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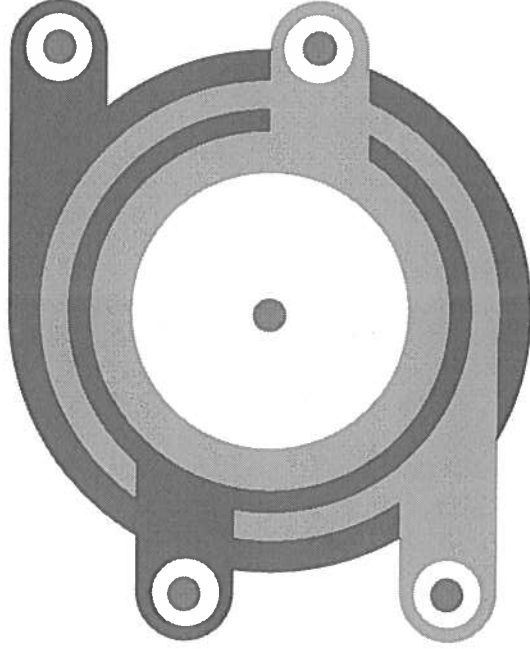
Mentally Healthy Conversations

With Dr. Amanda Sherman

The pathway



**Social Identities/
Intersectionality**



Privilege & Power



Bias/Implicit Bias



**Mentally Healthy
Conversations**

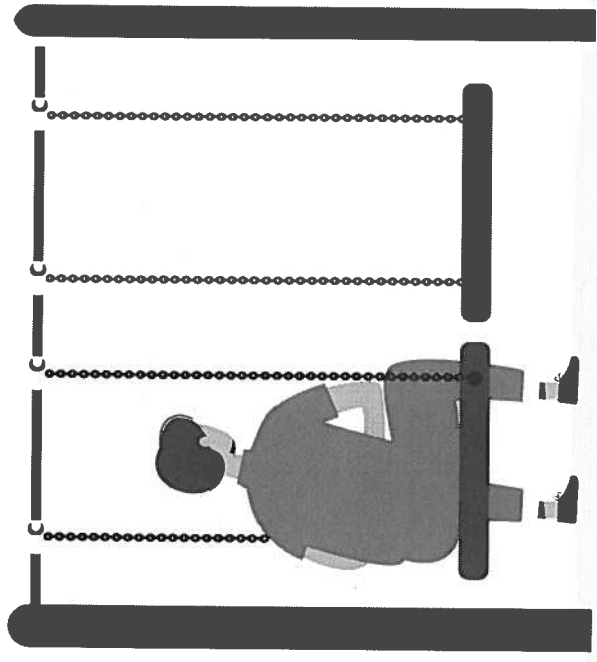


Turning Conversations into Action

●● Question #1

Sense of belonging

Why is it important for staff and students to feel like they belong before having conversations that cause discomfort?





Our sense of belonging



A universal and basic
need and desire




Influenced by
experiences,
personality, and
treatment by others

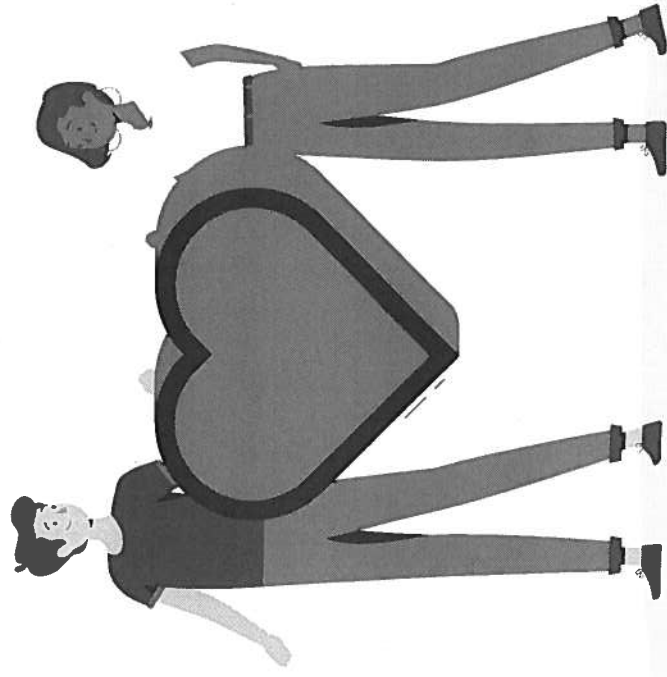


Contributes to
well-being,
engagement, effort,
concentration, and
memory

Marginalization or
exclusion can be
unintentional



•• Question #2



Why talk about race, racism and acts of discrimination?

What does this have to do
with a feeling a sense of
belonging at school?



Call to action

Magnification of
existing
inequities

**COVID-
19**

**Police
brutality**



Racial trauma

Vulnerability to
severe distress




Message

"You do not
belong"

Systemic racism
Education system

Inequities

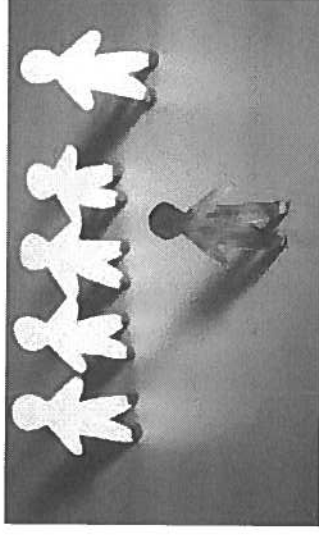
Streaming,
supports,
surveillance,
discipline

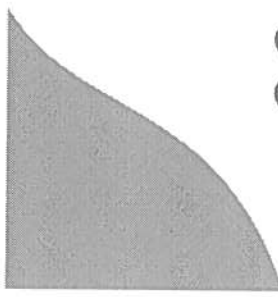


•• Question #3

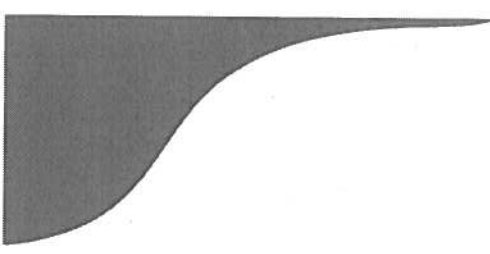
What is racial trauma?

Why is it important to know how it might affect colleagues and students?

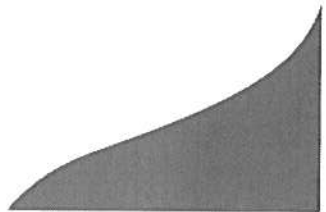





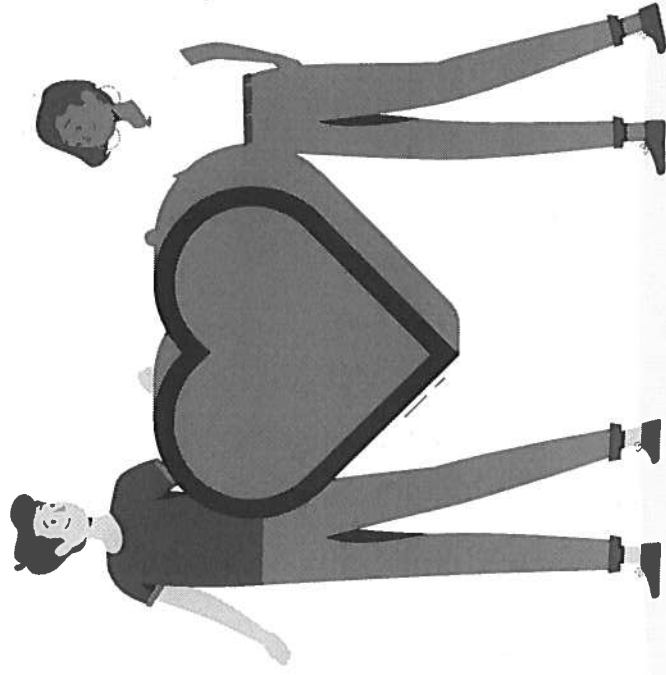
Trauma is caused by sudden, unexpected, non-normative threatening events that exceed our coping abilities



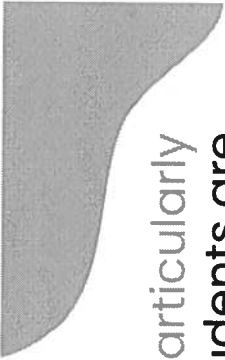
Racial trauma

- Mental, emotional, and physical injury
 - Caused by repeated encounters with racial bias, racism, discrimination, humiliation and shaming, and hate crimes
 - Can be passed down intergenerationally
- 
- 

•• Question #4



What are some considerations that educators should keep in mind when they have these discussions with their students, to ensure that the conversation is a mentally healthy one?



“Students pay attention to everything we say and do. They particularly pay attention to our silence. Many black and brown students are educated in school systems and classrooms where they, despite making up the racial majority, are taught how to understand a world by staff comprised of a powerful minority.

When their teachers choose to remain silent about moments of racial tension or violence—violence that may well touch students’ own communities or families—these children are overtly reminded of their inferior place in society.

So if you feel that the conversation is too heavy or that the weight of having to end racism is in your lesson plan, humble yourself and relax. It isn’t. Your students need you to allow them space, not to fix the world.”



—**Jamilah Pitts**





Tips for mentally healthy conversations

01

Lay the
groundwork

02

Preparation

03

Self check-in

04

Model calm

05

Guide the
conversation

06

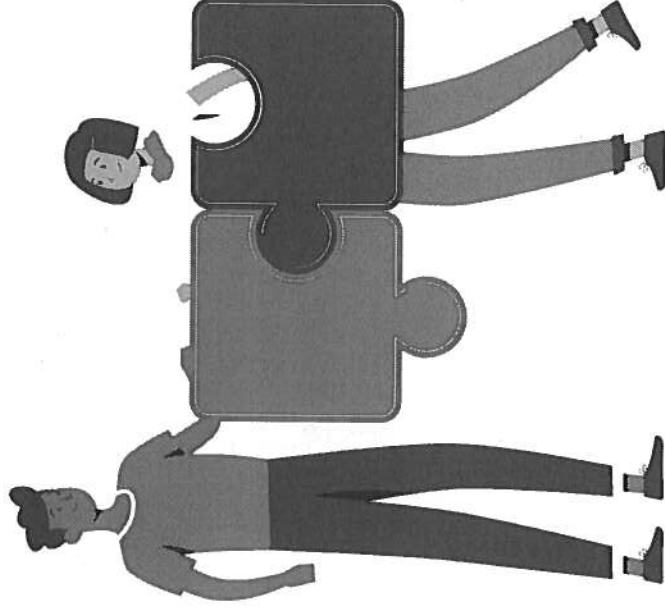
Connect with
students &
reflect



•• Question #5

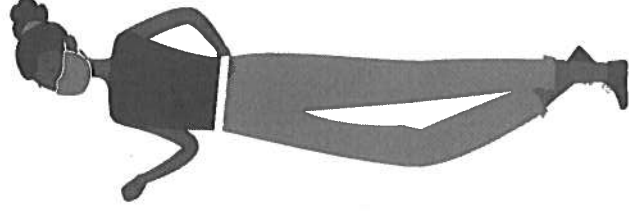
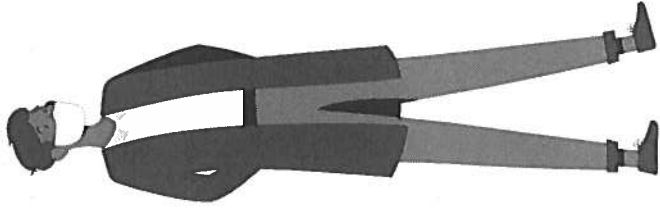
**What can we do to
make classrooms
safe & brave?**

How can we ensure that everyone
feels like they belong at school?



What educators can do

- Learn more about historical and systemic racism
- Reflect on your own beliefs, biases, privilege, and knowledge
- Practice self-care



We can
do this,
together.

