

Understanding IRO & IRS

A cognitive behavioral approach



Purpose

- ▶ **This presentation is designed to operationalize the concepts of IRO (internalized racial oppression) and IRS (internal racialized superiority) by utilizing a cognitive/ behavioral lens.**
- ▶ **To make these abstract concepts more practical**
- ▶ **To help facilitate more meaningful dialogue through increased understanding of the concepts.**

MCARI has taught us that

- ▶ *Internalized racial oppression*- is a complex multi-generational socialization process that teaches people of color to believe, accept and live or act out negative societal definitions of self
- ▶ *Internalized racial superiority*- is a complex multi generational socialization process that teaches white people to believe, accept and or live superior societal definitions of self

Difficultly in have authentic dialogue

One of the reasons that many of us struggle when having conversations about oppression or superiority is that these concepts have explicit and implicit negative stigma for those having the dialogue.

As a result, the dialogue often stalls, becomes carefully scripted or results in uncomfortable silence, anxiety, frustration and a sense of futility.

This lessens the notion of appreciative inquiry, true authenticity potentially creates a less than open atmosphere for future conversation in mixed race groups.

Now we are STUCK !

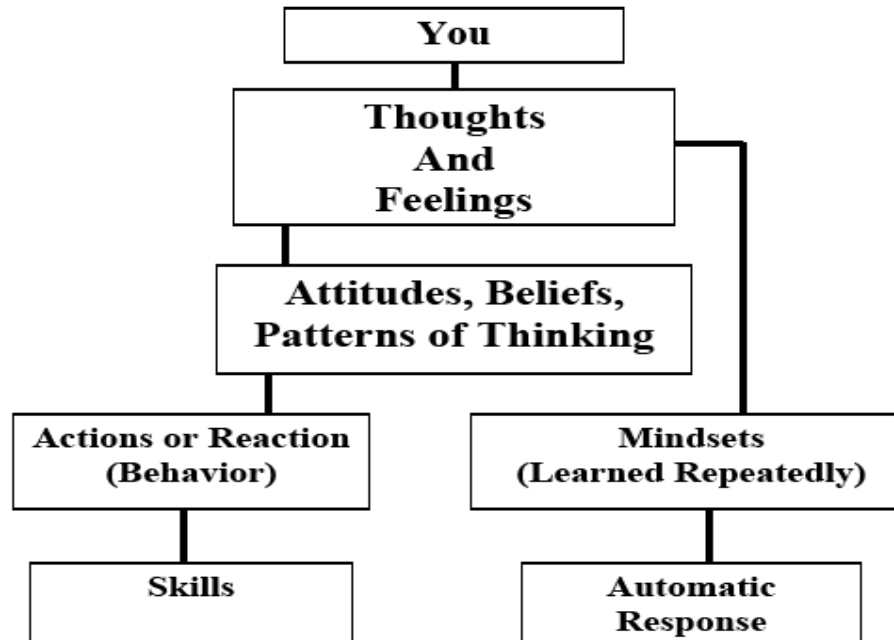
Key Concept

▶ **THINKING
CONTROLS
BEHAVIOR**

Definitions

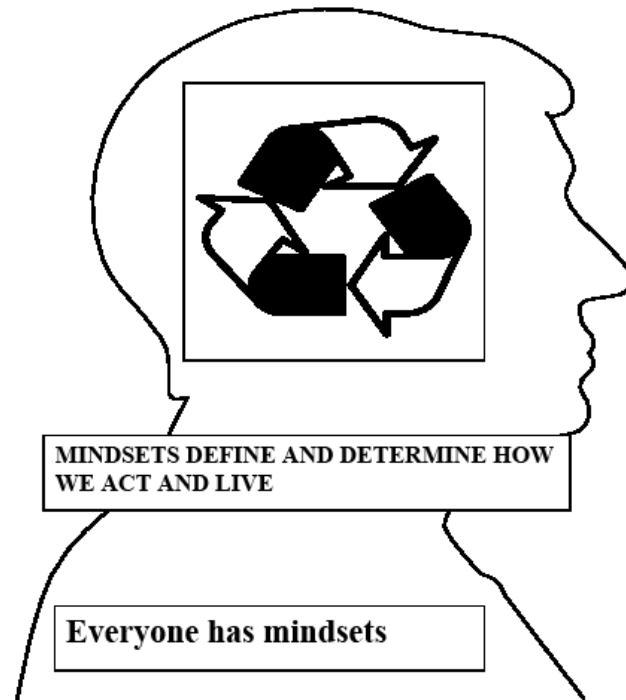
- ▶ Thoughts- the act or process of thinking (words that happen in your head)
- ▶ Feelings- the ability to react or feel emotion (emotions & sensations)
- ▶ Attitudes- state of mind or feeling with regard to some matter (the result or sum total of thoughts and feelings)
- ▶ Beliefs-mental act, condition or habit of placing , trust or confidence in a person, thing or situation
- ▶ Thinking patterns- habitual patterns of thinking
- ▶ *All of these attributes reinforced over time and experience form –your MINDSET*

Cognitive Structure



MINDSETS

Attitudes, beliefs & thinking patterns that have been learned repeatedly over time



Mindsets are **not right or wrong**, but they do affect how people act and react

Cognitive and behaviorally speaking IRS / IRO are mindsets

- ▶ When we accept and understand that IRS and IRO are in fact mindsets that all people operationalize in all aspects of daily life.
- ▶ Mindsets by definition are value-neutral (not right or wrong)
- ▶ Mindset define how we act and live
- ▶ Mindsets do affect how people act and react

Key Concepts

- ▶ **Mindset/IRS-** attitudes, beliefs, thinking patterns reinforced by time and experience that cause white people to *respond/ behave automatically....*
- ▶ **Mindset/IRO-**attitudes, beliefs, thinking patterns reinforced by time and experience that cause people of color to *respond/ behave automatically....*

Purpose of socialization

- ▶ **We are all socialized in ways to understand the world around us and our nurturing /sustaining environments teach and reinforce our learning and experiences to maximize our individual potential for success as we navigate the world around us.**
- ▶ **IRS/IRO are a part of who we are not good not bad. But impacts how we respond and treat each other.**

Understanding how you came to be who you are

- ▶ **Messages about difference from family of origin**
- ▶ **Social/ political and economic issue present in formative years**
- ▶ **Where and when you grew up**
- ▶ **Positive and negative personal experiences with difference. (defining moments)**
- ▶ **Educational system influences**