. Examples of this include beauty companies having a limited shade range of products available for darker-skinned consumers or raising prices for beauty products marketed towards the Black community.**

- **There are also many examples of anti-Blackness within society's beauty standards. Ex. The use of skin lightening creams and hair relaxers is a reaction to a standard of beauty that says that being beautiful means being white and having straight hair. This Eurocentric beauty standard can be seen in cultures around the world. It is rooted in racism, and it has been perpetuated by the beauty industry's marketing.**

# ANTI-BLACKNESS IN BEAUTY CONT.

- **Another example of anti-Blackness apparent in beauty is the perception that it is okay to ask any Black person to touch their hair. Why is this a portrayal of anti-Black racism? Asking to touch a Black person's hair when you wouldn't typically ask to touch a WP's hair is feeding into the narrative that White hair is the norm and anything outside of it abnormal.**
- **It also then becomes a personal space issue as well and how there is this societal belief that it is okay to invade a Black person's space when this wouldn't normally be done to a WP or even another person of color who does not identify as Black/African American.**

Sources: <https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=125020162>, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/janicegassam/2020/01/08/stop-asking-black-people-if-you-can-touch-their-hair/#3555022250a7>



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OLQzz75yE5A>



A YouTube video player interface. The main video area shows a woman with a large afro hairstyle, wearing a black blazer over a patterned top, speaking on a stage. The video progress bar is at 6:28 / 16:02. Below the video, the text reads: #DONTTOUCH No. You Cannot Touch My Hair! | Mena Fombo | TEDxBristol

# PRO-BLACK CELEBRATION

- **What does pro-Blackness look like? It means liberation for all. Racism in the US is specifically rooted in anti-Blackness so it is important that people not only "accept" Blackness but celebrate and uplift it.**
- **Non-Black People of Color also need to start having conversations and dialogue about the anti-Blackness within their own communities and how it is beneficial for all to be pro-Black.**



# PRO-BLACK WORKPLACE/ORGANIZATION

- **An important thing to remember is that this is a journey and a process. Turning an organization that is rooted in White corporate culture/White supremacy to an anti-racist and pro-Black organization is not going to happen over night.**

- **Being a pro-Black organization means not only having/starting conversations about race/racism, but also taking a deeper look into the policies, beliefs, unspoken norms and routines, and culture within the workplace that uphold White culture and perpetuate anti-Blackness.**

# WHAT CAN ORGANIZATIONS DO?

- **For everyone in the organization - It is important to address the anti-racism and anti-Blackness within the workplace. Again, it will not always be so apparent, but can also be found in the subtleties of everyday work routines, language, and culture.**
- **Be okay with the discomfort that will come with conversations about race.**
- **Listen to your Black colleagues. Provide a safe space for your Black colleagues.**
- **Really commit to being an anti-racist, pro-Black organization through action and incorporate this mindset throughout every division, department, etc.**



# WHAT CAN ORGANIZATIONS DO? CONT.

- **Put resources towards efforts that actually enhance the lives of Black staff and Black communities.**

- **Ex. You can commit to a strategic planning process that centers on anti-racism; hire facilitators that specialize in racial equity and racial healing; or design long-term programs to develop and retain your Black talent. Set significant resources aside for training that effectively teaches people of all races and genders how to combat racist behavior, including unconscious bias and microaggressions.**

# WHAT CAN ORGANIZATIONS DO? CONT.

- **Give a voice to Black leadership and employees, but do not lean on them to address issues of anti-racism and anti-Blackness alone. If you are a WP or a non-Black POC you must own this work as well.**

- **Involve Black staff in these efforts but don't expect them to do the work. Too often, Black staff and staff of color are called upon to help organizations navigate issues regarding race, only to end up shouldering burdens that are not theirs to carry. It is not right or fair to rely on your Black staff to tackle these issues; if you are a WP or a non-Black POC you must take the lead yourself.**

# OAR AS AN EXAMPLE OF A PRO-BLACK ORG.

- **Dress Policy - "Come as you are."**
- **Incorporating a racial justice mindset and the title, "Racial Justice Ambassador," to each staffed position.**
- **Requiring all staff and volunteers who engage with OAR in a more in-depth, regular basis to go through anti-racism and racial justice training.**
- **Providing a safe space/community time for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) staff.**
- **Lifting up anti-racism, racial justice, pro-Blackness, and liberation as a core value of OAR's mission.**

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