Anti-Racist Parenting
Empowering You & Your child

Guest Speakers: Yolanda Flores Niemann, Ph.D. & Fawn Groves, M.Ed.

“The power of resistance is to set an example: not necessarily to change the person with whom you disagree, but to empower the one who is watching and whose growth is not yet completed, whose path is not at all clear, whose direction is still very much up in the proverbial air.”

– Tim Wise, White Like Me: Reflections on Race from a Privileged Son
Thank you for supporting Domino Foundation. We are committed to providing support to transracial families by offering pre- and post-transracial adoption placement services and a variety of activities for parents and the entire family.

Sincerely,

Curtis & Melody Linton
Andrea Hardeman

We can be contacted via email (info@dominofoundation.org).
Items Included in This Packet

1. Terms & Definitions
2. Examples of White Allies
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Terms & Definitions

**White Ally** – A white individual with a healthy sense of his racial identity as a white person, who recognizes white privilege and its detrimental effects on people of all racial and ethnic groups, and who uses his sphere of influence to help make positive changes in complimentary ways to the efforts by people of color.

**Anti-racist** – Actively engaging in the process of fighting and overcoming racism. This can be done on an individual level (e.g. correcting someone who expresses racist views), within your community (e.g. participating on boards to promote cultural competence and acceptance), or on an even larger scale.
Examples of White Allies

Can you name the following individuals? Write their names below their picture.

1.

2.

3.

4.

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Examples of White Allies

Answers

1. **Anne Braden (1924-2006)** – She and her husband Carl are best known for purchasing a home in an all-white neighborhood in 1954 in order to sell it to a black family, the Wades. This event was a prearranged attempt to protest housing segregation. The home was bombed and the Bradens were prosecuted. During this period, integration efforts were at times linked to acts of Communism; therefore, Carl Braden was imprisoned for a time on the grounds of sedition. Despite this setback, Anne continued her activism work and later founded Progress in Education and the Kentucky branch of the Alliance Against Racist and Political Oppression to help alleviate the tensions surrounding school desegregation in the 1970s.

   Anne Braden was raised in Alabama and worked as a courtroom news reporter after college. She became unsettled by “the incongruity between the Bible... and the racist practices in her society” and later fled the deep South. ([Photo source](http://mrzine.monthlyreview.org/2006/ireland100306.html); [Text source](http://www.ket.org/civilrights/bio_braden.htm))

2. **Federal Judge J. Waties Waring (1880-1968)** – Although he was born the son of a Confederate veteran, he later became a white ally. He issued a ruling to the Democratic Party in South Carolina in 1948 ordering them to allow blacks to register and vote in the election process. He ruled in the Briggs v. Elliott case that “racial segregation was incompatible with the American Constitution, even if an effort had been made to equalize the segregated facilities.” This dissent represents the
first time in 55 years since Plessy v. Ferguson that a federal judge ruled against racial segregation. Waring’s dissent set the precedent for Brown v. The Board of Education. It may not have seemed that Judge Waring made much of a difference during his tenure as a Federal Judge, but he laid the foundation for the integration we enjoy and experience today. (Photo source: http://educatingsouthcarolina.blogspot.com/2011/07/judge-j-waties-waring-re-directed-south.html; Text source: http://educatingsouthcarolina.blogspot.com/2011/07/judge-j-waties-waring-re-directed-south.html)

3. **Virginia Foster Durr (1903-1999)** – She was born in Birmingham, Alabama. Her father was a prominent Presbyterian minister. She was raised with “traditional white mores, including acceptance of racial segregation…” She accepted her upbringing without question until her sophomore year at Wellesley College. The college had a “rotating tables” policy in the dining hall, which “require[d] students to eat meals with random groups of students, including African Americans.” Virginia initially protested this policy but was informed that she could leave the university if she chose not accept and adhere to the policy. She decided to accept the policy and remain at Wellesley College.

She later met and married Clifford Durr, an attorney. The couple moved to Washington, D.C. while Clifford worked for the Hoover and later the Roosevelt administrations. It was during this time that Virginia’s role in activism began. She joined the Women’s National Democratic Club and devoted much of her time and energy the campaign to abolishing the poll tax, so poor whites and southern African Americans could exercise their right to vote. (Photo source: http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/face/Article.jsp?id=h-1574; Text source: http://encyclopediaofalabama.org/face/Article.jsp?id=h-1574)
4. **Tim Wise (b. 1968)** – He is a modern-day white ally and anti-racist activist. He is an essayist and author. Wise has provided anti-racism training to teachers nationwide, and has conducted trainings with physicians and medical industry professionals on how to combat racial inequities in health care. He has also trained corporate, government, entertainment, military and law enforcement officials on methods for dismantling racism in their institutions, and has served as a consultant for plaintiff’s attorneys in federal discrimination cases in New York and Washington State. (Photo source: http://www.beyondwhiteness.com/tim-wise/; Text source: http://www.timwise.org/about/)

Quote by Tim Wise: “‘Stuff Happens.’ That’s the G-rated version. That’s a bumper sticker that only a straight white upper middle class male could have made. Because anyone who isn’t straight, anyone who isn’t male, anyone who isn’t white, anyone who isn’t upper middle class knows that stuff doesn’t just happen. Stuff gets done by people to people. Nothing is a coincidence. Nothing is random. This isn’t osmosis. And so we act as if it’s this passive thing, but yet that’s not the case.” (http://www.goodreads.com)
Yolanda Flores Niemann, Ph.D.

Yolanda Flores Niemann is currently a Professor of Psychology at Utah State University. She has held many prestigious titles and offices throughout her career in academia. Her research has focused on the effects and social ecological contexts of stereotypes across various domains, psychological effects of tokenism, and overcoming obstacles to higher education for low socio-economic status group members.

Dr. Flores Niemann has authored and co-authored numerous publications, such as Black/Brown Relations and Stereotypes. She has notable articles and chapters in The Handbook of Racial Ethnic Minority Psychology, Hispanic Journal of Behavioral Sciences, and (in M. Reddy, Ed.), Everyday Acts Against Racism: Raising Children in a Multiracial World.

She and her husband Barry have been married for 35 years; they have two adult multiracial children and one grandchild.
Fawn C. Groves, M.Ed.

Fawn Groves is a lecturer in the School of Teacher Education and Leadership at Utah State University. She teaches multicultural foundations of education and supervises student teachers. Her professional interests include social justice issues pertaining to race, class, and gender; identity and socialization dynamics among underrepresented student populations; and the impact of diversity on the learning environment. She currently holds the position of President-elect for the Utah Chapter of the National Association of Multicultural Education (NAME) and will serve as the organization’s President for the 2012-2013 academic year. A great day for Fawn includes time in the outdoors with her partner, Amy, and golden retriever, Teton. She also enjoys running, reading nonfiction, and laughing out loud with good company.
Notes

*Note: This transcript includes content that has been paraphrased, as well as exact quotes. This transcript is meant to illustrate overall themes and possible suggestions as you raise your children of color.

Yolanda’s disclaimer: I will focus mostly on blacks in my examples and on Latinos some as well.

Visualization exercise.
Close your eyes and imagine:
- A librarian
- A truck driver

Describe the librarian and the truck driver.

The purpose of this exercise is to illustrate that we have pictures in our heads about every category.

Where do stereotypes come from? Stereotypes are learned! Our society and communities teach us stereotypes.

The most consistent stereotypes we hold are for black girls and boys – particularly black boys.
- This hurts African Americans the most.
- There’s no such thing as colorblind.
  - We want to say we don’t see color. It’s a good goal but is not accurate. We all have pictures and labels. You cannot have labels without also having content that describes the label.
The stereotypes for African Americans haven’t changed. Extensive research has been conducted on this phenomenon.

Stereotypes are not always overt. We often will evaluate people of color differently than whites.

- The two groups are evaluated using different standards.
- Stereotypes are subconscious.
- For example, when a white male is evaluated, his strongest traits/characteristics are given the greatest weight. When a black male is evaluated, his weakest traits/characteristics are given the greatest weight.
  - Extensive research has been done on this across the U.S. This same pattern also occurs in grades K-12.

Yolanda highly recommends the book: *Whistling Vivaldi* by Claude Steele. She read a passage from pg. 6:

Consider the experience of Brent Staples, now a columnist for the New York Times, but then a psychology graduate student at the University of Chicago, a young African American male dressed in informal student clothing walking down the streets of Chicago’s Hyde Park neighborhood. In his own words:

I became an expert in the language of fear. Couples locked arms or reached for each other’s hand when they saw me. Some crossed to the other side of the street. People who were carrying on conversations went mute and stared straight ahead, as though avoiding my eyes would save them...
I’d been a fool. I’d been walking the streets grinning good evening at people who were frightened to death of me. I did violence to them just by being. How had I missed this...

I tried to be innocuous but didn’t know how. ... I began to avoid people. I turned out of my way into side streets to spare them the sense that they were being stalked. ... Out of nervousness I began to whistle and discovered I was good at it. My whistle was pure and sweet – and also in tune. On the street at night I whistled popular tunes from the Beatles to Vivaldi’s Four Seasons. The tension drained from people’s bodies when they heard me. A few even smiled as they passed me in the dark. (pp. 202-3)

Staples was dealing with a phantom, a bad stereotype about his race that was in the air on the streets of Hyde Park – the stereotype that young African American males in this neighborhood are violence prone. People from other groups in other situations might face very different stereotypes – about lacking math ability rather than being violence prone for example – but their predicaments would be the same.

Yolanda pointed out that Staples learned to whistle tunes that were familiar to whites and that made them feel safe.

- This approach focuses on Staples as being both “the problem” and the agent of change. (Comment by Andrea, Domino Foundation)

Steele researches stereotype threat. Stereotype threat refers the fear of proving that a stereotype about your group is true. Early research on stereotype threat
focused on people who were college age, but research has now been done across ages.

Children learn stereotypes about their group by the time they are 5 years old. Some children figure it out at an earlier age. Children (and people in general) are inundated with stereotypes.

**Demonstrations of stereotype threat:**

Scenario 1: Test of Tests Conditions.
Stated intent of the test: trying to determine which questions are good test questions.

Blacks vs. Whites: There was no difference in the scores.

Scenario 2: Test of Intelligence.
Stated intent of the test: measure your intelligence.

Blacks vs. Whites: There was a notable difference in the standard deviation of the scores of blacks and whites who took the “test of intelligence.”

This same experiment was also done with females and males with a math test. The stereotype is that females perform poorly at math in comparison to males. The same pattern was found respective to blacks compared to whites in the above experiment.

Yolanda: Parents need to acknowledge stereotypes with their children because they are already aware of them. Stereotypes are a part of your children’s world.
Colorblindness is not a part of their world; it is a part of your world. Don’t worry about saying something wrong to your child. They’ll figure it out as they go and will know that you tried.

Anticipatory socialization: Prepare kids for what you think they are going to experience and teach them how to handle it.

*Andrea, Domino Foundation:* This can be done through engaging your children in role-plays. Role-playing gives your children the opportunity to practice what they would say and how they would act in a particular scenario and allows parents to coach their children through challenging situations.

*Curtis,* of the Domino Foundation, referenced his upbringing as a Latter-day Saint and how from an early age he was indoctrinated with principles and values and taught how to respond in certain situations. He noted that his parents used church programs, songs, and stories to teach him these skills. What resources are at your disposal to engage your children in protective and/or preventive measures when dealing with prejudice and discrimination?

*Tokenism is more than just being a numerical minority. It’s about how a person of color is treated that makes them a token. Here in Utah (and in any predominately white community) children of color will be tokenized.*

*Question:* Is it better to move to a community that is predominately the same race/ethnicity as my child of color?
Yolanda said that you want to steer clear of homogenous communities. An all-black or Hispanic community is still homogenous. Research has shown that it is better for children to be raised in heterogeneous communities in which people vary by race/ethnicity, religion, and other such demographics.

Example of tokenism: A school principle in/near Cache County decided that diversity matters. He had the same black kid dress in different clothes, so they could have him throughout the various yearbook photos in order to give the school an appearance of diversity.

Consequences of tokenism: The person of color feels like they are representing their entire race. To counter this they begin to engage in what sociologists refer to as code-switching and act differently around the dominant group (whites) than they do around their own race. (I do this subconsciously. It’s as if I have an automatic switch. I’ve noticed it the most since I have lived in Utah. The moment I step off the plane in Texas I feel noticeably lighter. I feel more comfortable and enjoy being around my family even more because the weight I carry when I’m in Utah that was somewhat undetectable to me at times is completely gone. – Andrea, Domino Foundation) They may also become shy or do the opposite and become loud and boisterous. They do these things because they can’t be themselves and are hiding their true feelings.

Attributable ambiguity – you are unsure if the feedback you receive is real or not. Oftentimes, children of color will not know if the teacher is giving them real feedback or is patronizing them because the teacher is afraid of being seen as racist or if it’s negative feedback they are not sure if it is because the teacher may be racist.
Teach them to embrace all of their identities. When they do this they are more empathetic. People who are empathetic generally are able to see things through others’ lenses. Research has shown that people who have this ability do well in leadership positions. This is a leadership skill that you can help your kids develop.

Yolanda: I want you to take this test online. It’s called The Implicit Association Test. You need to come to terms with stereotypes that you still hold. Just because you have children of color doesn’t mean that you’re immune to stereotypes about that particular race. URL for The Implicit Association Test: https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/demo/takeatest.html

Stereotyping is a habit. You can make a change by replacing the stereotype (which is a subconscious habit) with what you believe about group “X.” If you do this habitually, then you will replace the stereotypes that you have internalized from society.

Fawn Groves, M.Ed.

- Grew up in Taylorsville in 1972 (still in the heart of the Civil Rights’ Movement).
- Her mom is white, her biological father is black, and her stepdad is black. Her stepdad adopted her when she was about 4 years old.
- She adopted LDS beliefs growing up and served an LDS mission but has since left the tradition.
- Her parents divorced when she was 19 years old.

By a very young age children learn their place in the social hierarchy. By age 6, she knew that she was “less than [her] white peers.” She feels that there was a
knowledge of and a buy in this message of being less than. She stated, “I didn’t protest it.” She pointed out that she was not receiving any messages to counter the message of being less than.

Her nickname in the first grade was Fawn Gross. She talked to her mom about it but felt that her mom was really quick to shut down the conversation and the line of thinking that she was having. It made her feel that there was a disconnect between her and her mom and that despite her best efforts she couldn’t help her mom see the connection that she was making. She felt like saying, “Mom I get it. I’m gross. I understand.” She had learned that being black was gross. Her mom was usually quick to say, “No, you’re beautiful,” or “No, you’re great.”

“There is power in letting the individual express what [an event or situation] means to them.” – Fawn

When you say things like “no, you’re beautiful” or “they’re just jealous,” it can’t just be lip service. You need to help give your child a way to believe the counter-narrative. For example, what are the things that make them great? Give them examples. It isn’t enough for them to know that you believe that they’re “great.” Once your child believes the counter-narrative, then they are empowered. Now, they have the ability to educate others.

There’s still something deeply embedded within me that causes fear, hence my shaking voice right now that says, “You don’t teach white people. People on my rung don’t do that.” Fawn said that she doesn’t know where the fear comes from.
Yolanda stated that it’s “empowering” for white children and children of color to have conversations on race.

Children need role models within their race, so they can learn that there isn’t just one set way to a member of their race. This also allows them to carve out their own racial identity in which they can be secure. In short, it gives a child of color options, so they don’t simply fall back on the stereotype for their race. It’s important that they learn how to socialize with members of their same race when they grow up in a white family, which is why having a same-race role model is good.

“We know instinctively who is uncomfortable around us.” – Yolanda

The ideal neighborhood is heterogeneous (has a little bit of everything). Whatever your child is embedded in is what your child will learn.

No matter what color you are as a teenager you’re going to go through an identity crisis. This is exacerbated when you grow up in an all-white community. If/when your child of color starts to become angry at “white racism,” they have to learn what to do about their feelings for you. If you have been engaging your children in anticipatory socialization as you raise them, they will be better prepared to handle this. It is important to have these types of conversations early on. (“I’d like to add that engaging all of your children both birth children and adopted children in anticipatory socialization in terms of race issues is important. It is just as important for white children to cultivate tools to deal with prejudice and discrimination, so they can educate others and become a white ally and stand up not only for their siblings of color but for people of color in general. The burden to dismantle racism is upon us all.” – Andrea, Domino Foundation)
You have to help your children believe that they are good but also validate their negative experiences.

You can show your children iconic/notable figures within their race and help them see the similarities between them and the icon (it doesn’t have to be a famous person).

Ways to start the conversation about race with your children:

1. We have different color skin. They’re both pretty. What do you think about us having different color skin? (Applicable to all children of color.)
2. What do you think about your hair today?
3. You got more sun today and got a little darker. What do you think about this different skin tone? (Applicable to all children of color. Generally speaking, among many ethnic minority groups lighter skin is valued over darker skin.)

*Pay attention to when your child’s tone in their response changes.

Some typical stereotypes:
- It’s not cool to be smart and black.
- Golf is only for white people.

Yolanda said, “What I tell people as a psychologist, is that somewhere along the way someone told you a racist story and you bought into it.” She went on to say that when your child of color goes through an identity crisis (a natural part of teenage development) and want to identify with their race “you better have taught them about their race and what it means before they become teens.” If you don’t teach them about their race and give them positive examples, they are left to internalize stereotypes about their race. Stereotype internalization is
different for every group. For example, a stereotype that some Latina’s internalize is that it’s okay or normal to get pregnant out of wedlock.

Fawn mentioned that the process of racialization (helping them discover and develop a their racial identity) for your children of color is a “family thing.” She said that it’s “something that you figure out as a family,” and that “as parents you must be willing to get it wrong.”

- There’s no perfect way to teach your children how to be racialized person who understands the implications of their race.
- Racial identification is not just something for people of color. It is just as important for whites to recognize themselves as belonging to a race and the implications thereof.

Yolanda said that she and her husband have been married for thirty-five years and have had some deep heated conversations about race. She commented, “If you work it through, then it can strengthen your marriage rather than weaken it.”

Question: Is this an example of tokenism? People want to and actually do come up and touch my daughter’s hair. People constantly comment on how pretty she is, but her white cousins do not receive the same type of attention.

Yolanda: Yes. How does your daughter respond to the attention?

Parent: My daughter loves the attention, but I’m not sure how to help her understand that in the future that attention may be negative or harmful.

Yolanda: I taught my children about boundaries and personal space and how they don’t have to let people enter their personal space. I think it’s okay to let her revel in it now. When she starts to get uncomfortable there needs to be trust in
your relationship that allows her to express whatever she is feeling about people barging in on her personal space.

Fawn: For me, at least in the environment that I grew up in, I learned to accommodate the system. I have an LDS background. My parents are not LDS.
  • She went on to say that she was tokenized.
    o People at church would often comment on how strong and obedient she was because she came to church on her own.
    o She realized that people really liked her when she allowed them to touch her hair, when she let them make a joke about her [and her blackness], or when she made a joke about herself [as a black person].
    o She learned that all of these things made her feel accepted and well liked. She later realized that while she was busy accommodating the system she was not allowing herself to think critically about the problem.
    o She commented that perhaps if she had had more same-race models then she would have felt more comfortable in her own skin.

Children have to feel secure with themselves to be able to say “this is my space and you don’t have my permission to enter it.”

Ways to be in contact with potential same-race mentors for your children of color:
  • Attend a church that is established by members of your child’s race regularly. This doesn’t mean that you have to change religions. You will be immersed in part of the culture by attending an ethnic church. This will give
you the opportunity to get know members of your child’s race/ethnicity in more of a natural way.

• Same-race mentor: Put yourself in situations where you can come into contact with members of your child’s racial/ethnic group, so you can make friends with them naturally. Another name for mentor is friend. You must establish genuine relationships with people and not just use them because they are the same race as your child. It’s okay to ask them for advice, but you shouldn’t expect them to want to be your friend simply because your child is the same race as them. You have to have something else in common with the potential mentor. They may be willing to help, but they also do not want to feel used. They want to feel like you are asking them for their advice and opinion because you value their personal opinion and not because you just want anyone of their race to give you the information you’re seeking.

Part of having privilege and power is having the mindset of acquiring people of color as friends because it serves your need. This is not a natural way to build a friendship.

A couple of examples of tokenism experienced by transracial parents

- Sometimes transracial parents are viewed as “great humanitarians” or their families are seen as a humanitarian project.
- They become the spokesperson for how to communicate with people of the same race/culture as their adopted children of color.

Fawn: Even as an educated adult black woman she still feels like a fraud when it comes to being black. She said that you have to “give yourself permission to be
okay with not always feeling like an authentic person of color and then gravitate toward spaces that accept you as an imperfect work in progress.

Parent: It’s hard to feel like you’re stepping away from your family and friends because they start to view you as different. What do you do when you have family members who don’t accept your children of color or who make racist comments?

- Potential solutions:
  - Turn it into a teaching moment
  - Allow your child to choose who they associate with whether it be a friend or family member. Let them know that it’s their choice.
  - You can choose not to allow that person to be in contact with your child or your family as a whole.
  - The following is an option for if a family member is making disparaging remarks your child’s group membership in a general sense and not about your child specifically. Explain to your child that those views are wrong but that they love you.

Parent: How do you do address family members and friends without having a heavy heart?

Yolanda: “I carried that heavy heart when I had to explain tough topics.”

- In her book chapter included in this packet, she talks about an experience where her son was invited to a pool party at a “White’s only” establishment. She explained to her son why he could not go to that particular establishment and why their family would never support such an establishment. She and her husband still made sure that her children went
swimming and allowed them to bring friends if they wanted. Sometimes going swimming was just a family outing.

Sometimes we get tired of being the teachers, but I didn’t want to let them get away with it. You don’t have to hammer it in. Saying it once can be enough. It lets them know where you stand.

Parent: People are tired of us making them uncomfortable.
Fawn: Well, they’ll stay tired.

Parent: How do I help my daughter embrace her black culture?

Note: It is imperative that embracing the culture(s) of your child(ren) of color is a family matter. Your family must embrace the culture(s) as well for the effects to really take root. Do not single out your child of color and place the burden of learning about and embracing their birth culture solely on them.

Suggestions:
- As she gets older it’s important that she embraces the strength of what her people have overcome.
- Teach your children from a young age. Don’t wait until they have questions or they have a negative experience as a person of color.
- Teach your child the true meaning behind the cultural celebrations (e.g. Juneteenth celebration; attend a jazz festival).
- Find songs and books with roots in your child’s birth culture and ask their teacher to incorporate them into the class material.
- As children learn different languages, they’ll learn the associated cultures.