



UNDOING RACISM

Spring 2021 Newsletter

The Undoing Racism committee would like to periodically communicate the work that is being done in this arena by both committee members and other dedicated faculty, staff, and students. Our mission is to:

“Create spaces for critical dialogue, reflection, education, and action rooted in best practices of antiracist approaches and consistent work with social work values and ethics for the Anne and Henry Zarrow School of Social Work.”

Throughout the past semester, the committee has continued to engage in mission-focused activities. In April, the Green Shoe Foundation facilitated three sessions titled "Self-Care During Times of Trauma: Responding to Racial Violence and COVID." Attendees were entered into drawings for door prizes and all left with renewed inspiration. In May, committee members attended a virtual training hosted by the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond. The focus of this training was to review and renew the commitment to the Principles of Undoing Racism.

Upcoming plans include:

- Opening spaces on the committee for additional faculty, staff, and students to engage in this collaborative work.
- Exploring funding through grants to bring the People's Institute to Oklahoma City and Tulsa for one-day workshops that would allow faculty and staff and some community members to participate.
- Share resources and training opportunities with faculty, staff, students, and the community.
- Teaching a selective on the Tulsa Race Massacre.
- Continuing to interview alumni of color regarding their experiences of racism and bias within the AHZSSW .

Continue to look for our communications, continue to bring forth ideas about how to do this work and most of all continue to share what are you doing to Undo Racism within the AHZSSW and your communities. Please visit our website at: <https://ou.edu/cas/socialwork/centers-programs/undoing-racism>

Practicing Anti-Racism In Social Work perspectives from social work students: Nava Mansouri, Alma Ramos Orozco, and Jackson Paden

To be an anti-racist means to be an active protagonist in addressing individual, interpersonal, and systemic racism. The core value of social justice has been emphasized in our social work education, however, how do we conceptualize the meaning of social justice, intersectionality, and diversity into action?

Social workers are in constant interaction with diverse and vulnerable populations, and in order to effectively serve these populations, we must actively identify and address our implicit and explicit biases. We must educate ourselves regarding the United States' long, brutal, and ignored history with race in order to understand how racism affects our institutions, interactions, and the lives of BIPOC individuals, families, and communities. Non-BIPOC social workers need to be allies by extending resources and utilizing the power of their position to elevate the voices of those experiencing injustice.

It is important for social workers to be aware of biases and to not have a colorblind approach when working with different populations. Ignoring an individual's race and ethnicity is ignoring their identity, their culture, and the hardships that they have faced while surviving in a system that is rigid against them.

Being a bystander is an act of racism. Choosing to be "colorblind" is an act of racism. Ignoring our country's history with race and how racism has shaped our institutions is an act of racism. These all contribute to the perpetuation of racism in our systems, communities, and interpersonal interactions. Therefore, what steps will you take to be an anti-racist?
