



identity explorers

ideNtity expLorers

**Identity Explorers
guides interracial
families through
co-learning
about ethnic-
racial identity to
document a shared
narrative so that
all guardians
take action in
instilling a positive
understanding in
their Multiracial
children.**

Identity Explorers is designed by Danielle Hernandez at the School of Visual Arts Design for Social Innovation.

It was advised by Jeff Franklin.

It is dedicated to future Multiracial majority.

Foreword

I'm a graduate student with a background in graphic design and a love for art as a vehicle for expression. I also happen to be a white-passing, biracial woman who as a child didn't know how to feel about or talk to others about my ethnicity in my predominantly white hometown. I didn't gain the tools or the capacity to express my identity until much later in life. Through my research I've found that other young adults experience this - but more importantly, young children are currently experiencing this. How might we better support their self awareness and aid their expression? Identity Explorers 'explores' the question what might it look like for a child to feel whole in a culture that tells you that you're part something and part something else?

Danielle Hernandez

MFA Design for Social Innovation Thesis
School of Visual Arts
New York City,
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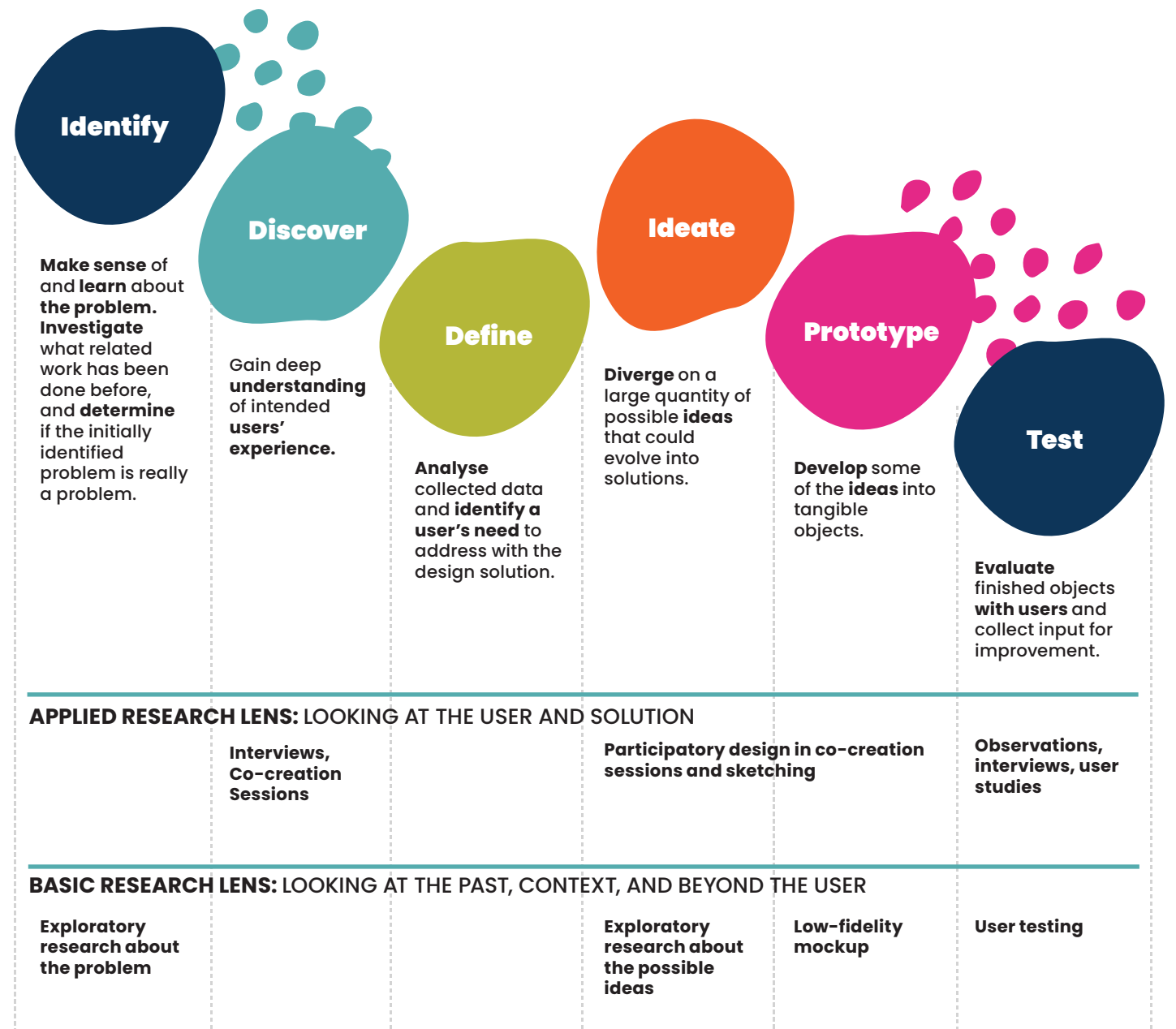
Designed by
Danielle Hernandez

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- Ask about visuals
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 - BC
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 - late May
 - New Orleans
 - #Iamwhole
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 - comic book class
 - kickstarter campaign
 - murals
 - foster homes
 - CASA
 - immigrants
 - shoes
 - multiple touchpoints
 - MURALS
 - @ NCORE
 - Pavilion
 - Dad
 - AT Dept
 - Delany
 - Smerygin
 - Adele
 - Tim
 - sustainability
 - how to keep this going
 - reaching out to various local suppliers
 - review notes from Bernard
 - comm-center schools MB's contact

Design Thinking Process, Illustrated



Stanford d school model of design thinking as implemented by Danielle Hernandez



HOW DO YOU RAISE A CONFIDENT MULTIRACIAL KID?

WHY?

SCOPE

CHALLENGES

INTERVENTIONS

GOALS

DEVELOPMENT

RACIALLY ISOLATED COMMUNITIES

HAIR

age 5-7
begin to identify themselves by race or by color

age 5-7
skin color = long term identity

age 8-11
simultaneously recognize by more than 2 characteristics

age 8-11
expressing racial or ethnic group characteristics

age 12-15
solid preference for racial or ethnic group characteristics

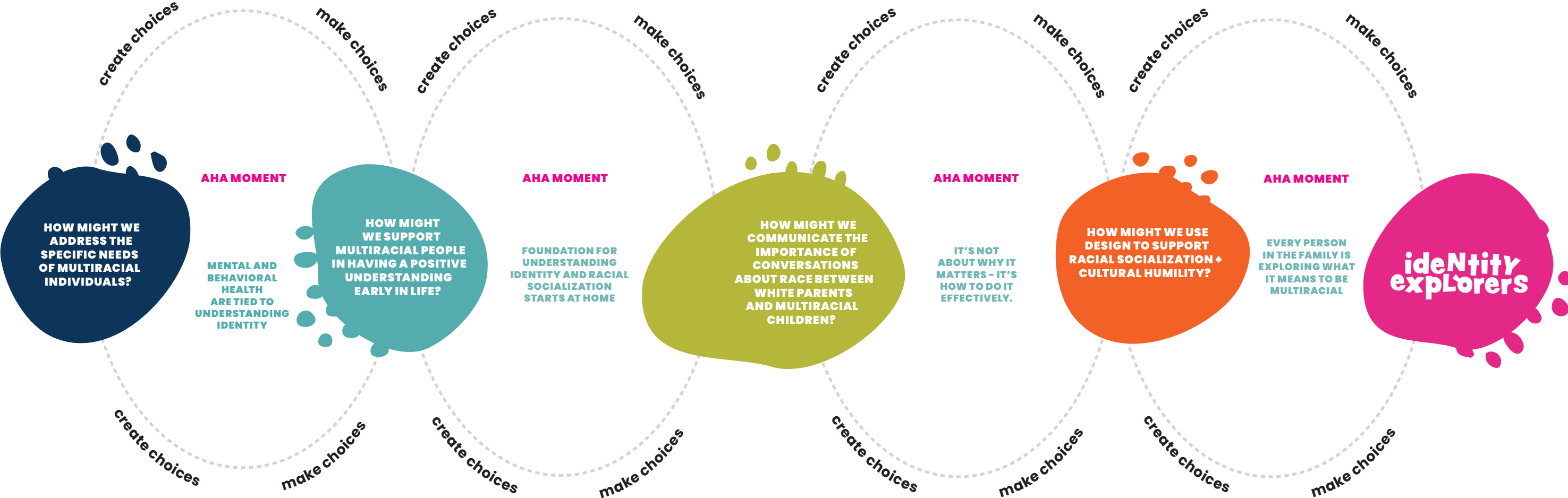
age 15-17
more racial or ethnic identity responses to social challenges

identity explorers



SCOPING

My Convergence and Divergence, Illustrated



Process Snapshot

52

Hours of Recordings
from Interviews

14

Direct Conversations with
Subject-Matter Experts

100

Ideas for Thesis
Presented

27

Conversations with parents of
Multiracial Children

8

Conversations with
Young Multiracial Adults

11

Conversations with Multiracial
Children

A Few of the Experts



DORIMAR MORALES
CSW and Family & Couples Therapist
at Ackerman Institute

"The Multiracial Family & Couples Project (MRFCP) addresses a deficit in our knowledge of couples who are engaged in relationships that transcend racial and ethnic categories as defined by the dominant culture. In addition, it hopes to bring into focus how we come to a comprehensive, yet specific, understanding about the ways in which the legacy of racism, experiences pertaining to institutionalized racism, and day-to-day embodiments of racial oppression and privilege, shape the narrative of each person in the family and couple and in turn impact their interactions within their family."



CARLOS QUINTANA
Trainer at Center for Racial Justice in
Education, Multiracial Adult & Parent

"Center for Racial Justice in Education offers trainings, consultation and in-depth partnerships to educators who want to dismantle racism in their classrooms, homes and communities. This organization also hosts TALKING ABOUT RACE FOR PARENTS: RAISING CHILDREN FOR RACIAL JUSTICE. This training provides parents, guardians and caregivers with strategies for how to talk about race and racism with their children. Participants learn how children see race, gain skills for approaching age-appropriate conversations with a racial equity lens, and practice strategies to promote positive racial identity development in children."



MARISA FRANCO
Asst Professor in Counseling & Psych
Services at Georgia State University

Marisa Franco is an assistant professor in the Department of Counseling and Psychological Services. Her research focuses on the health effects of the invalidation of Multiracial individuals' identities. She also focuses on racial group boundaries between monoracial and Multiracial groups.

Franco has received the Ethnic Minority Achievement Award and the Flagship and ALL STAR fellowships from her alma matter, the University of Maryland. She is passionate about mentoring students in research and in particular, students of color.

Racial Socialization

is defined as how family members transmit views, values, and information around race.⁴

Cultural Humility

is defined as practicing respect and understanding toward an individual's cultural background and experience⁵

INITIAL FINDINGS

Research has shown that children as young as 7 years old are able to detect racial and ethnic discrimination aimed at them.¹

Ethnic identity development or ethnic-racial identity (ERI) development includes how a person chooses to identify and the attachment that gets formed to ethnic group(s). Ethnic identity is characterized as part of one's overarching self-concept.

With some few exceptions, ethnic and racial identity development is associated positively with good psychological outcomes, psychosocial outcomes (e.g., better self-beliefs, less depressive symptoms), academic outcomes (e.g., better engagement in school), and health outcomes (e.g., less risk of risky sexual behavior or drug use).

Early experiences for children are considered crucial in regards to their ethnic identity development. "2 or more races" is the fastest growing demographic in the U.S. and by 2060, the percentage of individuals who identify as Multiracial will triple. In a recent study, children who reported frequent experiences with discrimination were at higher risk of depression, anxiety, oppositional behavior and other mental health problems — **but only among the children with less developed ethnic-racial identities.**

Children who are raised with a strong sense of their ethnic-racial identity are more resilient to the psychological harm that such discrimination inflicts. Ethnic racial identity often forms through social interactions, which poses added challenges for Multiracial individuals - who are both part something and part something else. Many white parents feel unprepared to speak with their children about their racial identity, and conversations with their children are often **reactive** when emotions are high as opposed to **proactive** and laying a foundation for understanding that gets built over time.

Different Patterns of Racial Socialization ²

WHITE PARENTS

answering questions

teaching equality

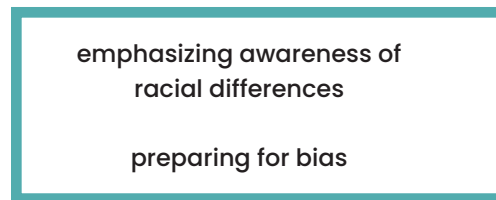


PARENTS OF COLOR

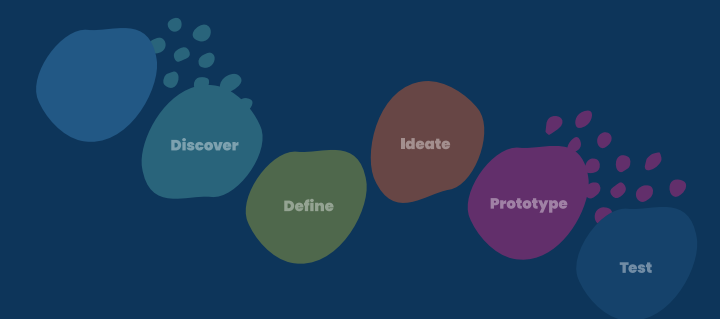
answering questions

teaching equality

emphasizing awareness of racial differences
preparing for bias



1,2 Rollins, Alethea, and Andrea G. Hunter. "Racial Socialization of Biracial Youth: Maternal Messages and Approaches to Address Discrimination." Family Relations: Interdisciplinary Journal of Applied Family Science, National Council on Family Relations, 22 Jan. 2013.



Identify

Given the growth of this population, the lack of attention to how Multiracial families talk about race is concerning. Racial socialization plays a formative role in shaping racial identity, mental health, and susceptibility to discrimination.¹

1 Hughes, D., Rodriguez, J., Smith, E. P., Johnson, D. J., Stevenson, H. C., & Spicer, P. (2006). Parents' ethnic-racial socialization practices: A review of research and directions for future study. Developmental Psychology, 42, 747-770. doi:10.1037/0012-1649.42.5.747

BILL OF RIGHTS FOR RACIALLY MIXED PEOPLE

By Maria P.P. Root

I HAVE THE RIGHT...

Not to justify my existence in this world.
Not to keep the races separate within me.
Not to be responsible for people's discomfort with my physical ambiguity.
Not to justify my ethnic legitimacy.

I HAVE THE RIGHT...

To identify myself differently than strangers expect me to identify.
To identify myself differently from how my parents identify me.
To identify myself differently from my brothers and sisters.
To identify myself differently in different situations.

I HAVE THE RIGHT...

To create a vocabulary to communicate about being Multiracial.
To change my identity over my lifetime -- and more than once.
To have loyalties and identification with more than one group of people.
To freely choose whom I befriend and love

**Maria P. P. Root, PhD, is author of
"The Multiracial Experience: Racial Borders as the New Frontier"**

**"There isn't
one thing I feel
confident in
speaking
with him about
when it comes
to his race."**

**- White Mother of
Multiracial Son**

DIGGING DEEPER

Multiracial people comprise the fastest growing racial group and are projected to comprise 1 out of every 5 people in the U.S. by 2050. Yet, despite this growth, Multiracial individuals continue to be understudied and underserved. This lack of attention in studies have caused limited resources and support for biological, interracial families. What existing research that does exist typically highlights the shortcomings of the common strategies of interracial families that minimize the importance of race.¹ Many studies list that one way of instilling understanding of identity in children is **"racial socialization"**. It is defined as how family members transmit views, values, and information around race. How people begin to shape their racial identity begins at home and from birth is influenced by the narratives that they receive from others.

THE CHALLENGES

Racial socialization plays a formative role in shaping racial identity, mental health, and susceptibility to discrimination which poses added challenges for those parenting Multiracial children. Their children simultaneously belong to more than one racial group but often feel that they don't 'fit in' with any group of people. These parents of Multiracial children, by definition, are of different races. These parents' experiences of race and racism are different, and their experiences will be different than their child because of the range of appearances and experiences that Multiracial people may go on to live. **There is no such thing as a singular Multiracial experience.**²

SPACE TO EXPLORE

Every Multiracial experience is unique – even siblings within the same family can have very different outward appearances and internalized feelings about what it means to them to be Multiracial. However, Multiracial individuals across racial groups share common racial experiences: possessing family members from racial group(s) that are different from their own, inhabiting a society that often invalidates and threatens the ability to identify as belonging to multiple groups—potentially making affirming family members particularly important.³ Many white parents feel unprepared to speak with their children about their racial identity, but acknowledge its importance and are unsure of how to take action in instilling a positive understanding.

Results of one study highlight the practice of **"cultural humility"** as a way to instill such positive understanding and minimize unintended microaggressions within families.⁴ The term was coined originally as part of a therapist's multicultural orientation and it refers to a way of interacting with others as opposed to a specific skill or study.⁵ One study noted that when caregivers practiced cultural humility, it led to lower depressive symptoms in their children. From what is found in literature and how it is applied as part of Identity Explorers, it means creating space to let one's child explore their racial identity in a safe and supportive environment. It comes down to being respectful, open to explore, and avoiding making assumptions or choices for others.

1 Rockquemore, K. A., Laszloffy, T., & Noveske, J. (2005). It all starts at home: Racial in Multiracial families. In David L. Brunsma (Ed.). *Mixed Messages: Multiracial Identities in the "Color Blind" Era*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Press.

2 Crawford, S. E., & Alaggia, R. (2008). The best of both worlds? Family influences on mixed race youth identity development. *Qualitative Social Work: Research and Practice*, 7, 81–98. doi:10.1177/1473325007086417

3 Hughes, D., Witherspoon, D., Rives-Drake, D., & West-Bey, N. (2009). Received ethnic-racial socialization messages and youths' academic and behavioral outcomes: Examining the mediating role of ethnic identity and self-esteem. *Cultural Diversity & Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 15, 112–124. doi:10.1037/a0015509

4 Franco, Marisa. "Cultural Humility & Identity." American Psychological Association, 2018.

5 Hook, J. N., Davis, D. E., Owen, J., Worthington, E. J., & Utsey, S. O. (2013). Cultural humility: Measuring openness to culturally diverse clients. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 60, 353–366.

Insights That Moved Me

White parents want the best life for their children – and that means shielding them from racism they’ve never experienced.

“I want to raise her so that the conversation [about her being biracial] never even has to happen – but I feel like if it does have to be a conversation, it’s probably going to come up because of something other kids and friends of friends say to her. And if it does happen, I’m probably going to tell her ‘Go talk to your dad.’”

– *White Parent of Multiracial Children*

“I’ve definitely been in situations where I was the only white person [...] and i don’t want that for him. It’s my job as a parent to make his life as easy as possible.”

– *White Parent of Multiracial Child*

Many white people have been conditioned to be unaware of their ethnicity on a daily basis.

“White parents have not systemically been disenfranchised and discriminated against so when they see it happening to their kids they’re a little more vocal about it because it’s so jarring to them. Whereas parents of color have kind of normalized it and you would see it as a fact of life because that’s the life that they’ve grown up in.”

– *Family & Couples’ Therapist*

“White parents could go their entire lives without talking about race. That wouldn’t register as strange for them.”

– *Racial Justice Trainer*

Many white parents feel they’re being called on to utilize a skill they’ve never developed.

“One of my friends said it best – everything is different when you have skin in the game. And I think that that’s true because now everything’s going to affect me personally, you know, I’ve thought a lot about what am I going to do if somebody says something racist to my child on the street.”

– *White Parent of Multiracial Child*

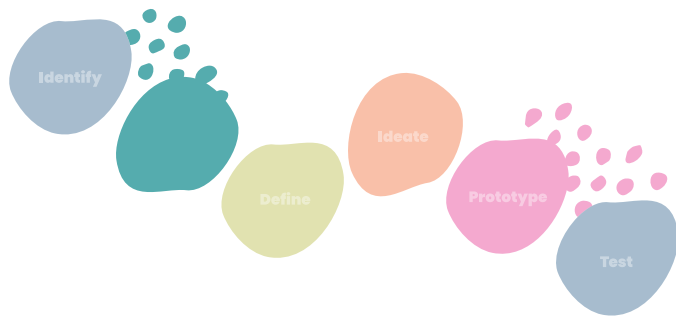
“What if I get it wrong in the moment? Whatever I say will be absorbed.”

– *Parent of Color of Multiracial Child*

Lack of identity is allowing discrimination to have a harder impact.

“If you grow up in a community where you are the only person who looks like you, you are probably going to be ‘othered’ and it’s probably going to impact how you develop [...] and it’s maybe going to make you ashamed of the parts of your identity that made you different.”

– *Family & Couples’ Therapist*



Discover

Brave Space

allows individuals to express themselves, challenge one another in a positive way, and learn from one another

Safe Space

is intended to be free of bias, conflict, criticism, or potentially threatening actions, ideas, or conversations

Through interviews, design research, reviewed articles, and prototyping, I found that when it comes to talking about race with their Multiracial children, white parents are doing the best they can with the limited experience and access to resources and community that they have.

Identity Explorers operates on the belief that it can increase the number of opportunities and access to **brave space** to discuss race with others and also increase the number of connections between people with similar challenges who might have formed a community otherwise. By doing this these parents will develop that base understanding alongside their children that will lead to more conversations and socialization down the line. Through this, white parents can take action in instilling positive understanding of ethnic-racial identity in their Multiracial children.

“There just needs to be a space for the difficult conversations to happen.”

- White Parent of Multiracial Children

SYNOPSIS

While these parents are doing the rewarding and difficult work that is a normal part of parenting, they are also navigating a world of race and culture previously unknown to them. They are stepping into an entirely new understanding of their own identity and what it means to be white in America.

ASSUMPTIONS

Identity Explorers considers the following to be true:

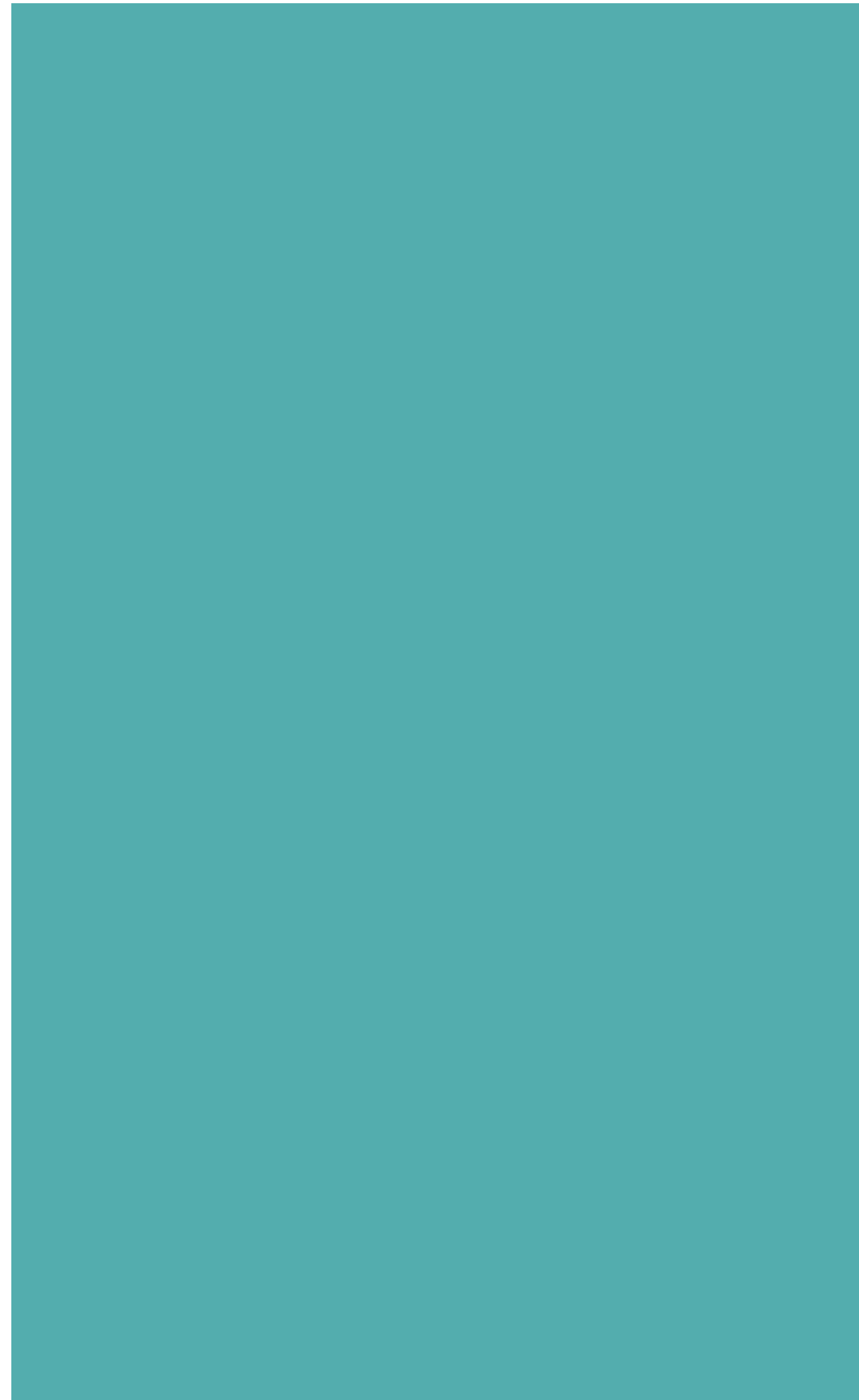
- > Conversations at a young age will build a foundation for understanding and lead to more conversation in the future
- > Parents expressing comfort with racial conversations while their child is at a young age will lead to children approaching them in the future
- > Parents want their children to feel comfortable speaking with them about anything

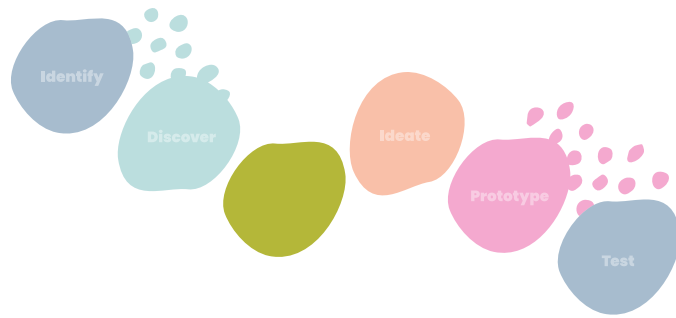


I asked parents if they were to participate in this project, what would their ideal outcome be?

“... if I had a takeaway that taught me how to be better at what I’m already trying to do.”

“... to have someone that could understand because they also were in the same situation.”





Define

All parents are doing the best they can with the access to resources, experience, and people they have to support them.

WHY THE SHIFT?

Conversations and workshops with parents revealed new findings. There was a shift in my mindset and how I was framing my problem statement. **The issue wasn't that white parents don't want to talk with their children about race.** White parents I spoke with recognized that these conversations are important. **They want to engage in these conversations but aren't sure how or where to begin.** My project goal moved from inspiring parents to speak with their children about race to creating the tools and space for these conversations to make parents feel prepared and confident enough to take action and engage in these conversations with their children.

HOW CAN DESIGN SUPPORT THIS?

My focus shifted. My project goal moved from communicating the **importance** white parents to speak with their children about race to creating the tools and space for these conversations in order for those parents to feel **prepared** enough to take action and engage in socializing their children.





What are some pain points and moments of enjoyment?

WHAT ARE SOME CHALLENGES YOU'RE FACING RIGHT NOW?

What to expect? Milestones of Multiracial kids?	I don't know what I don't know.	How to talk about being white in a way that isn't problematic?	How to navigate preconceived notions and stereotypes	How to respond to offensive questions and being 'the other' in spaces
How to avoid getting bullied or left out, "othered"	Outside family pressure to maintain traditions	How to blend and respect radically different cultures	It feels like it's all on my shoulders.	Where can I turn to for questions? None of my friends.

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS YOU ALREADY ENJOY DOING WITH YOUR CHILD?

Reading books and comic books	Going to the park and on walks	Watching movies and TV	Arts and crafts & gardening	Imagine and roleplaying games
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WHAT OBJECTS MAKE HAVING CONVERSATIONS ABOUT ANYTHING EASIER?

We take more photos than ever and don't do anything with them	We take more photos than ever and don't do anything with them	We take more photos than ever and don't do anything with them	We take more photos than ever and don't do anything with them	We take more photos than ever and don't do anything with them
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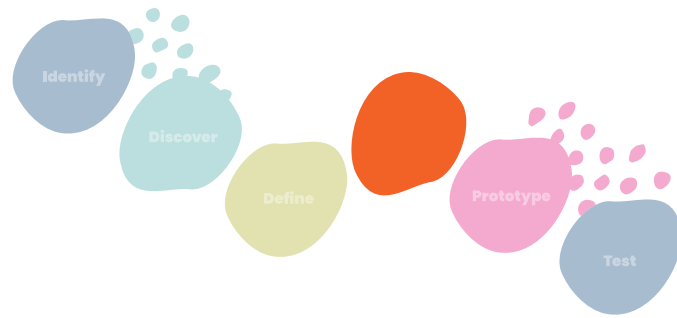
Parents of Multiracial Children

**Brainstorming
Session
Is Here**



INTERVENTION
identity explorers

INTERVENTION



Ideate

DIVERGE ON A LARGE QUANTITY OF POSSIBLE IDEAS THAT COULD EVOLVE INTO SOLUTIONS.

Now that I had identified that co-learning about Multiracial identity was my leverage point, it was time to think of how to do that. The first step was brainstorming and ideation, focused loosely around the idea of how **creating, play, and books** might have a part in the final solution. It was at this point in the process that I was trying to answer what would be the most sustainable intervention - from the sense of ongoing interaction with minimum effort and maximum impact. Being a parent is hard... and time consuming. Scheduling interviews and co-creation sessions in itself had been a feat, so a top priority was how to make the invention as **low barrier to entry, respectful of busy schedules, and part of something they already enjoyed doing as a family.**

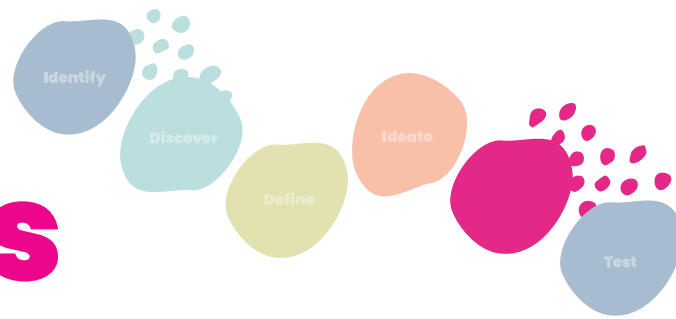
I brainstormed and asked for additional input my community to generate 100 different ideas for how the next phase of the project might take physical form. From the list of 100, a sorting process began. The first pass-through eliminated 40 ideas from the set: ideas that were the least interesting, least connected to the main idea, or just ones that were "tired." The second pass-through selected 10 ideas that were the most interesting, most challenging, and the ones with the most potential. From there, I found myself hovering around 3 main ideas: challenges for families to complete in a game like structure for badges, time capsule film-making as families, and a play on the double meaning of salons as Victorian conversation spots and a place to build positive feelings towards aspects of Multiracial identity. I started to flesh them out and give them names to make them more tangible. It's from here that I began prototyping with parents in order to gain feedback and refine the next version.

- Artifacts
- Lifsize posters tracing child
- Mixtapes with inserts from family
- Digital Paper Dolls - fashion community
- Building a meal placemat questions
- Make Your Own Treasure Map
- Storyboarding The First Multiracial Prince(ss)
- Rewriting History Scripts like Hamilton
- Shoe Carving - Impact You Leave
- Hatchimals - build a representational monster
- Me Map - more than 'part'
- Harry Potter - houses, spells, colors
- Mosaic of different aspects
- Aspect Cycle Plate Decorating
- La Borinquena - artifacts + superpowers
- Carry with Me - Decorate Bags
- Matching Cards to Learn More
- I Am Whole - Puzzle Building
- Build Robot for Representation
- Giorgia Lupi symbol blankets
- Gig Posters - lineup represents heritage
- Conversation Starters
- Hair Salon + Conversation Salon
- Your Culture Game Sharing Collective
- Movie + Snack Nights with others
- Cootie Catcher Conversations about race
- Scavenger Hunt to facilitate research
- Planting Gardens that Represent Culture
- Prompt popsicle sticks - create journey
- Pay-It-Forward Cultural Packages for Others
- Pop Up Library - Other Parents
- Mad Libs with Other Parents

- Community Art
- Dice with Aspects - Learn More
- Tree + Roots Game on Map
- Growing wall/ground chalk mural
- Bopit - with recordings and interactions
- Playing cards - represent each parent
- Heritage Scouts - guidebook + badges
- Building Animal Avatars - represent heritage
- Empty Speech Bubble Color-in Comics
- Sculpture Park Neighborhood Pop Up

100 THESIS IDEAS PROMPT

Prototypes



IDENTITY EXPLORERS

Gamifying Structure

Similar to scouts, there would be weekly challenges to complete and earn badges and achievements.



MIXED TAPES

Creating Content

Families would build a video narrative for the child to receive. This documentary involving multiple generations would create space for conversation.



MULTIRACIAL SALONS

In-person Community Building

These pop-up events would be brought to parents' neighborhoods as a gathering space to exchange ideas about how to build understanding in their children about aspects of racial identity.



IDENTITY EXPLORERS (REFINED)

System of Guided Narrative Building + Sharing

What can we do to understand this? Being brave and going on racial identity journeys - exploring, bonding, and learning together. This impact was prototyped and proven through a four week test flight with small projects each week that resulted in building a narrative for the child to receive at the end.

The project is a living system where family members co-own the narrative that can be documented again and again over time. Crowd-sourced content ensures that the material is catered to and representative of the people engaging with and creating it. New narratives develop new pathways. There are 2 narratives that need to shift: (1) Individual narratives, the stories that individuals tell themselves, and (2) family narratives, the stories that the family unit holds to be true. The stories produced from the event could shift individual narratives, but the family narrative begins to shape new ideas of what's possible, together. Ultimately, this could alter the way that the family members continue to develop or understand their respective ethnic racial identities.

What is one thing that you would want your family to walk away with after participating in this project?

ideas for others i want to be more thoughtful engagement w/ my kids

Increased knowledge and skills to navigate inter racial topics, community of support

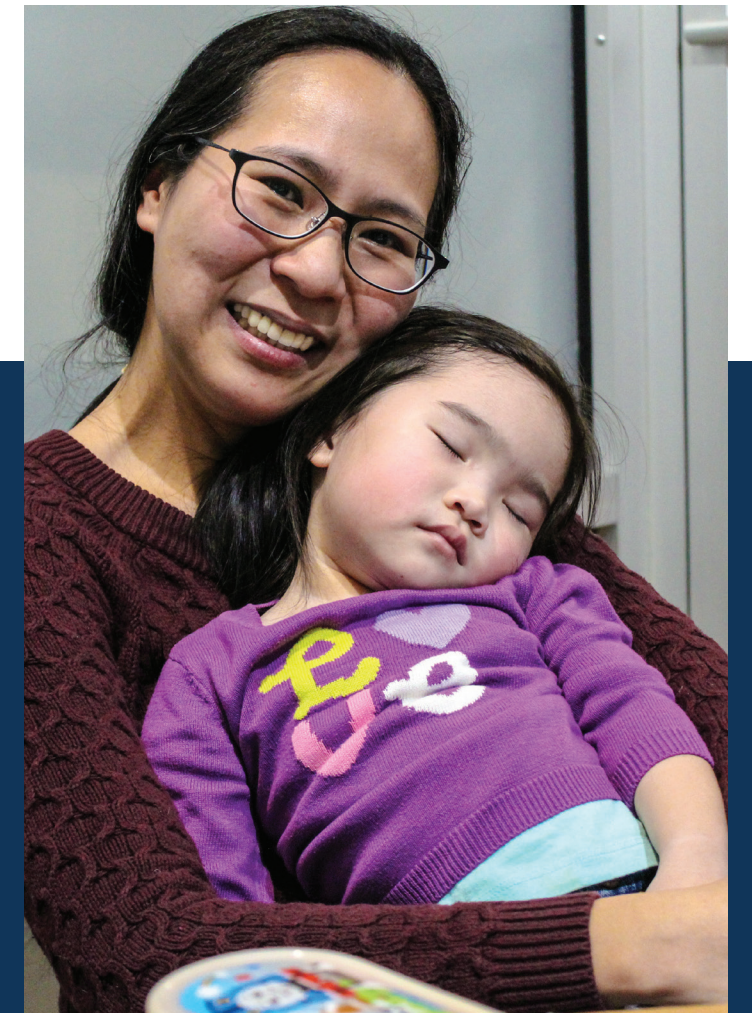
something meaningful for my son to use over time

"I like the first one because it's kind of like a personal trainer."

- Parent of Multiracial Child

"Mixed Tapes helps my child, and the Salon pop-ups help me. It's hard to choose."

- Parent of Multiracial Child



Piloting

DEVELOP SOME OF THE IDEAS INTO TANGIBLE OBJECTS.

Version 1



How might we use the comfort of creating + books + play to open up conversations?

Parents and children use the field guide together to build a narrative with their families and friends. This concept builds on something that's been done forever - stories being passed down through generations - and uses structured activities to make it more accessible and tangible.

The best conversations with my children seem to revolve around play. Whether we are interacting in a creative way or listening to music together, seeking their opinion or reaction always leads to something interesting.

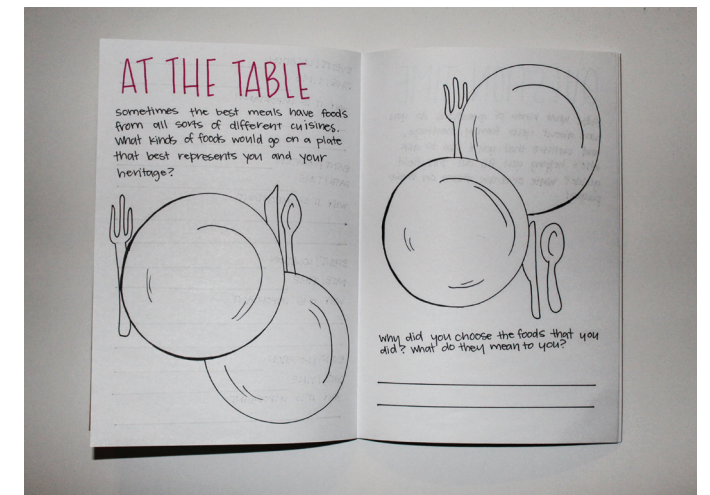
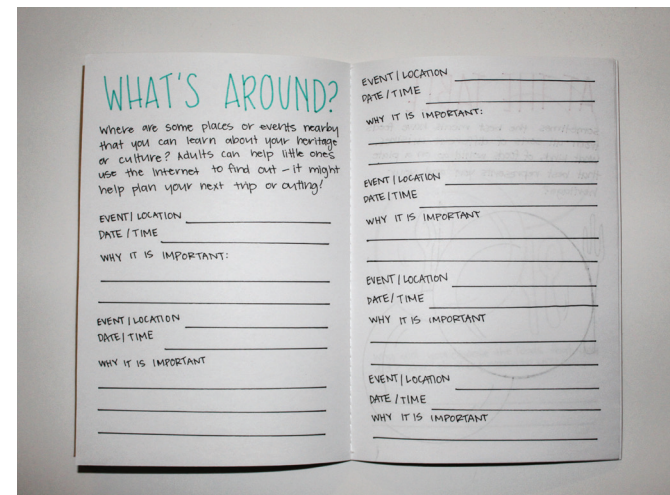
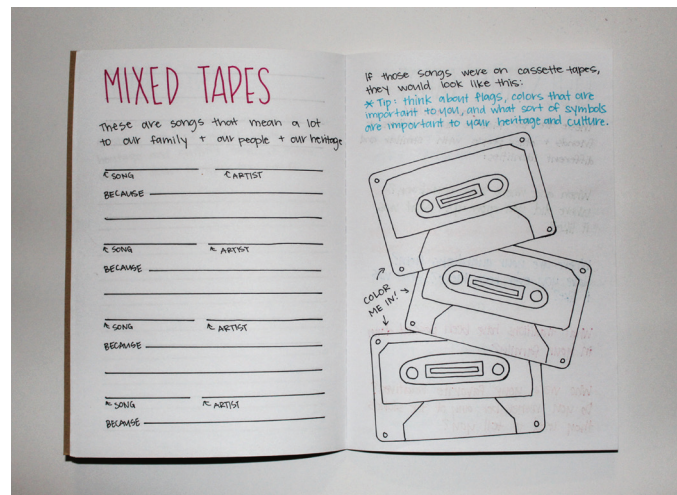
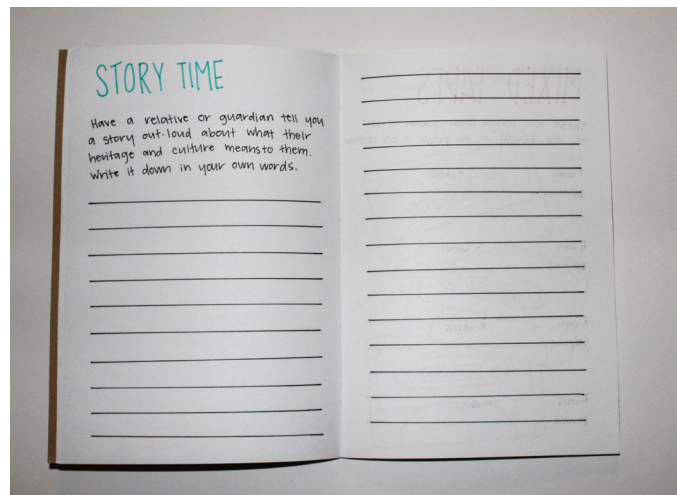
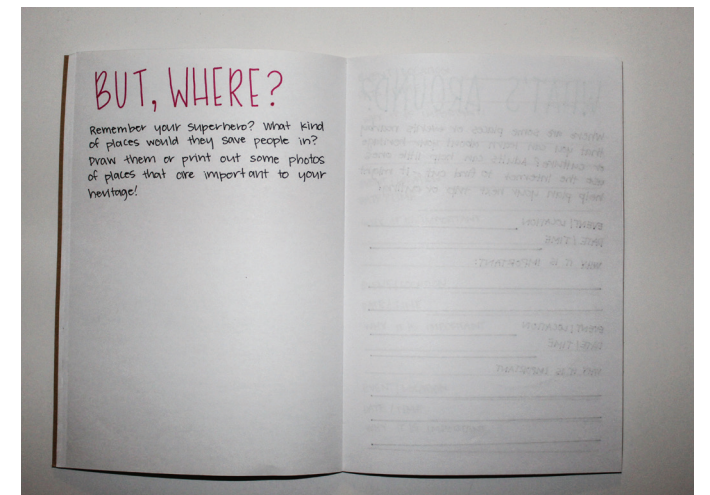
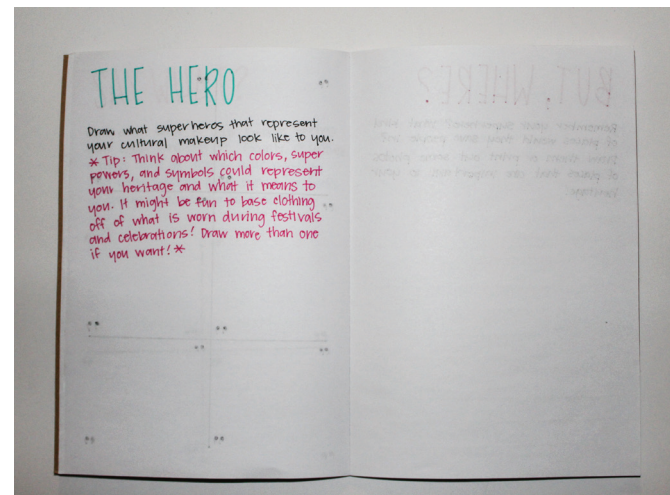
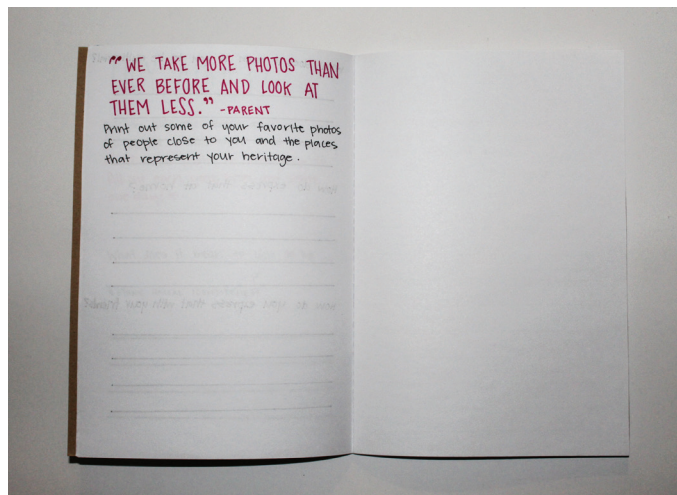
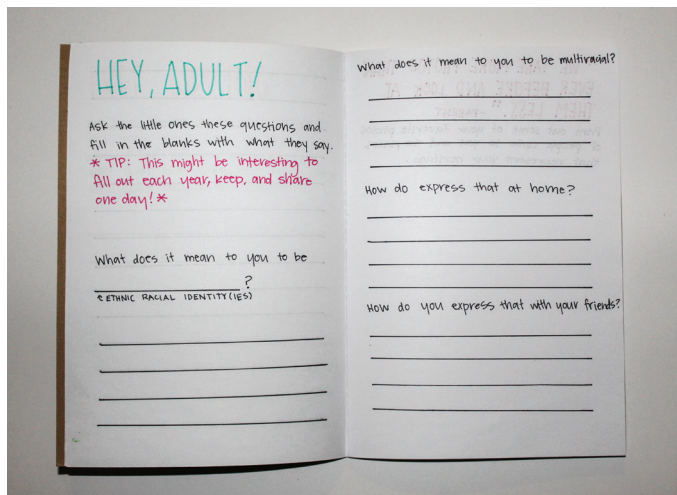
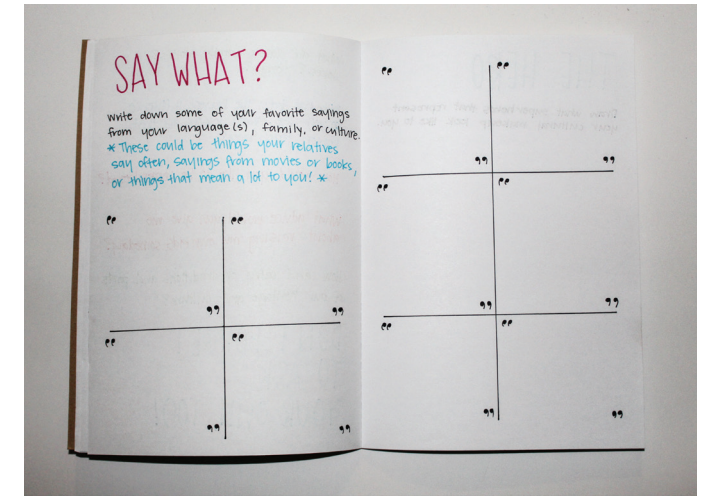
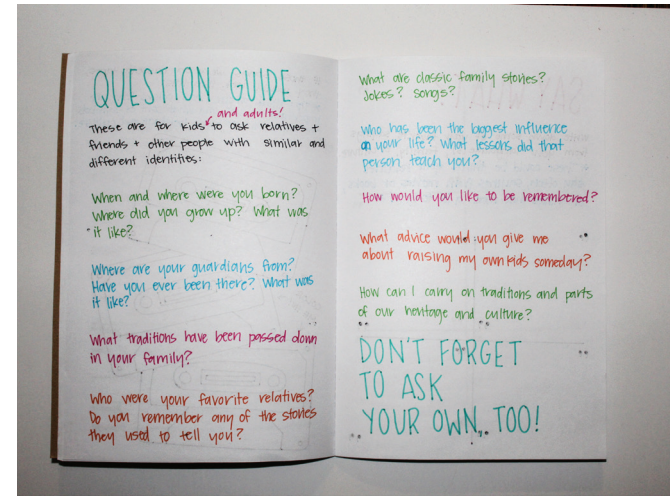
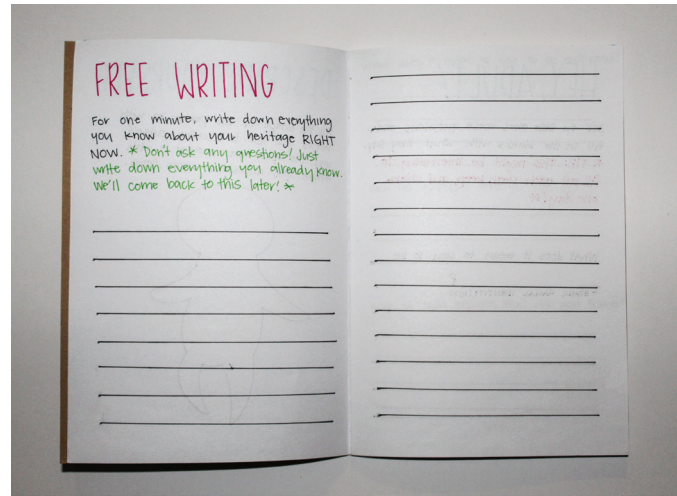
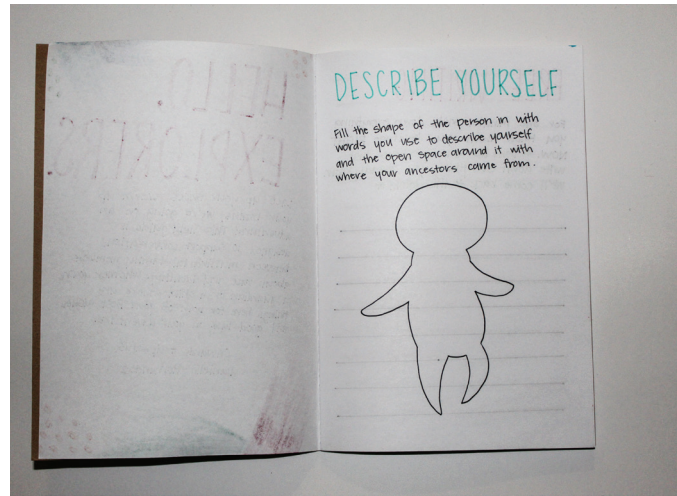
IT LOOKS WONDERFUL AND IS SUCH A NECESSARY TOOL. THANKS FOR SHARING. I LOVE SEEING SOMEONE TURN THE MULTIRACIAL RESEARCH INTO A PRACTICAL AND USEFUL TOOL. IT SEEMS YOU COVERED A LOT OF ASPECTS OF CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT: FOOD, EVENTS, HISTORY ETC. I ALSO LOVE HOW ITS A TOOL FOR PARENTS AND KIDS ALIKE.

MARISA FRANCO
Assistant Professor in Counseling and Psychological Services at Georgia State University

I like working on creative projects with my children. Whether it's a project for school or one that I come up with, stimulating the kids' creativity is always fun for me.



Snapshot of Version 1 Prompts





Version 2

How can we improve the next version?

Families from all over New York City helped me test the concept and process to be learned from and replicated. Piloting happened over 4 weeks and was facilitated over social media and text. I conducted weekly phone calls with the parents to pose monitoring questions, assess, and refine the prompts for the following week.

WHAT I HOPED TO LEARN

In order to open up conversations and lead to positive understanding, I wanted to find out what sorts of prompts parents and activities were drawn to as well as what developmentally made sense for different ages. I wanted to facilitate a positive experience through an inanimate object that could be replicated or learned from.

WHAT I LEARNED

It helped parents know what impact they've already had on their children. Parents expressed being so unsure of how the messages they were sharing with their children about racial identity were being received by them. Identity Explorers really gave them the space to quantify that for themselves by seeing how they interacted with the Field Guide and lead to confidence and behavior change.

What You'd Get

a hand delivered Field Guide to document your family's narrative about race and culture with activities and join an online movement of other multiracial families doing the same

What You'd Do

participate in a Facebook Group where I'd post a quick prompt each week for 4 weeks and document your journey along the way in order to make the next version of the Field Guide even better

ideNtity expLorers

Four Week Piloting + Monitoring Feedback



1. For one minute, have your child write down everything they know about their racial identity right now. Or, have them say it and you can write it down for them!
2. Print out your favorite pictures of people and places from all of your race/culture(s) and paste them into the Field Guide. Write notes about what each photo means to you!
3. Interview an older relative about traditions that have been passed down in the family and what being [their racial identity] means to them and what they would want it to mean to the Lil' Explorer.

“The one minute time limit was hard – she’s not that into writing so I would give more time.”

– Parent of Multiracial Child

“Interviewing seems like a bigger ask – I would make that a longer term goal for the entire thing.”

– Parent of Multiracial Child



1. Draw what superheroes that represent your Multiracial makeup look like to you! *tip: think about which colors, superpowers, and symbols could represent your heritage and what it means to you. It might be fun to base clothing off of what is worn during festivals and celebrations! Draw more than 1 if you want.
2. Kids! What kind of questions do you have about your family, heritage, race, and culture that you’d like to ask who’s helping you fill out this guide? Write or draw them on these pages.
3. Mixed tapes! This is an activity for family members and friends to contribute to. What are the songs that mean a lot to your family? Write down the song title, artist, and reason it holds so much meaning. If those songs were on a cassette tape – what would it look like? Draw them out! *tip: think about flags, colors that are important to you, and what sort of symbols are important to your heritage or culture.
4. Explore NYC! Where are some places or events nearby that could learn about your heritage or culture? Adults can help little ones use the internet to find out – it might help plan your next trip or outing! Create an itinerary for ‘exploring’ your identity in your community.

“I don’t know any Portuguese areas in NYC so now I want to find them.”

– Parent of Multiracial Child

“We went to restaurants which was great for him and easier to understand.”

– Parent of Multiracial Child



1. Guardians (and kids, if they can!) write down some of your favorite sayings from your language(s), family, or culture. These could be things your relatives say often, sayings from movies or books, or things that mean a lot of you!
2. Family movie night! Make a list of different movies that represent different aspects of your heritage. Make sure to ask questions during it and at the end ask the little explorer what stuck out for them and what are some things they never knew before?
3. Do you have many books? There are probably some great finds at the local library! Can you find any new gems about being Multiracial? Look for children’s books, graphic novels, and other fun ways to learn more about aspects of your culture.
4. What are famous people with ethnic-racial makeups similar to yours? Find some photos and make notes about what you all find so special about them! Think of celebrities, artists, scientists – and other people that are great to look up to!

“It’s making me more aware of how I can use what’s around me to have these conversations.”

– Parent of Multiracial Child

“There’s not a lot of Filipino American books – this encouraged me to write my own and my daughter can illustrate it.”

– Parent of Multiracial Child



1. What’s new here? Have your child tell you everything new they’ve learned and/or what it means to them to be Multiracial now after these past four weeks and working on the Field Guide. Document what they say and anything they’d like to draw in the book!
2. What would your family’s cultures look like as a meal? What food items would represent the Little Explorer’s Multiracial identity? Some families may have already drawn that – but what would cooking it be like? Make the meal and document the process and final result in the Field Guide!
3. Construction party! How would you all represent your family and what it means to be Multiracial using construction paper? Have some friends over or make your own at home and send them pictures to see what they say. Learn about yourselves through making and others’ cultures, too!

“I realized I’ve looked at our different cultures as either/or but hadn’t considered what it’s like to be both/and.”

– Parent of Multiracial Child

“Because she’s so young, appreciating differences in others is really tying it together and the activity with friends was a way to really see that.”

– Parent of Multiracial Child

CATHY



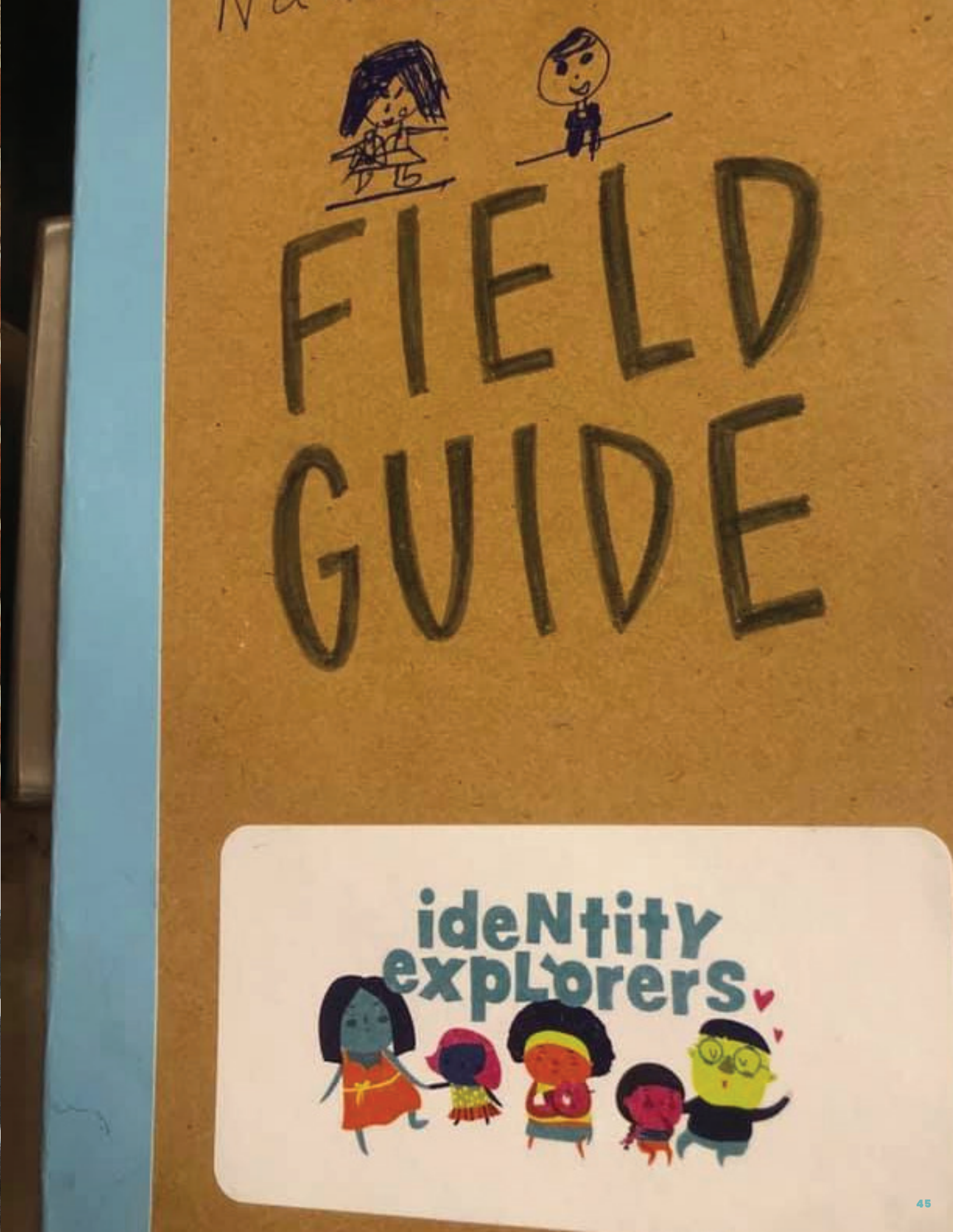
"SHE WILL HAVE A JEWISH STAR ON THE TOP OF HER SHIRT. SHE WILL BE HOLDING THE JAMAICAN FLAG AND SHE WILL BE WEARING PURPLE AND BLUE BOOTS WITH A PINK GEM ON THE TOP LEFT."

AVIYA
Multiracial Child

Can this work?

"I'm telling her things all the time and she's kind of filling it in, but I never just flat out asked her, what do you think about yourself? So that was a nice thing to have... and to have a base understanding of how much I'm telling her really sticks."

- Parent of Multiracial Child



Multiracial Parent Survey



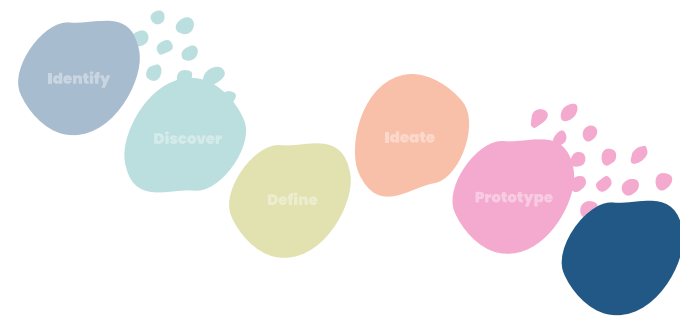
How often do you touch with parents like you? (rank 1 - 4)
 Phone Call Social Media Direct Message
How often do you already use often during the week? (check all that apply)
 Twitter Other:
How often do you read online / social media in a given week?
How often do you use a website that was dedicated solely to this would you use it?
Maybe, if:
How often do you do with your child daily or weekly?
How often do you have per week?
How often do you dedicate to it each week?



identity
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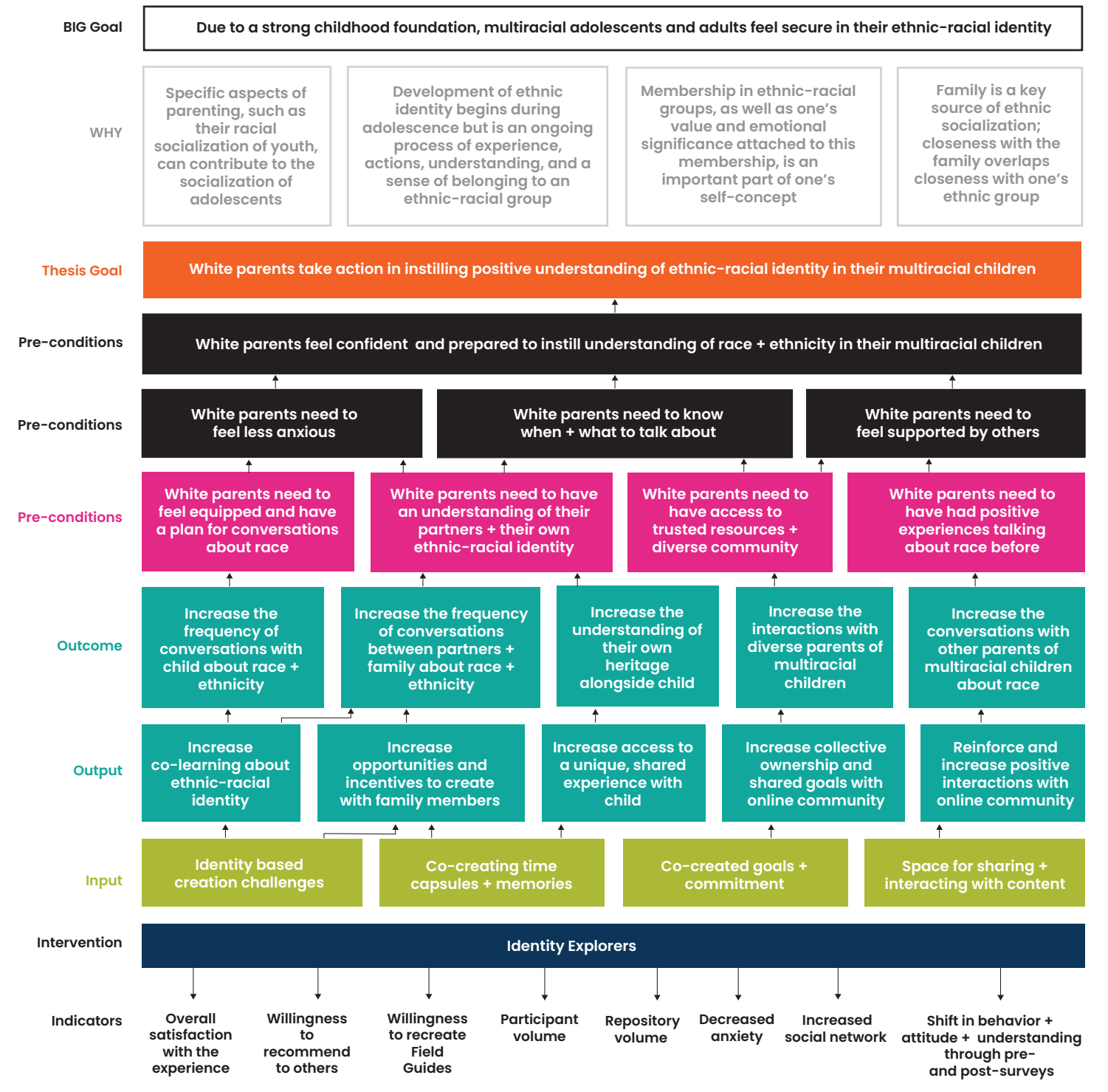
LEARNINGS

LEARNINGS



Test

Theory of Change



Indicator Matrix Table

THEMES	INDICATOR	DESCRIPTION	COLLECTION	FREQUENCY	LEVEL
Level of satisfaction with the experience	% positive / whole	> Likert scale results	Pre-Survey Post-Survey	Beginning Weekly End	Output Goal
Willingness to recommend to others	% positive / whole	> Likert scale results > # of people recommended	Post-Survey Counting	End	Output Goal
Willingness to recreate Field Guide	% positive / whole	> Likert scale results	Post-Survey	End	Output Goal
Participant volume		> # of parents participating	Counting	Weekly End	Input
Repository volume		> # of Field Guides submitted	Counting	Weekly End	Input
Frequency and quality of conversations with child about race + ethnicity	% positive / whole	> # of conversations reported > Likert scale results from parents > Likert scale results from child	Pre-Survey Post-Survey Counting	Beginning Weekly End	Outcome Goal
Frequency and quality of conversations between partners + family about race	% positive / whole	> # of conversations reported > Likert scale results	Pre-Survey Post-Survey Counting	Beginning Weekly End	Outcome Goal
Level of understanding of their own heritage	% positive / whole	> Likert scale results	Pre-Survey Post-Survey	Beginning End	Outcome Goal
Frequency of interactions with diverse parents	% positive / whole	> # of interactions reported > Online community report	Pre-Survey Post-Survey Counting Social Media Analytics	Beginning End	Outcome Goal
Quality of interactions with online community	% positive / whole	> Likert scale results > Online community report	Pre-Survey Post-Survey Social Media Analytics	Beginning Weekly End	Output Goal
Quality of experiences talking about race	% positive / whole	> Likert scale results	Pre-Survey Post-Survey	Beginning Weekly End	Outcome Goal

Evaluation Approach

OUTCOMES	KEY QUESTIONS	EVALUATION METHOD
Increase the frequency of conversations with child about race + ethnicity	> How comfortable do you feel initiating conversations about racial identity with your child? > How confident do you feel about instilling understanding in your child about their Multiracial identity? > How often do you discuss race with your child? > How well do you think your child understands their ethnic-racial identity? > After your experience, what do you feel motivated to do with your child? > How likely are you to recreate this Field Guide with your child?	Pre-Survey Post-Survey
Increase the frequency of conversations between partners + family about race + ethnicity	> How prepared do you feel to express your values/opinions about your heritage? > How often do you discuss race with other adult family members? > How well do you understand your partner's heritage?	Pre-Survey Weekly Calls Self Reporting Post-Survey
Increase the understanding of their own heritage alongside child	> How well do you understand your own heritage? > How would you rate the quality of interactions between you and your child regarding race and identity?	Pre-Survey Weekly Calls + Self Reporting Post-Survey
Increase the interactions with diverse parents of Multiracial children	> Would you recommend this experience to another parent or family member? > After your experience, what do you feel motivated to do with other parents?	Pre-Survey Weekly Calls Self Reporting Post-Survey
Increase the conversations with other parents of Multiracial children about race	> How has this experience affected how you talk about race?	Pre-Survey Weekly Calls Self Reporting Post-Survey

Monitoring + Evaluation Approach

PROTOTYPING

To address the monitoring of the intervention I established an approach to measure impact for each quantitative and qualitative indicator along the way. The online piloting portion of Identity Explorers includes weekly calls to monitor progress and fine tune for next week's challenge.

MONITORING

Key Question: How might we prove a need for and satisfaction with the Field Guides?

Quantitative Indicators

- > Overall satisfaction with the experience
- > Willingness to recommend to others
- > Willingness to recreate Field Guides
- > Participant volume
- > Repository volume

Qualitative Indicators

- > Intervention goal alignment
- > Asking kids what they learned from what they did
- > Parents doing selfie recaps

APPROACH

To measure this, I will use a mix of quantitative and qualitative questions and continue to probe "why do you think that is?" to responses.

REFLECTION

To address the evaluation of the intervention, I asked key questions to be answered through reflective assessment and linked to my Theory of Change outcomes.

EVALUATION

Key Question: How might we prove early signs of white parents taking action to instill positive understanding of ethnic-racial identity in their Multiracial children?

Quantitative Indicators

- > Decreased anxiety
- > Increased social network
- > Shift in child's understanding
- > Shift in parent's understanding

Qualitative Indicators

- > Shift in parents' behavior
- > Shift in parents' feelings of anxiety + preparedness

APPROACH

To measure this intervention, a baseline measurement will be taken at the beginning of the program, then as the participants leave the program, they will be asked to answer the same questions. The aim is to determine whether there is an increase in Multiracial pride, exposure to multiple cultures, and dialogues about race.

Methods of Collection

GET TO KNOW YOU FACE GENERATION

Inspired by Giorgia Lupi's work, Data Portraits at Ted, this data visualization is designed to help participants learn more about the other parents embarking on this journey with them and also establish a baseline to compare measurements to after the session ends. Parents engaging in the piloting portion answer a few questions about themselves to generate a representation of their experience to share with the others.



Do you feel comfortable initiating conversations about racial identity with your child?

YES NO

How well do you think your child understands their ethnic-racial identity?

NOT VERY PRETTY WELL

Does your child often get mislabeled by others?

YES NO

Do you feel confident answering your child's questions about their ethnic-racial identity?

YES NO

Do you have friends who are also parents of multiracial children?

YES NO

How comfortable are you talking about race issues with others?

NOT AT ALL SOMEWHAT VERY

RESET

Do you feel comfortable initiating conversations about racial identity with your child?

Yes No

How well do you think your child understands their ethnic-racial identity?

Not Very Pretty Well

Does your child often get mislabeled by others?

Yes No

Do you feel confident answering your child's questions about their ethnic-racial identity?

Yes No

Do you have friends who are also parents of multiracial children?

Yes No

How comfortable are you talking about race with others?

Not At All Somewhat Very

ideNtity explorers Pre-Survey

How comfortable do you feel initiating conversations about racial identity with your child?

Not At All Somewhat Neutral Somewhat Very

How confident do you feel about instilling understanding in your child about their multiracial identity?

Not At All Somewhat Neutral Somewhat Very

How often do you discuss race with your child?

Not At All Somewhat Neutral Somewhat Often

How would you rate the quality of interactions between you and your child regarding race and identity?

Low Somewhat Neutral Somewhat High

How well do you think your child understands their ethnic-racial identity?

Not At All Somewhat Neutral Somewhat Very

How often do you discuss race with others?

Not At All Somewhat Neutral Somewhat Very

How prepared do you feel to express the values about your heritage?

Not At All Somewhat Neutral Somewhat Very

How well do you understand the other parent's heritage?

Not At All Somewhat Neutral Somewhat Very

How well do you understand your own heritage?

Not At All Somewhat Neutral Somewhat Often

What do both of you want to walk away with after engaging in this project with your child?

ideNtity explorers Post-Survey

How comfortable do you feel initiating conversations about racial identity with your child?

Not At All Somewhat Neutral Somewhat Very

How confident do you feel about instilling understanding in your child about their multiracial identity?

Not At All Somewhat Neutral Somewhat Very

How often do you discuss race with your child?

Not At All Somewhat Neutral Somewhat Often

How would you rate the quality of interactions between you and your child regarding race and identity?

Low Somewhat Neutral Somewhat High

How well do you think your child understands their ethnic-racial identity?

Not At All Somewhat Neutral Somewhat Very

How often do you discuss race with others?

Not At All Somewhat Neutral Somewhat Very

How prepared do you feel to express the values about your heritage?

Not At All Somewhat Neutral Somewhat Very

How well do you understand the other parent's heritage?

Not At All Somewhat Neutral Somewhat Very

How well do you understand your own heritage?

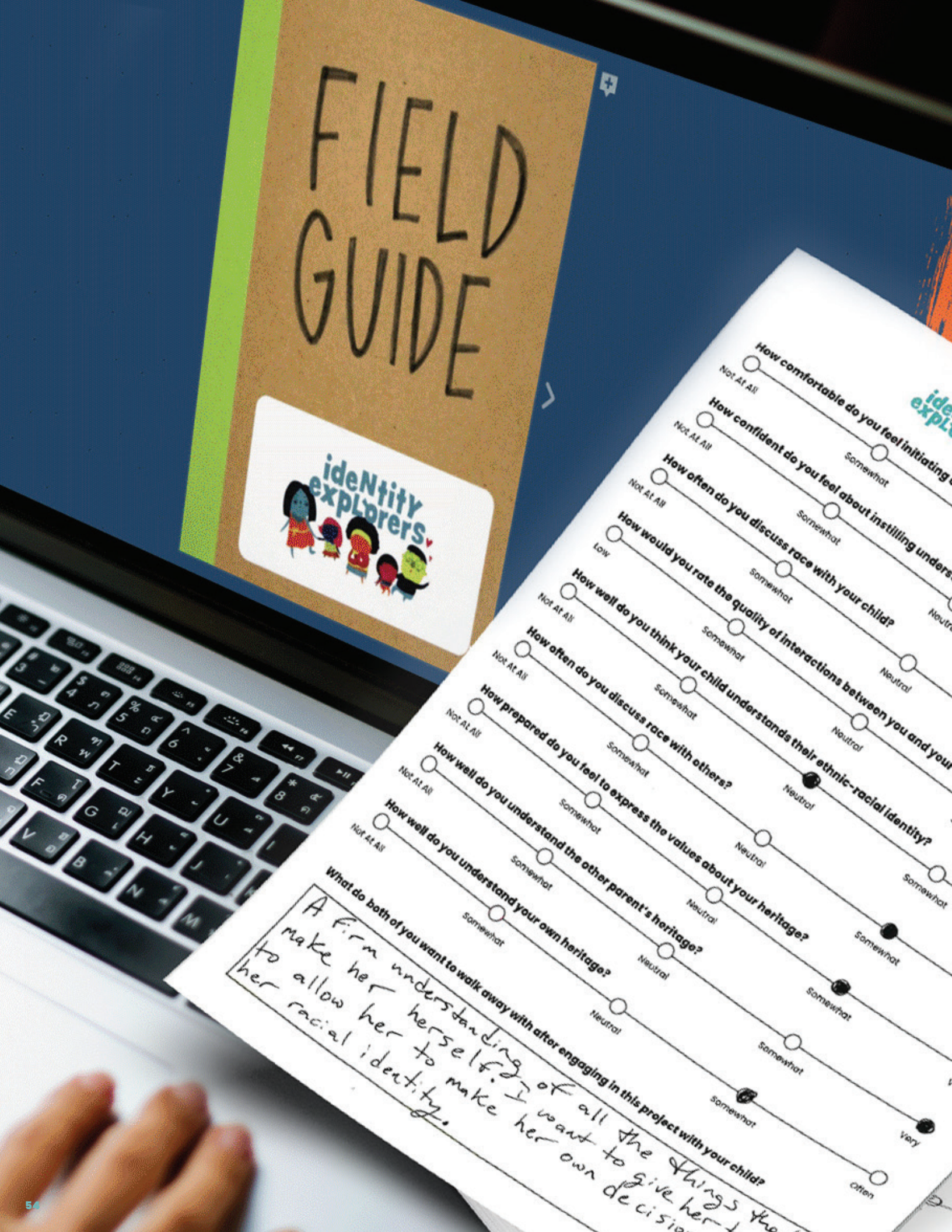
Not At All Somewhat Neutral Somewhat Often

Do you want to recreate this Field Guide again? (circle one) Yes No

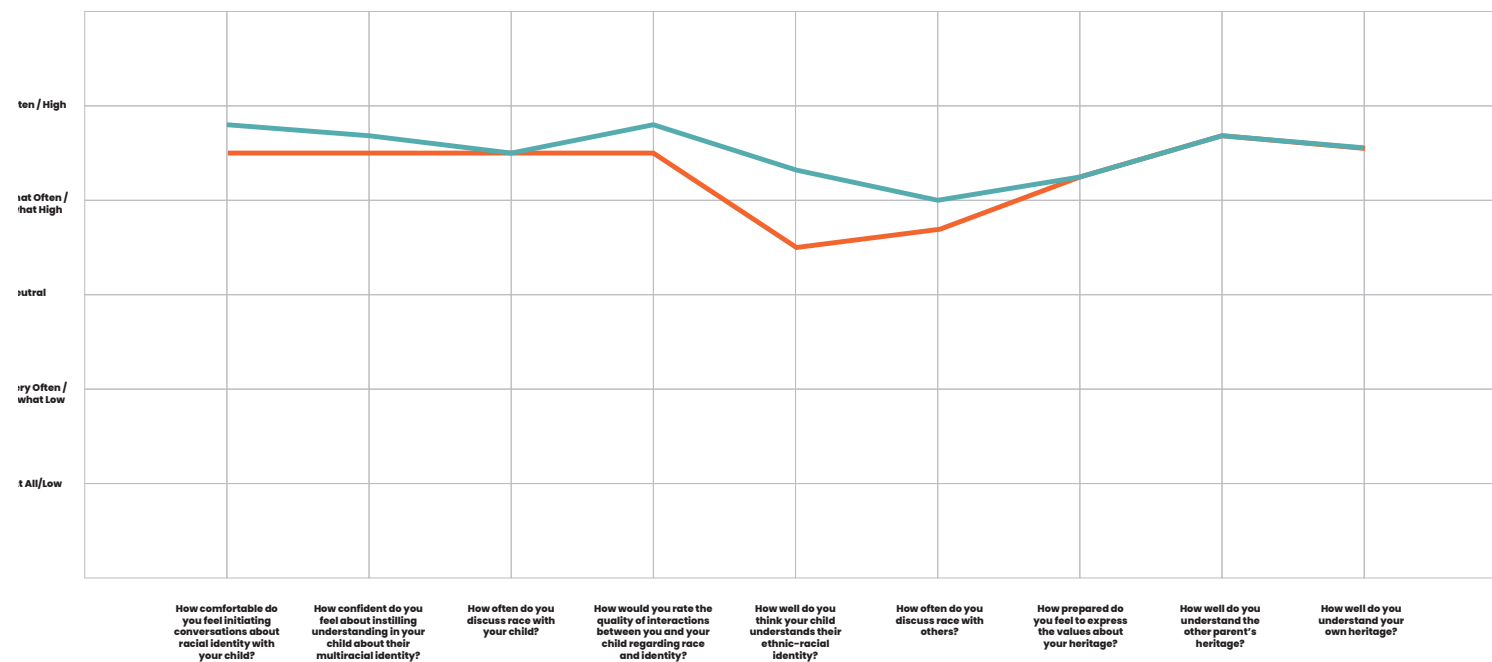
Would you recommend this experience to another parent or family member? (circle one) Yes No

After your experience, what do you feel motivated to do with your child?

How has this experience affected how you talk about race?



Survey Responses



AVG OF PRE-SURVEY RESULTS

AVG OF POST-SURVEY RESULTS

20% increase in how well parents think their child understands their ethnic racial identity



Apps Dani Sess The famii TP
https://www.multiracialchild.com/queens
DSI19Slack Envato Elements Thesis
identity explorers
You are invited to a Brainstorming Session.

FIELD GUIDE
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NEXT identity explorers STEPS

NEXT STEPS

Looking Beyond

MORE FAMILIES

Multiracial families from all over NYC have already participated in this project, and my biggest goal moving forward is to expand the community to involve even more diverse voices.

MORE REFINING

Initial piloting and prototyping has happened, but more testing and refinement is needed. There is no universal Multiracial experience and the Identity Explorers system should reflect that by being flexible enough to cater to different the different forms family trees take, appropriate for different age groups, and inclusive of different skill sets.

MORE ROBUST

As the Field Guide repository continues to grow it will eventually need more robust back-end development and technical support. A drag and drop builder for the website in order to select activities that make sense for each family's skill set and interests and agency in that process is another goal.

MORE PARTNERS

Organizations with values aligned with Identity Explorer's mission of cultural awareness and celebration of diversity would make ideal partners for distributing these Field Guides to the widest possible audience and incorporating them into programming that already exists.

MORE FUNDING

Because Multiracial people are an underserved community, this project is intended to be free or very low cost to all participants. Grants and additional funding will be needed to support the growth of this project. I'm applying for summer programming and fall grants through the Brooklyn Arts Council.

Reflections

LESSONS LEARNED ALONG THE WAY

Throughout this process I've grown so much in being mindful of the designer's role and responsibility in human-centered design. Along the way, my practice was shaped by constantly checking in with families and expressed needs and goals. As the designer of Identity Explorers I wanted to facilitate a space for others to discuss race; not for me to talk about it. My process will always be constantly growing and becoming what it means to design with people and not just for them.

PROJECT SUCCESSES

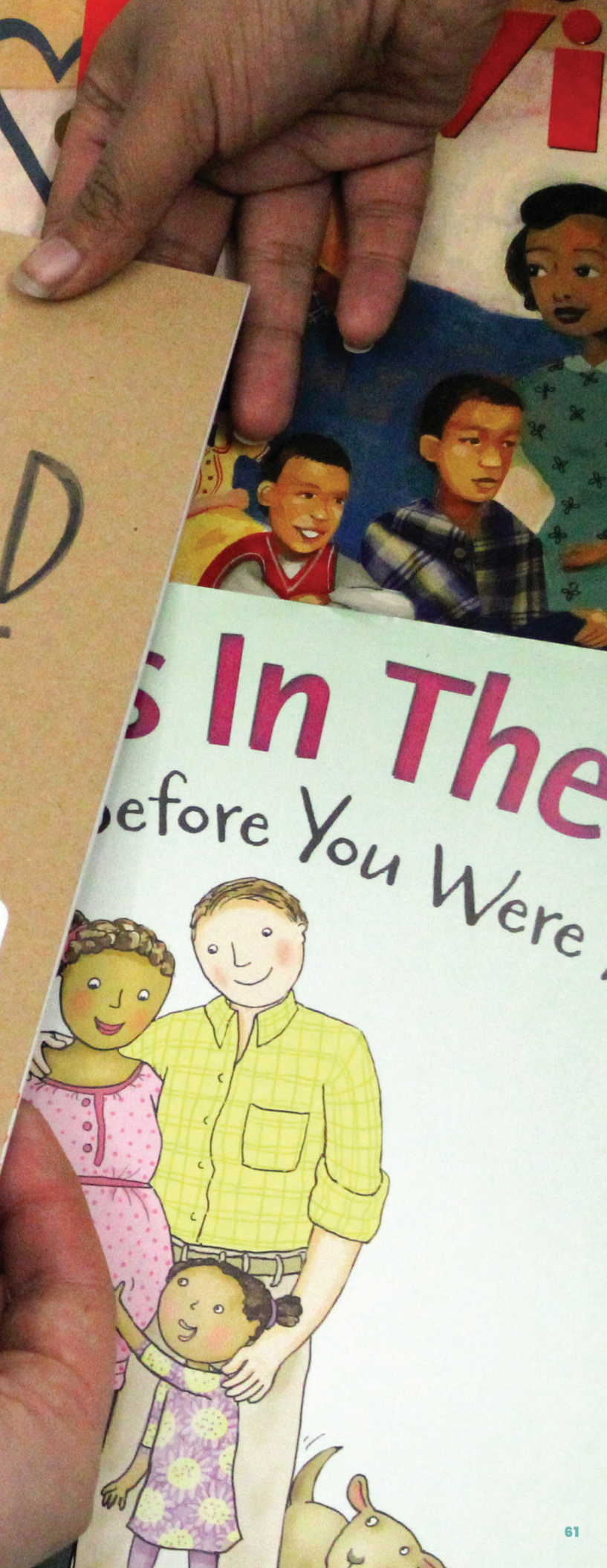
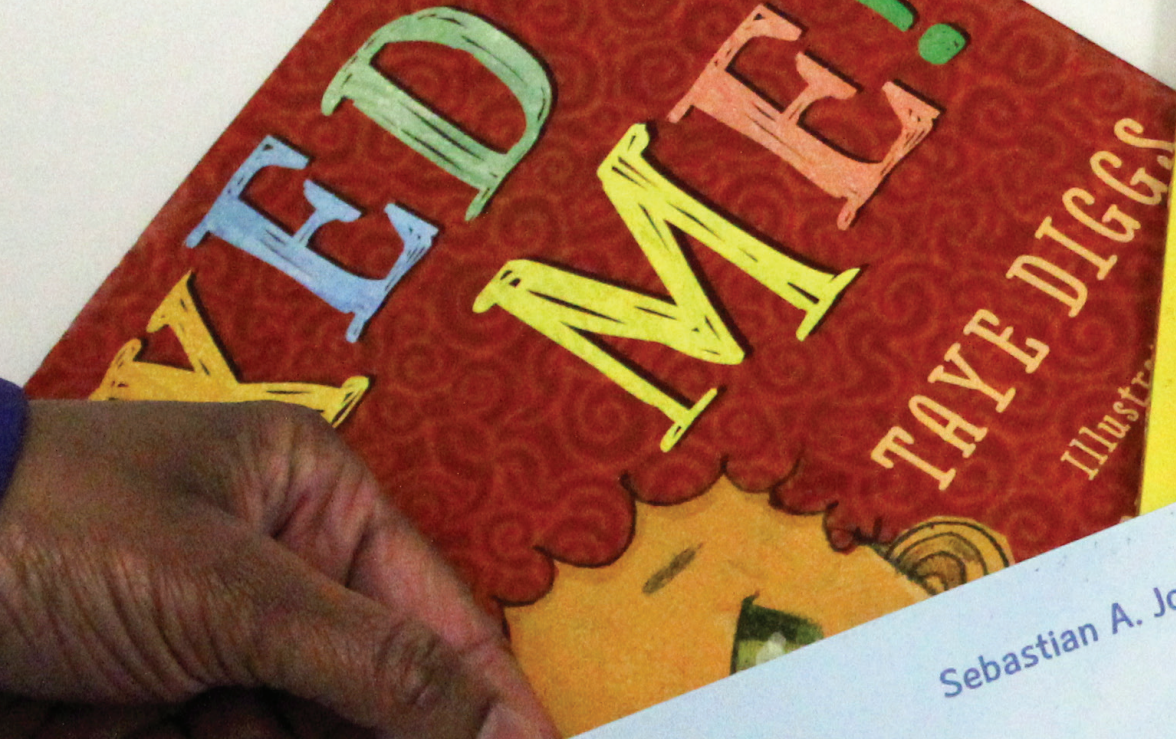
Identity Explorers is system for Multiracial families to open up conversations and learn from each other to define for themselves what being Multiracial means to them. It helped parents know what impact they've already had on their children. Parents expressed being so unsure of how what they were doing and saying affected their children and Identity Explorers really gave them the space to quantify that for themselves by seeing how they interacted with the Field Guide and lead to confidence and behavior change.

PROJECT SETBACKS

Time constraints, scheduling conflicts, and ambiguous solutions made partnering for development and distribution of the Field Guide challenging. But every challenge revealed another opportunity.

PERSONAL LEARNING & GROWTH

This project in particular has brought me to the people and education I will carry with me forever. Speaking with so many families and experts about ethnic-racial identity has in many ways grown my own understanding of what being Multiracial means to me. Letting go to the idea of being the expert and learning alongside everyone else involved has in many ways grown my own understanding of what being human means to me.



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**“If I have
seen
further
it is by
standing
on the
shoulders
of giants.”**

- ISAAC NEWTON

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I came to New York City for grad school almost two years with a few friends in the area but no real community to call my own. I'm most proud of the work I did to build that, the people that let me in, and those who have been there for me from a distance. Identity Explorers wouldn't exist without all of you and I wouldn't be the person I am without becoming the people I've intentionally surrounded myself with.

Thank You

FOR BEING THERE FOR ME FROM THE BEGINNING...

My constant drive and lateral hero, Lu Lawrence
My parents, both by blood and in spirit
My siblings, who I owe my drive to succeed
My partner, Collier, and our beloved boy, Benny
Every mentor, but especially Brian Buckles and Debra Sanborn

FOR SHAPING WHAT MULTIRACIAL MEANS TO ME BY SHARING WHAT IT MEANS TO YOU...

Marisa Franco, Vanessa McNeal, Trey Nielsen, Kelsey + Tony Crawford, Jenn Kaiser + Robert, Peter Benzoni + Pavithra Lakshmi, Petronella Lugemwa, Anne McNelis, Carlos Quintana, Liz Kantner, Nadine Graham-Kaplan (and Arie and Aviya), Dorimar Morales, Latrice Lacey, Katie Foster, Dhara Shah + Eric Barbour, Dana Marino, Aaron Jackson, Kye Weaver, Aaron Jackson (and Jazzy), Razia and Bushra Lacerda, Jo-Ann Grande Pjevac (and Maya + Anja)

THE INSTITUTIONS AND SPACES THAT MADE THIS A REALITY...

Design for Social Innovation, The Ackerman Institute's Multiracial Family and Couples Project, The Center for Racial Justice in Education, Ifetayo Cultural Academy, Greendesk Coworking Space, Julie Sturm from BRIC Arts Center, Christopher Mule from Brooklyn Arts Council, and my entire Statement Arts family

AND FINALLY THE 2019 COHORT OF DSI.

My people who met my preference and let me grow in every direction

Rutvi Gupta for her guidance and support in making sense of this entire process. Lu Rodrigues for loving me fiercely and never letting me forget what's really important. Taylor Sokolowski for having the words I never do and thinking more clearly than I ever could. Mary Beth Lumley for demonstrating to me everything that I could become. Umila Singh for art directing my experience and being the life coach I've always wanted.

Single Moms' Thesis Support Group and Self Confidence Club for not letting me give up.

