Beyond the Model Black ® : Creating an inclusive culture at NHSGGC

EDI Workforce Learning Event 2025

Prof Barbara Banda

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Stand up if...

- You feel that your workplace has made real and visible progress on inclusion in the past 2 years?

- You believe that you can match satisfaction ratings from your non-white staff are better than or equal to your white employees?

- Your leadership understands and is trusted by the full spectrum of people they lead — across race, culture, and background?

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What I will talk about

1. Why inclusion matters

2. How workplace norms shape inclusion

3. Removing the hidden tax on black (and other) workers

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Your experience....

Short reflection

- What were the feelings you experienced as a result of your exclusion?
- What conclusions did you draw about yourself and othere based on this experience?

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Exclusion causes pain...

Exhibit 1: **Social and Physical Pain Produce Similar Brain Responses**

Brain scans captured through functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) show the same areas associated with distress, whether caused by social rejection or physical pain. The dorsal anterior cingulate cortex (highlighted at left) is associated with the degree of distress; the right ventral prefrontal cortex (highlighted at right) is associated with regulating the distress.
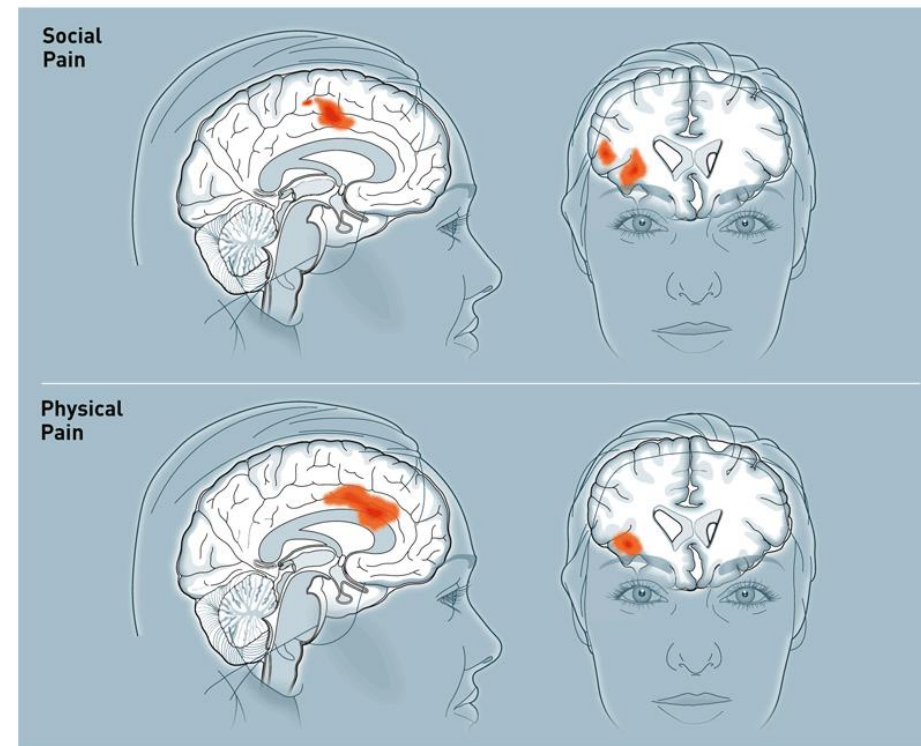
Social Pain

Physical Pain

Illustration: Samuel Valasco
Source: Eisenberger, Lieberman, and Williams, *Science*, 2003 (social pain images); Lieberman et al., "The Neural Correlates of Placebo Effects: A Disruption Account," *Neuroimage*, May 2004 (physical pain images)

Yet diversity and inclusion are drivers of innovation and financial return

Diverse management teams drive a

19%

increase in revenue

Ethnically diverse companies are

35%

more likely to perform better

Diverse teams make better decisions

87%

of the time

Inclusive companies are

1.7x

more innovative

Inclusive companies are

120%

more likely to hit financial goals
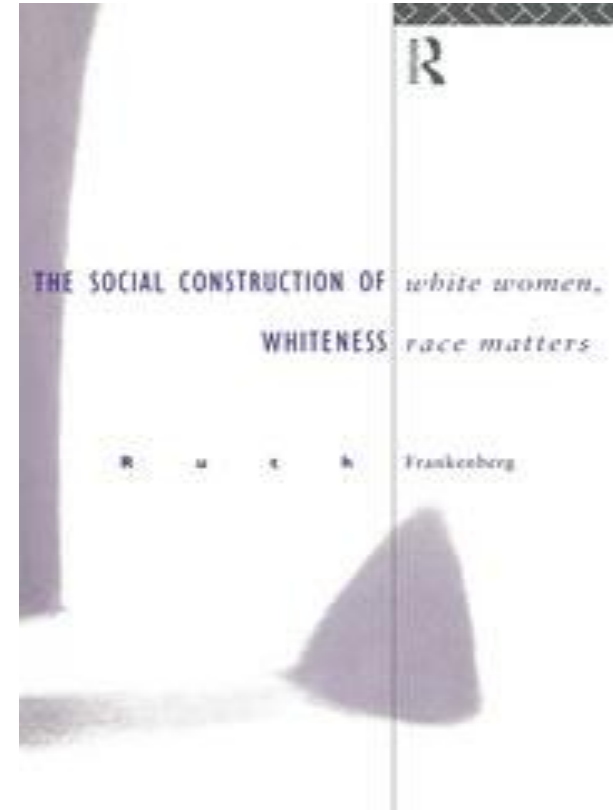
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2. How workplace norms shape inclusion

Whiteness is socially constructed

"Cultural practices that are unmarked and unnamed…"

Ruth Frankenberg

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF WHITENESS: white women, race matters — Ruth Frankenberg

Whiteness is socially constructed

- White people often have the luxury of not having to think about race

- The blacks have race; maybe Latinos have race; maybe Asians have race. But they're just white.

- They're just people. That's part of being white.

John A Powell / UCLA Berkeley

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF *white women,*

WHITENESS *race matters*

R   u   t   h   Frankenberg

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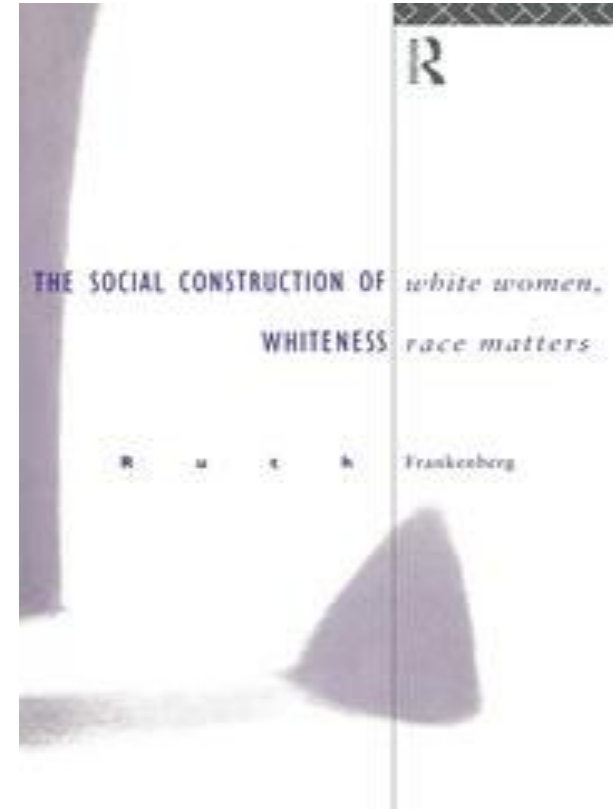
What we mean by whiteness?

Group or individual identity

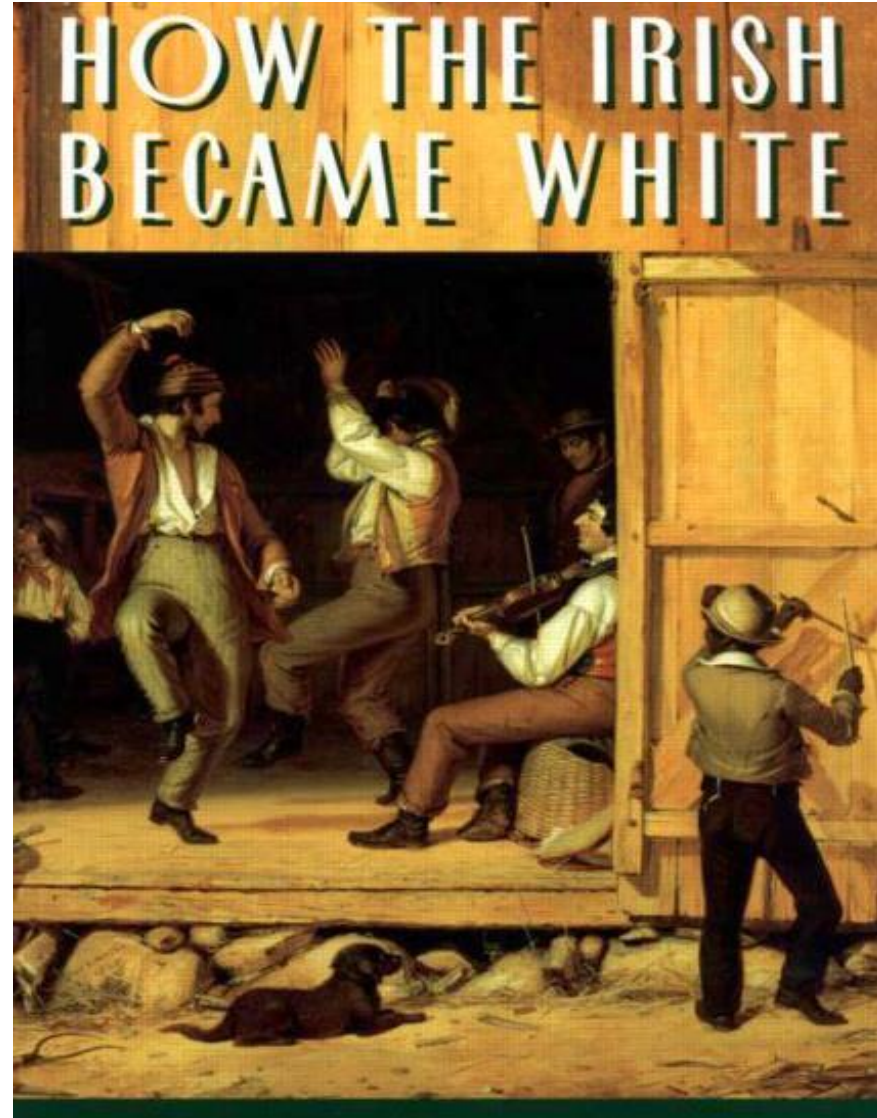Ideology or sets of ideas about the world

Dominance

Privilege

Standards by which others are judge

= More than colour more like a 'social location to inhabit.'

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White identity:

made up
diverse
gendered
classed
unstable

Whiteness permeates our values

- Idiot, flashy, cocky,

- Bling bling

- Greedy

- Obscene

- Relatively unpretentious

- 'A football hero England can be proud of'

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MACRON ACCUSES AFRICA OF HAVING "CIVILIZATIONAL" PROBLEMS

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Whiteness plays out at work...

- The default for organisational norms
- The standard office behaviour and workplace values
- What those who perceive themselves to be at the highest rank in organisations (unconsciously) demand from other
- Used to define merit
- Diversity is okay, if the "diverse" individuals adapt to these norms

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...with "whiteness' manifesting itself in different ways
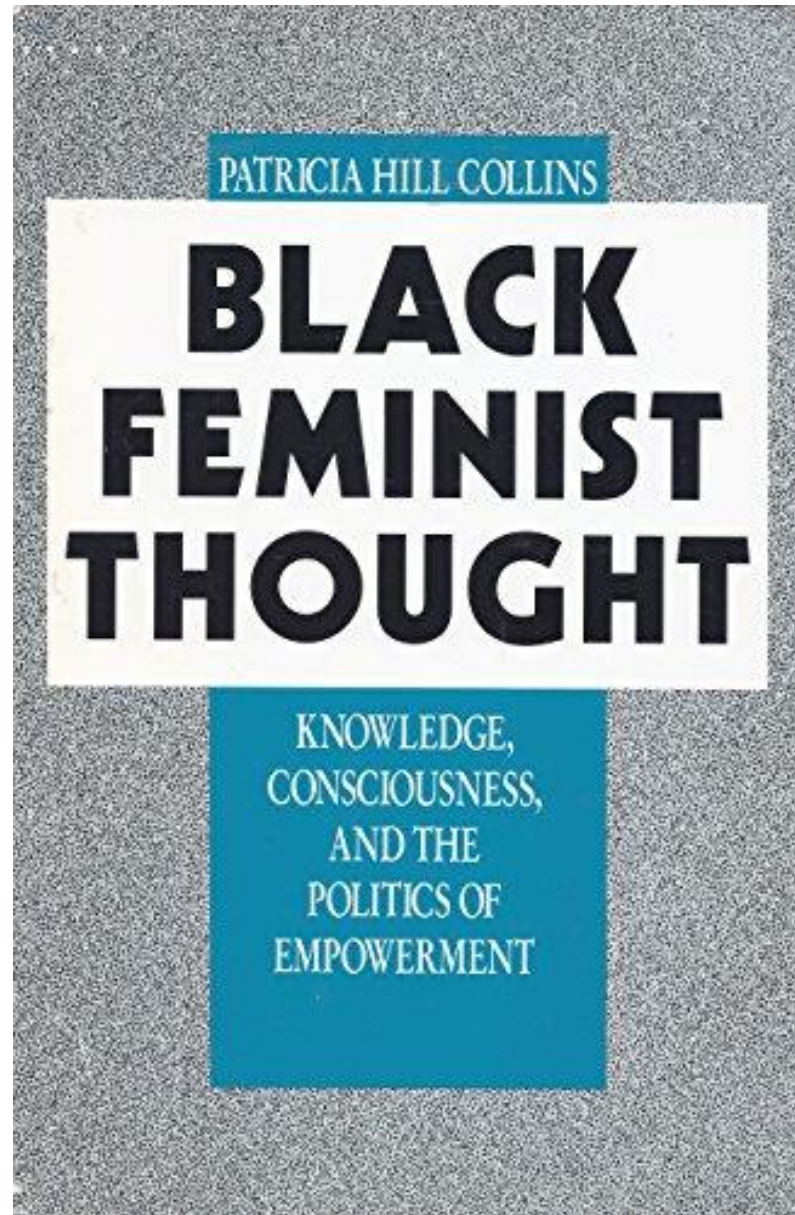
- What you wear
- How people speak
- How you wear your hair
- Cultural references
- What's a 'good fit'
- Who is a 'natural leader'
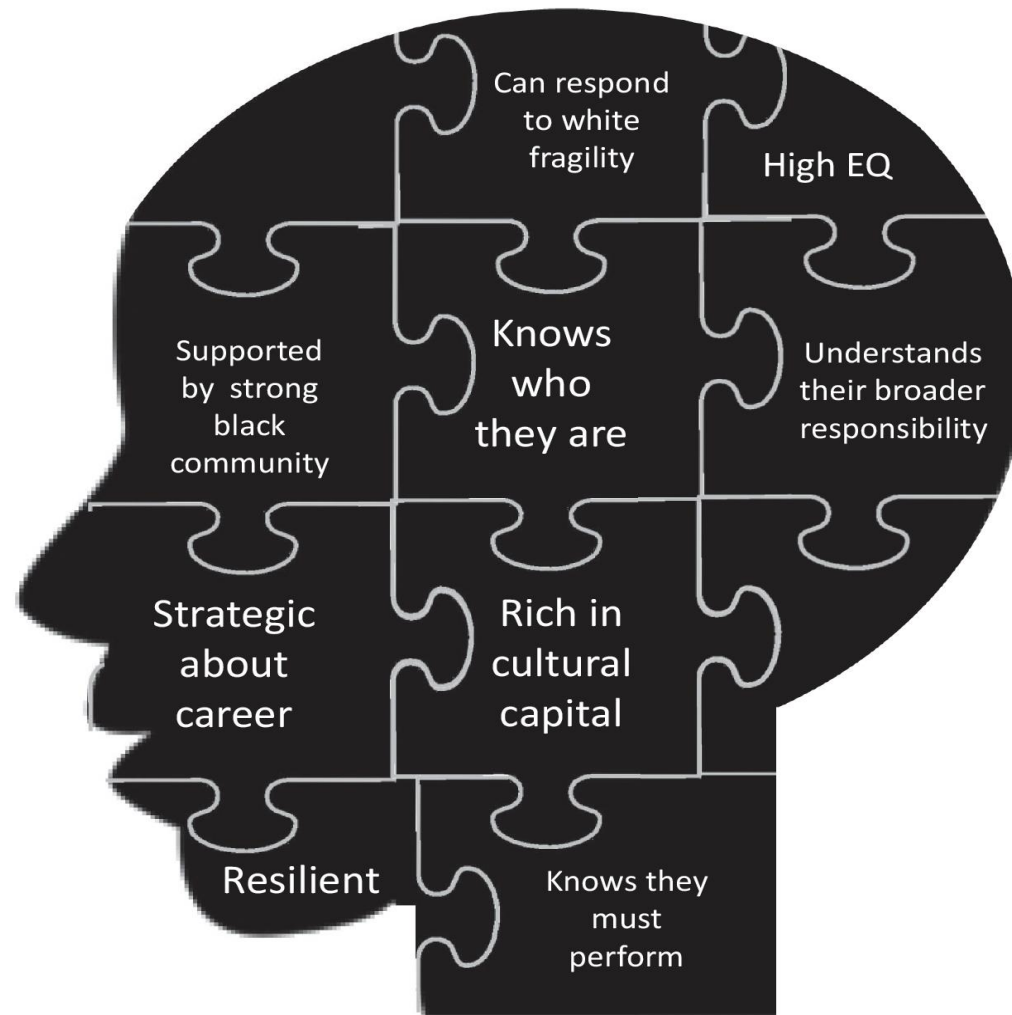- What names are 'normal'

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3. Removing the hidden tax on black workers

Racial tropes permeate society

PATRICIA HILL COLLINS

BLACK FEMINIST THOUGHT

KNOWLEDGE, CONSCIOUSNESS, AND THE POLITICS OF EMPOWERMENT

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The Model Black®

Can respond to white fragility

High EQ

Supported by strong black community

Knows who they are

Understands their broader responsibility

Strategic about career

Rich in cultural capital

Resilient

Knows they must perform

Positive, pragmatic and unapologetic

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The model black: A response to the tropes

S Situation

C Confirm

A Analyse

N Next

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Squaring

"How am I coming across?"

Self silencing.

"Do I ignore or speak out?"

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Softening

"I need reduce any further risk of being a threat to my white colleagues"

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Real progress demands representation and culture change

University Hospitals Dorset
NHS Foundation Trust

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And a commitment to long term change

Freshfields Stephen Lawrence Scholarship Scheme — 2015 Scholar

KPMG — Inclusion spotlight: Black Heritage Talent Initiatives in Financial Services

SAINSBURY'S BECOMES PARTNER AND SPONSOR OF ETHNIC FUTURE LEADERS PROGRAMME

accenture

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Stand up if...

- You have heard at least one idea today you could take back and make a reality in your workplace."

- You truly believe that creating an inclusive workplace is possible — and that you have a role to play in it."

- You feel more hopeful about what your organisation can become."

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Thank you

Lets keep the conversation going....

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