

PUBLIC SCHOOLS of  
**BROOKLINE**

# Racial Identity Development & Our Unspoken Loyalties

April 3, 2023



# Agenda



- Land Acknowledgement, Privilege Check and Framing (2)
- Stages of Racial/ Ethnic Identity Development Theory (20)
- The Four I's of Oppression (15)
- Tuning Our Unspoken Loyalties (5)
- Closing Thoughts (3)



# LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We live, work and practice on the  
traditional territory of the Massachusett,  
Nipmuc, Mashpee and Aquinnah  
Wampanoag People, who have stewarded  
this land for hundreds of generations.

# Name Your Unspeakable Loyalties

“In any organization or community for which you are trying to exercise adaptive leadership, you own a piece of the problem at hand. If you are a part of the organizational system, you must be part of the problem. This does not mean that you are responsible for the whole mess. Nor does it imply that you are not doing a lot of good in trying to address the problem. It only suggests that there is an element of the problem, however small, that stems from what you believe and how you behave, from the loyalties that are holding you.” ~ Ronald Heifetz

# Framing Our Conversation

Think about this question (and jot down notes, if you like):

- Where do you think you are in your racial identity development and how might you articulate that to others?

Stages of Racial Identity Development (Helms, Tatum, Michael)



# Framing Our Conversation cont.

**It is important to keep in mind that:**

- Not every person will necessarily go through every stage in a framework or model.
- The context of an individual's life will affect their racial and ethnic identity development.
- The stages might be cyclical and people might revisit different stages at different points in their lives. Some people may skip stages.
- We might choose to use think of these stages as lenses or orientations through which to view racial and ethnic identities.
- The model we will look at describes people who are situated in many different ways, but they do not describe all of the possibilities.

# STAGES OF **WHITE** RACIAL/ETHNIC IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

- **CONTACT** – Unaware of own racial identity; does not think of oneself as “white” but as “normal.” Tendency to view racism as “individual acts of meanness” rather than as an institutionalized system, and typically does not recognize or acknowledge “white privilege.” Naïve curiosity or fear of people of color, usually based on stereotypes.
- **DISINTEGRATION** – Awareness of racism and white privilege increase as a result of personal experiences. Common emotional responses to this new information include shame, guilt, denial, anger, depression, and withdrawal. May attempt to persuade others to abandon racist thinking.
- **REINTEGRATION** – May feel pressured by others to “not notice” racism. Feelings of guilt and denial are transformed into fear and anger toward people of color; common response is to “blame the victim.” Chooses to avoid the issue of racism, if possible, rather than struggling to define a non-racist identity.

# STAGES OF **WHITE** RACIAL/ETHNIC IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

- **PSEUDO-INDEPENDENCE** – Individual is abandoning beliefs in white superiority. Has an intellectual understanding of the unfairness of white privilege and recognizes personal responsibility for dismantling racism. May choose to distance oneself from other whites, and actively seek out people of color to help him/her better understand racism.
- **IMMERSION/ EMERSION** – Actively seeking to redefine whiteness. Asking self-questions such as “Who am I racially?” “What does it really mean to be white in the U.S.?” Needs support from other anti-racist whites who have asked similar questions. Focus is on developing a positive white identity not based on assumed superiority. Takes pride in active anti-racist stance.
- **AUTONOMY** – Has internalized a positive white racial identity. Actively anti-racist within own sphere of influence. Development of racial identity is not static, continues to be open to new information and ongoing self-examination. Able to work effectively in multiracial setting in “beloved community.”





## STAGES OF RACIAL/ETHNIC IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT: PERSONS OF COLOR

- **PRE-ENCOUNTER** - Individual absorbs many of the beliefs and values of the dominant white culture, including the idea that it is “better” to be white. May value role models, life-styles, value systems of the dominant group more highly than those of one’s own culture. Often seeks to assimilate and be accepted by whites. Tends to minimize the personal/social significance of race/ethnicity.
- **ENCOUNTER** - Transition to this stage is typically precipitated by an event or series of events that forces the individual to acknowledge the personal impact of racism. Anger, confusion, and alienation are common emotions. Aware of rejection by whites, the individual begins to grapple with what it means to be a member of a group targeted by racism. Initial attempts to define one’s racial/ethnic identity may be based on internalized stereotypes about own group. Process often begins in early adolescence.

## STAGES OF RACIAL/ETHNIC IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT: PERSONS OF COLOR

- **IMMERSION/ EMERSION** - Characterized by the desire to surround oneself with visible symbols of one's racial identity, and an active avoidance of symbols of whiteness. At the beginning of this stage, there is a tendency to categorically reject whites and glorify one's own group. Individual actively seeks out opportunities to learn about his/her own history and culture with the support of same-group peers. Anger may subside because focus is on group and self-exploration. Results in a newly defined and affirmed sense of self.
- **INTERNALIZATION** - Characterized by a sense of security in one's own racial/ethnic identity. Able to view his/her own group more objectively, as well as other racial/ethnic groups. Willing to establish meaningful relationships with whites who acknowledge and are respectful of his/her self-definition, and is also ready to build coalitions with members of other oppressed groups.
- ***Internalization-Commitment*** - *Those in this last stage have found ways to translate their personal sense of race into a plan of action or general sense of commitment to the concerns of their own race as a group. This is sustained over time. Their race becomes the point of departure for discovering the universe of ideas, cultures and experiences beyond their own race, in place of mistaking their race as the universe itself.*

*Often a person moves from one stage to the next, only to revisit an earlier stage as the result of new encounter experiences. Though the later experience of the stage may be different from the original experience,*

# Other Models and Frameworks

## SUMMARY OF RACIAL AND ETHNIC IDENTITY MODELS

*includes*

- Perspective on American Indian Identity Development
  - Asian American Identity Development Model
    - Black American Racial Identity
      - Latino Identity Orientations
  - White Racial Identity Development Model
    - Biracial Identity Development



## *How are you being “pulled” by the water?*

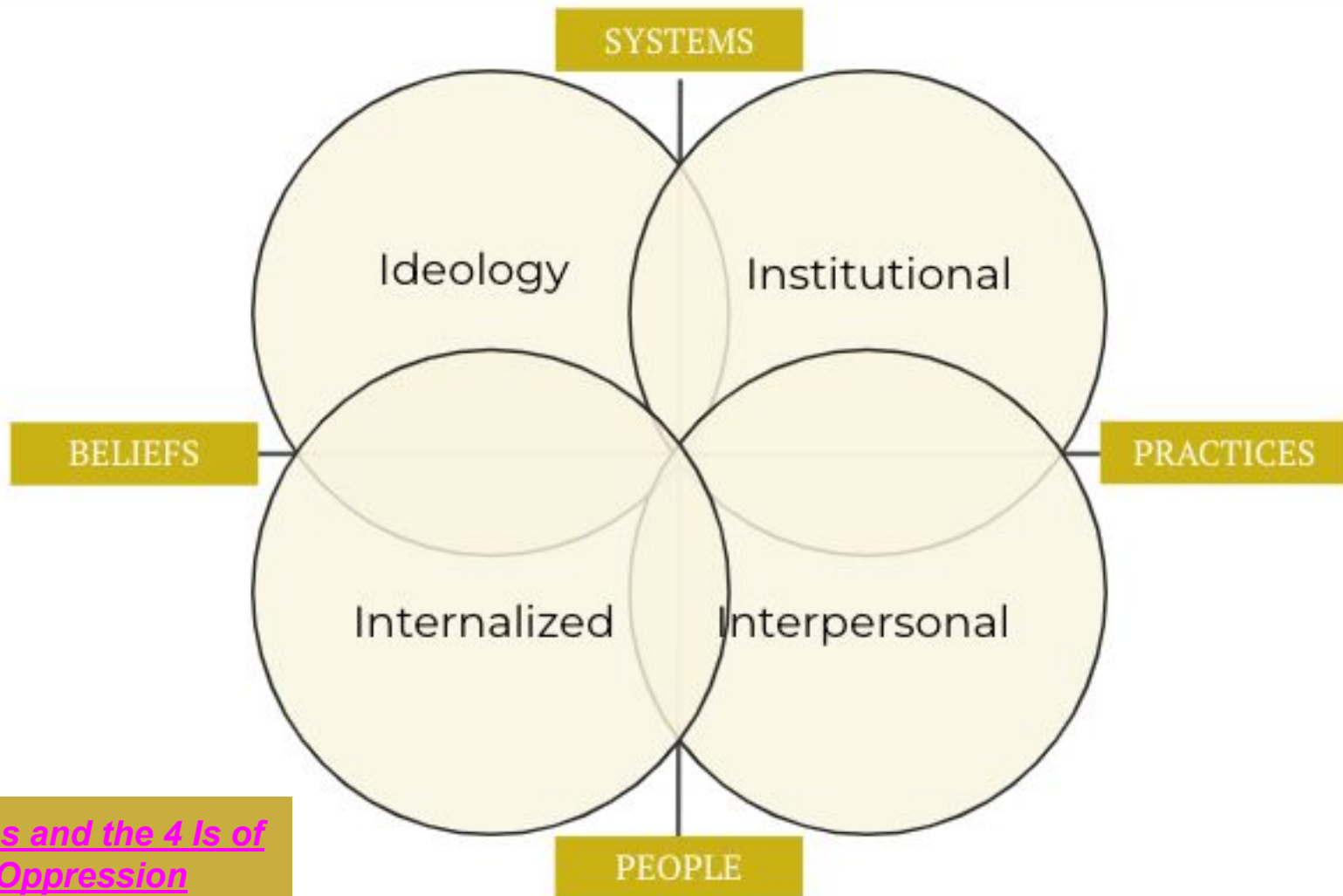
Our ability to move towards equity in the DBIE journey is based on our ability to continue to think more systematically about our own “water” and the “water that we are carrying.”



Adaptive leadership teaches us that *Getting on the Balcony* involves our ability to be able to name our own “Water.” Water is referred to as loyalties that you carry that are connected to three different layers:

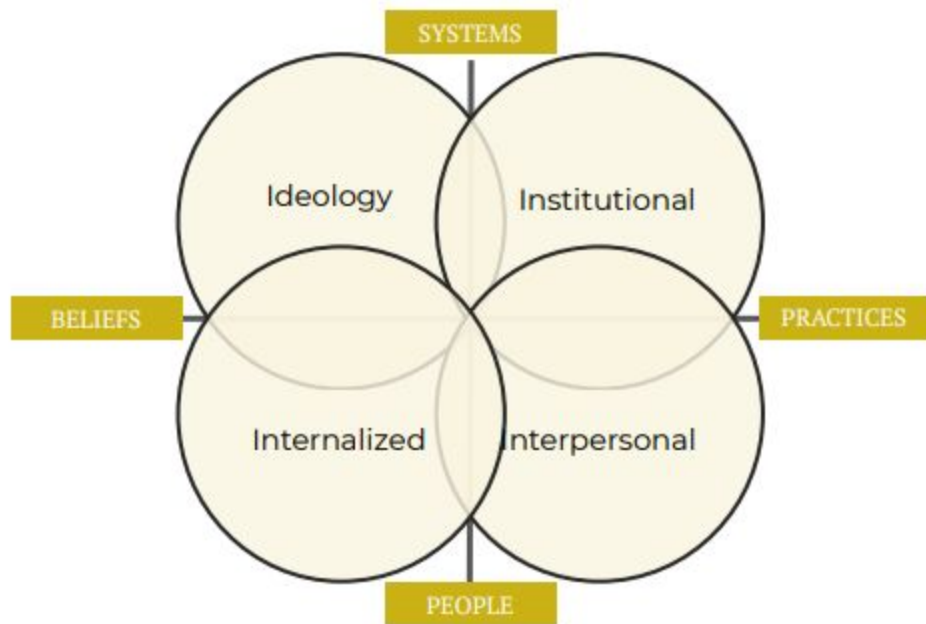
1. Colleagues/Work
2. Friends/Family
3. Ancestral





Legos and the 4 Is of Oppression

# Systemic Oppression - The 4 I's



## **Internalized**

Implicit Bias, Unconscious Bias, Internalized Privilege, Internalized Oppression

## **Interpersonal**

Macroaggression, Microaggression, Stereotype Threat

## **Institutional**

Explicit and Implicit Policies/Practices

## **Ideology**

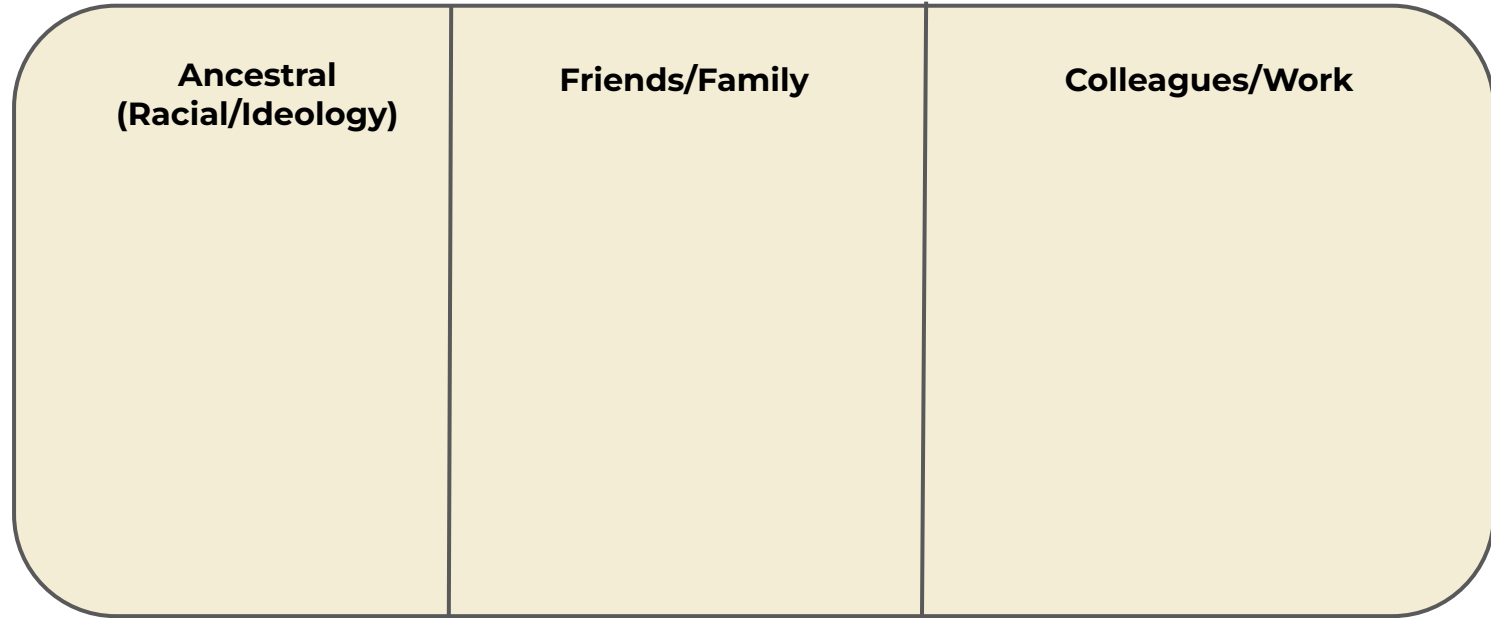
Race, Racism, Privilege, White Privilege, White Supremacy, Whiteness, Systemic Oppression, Structural Racism

# Quick Turn & Talk Reflection

Please ponder the following:

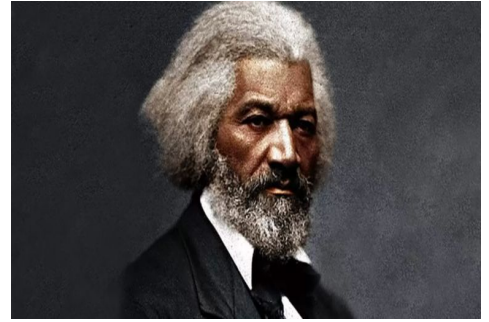
- When you consider the 4 I's metaphor, what water have you swallowed?
- How do you think your “water” is holding you back/creating barriers for you?
- How have you potentially “spit your water” on others or on yourself?

# Loyalty Mapping: Inside/Out



# Let's keep it going! Thanks, everyone!

*If there is no struggle, there is no progress.*



*Those who profess to favor freedom and yet deprecate agitation are men who want crops without plowing the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the roar of its mighty waters.*

*The struggle may be a moral one or it may be a physical one, or it may be both moral and physical, but it must be a struggle. Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never has and it never will.*

~ Frederick Douglass (1857)