National Resource Center (NRC)
Understanding Oppression and Promoting Equity
Ruby White Star
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>> Hello?   Can you hear me?   Are we good?   Perfect.   Thank you.

Good afternoon and good morning, everyone.   We are pleased that you are joining us for our webinar: Understanding Oppression and Promoting Equity.   Before we begin, it is important to mention that the National Resource Center on Reaching Victims is committed to providing equal, meaningful, language and disability access for all of our trainings.   It is why we will ensure the complete functionality of our captioning pod and interpreters before moving forward.   Because technology can be so unpredictable, technical difficulties are not always preventable.   If we do experience a technical challenge, you will see a message on your screen which reads "We are experiencing technical difficulties: Please stand by."   The NRC team will work to resolve the issues as quickly as possible.   If the issue cannot be resolved, we may have to cancel the webinar.   Attendees will receive a follow-up e-mail if we need to cancel the webinar.   The

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Before I begin, I have a couple things.   Participants will be in listen-only mode.   If there are any technical difficulties during the presentation, please enter a message in the Q&A pod to the bottom right of the PowerPoint.   This is the best way to communicate with us.   If you have logged into Adobe on your computer, you will notice the raise hand button on the top of your screen.   Can you please find the button that is raise your hand on the top of your screen?   Please test this now by clicking the button to raise your hand.

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So Melanie, I wanted to see if you're able to hear me?   Perfect. Thank you, Melanie.

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says Q&A.   You can download the materials in the file box any time during the presentation.   We plan to have time after the presentations for questions and comments.   If you don't want to lose a question or comment during the presentation, please enter it into the Q&A pod and we will hold onto your question until the end.

We are recording this webinar.   Melanie, can you hear me? Great, thank you.

You will also receive a link to complete an evaluation after this webinar.   We appreciate your feedback, so please let us know if you need the evaluation or other webinar materials in alternate format.   I just want to take a moment to pause and create some briefing space as we transition to our webinar.

Ruby, I am so happy to have Camirar Latino as one of our partners this work and excited about your presentation.   I will pass it over to you, Ruby.

Ruby, are you able to hear us?

>> RUBY WHITE STARR: Yes, I can hear you.   Can you hear me? Can you hear me, Jorge?

>> I hear you perfectly fine.

>> RUBY WHITE STARR: Great.   Thank you so much.   Thank you all for joining me.   I'm happy to be here.   I am from Caminar Latino, so you will notice when I do this topic on oppression I will tend to focus more heavily on issues related to race and those things that are pertinent to my identity.   I just put that up front so you're all aware.   But we will explore the full context of what this means.

In terms of examples, oftentimes those are the kinds that I bring up.   So having said that, there's a few things before we get started that I want to put forward, as well.   So one of them is

that this topic can be done in a number of ways. There are several different approaches, different philosophies, ways of viewing the work. And so I will say that it is kind of a compilation of the work over the last few decades that are the things that we've found to be best practices. I want to say that up front that it's not the only way. I present it to you as kind of a primer of what we've learned over the last, you know, long period of time. But if you had a different presenter, you would have a completely different workshop. And that's the thing about this particular topic. It is also a difficult topic to have. And I'm not sure what is causing the background noise. Maybe we could mute ourselves.

This particular topic is one that typically (echoing) Would require quite a bit of discussion.

Jorge or somebody, there is a lot of background noise right now. It is -- (echoing) -- Sorry, I don't know what that is. We're going to do our best to try to have this discussion in this particular format. Typically you want to be able to explore. You want to be able to seek clarification. But we're going to try to do our best with this format.

Okay. It sounds like we're okay to continue now. I will pause during the audio issues. So one thing I wanted to say, of course, the format is difficult.
We understand that. The topic is also important. So we'll try to do it as best we can.

I want to say one other thing because when you're having a discussion such as this, there will also tend to be some generalizing that occurs. And I want to say right up front that it's difficult to have conversations about these issues without doing some of that. The caution that I put forth is ensuring that when that occurs we view them as possibilities for further discussion to ask questions, not for stereotyping. That's really important. There tends to be a thing we do human nature wise that when we learn something, we will generalize that in a way

that's much broader than it was intended when we learned it. And so I say that going forward.   So we make sure that we take in this information as possibilities, not in a way where we stereotypically where we view people.

I say that, because as we begin our objectives of learning this information will be so that we can be all on the same page about the concepts that we're using related to culture and oppression. That we can understand it in a way where we examine our own identity and analyze how that impacts our relationship with others.   And that we can explore the relevance of cultures and systems and organizing spacing.

Typically when we learn about culture, we take in that information as learning object someone else.   As an outside-in job.   We are trying to reframe that paradigm and recognize that understanding these issues is about examining our own identity, not learning about someone else.   It's recognizing who we are and what we bring, that world view we have, and recognize how that contributes to all of these concepts that we'll be putting forward.

So with that, it takes us to this concept of how we have traditionally viewed culture.   Historically, culture has been thought to be a stable pattern of beliefs, values, thoughts, norms, et cetera, that are transmitted from one generation to another for successfully adapting to other group members and their environment.

Most of the field has recognized that this is a static and not a best way to view culture.   What it appears to translate is that it is something I can hand, for example, to someone.   That all of the beliefs, thoughts, norms, are are just handed down or transferred in a static way.   And we see that there are many variables that contribute to culture.   Therefore, it cannot be transferred in that way.

Instead, how we want to view culture is in a broader way that

refs to shared experiences and commonalities that develop and that continue to evolve.   However, those also do so in the context of particular social and political contexts.

Those particular identities will include those listed here, such as race, ethnicity, sexuality, religion, gender.   And they may include others that are not on here.   This is one way of viewing it.   And our next slide is a visual of this same concept, but in a way for me that graphically I can understand slightly better.   So I offer it with that intent.

So in this graphic, this graphic would be a representation of each of our cultures.   So in this context, understanding culture is not about learning this is how these people are, this is how Latinos are, this is how people with disabilities are, this is how English as a second language speakers are.   Culture cannot necessarily be learned in that particular way because all of these identities interact in each of us to determine our particular culture and our world view.

You'll see in what we call the primary dimensions are those in the center of the box.   Age, race, ethnicity, gender, physical ability or condition.   Those are those dimensions which we do not have a choice or control over necessarily.   So it doesn't mean they do not change.   You may be 36 today and 37 tomorrow.   So they obviously evolve and change, as well.   What it means instead is not that they don't change, but that they're not a choice necessarily.   I can't wake up tomorrow and say you know what, I think I'll be 40 today instead of 51.   Right?   And so that's what those mean.

The middle circle are those that we have more control over. They would include such things as whether we have kids or don't have kids.   Married, divorced, democrat, republican, whether you live in rural or urban, the language you speak.   It doesn't mean changing them would be easy.   It just means that you have the possibility to do so.   Learning a language, for example.   It doesn't mean that would be easy, but you could take the time to

do that.

The outer context, the three you see on the outside: Degree of acculturation, origins/roots, and historical context of oppression are variables that are almost always left out our understanding of culture and the impact that that has on our identity.

So I want to speak a tiny bit more about that.

Our origins and roots is a little bit more self-explanatory.

Historical context of oppression.   It's important that we mean to understand context of oppression as the oppressed or as the oppressor.   So all of us have a historical context of oppression and we may have ways in which we have areas where we have privilege, and still have other areas in which we don't have privilege so we can be both oppressor and oppressed in different contexts.   So that's what we mean by this particular graphic.   So that's an important context for us to have as we move on with this particular discussion.

I want to the say a little bit more about degree of acculturation, which you'll find in the next slide, because often people don't have this context.   I've heard said, for example, in particular contexts.   Say, for example, I don't have a problem with that difference, it's just that they need to assimilate, for example, is a common concept that I have heard without perhaps an understanding of what it means to assimilate.

So the degree of acculturation means how much you choose to assimilate or are forced in some cases to assimilate.   And some people don't choose assimilation.   Assimilation is when you identify with what we'll call dominant culture.   So with race, for example, or like immigrants, if they choose to identify with the U.S. and let go of their dominant culture, of the culture they brought with them.   They will have low identification with that culture.   That is what we call assimilation.   So basically assimilation is letting go of who you were and taking on the new

culture.   I use identity culture, because it's not always race.   It could be that we're talking about people with a disability.   And perhaps they are walking through the world and identifying to the best of their ability with the dominant culture and trying to make who they are invisible.   That's where I use the term identity culture instead of heritage culture.

Integration, sometimes it's called bicultural.   It's where you live in the dominant culture, but you also hold onto the full impact of who you are.   You don't force that to be invisible.   In a different context, you can choose different things.

Separation, which is oftentimes judged, is when you have a high identification with your heritage culture, or with your identity culture, but you choose not to identify heavily with the U.S. culture or the dominant culture.

And marginalization would be when you have low identification with both, your heritage or dominant culture, and your heritage or identity culture.   That would perhaps signify that you need more support, for example, in order to get what you needed, for example, in another context.

So that's just some, because we all want to be talking about using the same language, I think it's important for us to first make sure we understand all these concepts.   Correct?   So there is one more concept that we want to make sure that we're aware of.

Because what this demonstrates is why learning about culture in the way that will we traditionally have been is problematic. Because there's an assumption then that we know something about a human based on one element of their identity, which is why it's important, this concept of intersectionality. Intersectionality was coined by Dr. Kimberlé Crenshaw, a black feminist scholar.   And it refers to the fact that many people experience multiple oppressions simultaneously.   And that there's many aspects of identity that we have to consider.   For

example, migration status is not just about immigrant or non-immigrant. It could be about, you know, immigrant versus emigrant citizen, versus resident citizen on a visa, refugee, newly immigrated, immigrated 30 years ago, it's much broader. And all of these attributes contribute to a person's identity and culture.

Intersectionality help to explain why we can have an identity that is similar to any other person, but we still make different decisions based on our own identities related to all of these aspects of intersectionality.

In addition, the importance of understanding intersectionality is not just about understanding that all of these identities contribute to our culture. What is also important besides that, which gets left off many times is how these intersections between identities interact with systems of oppression.

So, it's not just we all have these identities. But each of these identities interacts and is received differently in our systems. And that is what contributes to privilege and access.

So moving on quickly. So we all mean the same thing, so we all understand what we're talking about when we say privilege and access, oftentimes we say oppression is conflated with adversity, making it very difficult to have conversations about oppression, because we can, human nature, make us feel like we have not had it easy. You know. You don't know me. I've had problems, too. Oppression and adversity are not synonymous. Everyone suffers adversity.

Instead, what we're talking about when we talk about oppression is privilege. And where you have privilege and where you haven't had privilege and how systems of social control or of dominant culture have created patterns for whole groups of people that are about their identities, not about a particular difficulty that one had as an individual.

A way to instead understand privilege is that in all cultures, contexts of privilege and access are created by certain norms against which all other subgroups are compared.

In the U.S., for example, if you look at the dimensions of diversity that we talked about, those primary dimensions, the attributes of the dominant culture include English as a primary language, whiteness, Christianity, physically able, male, middle class, cis-gender, heterosexual.   So this would typically mean you have more access the closer you are to this center.

Equally with privilege, you don't have to think about it in a particular context.   You do not have to wonder if you're Spanish speaking, for example, will somebody there speak my language. You can walk in and make an assumption.   We don't typically tend to think of that as a privilege.   You don't have to call ahead somewhere to see if they have a wheelchair ramp, for example. You can assume that you will be able to enter the building. Again, we don't tend to think of those as privileges, but that's how we understand.   And what we're talking about, when we talk about privilege and access in the context of oppression.

Oppression is another term that we toss around and often make assumptions about what we mean and about whether we all are thinking the same thing when the terms are tossed around.   And so this particular, I find it easier to have graphics to explain concepts that are very difficult.   So this is my attempt because oppression is a very complicated concept and issue.
I have oversimplified it for the purposes of getting us all on the same page about what we're talking about.   So I want to put that up front.   I oversimplify it so we can understand it, however, it's more complicated.

But to explain this cycle so we all kind of, I've been in trainings where we ask who understands what oppression is and everyone raises their hand.   But when you ask someone to explain it to others, it's not something most of us want to do because it is so complicated.

But, what we basically mean when we're talking about oppression, again in an oversimplified way, is that there is a myth.   There is some kind of misinformation that has been received.   There is some kind of stereotype that somebody learned.   I call it it's the story we created.   With lack of information, we will create the story based on everything we've learned.   So that leads us to how this gets reinforced.   So those myths, they then become socialized, and they're reinforced by our institutions, by our culture, by our government, the media, family, education, religion, by our friends, by those people that are part of our circle.   In all these ways they're socialized and possibly many others.

So then these stories have now been socialized become internalized in each of us.   And I say in each of us because all of us are swimming in that river or breathing that air.   So it's not that some of us are immune from it.   This can be internalized by all of us.   So these myths, which are not socialized, become internalized as truth, the reality, the true story.   How it is, common sense.   These are all ways that it is internalized.

So this difference, because everything is measured against the dominant culture.   So this difference now becomes the deficit or the weakness, the thing we need to change, the thing we need to make better or educate, because it's different.   That's where the internalization occurs.   And it can occur in the oppressor or the oppressed or in the agent or the target, whatever language you choose to use.   It can happen for either.

For example, you hear people that say well if they're going to call me a thug, I'm going to act like a thug.   That is an example of how internalization can play out.

The opposite can also occur.   There is a study of young girls who have been told, for example, girls have been told all their lives they're terrible at math and science.   So when they don't do well it's like oh, well that's just girls aren't good at that.   However,

they've done studies now where they tell girls, they give them a test, and tell them for example you are amazing, you have an incredible aptitude for math and science. So, we're going to put you in the special class and, you know, to foster that even further.

And these are all girls who did not score well in math and science. And after being told they have amazing aptitudes and put in these classes, their scores have shot through the roof. Right? So that demonstrates the way we're socialized, for example, can be internalized both in negative and positive ways. So that's a really important kind of concept. So once it's internalized, now it will influence our behavior.

So this is just a quick kind of way to demonstrate how the cycle works. And how it can affect all of us. It's still theoretical and so I in the next slide have put an actual myth so we can dig a little deeper.

I use the example that domestic violence is more prevalent in communities of color because those cultures condone violence because as a culturally specific technical assistance provider, we are often called in to help organizations deal with diverse populations that they're serving, and this is what we're told. Right? Their cultures condone violence. That's the story that has been created. And that has been socialized. We've been socialized to believe that to be true in all of these different ways. Right? When our parents tell us don't hang out with those people, when we look at our jails and our child welfare system, I mean communities of color are overrepresented in those systems. We see our movies. Me, for example, as a Latino woman, I did not grow up and ever see myself represented in movies as the hero, for example.

And as a matter of fact, in most of my favorite movies, the Latino was the mother or the gang member. That's how that was reinforced. There's many different ways of how this idea that we're more violent gets reinforced in ways that we don't recognize. So then that gets internalized again. It can be

internalized in both the target and the agent of that oppression.

We hear oftentimes where I will hear a comment that could be possibly racist.   I'll give you an example.   Latino cultures are more violent because of machismo.   Those cultures, you know, Latinos condone violence because of machismo.   Machismo is another way to say paternalism.   And Latino cultures don't have the copyright on oppression, I mean on paternalism.   So paternalism exists in many cultures.   Latinos have a word for it. But other Latinos repeat that.   They learn that it's because of the culture.   So I've heard people say well no it's true, because this Latino person said it, for example.

So that is an example of the way internalization can occur.   It can happen in both the agent and the target, right?   So it can be internalized.   This particular myth, for example, we will see it in our shelters, right, when we say for example women from other cultures, they won't leave their relationships because they just see it as norm.   Again, the story we created because they won't come to our shelter, because they don't seek services.   It's because their cultures condone violence.   We created that story to have it make sense.   We have a work force that is afraid of men of color.   Oftentimes we view women of colors' parenting, and it doesn't fit the stereotype of what appropriate parenting should look like.   It's judged by this other standard.   They're not as nurturing.   They use physical violence more.   The context of their decision making or the context of why they do things the way they do is left off.   Instead, we decide it's inferior.   Right? We're not taking into consideration, for example, if, which there are a few studies that say physical discipline may be more common in African American communities.   But the context that's left off of that is, for example, how has the historical context of oppression and slavery where African American people had to use physical violence against their children to keep them in line so they weren't killed by slave owners, that whole context is left off of the story.   Right?   Because I haven't heard of any parenting classes, for example, that are culturally specific for African American women that take that context into

consideration.   They're going to mainstream classes that what I hear from some African American women is they're trying to make this parent white in the dominant way.

So just to demonstrate how the myth becomes socialized and then internalized and then affects our behavior.   Because like I said, now we're doing parenting classes that have decided what the appropriate standard is because that's a deficit, and now we're doing it differently.   We are now scrutinizing those families more closely because they're not operating the way we believe they should.   We're seeing women of color more represented in systems such as the child welfare system, but underserved and not served adequately because the story we created is they don't want help, as opposed to they don't want the help that we are giving them.   They don't want what we have.   Right?

So again, once our behavior changes, we see that they're not coming back for services, for example, so then it reinforces the myth.   So again, this is an oversimplified way.   But an example for us to understand how this cycle plays itself through.   And we can spend all day talking about different ways that that happens and hopefully if we ever have this in person we would be able to do so.   But we're going to move on, because we're getting through these concepts very quickly and we only have about 20 more minutes, I think.

So one of the ways that this can play out is through this, why it's important for us to understand our own cultures is if we get underneath the values that inform a culture we can better understand and interrupt that cycle, which is a very difficult concept.   So I'm going to use one example of a value in U.S. culture to demonstrate how this gets reinforced and how we need to interrupt it.   It's a concept of individualism versus collectivism. I have done an activity across the country hundreds of times where with service providers where we try to figure out as individuals whether we tend to fall towards more individualistic mindsets or towards collectivist mindsets.   And in almost all rooms, there there be 40 people, 100 people in the room, there is

typically only one or two people who in the activity land on the collectivist side.

So why this is important is it influences all of our interactions and communication. For example, if you have an individualistic mindset and you're working with victims and they are not moving in the direction that you want them to, or viewing things the way you want them to, a common thing for us to say is because maybe they're worried about well what about my family and what about this, that, we'll say you have to take care of yourself first. And I use that example because it's probably one most of us have said out loud and without recognizing that that comes from an individualistic world view. That in an individualistic culture, which is what the U.S. is, it doesn't mean every person is individualistic, it means the culture tends to value that viewpoint. And it's identifying primarily with the self. Our sayings such as "You have to take care of yourself first" and "Pull yourself up by your bootstraps" all of those demonstrate this value on the individualism. If you take care of yourself first, that will guarantee the wellbeing of those around you.

Wherein collectivist mindsets, the survival and success of the group, looking after the collective is what will elevate you as an individual. In an individualistic culture independence and self-reliance are stressed. That's most important. You make decisions based on those. But in a collectivist one, interdependence, the interdependence of the group is what is valued. In a collectivist society, group members are close psychologically and emotionally, but distance to non-group members. This story plays often when we hear, I'll use Latinos, because I hear that one a lot. Latino people are very private. They won't share what happens in their home behind closed doors. Again, a story that has been created to make sense of what someone sees happening.

When what is instead occurring in that particular case is they're not talking to that service provider. I as a Latina do not find

Latino to be very private.   They do talk to people, but they may be distant to non-group members.   So they may be talking to other Latino people.

Religion is not one that can fit into this.   A lot of people of color for example, their faith.   We see it as either faith is a problem. Sometimes we see it as well, it's their religion, but we see it as religion of something that they can leave or stay in.   We may not necessarily see religion as a part of their identity, wherein collectivist cultures, it's not where they go to practice their faith, it's who they are.   It is a part of their identity.   And that is an important distinction.   Otherwise, we will be playing out and not create different pathways to understand and interrupt this cycle of oppression.

So, it's also important when we understand culture that we are not, that there is no American in the U.S. who is like another American in the U.S.   So, this is why it's important to understand culture in this particular way.   Because, what we're staying instead is there is a handful of core values and beliefs that underlie and permeate the national culture.   Individualism is one of those.   It doesn't mean every single person has an individualistic mindset.   Right?   This goes back to that generalizing versus stereotyping.   But it means that that is a value as a culture that is placed.   We may even act in ways that are completely opposite, but they're still at the heart of that culture.

An example of that would be like the right to bear arms.   The right to bear arms is at the cultural ethos of the value in the U.S. But that doesn't mean every single one of us feels the same about that particular issue.   Right?   This is a problem why when we learn about other cultures in stereotypical ways why it can actually has the opposite effect.   It can contribute to stereotyping and lead to oppression because we are now treating all people the same.
And the best way to kind of understand that is someone outside of this culture, outside of the U.S. learned about the values of the

U.S., what assumptions would they make if they applied those across the board to everyone?   And we can see that those would probably be problematic.   But we still sometimes operate in that particular way.

So it's important to get underneath what the values are that underlie American culture.   So it's not necessarily about judging, examining, and learning about someone else's culture.   It's about recognizing our own culture and thinking about how those values manifest in our own organizations, in our own interpersonal relationships, in our work with survivors, and in all contexts of the way that we experience the world.

So some of those, hopefully you will examine these more, because like I said, this is more like a primer where I'm throwing a lot of things at you that require a lot more discussion.   But some of those concepts are things like I said the right to bear arms, individualism.   There are things like objectivity in the U.S., for example, evidence-based practice, and if you didn't have objective, randomized trials, then the information, if it's not documented, if somebody didn't study it, it's less relevant.
There are things like patriotism, right, in America.   Things like fear of open conflict where we don't discuss, you know, you don't challenge, you be respectful and you be nice.
There could be things like I always say there is a sense of urgency in the U.S.   Everything needs to be done and it needs to be done right now.   You know?   Numbers are more important, right?   Data and quantity.   The quantity of how many you did.
Do 10 webinars is better than quality.   Maybe only meeting with one person, but doing it in a more comprehensive way.   One has more value than the other.   We could go on and on.   And I say it's a primer because it's important for us to examine what these things are.   For example, that you have to be doing things all the time.   That one is really important.   And we don't realize how it then impacts all of our work.   It's against the law in the U.S. to stand around doing nothing.   Right?   We call it loitering.   We don't think about that.   But that is a value that we have.   We call it loitering.   But why it happens and why all of this context is

important, there's loitering laws in malls, for example.   But if there's four women with shopping bags standing outside of their cars chitchatting for an hour and a half before they leave, although the law exists, is someone going to call the police?   It's unlikely.   Although the laws exist, they are not applied in the same way.   Whereas if three African American boys were standing outside of a Circle K, for example, is it likely somebody, maybe the owner inside is going to call the police?   Because it's undesirable for other customers.   That's the context we're talking about, about how oppression needs to be understood to be interrupted because it influences every aspect of how we do our work, how we operate in systems, how laws get applied, and how oppression continues.

Much more complicated, but I just wanted to throw those out there as a way to understand and get on the same page about what we're talking about when we're talking about these particular concepts, which in a way I'm oversimplying and in a way I'm trying to get underneath.

So the important takeaway from us getting on the same page about what we're talking about in the previous slides is that meaning is assigned.

When we see other people's behavior, we are viewing it through our own cultural filter of what our culture tells us is happening. However, we operate in our systems and with helping victims as if there is a good and a bad.   A right and a wrong.   Another element of U.S. culture.   Right?   Is this binary.   It's good or it's bad.   It's right or it's wrong.   Right?   And so that will influence everything we see, which will lead us to make statements that we think are common sense, which are you have to take care of yourself first, which really have an incredible amount of cultural implications.   Right?   If, for example, in the U.S. you had an organization where 10 people are making 100,000, you have a million dollar budget and you lose a grant for $100,000, in the U.S., it's common well unfortunately we have to let one person go.   That's an individualistic mindset.   You don't realize how it

permeates, all of these cultural, world views, influence everything that happens in our organizations, because we have to let somebody go.

Whereas in Japan, where it's a collectivist mindset, it would be equally common sense to say unfortunately we all have to take a 10% cut.   Common sense, nothing else we can do about it.   Again, we could do this all day.   We're moving through this very quickly.   But it would be really important hopefully in your organizations you have some of these conversations.   Because it's much more difficult to get underneath than we think when we understand things in a superficial or a transactional way.

So instead, what we need to recognize about culture is that it is the learned and shared knowledge, beliefs, rules, customs, et cetera, of a particular people that are used to generate social behavior at any given point in time.

So culture makes each of us who we are.   But it's a combination of various identities that contribute to our culture.   And every single one of us has it.   It's not something other people have that we need to learn about.   It's something that we have that we bring to the situation and that if we're not careful we impose in the situation.   And it's important to remember that organizations and systems have cultures.   That are embedded in these world views.   That can be oppressive.   And that need to be examined, as well.

It's interesting, because I've heard said oftentimes that what Latinos won't, or they accept violence in their own cultures.   Or it could be anything.   Police officers.   Police officers think a certain way.   I think my point, wait, let me try to think what I'm trying to say.   What we find is not that one culture condones violence more so than other cultures.   But what we do see is that cultures have difficulty holding their own accountable.   Which is why I said the police officer -- law enforcement has a culture also, right?   And when you understand and live within the culture, you see a context that others might not see.   And so, it influences

what you see, what you accept, what you think you have to respond to.   Similarly, with certain communities of color, politics, whatever it is you're talking about.   Child welfare.   When somebody, an outsider is trying to give them a particular world view.   You're outside the culture, and they're trying to make you understand why they have to operate.   All of these things is why it makes it so difficult to create new pathways.   That's something that we need to think about.   Otherwise we will be perpetuating the same oppressions.   Right?   We need to understand that communities have different cultures and it's influenced by all these things.   And if we want to interrupt that cycle, if we want to understand oppression, and instead be working to promote equity, then we need to get underneath all of these and figure out ways to create new pathways.

So I want to take us to this concept of the cultural competency continuum.   This is created by Terry Cross.   It's not my own work.   I apologize.   The graphic makes it appear -- it's hard to do a graphic.   The bottom line is it looks like you can only live in those two that are connected.   That's not the case.   They're not static in that particular way.   But the important thing that I just want to say about this slide is oftentimes we think that we will say stuff like we help everyone, right?   You're operating from a place of cultural blindness.   You're dismissing differences and perhaps providing services with the expressed philosophy that you're unbiased or that culture doesn't make any difference.   That the helping approaches that you're using for the dominant culture can be universally applied for everyone.   And you're also, in that place, you're also encouraging assimilation.   Right?   You're saying everyone needs to assimilate in a way.

So we oftentimes hear "I don't see color," right?   As if that's the right way to operate.   But I offer this to say that is problematic.   And many organizations and service providers actually live in this cultural incapacity.   The left side of this continuum, the left three circles, being more harmful.   The incapacity means you don't intentionally mean to be destructive, but you lack the capacity to serve anyone beyond the dominant culture.   So that is

problematic, right? The culture destruction, that's kind of what we're talking about, genocide. What we're trying instead, and I like to say increasing our cultural capacity, because this is also, this cultural competency term is also controversial, because it assumes you get somewhere. You get to the place where you understand, and that doesn't happen. But instead we're moving toward acknowledging and responding, doing things different is what we're talking about when we talk about this pre-proficiency.

Cultural proficiency, the closest I can get to explaining that is when you actually are contributing to the knowledge base, for example. You're operating in a way, well it doesn't mean you're not learning anymore. But you're operating in a way that is still developing your own cultural capacity, but you're also adding to the knowledge base of culturally competent practice. You're elevating, right? Certain standards. You're publishing results of demonstration projects on race, equity, other oppressions. You're hiring and elevating the equity specialists for staff and people who have knowledge of the community they're serving. You're prioritizing different things. So I just wanted to make sure we understood that concept, because we're not on the same page about that a lot of the times, too.

So with that, I wanted to say it's really important. Violence is present in all cultures. We're not ever saying that culture is being used to deny or excuse violence. That's not what this is about. It's a way to intervene appropriately. It's important to understand that it's normal in certain groups. All groups have a way of accepting violence, including the U.S., and ways of resisting violence. That's the important thing to understand. When you learn about a culture in a blanket way, you have to be cautious that you're not taking in the information in ways that stereotype and further oppress.

Instead, you want to learn these things so you can eliminate disparities, so that you can increase access. And so that you can improve outcomes as it relates to non-dominant identities.

We're not going to go through all of these slides, but I included them because I think it's really important to understand the context of why it matters.

People of non-dominant cultures have fewer options.   They have less access.   They have bad experiences with people who are supposed to be helping them.   They have different perceptions of what is available to them of what they need.

It is central to how they organize their experience.   It influences how they seek assistance.   Whether they talk to a friend or go to a service provider, many will not, for a variety of reasons, attributable to all the things we have just discussed.   It influences what they value, it influences what they define as the problem, whether they want to talk to you about it, how many stressors they have in their own lives.   Right?   What they expect helpful treatment is.   What they think the problem is.   A lot of times our systems tell them.   The other thing that happens in the U.S. is we're educating, constantly.   We have to educate people, as opposed to recognizing that there is some education that we need to do for ourselves, right?

Again, we're not going to go through all of these, but I offer them for you so you have an understanding of why all of these concepts matter.   Communities have experienced lot of institutionalism racism and systemic bias.   They mistrust the systems.   They are not offered sometimes the alternative resources and services that they need.

And there's barriers that we don't tend to think of the risk of the systemic intervention, but that is particularly important in underserved communities.   That's a new concept for many.   A lot of times we think of barriers as individual challenges that people have.   But we don't think about how the systems and the interventions themselves is what create the risks.   Again, these are all concepts that need a lot more time a lot more discussion, but we wanted to put forward so we're all on the same page about why these things were important.   It's why you can't take

these topics in isolation.   You can't be helping communities of color if you're not also concentrating on the fact that they're all in low-paying jobs, that they have immigration issues, right?   That there is tremendous within-group diversity, that they don't mean the same thing.   If the these are not all things that are at the forefront of your thinking and philosophies around what you're doing, then it's going to be an issue.   Instead we want to move the conversations from how we've been having them to how do we increase our cultural capacity.   These are just a few things to think about as we start moving in that direction.   Again, we can't do it all in one hour and ten minutes, but it's really important that if you're trying to increase your own cultural capacity, the number-one step is to be aware of your own biases, prejudices, and your own knowledge base, and where that comes from, and what world view you learned that in.   That you recognize your professional power and avoid the imposition of those values, which we will tend to do on a day-to-day basis, just as we manage our lives.   That we instead gather information within the context at hand.   Right?   That we ask a lot of questions.   And that we don't work alone in isolation.   There are things you will not see because you can only see things through your own eyes. So you have to work cross culturally.   You have to create linkages and collaborate with culturally-specific individuals, groups, organizations, experts.   You can't do it on your own.

So these are questions that I am posing for you to think about as you leave this session that hopefully you will continue to, I'm sorry like I said we had to go through this real quickly.   But hopefully this will inspire you to either recognize that you want to learn more about this, like hopefully a little seed will be planted, or that if you already had that seed, that it will promote you to even enhance that even further.   Because as we see here, equality has to do with giving everyone the same thing.   It's interesting because this picture is even problematic and is controversial.
And if we had time, we could discuss this picture, because it also assumes a level playing field, which is not the case, right?   Some of these boxes are actually in a hole and it has other problems.

But I use it to demonstrate when you're giving everybody the same thing and we think of it as equality, that doesn't mean you're going to come up with the same outcome.   If you focus on the outcome, then you recognize to get to that outcome you need a different thing.   That's what we're talking about when we talk about equity.   And equity is the concept that we work towards as opposed to equality.

That's more ideal.

So with that, hopefully, we didn't get a lot of chance to talk about it, but this concept of discomfort is really important.   Because a lot of people conflate comfort with safety in the social justice field.   If somebody makes us uncomfortable, we want to remove ourselves.   That's conceptually very important.   However, when you're trying to educate yourselves on the concepts of race, it can become very problematic.   You conflate safety and comfort, and then you do not grow and learn and challenge yourself when you're uncomfortable.   And that's going to be necessary in order to have these more difficult conversations about oppression and recognizing the ways that what we've been doing could be harming people.   Right?   So we want to make sure we increase our own awareness of our own cultures and our own privilege and our own biases.   That's a first step for being able to do this work. We want to recognize that we are assigning new meaning based on our own cultural lens, and instead switch that to work from inside the world view and the culture of those we're trying to help.   That's what we would need to do if we were trying to promote equity.

So with that, I'm going to turn it back over to Jorge.   And then we have a few minutes, make like 10 minutes or 5 minutes for questions or comments.

>> Thank you, ruby.   Can you hear me?

>> RUBY WHITE STARR: Yes, I can hear you.

>> Thank you.   We invite participants to chime in and see if they have any questions for you as we move to the Q&A session.   I just want to say thank you Ruby for grounding us on the terminology and also inviting reflection and collaboration as we do this work.   I think it's a life-long process as we unpack our privilege, power, culture, and the way it manifests in relationships.   So the invitation for reflection is really, really needed in this work.

So I want to invite participants, I want to invite all of you to ask Ruby questions.   We have a few more minutes for Q&A.   In the meantime, Ruby, you know, I think a lot of people who going to be listening to this webinar will have a lot of ah-ha moments as you discuss oppression and culture, the way our biases or implicit biases affect relationships.

I wonder if you can tell us about organizations, grounding them, around power, creating spaces for staff.   I'm wondering if you can give some examples of those assistances that you've given to organizations or technical assistance that you've provided.   So you can give people some ways that you can support them in the work.

>> RUBY WHITE STARR: Yeah.   We prefer more comprehensive Q&A.   Like I said, these webinars are difficult because you're opening up a lot of very complicated concepts that you want to be able to actually dialogue on.   Clarification is always needed. People will be like "Are you saying this?"   And "Is this what you mean?"   Especially when they're challenging their own paradigms.   So what we do have is through this project, we are able to provide comprehensive technical assistance, which we don't necessarily, we're not able to just do a phone call on this. It's not like somebody can call us up for a 20-minute consultation and we're going to help them work through all these issues.

How we tend to work with organizations is they will contact us and we will work with them for an extended period of time.   We have several organizations across the country, where we've

worked with them.   One of the things we've found is when people start trying to go in this direction, it will wreak havoc in an organization, because you want to do this work, but you realize there is a lot of conflict and tension, because you haven't first built the trust to engage in the conversation.   A lot of times we've been having organizations prepare to even have the conversation.   We have gone in some communities, in Idaho, in Maryland, and a couple of other states have had us come in and do this workshop.   We actually do this in a two-day.   It's obviously more than what we did.   We tried to do as much as we could in the hour.   But we do two-day workshops on these topics.   And we're able to get underneath very specific questions and tensions around these issues.   So I hope that answers your question.   But we're willing to engage in technical assistance, consultations, like telephone calls with people who want to know more as a starting, jumping-off point.   But it will always require further discussion and planning around how you can actually do more work in this area.

>> Thank you, Ruby.   That definitely answers the question.   I think it is an opportunity to dive deeper especially around trust. How do we build trust.   And also, too, power.   Power sharing. Could we center the voices of all staff and also community to shift the way we create.   Or we create our work and then also how do we create our culture internally.

>> We are going to do a workshop on collaborations.   Because that one bullet that says work with others, that one bullet of this training will have its own webinar.   Because what does that mean to work with others?   What does it mean to share power? What does it mean in regards of changing the paradigm of what we're doing to a way that promotes equity.   Like I said, each one of these bullets we had could be its own workshop.   That one we do have scheduled I think for next month or something.   So I'll put on everybody's radar to get a little bit deeper on that.   What does it mean?   What is power and how do we work with others?

>> August 19th, to be exact, for your next webinar.   And also,

we're having this conversation in Spanish.   So there will be one on Wednesday around oppression, as well, for Spanish-speaking providers.   So we have opened that space to bring people who speak Spanish into that conversation.

So we have four more minutes.   I know it's hard to often ask questions around oppression, around privilege, around power, in a forum.   So we invite you also to e-mail us reachingvictims@Vera.org.   If you have any questions around the webinar, if you want to get connected to Ruby.   Or if you want to invite us for technical assistance, I could walk you through the process.   So again, it's reachingvictims@Vera.org.

And Angelina, if you could switch the view to the evaluation.   So right underneath the PowerPoint, you will see webinar Survey Link.   You can click on the word "webinar survey link" underneath the PowerPoint.   Once you click on "webinar survey link" you can click "browse to" and that will give you access to our evaluations.   Approximately 3-5 minutes to complete it.   We appreciate your thoughts on how we can make it better.

To download the transcript, you can press "save" and that will give you access to download the transcript from today.

I want to thank you Ruby for your time and grounding us in this reflection and the invitation to continue and have continuous reflection.   Anything else, Ruby before we close out the room?

>> RUBY WHITE STARR: No, I appreciate everybody's time.   And like I said, we introduced a lot of information that typically we would not want to do in an hour and ten minutes.   If you would like further discussion, please contact Jorge so we can kind of manage any kind of followup that might be needed.

>> And the one way I think as you go back to your organizations, if you share the recording with your staff and have conversations, then we're able to bring your needs and wants through our TA.

So again, thank you so much for your time today.   Again, you can reach us at reachingvictims@Vera.org.   And I want to thank all of the staff, the interpreter, the captioner, and all of the staff at Vera who make this possible.   Thank you and have a great afternoon and a great day.