

Beware of Isolation and Exhaustion

With knowledge regarding the **historical and contemporary functioning of public education, educators can either remain complicit, or work to actively disrupt and dismantle inequitable praxis.** However, intentional disruption of public-school legacies of inequity and injustice can leave educators feeling isolated and ignored, leading to exhaustion and defeat (Gorski & Chen, 2015). Within this stress, even the most equity-oriented educators feel pressure to maintain the status quo. Examples of areas that have potential to lead to exhaustion, stress, isolation, and defeat include, but are not limited to:

- Racial battle fatigue amongst teachers of Color in a predominately white profession (Pizarro & Kohli, 2020).
- The persistent stress of the education profession and a need to perform within accountability structures, such as **high stakes testing, rooted in white racism and the ideology of white supremacy (Leonardo, 2009).**
- White educators might avoid disruption and seek comfort **within familiar characteristics of whiteness and white supremacy that flourish in K-12 schooling environments (Zembylas, 2003).**
- **A desire to consciously and subconsciously maintain unearned privileges rooted in whiteness and white supremacy to preserve membership and acceptance and being treated as an outsider amongst colleagues, peers, and families that identity as white or subscribe to the ideology of whiteness and white supremacy (DiAngelo, 2018).**

(Re)commitment to equity and an understanding, analysis, and interrogation of the ways in which our educational system warrants complacency, is necessary. Otherwise, students who have been historically kept on the margins will continue to be silenced, excluded, and exposed to harm and violence in a schooling structure privileging the dominant norm. Thereby, we ask educators to continually engage in critical reflexivity and critical action, ensuring congruence between their language and actions in the name of equity and justice. (Re)committing and centering equity should take form through educators actively centering the perspectives, funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 1992), and lived experiences of the students, families/caregivers, communities they are serving, moving from critical reflection to critical action (Jemal, 2017).