Slide 1

Critical Race Theory (CRT)-A Brief Overview from a Social Work Perspective

DR. HANIF M. BEY, DSW, LSW, MSW

EAST STROUDSBURG UNIVERSITY-DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY, SOCIAL WORK, & CRIMINAL JUSTICE

1

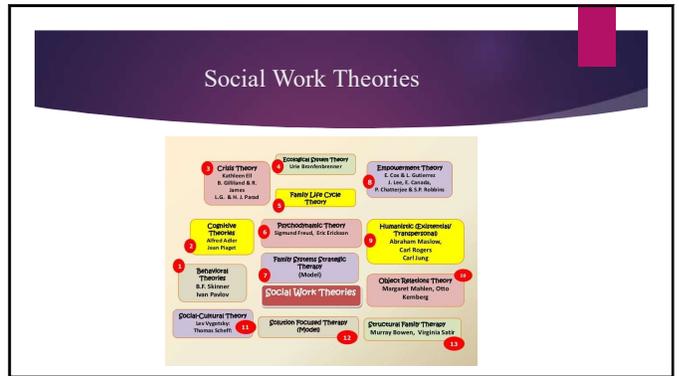## Slide 2

Critical Race Theory-A Brief Overview

Objectives

▶ Understand the purpose of theories and their use in social work.

▶ Review the antecedents of Critical Race Theory.

▶ Explore the origins of Critical Race Theory and its basic tenets.

▶ Explore the use of Critical Race Theory in social work.

2

Slide 3

Theories

▶ What is a theory? "Interrelated set of concepts and propositions, organized into a deductive system that explains relationships among aspects of our world" (Hutchinson, 2017 p. 21).

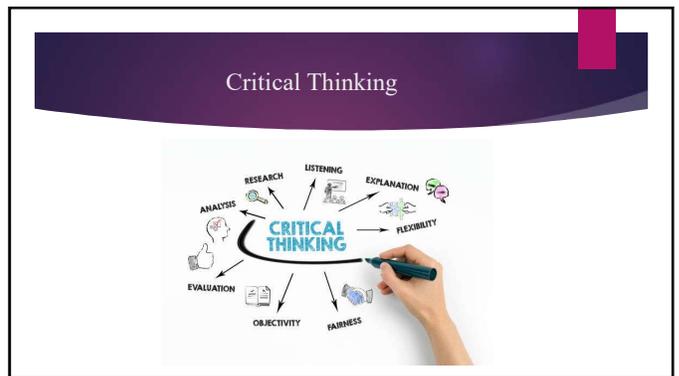▶ Theories provides a framework for interpreting person and environment, and for planning interventions.

3

Slide 4

Social Work Theories

4

Slide 5

Antecedents of CRT

▶ Critically exploring the phenomena of race is not new.

▶ Frederick Douglass (1890)-"The true problem is not the negro, but the nation. Not the law-abiding blacks of the South, but the white men of that section, who by fraud, violence, and persecution, are breaking the law, trampling on the Constitution, corrupting the ballot-box, and defeating the ends of justice."

▶ W.E.B Du Bois (1903) "The problem of the 21st century is the problem of the color line."

▶ Carter G. Woodson (1933) "If the Negro in the ghetto must eternally be fed by the hand that pushes him into the ghetto, he will never become strong enough to get out of the ghetto."

▶ Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (1968) " The doctrine of white supremacy was imbedded in every textbook & preached in practically every pulpit-it became a structural part of culture."

5

Slide 6

Critical Thinking

6

3/28/2022

Critical Thinking

- Critical thinking involves thinking about our own thinking, careful analysis, challenging assumptions, and ask probing questions.
- Cognition-our conscious or preconscious thinking.
- Beliefs-ideas that we hold to be true.
- Piaget's theory of cognitive operations-**schema**=internalized representation of the world; ingrained; systematic.
- Social & direct learning.
- Assimilation-responding to experiences based on existing schemata.
- Accommodation-changing schemata when new situations cannot be incorporated within an existing one.

7

Conflict Theory

- CRT has its roots in the conflict perspective:
  - All social systems have inequalities.
  - Power is unequally divided, and power social groups impose their will on subordinate groups.
  - Conflict and the potential for conflict underlie unequal social relationships.
  - Members of subordinate groups often become alienated from society.
  - Social change may occur when subordinate groups recognize patterns of inequality and injustice and take action to increase their own power.

8

Origins of Critical Race Theory

- Critical Race Theory **is a theory**, **not the theory** to help us understand racial oppression in the law and society.
- In 1970, legal scholars formulated a method of critical analysis to expose the role that United States' jurisprudence played in preserving structural racism (Crenshaw et al., 1995).
- Challenging the notion of a racially impartial nation="colorblindness."
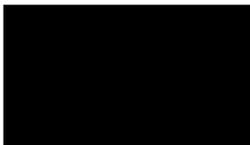- CRT examines the socio-political and cultural forces that frame how individuals & groups experience racism.

9

Six Basic Tenets of Critical Race Theory

- Race as a social construction.
- Endemic racism.
- Interest convergence
- Differential racialization.
- Counter-hegemonic narratives.
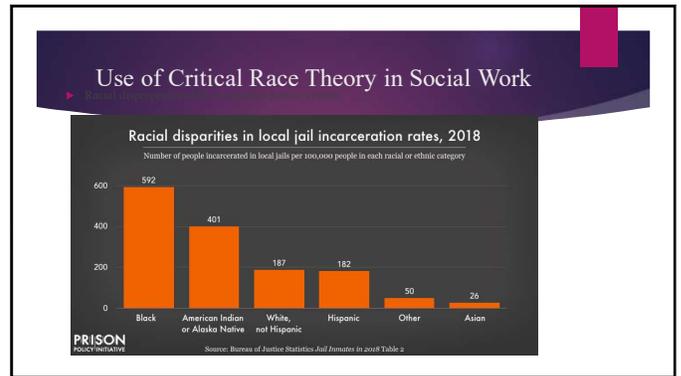- Intersectionality.

10

Myth of Race

11

Use of Critical Race Theory in Social Work

- CRT offers a framework for examining power structures (individual & systemic) that sustain racial inequities.
- CRT provides strategies for action and change from an individual and systemic levels.
- CRT expands social workers cultural competence.
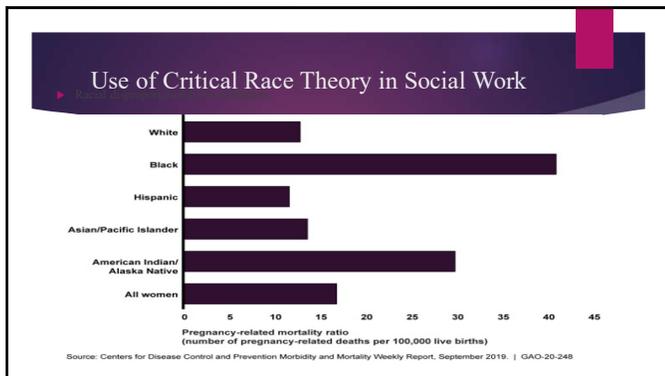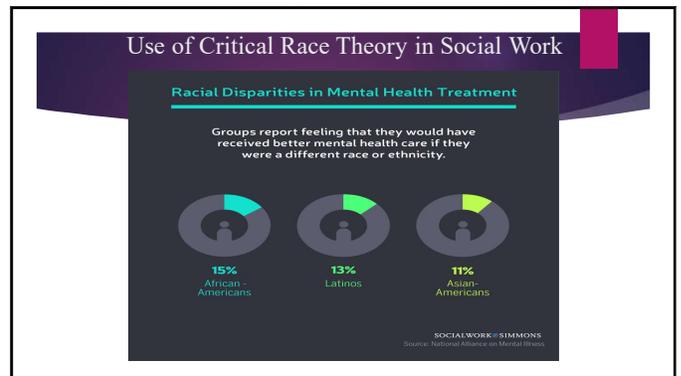- Racism has real-life consequences and meaning.

12

Use of Critical Race Theory in Social Work

13

Use of Critical Race Theory in Social Work

14

Use of Critical Race Theory in Social Work

15

Use of Critical Race Theory in Social Work

16

Causation vs Correlation

▶ Racial disproportionality doesn't mean causation.

▶ Simply a relationship, as many factors contribute to racial disproportionality.

17

Questions & Closing Remarks

▶ Socially constructed categories and labels create, sustain, and reinforce privilege and unequal power dynamics.

▶ Race, remains undertheorized.

▶ Social workers pursue social change, particularly with and on behalf of vulnerable and oppressed individuals and groups of people.

▶ Cornel West (2004) "To confront the role of race and empire is to grapple with what we would like to avoid, but we avoid that confrontation at the risk of our democratic maturation" (p. 41).

18

Questions & Closing Remarks

- Haile Selassie (1963) "Until the philosophy that holds one race superior and another inferior is finally and permanently discredited and abandoned; that until the color of a man's skin is of no more significance than the color of his eyes; that until the basic human rights are equally guaranteed to all without regard to race; that until that day, the dream of lasting peace and world citizenship and the rule of international morality will remain but a fleeting illusion, to be pursued but never attained."
- Bob Marley (1976) added, "everywhere is war, me say war."

19

Questions & Closing Remarks

- Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) Educational Policy & Accreditation Standards (EPAS) 2022 Draft.
- Competency 3-Engage in Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Practice.
- Social Workers cannot remain silent or neutral while many still seek to promote "white supremacy" and incite racial differences.

20

References

Abrams, L. S., & Moio, J. A. (2009). Critical race theory and the cultural competence dilemma in social work education. *Journal of Work Education, 45*(2), 245-261.

Bell, D. (1973). *Race, racism, and the American law.* Little & Brown.

Bey, H. M. (2018). *Exploring the role of United States legal discourse in creating, sustaining, and disrupting vestiges of slavery.* Available from : *Social Work Doctoral Dissertations.* 3. https://research.library.kutztown.edu/socialworkdissertations/3

Cole, A., & Barrett, C. (1976). War [Recorded by Bob Marley & the Wailers]. On *Rastaman Vibration.* Island Records.

Crenshaw, K., Gotanda, N., Peller, G., & Thomas, K. (Eds.). (1995). *Critical race theory: The key writing that formed the movement.* New Press.

Du Bois, W. E. B. (1989). *The souls of black folks.* Penguin Group.

Hutchison, E. D. (2017). *Essentials of human behavior: Integrating person, environment, and the life course* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.

King, M. L. (1968). *Where do we go from here: Chaos or community?* Beacon Press.

Kolivoski, K. M., Weaver, A., & Constance-Huggins, M. (2014). Critical race theory: Opportunities for applications in social work practice and policy. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services, 95*(4), 269-276.

Selassie, H. (October 4, 1963). United Nations General Assembly Address.

West, C. (2004). *Democracy matters: Winning the fight against imperialism.* Penguin Group.

Woodson, C. G. (1933). *The mis-education of the negro.* First Africa World Press.

21