DO NO HARM

Disproportionality & Disparity in Child Welfare
“Yet American political development has been organized around the dynamics of race, and conflict over race are embedded in the structure of all social policies” (Katz, 2001) as stated in Midgley and Livermore, 2009, p.263)
“All Children belong to all of us, to protect them is to preserve humanity,” Dr. Kenneth Clark
Disproportionality & Disparity

Implicit Bias

Social Structure

Child Welfare Professionals

Fletcher  CASA National
DO NO HARM Presentation 2013
OBJECTIVES:

- Define Disproportionality & Disparity

- Identify Structural theory of society

- Define Implicit bias

- Identify Decision Making Points

- Analysis of the impact of structural theory & implicit bias on child welfare professional decision making and disproportionality & disparity

- How can CASA address this issue?
What is disproportionality in child welfare?

The difference between the percentage of children of a certain race/ethnicity in the child welfare system and their percentage in the overall population.
“Disparity means unequal treatment when comparing a racial or ethnic minority to a non-minority. This can be observed in many forms including decision points (e.g., reporting, investigation, substantiation, foster care placement, exit), treatment, services, or resources.” (Hill, 2006)
probable causes of disproportionality & disparity?

- Racial/ethnic bias in maltreatment referrals?
- management/treatment of minority children’s maltreatment cases?
- Risk Factors:
  - Chronic poverty?
  - Teen Pregnancy
  - Incarceration
  - Substance Abuse
  - Domestic Violence
  - Single parent household
- Social Structure?
- Higher incidence of neglect and/or abuse?
Outcomes

AS YOUTH

- Increased hospitalizations →
- Increased mental health concerns →
- Educational troubles →
- Juvenile criminal behaviors

AS ADULTS

- ↑ physical illness & risky health behaviors
- ↑ mental illness
- ↓ education attainment
- Poor employment
- Homelessness

Ahrens, DuBois, Garrison, Spencer, Richardson & Lozano, 2011

Annie E. Casey Fact sheet 2002
## Disproportionality rates

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<th>Number</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Af. Am.</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>Am. Ind.</th>
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<td>0.6</td>
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<td>0.9</td>
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Summers, Wood & Russell 2012
Social Structure
### BASIC TENETS

- Invisible
- Distinctive
- Stable arrangement
- Patterned institutional interactions
- Patterned individual interactions

### THEORIES

- Critical social theory
  - Critical Race/Ethnic Theory
  - Anti-oppressive Theory
  - Feminism
- Critical Realism
  - Bhaskar
    - Human agency and social structure
    - Structure is evident by human behavior
    - Antecedent social structures

Lewis, 2000; Mullalay 2010
United States Social Structure

BASIC TENETS

- Invisible
- Distinctive
- Stable arrangement
- Patterned institutional interactions
- Patterned individual interactions

Racism is integral to U.S. life and permeates all aspects of our institutions and culture.

Lewis, 2000; Mullalay 2010
Bias: an unfair preference for or dislike of...

Explicit: fully and clearly expressed or demonstrated.

Implicit: implied rather than expressly stated. (Encarta Dictionary, 2013)
Explicit Bias

Who is the welfare Queen?

Kill the Indian save the man

The post-test questionnaire explored respondents' attitudes on a wide range of issues related to welfare, race and gender.

Gilliam altered the race of the woman portrayed in a welfare reform TV story to test viewers' perceptions of gender and race.
Implicit Bias: An implied rather than expressly stated unfair preference or dislike which is hidden even from the originator. Unconscious.

“Prejudices that persist even as our explicit attitudes evolve,” Dr. Mahzarin Banaji (Gong, 2012)

All people are socialized into society and therefore inherit the biases, stereotypes, and racist attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors of the larger society.

(Ponterotto, 2006Sue et al. 1998)
What does implicit bias look like, what dose it do, how does it act?

1. It’s invisible
2. It keeps the social structure in place
3. It becomes visible in the decisions we make regarding ourselves and others
   1. Rate of call back interviews
   2. Moving to the other side of the street
   3. Clutching the purse, locking the car door
4. Stereotypes
   1. Asians are... Hispanics are....
   2. Blacks are... Whites are....
   3. Native Americans are...
Decision Making Points
and the Professional Use of Self

- Identification → Social worker involvement
- Reporting
- Intake
- Initial Assessment → Court involvement
- Family Assessment
- Planning → CASA involvement
- Service Provision
- Case Closure
Child Welfare System Decision Tree:

Source: Wisconsin Legislative Fiscal Bureau, 2009
Do social structure & implicit bias influence child welfare professionals?

Disproportionality & Disparity

YES!

Implicit Bias

Social Structure

Child Welfare Professionals
5 MIN BREAK
Exercises

INDIVIDUAL

GROUP
What do we do?

- AWARENESS
- AWARENESS
- AWARENESS
- Intentionally interact with others
- Decision making tools
- Attend trainings
  - Know Who You Are
  - Undoing Racism
  - Facing history Facing Ourselves
- Come to grips with your own bias
- Understand the impact of your own bias

Trosch, 2012; Gong, J. 2012.
<table>
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<tr>
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Encarta Dictionary (2013)


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