

Opening Exercise
Rita Cameron Wedding, Ph.D.
CalSWEC Fairness and Equity Symposium
April 4, 2005

Summary

In the symposium's opening exercise, Eyes Wide Shut: Fighting Racism in CWS One Social Worker at a Time, Dr. Cameron Wedding discussed the cumulative effect of individual bias in creating the overall pattern and systemic issue of disproportionality in child welfare. The disparities in child welfare cannot be explained by the acts of only a few "bad apples" and we are challenged to understand how the problem evolved without anyone seeming to notice. In order to change practices which contribute to disproportionality, we must first begin to understand how as individuals we each contribute to the overall problem.

The exercise addresses:

- Factors that mask bias;
- Behaviors, actions and attitudes that can promote bias without detection;
- Individual and collective interactions that constitute bias; and
- Possible solutions.