

Race Equity in Children's Services & Multi-Agency Partnerships

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Warming the Context for Racial Dialogue



'Warm' topics / ideas have greater chance of enduring (Bateson, 1972) .

How does talking about Race make you feel -
warm or **cold**?

Do you **move close** or **move away**?

Why / why not?

Talking about Race

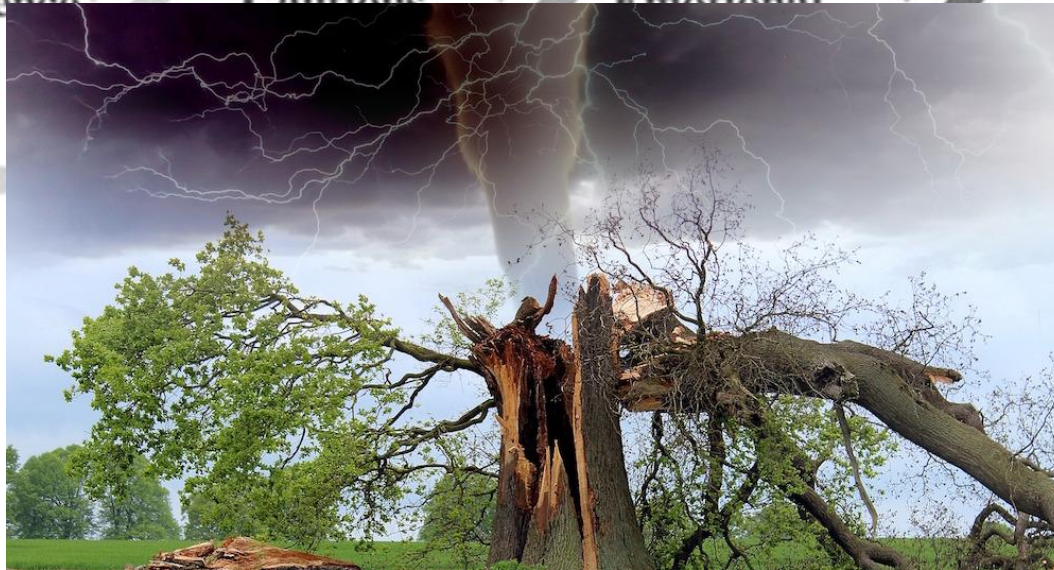
Epistemic and psychological silence

Cognitive silence

Cautious

Emotional

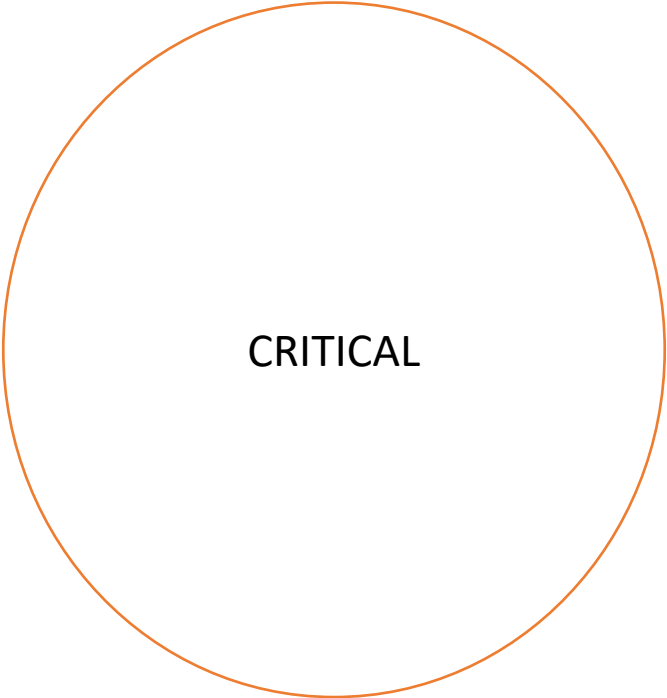
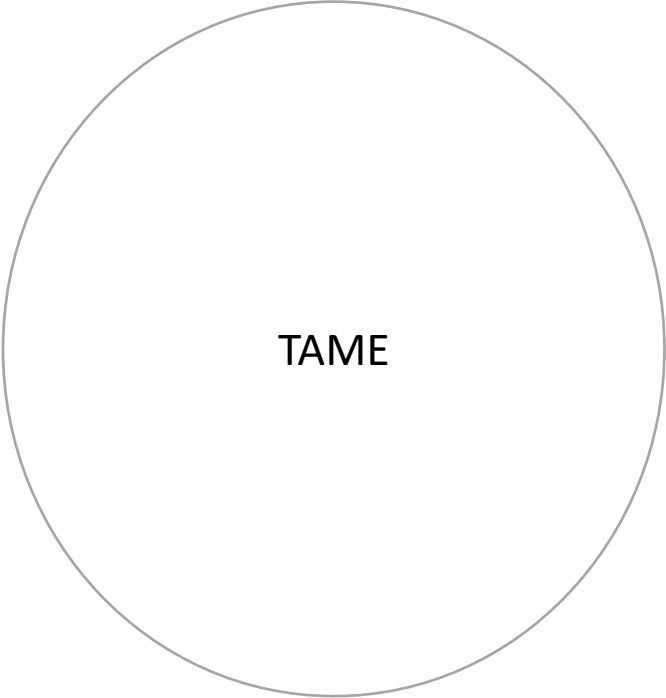
Adaptive silence



Company Morales, Miguel & Casadó-Marín, Lina & Muñoz
Garcia, Araceli & Fontalba Navas, Andres. (2024).

Breaking (through) the silence





UK Legal landscape: Race Equity & Children Protection

Race
Relations Act
1965, 1968,
1976, 2000

Macpherson
Report
(1999)

Equality Act
2010

Independent
review of
Children's
Social Care
(2021)

Child
Safeguarding
Practice
Review
(Race,
Racism)
2025

Children's
Act (1989)

The Victoria
Climbié
Inquiry
(2003)

Commission
on Race and
Ethnic
Disparities
Report
(2021)

Casey
Review
(2023)

The Practice Landscape

Black children are 6x more likely to be murdered in the UK
(YEF, 2025)

Exclusion rates for Black Caribbean students are 6x higher
than those of their peers

(The Guardian, 2021)

Police are more than 6x likely to strip-search black children
(The Guardian, 2024)

Only 6% of Directors of Social Care are Black

(Community Care, 2022)

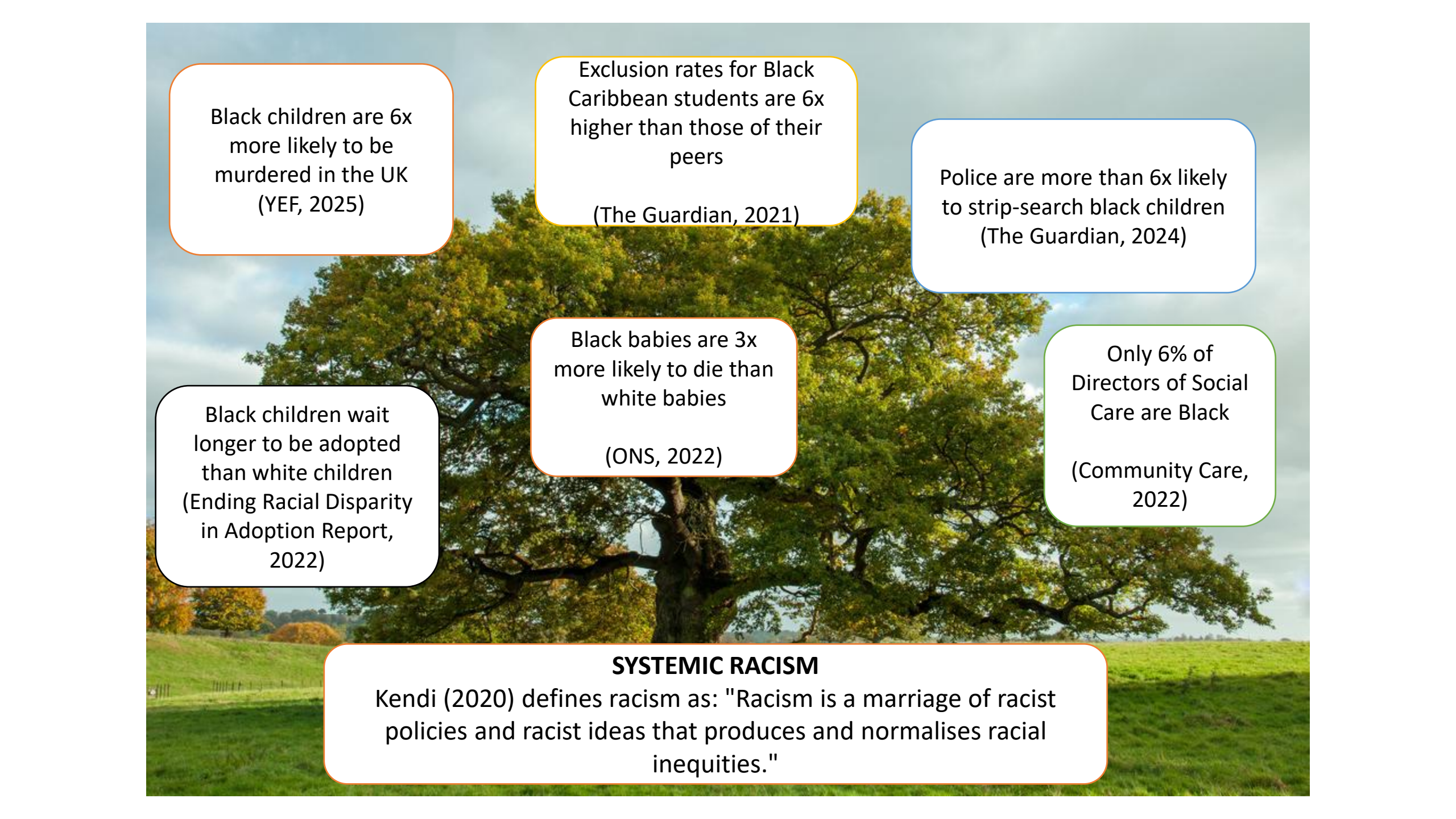
Black children wait longer to be adopted than white
children

(Ending Racial Disparity in Adoption Report, 2022)

Black babies are 3x more likely to die than white babies

(ONS, 2022)





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SYSTEMIC RACISM

Kendi (2020) defines racism as: "Racism is a marriage of racist policies and racist ideas that produces and normalises racial inequities."

SERIOUS YOUTH VIOLENCE

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EDUCATION

Exclusion rates for Black Caribbean students are 6x higher than those of their peers

POLICE

Police are more than 6x likely to strip-search black children

HEALTH

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SOCIAL CARE

Only 6% of Directors of Social Care are Black

SOCIAL CARE

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**WHITE-CENTERING POLICIES, PRACTICES, PROCEDURES, POWER DYNAMICS
(SYSTEMIC RACISM)**



Do you water or axe?



If we followed you around the office /personal life everyday for 12 months, what would we see?

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EVERY CHILD REALLY MATTERS

Being an anti-racist leader

“Anti-racist leadership is understanding your how your racial and social identities intersect with power and privilege. It is about being intentional in crafting your organisational culture and environment, and supporting people through equitable organisational structures.”

(Dr. Nicole Evans, Embracing Equity)



Would you be described as an anti-racist leader?

Anti-Racist Systems Leadership: It's a mindset

**Being ethics-driven –
A moral imperative**

**Frequent conscious
internal introspection**

**Amplifying marginalised
(Black) voices without
exploiting emotional
labour**

**Accountability / affinity
circles**

Humility

Integrity and Authenticity

**Tolerate uncertainty and
discomfort**

**Not about saviour-ship or
heroism – it is about
doing the right thing**

Move beyond individualism – build community, not just partnerships



“To build community requires **vigilant awareness of the work** we must continually do to **undermine all the socialization** that leads us to **behave in ways that perpetuate domination.**”

- Bell Hooks,
Writer, Theorist, Educator and Social Critic

Build community at a systems level

1. **Racism remains a deeply intricate** and ever-changing challenge, even in the face of ongoing efforts to address it. (Spillet, M. (2024))
2. **Financial constraints and racial inequities** create a multifaceted issue that demands thoughtful and strategic solutions.
3. Tackling racism **requires collective action and collaboration**, drawing on the expertise and perspectives of others.
4. It is essential to **uplift and center the voices of Black leaders—particularly Black women**—who bring a crucial intersectional perspective.
5. A single-service approach is insufficient in addressing the complexities of racism. Instead, **a coordinated, multi-agency strategy is necessary** (Ghate, Lewis & Welbourn, 2013).
6. The focus should not be on rigid control but on fostering **influence, ethical leadership, and a commitment** to doing what is right.

Leading effective multi-agency partnerships: A Call to Action



Stay in touch

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