

Introduction to Centering Blackness Videos featuring Dr. Melissa Ross

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aufCOyz5Ocs>

I'm so glad that you have elected to engage in CETE's Getting Ready program. Before you launch into the modules, I'd like to share the concept of centering blackness with you. CETE's REDI steering team deems it appropriate that a critical component of our approach to racial equity, diversity and inclusion work. Our promise is that centering blackness or conversely, de-centering the social construct of whiteness, is required to dismantle systemic racism. Centering blackness demands that we create and design policies and practices that intentionally honor and respect the humanity of Black people, and create the equity and inclusion commensurate with that perspective. It is important to know that our decision to start with a focus on Black people specifically was a strategic one. As translational research professionals we all understand the importance of customizing our intervention. Thus, we will start with attention to the unique contextual factors and experiences of Black Americans.

Our approach is based on the premise that effectively addressing equity for Black people will result in enhanced experience of equity for other marginalized populations impacted by our work. As Fannie Lou Hamer explained it your freedom is shackled and chained to mine. Race work acts as a liberator for all of us. As our movement evolves and outcomes are achieved, we will be better positioned to expand our focus to the unique concerns of other marginalized populations.

As you engage in the upcoming modules, we recommend that you do so with the express intention of centering blackness. To center blackness, we must actively seek to gain a valid understanding of the experiences of the black employees, families and students impacted by our work. To center blackness, we must value the perspectives of our Black colleagues as central to the decision-making process. To center blackness, it is imperative that we understand that the black experience is not monolithic. To expand the depth and breadth of our shared understanding, we are offering you a recentering blackness experience before each module. These videos are designed to illuminate the depth, breadth and shades of the black experience.

We hope that an expanded capacity to center blackness will make you more effective in your efforts to mitigate your own implicit biases; more effective at activating anti-racism in the design and execution of your program teams policies, products and services, and make you more effective in your contribution to the dismantling of systemic racism within your spheres of influence. The next step of your writing journey is to engage in your first centering blackness experience.

Transcribed by <https://otter.ai>

