

January 14, 2021

A MESSAGE FROM THE MESSENGER

The Messenger Newsletter

REPRESENT
JUSTICE

From the Messenger:



January 2021 is finally here!! Like me, you are perhaps overwhelmed with excitement and expectation of better days, and relieved of the feelings of despair you carried throughout most of 2020. Many are cautiously optimistic that this new year, with a new federal administration, will bring forth the significant

and real changes we seek in the social order of life. On the economic front, we hope for economic policies that will acknowledge and address the eradication of generations of disadvantages faced by minority populations; policies that will address inequities in education, employment and housing opportunities. Yes, 2021 is finally here and maybe we can begin to have reconstructive dialogue about the many issues that have contributed to the erosion of trust, the fear of harm or death, and the demand for bold change in policing in this nation. Is this the year we reinstate consent decrees for policing agency that violate the civil rights of its citizens? Could this be the year laws are passed that force local, state and federal law enforcement to recognize, respect and acknowledge the constitutional rights of all people? Will this be a year where the confrontational and aggressive policy of breaking and entering the homes of Americans (the No- Knock Warrant) for reasons that may not be related to serious violent crimes is outlawed? I am hopeful that in this year substance use disorder will be treated as an illness instead of a crime for all people, not just for the affluent, the well-resourced and in most cases those of a

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READ THIS

lighter hue. This year we could seize the opportunity to reform the criminal justice system to make it equitable for all; an opportunity that has been ignored and allowed to pass us by for decades. I could go on and on about the hopes and dreams that I anticipate coming to fruition in the year 2021. But my reason for listing the possibilities that await us is to motivate you to educate, advocate, and agitate (if necessary) those in the halls of power to enact the change we so desperately desire and need. This is an “all hands-on deck” an “all in” year. The push is on and it will take all those who seek the true manifestation of these great words: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” Attend hearings and legislative sessions, go to local public committee, commission or council meetings. Make your presence known and your voice heard- 2021 is your year to make a difference in this battle for equality for all!



Did You Know?

As chef de cuisine at Chicago’s Japanese restaurant, Kikkō, Mariya Russell is the first black woman to earn a Michelin Star in the Michelin’s Guide 93-year history. Originally from Springfield, Ohio, Russell became interested in food from a young age and began by cooking soul food and Midwestern staples, like mashed potatoes, fried chicken, and casseroles. She later moved to Chicago to attend The Cooking and Hospitality Institute of Chicago. She and her husband went on to work together, eventually both joining Kikkō. In an interview with Michelin Guide, she said, “Thinking about [being] the only Black woman doing this is really, still very much so, blowing my mind. Representation is really important in all kinds of things, but in an industry like this, I think it’s really cool.”

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Guest Opinion



Let’s embrace this truism—We have been addressing racial disparities in juvenile justice since 1974 and still, no one has truly eliminated racial disparities. Even in progressive juvenile justice systems there has not been an elimination of it.

We must ask ourselves why?

Judge Steven Teske
Chief District Judge
Past Chair for National
Coalition for Juvenile

We can implement all the detention admission instruments we want at intake, and risk and needs tools at the disposition stage, or graduated responses for violations of technical conditions, but these best practices are merely reducing disparities, not eliminating them. In other words, there must be more, and to find that “more,” we must apply a public health approach, specifically using the epidemiology model. This model shifts systems from targeting reactions to population-based prevention and interventions. And, understanding the following two basic epidemiological facts is key to re-framing how to solve the problem of racial disparities—1) Diseases don’t occur by chance and 2) Diseases do not occur at random. While delinquent behaviors are not disease, they behave like diseases. This means delinquent conduct can studied to determine the underline causation, but we must stop targeting the symptom (delinquent behavior) and focus on the causation. The more I study the “why we cant eliminate racial disparities” through the lends of public health, I am convinced it’s because we are not addressing the one affliction our people of color suffer as a result of the 300 plus years of slavery, segregation, and Jim Crow—poverty. We know that poverty is a serious driver of criminal conduct, and for that reason, there will always be a disproportionate disparity until

we change our laws and policies that will help the poor break their cycle of poverty. It is a prison of a different form that is difficult to escape. Whilst we must continue doing the good things described above, we must reframe our analysis of this problem if we are going to eliminate racial disparities. Free more people of color from this prison, the fewer who will have contact with law enforcement and the courts. I commend to your reading a book recently published by lawyer and law professor Barry Feld titled *The Evolution of the Juvenile Court: Race, Politics, and the Criminalizing off Juvenile Justice*. He accurately documents the chronology of economic policies of our country over the years and the tragic affect it has on our people of color. And, its not only our economic policies, it is also our laws that criminalize the poor. We must pursue bail reform, sentencing reform, housing reform, and a host of other reforms that keep our people of color in poverty. And this is why Black Lives Matter organized—to bring what Feld documented to the attention of policymakers. This is not a question of Capitalism versus Socialism. This is about making Capitalism a smarter economic policy that saves people from poverty and in so doing, increases economic mobility that will improve our economy altogether.

**YOU HAVE
THE RIGHT TO
REMAIN ALIVE**

EVALUATION OF THE MESSENGER'S IMPLICIT BIAS TRAINING

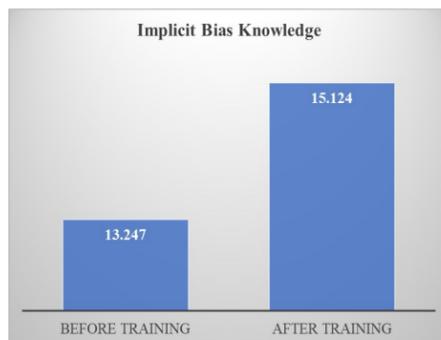
Background

Pastor Edward L. Palmer, Sr. developed a comprehensive implicit bias training as a part of a three-part diversity and cultural competency training series. Most of Pastor Palmer's clients are in justice settings, which is fitting given his leadership within the Coalition for Juvenile Justice as Chair and his many years as a member of the Kentucky Juvenile Justice Advisory Board.

Content below is an overarching summary of findings from a program evaluation conducted by an external research team at the Johns Hopkins University – Bloomberg School of Public Health. Data were collected from over 500 criminal and juvenile justice personnel, professionals working in large U.S. corporations, and from other community organizations. Participants completed pre- and post-implicit bias training surveys and brief qualitative data were obtained.

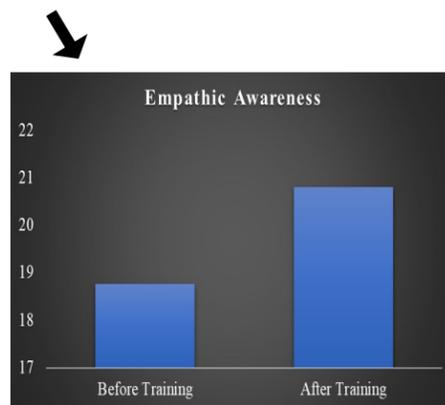
Executive Summary

Implicit bias trainings demonstrated effectiveness in justice, corporate, and community settings.



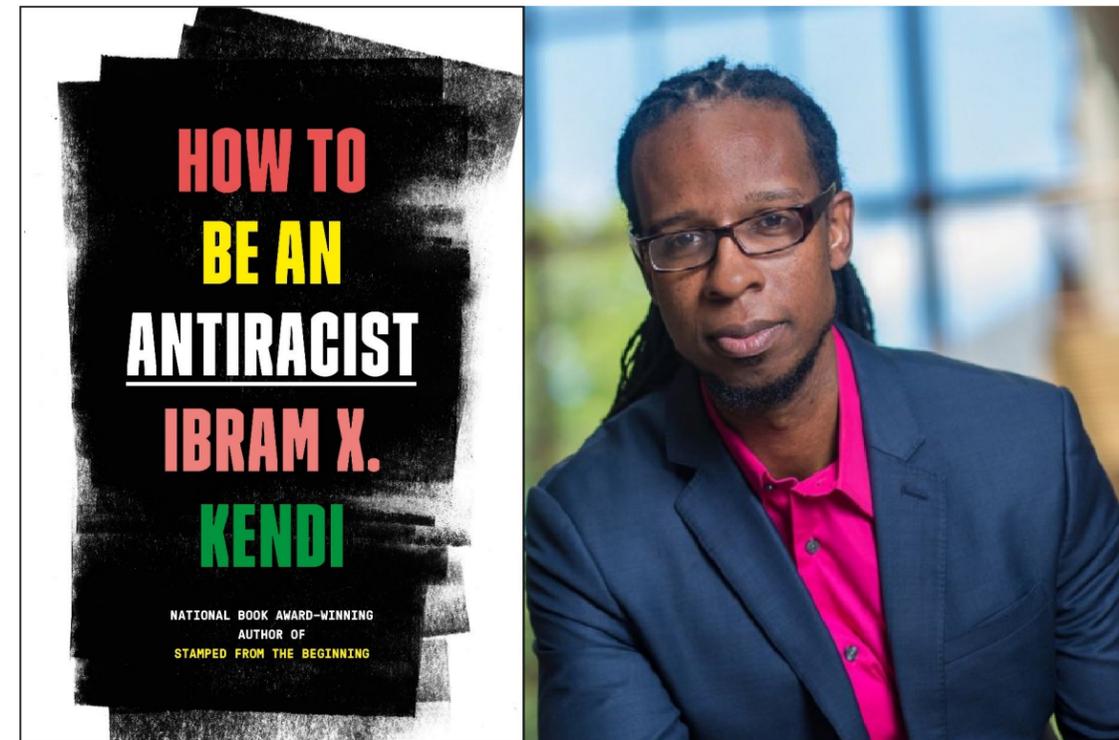
← *Figure 1.* The training increased knowledge about implicit bias.

Figures 2 and 3. The training increased multiple aspects of ethnocultural empathy (defined as the ability to understand and relate to individuals from racial, ethnic, or cultural backgrounds differing from oneself).



Note. A full peer-reviewed evaluation of this training is available from Dr. Rebecca Fix.

Book Club Corner



Ibram X. Kendi brings his great book, “How To Be An Antiracist”, to a close by presenting a blueprint for taking steps to eliminate racial inequity in our spaces. At the top of his list, is to “admit racial inequity is a problem of bad police, not bad people.” I have been advocating for years that the foundation of the issues of inequity has always been about “it” and not “them”. This approach to the conversation of systemic racism eliminates the need of individuals to defend themselves against the accusation of being a racist. Acknowledging that it is racist policies, not racist people that are responsible for the iniquitous outcomes we see in every aspect of public life in America. Focus our energies on policy reform and not the reformation of the hearts and minds of individuals. The next important and critical component of his blueprint, and I will not list them all, is to “identify racial inequity in all its intersections and manifestations”. It is not one thing that is the cause of the inequities that black and brown people are experiencing but a great manifestation of the intersectionality of multiple systemic disadvantages experienced by minority populations. It is because of the inequities in education, employment, healthcare, community construct and more that minorities are experiencing disparate, deadly impact of COVID-19. Therefore, the wrongs we seek to right cannot be completely realized if we only focus on one system's impact. We must address and eradicate system racism at all intersections and systems. I want to thank Ibram X. Kendi for this great piece of literary work. It has been educational, motivational and inspirational for me. Because of this book, my toolbox has been retooled and restocked.

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