



**MSU**<sup>SM</sup>  
DENVER

SCHOOL OF  
EDUCATION

## **History of Inequities in America: Historical and Generational Trauma**

**Facilitation Guide for Educators, Instructors and  
Professors**



# Part I: Historical Trauma Glossary

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**Coded Language** - substituting terms describing racial identity with seemingly race-neutral terms that disguise explicit and/or implicit racial animus. Injects language that triggers racial stereotypes and other negative associations without the stigma of explicit racism. Fosters anxiety among audiences for the coverage and dehumanizes people and communities of color.

**Diversity** - the practice or quality of including or involving people from a range of different social and ethnic backgrounds and of different genders, sexual orientations, etc.

**Epigenetics** - the study of how behaviors and environment can cause changes that affect the way genes work. Unlike genetic changes, epigenetic changes are reversible and do not change the DNA sequence but can change how the body reads a DNA sequence.

**Equality** - evenly distributed tools and assistance with no regard for individual's needs or accessibility.

**Equity** -

- customized tools, based on need, that identify and address inequality
- An action word, but not the outcome. The work to address and change oppressive systems so that everyone benefits.

**Generational Trauma** - a phenomenon in which the descendants of a person who has experienced a terrifying event show adverse emotional and behavioral reactions to the event that are similar to those of the person himself or herself.

**Historical Trauma** - multigenerational trauma experienced by a specific cultural, racial, or ethnic group

**Inclusion** - the placing of equal value and importance on every voice represented in a diverse setting. Valuing every person as equally intelligent, and ensuring that every voice is heard, valued, honored, and embraced.

**Inequality** - unequal access to opportunities

**Inequity** - lack of fairness or justice

**Justice** - fixing the system to offer equal access to both the tools and the opportunities.

**Race** - a social construct, a classification of humans that is politically defined

**Race Norming** - more formally called within-group score conversion and score adjustment strategy, is the overtly subjective practice of adjusting test scores to account for the race or ethnicity of the test-taker or individual being assessed.

**Racial Trauma** - the cumulative effects of racism on an individual's mental and physical health

**Racism** -

- prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against a person or people based on their membership in a particular racial or ethnic group, typically one that is a minority or marginalized.
- the belief that different races possess distinct characteristics, abilities, or qualities, especially to distinguish them as inferior or superior to one another.

**Redlining** - a discriminatory practice in which services are withheld from potential customers who reside in neighborhoods classified as 'hazardous' to investment; these neighborhoods have significant numbers of racial and ethnic minorities, and low-income residents.

**Social Justice** - justice in terms of the distribution of wealth, opportunities, and privileges within a society.

## Part II: Race Based Legislation Overview

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**Act XII of the Laws of VA (1662)** - the “Hereditary Act” requiring “Negro women[']s children to serve according to the condition of the mother,” was passed by the VA General Assembly as the government attempted to define the conditions by which people of African descent were designated as either enslaved or free. The passing of this Act was a direct reversal of the previously established legal presumption that the status of the child was determined by the father. This reversal effectively enabled slave owners to participate in the production and reproduction of their own labor force.

**Bacon’s Rebellion (1676)** - Led by Nathaniel Bacon, who united poor whites, free Blacks and enslaved Africans who had escaped against the VA House of Burgesses and other wealthy and elite whites due to disagreeing with governance of the colony. After Bacon’s Rebellion, Virginia’s lawmakers began to make legal distinctions between “white” and “black” inhabitants (the introduction of white supremacy). By permanently enslaving Virginians of African descent and giving poor white indentured servants and farmers some new rights and status, they hoped to separate the two groups and make it less likely that they would unite again in rebellion.

**Act Concerning Servants and Slaves (1705)** - Also known as the Virginia Slave Codes of 1705, was a series of laws enacted by the Colony of Virginia’s House of Burgesses in 1705 regulating the interactions between slaves and citizens of the crown colony of Virginia. Most notably, the act stated that if an enslaved person resisted their master and the master killed them in response to said resistance, the maser shall not be held accountable for the death.

**Three-Fifths Compromise (1787)** - compromise agreement between delegates from the Northern and the Southern states at the United States Constitutional Convention that three-fifths of the slave population would be counted for determining direct taxation and representation in the House of Representatives.

**Naturalization Act of 1790** - It limited access to U.S. citizenship to white immigrants—in effect, to people from Western Europe—who had resided in the U.S. at least two years and their children under 21 years of age. It also granted citizenship to children born abroad to U.S. citizens. Effectively populated America with white skinned individuals of European heritage.

**Indian Removal Act (1830)** - authorized then President Andrew Jackson to grant Indian tribes unsettled western prairie land in exchange for their desirable territories within state borders (especially in the Southeast), from which the tribes would be removed forcibly if they did not go peacefully.

**Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (1848)** - Brought an official end to the Mexican-American War. With the annexation of more than 525,000 square miles of land, the treaty extended the boundaries of the United States west to the Pacific Ocean. This agreement, along with the 1853 Gadsen Purchase, created the southern border of the present-day United States.

**Homestead Act (1862)** - enacted during the Civil War, the act provided that any adult citizen, or intended citizen, who had never borne arms against the U.S. government could claim 160 acres of surveyed government land. Claimants were required to live on and “improve” their plot by cultivating the land. Established the beginning of wealth for white people, and the wealth gap for people of color.

**The Emancipation Proclamation (1863)** - Issued in September of 1862, the presidential proclamation and executive order made by President Abraham Lincoln declared that slavery would be ended in all Confederate States if their rebellion had not ended by January 1, 1863. The original intent of the proclamation is highly debated as it sought primarily to stop the succession of the southern states from the union with the ending of slavery as a secondary outcome.

**The 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment (1865)** - Amendment to the United States Constitution which states that "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

**Black Codes (1865-1964)** - laws and societally recognized regulations that restricted Black people's right to own property, conduct business, buy and lease land, and move freely through public spaces. A central element of the Black Codes were vagrancy laws, whereby states criminalized men who were out of work, or who were not working at a job whites recognized, respected, or valued.

**Compromise of (1877)** - an informal, unwritten deal that settled the hotly disputed 1876 U.S. Presidential election; through it Republican Rutherford B. Hayes was awarded the White House on the understanding that he would withdraw the remaining federal troops from South Carolina, Florida and Louisiana, ending the Reconstruction Era racial safety protocols and leading to the restoration of white supremacy.

**1882 Chinese Exclusion Act** - passed by Congress and signed by President Chester A. Arthur, this act provided an absolute 10-year ban on Chinese laborers immigrating to the United States and subsequently excluded immigrants from China from naturalization.

**1930 The Great Depression (1929-1939)** - the worst economic downturn in the history of the industrialized world, starting with the crash of the US stock market and resulting in mass unemployment, homelessness, and worldwide economic distress.

**The New Deal (1933)** - a series of programs and projects instituted during the Great Depression by President Franklin D. Roosevelt that aimed to restore prosperity to Americans, covertly written in coded language leading to specific and intentional exclusions for people of color.

**Social Security Act (1935)** - signed into law by President Roosevelt, the act created a social insurance program designed to pay retired workers age 65 or older a continuing income after retirement, in addition to several provisions for general welfare. The act was filled with coded language that excluded coverage for workers in agricultural and domestic fields.

**The Servicemen's Readjustment Act (1944)** - Commonly referred to as the .G.I Bill, this act provided a range of benefits - such as funding for homes and education - for some of the returning World War II veterans. The coded language of this act pushed administration of the regulations to the state level, leading to discriminatory practices as allowed by individual state covenants that denied some tenants of the act on the basis of race.

**Civil Rights Act (1964)** - prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex or national origin. Provisions of this civil rights act forbade discrimination on the basis of sex, as well as, race in hiring, promoting, and firing.

**Voting Rights Act (1965)** - signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson, this act outlawed the discriminatory voting practices adopted in many southern states after the Civil War, including literacy tests as a prerequisite to voting.

# Part III: Suggested Class Discussion/Assignment Activities

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## *“Freedom” Realities*

Imagine it is June of 1865 in Mississippi. Slavery legally ended two years prior, and federal troops have arrived to enforce the ending of the practice. Think about those who had been enslaved, and now found themselves “free” and responsible for themselves for the first time.

- Were those formerly enslaved in a position to live as free people?
- What were the barriers?
- What supports were provided?
- What supports were needed?

## *Freedom?: Systematic Release*

Consider how systematic releases are handled today. Consider the following for one or each of the following groups: newly released inmates, discharged military veterans, young adults who age out of the foster care system.

- What are some of the challenges facing people released from systems?
- What are the needs?
- How can individuals with no familial support meet these needs?
- Can you think of any other groups that face similar challenges?

## *Redlining Then and Now*

Select a zip code from the list provided\*. Lookup and examine published redlining maps, and state and local covenants that governed the selected area between 1933 and 1965. Consider the current demographic makeup of the area.

- Compare the current demographics to specific points in the identified time frame. What changes do you notice? Has gentrification played a role in the noted changes? If so, how?
- Compare your selected area to areas immediately to the north, south, east and west of it. What do you notice?
- What is the lasting impact of redlining on this area?
- Based on the information found (and any other appropriate sources), write a 250 – 500 word statement for or against the presence of systemic racism in the present day American housing market.

## *Slavery and Segregation Sequencing*

Was slavery and segregation really a long time ago? Create a racial timeline of the United States from 1600 to present. Include critical events and legislation. Color code events:

Orange - Prior to the arrival of enslaved people

Green - American Slavery

Yellow - Reconstruction and Segregation  
Racial Incidents

Blue - Post Segregation

## Part IV: Group/Class Discussion Questions

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- Is race biological?
- Why was race created?
- Which came first, race or racism?
- What was the impetus of The Three-Fifths Compromise? Identify and discuss any lasting effects of the compromise.
- What were some of the atrocities of slavery? What are some residual atrocities still felt today?
- In what other occupation can a person kill for resisting? What is resistance? Who determines what constitutes and act of resistance? How is this communicated?
- Reactions, Aha Moments, Overall feelings?