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Breakout Session:	Ariam Wolde-Giorgis
Topics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colorism in the Black Community

What is Colorism

Light Skin vs Dark Skin – White supremacy created the division to divide folks between. The social media and technology that doesn't make your skin lighter. Colorism can be how you want to be perceived and how others that you would like to be seen.

Media – The narratives of how likeable a women is based on the range of tone. The internalized racism. Darker can be seen as more “masculine” and the lighter is more “feminine”. We still fit into the roles.

The darker range more “athletic” you are the lighter skinned more “intellectual”. Based on colorism, parents can have certain expectations of who children will grow up to be. Multiple people cited examples of parents treating their children different because of colorism.

Another aspect of colorism is that light skin people can gain certain benefits based on how people perceive them.

How do women get out of these narratives and seen as full beings despite their shade? All Women in general are being portrayed as the “pretty thing” in media as the starting point so the further you're away from that narrative. Representation varies, hard to find women athletes in sport as they are there but now in the spotlight for young women to be able to look up to. However, men in general do not have the issues of representation in sport.



Breakout Session:	Kinya Baker
Topic:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cultural Appropriation

How do we bring in intersectionality from black into what everyone experiences?

-similar cultures and the issues they face that are similar to us

What is **Cultural Appropriation**?

Generic: When someone adopts aspects of a culture that is not their own

Deeper: particular power dynamic in which people of a dominant group can take the aspects of.

Power/ privilege, oppression/ marginalization

The dominant trump the marginalized

The marginalized don't leave their culture, they go home and are still the person that someone else was making fun of.

- Can a member of another marginalized group appropriate another group?
 - Yes

Context matters

- NFL teams with indigenous symbols
- Mexican restaurant, but talking about building the wall
- -makes things cool for white people but not for the group It comes from
- -white celebrities wearing black braids

1. surgery where a person will get big lips and features that may get
2. -local cuisine, white celebrity goes and gets the cuisine and opens a restaurant and gets 5 stars w/o honoring and acknowledging where it comes from
3. Even with acknowledging, folks may want to interact with it more b/c they are willing to engage with a person who is white. More high class and high power.



4. Curiosity and excitement likes it as it is. Looks at more of a cultural exchange
5. Look at the role of whiteness to shape b/n contexts
6. Dreadlocks, man who can't walk the stage w/o cutting his dreadlocks, entitled to do things that someone else would not be allowed to

Self-education b/n cultures, educating diff. cultures on another cultures.

Why is hair on a black lady in a corporate world seen poorly but not on a white people, how do we get passed this.

I feel like it is lateral violence is a way to destroy culture. You cannot go somewhere else and experience it in entirety in another culture

Gets bastardized and people start to think this is what it is, slowly destroying what it truly is.

-authentic indigenous culture and authentic black cultures

To bring cultures closer together we need to be caring

- They have a curiosity, child-like. You want to learn from it and appreciate it, do not bash each other but empower someone else.
- Take the time to learn and love on the culture
- Confidence to rock it freely, by understanding where it comes from w/o bashing the culture

when you appreciate something, you can do it from far away, you don't have to have it

- Colonization is this idea that you have to have it, and I will make money from it
- Headdress on the Superbowl
- Elvis, took their music- they are taking from people who are not being recognized for what they are doing
- By invitation to share vs. take

Are there ways the oppressor can participate in a culture, it looks like experience

We need to ask who we are lifting up?

- My identity when I am out in the world



- Who are we giving the power?

It bothers me when I see people take our culture, south Indian

- Dominant culture took so much and now they want to take our clothes
- If I see a black person wearing it it doesn't bother me but a white person does
- If we invite people, they can of course wear the Indian clothes
- But if there was an event like this, it would bother me to no end as colonization took a great deal
- When does the colonization end?
- If you wear your clothes to work, you are expected to assimilate and lose your culture.

Embarrassing to wear my African clothes, but now people will wear it

So where do we go from here? It is all about commercialization. Depends on who is putting it out there, who is making the money. It dilutes the value of it.

- Might buy something because it has a Louis Vuitton label as opposed to just the designer
- We can change this based on who is designing the clothes that you are buying. By from black owned business.
- The real source of the design is being neglected

I was told my figure is not good enough, but now people are buying it. but I'm not sure if I represent what people are buying for.

-things are repackaged to not include you

Ballerina: did not have the body that was considered right at the time, suffer against the white beauty standards

- Fetishize blackness, new beauty standard
- mixed race children
- black men are talented in sports, different cultural backgrounds
- "all black men are good in sports" no other sports



- Exceptions, Obama
- Really have to work hard to reach the bar

Back women were told to look different

Lebron James: as rich as he is he is still a black man living in the US

African culture is in,

- Hair, Fashion and music

Spend your money on the place you value

- Pretty for a black girl, im pretty period
- -struggle to embrace and love our own culture, see the unity and strength w/n us.
- Not bring us down w/n our own culture
- The more we invest in ourselves it will help uplift us w/o hurting us.

How do we bridge the gap?

I'm a teacher, help people grow up

- Black role models
- One wanted to be a masseuse, a teacher
- The pressure, how do they feel about themselves
- Want higher expectations for the kids, no one is helping them to see more. They are left on their own.

Everyone could bring a different cultural garb to school, people were felt othered, embarrassed, racing your culture, there is still discomfort in being we, be a part of the norm. What is our responsibility to change?

1000s of years of colonization, zoom in on micro elements. When people ask if they can touch your hair? It does not bother me, there needs to be a love response as opposed to all the weight that we are taught with our ego.

if you need to touch my hair, you need more black friends in your life



this is from my own experience; we are just perpetuating it.

I understand the value in that, but it depends who has the energy to offer that. It's not my job to set the tone, but it may make their interaction with the next person better. But I have grown less generous over time.

Who has earned the right to your story?



Breakout Session:	Sullivan Brenner
Topic:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black LGBTQ Identities

Being identified as LGBTQ black people creates a strong sense of how we're proud.

What makes it hard to connect is not that it's underground and having connect. The isolation can happen as there are not the spaces that exist. Sometimes the LGBTQPOC is usually seen as an afterthought to showcase representation. There are also not a lot of spaces where Black LGBTQ people can connect in the day. A lot of the spaces are during the night and they involve alcohol. Also, the spaces that are for White LGBTQ are not necessarily spaces that are good and safe for Black LGBTQ people. Often times in white spaces the intersection of LGBT "fetishized".

In LGBT spaces racism is often not part of the discussion. There is no focus on the ways that white LGBTQ people can be racist. How can we make it safe for LGBT black people? How do we ensure that people are able to showcase all their identities rather than just the ones that are palatable in certain spaces?



Breakout Session:	Cynthia Okafor
Topic:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internalized Racism

Internalized racism:

what do we mean? Give me an example?

We accept the dominant structure ourselves; lighter skin is more beautiful, we believe

Internalized: conscious and subconscious, patterns, beliefs, towards your racial group

Think about the role that internalized racism has for us

- Encourage what people who identify as white have experienced

Ethiopian, identify as black. I work with all white people; I am conscious of my behavior. Someone jumped in and asked, why are you angry, immediately became defensive and thought they were attributing that conversation to when

Shifting identities based on the space you are in. How I should act or how I should look

I would avoid wearing bright colors, so people did not look like they were an immigrant.

Your nose is skinnier, people would not think I was black if I straightened my hair

- Compliments, that were making things favorable that were not, being othered from black people but more acceptable.
- Had to check myself, those comments do not change my value

it boils down to survival and trying to fit in

- Tired of weaves and extensions. One ex, when I cut it looks at me and asks, what did you do to your hair? You look like a man, starts picking at your hair
- Freedom of expression is still a struggle, I need to do what I have to

Comes from black people to black people, we need to empower each other. Unify w/n ourselves. Mom was proud, we need a more supported structure. When



someone said I had nappy hair, I did not get it. But if I was not confident, it could have affected me. We put ourselves down and it hinders how we address our race.

We talk about the important of contexts, the root of it is still whiteness and that we project on each other. One issue is colorism, skin-bleaching and the root it comes from. It has moved to be unconscious

We are a diverse community and can come here and express ourselves.

Anti-blackness, it is seen in all cultures

- We experience things in our own ways

There are still hierarchies between which immigrants come here. Whether you are Asian or black, or white.

Remnants of colonization,

Became a boss, young, black, female- not take me serious w/o believing me. Remind that I need please myself. Speak to myself in my own terms and empower myself. Compliment POCs. Taking on things in our daily, tell another black girl that she is pretty

- Positive self-talk

How do we cope and self-care? There are pressures to survive and adapt?

I found internally it started super young. Straight hair is better hair, not seeing the adults around me with black hair styles. Watching that black skin and hair are not good. Solving it would need to happen when we were young. Takes a while to break out of it, it would be better if it starts positively from when we are young. Instill things at a young age. Might not have a great example here as someone in Nigeria has. If you see a kid engaging anti-black sentiments or internalized racism. Try and snap it out of them at a young age.

I wonder, is it that simple. The environment, you can instill them. What happens when you leave the house?

One day I showed up w/ natural hair they got told it was cute. I was stunned, as the only black-deaf person I just smiled and nodded. In a space like this I feel like I am not the only black person alone. I think I'm the only black deaf person



These safe spaces, and supportive remarks are needed

lack the self-esteem, lack the satisfaction, lose our self-esteem. Eventually someone will stop the remarks.

Make a powerful statement and take a stance

interviews or events where I straighten my hair- fears that feed into it. Coping are events like this where I try and interact with people like me.

White allies: ownership for educating and awareness. I rely on white allies for support.

Calgary is conservative, even though your parents tell you to be proud of where you came from.

you sound like lost sheep; we need to get together more like this. Love ourselves or who and what we are. Teach each other. We are beautiful people. Walk and march together in unity.

Use the power of our ancestors as we are never alone.



Breakout Session:	Wegahta Berhane
Topic:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black Mental Health

What is Mental Health the cultural perceptions are seen as religious component. When prayer doesn't 'work' it's a bad reflection on me. I also experience where my parents who have the trauma or more trauma and so the mental wellbeing I suffer is not being taken seriously when compared to my parent's undealt trauma which is seen as normal. People can also get trapped in survival mode due to the past experiences they have had and may continue to have. There is also a lack of focus on the ways that racism and oppression impacts people's mental health. This can add to the hardship that people are already experiencing in life.

How do black people get counselling for the racism they face when the service providers are white? The cultural understanding is lacking. The leads to a lack of safety and trust within counselling spaces.

The prioritizing of getting "food" on the table comes first to a mental health crisis that they don't really understand. So, the things that they are known to manage. Talking to strangers is seen as negative. Even on a linguistic level there is literally no language for certain words outside of being stressed. Culturally most of us are from community centered, the ability to have normal self-care practice like walking or teatime allow can't happen in our three job, survival mentality.

Our system also does not validate our experience and simple interactions can escalate in the mental health/AHS space where it can be dangerous for POC families. The years of mental research is all western.

How will cultural perceptions impact Black people's mental health?

Are Black people allowed to be emotionally vulnerable? How can this impact their mental health?



Breakout Session	Babil Pobee
Topic:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parenting While Black

Are there any stereotypes?

- I'm a young mom, so yes

How do people treat you?

- Jump to Judgment but not teaching you

My black teens parents get flagged, with social work called on them

I had social workers called for both of my children

When she found out she was pregnant she had to advocate for herself, she did not want to have an abortion

The first resource I was provided was abortion pamphlets

Should you teach your children about race and racism before they go to school? Yes

How do you teach your kids to act with authority?

Obey, do exactly what they say

One time my kid decided to do a test, he was going down Stoney trail and he was speeding, a cop pulled him over and ticketed him. Next, he got a friend, a white friend went in the same car and was pulled over by the same cop. The cop asked, where are you going? The movies. And he let them go w/o a ticket.

I teach them to stand up for themselves, my kids know I will advocate for them



Breakout Session:	Calgary Ethiopian Youth Alliance (CEYA) - Presented by Moses
Topic:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black Diaspora

Everything discussed at this event ties to the Black Diaspora.

Pan Africanism: unifying Africans and those of African descent

- Countered by nationalism and how that has had an intentional divisive effect.
- Some key Pan African theorists
 - Marcus Garvey, Malcolm X, Clenora Hudson

People will often not identify as being Black, they will identify as being Ethiopian, Jamaican, etc.

The largest Black Diaspora population in the world is in Brazil

Clenora Hudson identifies Black feminism and coexisting as external advocating for equity while also ensuring the continuation of cultural roots within the hope.

We need to see each other as siblings.

How do we put aside tribalism and nationalism?

Do we support each other?

- A method of this is to support other Black people in finding jobs. How do we ensure more Black people find opportunities?
- How do we work together?

How do we organize all the Black groups in the city into one large one?

