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INNOVATIONS CONCERNING DIVERSITY TRAINING AND ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTIONS FOR POLICE OFFICERS USING REFLECTION AND TALKING CIRCLES

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ABSTRACT:

The paper explores a management consulting and organizational development intervention focused on employing new and innovative approaches to diversity training for police and law enforcement organizations through real-world interventions that explore human stories, connections, and dialogues as tools for understanding and change. The outcome of this approach is a more dynamic, productive, and constructive way to have more impactful and transformative organizational development and employee discussions, interventions, and training on diversity, inclusion, and cultural competence in law enforcement and all complex organizations. The intent of this discussion is not to reconstitute academic theory, but to influence the world of practice in a way that supports social change, because when applied, community-based research is important and relevant.

KEYWORDS:

Diversity training in law enforcement, employee engagement, talking circles, talking stick, training interventions, employee development, organizational development, diversity consulting

1. Introduction

The importance of providing effective diversity training for police officers and police supervisors cannot be overstated. According to Barlow & Barlow (2018), diversity training is a vital tool for law enforcement officers in the 21st century, as it promotes understanding and respect for all individuals, regardless of their race, gender, age, religion, and other identifying factors. Effective diversity training not only ensures the delivery of fair and equitable law enforcement services, but it also contributes to building positive police-community relationships and trust among citizens. By providing comprehensive diversity training to police officers and police supervisors, law enforcement agencies can benefit in multiple ways.

Diversity training can help reduce the potential for discrimination and bias-based profiling of citizens. By understanding how their actions, words, and behaviors affect different individuals, police supervisors and officers can better serve the public. In addition, diversity training can be beneficial

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for police administrators, because all traditionally underrepresented and diverse community members may no longer perceive the police as biased against them, thus, relieving the agency of potential liability (Barlow & Barlow, 2018).

The changing demographic landscapes in many countries have led to the importance of diversity training in all professions (El-Amin, 2022; Deardorff, 2019). One of the tools used by many organizations in this effort is diversity training (Devine & Ash, 2022; Thakur, Khoo & Pyar, 2021). However, many organizations face the challenge of designing effective diversity training that has a tangible impact on changing attitudes and behaviors (Tychonievich & Cohoon, 2020). Typical objectives of a diversity training program may include:

- Increase awareness and knowledge of cultural differences;
- Changing attitudes to create a sense of belonging and inclusion for all employees;
- Promote better communication between diverse groups;
- Demonstrate the importance of respect, sensitivity, and cooperation when working with people from different backgrounds and;
- Develop the skills necessary to lead a diverse workgroup.

Many organizations are trying to address the complexities of diversity and inclusion training in order to move towards organizational cultures where inclusion, equity, and engagement of others of all races, cultures, countries, genders, and sexual orientations are the norm rather than a rare or occasional exception (Hecht, 2020). Diversity training needs to move from check-the-box online PowerPoint presentations to high-impact interventions (Tychonievich & Cohoon, 2020). This is critical in law enforcement where racist, uncivil, and hostile interactions between police and members of the community can be matters of life and death or mentally traumatic. For many police and law enforcement organizations, this level of change represents a significant organizational shift, requiring high touch and high contact interventions, innovative training approaches, and complex change management activities.

Although studies have shown that diversity training can be beneficial to organizations, there can also be a number of challenges associated with developing and implementing an effective program (Tychonievich & Cohoon, 2020). Although diversity training offers a number of important benefits to both employers and employees, there are a number of challenges associated with creating an effective program, particularly when people are either indifferent or opposed to the idea of diversity training (Dover, Kaiser & Major, 2020).

These challenges include:

1. **Lack of buy-in**: One of the most significant challenges in creating effective diversity training is the lack of buy-in from participants. Studies have shown that the success of any training program is largely dependent on the willingness of participants to engage and take part in the program. If participants do not see the value in diversity training, or do not believe that it is relevant to them, they may not participate meaningfully, which can render the program ineffective (Thakur, Khoo & Pyar, 2021; Tychonievich & Cohoon, 2020).

2. **Poorly designed programs**: Another challenge with diversity training is that many programs are not designed to effectively address the core issues that are causing division in the workplace. For example, some programs may focus exclusively on superficial issues such as race and gender, without taking into account the underlying issues such as power dynamics, organizational culture, and institutional policies. This can make the training seem superficial, irrelevant, or overly generalized, which can lead to participants disengaging from the program (Thakur, Khoo & Pyar, 2021; Tychonievich & Cohoon, 2020).

3. **Inappropriate training content**: Diversity training can be a sensitive topic, especially when it involves cultural differences and sensitive issues such as power dynamics. If the content of the training is not carefully and appropriately designed, it can lead to misunderstandings, confusion, and even accusations of discrimination or bias (Thakur, Khoo & Pyar, 2021; Tychonievich & Cohoon, 2020).

4. **Inadequate facilitation**: The success of any training program is highly dependent on the quality and effectiveness of the facilitator. An ineffective facilitator can lead to an ineffective training session, resulting in participants feeling poorly informed and disengaged (Thakur, Khoo & Pyar, 2021; Tychonievich & Cohoon, 2020).

5. **Lack of follow through**: Finally, the effectiveness of any diversity training program is heavily dependent on the implementation of follow-up activities. If participants are not given the opportunity to apply their newly acquired skills and knowledge in a meaningful way, the training may be seen as irrelevant or ineffective (Tychonievich & Cohoon, 2020).

6. **Failure to connect diversity training with change management approaches**: It is clear that understanding change management processes when delivering diversity training is of great value to an organization. By ensuring that the underlying change management processes are in place, organizations can more effectively create an environment that is conducive to diversity. This can help organizations to better leverage their competitive advantage and create a more productive and engaging work environment. Thus, organizations that recognize the importance of intertwining change management processes with diversity initiatives will be significantly rewarded for their efforts (Leslie, 2019; Hecht, 2020).

2. Problem statement

Police officers and supervisors are responsible for serving all members of the public, regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, or any other identifying factor. Diversity training is essential to ensure that police officers and supervisors are well versed in how to handle different types of situations that may arise due to differences in culture or background (Lai & Lisnek, 2023; Vaughn & Johnson, 2020).

The primary challenge of diversity training for police officers is getting officers to accept it and embrace the change it requires (Lai & Lisnek, 2023; Vaughn & Johnson, 2020). Police departments may be resistant to change, making it challenging to implement diversity training or get officers to willingly attend these trainings. In addition, many officers may feel that the trainings are pointless or unnecessary, as they are already trained to de-escalate crises and manage volatile interactions.

Diversity training gives police officers and supervisors the tools to better understand and interact with members of diverse communities. Officers need it to avoid relying on stereotypes and preconceived notions when making decisions. They may also be unaware of their implicit biases or prejudices and how they affect their interactions with specific groups. Diversity training is also essential in teaching officers how to empower marginalized communities and improve trust between law enforcement and these communities. This training is essential in equipping police officers and supervisors with tools to ensure that all interactions are fair and just (Lai & Lisnek, 2023; Vaughn & Johnson, 2020).

3. Method

The approach used was an organizational development intervention. This type of research aims to determine how well employees are doing and to identify areas for improvement. Organizations that are serious about

achieving results have embraced these interventions, finding them to be incredibly effective in achieving their organizational goals. Organizational development training interventions, such as problem-solving and team-oriented activities, can be valuable in solving complex organizational issues. By bringing team members together and improving their communication skills, team members can better understand individual and organizational needs. This research helps to provide data that can be used to measure an organization's performance and to evaluate how effective current policies and programs are in bringing about positive change. It is also used to discover new techniques and strategies to improve the effectiveness of organizational development and intervention efforts (Beeby & Simpson, 1998; Paluck, 2006). This paper explores a training intervention as a new approach to diversity training.

4. Managing cultural change

Organizations are dynamic entities that are constantly affected by change and the need for innovation (Cameron & Green, 2019). Therefore, it is important to consider both organizational culture and change management processes when implementing effective training programs. To be successful, training programs must be aligned with organizational objectives and must be designed to enhance a culture of innovation (Tychonievich & Cohoon, 2020). The change management process refers to the set of strategies that an organization uses to manage a change in its structure, operations, or services. This process helps to ensure that the change is accepted by employees, and that it is efficiently implemented (Cameron & Green, 2019).

According to Cameron & Green (2019), people do not progress through the stages of change in a linear manner, but in a spiral pattern. They outline change processes: experiential and behavioral. Experiential processes include increased awareness, emotional experiences, environmental reevaluation, social liberation, and self-reevaluation. Consciousness raising (getting facts) can be achieved through interventions such as feedback, education, confrontation, and interpretation. Furthermore, dramatic relief (attention to feelings) can include psychodrama, role-playing, and personal testimony. Environmental reevaluation (noticing one's impact on others) can involve becoming aware of how a particular habit affects one's social environment, such as the effect of smoking on others. Additionally, social liberation (noticing public support) requires increasing social opportunities or alternatives. Finally, self-reevaluation (creating a new self-image) combines cognitive and affective assessments of one's self-image.

Behavioral processes involve counter conditioning (trying something new), stimulus control (changing one's environment), helping relationships (getting support), and reinforcement management (paying oneself). Counter conditioning (trying something new) involves competing responses, substitute activities, and activity scheduling. Stimulus control (changing one's environment) includes stimulus fading, stimulus discrimination, and stimulus control. Helping relationships (getting support) emphasizes the importance of social support and positive reinforcement from family and other social contacts. Finally, reinforcement management (paying oneself) involves increasing the likelihood of positive reinforcement through incentives, reinforcement contracts and back-up reinforcers (Cameron & Green, 2019).

5. Training considerations

When discussing the way to deliver effective training, organizations must consider how to deliver meaningful educational content that leaves a lasting impression and truly transforms the knowledge of an individual or group of individuals (Tychonievich & Cohoon, 2020; Sabie-Aridi, Burrell & Richardson, 2022). One of the most effective ways to do this is

through the implementation of experiential learning approaches and dialogue (Morris, 2020; Sabie-Aridi, Burrell & Richardson, 2022). Experiential learning is a type of learning that requires the learner to engage with the material being taught in order to understand it more effectively. Additionally, dialogue between the learner and the facilitator is an important part of ensuring that knowledge is successfully transmitted and understood. Combining these two elements of experiential learning and dialogue creates an effective training environment that can be easily adapted to a variety of settings and topics (Morris, 2020; Seaman, Brown & Quay, 2017; Kolb & Kolb 2017; Sabie-Aridi, Burrell & Richardson, 2022).

Experiential learning is an approach to teaching that uses learning activities to help learners acquire knowledge and skills. This type of learning encourages learners to actually practice and reflect on the content being taught, a process known as reflection-in-action. Experiential learning often requires learners to explore real-life scenarios to provide more context for learning (Morris, 2020; Seaman, Brown & Quay, 2017; Kolb & Kolb 2017).

According to Robbins (2018), dialogue is an effective teaching tool that allows the educator to supplement the learning experience of the participants by engaging in one-on-one conversations with the learner. This type of communication ensures that the learner not only understands the material, but also connects the knowledge to his own experiences and applies it in a meaningful way. The combination of experiential learning and dialogue is an effective strategy for delivering successful training sessions. Experiential learning provides a means for learners to gain direct experience of the subject matter and develop a more comprehensive understanding (Morris, 2020; Seaman, Brown, & Quay, 2017; Kolb & Kolb 2017). Dialogue helps to ensure that learners connect the material to real-world experiences and allows them to reflect on how they can apply the content to their own lives (Robbins, 2018). By utilizing both experiential learning and dialogue, educators can create a more engaging and effective learning environment and allow learners to develop a longer term understanding of the material (Sabie-Aridi, Burrell & Richardson, 2022).

6. Innovative training and interventions

An intervention and experiential learning approach that was applied and utilized included several training and engagement activities that took place between police officers and community members of color. There were a total of 24 participants organized in a large group or in 6 small groups of 4 participants each. The small group consisted of two police officers and two community members of color. All 24 participants were required to read a series of news articles, take notes in their own personal journal and then discuss them weekly in their small groups of 4 and then twice a month in the larger group of 24, using a talking circle approach.

The talking circle is an ancient practice used in many cultures to allow individuals to have a voice and be heard. It is an effective way for individuals to practice open communication with respect and empathy in a safe and non-judgmental environment. It is a process in which participants sit in a circle and take turns speaking. Each individual has an opportunity to express his or her feelings, thoughts, and opinions about a given topic, without interruption, in ways that label it as restorative practice (Parker-Shandal, 2023). The facilitator of the circle ensures that everyone has an equal opportunity to speak and to be heard. The talking circle enables professionals to explore their own feelings and emotions as a means of better understanding their values, beliefs, and unique contributions (Van Ness et al., 2022).

Restorative practices have the potential to approach conflict resolution as a process of moving from detached adversarial

relationships to empathic transformational relationships in a sense of community (Van Ness et al., 2022). One particular restorative practice, the talking circle, is a common practice in restorative justice efforts and an apparently effective one (Parker-Shandal, 2023). This has the potential to help police officers increase their sense of wellbeing and transcendence from old models of thinking to more transformative ways of being (Van Ness et al., 2022). Pranis (2015) adds that the circle process encourages a transformative approach by having the professional reflect on their own beliefs in relation to the situation, challenging both professional orthodoxy and their own biases or entrenched beliefs. This allows professionals to remain open to information that may challenge their current views. Additionally, the talking circle is an effective way for individuals to practice open communication with respect and empathy in a safe and non-judgmental environment, allowing participants to hear each other's stories, perspectives, and ideas of others in an uninterrupted group process (Parker-Shandal, 2023). By allowing each individual to express their feelings, thoughts, and opinions without interruption, it enables all participants to explore their own feelings and emotions as a means of better understanding their values, beliefs, and unique contributions (Van Ness et al., 2022).

Pranis (2015) highlights the philosophy underlying talking circles, which is that all people are in need of help and that helping others simultaneously helps oneself. Thus, participants who engage in the process with an open mind tend to experience some level of change and growth, with mindful attunement likely to be a key factor in meaningful interactions and transformative experiences. Pranis also points to committed interactions in the circle as the ability to hear commonalities between participants in the circle process in ways that find common concerns, feelings, priorities, and values even between participants of different cultures, races, genders, sexual orientations, and backgrounds. Facilitators of circles must therefore be present and attuned to both themselves and the circle participants in order to cultivate a genuine and secure environment. It is because circles are able to engender a shared understanding of common experiences and potentially a new understanding of the other that it can be profoundly transformative, a radical empathy as a feeling of direct and deep connection with another person who may be a stranger (Givens, 2021). This state of radical empathy can lead to a deepening of the relationship and a spiritual transformation (Givens, 2021). The talking circle has its roots in Native American tribal practices, where members of the same tribe would gather in a circular formation and engage in a discourse until a consensus is reached (Pranis, 2015). As such, it can be seen as a practice that facilitates a shared understanding and appreciation of the human condition.

The use of circles has been an important part of Native American culture, serving as a way to pass on narratives through an oral tradition (Pranis, 2015). In education, circles are being used to promote respect among and between student peer groups, teachers, parents, and administrators, to model listening and conflict resolution skills, and to foster self-esteem (Parker & Bickmore, 2020). Parker and Bickmorem (2020) propose a model for implementing a talking circle practice in a teaching and learning environment, where a small object such as a feather, talking stick, or small stone is used as the "talking stick" which, when held by a member of the circle, symbolically confers the power to speak to the group, as the only speaker at that time. There are some basic guidelines for effective circle discussion, such as limiting the disclosures to self-exploration, rather than discussion of others in the group. Researchers suggest the presence of an expert moderator to ensure that the circle dialogue stays on track and does not become inappropriate in terms of disclosures or conflicting views, and that the other members of the group remain silent when the person holding the talking stick is speaking.

7. Activities included in the circle

The process included guiding questions, individual and team activities to facilitate a content analysis of a series of articles on the topic of racial dynamics. Conducting a content analysis of articles on race through a group discussion and talking circle approach provided a dynamic and inclusive avenue for teams to delve into the complexities surrounding race, racism, and conflict. This method not only facilitates a deeper understanding of the content but also encourages meaningful dialogue and introspection among team members.

The first step is to carefully select a set of articles that encapsulate diverse perspectives on race-related issues. These articles should cover a range of topics, from historical analyses to contemporary discussions on systemic racism and its impact on various facets of society. Each team member is assigned a specific article to read and critically analyze, preparing them for the subsequent group discussion. Each participant should read each article and discuss it with their group based on the following objectives and activities:

- **Understand the main thesis or argument**: Identify the main thesis or argument presented by the author. This is often stated in the introduction or abstract. Pay attention to the central claim or purpose of the article.
- **Identify key concepts and terms**: Look for key concepts and terms used by the author. Understand how these terms are defined and used in the context of the article.
- **Highlight supporting evidence**: Identify the evidence, examples, or data used by the author to support the arguments. Evaluate the reliability and relevance of the evidence presented.
- **Evaluate counterarguments**: Consider whether the author addresses counterarguments or alternative perspectives. Evaluate how well the author responds to potential criticisms.
- **Examine implications and conclusions**: Consider the implications of the author's arguments and findings. Reflect on the broader significance of the article's content.
- **Identify themes and patterns**: Look for recurring themes or patterns in the article. Consider how these themes contribute to the overall message.
- **Take notes**: Take detailed notes as you read to capture key points, quotes, highlight key sections and note your own reflections.
- **Reflect on personal reactions**: Consider your own reactions and responses to the material. How does it align with or challenge your existing knowledge and beliefs?
- **Summarize key points**: Create a concise summary of the article, highlighting the main arguments, evidence, and conclusions.

In the group discussion phase, teams came together to share their individual analyses, emphasizing the key themes, arguments, and implications presented in the articles. The talking circle format fosters an environment of open communication, allowing each team member to express their perspectives and insights without hierarchy. This approach ensures that diverse voices are heard, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the materials.

As the conversation unfolded, teams were encouraged to explore the intersections of race with other societal elements, such as class, gender, and privilege. This holistic approach helps team members recognize the interconnected nature of systemic issues and broadens the scope of the discussion. The goal is not only to dissect the content of the articles but also to reflect on how these insights can inform their understanding of race dynamics within their respective fields.

Furthermore, the discussion encouraged critical reflection on personal biases and assumptions. Teams can explore

how societal structures contribute to implicit biases and challenge themselves to confront preconceived notions. This self-awareness is vital for fostering a culture of inclusivity and empathy within the team.

The group discussion and talking circle approach concluded with a collective synthesis of the insights gained. Teams work together to identify overarching themes, areas of consensus, and potential avenues for further exploration. This shared understanding serves as a basis for ongoing conversations about race and informs strategies for addressing issues of racism within the team's professional context.

By using this group discussion and talking circle approach, teams not only engaged in a content analysis of articles on race, but also actively participated in a transformative process that promoted inclusivity, self-awareness, and a deeper understanding of the nuanced dynamics surrounding race-related issues.

All 24 participants were required to read a series of news articles, take notes in their own personal journal and then discuss them weekly in their small groups of 4 and then twice a month discuss them in the larger group of 24 participants using a talking circle approach. The larger group was to produce a summary, developed collectively from the group discussions, of the conclusions drawn from reading and discussing the article.

The weekly journal prompts guided the small group discussions of the groups of 4 and provided notes and discussion points for the larger group of 24 in the talking circle sessions, where each participant was handed a talking stick and shared their answers to each of the 4 questions.

The questions were as follows:

1. What key points in the article made the most impact on you and why, in a way that challenged, confirmed, or changed your thinking?

2. Can you put yourself or a family member in the place, author's perspective, or context of the article and write about how you would feel?

3. Is there anything in the article that you would like to change, and if so what do you think it would take to change it?

4. Are there any personal stories you have that relate to the article and if so, what are they?

7.1. Article no. 1

Lukasik, G. (2017, November 20). "My mother spent her life passing as white. Discovering her secret changed my view of race – and myself". The Washington Post.

7.1.1. Article introduction

This article presents the story of Lukasik's discovery that her mother was African American but had passed as white, and the impact this revelation had on her identity and worldview. This paper seeks to provide a summary of the article, analyze the themes of race and identity, and discuss the implications of this story.

Lukasik (2017) begins the article by recounting her mother's life. Her mother had never disclosed her true racial identity to her daughter, instead living her life as a white woman. Lukasik writes that her mother's life was filled with secrets, such as being adopted by a white family and raised as a white person, and that she had even changed her name to conceal her true identity.

Lukasik states that she had always been aware of the racial disparities that existed in the United States, but it was not until she learned her mother's secret that she truly began to understand the realities of racism. She recounts how her discovering her mother's identity caused her to reflect on her own identity and experience of race.

Lukasik goes on to discuss how her mother's passing as white was a reflection of the racism and discrimination that African Americans were subjected to during her lifetime. She notes that her mother had to hide her identity in order to survive, and that this was a reflection of the

systemic racism that African Americans faced. She also reflects on how her mother's death had a profound impact on her own identity and experience of race. Lukasik then discusses the implications of her discovery. She states that learning her mother's secret has changed her view of race and how she sees herself and the world around her. She writes that it has allowed her to see the world in a new light, and to better understand the realities of racism and discrimination.

7.1.2. Analysis of themes

The article presents a number of themes related to race and identity. One of the main themes is the idea of passing as white. As Lukasik recounts, her mother spent her life passing as white in order to survive. This idea of passing as white reflects the systemic racism and discrimination that African Americans faced during her mother's lifetime, and it is a powerful illustration of the realities of racism and discrimination.

Another theme is the impact of racial identity on individuals. The article illustrates how learning about her mother's true racial identity had a profound impact on Lukasik's identity and worldview. Her discovery of her mother's secret changed her view of race and how she saw herself and the world around her, and allowed her to gain a better understanding of the realities of racism and discrimination.

7.1.3. Conclusions from the group discussions shared by group participants

Lukasik's article prompts a multifaceted exploration of race and identity. It challenges readers to confront the hidden narratives within their own lives, fostering discussions that transcend the personal to address systemic issues. The article's power lies in its ability to unravel the complexities of racial experiences, urging readers to grapple with the past, present, and future implications of systemic racism in America.

The groups outlined that the implications of this story are far-reaching. This article illustrates the power of racial identity and how it can shape an individual's identity and worldview. It also serves as a reminder of the systemic racism and discrimination that African Americans faced during Lukasik's mother's lifetime, and how this racism and discrimination can have a lasting impact on individuals and their families.

Additionally, this article serves as a reminder of the importance of understanding our own identities and how they shape our view of the world. By understanding our own identities and the identity of those around us, we can gain a better understanding of the realities of racism and discrimination and how they shape our lives.

7.2. Article no. 2

Powell, T. (2019). "My Son Has Been Suspended Five Times. He's 3". The Washington Post.

7.2.1. Article introduction

This article presents the story of her three-year-old son's five suspensions from pre-school. The author argues that racial disparities in school discipline are a systemic issue that cannot be attributed solely to the behavior of individual students. She also highlights the challenges Black parents face in advocating for their children's rights in the face of racism and prejudice.

In her article, Powell argues that the suspensions are symptomatic of a larger problem of racial disparities in school discipline. Drawing on data from the US Department of Education, she argues that Black children are disproportionately subject to suspensions and other disciplinary measures, and that this is due in large part to entrenched racism and prejudice.

The article begins with an anecdote about Powell's three-year-old son, Kayin,

who had been suspended from pre-school five times before he was four years old. At the time, Powell was working as an advocate for families dealing with challenging behavior in school, but even she was taken aback by the severity of Kayin's suspensions. She recounts the story in the hopes of raising awareness about the issue of racial disparities in school discipline. According to data of the US Department of Education, Black students are suspended three times more often than their white peers, and are more likely to face harsher punishments for the same infractions. This is true even at the pre-school level, where Black children are more than twice as likely to be suspended as their white peers.

Powell argues that these disparities cannot be explained away by the misbehavior of individual students. Rather, she argues, they are the result of entrenched racism and prejudice. She cites studies showing that Black students are more likely to be considered "problematic" than their white peers, and that teachers are more likely to respond to their misbehavior with punitive measures. Similarly, Powell argues that Black parents are often met with suspicion and hostility when they attempt to advocate for their children's rights in the face of such discrimination. This can be particularly true for Black mothers, who are often seen as "overly aggressive" and "unreasonable" when they try to stand up to racism and prejudice.

Powell recounts her own experience of navigating the school system in order to advocate for her son's rights. She notes that she had to constantly remind herself to remain calm and professional in order to be taken seriously. She also argues that Black parents must be prepared to "fight the system" in order to ensure that their children receive fair and equitable treatment. She argues that the school system must be held accountable for its role in perpetuating racial disparities in school discipline, and that teachers and administrators must be willing to take responsibility for their own biases and prejudices.

Finally, Powell highlights the importance of developing a "culture of understanding" in order to help reduce discipline disparities in schools. She argues that teachers and administrators must be willing to engage in "uncomfortable conversations" about race and racism in order to help foster a more equitable learning environment. She also encourages parents to support one another in advocating for their children's rights, and to "seek out resources" such as parent-teacher organizations in order to help ensure that all children are afforded equal educational opportunities.

7.2.2. Conclusions from the group discussions shared by group participants

Powell's article highlights the challenges that Black parents encounter when standing up for their children's rights. Those without direct experience gained insight into the suspicion and hostility often directed at Black parents in the face of discrimination. This aspect of the narrative prompts reflection on the additional burden placed on Black parents, who must navigate a system that is inherently biased against them. The emotional and intellectual impact of Powell's article extends beyond a mere recounting of events. It becomes a catalyst for empathy, prompting those without direct experience to imagine the emotional toll on parents and children facing such systemic injustices. Powell's courage in sharing her own struggle becomes an invitation for readers to join the cause of racial justice. Powell's article served as a powerful vehicle for fostering understanding and empathy among individuals without direct experience in racial issues. Through a poignant narrative and compelling data, Powell invited readers to confront the systemic challenges faced by African-American parents and children, sparking a journey toward a more profound awareness of racial disparities in America.

7.3. Article no. 3

Rankine, C. (2014, July 17). "The Condition of Black Life Is One of Mourning". The New York Times.

7.3.1. Article introduction

In June of 2015, the New York Times published an article by Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Claudia Rankine entitled "The Condition of Black Life Is One of Mourning". In this article, Rankine examines the various ways in which racism has affected the daily lives of Black Americans and how these effects continue to affect them today. Rankine uses personal stories, interviews, and data to demonstrate how racism continues to shape the lives of Black Americans.

Rankine's article begins by discussing the ways in which racism is a continuous process, rather than just a series of isolated incidents. She argues that racism is experienced on a daily basis, and that it continues to shape the lives of Black Americans in subtle and not-so-subtle ways. To illustrate this point, Rankine cites the case of a Black woman who was stopped by the police for a minor traffic violation, but was treated rudely and accused of being a criminal. Rankine argues that such incidents are all too common, and that they show how racism is woven into the fabric of everyday life.

Rankine also argues that racism is often perpetuated by institutions, both formal and informal. She cites the example of a school where the majority of the staff and students are white, but the Black students are disproportionately disciplined, suspended, and expelled. In this case, Rankine argues that racism is perpetuated by the institution of the school, not just by individuals. She also argues that racism manifests itself in different ways depending on the context, and that it is often difficult to identify.

To support her argument, Rankine cites data from various studies, including one by the US Department of Education which found that Black students are suspended and expelled at three times the rate of white students. She also cites the work of scholars such as Michelle Alexander and Ibram X. Kendi, who have done extensive research on the effects of racism and how it continues to shape Black life today.

Rankine argues that racism harms Black people not only on a social level, but also on a psychological and emotional level. She cites the case of a Black woman who, despite being successful in her career, still experiences feelings of shame and guilt because of her race. Rankine argues that these feelings, which are often internalized, are a direct result of racism as well as the way it continues to shape the lives of Black Americans.

To support her argument, Rankine cites the work of scholars such as Beverly Daniel Tatum, who has studied the effects of racism on Black people's self-esteem and mental health. She also cites the work of sociologist William Julius Wilson, who has written extensively about the long-term impact of racism on Black people's ability to build wealth and achieve economic security.

7.3.2. Article conclusion

In "The Condition of Black Life Is One of Mourning", Claudia Rankine (2015) argues that racism is a continuous process, and that it affects the lives of Black Americans in both subtle and not-so-subtle ways. She argues that racism causes psychological and emotional damage, and that it has a long-term impact on Black people's ability to build wealth and achieve economic security. To support her arguments, Rankine cites the work of various scholars and data from various studies. Ultimately, Rankine's article provides a powerful and compelling argument for the need to address racism in the present day.

7.3.3. Conclusions from the group discussions shared by group participants

The initial impact and exposure to such anecdotes may evoke a realization that racism operates on both subtle and blatant levels, influencing various aspects of Black Americans' daily lives. Rankine's argument that racism manifests itself differently depending on the context introduces an additional layer of complexity. This acknowledgment challenged preconceived notions and encouraged a more nuanced understanding of the various forms racism can take. Recognizing that racism is often difficult to identify reinforces the subtlety of its effects and prompts reflection on one's own potential blind spots. By weaving personal narratives, data, and scholarly perspectives, Rankine offers a nuanced understanding of how racism permeates the daily lives of Black Americans. This exposure led to increased empathy, a broader awareness of the systemic nature of racism, and a commitment to learn more about the complex issues surrounding racial inequality.

7.4. Article no. 4

Mathews, A. (2018, August 2). "They considered themselves white, but DNA tests told a different story". The Washington Post.

7.4.1. Article introduction

The article published in 2018 in the Washington Post entitled "They considered themselves white, but DNA tests told a different story" explores the surprising results of a DNA test taken by an American family. The family, who had always considered themselves white, were surprised to discover that their DNA results revealed that their genetic heritage was primarily composed of African and Native American ancestry. The article examines the family's reactions to this discovery, as well as the implications of the results on their identity, cultural heritage, and ancestry.

The article focuses on a family of four, who had always considered themselves to be white, unaware of their African and Native American ancestry. The family patriarch, a 72-year-old man named Tim, had grown up knowing that he was adopted, but had never been told the identity of his birth parents. Tim's wife, Linda, had always assumed that her husband was white, and the couple had raised their two daughters with the same assumption.

To gain more insight into their heritage, the family decided to take a DNA test. The results revealed that Tim was 18 % African and 6 % Native American, and Linda was 7 % African and 2 % Native American. The results also showed that their two daughters had varying amounts of African and Native American ancestry.

The article highlights the complexity of identity, race, and culture in the United States. The DNA test confronted the family with the reality that their racial identity was more complex than they had ever imagined. The results of the DNA test forced them to confront the fact that their racial identity was not as simple as they had believed, and that their ancestral heritage was much more diverse than they had thought.

The article also brings to light the idea of "passing", or the ability of people of color to pass as white. In the case of Tim and his family, they had unknowingly passed as white for generations. Although the family had never attempted to hide their racial identity, the fact that they had never been aware of their African and Native American heritage suggests that passing as white was a possibility.

The article also highlights the importance of family history and the need to explore one's ancestry. The results of the DNA test allowed the family to gain a better understanding of their heritage and to connect with their ancestral roots. This is particularly important for marginalized populations, who often have limited access to information about their family history.

7.4.2. Article conclusion

The article explores the implications of a DNA test taken by an American family of four. The results of the test revealed that the family had African and Native American ancestry, forcing them to confront the complexity of their racial identity. The article highlights the importance of family history and the need to explore one's ancestry, as well as the idea of passing as white. This article serves as a reminder of the intersecting roles of race, gender, and culture in the United States and the importance of understanding the complexity of identity.

7.4.3. Conclusions from the group discussions shared by group participants

The idea of a family identifying as white for generations, only to discover a more diverse genetic heritage, challenges conventional understandings of racial identity. The revelation that the family had unknowingly passed as white introduces an element of complexity and nuance to the understanding of racial dynamics in America. The family's genuine shock and the subsequent need to reassess their identity resonated with those who may not have previously considered the intricacies of racial heritage. The concept of "passing" introduced a nuanced layer, raising questions about the social constructs of race and the potential for individuals to navigate and exist within these constructs unknowingly. The article served as a gateway to understanding the intricacies of racial identity in America. It prompted reflection on the fluidity of identity, the historical context of passing, and the significance of acknowledging diverse ancestral backgrounds. The family's story elicited a sense of shared humanity and a recognition of the common threads that bind individuals together, regardless of their perceived racial identity. Reading this article fostered a heightened awareness of the nuanced ways in which race and identity intersect. It invited readers to consider the complexity of racial narratives, challenging them to move beyond simplistic categorizations and engage in a more profound understanding of the multifaceted nature of personal and familial identity in the context of American society.

7.5. Article no. 5

Janey, D. W. (2021, February 28). "Black parents give their kids 'the talk.' What if white parents did, too?"

7.5.1. Article introduction

The article "Black parents give their kids 'the talk.' What if White parents did, too?" by David W. Janey, published in Cognoscenti, examines the long history of Black parents having to 'talk' to their children about racism, and suggests that White parents should have similar conversations with their children.

The history of racism in the United States is long and painful. For generations, Black Americans have had to confront the reality of racism in all its forms – from slavery to redlining to police brutality. For parents, this history has created an additional burden: that of having to give their children "the talk" about racism. This talk is a difficult but necessary part of parenting for many Black families. As David W. Janey writes in his article "The talk is a rite of passage for many Black parents, a difficult but necessary lesson about how to navigate a world that can be hostile and dangerous".

Janey's article examines the history of the 'talk' and suggests that White parents should also engage in similar conversations with their children. This paper will provide a summary of Janey's article and discuss the importance of White parents being active allies in the fight against racism. In addition, the paper will provide a number of concrete steps that White parents can take to ensure that their conversations about racism with their children are both meaningful and effective.

The author begins by discussing the long history of the 'talk' that Black parents have had to have with their children about racism. He notes that this history goes back to the days of slavery, when Black parents had to teach their children how to survive in a world that was hostile to them. This talk has continued through the generations, as Black parents have had to teach their children how to navigate a world that is often hostile and dangerous.

Janey examines the importance of White parents' involvement in the fight against racism. He argues that White parents need to be active allies in this fight, and that 'talking' is an important part of this process. He further argues that White parents should not simply talk to their children about racism, but rather engage in meaningful conversations that equip their children with the necessary tools to combat racism in their everyday lives.

Janey then provides a number of concrete steps that White parents can take to ensure that their conversations with their children about racism are both meaningful and effective. He suggests that White parents should begin by educating themselves about the history and realities of racism in the United States, and by having honest conversations with their children about racism and privilege. He also suggests that White parents should actively listen to their children when they bring up topics related to racism, and take their children's experiences seriously. Finally, he suggests that White parents should take concrete steps to combat racism in their own communities.

In conclusion, it is clear that the 'talk' that Black parents have had to have with their children about racism is a long and painful part of history. As Janey argues in his article, White parents should be having similar conversations with their children. The 'talk' is an important part of the process of equipping children with the necessary tools to combat racism, and White parents must be active allies in this fight. Furthermore, White parents must take concrete steps to ensure that their conversations about racism with their children are both meaningful and effective. By doing so, they can ensure that their children are part of the conversation and part of the solution in the fight against racism.

7.5.2. Conclusions from the group discussions shared by group participants

The article served as a powerful introduction to the complexities of race and racism in America. It raised awareness of the challenges faced by Black families, inspired a sense of shared responsibility in the fight against racism, and provided practical steps for White parents to meaningfully engage in conversations that contribute to the dismantling of systemic racial inequalities. The idea that conversations about race are not exclusive to one racial group challenges preconceived notions and may encourage self-reflection about own awareness of racial issues. The call for White parents to be active allies in the fight against racism may evoke a sense of responsibility and recognition that combating racism requires a collective effort. The article's emphasis on meaningful conversations underscores the importance of depth and sincerity in addressing racial issues.

7.6. Article no. 6

Muhammad, K. (2020, June 6). "How racist policing took over American cities, explained by a historian". Vox.

7.6.1. Article introduction

Khalil Muhammad, a Harvard-based professor of history, race and public policy, offers an explanation of how racist policing took over American cities in the Vox article "How racist policing took over American cities, explained by a historian". His explanation is based on the history of

policing in the United States and its systemic racism, as well as more recent events, such as the murder of George Floyd, that have highlighted and brought attention to the issue.

The history of racist policing in the United States is long, ugly and deep. From the early days of slavery, when law enforcement was used to hunt down runaway slaves, to today, when African Americans are disproportionately targeted and subjected to police violence, racism and injustice have been an enduring reality of American policing.

The roots of racist policing can be traced back to the days of slavery, when law enforcement was used to protect the interests of slave owners and to capture runaway slaves. Muhammad starts by noting that policing in America has a long history of racial bias and violence, beginning with the slave patrols that were used to track down and punish slaves in the antebellum South. He then outlines how this system of slavery evolved into the current policing system in the United States, which he says is based on a system of racial control.

Muhammad explains that this system of racial control works by criminalizing black people in order to justify the presence of a police force in their communities. He notes that this system of criminalization is present not only in policing but throughout the criminal justice system, including the courts and prisons. He argues that this system of control has been in place for decades, and has been sustained by white supremacy and racism.

African Americans were often the targets of racial profiling, criminalization, and excessive use of force, leading to a long history of police brutality. During the Jim Crow era, law enforcement was an integral part of enforcing the system of segregation and discrimination. African Americans were routinely subjected to racial profiling, and police brutality was a common occurrence.

As the civil rights movement progressed, police departments faced increased scrutiny and calls for reform. In the 1960s and 70s, many cities began implementing reforms to reduce racial disparities in law enforcement. However, despite these efforts, racial disparities in policing persist today. African Americans continue to be disproportionately targeted by law enforcement and subjected to police violence. This is particularly true in the context of drug-related policing, where African Americans are far more likely to be arrested and incarcerated for drug offences than white Americans.

Muhammad concludes by stating that the only way to fight against this system of racism is to fundamentally change the way policing is conducted. He argues that this means rethinking the way police are deployed and the way in which they interact with the communities they serve. He also calls for an overhaul of the criminal justice system and a focus on investing in education and other resources that can help create more equitable communities, rather than relying on policing to solve social problems.

7.6.2. Conclusions from the group discussions shared by group participants

The revelation of the historical connection between slave patrols and modern policing caused a sense of shock and discomfort. Learning that law enforcement was initially used to protect the interests of slave owners and to catch runaway slaves prompted a reevaluation of preconceived notions about the origins of policing in the United States. The articulation of racial bias and violence embedded in the history of American policing, particularly the criminalization of Black people, fostered a new and heightened awareness of the systemic nature of racism. The mention of events such as the murder of George Floyd as contemporary examples served to bridge the historical narrative with current realities, potentially prompting a connection between past injustices and current struggles.

8. Conclusions

24 out of 24 participants stated that they learned a great deal and found the diversity training to be valuable, through these articles, journaling, and group discussions, in ways that surprised them and gave them new perspectives on diversity.

One participant stated – "The diversity training our team attended was extremely useful and informative. We were presented with case studies, journaling activities, and talking circles, all of which encouraged us to think more deeply about how we can better demonstrate respect for our colleagues and foster a more diverse and inclusive workplace. Through the case studies, we were able to identify larger systemic issues and how they can lead to microaggressions in the workplace. The journaling exercise helped us to reflect on our own biases and how they impact our interactions with others. Finally, the talking circles allowed us to share our ideas in a safe and productive space".

Another participant stated – "The diversity training has given us a much better understanding of how we can demonstrate more respect for people with different life experiences and backgrounds. It has also helped to open up a dialogue between us about how to create a more equitable and safer workplace. The activities we did helped to foster skills and knowledge to be better people, team members, colleagues, and friends, which was both eye-opening and meaningful".

Another participant stated – "The first step in learning about race, racism, and minority perspectives during the diversity training was to review several different case study articles. This allowed me to gain an insight into different types of discrimination that occur in the workplace. I was then asked to respond to the case studies by journaling and reflecting on my own experiences and beliefs about race and racism. Through this process, I began to discover my internalized stereotypes and biases and how they had been influenced by my upbringing and societal norms".

One participant stated – "Engaging in talking circles and opening up the discussions helped me to understand the perspectives of minorities more deeply. It was during this step that I gained greater insight into the history of racism in this country and learned about the feelings and experiences that people of color have endured. I was able to see how the systemic and structural racism that exist in our society has contributed to the economic and educational disparities that many minority groups still experience today".

Another participant stated – "This experience really opened my eyes to the injustice and inequality that still exists in our society. By deepening my understanding of race, racism, and the perspectives of minority groups, I was better able to reflect on my own beliefs and identify the steps I needed to take to unlearn the internalized biases I had developed throughout my life. Through this diversity training, I was also able to recognize my areas of privilege and the power I have to make a difference in my community".

Another participant stated – "Overall, this diversity training has been a great experience for me to continue to learn and grow in my knowledge and understanding of race, racism, and minority perspectives. By engaging in case studies, journaling, and talking circles, I was able to better identify the internalized biases I have picked up throughout my life and begin to see what I can do to help create a more equitable and inclusive society. I am grateful for this opportunity to further develop my understanding of the different perspectives of others".

Another participant stated – "The diversity training was extremely effective in helping me to understand the value of different perspectives in ways that I never had before. My eyes were opened in ways that helped me realize the need to step

out of my own experience and consider the different experiences of others who are not like me. The case study articles and talking circles provided much needed context and the journaling helped to effectively reinforce the understanding of the value of diversity".

Another participant stated – "I found the use of the articles, journaling and talking circles to be incredibly helpful in providing a non-judgmental and constructive approach to exploring diversity issues. It created an atmosphere where I could ask challenging questions and really explore the issues without any fear of criticism or judgment. I left the diversity training feeling much more aware of the value of different perspectives and the importance of embracing diversity in the workplace".

Another participant stated – "The use of case studies and talking circles was an effective way of exploring real-life examples and understanding how to better address them. I felt this was the best way to learn the material and provided a more engaging, and effective way to learn. Overall, I was very impressed with the diversity training. It opened my mind to the value of discussing different perspectives and showed me the importance of inclusivity".

9. Final discussions

Storytelling, reflective journaling, and constructive group dialogue can be powerful tools when incorporated into diversity training. By using these methods, organizations can equip employees with the skills and knowledge needed to effectively manage diversity in the workplace. By engaging in thoughtful and respectful storytelling, reflective journaling, and constructive group dialogue around diversity issues, employees can gain a greater understanding not only of diversity, but also of their own roles and responsibilities in creating a workplace that respects and celebrates diversity.

The result of this approach is a more dynamic, productive and constructive way to conduct more effective and transformative organizational development and employee discussions, interventions, and training on diversity, inclusion, and cultural competence in law enforcement and all complex organizations. The intention of this paper is not to reconstitute academic theory but to influence the world of practice in a way that support social change, because applied, community-based research is important and relevant.

The concept of diversity training has become increasingly prominent in public discourse, as organizations strive to create and maintain an inclusive, accepting workplace. In order to be successful, diversity programs must take into account different cultural practices and languages, and identify marginalization or discrimination that affects the workplace or organization (Thakur, Khoo & Pyar, 2021; Tychonievich & Cohoon, 2020). While traditional approaches to diversity training such as lectures and workshops have their merits, storytelling and talking circles can be highly successful methods for building an understanding of different perspectives, as they create an environment of open dialogue and respect.

This training approach uses storytelling articles and talking circles. Storytelling has been used as a method of knowledge transfer for centuries, across cultures and countries around the world. Today, narrative approaches of teaching have been found to be particularly effective in teaching values, creating a shared understanding, and fostering empathy. Storytelling is one of the oldest ways of teaching and is an effective form of communication between generations. Storytelling can also be used as a strategy to increase understanding of diversity among people who have limited exposure or knowledge of a particular group or culture. By providing meaningful narratives, trainees are given the

opportunity to be emotionally moved and to gain insight and knowledge about differences in culture, values, and beliefs. Through storytelling, employees can have an informative, meaningful, and often enjoyable learning experience (Vance, 1991; Andrews, Hull & DeMeester, 2010).

The use of reflective journaling as part of diversity training is also an effective way of ensuring that trainees gain a deeper understanding of diversity and their individual responses to it. Reflective journaling can provide a safe space for trainees to record and discuss their thoughts, feelings, and experiences in an unrestricted way, enabling them to reflect more deeply on a diversity issue. Additionally, reflective journaling can be used to encourage trainees to challenge their own assumptions and beliefs and to consider new perspectives (Kessler & Lund, 2004). Through this process, trainees can gain insight into their own biases and begin to develop the skills necessary to truly understand and value diversity.

Constructive group dialogue can be used to promote understanding of diversity in the workplace. By participating in group dialogue, trainees are exposed to a variety of perspectives and can learn to recognize and respect individual differences. In addition, constructive group dialogue can help to foster collaboration and cooperation between employees from different backgrounds, enabling teams to come together even when faced with difficult conversations. This type of dialogue can also help trainees to engage in critical self-reflection, thereby increasing their understanding of complex dynamics (Muller & Irby 2005).

A traditional talking circle is an event in which participants sit in a circle and are given the space and time to express themselves, and listen to others. Each person expresses themselves and speaks when they feel the need, and the atmosphere is one of respect and acceptance (Parker & Bickmore, 2020). In a workplace context, talking circles enable individuals to have conversations about difficult issues, create a shared understanding of workplace expectations and develop a collective identity.

When used together, storytelling and talking circles can have a powerful impact on diversity training. Talking circles allow training participants to share their stories in an authentic and thoughtful way; these sessions enable genuine understanding and acknowledgement of all perspectives (Parker & Bickmore, 2020). Organizations have found that when conversations around challenging topics are aired in an open and safe way, staff are more engaged in the process and therefore more likely to leave having learned something (Robbins, 2018). Through storytelling and talking in a circle, employees can gain an understanding of different perspectives and become more aware of the individual experiences that shape the workplace. Consequently, individuals can develop effective communication skills, an authentic knowledge of diversity, and greater empathy for their colleagues and the wider population (Parker & Bickmore, 2020).

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