

Student #2

YWCA 21-Day Challenge

Day 1: Historical Context

While community investments sound like a great form of reparations, there are loopholes and corruption that prevent it from actually working well. An example of this is the Indian Claims Commission's chronic mismanagement of funds intended for reparations for Native Americans. Not only that, but in many Native Reservations, prices for basic necessities are much higher than they should be for poor quality food, with costs like \$4.99 for a gallon of milk. It's been proven over decades and centuries that the U.S. government tends not to fulfill its promises, so even if reparations for descendants of enslaved people were declared, they might not actually be done. These reparations should come in more forms than financial compensation and investments—things such as housing, equal job opportunities, and education that sheds light on black history.

Day 2: Reparations for Slavery Part 1

The proportion of wealth distribution in the U.S. is extremely skewed. 10% of the American population owns nearly 80% of the entire country's wealth. This leaves only 20% for the 90% left of the population. Most of those hoarding wealth are white billionaires, while many black people and other people of color live in poverty. This is not to advocate for more black billionaires, but rather to break up the distribution of wealth so that the bottom half would have more than they own, which is currently 1%. A

good way to combat this is through baby bonds, which provides a trust fund starting from \$20,000 to babies of the poorest families. This would gradually increase as the child gets older and hopefully alleviate the median wealth gap by building the generation a solid financial foundation. There should also be other ways to decrease the gap, such as by estate taxes, truth and reconciliation, and economic compensation for past acts of racism in the nation.

Day 3: Reparations for Slavery Part 2

Recently, a lot of people have protested and called for removal of Confederate statues. This was pushed forward after the murder of George Floyd, as more people realized that these statues depicting Confederate soldiers and leaders symbolized racism, bigotry, and police brutality against African Americans in the United States. Others argue that taking the statues down is erasing our history, but we will still continue to learn about it and not just reject it. Statues are erected to celebrate a specific person or event, but racist Confederate soldiers and slave-owners should not be glorified for having done horrible things. The removal of these statues is significant, but it would also help to cancel debt and provide reparations for victims of colonization, brutality, and white supremacy.

Day 4: Reparations and Indigenous People

Regarding reparations, Native Americans aren't always included in discussions of the topic. The difference between discussion for Native reparations and reparations for African Americans is that land was stolen from Natives, and this resource cannot be provided in the same proportion as financial compensation. Natives prefer the term

“restoration” and I agree that these should take several forms, such as: free tuition, restoration of tribal lands, full rights of stolen Native artifacts, and direct compensation for descendants of assimilation program victims.

Day 5: Corporations and Reparations

Capitalism plays a massive role in American society and corporations have a large control over the economy. It would be a significant change if corporations were to pay reparations to African Americans, especially businesses that have profited from the slave trade. The disparities continue to this day, and these companies have an overwhelming amount of wealth that could help many people in poverty. It is also important to support black businesses and reduce the wealth gap. Banks also played a huge role in discrimination and racism by redlining, refusing to give out loans to residents of poor communities. These banks should pay reparations as well and acknowledge their part in causing disparities.

Day 6: Racism in Sports History

Sports are and have always been an important source of culture and entertainment in the United States. However, as most things in our country, it has been riddled with racism and discrimination. How athletes of color are treated reflect America's stance on race, as the treatment has improved, but there is still a long way to go. Black athletes (and other people of color) contribute a lot towards victories in sports, but are still silenced when they try to speak out on racial issues. Their athletic prowess is widely celebrated, but people tend to ignore their problems as people of color and only see them as entertainers.

Day 7: Racism in Sports Today

For someone who is not very well-versed in sports, particularly American Football, it is surprising that most of the money earned from revenue goes towards sports teams owners, and pro athletes do not get nearly as much as them. These athletes endure back-breaking training and can suffer injuries and their careers do not last very long, yet the owners are given more credit and praise for something others have done. It may seem like these athletes are treated equally as sports team owners, but this exploitation is coupled with black athletes being criticized for protesting. There are so many attempts from companies and sports teams to seem “woke” and act like they care about the effects of racism, but they do not directly address the specific problems, such as police brutality. They will say things like “we have to do better” and “we want to fight against racial injustice” but do not actually take action into helping and protecting black people. It is so disturbing to see how many groups will participate in fake activism to retain their fans (and money) on both sides by generalizing such major issues.

Day 8: Ending the use of Native American Imagery in Sports

The use of Native Americans as mascots is highly racist and perpetuates the stereotype of Natives as bloodthirsty warriors. This has a negative impact on Native Americans and how they are perceived by other people. I find it strange that while other teams use animals as mascots (bulldogs, eagles, etc.), some teams choose to use Native American names, thus equating them on the same level as animals. The Cleveland Baseball Team should have changed their name long ago rather than doing it in 2022, and it does not seem right that they continue to profit off of the old name and its

stereotyping while promising to make this change. It is clear that they care more about monetary gain than doing the right thing, because if they truly cared about the impact of the name on Native Americans, they would change it now rather than later.

Day 9: Athlete Activism

There is a lot of hypocrisy in sports regarding racial inequality and treatment of athletes. Many sports fans will celebrate the victories of athletes of color, while silencing them when they try to speak up about important issues. This can be seen a lot in American Football, where players have been partaking in silent protests by kneeling during the national anthem, popularized by Colin Kaepernick. He was fired for this act and lost many opportunities, while white athletes that have a history of racism continue to play with no consequences. In the sport of lacrosse, there is a lot of racism towards Native Americans, which is ironic given that the sport was created by Native Americans a thousand years ago. When athletes try to protest and speak out against racism, people tell them to go back to playing their sport, treating them as merely entertainment rather than people that are actually affected by these real issues.

Day 10: Gender and Sexuality in Sports

Inequality due to race and gender in sports affect women and black athletes, but particularly black women and black trans women. People discriminate against those who don't meet the standards of feminism, banning trans girls from playing sports and criticism of black girls in sports. They argue that trans girls aren't "real girls" and have an advantage due to testosterone, and also argue that black girls have an advantage because they are bigger and taller than white girls. I do not believe that it is true

feminism if there is discrimination against women of color and trans women; media tends to lean towards feminism regarding only white women. We need to continue pushing for racial, gender, and sexuality equality in sports, dealing with discrimination of trans girls and black girls, as well as a pay gap between male and female athletes with males getting paid much more or the same sports.

Day 11: GBV's Impact on Women of Color

Women of color tend to have large rates of being affected by domestic violence in relationships. We are often objectified and fetishized due to our cultures and physical features, seen as sexual objects rather than real people. It is difficult for black women to seek help and escape abusive relationships because they are stereotyped as “feisty” and tough. Asian women are seen as more “submissive” and fragile, which the men use to prove their power and dominance. Seeing the statistics on violence against API women were unsurprising to me as an Asian woman who has experienced sexual violence and emotional abuse in a relationship. I knew beforehand that many women like me have experienced similar situations due to stereotyping, and it is difficult for Asian women to talk about their experiences because our culture emphasizes reputation and image. If you talk about overcoming abuse, it is usually seen as a disgrace to you and your family. It is already difficult to heal from abuse, but racial and cultural stereotypes further harm women of color.

Day 12: Intimate Partner Violence in the LGBTQ+ Community

A lot of the LGBTQ+ community experience sexual violence due to higher rates of poverty and stigma. This even happens to them more often than it does to heterosexuals

because of hypersexualization and homophobia. I didn't realize before that there are some unique ways that people in the community can be manipulated in a relationship, such as a closeted person being threatened to be outed to their family, employer, and community. It makes sense that these actions can stem from internalized homophobia, but it does not excuse them. It was horrifying to find out that sexual violence affecting trans people and bi women often began during childhood. We must do more to protect survivors and try to prevent sexual assault from happening in the first place.

Day 13: Gender-Based Violence and Homelessness

There is a strong connection between domestic violence and homelessness, which makes it a vicious cycle for anyone going through abuse. It is terrifying as a woman to know that many of the homeless population is female, and some are in that situation due to domestic violence in relationships. I am also reminded of the feminization of poverty, a term I learned in one of my psychology classes, which simply means that more women are becoming impoverished than men. Sexism and misogyny can be found in most aspects of life, and more safe spaces need to be created for women to be able to live with stable housing and financial stability.

Day 14: Financial Abuse

I feel like financial abuse is a form of domestic abuse that people do not talk about enough. I have heard of the term before and have some basic knowledge about it but did not know the different forms that it can be. I never even thought about financial abuse being things like spending your partner's money without them knowing or putting all loans and bills in their partner's name. This is especially difficult in our finance-based

society where money is the thing people value the most. Money is an important part of survival, it pays for bills and housing, and is needed to access essentials for living.

Financial abuse should be treated as seriously as other types of abuse because it affects the victim mentally and the way their lives are led.

Day 15: Gender-Based Violence and the Criminal Justice System

It's strange to think about how hypocritical our social justice system is; they criminalize abuse survivors because of how they react to being abused, but will not do anything about the abusers. Those abusers could do the same to others and start another cycle of violence, yet nothing usually happens to them and the victim continues to be in danger. Even worse is sexual abuse enacted by police officers, a type of police brutality that is not talked about enough. The police are sworn to "protect and serve" but instead take advantage of their authoritative power by violating victims, usually women, in vulnerable situations where they may feel helpless. They could claim that the violation was consensual, and the victim will be ignored and usually criminalized, where they will face continuous abuse in prison. I believe that the fear of police is rational given the actions that many of them have done and gotten away with.

Day 16: The Environmental Justice Movement

Many corporations prioritize money over the environment and the safety of their workers. I'm shocked that we were never taught in school about these issues, specifically about Cesar Chavez and the pesticide poisoning of farm workers in 1988. It is already difficult to deal with cancer, whether it is you or a loved one, but it is more disheartening to hear that many of the victims were children. To witness the death of your young child

is heartbreaking, but seeing how little these chemical (and other) companies care about the consequences of their choices just makes me angry. The pesticides used harmed many people and caused many cases of cancer, and yet it is still ineffective against pests because of evolution. There are no benefits and only consequences of using pesticides, and the work of Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers have contributed much to the environmental justice movement and helping others see the negative results of pesticide use.

Day 17: Climate Change

Although climate change is a widely-discussed topic, not many people bring up environmental racism. People often focus on smaller things like not using straws or plastic bags, which may be a good way to reduce plastic intake, but they are often ignorant of the other environmental problems caused by large corporations. Black communities are often the target of hazardous conditions, like the pollution in South Philadelphia causing many health issues and even death. I hope for our current and future generations that more action is taken towards solving environmental racism and climate change.

Day 18: Toxic Exposure

There are huge disparities between white people and people of color in many things, but an important issue is that of environmental racism and illnesses caused by it. We already know the correlation between poverty and being unhealthy, as well as more people of color being impoverished than white people. However, systemic racism creates situations for black and brown communities where they are exposed to high levels of

pollution where they live and work in addition to lack of access to health care. These environments create many health issues for their population such as heart diseases, COVID-19, and compromised immune systems. In Harriet A. Washington's article, I agree with her use of the term food swamps rather than food deserts because of the overflow of unhealthy food, alcohol, tobacco, and no healthy options.

Day 19: Racism and Environmental Disorders

Environmental disasters such as hurricanes and earthquakes often show us how much our government favors rich white people over low-income people of color. This was extremely visible during the event of Hurricane Katrina, where many poor black residents of New Orleans were severely impacted. Their government did not respond well to the disaster and many residents were displaced. Even now, only 37% of the residents in the predominantly black Lower Ninth Ward returned home after a decade. Many white residents were able to return home and build their lives back. This just shows how much work we still need to do to reduce disparities within our communities, especially with government action.

Day 20: Destruction of Native Land

The oil and gas industry continues to destroy the environment and Native American lands. It is already terrible enough that Natives have gone through genocide and been driven to live on small reserves with little resources, while others freely live on stolen land. Fracking and drilling for oil by these companies cause environmental damage and destroy what little land Natives have, disregarding even sacred lands. These actions cause fires, dry climate, the ground shaking, and the release of dangerous gases such as

methane, which can cause health issues. As humans, we should always prioritize others over profit, but the greed of major industries have overtaken their feelings of humanity.

Day 21: Wrap Up

This experience has made me realize that falling under certain communities can help me connect on a deeper level with others who have had similar experiences. However, I understand that it is important to learn about other cultures and communities so that I can empathize with those who have had different experiences than me. I learned about the intersectionality between many different issues, and how having one issue may also give you several others that relate to it. I recognize this especially on day 13, which talked about gender based violence and homelessness. Having this knowledge makes me think about the different situations my future clients may face as an art therapist. It is important to understand the background behind the client's situation and outside forces that may perpetuate it.