

Unpacking Workplace Violence on BIPOC Health Care Workers

Tolu Thomas, MBA, MSN, RN
Chief Administrative and Quality Officer, HCH

Lawanda Williams, MPH, LCSW-C
Chief Behavioral Health Officer, HCH

NATIONAL
HEALTH CARE
for the
HOMELESS
COUNCIL

HCH2024

PHOENIX, AZ • MAY 13-16, 2024



Download the
conference app



Follow the Council on social
media and join the conversation!

This content is intended solely for participants of HCH2024.
Please do not replicate this content for further dissemination
without expressed permission from the presenter.

A little about us...



Lawanda Williams, MPH, LCSW-C
Chief Behavioral Health Officer



Tolu Thomas, MBA, MSN, RN
Chief Administrative and Quality Officer



A little about us...



We work to end homelessness through racially equitable health care, housing and advocacy in partnership with those of us who have experienced it.



A little about us...

Vision: Everyone is healthy and has a safe home in a just and respectful community.

- 39-year-old FQHC
- Integrated health care for 11,000+ people
- 650+ households in permanent housing
- HCH Real Estate Co. (subsidiary)



Learning Agenda:

1. Provide overview of workplace violence
2. Describe the unique impacts of workplace violence of BIPOC workers
3. Examine how racism is an act of violence
4. Explore ways to support BIPOC workers before and after an incident



SPACE GUIDELINES: A COMPARISON

Safe Space Guidelines ❌	Brave Space Guidelines ❌	Accountable Space Guidelines ✅
Impossible for organizations to anticipate participants' evolving triggers.	An unbalanced onus of bravery of marginalized communities to maintain bravery while sharing lived experiences to ensure allies can grow and learn from it.	Places an equal amount of onus for all to behave equitably and inclusively to foster a deeper understanding of diverse lived experiences in REAL-TIME.
Impossible to guarantee complete safety since we cannot control people's behaviours or actions to embed DE&I principles in their actions during and after the conversation.	Negates the daily bravery marginalized communities need to display to navigate workplaces and society. Also, it does not lighten marginalized communities' "burden of bravery."	Creates a REAL-TIME opportunity for EVERYONE in the discussion to challenge the conditions that are oppressing marginalized communities by demonstrating accountable and equitable behaviours and actions.
It does not allow allies and non-marginalized people to show allyship in action by following a set of guidelines to support accountable conversations that foster inclusion and equity.	It does not allow allies and non-marginalized people to show allyship in action by following a set of guidelines to support accountable conversations that foster inclusion and equity.	Intent and impact are rooted within accountability to promote actions, thoughts, and behaviours that are equitable and inclusive of marginalized communities.

[Elise Ahenkorah \(she/her\)](#)



Group Agreements

1. Focus on the session; refrain from doing other work.
2. Allow others to finish their thoughts before speaking.
3. Be brief; speak no more than one minute at a time.
4. Build on others' comments; work towards a shared understanding
5. Listen respectfully. Ask for clarification if you are confused. Acknowledge if you are offended.
6. Critique ideas, not people. Leave assumptions about motivations, understanding, and experiences at the door.
7. Words and tone matter. Be mindful of the impact of what you say, and not just your intent.



What's said here, stays here; what's learned here, leaves here.

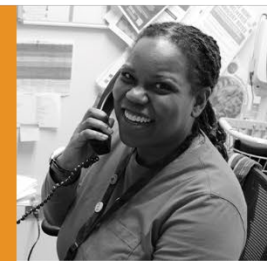


What is Workplace Violence?



Definitions

Workplace violence as “an act or threat occurring at the workplace that can include any of the following: verbal, nonverbal, written, or physical aggression; threatening, intimidating, harassing or humiliating words or actions; bullying, sabotage; sexual harassment; physical assaults; or other behaviors of concern involving staff, licensed practitioners, patients, or visits.



Definitions

Workplace violence is any act or threat of physical violence, harassment, intimidation, or other threatening disruptive behavior that occurs at the work site. It ranges from threats and verbal abuse to physical assaults and even homicide. It can affect and involve employees, clients, customers, and visitors.

--Occupational Safety and Health Administration



Group Discussion Point



In what ways have you experienced workplace violence?

The full picture of workplace violence in healthcare

5x

more likely for violence to occur in healthcare than other sectors.¹

44

average of workplace homicides to private healthcare workers occurred each year from 2016 through 2020.²

73%

of all nonfatal workplace violence related injuries were from healthcare worker.¹

47%

of ER doctors report being assaulted at work.³

70%

of ER doctors report escalating violence since 2014.⁶

80%

of ER nurses report being assaulted at work.⁷

68%

of nurses report experiencing verbal abuse during the pandemic.⁵

25%

1 in 4 nurses have been assaulted on the job.⁴

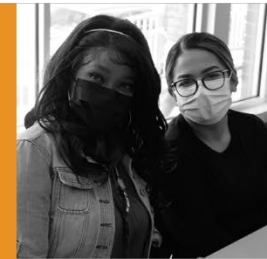
80%

of violent incidents are perpetrated by patients.⁸

63%

of nurses think enough isn't being done to combat the issue.⁹

[Zara Nwosu](#)



Types of Workplace Violence



Types of Workplace Violence

4 Types of Workplace Violence



1
Criminal Intent
Workplace violence by a perpetrator that has no direct or previous relationship with the employee or the establishment



2
Customer / Client
The act of violence that occurs when the employee is performing their daily duties. The perpetrator is a client of the employee or the establishment.



3
Worker-on-Worker
Act of violence is a result of an aggression between two or more employees in the same workplace.



4
Personal Relationship
The perpetrator has a direct relationship with someone whom affects their work and workplace, but does not work with them.

SafetyCulture



Examples of Workplace Violence

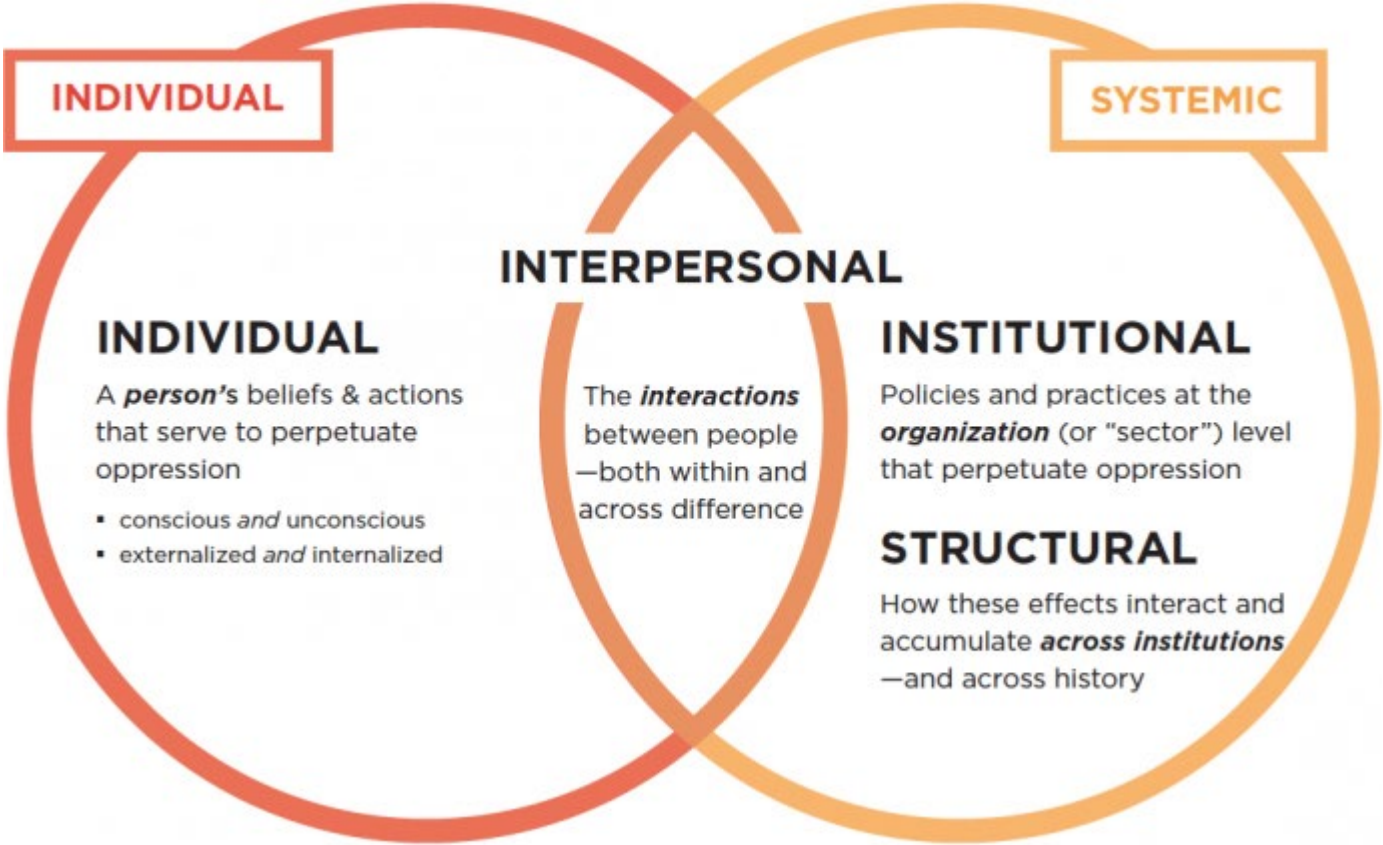
- Harassing or stalking
- Unauthorized use of weapons
- Threats of suicide
- Verbal abuse
- Sexual harassment
- Stealing from coworkers
- Written or verbal remarks that are false, malicious, or unfounded
- Body-shaming jokes, comments, or demeaning slurs



Racism as an Act of Violence



Levels of Racism



[New Westminster Schools](#)



Interpersonal Racism

How our private beliefs about race become public when we interact with others. When we act upon our prejudices or unconscious bias — whether intentionally, visibly, verbally or not — we engage in interpersonal racism. Interpersonal racism also can be willful and overt, taking the form of bigotry, hate speech or racial violence.

<https://www.aecf.org/blog/racial-justice-definitions>



Discussion - Microaggressions

Oh your English
is so good!

Where are you
really from?

You're really pretty
for a dark skin girl

They won't want to
come to the event this
evening because they
don't drink...

Can I touch your hair?

So, what
are you?

Why do you
sound white?

You don't act like
a normal black
person

You don't speak
Spanish?

*From Kiyun Kim's Racial Microaggression Project

Est. 2006
Skills 4
STEM Specialist



Examples of Racial Discrimination

Harassment

Workplace Victimization

Tokenism

Stereotyping

Microaggressions



Group Discussion Point



Do you believe interpersonal racism is an act of violence and why?

Unique Impact on BIPOC Workers



Scenario

A cisgender female is 3 days into a new role at her job. She is in a team meeting where individuals introduce themselves and welcome her to the team.

In sharing about herself, she discloses that she is Japanese and speaks the language fluently.

In response, a team member mimics sounds that he implies is Japanese.

Discussion Questions:

- In what ways did this impact the safety of the new employee?
- How did it also impact the culture of the team?
- In what ways did this perpetuate workplace violence
- What is your responsibility from the role you hold in that team



WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF RACISM ON OVERALL HEALTH?

Poorer Sleep

Cardiovascular Disease

Higher BMI and Obesity

Inflammation

Psychiatric Disorders

- depression
- anxiety disorders
- post-traumatic stress disorder
- eating disorders
- psychosis

Coronary Heart Disease

High blood pressure

Stress Hormone Deregulation

MEDICALNEWS TODAY

The Impact Of Racism On Mental Health:

Feeling disconnected / lonely

Increase risk of depression and anxiety

Second-guessing things

Decreased hope (in the future, justice, the government etc.)

Trauma (both from the present and triggering past instances / generational trauma)



Increased "Survival Mode"

Existential questioning "How can the world be so cruel?"

Decreased trust

Worry

Feelings of powerlessness (You can do the right thing and still end up with a horrific outcome)

Panic

#BlackLivesMatter

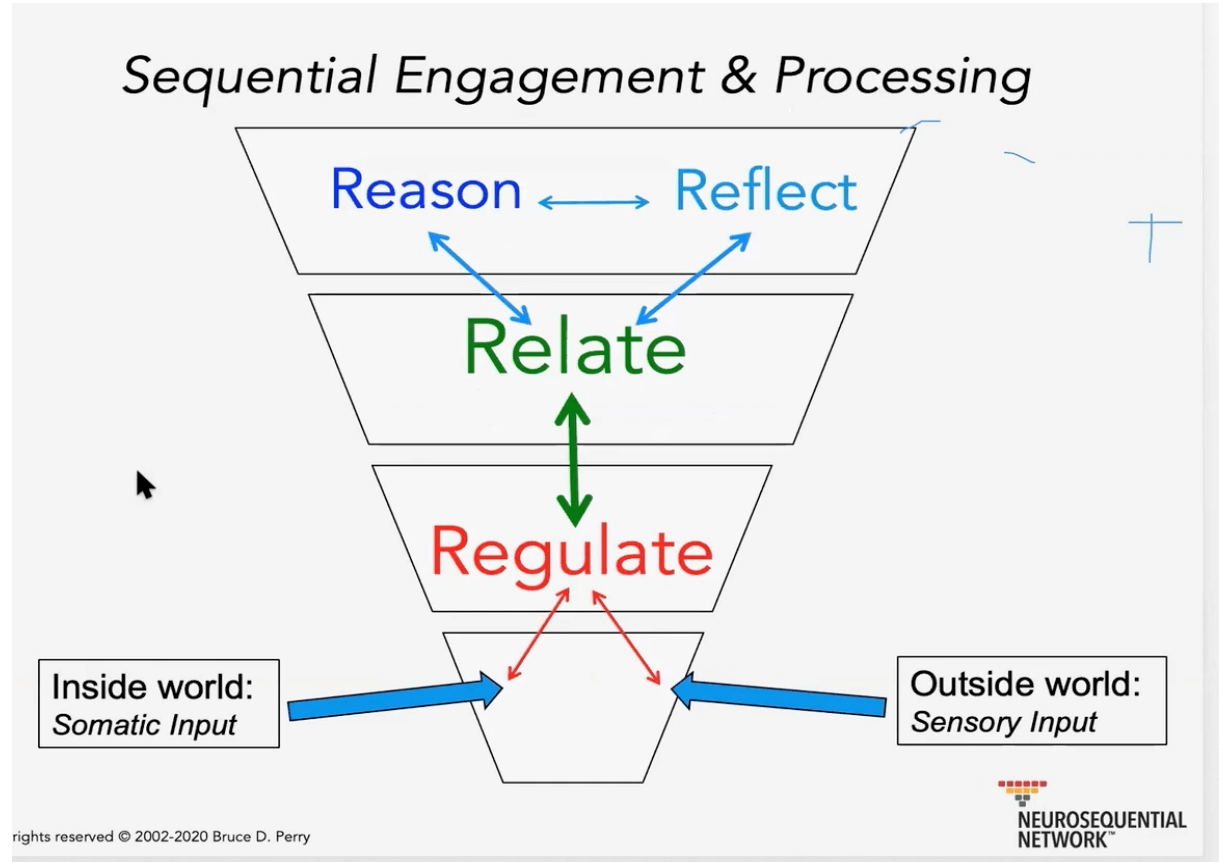
@RealDepressionProject



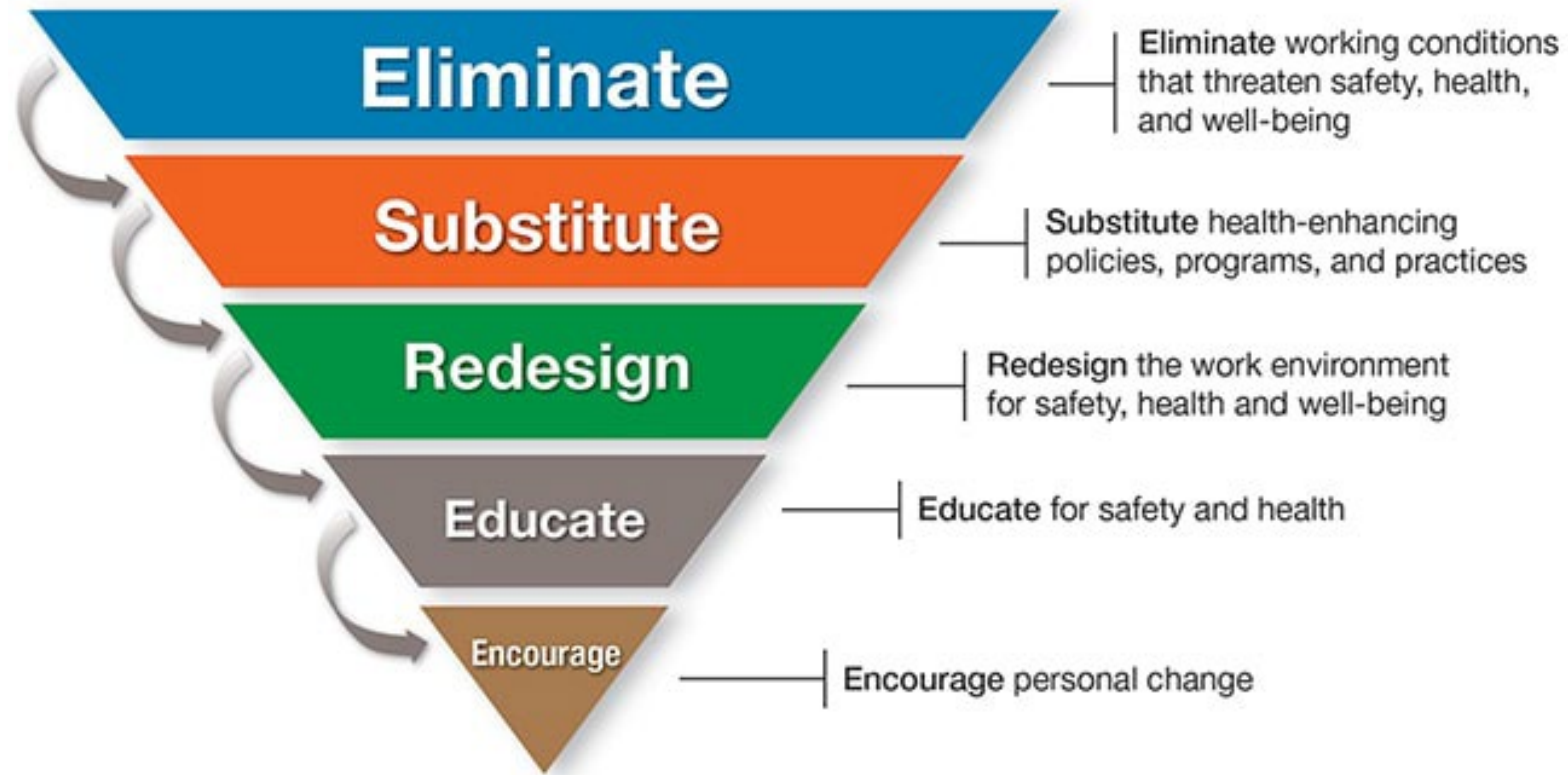
Providing Support to BIPOC Workers



Debriefing



Standardized Process to Prevent Workplace Violence



Hierarchy of Controls Applied to NIOSH *Total Worker Health*



Incorporating Racial Equity Inclusion (REI) Lens into any Framework, Policy, Procedure etc.

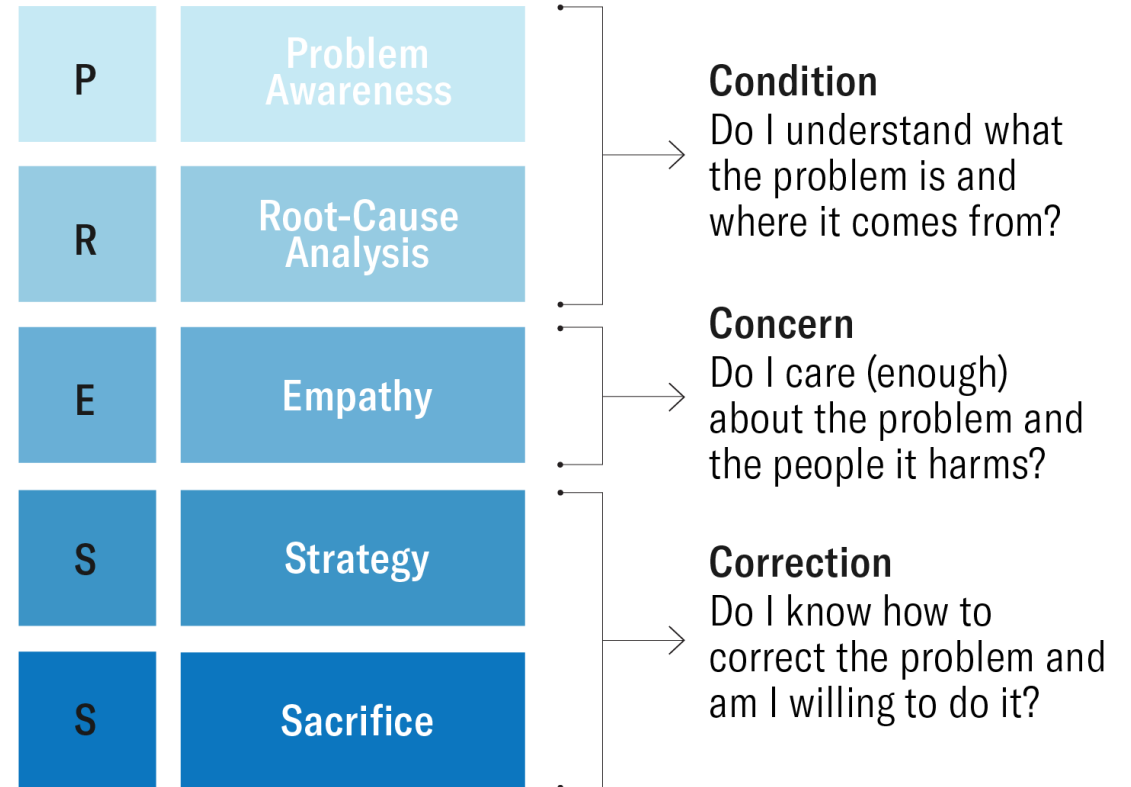
- **What is a Racial Equity Lens?**

A racial equity lens is the set of questions we ask ourselves throughout the decision-making process. The lens interrupts the impact of unintended consequences by taking into consideration the lived experiences and perspectives of the racially diverse communities we intend to serve

- *-Michigan State Department of Civil Rights*



Incorporating REI Lens into any Framework, Policy, Procedure etc.



Incorporating REI into any Framework



Eliminate



Substitute



Redesign



Educate



Encourage

Questions to ask yourself:

- Have you applied your racial equity lens to determine how this helps or hinders racial equity?
- Who benefits from or is burdened by this change?
- Are there individuals that will be disproportionately (and negatively)?
- Does this perpetuate or help to dismantle barriers set in the past?
- If disparities are identified, how can they be mitigated or eliminated?



Group Discussion Point



If you could change one thing in your organization today to promote the safety of BIPOC staff, what would you do?

Thank You
Questions ?

