The Hate U Give: A Talk Back Series
Summer Bridge Program Cohort

Between June 19th and July 10th, Bridge to Success (BTS) facilitated its second cycle of The Hate U Give Talk Back Series for Waterbury Hospital’s Summer Bridge Program. Thirty seven (37) students completed the complete series, representing different Waterbury schools and grade levels. The majority of participants identified as African-American/Black (44%). More than half (55%) of participants identified as Latinx of various racial identities. Nearly half (47%) were in 7th or 8th grades, while over a quarter (28%) were high school upperclassman in 11th and 12th grades.

With a slightly altered curriculum to fit the Summer Bridge Program schedule, The Series spanned over 2 months with four, 2-hour sessions to discuss the following topics:

1. Racial Equity Terms & Definitions
2. School Culture
3. Identity
4. Healing & Liberation

Racial Equity Terms & Definitions
Participants were asked to complete a blank crossword puzzle within 10 minutes to test their current knowledge of the 26 racial equity terms we would be discussing throughout the course. Students, on average, answered 10 words correctly. The three most correctly identified terms were colorism, racism & anti-blackness, respectively. On the final day, students were asked to attempt the crossword puzzle for a second time. Students, on average, answered 19 terms correctly.

“It was amazing. This was the most interesting class I’ve ever experienced! I want to learn more.”
African American girl, 15
Kennedy High School

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**School Culture**
Students shared experiences with racial discrimination, inequities, intentional and unintentional racism, etc. and how this contributes to the overall school culture. Students first focused on student experiences with administration, staff and teachers, moving on later to discuss students’ peer relationships.

**Identity**
Post surveys indicated that **Identity** was the most meaningful class to the participants. Students engaged in discussions and activities that explored the ways our understanding of race and interaction with racism impact self image. This was an opportunity for young people to both identify the origins and impacts of racial messaging and reclaim their own narratives.

“**This makes me want to create a movement with my friends and family!”**

**Healing & Liberation**
On the final day, participants walked through a visual gallery of photos taken during iconic racial justice movements (i.e., Civil Rights Movement, Black Power Movement, Black Lives Matter). Students identified the similarities and differences in strategies, desired and achieved outcomes and basic components to building and sustaining a movement.

After three sessions of discussing the ways racism and oppression harm people of color, it is vital that the curriculum close with a focus on the ways organizing and movement building can serve as a healing practice for marginalized communities. One student, an 11th grader attending Waterbury Arts Magnet School, reported on their feedback survey, “This makes me want to create a movement with my friends and family!”