Women of PWN  
Dismantling Racism  

Introductory Webinar  
January 17, 2017
Webinar Objectives

• Gain an understanding of what work Women of PWN Dismantling Racism is committed to doing.

• Understand why this work is so important and how we got here.

• How you can get involved... next steps!
Presenters

Laurel Sprague, Ph D.- HIV Justice Network Research Fellow, PWN USA member

Naina Khanna, Positive Women’s Network Executive Director

Kari Hartel, PWN USA Colorado Co-Chair

Kat Griffith, LSW- PWN USA Board of Directors

Wanda Brendle-Moss, PWN USA Member

Barb Cardell, PWN USA Board Chair

Venita Ray, Legacy Community Health Program Manager, PWN USA Board of Directors

Jennie Smith-Camejo, PWN USA Communications Director
Mission of WPDR

To create a space for open dialogue to address racism among ourselves and our communities in a spirit of cultural humility
Our Commitment

We acknowledge a long history of systemic racism, institutional privilege, as well as past and recent brutality.

We are here, with humility, to stand in solidarity and hold safe space for our sisters and ourselves.

We commit, as white women, to being uncomfortable in order to learn and grow as we challenge racism in ourselves and our community.

We stand in sisterhood, solidarity, and action!
Women of PWN: Dismantling Racism

January 2017
Why?

- White supremacy structures power, access, leadership, HIV response
- Race-neutral narratives/"colorblind" ideology
- Movement leadership; representation
- Antiblackness is pervasive
- Conditions that predispose people to acquiring HIV or that lead to worse health outcomes once living with HIV are structured by race: health care access, poverty, “War on Drugs”, HIV criminalization, etc
How does race structure the HIV response?
How does race structure the HIV response? A wider lens
How does race structure the HIV response? Micro lens

... & yes, gender too!
Race is pervasive as a structuring concept

• INSTITUTIONAL POWER
• "Priority populations" in planning council allocations
• “Diversity” trainings
• “Cultural competency” in interventions
• Frontline staff who look like/share life experience with the clients... but management that doesn’t.
• “Community”
• Lack of consideration about how decisions/proposed impact communities of color differently
• Lack of open dialogue/discourse about race
Microaggressions, Codes & Violent Language

- “Urban”
- “Inner-city”
- “Target populations”
- “Illegal”
- Compliments: eg “well-spoken”
- “As a white person, I just need to say…”
- Taking up space in meetings or conversations without awareness of racial privilege
- Research and/or presentations that talk about communities but are not led by people of/from those communities
- Putting all the POC on a “community” panel
- Personal responsibility/bootstrap/merit narratives
Examples of white supremacy culture in practice

- Roberts Rules of Order
- Hiring practices that exclude impacted communities
- Sense of urgency that precludes thoughtful decision making
- Political compromises that sacrifice those who are less represented/less powerful/more vulnerable
- Defensiveness: “but I’m not racist”
- Diversifying existing white-led entities instead of supporting indigenous POC led entities
- Fear of open conflict
- Power hoarding
- “What just happened?” Lack of transparency in decision making

PWN’s Response

From *SPEAK UP! 2014* to *SPEAK UP! 2016*

**Thursday Sept 18**

**6:30PM-8:30PM**

**EVENING: WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE TO BUILD AN EFFECTIVE AND ACCOUNTABLE MULTIRACIAL MOVEMENT?** Moderated by Dázon Dixon Diallo

**EMPIRE**

*Featuring:*
- Martha Cameron
- Grissel Granados
- Deon Haywood
- Andrew Spieldenner
- Laurel Sprague

**Women of PWN Dismantling Racism**

December 19, 2016

To the Positive Women’s Network Sisterhood and Allies –

At the 2016 PWN Speak Up Summit in Ft Walton Beach, white women living with HIV committed to study and challenge racism within ourselves and in our communities. We promised to do this work even when it makes us uncomfortable. We want and need to stand with our Black and brown sisters living with HIV in the struggle for dignity, justice, and rights for us all.

The election of Donald Trump and Mike Pence has shaken this country to its core. As women living with HIV, we are gravely concerned about our ability to maintain our health and health care, housing, childcare, wages, and support services. As white women living with HIV, we are also frightened for the safety of our Black and brown sisters, cisgender and transgender, for our own Black and brown children, and for all members of non-white and non-Christian, non-heterosexual communities. As this wave of white supremacy crashes over our country, we commit to stand together and to fight alongside our Black and brown sisters and communities.
The Way Forward

• Political education:
  • deconstructing race
  • understanding race as an historical, social, political construct that changes over time and serves a particular purpose
  • understanding white supremacy and anti-blackness as separate constructs
  • understanding intersectionality: privilege & oppression
    • taking responsibility

• Courageous conversations
• Revisiting language
• Centering most impacted communities
• Commitment to dismantling racism, patriarchy, and white supremacy within our own organization, chapters, and communications

• This is a journey
Thank you

Naina Khanna
Executive Director
Positive Women’s Network – USA
@uspwn
@nainadevi
#pwnspeaks

www.pwn-usa.org
Living at the Crossroads of HIV, Race and Gender
Dismantling Racism in the HIV Movement
Black Woman’s Perspective

Venita Ray
Legacy Community Health
Black Women – HIV, Race and Gender

✓ Black women and the epidemic
✓ Herstorical context for the role and treatment of Black Women
✓ Living at the intersections of Race, Gender and HIV
✓ Moving forward in the HIV movement
Black Women and HIV

• Disproportionately impacted by HIV
• Black Women – 61%
• White Women – 17%
• Hispanic and Latina - 17%
• Globally epidemic is centered in sub-Saharan Africa on women and girls

http://www.cdc.gov/hiv/group/gender/women/
Why are black women disproportionately impacted by HIV?

Does anyone want to know?
Does anyone care?
Herstory: Sojourner Truth “Ain’t I a Woman

- Servitude – field, house and sex slave
- Historically viewed as men
- Valued by sex and ability to reproduce
- Seen as strong black woman – denial of needs/issues
- Forced to neglect self in order to care for everyone else
- Hair and bodies devalued and ridiculed – Serena Williams
- Not meeting society’s image of femininity – no need to protect
- Stereotyped as angry, demanding, aggressive, mannish
- Suffrage movement did not include black women
- Feminist movement not always welcoming for black feminist
We’ve come a long way. Are we there yet?
JEZEBEL
Sex to satisfy insatiable desires for white men
Fulfills masters’ sexual & economic desires
Mulatto/Half Breed; Light skin, long hair, shapely bodies, with few African features

MAMMY
Asexual and Nurturing
Fulfills masters families’ domestic needs
Dark skinned, large, African features; portrayed as unattractive

WELFARE MAMA
Sex with African American men to breed
Not useful to white culture’s needs; “living off the system”
Physical appearance undefined and unnecessary

Matriarch
Sex to emasculate and control men
Not useful to white cultural needs; seen as source of African American’s problems
Physical appearance undefined and unnecessary
Intersections of HIV, Race, Gender

- Experience multiple forms of oppression, racism, sexism...
- Forced to choose between being black or a woman
- Stigmatized by black church/community
- Patriarchy is an issue within the black community & broader society.
- How do we speak up w/o bringing black men down?
- How do we support liberation if it comes at the expense of black men or other women?
Impacts of Race, Gender and HIV on Black Women

- Racism/sexism
- Poverty
- Employment
- Housing
- Language/culture
- Othering
- Violence
- Stigma
- Access to care
- Trauma
- Incarceration
- Stigmatized role in community and church
Moving Forward in the HIV Movement

• Issues around race and racism fuel the epidemic but are rarely discussed in developing strategy or solutions - only when talking about statistics

• HIV movement must confront realities of blackness and womanhood and the effects of racism on our families and communities

• HIV movement must include the unique experiences and expressions of ALL Black women -Trans, African, Latina, and African American

• Recent strategy being discussed is whitening the face of the epidemic to get support for HIV from new administration

• PWN recently started BWLHIV work group from affinity session at PWN Summit focused on advocacy, wellness and specific needs of BWLHIV.

• We cannot end the epidemic without addressing ALL forms of oppression

• Black women cannot dismantle racism.
Thank you!

Venita Ray
vray@legacycommunityhealth.org
Anti-Racist Organizing for White Women

Laurel Sprague
HIV Justice Network
When someone tells me a piece of truth which has been withheld from me, and which I needed in order to see my life more clearly, it may bring acute pain, but it can also flood me with a cold, seasharp wash of relief.

Adrienne Rich
Segregation distorts the soul and damages the personality. It gives the segregator a false sense of superiority and the segregated a false sense of inferiority.

Martin Luther King, Jr.
Speak your truth, even if your voice shakes.

Audre Lorde
Thank you!

Laurel Sprague
Global Research Fellow, HIV, Gender, and Justice
HIV Justice Network
laurel@hivjustice.net
Why is this work so important?

https://youtu.be/hPFEprNiHrw
“When amazing people gather together often- times it is a catalyst for amazing things to happen. Several amazing things happened at PWN’s 2016 National Speak Up Summit. One of the most remarkable come-about was the formation of an affinity group to address racism. This group was formed by members of our PWN sisterhood who are White women. With courage and determination, they embarked on a journey of personal growth - challenging their own ideals and principles in an effort to become a central component of dismantling the racial problems which continue to plague black and brown citizens in this country of professed freedom and liberty”.

“Standing in solidarity with PWN-USA the white women’s affinity group has continued to meet to explore the nature of privilege and educate themselves in ways to meaningfully contribute to the movement for racial justice. This has been a liberating experience for each of them”.

Waheedah Shabazz-El.
PWN-USA Director of Regional Organizing
“We are deeply appreciative of them and the work they are configuring around dismantling racism – some of which they will be sharing with us in a Webinar Series.

Support is an action word. So we ask that you show support of them, their affinity group to address racism and their work of Dismantling Racism, by taking the action of making time to attend and positively participate in each session in their webinar series.”
Moving Forward

- Webinars
- Curriculum
- Discussion Groups
- Report Backs (videos, webinars and blogs)
Questions/Comments
White women living with HIV discussion group sign up

• Link to sign up for discussion groups for white women living with HIV.
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Thank you....we look forward to future conversations and putting in the work!