

Sal's CURE/RHA Resume

Taking stock now, I reflect backwards 25 years - I certainly didn't know what I didn't know. I knew racism was bad, but I didn't know where I fit into it.

After a lengthy study supported by brilliant professors, some Baldwin, Beverly Daniel Tatum and others, I learned about my guilty white identity. Writing a lengthy RAB, developing a personal mindfulness practice and years of teaching and coaching in ethnically diverse schools brought me front, center and ready to contribute in a post George Floyd world. Facilitating to adults about the things I'd incorporated deep in my body for years, about racism and the ravages of our white dominant culture, came naturally. With the profound and exquisite wisdom and skill sets of my RHA trio partners, I was happily swept into the work of healing humanity. As I take stock now - over two years later, I am energized by not only what I have learned but continue to learn everyday.

Highs have been many - though they aren't ribald celebrations - but rather peaceful and quiet. Within days of meeting Tovi, though I couldn't name it, she knew I needed her acknowledgment that I was earnest, had good intentions and the will to be a strong ally. Coming from her, it was like water on a dry plant. From there, I was able to take off. Other highpoints came during our facilitations, and none as striking as the gentle looks from the zoom squares of program participants. While saddened that our course had ended, we knew they would forge ahead into their spaces with the energy we allowed them to bring forth. I am happy to use my innate ability to research, read, write, and create meaningful engaged learning experiences. I can capture the felt sense of a room, have learned to anticipate white needs while making space to center BIPOC voices, and am learning the intricate rhythms of questioning. The lows almost always involve getting caught in unknowing and questioning how to stand up to the challenge of racist pushback. I have become stronger, and learned to call in - inviting exploration, and helping people make this learning their own.

To me, the RHA space is an oasis - secure, productive, compassionate and loving. As we model how to handle the inevitable mistakes that are made, we welcome, expect and come to celebrate them as complex opportunities to learn.

In addition to working as a part of the RHA Trio, I am in my 19th year in a large unit district in the Western Suburbs of Chicago. This year I'm in a new role as Project Coordinator in our newly established Dept of Equity and Continuous Improvement, where staff development with an equity lens is my focus. In all of my work, I have come to know that active listening and recognizing that persistence is the only real tool any of us have to outlast the tremendous amount of damage racism has and continues to reign down on our modern society. RHA work has given me the inspiration I sometimes desperately needed to continue to contribute. Our work will evolve and meet the needs of the increasing demand for this unique, personal and nuanced learning, where the only constant is change. That said, I envision a horizon that is bright, and a world where difference is finally celebrated, thoughtful meaningful and brave connection matters and transformation takes hold. May the light of our healing.....