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## **MASTER'S PROJECT: THE INTERSECTION OF SHAME AND WHITE SUPREMACY: A LEADERSHIP JOURNEY**

Perri Devorah Erlitz Doll

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MASTER'S PROJECT: THE INTERSECTION OF SHAME AND WHITE SUPREMACY: A  
LEADERSHIP JOURNEY

A Capstone Project Presented

by

Perri Devorah Erlitz Doll

to

The Faculty of the Graduate College

of

The University of Vermont

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Master of Professional Studies  
Specializing in Leadership for Sustainability

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Committee:  
Connor Stedman, M.S., Coach  
Matthew Kolan, Ph.D., Capstone Leadership Team

## 1:1 Introduction

The driving question for my capstone project was, *What role does shame play in perpetuating systems of white supremacy and how can I utilize my leadership capacities to interrupt those systems within myself and my community?* I initially responded by suppressing my feelings of shame through performative allyship. My ultimate goal was to move beyond allyship to mutual liberation in both my personal and professional lives. I explored my essential question within two distinct phases. The first phase consisted of two parts: developing and implementing an antiracist curriculum in my fourth grade classroom and developing a leadership capacity building somatic awareness practice to process the embodied trauma of white supremacy. The second phase consists of utilizing my newly developed theory of change (See Appendix A) to embody and influence policy-based changes within my community.

The effects of white supremacy and its intersections with shame exist in nearly every aspect of my life, and I witness it all around me. The broader context of my project was a mapped fractal; any shift within the system would have ripple effects. My goal was to recognize, investigate and intervene in how the connection between shame and white supremacy can be found within myself, my family, my school community, the broader local Jewish communities, my city, and beyond.

I examined these contexts simultaneously through an iterative and nonlinear approach. This required research into core resources on shame, empathy and leadership practice, and transgressive education. My process included an inquiry-based research approach to literature and resources about the pervasiveness of white supremacy and antiracist approaches to dismantling those systems. What came from this research was a combination of both a deep process of introspection and relational work that shifted my leadership in completely unexpected ways.