Guidance Document for using the BLM Self-Assessment

It is challenging to define personal attitudes towards racism, which are often based on implicit (hidden) biases and institutional social constructs that influence thoughts and beliefs. However, these personal attitudes emerge in the actions and attitudes of every person, and they may result (sometimes unintentionally) in prejudiced responses and oppressive actions based on skin color.

The intent of the BLM Self-Assessment is to present a framework for viewing internal characteristics and gaining a vocabulary to talk about race. It provides a pathway for internal learning and a platform for group discussions; this can lead to a greater understanding of internal attitudes towards race and skin color, and can contribute to rich discussions on race and prejudice. Such discussions may change the thoughts and beliefs of individuals toward more open and accepting perspectives.

The Black Lives Matter Movement (BLM) protests the killing of Black people by on-duty police officers. BLM challenges racial profiling, infrastructural racism, systemic inequalities and white supremacy. Unsurprisingly, perceptions of BLM and racism in America varies considerably.

Every person approaches information at their own pace and with their own content choices. The BLM Self-Assessment Tool uses the acronym BALSAMIC and serves as a 2-dimensional representation of 4-dimensional (meta)cognitive processes; it’s designed to help someone consider their own position, and then have the language to share their beliefs, and to help them better understand the perspectives of others.

It is important to know that most people experience all of these factors at varying levels, and that none of these categories are “wrong”.

It is suggested that an individual initially self-assess their position by reading through the instrument and placing themselves into a category. They can then discuss with another person why they chose that category and how it represents their feelings. Dyadic or small group discussions work well for considering the internal characteristics that resonate with a particular BALSAMIC category.

Both thoughts and emotions may be expressed in these discussions, and it is recommended that participants have access to tea and water or other beverages, healthy snacks such as fruit, nuts or granola bars, and simple art materials such as fuzzy wires, beads, crayons and paper, or small finger toys, to allow for de-stressing during discussions.

For more information on the BLM Self-Assessment, please contact:

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