



Oklahoma City

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

July 27th & 28th

Rising Together: An OKCPS Professional Learning Event

BACK TO SCHOOL 2020: MENTAL HEALTH IN THE DUAL PANDEMICS OF COVID-19 & SYSTEMIC RACISM

Denique Boxhill, MS, MA, APCC

Sitar Mody Scott, MA, AMFT

Taquelia Washington, MS, LCSW, PPS

PRESENTERS



Denique Boxhill is a Registered Associate Professional Clinical Counselor and a consultant at the intersection of mental health and organizational culture, centering racial equity. She has over a decade of experience working in healthcare management consulting, supporting organizational strategy and change management. Clinically, she supports youth, adults, and families through culturally responsive and integrated therapeutic practices. Denique is a Jamaican immigrant and she is passionate about the impacts of oppression on the many marginalized opportunities of communities of color. When she's not working, she is an aspiring home-cook and baker.



Sitar Mody Scott is a Registered Associate Marriage and Family Therapist and Racial Equity facilitator. She has a background in mental health, strategy, and program development. Sitar has held positions focused on building cross-sector partnerships to deepen positive social impact at various nonprofit organizations. She is committed to supporting leaders and organizations create cultures of equity, self-awareness, mutual respect, connectedness, and continuous learning. With her clients, she works from a relational and anti-oppression foundation while co-creating courageous spaces for connection. When she's not working, Sitar loves to spend time in the sunshine with her toddler.



Taquelia Washington is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and holds a pupil personnel services credential. She has close to 20 years of experience working in community mental health, specializing in providing services in school systems. For over 10 years she worked at a continuation school, providing mental health related services to youth while also developing systems of care to help best support them. In addition, she has direct experience providing culturally inclusive, intensive therapeutic services to youth and their families. When she's not working, Ms. Washington loves spending time with her wife and son, exploring nature, running, and eating yummy food.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students, educators, and administrators are experiencing unprecedented impacts from two concurrent pandemics. COVID-19 and Violence against Black and Brown People continue to threaten lives, safety, health, jobs, family structure, and communities. While the pandemics are experienced differently and with differential impact across race, everyone is indeed affected.

In this 3-session series, you will explore the intersection of systemic racism, mental health, developmental psychology, and student behaviors—all within the context of dual pandemics of a new infectious disease and centuries-old racialized violence. You will practice alternative ways of relating to and supporting your students and yourself through challenges and uncertainty.

- Reflect on the parallel experiences from the dual pandemics of COVID-19 and racism for students and yourselves as educators and administrators
- Understand the physiological changes in the body and brain due to acute and chronic stress
- Understand behavior as symptoms of the physiological changes and the developmental stages of students
- Practice alternative ways of engaging that acknowledge the influence of systemic racism on behavior

AGENDA

MONDAY AFTERNOON

- Locate yourself as an educator
- Locate yourself in the conversation about COVID-19 and Systemic Racism
- Understand the mental health implications of loss, uncertainty, & grief

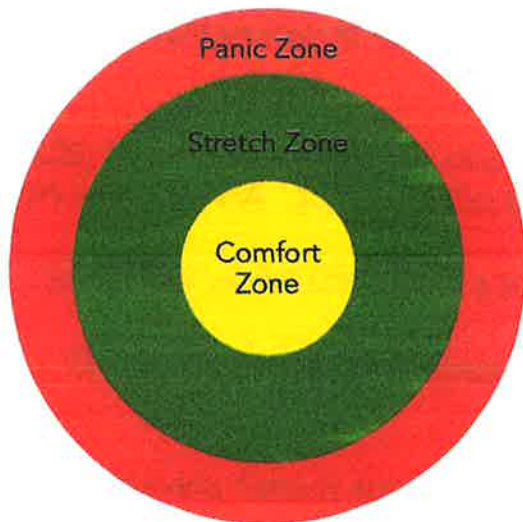
TUESDAY MORNING

- Deepen your understanding of Systemic Racism
- Connect the Brain & Body to Behavior and Emotional Expression
- Understand the importance of Self-Regulation and Self-Soothing

TUESDAY AFTERNOON

- Expand your Toolkit: Critical Dialogue Circle
- Bring it all together

COMMUNITY GUIDELINES



- Be curious and open
- Stay present and practice mindful listening
- Practice self-focus
- Suspend judgment for yourself and others
- Deepen your awareness of your own emotions and physical responses
- Notice and be willing to sit with discomfort / step out of your comfort zone
- Ask yourself, "how can I put this into action with my students and colleagues?"

WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

During the sessions you may have questions about technology and/or about the content being presented.

For questions about **TECHNOLOGY**, including Zoom and access to materials, please contact the OKCPS IT department.

For questions related to the **CONTENT** presented by the facilitators, please enter your question in the chat feature on Zoom when it is enabled. There will be designated Q&A times during the session.

PREWORK

Read/watch the following articles and TED Talk. For some participants, this information may be new, and for others, it may be familiar. In either case, as you read and watch this information, notice the thoughts, emotions, and physical sensations that arise for you. You may want to jot them down.

- > ["What COVID-19 Is Doing to Our Mental Health,"](#) Healthline.com, May 8, 2020
- > ["'We Are Living in a Racism Pandemic,' Says APA President,"](#) APA.org, May 29, 2020
- > ["How to deconstruct racism, one headline at a time,"](#) TED Talk by Baratunde Thurston, 2019
- > ["White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack,"](#) Peggy McIntosh, 1989

Take a moment to respond to the following question to locate yourself within this information.

- > I acknowledge that systemic racism exists today.
 - Not at all
 - A little bit
 - Undecided
 - Somewhat
 - Completely
- > I understand how systemic racism negatively impacts the mental health and behavior of individuals.
 - Not at all
 - A little bit
 - Undecided
 - Somewhat
 - Completely
- > I understand the mental health implications of the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - Not at all
 - A little bit
 - Undecided
 - Somewhat
 - Completely

REFLECTIONS

CENTERING YOUR WHY

Why did you enter into the field of education?

What is your hope/intention/purpose in the work that you do?

Take note of a specific moment or person that helps to remind you of your "why."

LOSS DURING COVID-19

What losses have you experienced as a result of COVID-19?

What losses may your students have experienced as a result of COVID-19?

ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (ACES)

Please answer Yes or No to the following questions:

Prior to your 18th Birthday:

- Did a parent or other adult in the household often or very often... Swear at you, insult you, put you down, or humiliate you? or Act in a way that made you afraid that you might be physically hurt?
- Did a parent or other adult in the household often or very often... Push, grab, slap, or throw something at you? or Ever hit you so hard that you had marks or were injured?
- Did an adult or person at least 5 years older than you ever... Touch or fondle you or have you touch their body in a sexual way? or Attempt or actually have oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse with you?
- Did you often or very often feel that ... No one in your family loved you or thought you were important or special? or Your family didn't look out for each other, feel close to each other, or support each other?
- Did you often or very often feel that ... You didn't have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes, and had no one to protect you? or Your parents were too drunk or high to take care of you or take you to the doctor if you needed it?
- Were your parents ever separated or divorced?
- Was your mother or stepmother:
Often or very often pushed, grabbed, slapped, or had something thrown at her? or Sometimes, often, or very often kicked, bitten, hit with a fist, or hit with something hard? or Ever repeatedly hit over at least a few minutes or threatened with a gun or knife?
- Did you live with anyone who was a problem drinker or alcoholic, or who used street drugs?
- Was a household member depressed or mentally ill, or did a household member attempt suicide?
- Did a household member go to prison?

Add up the number of questions you responded Yes to for your ACEs score: _____

Please reflect on how these experiences influenced your thoughts, feelings, and behaviors growing up?

How might high ACE scores impact someone's mental health as well as their behavior?

THE DEVELOPMENTAL PERSPECTIVE OF CORE ASSUMPTIONS

Core Assumptions	Behaviors that may result
The World is not a Safe Space	
I have no control over what happens to me / I am helpless	
Everyone is a threat to me	
I deserve all the bad things that happen to me	
I have no control over my body	

NOTES