

**2022 Public Service Award**  
**Oregon Women Lawyers (OWLS)**  
**"Parenting Through a Racial Justice Lens – Workshop Series"**

**About the Program**

The Parenting Through a Racial Justice Lens workshop series was put on by the OWLS Working Parents Committee. It was professionally taught and facilitated by Karen Neri, JD MA (<https://www.concinnitytherapy.com>) and Andrea Redeau, MA LPC (<https://www.uycounseling.org>). Karen is an OWLS member.

It was a three-part series that addressed racial self-awareness and explored what it means to raise racially conscious children as a parent who continues to grow within their own understanding of their racial identity, privilege, and oppression. Participants and facilitators worked on issues such as understanding privilege and oppression, racialized trauma, and talking to children about race and racism. It also took into account Oregon-specific experiences of generational racialized trauma.

- Part I: Exploring your Racial Privilege and Oppression and its impact on your Children's Racial Consciousness
- Part II: Understanding Racialized Trauma and Healing
- Part III: Supporting the Racial Identity Development of Your Children

Each workshop session included learning/lecturing from the two facilitators as well as large and small breakout group discussions. After surveying participants, it was decided that the small breakout groups would be based on "racial affinity groups" so that BIPOC participants would have a safe space and white participants would have a space to talk and learn without leaning on BIPOC participants to "teach us."

The series was virtual as it was held during the summer of 2021 when the pandemic made in-person gathering dangerous. This made it easy to offer the program to OWLS members statewide. We had folks from many parts of Oregon and had a total of 72 OWLS members participate. I was one of the series participants, and am so thankful to have participated. The facilitators were incredible and the feedback we received was very positive. White supremacy, racism, and child rearing can all be topics that are difficult to discuss. Karen and Andrea helped participants work through these issues. They helped us approach the workshop with an open mind, honesty, and compassion. They encouraged us to work through issues of fragility. One of the outcomes of the series, is that the OWLS Working Parents Committee is organizing ongoing "affinity groups" to continue the work. The white parent affinity group launches this week, and the BIPOC parent affinity group will launch soon. These are not topics you can learn and move on - they require ongoing commitment and accountability. I have uploaded the OWLS Advance Sheet from Fall 2021 which has an article about the series. Please refer to page 1 and page 14. I also uploaded one of our email advertisement/invitations for the series. The facilitators had excellent materials that they shared with participants but they are proprietary and cannot be shared here.

**Advice for Replicating the Program**

Form a small planning group and give yourselves time for planning and execution.

Research and engage skilled facilitators. We were fortunate to know Karen Neri who is a lawyer and licensed counselor (and an OWLS member). She put us in contact with Andrea Redeau.

Work with the facilitators in planning content, timing of sessions, etc. We recommend having more than one session. This helps break up the content and allows for more time overall.

Pay facilitators - do not look to skilled professionals to do this type of project for free.

Fundraise - have members of the planning group ready and able to do outreach to firms to raise money to pay for the workshops (or work out funding in the organizational budget). We also charged participants but covered the bulk of the costs with fundraising.

Members of our planning group would be happy to chat with other bar associations wanting to do similar programming.

### **About the Organization**

Oregon Women Lawyers is a 33-year-old organization with 12 statewide chapters.

### **Growth and Development**

The organization has grown and developed most importantly by the inclusion of an anti-racism lens through which we fulfill our new mission, which is to transform the legal profession by pursuing equitable access to the legal system and equity for women and communities who are systemically oppressed. We are working to undo racism by continuing to learn from our history, develop leadership, maintain accountability, and share culture.

2015: Added a robust Working Parents Committee to address the caretaking issues specific to a legal career

2017: OWLS board of directors voted to make anti-racism training mandatory for all board members.

### **Major contributions to legal community / community at large**

2019: OWLS led a coalition of affinity bar associations for a well-received, first-of-its-kind in Oregon "Time's Up Oregon: Reckoning with Sexual Harassment in Oregon's Legal Community" CLE to a sold-out audience providing information about the landscape of sexual harassment laws with two of Oregon's top employment lawyers, training and tools for interrupting harassment from a local professor and a keynote address by Tina Tchen, co-founder of the Time's Up Legal Defense fund.

2019: OWLS urged our Chief Justice to prohibit immigration arrests in or around the sensitive areas of Oregon Courthouses. "These civil arrest activities are of great concern to those connected with legal proceedings in Oregon state courthouses, both civil and criminal, because of the impact on legal proceedings and the detrimental effect on access to the judicial system. Members of immigrant communities and other communities across Oregon may be reluctant to appear or participate in critical legal proceedings for fear of questioning or civil arrest based on perceived ethnicity or questions about immigration status."

2019-2020: Organized virtual anti-racism series training for OWLS and affinity bar leaders.

2020-2022: Provided leadership for affinity bars to provide regular virtual networking and educational programs for new lawyers and law students during the COVID-19 pandemic (ongoing). 2020-current: Worked with Oregon's affinity bars to provide input around diploma privilege due to the ongoing pandemic.

**Scope of current membership:** Our current membership is 1200 mostly women lawyers, judges, law students and other legal professionals. Law students join for free and attend most programs at no cost. We have a 19-person board of directors and 16 committees.



## Parenting Through a Racial Justice Lens - CLE Series

**June 15, 29, and July 20, 2021, 12:00 p.m. - 1:15 p.m.**  
**Participants are expected to virtually attend all three sessions**  
**Application is being made for MCLE credit**

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Join the OWLS Working Parents Committee for this three part series by **Karen Neri** and **Andrea Redeau**, intended to address racial self-awareness and explore what it means to raise racially conscious children as a parent who continues to grow within their own understanding of their racial identity, privilege, and oppression.

This series will discuss understanding privilege and oppression, racialized trauma, and talking to your children about race and racism. It will also take into account Oregon-specific experiences of generational racialized trauma.

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**OWLS Members and Affinity Bar Members - \$30.00**

**Non-Members - \$50.00**

**Law Students - Free**

If the registration fee is a deterrent, OWLS encourages the use of available scholarships. Contact [Linda@Oregonwomenlawyers.org](mailto:Linda@Oregonwomenlawyers.org) for more details

[Register Here](#)

## Karen A. Neri

Karen A. Neri, JD, NCC, LMFT intern is a relational and systems-oriented therapist in private practice. She currently works with individuals and couples addressing concerns relating to relationships, racial identities, trauma, stress, anxiety, and depression. She has a special interest in approaching therapy through a social justice lens, particularly, in recognizing the existence of privilege and oppression. She strives to offer a therapeutic space that is affirming and culturally responsive to BIPOC identities.

Prior to becoming a therapist, Karen practiced law in California, litigating primarily family law and personal injury cases. She is also a licensed attorney in Oregon and remains connected to the legal community in addition to the mental health professional community in Oregon.



## Andrea Redeau

Andrea Redeau, MA, LPC, CADCI, is a licensed mental therapist, drug and alcohol counselor, and clinical supervisor for those seeking supervision in the state of Oregon. She currently stands as a newly appointed board member on the Oregon Board of Licensed Professional Counselors and Therapists, fostering representation in all aspects of the mental health field.

Her practice Uniquely You Counseling, LLC primarily serves BIPOC individuals and those desiring to explore the intersectionality between race, privilege and presenting mental health conditions. Andrea strives to use a lens of equity and social justice, ensuring that all clients are served from a place of understanding and healing. Through levity and a little humor, Andrea is focused on providing education in a collaborative and inviting approach.



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# AdvanceSheet™

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## OWLS Hosts CLE on Parenting Through a Racial Justice Lens

By Wilson Ta and Sidney Villanueva

It takes a community to raise a child. Whether we raise a child as parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, or "the cool" aunt or uncle, we want to take the time to learn and understand how we affect our little ones. In a three-part series that began on June 15, Karen Neri and Andrea Redeau conducted a CLE on exploring and understanding how we can raise racially conscious children. The series, presented by the OWLS Working Parents Committee, included a crash course on examining racial identity, privilege, oppression, and racialized trauma as parents, friends, and family members, and in the context of your child. Three sessions cannot fully unpack the complexities of race and parenting, but they can provide profound discussion and reflection.

Karen and Andrea began the CLE with a discussion of how children experience race and a graphic demonstrating the cycle of socialization that perpetuates antiblackness and white-body supremacy. Our parents, relatives, teachers, and the people we love and trust shape the expectations, rules, and schema of our daily lives. Those become reinforced and instilled through institutions and cultural norms that either promote

the racist status quo through silence and inaction, or create a direction for change through education and discussion.

Karen said that caregivers are the starting point for raising racially conscious children and that "caregivers must have their own understanding, willingness, and . . . curiosity about their own racial identity development." Consequently, if we want to raise racially conscious children, we have to shine a light on how race has shaped our own identity development.

Throughout the series, we broke into smaller groups to discuss our personal experiences with race, identity, privilege, and oppression in the context of what had been presented. Naturally, the time allotted for the discussions went by too fast because there was so much to unpack. These were safe group discussions among colleagues who want to improve themselves and their families. This is where the magic happened.

The discussions helped us explore and engage, but we were left wanting more. Fortunately, Andrea offered tangible strategies, which appear straightforward but are complex. These are the seven action items Andrea listed for parenting



Andrea Redeau



Karen Neri

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## Renew Your OWLS Membership

It's time to renew your OWLS membership. Renew before October 20 and receive a code for \$15 off the OWLS Fall CLE. Check your email inbox for your personalized renewal, or click [here](#) for more information.



## Parenting Through a Racial Justice Lens

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racially conscious children: (1) name whiteness for children who identify as white because not claiming the word *white* makes whiteness invisible and uncomfortable to discuss; (2) expose your child to different cultural opportunities and encourage questions and conversations; (3) let your child know that it is normal to notice racial differences, and talk about what those racial differences do or do not mean; (4) share the racial biases you have had in the past and your experience of growth; (5) study, share, and celebrate groups outside of your culture; (6) provide land acknowledgement when discussing school, parks, or vacations, and (7) explore your family's heritage while acknowledging and discussing how your heritage intersects with cultures through colonization and migration. Be honest.

Becoming an antiracist is not easy. Many of us, our parents, or our caretakers have experienced some form of racialized trauma, which refers to our "mental, emotional, physical, spiritual, or social experiences of white-body supremacy." Andrea and Karen discussed these experiences, as they can impede our ability to be antiracist parents. If the trauma goes unhealed, it creates a ripple effect that reaches further and over generations. Some people may experience the effect as imposter syndrome, and some may feel overly anxious or angry, or become hypervigilant. Over the next two sessions, held on June 29 and July 20, we were equipped with tools to articulate

our racial identity in the context of our racialized trauma. We were empowered with understanding how we can shift toward a cycle of liberation. We broke into our small group discussions, and more magic happened.

As co-authors of this article, we want to include our reflections about the CLE because it made such an impact on us. We are so grateful to OWLS for putting on this series. Karen and Andrea did a masterful job leading the group through conversations that at times felt awkward and messy. Our kids are old enough to ask tough questions, but young enough that we often feel the need to heavily filter. Getting a little practice and perspective talking about racial justice issues made us feel more prepared as parents. This series left us feeling part of a broader community, and we highly recommend the CLE, should it be offered again.

Additionally, it can be challenging to keep up with the most recent, evidence-based parenting advice. We want to make sure that our children are better versions of ourselves, but we have to recognize our past trauma to move

forward. We view ourselves as constant works in progress, especially as antiracists. We have to have these discussions with our partners, our children, and the caretakers of our children.

Presenting a CLE covering the vast and triggering topic "Parenting Through a Racial Justice Lens" is no easy task. It helped that Andrea opened the CLE with a quote from Guante: "White supremacy is not the shark; it is the water." An initial silence allowed the quotation to sink in. Parenting is no easy swim, and parenting is even more difficult when white supremacy is the water we are swimming in. We acknowledge its presence all around us, but we must also remind ourselves of our significance, impact, and pervasiveness as caretakers. That awareness is daunting, but to keep us afloat, this CLE provided the resources, materials, and tools to examine how we as individuals can explore and articulate our experiences with race and cultivate its relationship with ourselves and the children around us.

**Wilson Ta** is a contract officer at Oregon Health & Science University, and **Sidney Villanueva** is an associate at Troutman Pepper in Portland.



Sidney Villanueva



Wilson Ta

For more information about OWLS, OWLS events, and OWLS chapters, visit [www.oregonwomenlawyers.org](http://www.oregonwomenlawyers.org).



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For more information or to post a job, contact Lauren Smiley at [lauren@oregonwomenlawyers.org](mailto:lauren@oregonwomenlawyers.org).

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