

BLACK SUICIDOLOGY SUMMIT 2023



Tianna Dowie-Chin, PHD

Curriculum & Instruction - dowiechinphd@gmail.com

TERMINOLOGY

Antiblackness: “is defined as the beliefs, attitudes, actions, practices, and behaviors of individuals and institutions that devalue, minimize, and marginalize the full participation of Black people—visibly(or perceived to be) of African descent. It is the systematic denial of Black humanity and dignity, which makes Black people effectively ineligible for full citizenship.” (Boston University)

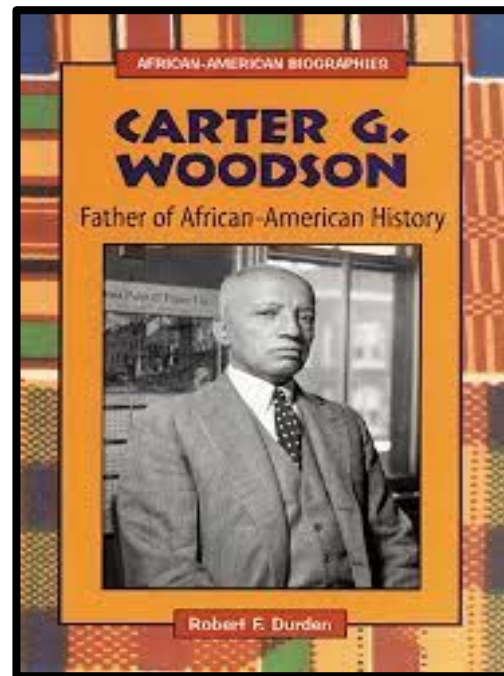
Anti-Black racism: “is a specific kind of racial prejudice directed towards Black people, or those perceived to be Black. More than merely a product of a few bad actors or individual prejudice, antiBlack racism is systematic and structural. It systematically marginalizes Black people and communities, and devalues Blackness in all contexts.” (Boston University)

Black Affirming Spaces: formal and informal spaces that affirm the entire person. In these spaces Black people can bond over shared experiences and “express concerns and frustrations with one another about their experiences with racism and other forms of discrimination” (Carter, D.J., 2007, p. 543).

ANTIBLACKNESS AND EDUCATION

“There would be no lynching if it did not start in the schoolroom. Why not exploit, enslave, or exterminate a class that everybody is taught to regard as inferior?”

— **Carter G. Woodson, *The Mis-Education of the Negro***



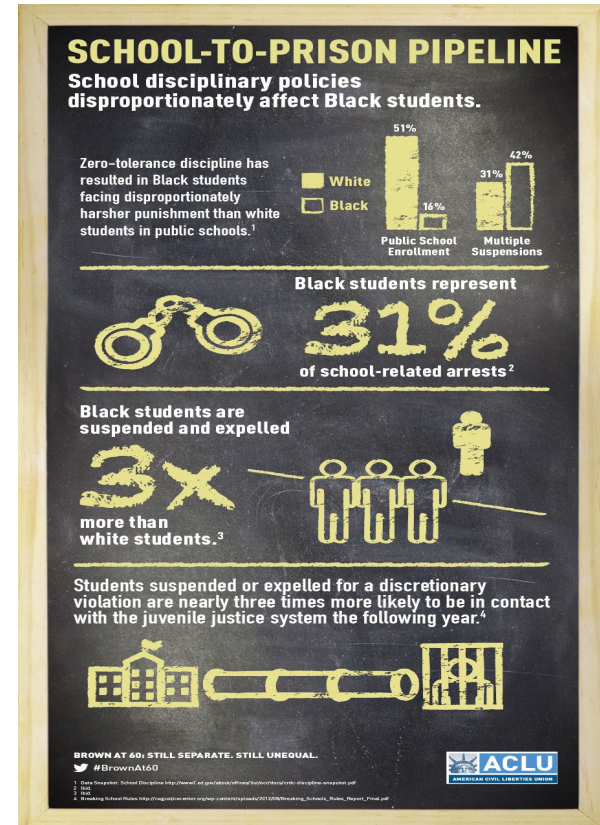
ANTIBLACKNESS AND EDUCATION



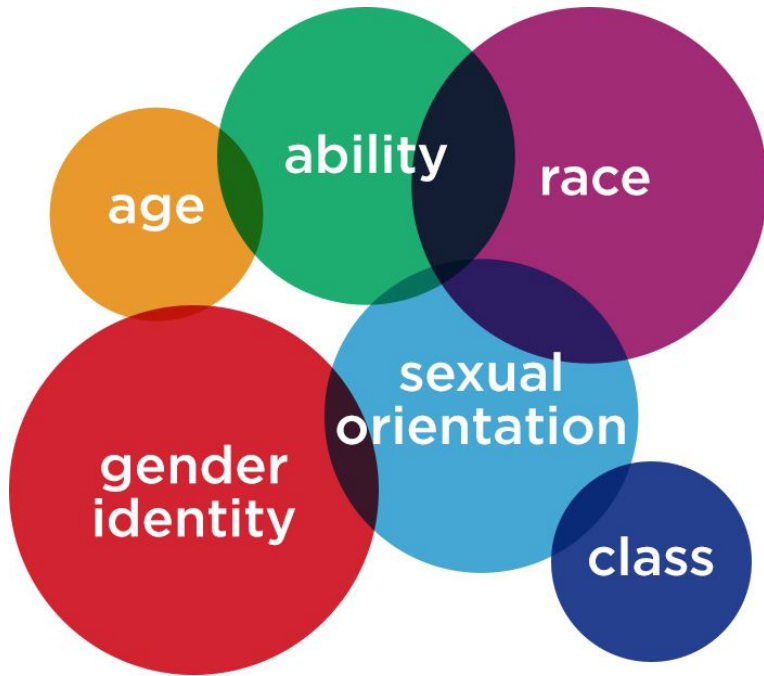
- Formal schooling often reinforces negative stereotypes/beliefs about Black people and culture
- This is done in a number of ways including overrepresentation in school discipline, mis/under-diagnosis of mental illnesses and learning disabilities and devaluation of Black identities and culture
- This impacts both Black people and non-Black people

MENTAL HEALTH AND SCHOOLING

“For Black students, structural, interpersonal, and internalized racism permeates school systems and perpetuates negative educational and **health outcomes**” (Marraccini et al, 2022)



INTERSECTIONAL IDENTITIES AND ANTIBLACKNESS



- Suicide rates of Black boys has increased in the last few decades (Marraccini et al, 2022)
- Racial and gender socialization uniquely produce mental health experiences and access to supports
- “LGBTQ identity was associated with higher risk for suicide in Black youth and Black boys specifically, rendering Black youth identifying as LGBTQ particularly vulnerable” (Marraccini et al, 2022, p. 298)

INTERSECTIONAL IDENTITIES AND ANTIBLACKNESS

- Research has also shown that socioeconomic status, housing, age and ability impact mental health outcomes and suicide ideation
- For instance, “Suicide rates among the Black population peak during adolescence and emerging adulthood and then decline, as compared with a peak in midlife among the general population” (CDC, 2021)



WHAT CAN WE DO/ARE DOING?

Create and Find Affirming Spaces

- Developing fictive kin relationships
- Creating formal affirming spaces

Value and Make Space for Black Ways of Knowing

- Include Black religious and culture practices in education
- De-center white practices as the norm

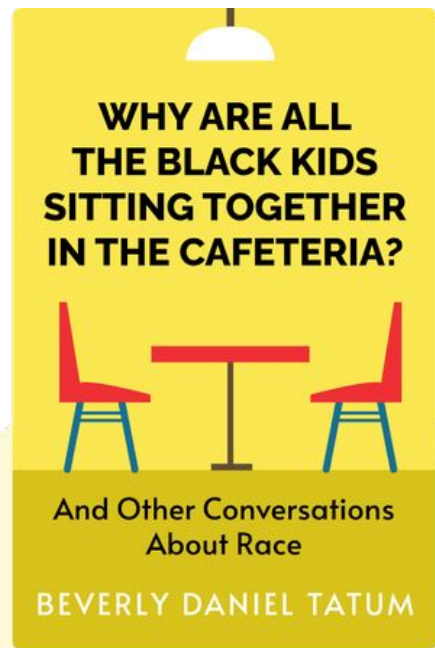
Implementing Restorative Discipline Practices

- End Zero-Tolerance Policies
- Challenge largely punitive discipline practices

School-Based Mental Health Services

- Increase access and diversity amongst providers

CREATING AND FINDING AFFIRMING SPACES



“When a group of Black teens are sitting together in the cafeteria . . . school administrators want to know not only why they are sitting together, but what can be done to prevent it. We need to understand that in racially mixed settings, racial grouping is a developmental process in response to an environmental stressor, racism.

Joining with one's peers for support in the face of stress is a positive coping strategy” (Tatum, 1997, p. 62)

**“The classroom remains the most radical
space of possibility...”**

**— bell hooks, Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of
Freedom**