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**Anti-racism praxis in an emerging community-academic approach to environmental and climate justice**

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**Background:**

Racial injustices, environmental and climate threats, and COVID-19 inequities that disproportionately affect communities of color have contributed to social reckoning with racism. Public health is grappling with how to strengthen collaborative processes, research, and practice to be grounded in an understanding of racism as a public health issue and incorporate a structural racism lens into strategies to promote health equity. We describe a process for strengthening anti-racism praxis for an emerging academic center focused on community-academic collaborative approaches to advancing participatory action research for environmental and climate justice.

**Methods:**

University-based faculty and staff and popular education designers and facilitators collaborated to design an anti-racism process for an emerging environmental and climate justice academic research center. The anti-racism process focused on building leadership and action through deep discussion, reflection, narrative generation, and visioning. This process involved clarifying the Center's purpose, anticipated short- and long-term outcomes, collaborative processes, and theories of change.

**Results:**

The anti-racism process focused on building deep connections and capacity to practice and advance racial justice within the administrative, research, teaching, and practice spheres of academic and community participants identified as active and passive allies on the Spectrum of Allyship. Dialogues illuminated the centrality of storytelling for listening to and learning from a range of lived experiences and envisioning processes and ways of working together. We discuss themes, facilitating factors, and challenges that emerged from our dialogic process.

**Conclusions:**

This case highlights the importance of anti-racism processes as a collective experience to inform racial justice approaches within emerging and sustained public health units - large and small - and in participants' spheres of influence.

**Key messages:**

- As the field of public health grapples with racism as a driver of health inequities, anti-racism approaches are critical to public health practice and research.
- Anti-racism approaches that engage narratives have potential to inform guiding approaches for public health units committed to health equity.