

On the Issue of Mattering: Black Lives and the Changing Landscape of Resistance

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Declaring Humanity Through Mattering

- **Consider your positionality going into the Inclusive Excellence Symposium presentations.**
 - Name those pieces of who you are (race, ethnicity, culture, status, gender or sexual identity, ability, SES, religion/spirituality, professional roles, lived experience, privilege, power, etc.) that influence your interaction with that space.
 - Dr. Manning says BLM is an argument or “response for Black humanity”. Do any of your named identities/positionality help you navigate what Black Lives Matters means or seeks to accomplish?
 - What parts of you still need more background information or knowledge to understand the BLM movement?
- **BLM affirms the mission is to “eradicate white supremacy and build local power to intervene in violence inflicted on Black communities by the state and vigilantes. By combating and countering acts of violence, creating space for Black imagination and innovation, and centering Black joy, we are winning immediate improvements in our lives” (BLM, 2020).**
 - How does this fit with your understanding of the BLM movement prior to IES?
 - Has this shifted since viewing the presentations?
- **Dr. Manning says Blackness is capacious. We should acknowledge and appreciate the full scope and diversity of lived experience that is Black identity. How do you make time to appreciate different aspects of Black identity?**
 - Do you feel inundated by certain angles or perspectives of Black identity as portrayed by popular media?
 - What spaces and places help you gain a fuller perspective?
- **There is plenty of literature out there on the historical commodification and territorializing of Black bodies.**
 - How does this continue today?
 - How might feeling a lack of autonomy or safety over their own bodies impact mental health for Black folks? How can we recognize this in our professional roles?
- **Do you feel you have some understanding of the specific experiences and issues faced by members of our Black community in Cache County?**
 - Why or why not?
- **Dr. Manning says it’s not enough to make comparisons of ourselves to others about our own racist beliefs or actions. It is unhelpful to say, “I am less racist than my grandparents,” for example.**
 - Think about how comfortable you are with attempting to understand/examine your own beliefs, attitudes, biases, behaviors. How do you deal with discomfort when it arises?
- **Dr. Manning spoke at length about the impact of the 13th Amendment, whereby slavery was abolished with the exception of slavery as punishment for a crime. This election, Utah voters made decisions about whether to change the language of the Utah Constitution to ban slavery as criminal punishment. Constitutional Amendment C passed with 80.61% voting yes (remove slavery) and 19.39% voting no (allow slavery as a form of criminal punishment).**
 - What does the need for Amendment C say about whether or not we are living in a post-racial society?
- **How do continued assaults on Black bodies perpetuate stereotypes connecting Blackness and criminalization?**
 - The argument could be made that criminalization of Black folks contributes to the erasure of Black identity. How are Black communities resisting this erasure?
 - Discuss how resistance (in its various forms) have come to be seen by some as unpatriotic. How has this helped maintain the status quo?
- **How do we stay centered on Black lives and voices without getting caught up in rhetoric?**
 - Name some ways you can do this in your everyday life.

RESOURCES

- Black Lives Matter
- Positionality: Working Across Differences
- Slavery in Utah? LDS Church, others urge voters to wipe it from the state constitution.
- Nice White Parents
- Titus Kaphar: How Can We Address Centuries of Racism In Art?
- “I Cannot Sell You This Painting.” Artist Titus Kaphar on his George Floyd TIME Cover

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