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Introduction

Individual and Organizational Anti-Racism Work: There's No Magic Formula

In mid-August the State Library of Ohio and Bexley Public Library hosted Dr. Hasan Kwame Jeffries, associate professor of history at Ohio State University, in "[Making Sense of the Moment: The Library's Role in Helping Us Understand Race and Racism](#)." His presentation took an honest look at how our nation's past is the key to understanding the persistence of racial tomorrow. Dr. Jeffries built upon this foundation to specifically examine the role of libraries and library workers in the context of antiracism work. If you haven't watched the recording, I urge you to watch, and then refer to the page of [resources](#) for individual and organizational anti-racism work.

The State Library received very positive feedback after the live event and the release of the YouTube recording. Alongside that feedback, common questions rolled in:

- How do I do this work in my library and/or community?
- Where can I find examples of policies, best practices, etc. to use at my library?
- What are specific programs I can do with my community and staff to start the conversation?

I wish there was a magic formula or a one-size-fits-all solution to fix systemic racism in librarianship, in our communities, and within ourselves. Unfortunately, there just isn't. I'm inspired by this slide (below) in Dr. Jeffries presentation.

“Activists who are truly committed to changing the world should recognize that the work that we often do that receives no public recognition can eventually matter.”

Angela Davis

Interview with Boston's NPR News Station
July 19, 2020

We must try and be all of these things when doing anti-racism work in our lives and in our libraries. And we must use our stellar research and collaboration skills to do the work and take ideas from other places and tailor it our specific library and community. It takes openness, awareness, hard work, proactiveness, and boldness.

And because this wouldn't be a continuing education roundup without some resources, here are a few places to start:

[Disrupting Whiteness in Libraries](#)

Great LibGuide with a variety of articles, webinars, and resources.

[Webjunction](#) —(free access for all Ohio Library staff) held a [webinar on September 20](#) where Multnomah County Library's will share their "[Racially Just Toolkit](#)" for staff to learn and practice EDI.

Denver Public Library hosted an [Advancing Racial Equity and Inclusion in the Workplace Symposium](#) and all the videos and resources are available.

Check out issues #1 - #4 of the Continuing Education Roundup at library.ohio.gov/services-for-libraries/training-and-professional-development/ce-roundup-ohio-library-staff/. Thanks for reading! Email me at ekelsey@library.ohio.gov if you have ideas, articles, or topics for future issues.

Stay Safe and Stay Well,
Erin Kelsey



7 Keys to the Anti-Racist Library

- ▶ Be Proactive - Develop Blind spot monitors
- ▶ Be Explicit – Name the work
- ▶ Be Positive – Combat stereotypes
- ▶ Be Open – New ideas, new collaborations, new people
- ▶ Be Aware – Know who to protect and who to correct
- ▶ Be Intentional - Policies and programming
- ▶ Be Bold – Seize the moment!

“Black faces in white spaces is not enough.”

Dr. Hasan Kwame Jeffries