

## 1. Educate and update yourself on the current issues and terminology

If you haven't already, familiarize yourself with the national conversation calling for racial justice and racial/social equity in U.S. society and systems. Get to know the most current terminology, the most acclaimed works/writers, and major discussions or themes related to antiracism. As a startup list, refer to the [Glossary of Terms Around Racial Equity](#) (the same link is included under [Racial Equity Resources](#) in the "Featured Links" section of the OCWTP homepage.)

In addition, read some of the acclaimed works or ideas of writers like Beverly Daniel Tatum (*Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting Together at the Cafeteria?*), Michelle Alexander (*The New Jim Crow*), and Ibram X. Kendi (*How to Be an Antiracist*). Take time to consider and absorb the authors' general ideas and examples about race relations and social injustice and what those ideas and examples mean to you.

You will also want to be familiar with those sources (articles, webinars, or other online learning opportunities) that address issues of systemic bias that can present themselves in child welfare situations (you can find these in the same section of [Racial Equity Resources](#) on the OCWTP homepage). Consider how differentials in power, dominance, and what's considered "normal" can lead to disparate outcomes in a child welfare case, whether the dynamic is rooted in racism, classism, or prejudice based on gender, sexual orientation, religion, or physical or mental ability.

## 2. Have a conversation into your training around how implicit bias, racism, and other "isms" can play out in the context of your training topic--and what your trainees can do to guard against their influence

Think about the types of people your trainees commonly encounter in the life of a case. If your trainees are caseworkers, for example, the types of people they will commonly encounter include the alleged child victim(s), the birth parents, or other members of the child's family. Now think of some of the common perceptions, or stereotypes, a caseworker might unconsciously hold of a member belonging to one of those groups. In addition, if the member is also consciously or unconsciously being labelled as "unemployed," "incarcerated," or "a substance abuser," that can bring an added layer to a caseworker's perception or judgment of that member--even before the caseworker has started the investigation. And whether that member is perceived to be black or white, of lower or higher socio-economic status, a mom or a dad, with or without a disability, gay or straight, American born or foreign-born, or old or young could have an unconscious impact on how well or how fairly that caseworker engages with, assesses, designs interventions for, or "goes to bat" for that person.

All these factors can be talked about during training in ways that allow trainees to self-reflect and consider how their own values, biases, and mistaken assumptions can negatively impact the outcome of a case. **The more we as trainers routinely include conversations about these critical topics, the more normalized these kinds of conversations will become.**

### **3. Do additional research on the above (or related) issues**

Take some time to conduct internet research or personal interviews re: any groups/populations of interest you have identified, and search for examples where individual or systemic racial or social inequities may appear for such groups in child welfare cases. Both in and outside of the training room, have conversations on possible pathways to advocacy, direct or indirect. Take the example of a mother who becomes incapacitated, but where the father recently released from prison is denied custody of his child because of a policy that denies custody to people with a criminal record. The training room could be the space for discussing how a caseworker can “step up” to advocate before a judge or attorney by testifying to the evidence she has observed of the father’s exemplary behavior and his clear devotion for his child.

### **4. Promote cultural humility as an essential component of child welfare practice**

Regardless of the topic you train, spend time training on the critical concept of “cultural humility”: i.e., an attitude where the caseworker, supervisor, or caregiver approaches a child or family without presuming from the outset either “what is wrong with” or “what’s best for” that child/family based on their *own* cultural standards. A person with cultural humility starts with the desire and expectation to learn the *family’s* story, the values the *family* holds, and what resources the *family* identifies for their preservation and strengthening. Teach that this attitude of cultural humility must be accompanied by sincerity, patience, and the ability to ask families the right questions—questions that, in essence, amount to asking *How do you see yourself? What’s important to you? What do you need? and What works and what doesn’t work for you?*

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Once you have updated your workshop(s), be sure to provide your RTC the updated version(s), and while you’re at it, include an updated resume of yourself for your trainer file as well. Communicate your commitment to be a trainer who addresses racial and social inequities--and ways to confront them in the world of child welfare. Again, the more relevant your training is to the national conversation, the more relevant it will become to the OCWTP.

*(For more information on racial and/or social equity with a trainer’s lens, consider the following resources):*

- [Staff Core Competencies for Working to Achieve Racial Equity](#)
- [\[1-Pager\] Addressing Racial Disparity in Foster Care Placement](#)
- [Guidelines for Discussing Difficult or High-Stakes Topics](#)