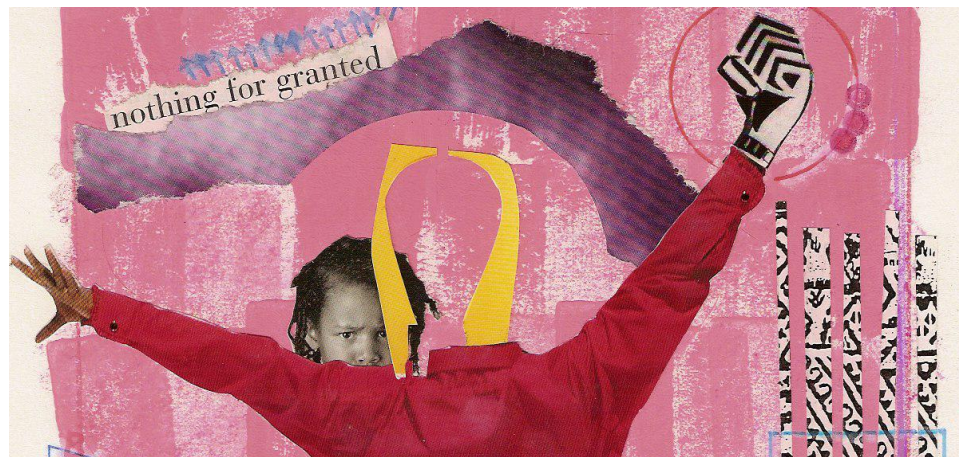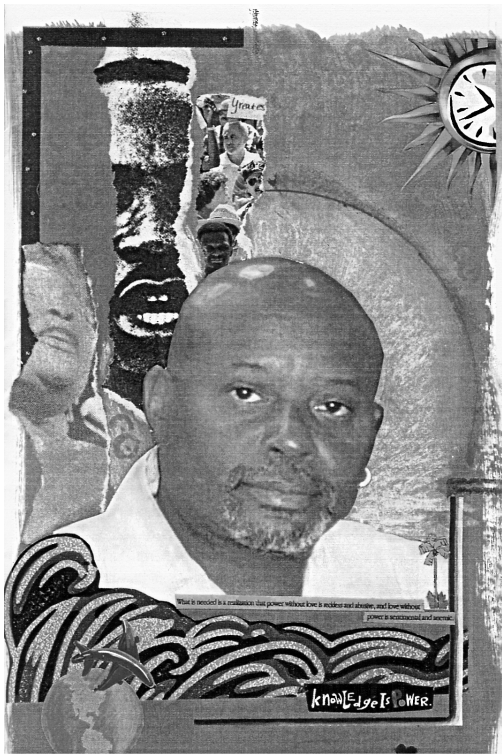# dismantling Racism

2016 workbook

dRworks
www.dismantlingracism.org

This workbook is designed for use in a Dismantling Racism workshop. The workshop is one step in a longer process developed initially by Kenneth Jones and Tema Okun. It builds on the work of many people, including (but not limited to) Andrea Ayvazian, Cynthia Brown, Bree Carlson, Beverly Daniel Tatum, Eli Dueker, Nancy Emond, Jonathan Henderson, Vivette Jeffries-Logan, Michelle Johnson, Jonn Lunsford, Jes Kelley, Sharon Martinas, jona olsson, Suzanne Plihcik, David Rogers, James Williams, Sally Yee, as well as the work of the Peace Development Fund, Grassroots Leadership, Equity Institute Inc, the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, the Challenging White Supremacy workshop, the Lillie Allen Institute, the Western States Center, and the contributions of hundreds of participants in the DR workshops to date. Many people's thinking and experience have contributed to the work you see here. The work is never finished, as the pages you see here change regularly, based on the feedback and thinking of colleagues and workshop participants.

> If you have come to help me,
> you are wasting your time.
> But if you have come because
> your liberation is bound up with mine,
> then let us work together.

Australian Aboriginal Elder Lilla Watson

This workbook, and the dismantling racism process, are offered in memory and celebration of the life and work of the late Kenneth Jackson Jones (1950-2004). Kenneth was a visionary and a leader, an organizer and a teacher, our friend and colleague. The dismantling racism process was developed with his leadership. We believe that its value in the lives of so many people and organizations is a demonstration and celebration of Kenneth's enormous contribution to our continued struggle to realize our vision of a just world.

We do not claim to have 'discovered' or to 'own' the ideas in this workbook any more than Columbus can claim to have discovered or own America.

This material is copyrighted in order to insure our ability to use it, not to prevent yours.

As you can see from the credits, this material has been collectively developed over many years by many people, some within our group and others who are colleagues in the work or who have attended workshops.

While we have made original contributions, these have been possible because of our relationship with people

and communities doing the work.

Therefore, we encourage people to copy these pages and use the workbook as much as possible.

Feel free to adapt it for your own needs. Our only request is that you acknowledge or credit us when you use the materials –

dRworks at www.dismantlingracism.org

Thank you.

Top: Cynthia Brown
Bottom: Vivette Jeffries-Logan,
Michelle Johnson, and Tema Okun

dRworks people

Cynthia Brown, a native of Reidsville, NC, received her undergraduate degree in Political Science from Bennett College in Greensboro, N.C. and her Masters of Public Affairs from the University of North Carolina in Greensboro (UNC-G). With 29 years of social justice activism, she has used training to increase grassroots community people's capacity to build their own organizations, build effective alliances, and advocate for public policies that address their needs. Cynthia was a fellow in the W.K. Kellogg National Fellowship Program. Cynthia has extensive international experience, is a former city council woman in Durham, a 2002 U.S. Senatorial Candidate, and she co-chaired the first U.S. Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Greensboro.

Vivette Jeffries-Logan (Kanahabnen Tabunitckia - translation Morning Star) is a member of the Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation (OBSN), the Indigenous people of Orange and Alamance Counties in North Carolina. Vivette states that "To understand the whole we must understand the parts. To understand the parts we must understand the whole." Vivette earned a B.A. in Psychology and Community Studies from Guilford College. A former trainer with dRworks, among her contributions to the workbook and our work is the wisdom about the role of the self system in understanding both oppression and healing.

Michelle Johnson has been part of the dRworks training team for the past 10 years. Michelle received her undergraduate degree from the College of William and Mary and her Masters in Social Work from UNC-Chapel Hill. Michelle is a licensed clinical social worker and specializes in working with people who have experienced trauma, survivors of sexual violence, people exploring racial identity, and people who struggle with body image issues and eating disorders. Michelle is a local yoga teacher and serves on the Carrboro Board of Aldermen. She is an ambassador for the Africa Yoga Project and transforms lives through yoga and social change locally and globally. She believes in and practices speaking truth to justice and she understands the importance of us becoming embodied to move in a more intentional thoughtful way in the world.

Jonathan Henderson was born and raised in Durham, North Carolina. Over the past decade, he has been active in various grassroots projects; he co-founded the Greensboro Community Arts Collective, Cakalak Thunder and the Greensboro HIVE. Jonathan was a 2011 participant in the Anne Braden Anti-Racist Organizing Training Program for White Activists where his appreciation for the importance of education around issues of racism and oppression deepened. Jonathan's tremendous love of music has led him towards a career in music teaching and performance. He has a great admiration for the role of culture in liberation movements and strives to bring the fire of justice and the courage of hope to his artistic pursuits. Jonathan holds a B.A. in Sociology from Guilford College.

Jes Kelley was born in a small town in the deep south, Jes Kelley was taught in school that racism was an unfortunate thing that used to exist before the Civil Rights movement. This teaching, along with many other lessons in history seemed inconsistent with her lived experience and reality. She has spent her adult life thus far seeking to learn about what is actually happening in the world and how things got this way. Jes has spent the last 10 years facilitating workshops on, and being shaped by, the reproductive justice movement, struggles for food justice and the anti-globalization movement. In 2011, Jes moved to California to be part of the Anne Braden Anti-Racist Organizing Program. She came back to NC with a deepened sense that for any individual or movement to thrive racism must be addressed.

Tema Okun has spent many years working for and in the social justice community. For over 10 of those years she worked in partnership with the late and beloved Kenneth Jones as part of the ChangeWork training group and now facilitates long-term anti-racism, anti-oppression work as a member of the dRworks collaborative. She holds a BA from Oberlin College, a Masters in Adult Education from N.C. State University, and a doctorate from UNC-Greensboro. Tema's book *The Emperor Has No Clothes: Teaching About Race and Racism to People Who Don't Want to Know* (IAP; 2010) reflects the collective learning of ChangeWork and dRworks over many years of race equity and racial justice work with leaders, communities, and organizations.

Cristina Rivera Chapman has been working at the intersection of social justice, food systems, and education for the past 13 years. Working extensively in both rural and urban settings throughout the United States, she has provided training and facilitation to diverse groups of people and organizations. Cristina received her B.A. from Fordham University and was part of the first Anti Racist Training of Trainers offered by GFJI in 2008. Most recently she co-founded Tierra Negra Farms, a cooperatively run teaching farm based in Durham, NC, striving to model a community controlled food system that is just and sustainable. Cristina is honored to be a member of the dRworks team.

Top: Jes Kelley
Middle: Jonathan Henderson
Bottom: Cristina Rivera-Chapman

Artwork by Rini Templeton

Frederick Douglass

Letter to an abolitionist associate 1948

Let me give you a word on the philosophy of reform. The whole history of the progress of human liberty shows that all concessions yet made to her august claims have been born of earnest struggle. The conflict has been exciting, agitating, all absorbing, and for the time being putting all other tumults to silence. It must do this or it does nothing. If there is no struggle there is no progress. Those who profess to favor freedom, and yet depreciate agitation, are men who want crops without plowing up the ground. They want rain without thunder and lightning. They want the ocean without the awful roar of its many waters. This struggle may be a moral one; or it may be a physical one; or it may be both moral and physical; but it must be a struggle.

Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did and it never will. Find out just what people will submit to, and you have found the exact amount of injustice and wrong which will be imposed upon them; and these will continue until they are resisted with either words or blows, or with both. The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppress.

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.
It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us.

Marianne Williamson

guidelines

Be fully present (silence cell phones).

Stay the whole time and stay engaged.

Be comfortable with silence.

Speak for yourself (use I statements).

Respect yourself and others.

Assume that everyone has a very good reason for feeling/saying what they do.

Take risks, ask questions, seek to understand.

Step up and step back.

Speak honestly (no attribution/ no retribution).

Recognize all forms of oppression (no hierarchy, interconnection) while staying focused on racism.

Honor confidentiality.

Lean into and expect discomfort (growing edges usually accompanied by discomfort).

Hold both that there are no quick fixes *and* our task is urgent.

Be prepared for messiness and non closure (the workshop is not a neat package tied with a bow).

SAFER SPACE

This is adapted from a draft paper by Marin Burton and is used with her permission:

Safer space is a place where people can come as they are to discover, assert, and empower their voices. Safer space is a place where people can come as they are to encounter and listen deeply to the voices of others. Safer space is grounded in respect; it is a place where we assume positive intent. People within safer spaces are working toward developing trust over time and are seeking to understand first. Safer spaces require continual work and mindfulness -- a seemingly safe space can turn unsafe within moments. How we handle those moments is what really determines the safety of the space. Spaces are safer when we take responsibility for what we say, feel, and think to the extent that we can and when we admit that we cannot when that is the case.

At the risk of seeming ridiculous, let me say that the true revolutionary is guided by a great feeling of love. … We must strive every day so that this love of living humanity will be transformed into actual deeds, into acts that serve as examples, as a moving force.

Che Guevara

assumptions

We live in a toxic culture that affects us all; one dynamic of the culture is that we are discouraged from seeing it. One of our tasks is to learn to see our culture and how it teaches us to make normal that which is not and should never be normal.

Intention is not the same as impact; we can have good intentions and still have a hurtful or damaging impact.

We cannot dismantle racism in a system that exploits people for private profit. If we want to dismantle racism, then we must build a movement for economic justice.

We are offering an analysis and awareness tool in order to develop ourselves as critical and compassionate people. Dismantling racism, sexism, heterosexism, and unlearning oppressive attitudes will and does take a lifetime. Most of us have been struggling with these issues for years and years already. None of us are beginners and none of us have perfect clarity. This work is a journey without endpoint. This work is a lifelong process.

How we do our work is as important as the work we do. We must work to honor our values and each other at every level of the organization.

Part of our work is to develop discernment about the exquisite balance between the personal and the collective. We work together collectively well when we tend to our personal work and our personal work makes better sense in the context of the collective.

We are all fabulous. We are not here to "fix" each other; rather our work is to love ourselves into who we are, knowing how conditioned we all are by white supremacy.

We have to believe in the possibilities of creating the world we want to see by walking our talk and learning from our mistakes.

None of this is easy and we have to do it anyway.

We already have what we need (with thanks to Mama Nayo).

Artwork by Rini Templeton

active listening

When you are the one listening:

1. Listen with undivided, supportive and focused attention. Anything your partner says is OK. Ask questions when you need to get something clear or don't understand something. The purpose is to help your partner get clear, not to communicate.

2. Help your partner stay on time and on the subject. Do not interrupt with your own comments or stories. Do keep the speaker focused on the question at hand in the limited time allowed.

3. Do whatever you normally do when you are listening to someone with focused attention, unless you discover it is distracting to the person talking. Some people like to make eye contact, some like to say 'yeah' and give encouragement that way, some like to nod or lightly touch the other person. Do whatever is appropriate for you.

When it is your turn to talk:

1. Use all the time you're allowed whether you think you need it or not, but don't go over.

2. Say whatever you want about the topic. It's your experience and you deserve to be listened to.

3. If you feel awkward, or don't know what to say next, that's OK. Just laugh or explain that you don't know what to say. Check out how you're feeling and talk about that.

If you are a citizen of the United States, part of the legacy you have inherited is the historical, systematic, and pervasive way in which race and racism have been constructed in this country. Here is a small sampling of U.S. laws, court decisions, and other acts which lay some of the groundwork for constructing race as a hierarchy with white at the top.

history of the race construct

1492: Columbus comes to the Americas in the name of Spain. People do not come here by race; we come here (those of us who come voluntarily) by nationalities. Columbus makes four voyages, none to what is now known as the U.S. He carefully documents the voyages, including directions, currents, and descriptions of the residents as ripe for subjugation. His purpose is not exploration or trade, but conquest and exploitation. James Loewen's book *Lies My Teacher Told Me* speaks to how the race construct begins here, with this story. He notes how the 12 textbooks most used in the U.S. offer a discovery narrative of an enlightened colonialism that brings the gift

of civilization to the "savage." This narrative ignores the ways in which Columbus truly did transform the modern world through the "taking of land, wealth, and labor from indigenous people in the Western hemisphere, leading to their near extermination, and the transatlantic slave trade, which created a racial underclass."

1640: when three servants working for a farmer named Hugh Gwyn run away to Maryland. Two are white; one is black, although neither descriptors are used at that time. They are captured in Maryland and returned to Jamestown, where the court sentences all three to thirty lashes -- a severe punishment even by the standards of 17th-century Virginia. The two white men are sentenced to an additional four years of servitude. But, in addition to the whipping, the black man, named John Punch, is ordered to "serve his said master or his assigns for the time of his natural Life here or elsewhere."

1712: "Act for the better ordering and governing of Negroes and slaves" in South Carolina – "whereas, the plantations . . . of this province

cannot be well managed . . . without the labor of Negroes and other slaves, [who] . . . are of barbarous, wild, savage natures, and such as renders them wholly unqualified to be governed by the laws . . . of this province; that such other laws and orders, should in this province be made . . . as may restrain the disorders, rapines and inhumanity, to which they are naturally prone and inclined. . . ."

1720: German immigrants are coming in great numbers; English colonists fear that these foreigners" will influence English culture and language. Laws appear forbidding German printing houses and the import of German books. The Pennsylvania Assembly passes a law requiring all male German immigrants to swear an oath of allegiance to the British Crown. English-language schools are recommended.

Columbus makes 4 voyages; his purpose is not exploration or trade but conquest and exploitation.

1787: the Constitution is signed, defining African-American males as 3/5 of a man. During this period, the English, Dutch, Spanish, and French have all established settlements, then colonies, pushed out Indigenous peoples, made and broken countless treaties, introduced slavery and begun creating the category of white as an organizing tool.

Late 1700s: It is during this period that the scientific community in Europe is creating the "oids" – a race theory relying heavily upon craniometry (measurement of the brain and skull) to develop four distinct races. The science claims that the larger the brain, the higher the intelligence. Those with the largest brains, and thus the smartest, are the Caucasoids (where our racial designation of Caucasian comes from), next is the Mongoloid (referencing "yellow" people and those of Asian descent), Australoid (signifying "red or brown" people), and Negroid, the

lowest and the only category without a geographic location.

1790: The Naturalization Act specifies that only free white immigrants are eligible for citizenship. The Act expressly denies civil rights, the right to vote or own land to first generation immigrants from Asia, the Caribbean, Central and South America and Africa. Indigenous peoples become citizens through individual treaties or intermarriage. Without citizenship, people of color cannot vote, own property, bring lawsuits, or testify in court -- all protections and privileges that white people take for granted. This Act continues to have influence in various forms until 1952.

1825: An early treaty with the Osage people introduces the idea of "blood degree." Traditionally, tribal member-ship is based on acceptance of language, customs, and authority. People escaping slavery, white people, and other indigenous people can and do join tribes or nations as full members of indigenous com-munities. As a result of this idea of "blood degree," most indigenous nations adopt some form of blood requirement for membership over the next century, participating in the government's construction of race in an effort to survive.
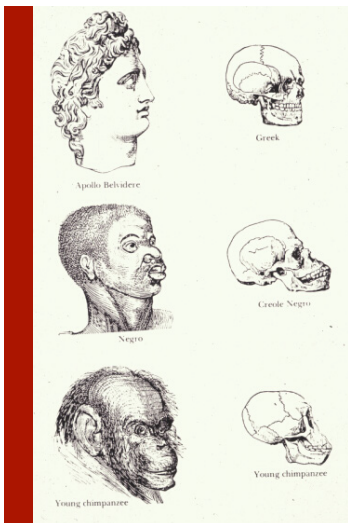
1830s: Slavery advocates turn to scientific and

It is during this period that the scientific community in Europe is creating a race theory relying heavily upon

biblical arguments to "prove" that Negroes are distinct and inferior. Samuel Morton, the first famous American scientist, possesses the largest skull collection in the world; using the OIDs theories developed in Europe, he claims the larger skulls of Caucasians gives them "decided and unquestioned superiority over all the nations of the earth."

mid-1800s: As the Black slave trade moves to England and then to America, the story of the curse of Ham moves with it. Presbyterian leader Benjamin Palmer, the emotional and intellectual leader of Southern American Christians, whose sermons and writings are widely published and read, preaches that the story of Ham (Genesis 9) is one of a series of Biblical justifications for slavery. Because Ham sees his father Noah drunk and naked, Ham is cursed by Noah to be "a servant of servants"; Ham's descendants, Palmer explains, are turned dark by the curse. Conservative Christians and segregationists argue that this and other Biblical passages prove that slavery is part of God's established order.

From 1846 to 1848, the U.S. invades Mexico for its land and resources (the Mexican-American War); the War ends with the Treaty of Guadelupe

Hidalgo, transferring over 55% of Mexican land to the U.S. (present-day Arizona, California, NM, Texas, and parts of Colorado, Nevada, and Utah). The treaty promises to protect the lands, language and culture of the Mexicans living in the ceded territory, but Congress substitutes a "Protocol," which requires Mexicans to prove in court that they have 'legitimate' title to their lands. Unable to provide proof in a culture that does not record land transactions, the "Protocol" becomes the legal basis for the massive theft of land from Mexicans in these territories.

In its 1857 Dred Scott decision, the Supreme Court defines enslaved people as property, essentially saying Congress cannot abolish slavery because to do so would interfere with private property rights. They

rule that descendants of slaves are "so far inferior that they had not rights which the white man was bound to respect."
In 1862, the Homestead Act makes 50 million acres

available, at low cost, to white working class homesteaders who flood Indian lands in the Midwest, forcing nomadic Plains Indian people to relocate to government reservations. The Act allots 160 acres of land to "anyone," meaning any white citizen, who can pay $1.25 an acre and cultivate it for 5 years; within 10 years, 85,000,000 acres of Indigenous lands had been sold to European homesteaders.

In the late 1870s, army veteran of the Indian wars Charles Pratt opens the first federally sanctioned boarding school -- the Carlisle Industrial Training School in Pennsylvania. His philosophy is to "Kill the Indian, Save the Child" and "elevate" American Indians to white standards. Students are brought to the school by train and upon arrival are given a haircut, an English name. They are forbidden to speak their native language. Punishment is severe and includes the forced washing of mouths with lye soap. Students are taught that their way of life is savage and

inferior and those who wish to retain their culture are stupid, dirty, backward. The schools initiate a pattern of abuse, including sexual and physical abuse continuing throughout the school's history into the 1930s.
1882: The Chinese Exclusion Act is passed, barring most Chinese immigrants from entering the U.S.; this is the first time a nationality is barred expressly by name.

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1883: The birth of eugenics – Francis Galton (cousin to Charles Darwin) coins the term eugenics, meaning "good genes" to emphasize heredity as the cause of all human and behavioral differences. Eugenicists advocate selective breeding to engineer the "ideal" society. Their writings profoundly influence many aspects of American life,

The philosophy is to "Kill the Indian, Save the Child."

including immigration policy, marriage laws, involuntary sterilization, and schooling. This ideology will find its fruition in Nazi Germany. This science is also the basis of school testing today.

1887: Congress passes the Dawes Act, breaking up collectively held indigenous lands and redistributing it to individuals, allowing so-called "surplus" land to be sold to whites. One goal of the Act is to promote the idea of private property. Congressman Henry Dawes, author of the act, expresses his faith in the civilizing power of private property saying of Indigenous Peoples "*They have gone as far as they can go, because they own their land in common. . . There is no selfishness, which is at the bottom of civilization. Till this people will consent to give up their lands, and divide them among their citizens so that each can own the land he cultivates, they will not make much more progress.*" White land sharks swindle many indigenous people out of their land.

1887: As the white power structure in the South organizes against Reconstruction, they institute Jim Crow segregation, introducing a system of laws and practices designed to unite poor and wealthy whites, reinforcing racial solidarity and privilege while systematically targeting African Americans. Jim Crow laws and culture, reinforced through violence and intimidation, affect schooling, public transportation, jobs, housing, private life, and voting rights.

1890s: Immigration from southern and eastern Europe swells dramatically. Many new arrivals are "ethnics" employed in low-wage jobs and living in the urban ghetto. They are initially deemed inferior, seen as not fully white. Denied their full humanity, they are nonetheless granted citizenship, and will for the most part merge into whiteness after WWII.

At the turn of the century, school textbooks serve as a major vehicle for transmitting white supremacy and racism. A 19th century primary grade textbook reads, for example: *God is the creative process. He first made the black man, realized He had done badly, and then created successively lighter races, improving as He went along. To the white man He gave a box of books and papers, to the black a box of tools so that he could work for the white and red man, which he continued to do.*

1896: The U.S. Supreme Court declares in Plessy v. Ferguson that separate but "equal" facilities are constitutional.

1890s: Immigration from southern and eastern Europe swells dramatically. Many new arrivals are considered "ethnics" and are employed in low-wage jobs and live in the urban ghetto. They are initially deemed inferior, seen as not fully white. Denied their full humanity, they are nonetheless granted citizenship, and will for the most part merge into whiteness after WWII.

1913: California passes the first Alien Land Law targeting Asian immigrants and particularly Japanese immigrants, forbidding them from owning land and limiting leases to a maximum of 3 years. Eleven years later, the federal government passes the Alien Land Act, forbidding noncitizens the right to own or lease land or be a member of an organization with access to land. Asian immigrants are not able to become naturalized citizens until 1952.

1922: Early in the century, many immigrants petition the courts to be legally designated white to gain citizenship under the 1790 Naturalization Act. The Supreme Court rules that Japanese are not legally white because science classifies them as Mongoloid rather than Caucasian. A year later, the court contradicts itself, saying that Asian Indians are not legally white, even though science classifies them as Caucasian, saying that whiteness should be based on "the common understanding of the white man."

1924: Virginia's Racial Integrity Laws are a series of legislative efforts designed to protect "whiteness" against what many Virginians perceive to be the effects of immigration and race-

The U.S. Supreme Court declares that separate but "equal" facilities are constitutional.
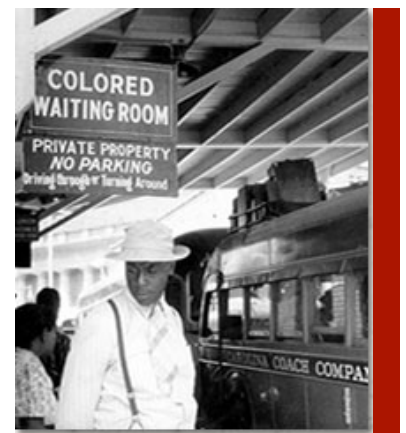
mixing. These laws explicitly define how people should be classified—for example, as white, black, or Indian. These laws are not overturned until the U.S. Supreme Court's 1967 ruling in Loving v. Virginia, which declares Virginia's ban on interracial marriage to be unconstitutional. Most of Virginia's Indigenous peoples, meanwhile, have been classified by the RIA as racially black, a designation that continues to be an obstacle for federal tribal recognition.

1935: Congress passes two laws to protect mostly American white workers and exclude others. The Social Security Act excludes agricultural workers and domestic servants (mostly African American, Mexican, and Asian); the Wagner Act allows unions to discriminate based on race, meaning people of color are locked out of higher paying jobs and union benefits. 1942: President Roosevelt signs

112,000 Japanese Americans are forcibly placed in military internment camps, their homes and property seized and sold to white Americans.

an executive order requiring Japanese Americans living within 20 miles of the pacific coast, most U.S. citizens, to relocate to 10 internment camps; over 112,000 Japanese Americans are forcibly placed in military internment camps during WWII, their homes and property seized and sold to white Americans at reduced costs.

1947: The G.I. Bill subsidizes employment, suburban home loans, college education opportunities for veterans returning from WWII but refuses to challenge the discriminatory policies embedded in the practices and policies of employers, bank lenders, and college institutions; as a result, almost all of the benefits of the bill go to white veterans and their families.

1954: The Supreme Court rules in Brown v. Board of Education that separate means unequal and mandates desegregation of public schools. In southern schools, thousands of Black teachers and principals are fired as School Boards claim that white parents will not allow their children to be taught by Black teachers. As a result, thousands of white men and women get jobs in the newly integrated schools, while Black teachers and administrators are shut out.

By the end of the 1950s, Alabama, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia use literacy tests to keep Blacks from voting while Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, Texas, and Virginia use poll taxes to prevent Blacks from registering 1977: In response to civil rights legislation, the federal Office of Management and Budget creates

standard government race and ethnic categories for the first time. The categories are arbitrary and inconsistent. For example, "Black" is defined as a "racial group" but "white" is not. "Hispanic" reflects Spanish colonization and excludes non-Spanish parts of Central and South America; while "American Indian or Alaskan Native" requires "cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition" - a condition of no other category. The categories are amended in 1996, and "Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander" is added.

1980s: Building on President Nixon's "War on Drugs," the Reagan Administration expands this "war," increasing the number of people behind bars for nonviolent drug offenses from 50,000 in 1980 to over 400,000 by 1997. Congress passes severe penalties that rapidly increase the prison population. As a result, the U.S. currently spends more than $51 billion on the war on drugs and incarcerates 1 in every 99 adults, the highest incarceration rate in the world. Over two thirds of those imprisoned are Black or Latino, although these populations use and sell drugs at the same rate as whites.

1980s: At the same time, the U.S. launches the biggest prison building spree in the history of the world. The fastest growing group of prisoners are Black women; Native Americans are the

largest group per capita. Prisons also become profit centers; more and more prisons are privatized, with the two largest private prison companies showing growing profits every year. Many corporations use cheap prison labor to enhance their profits; these have included IBM, Motorola, Compaq, Texas Instruments, Honeywell, Microsoft, Boeing, Revlon, Pierre Cardin. Schools throughout the world buy graduation caps and gowns made by South Carolina prisoners.

2001: September 11 sets the stage for a "national security" based immigration policy. The Patriot Act gives the government broad powers to detain suspected "terrorists" for unlimited periods of time without legal representation. Thousands of Arab, Muslim, and South Asian men are detained in secret.

2005: Hurricane Katrina hits New Orleans. The neighborhoods with the highest proportion of African American people sustain the worst damage. The only way out of New Orleans is by car, and many people do not have a car, money to pay for gas, or anywhere to go. Thousands of African American residents who try to leave by crossing the Gretna Bridge to higher ground are forced back into the flood by gun toting white vigilantes. The media describes white people as "flood victims looking for food" and Black people as "looters." Thousands of African-Americans have to wait

5 hours in the rain outside the Superdome-where they expect sanctuary-to be searched. Residents have to go through criminal record checks before Red Cross Centers will admit them. Curfew is only enforced against Black people. Six months after the storm, the 9th Ward, an African-American community, is the only ward that remains unoccupied, where nearly all homes are still piles of rubble. Ten years later, the demographics of the city has changed and white communities have taken the place of many Black communities. While white sections of the city have been reconstructed, the 9th Ward languishes; the contrast with white sections of the city is stark.

2008: As a result of subprime mortgage lending crisis, the total loss of wealth for people of color is between $164 billion and $213 over eight years, perhaps the greatest loss of wealth for people of color in modern U.S. history.

2010: Arizona passes draconian anti-immigration SB1070 law requiring all "aliens" over the age of 14 to register with the U.S. government after 30 days and to carry ID documents at all times. The law requires state law enforcement to determine immigration status whenever an officer has a reasonable suspicion that a person is an "illegal immigrant," and imposes penalties on those sheltering, hiring, and transporting unregistered "aliens." In 2012, the U.S. Supreme Court upholds required immigration checks while striking down the other provisions. In the intervening

years, all but 7 states pass anti-immigration laws, including many "copycat" laws based on Arizona's.

2012: 2012: Trayvon Martin, a 17-year-old young man is fatally shot by George Zimmerman, who is subsequently acquitted. This verdict leads to massive protests nationwide. Two years later, Michael Brown, an 18-year-old, is fatally shot by a white Ferguson police officer; the Missouri grand jury, following unorthodox procedures established by the prosecuting attorney, decides not to indict officer Wilson, leading to massive protests nationwide. This police killing is followed by the chokehold killing of Eric Garner by a white police officer in New York, where yet again the grand jury decides not to indict. These state sanctioned killings begin to illustrate the recurring and grossly disproportional assaults and shootings on Black and Brown people and communities; they also lead to the emerging #BlackLivesMatter movement.

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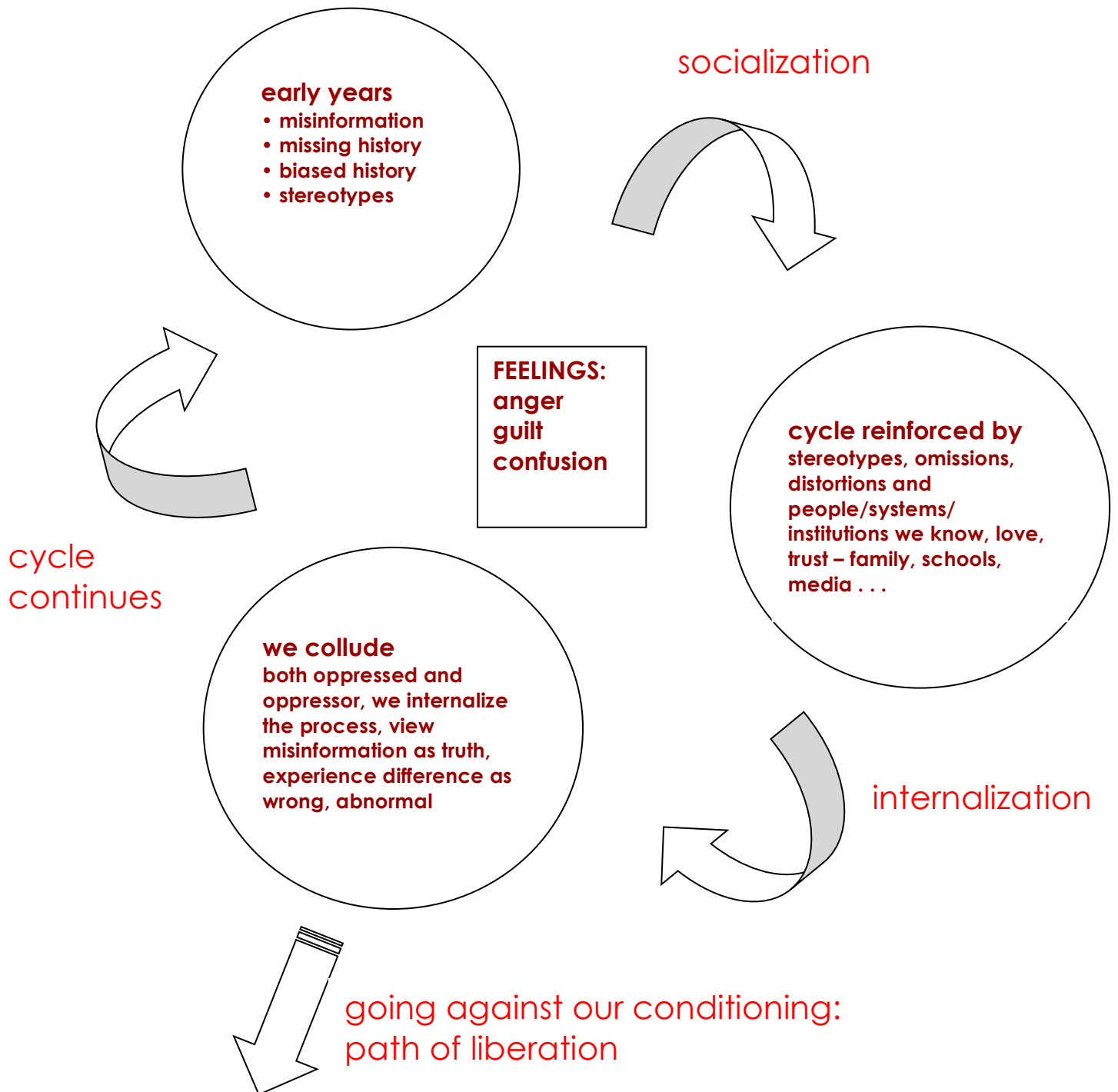U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights (2012)

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I have no mercy or compassion in me for a society that will crush people, and then penalize them for not being able to stand up under the weight.
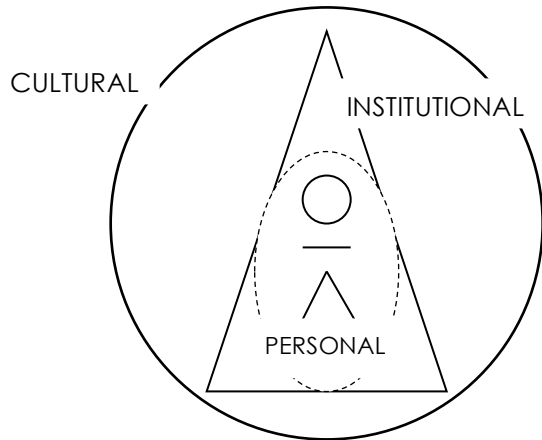
Malcolm X

This shortened timeline illustrates how many institutions participate in constructing race. The construction places white at the top, black at the bottom, with other people and communities of color moving up and down based on the historical context and the needs of the power elite. The line is always drawn to place white at the top. With this history, we are led to understand that racism is much more than personal; it is also institutional (the ways that institutions include or exclude based on race, serve or underserve, resource or exploit, and validate or oppress people based on race) and cultural (the beliefs, values, standards, and norms of the society that allow institutional racism to flourish).

socialization

early years
- misinformation
- missing history
- biased history
- stereotypes

**FEELINGS:
anger
guilt
confusion**

cycle reinforced by stereotypes, omissions, distortions and people/systems/ institutions we know, love, trust – family, schools, media . . .

cycle
continues

we collude both oppressed and oppressor, we internalize the process, view misinformation as truth, experience difference as wrong, abnormal

internalization

going against our conditioning: path of liberation

CULTURAL:

The ways in which the dominant culture is founded upon and then defines and shapes norms, values, beliefs and standards to advantage white people and oppress people of color. The ways in which the dominant culture defines reality to advantage white people and oppress people of color. The norms, values, or standards assumed by the dominant society that perpetuate racism. Examples: thin, blond, white women as the basis for our society's standard of beauty; women on welfare assumed to be black or brown and portrayed as irresponsible while white collar fraud in the business community is costing the US hundreds of billions of dollars a year; requiring people to speak English historically (American Indians) and today (people from Central and South America) as a way of deliberately destroying community and culture.

INSTITUTIONAL:

The ways in which the structures, systems, policies, and procedures of institutions in the U.S. are founded upon and then promote, reproduce, and perpetuate advantages for white people and the oppression of people of color. The ways in which institutions legislate and structure reality to advantage white people and oppress people of color. The ways in which institutions -- Housing, Government, Education, Media, Business, Health Care, Criminal Justice, Employment, Labor, Politics, Church – perpetuate racism. Examples: people of color under-represented and misrepresented on television, racially biased standardized tests used to determine who will be admitted to higher education programs and institutions, historic and ongoing breaking of treaties with indigenous Native American communities, reliance on low-paying undocumented immigrant labor by farms and factories.

PERSONAL:

The ways in which we perpetuate and/or assume the idea that white people are inherently better and/or people of color are inherently inferior on an individual basis. Examples: calling someone a racist name, making a racist assumption.

4 foundations of racism

CONSTRUCTED RACIST OPPRESSION (affecting People of Color)

- historically constructed and systemic (not just personal or individual)
- penetrates every aspect of our personal, institutional, and cultural life
- includes prejudice against people of color in attitudes, feelings, and behaviors
- includes exclusion, discrimination against, suspicion, fear or hatred of people of color
- sees a person of color only as a member of a group, not as an individual
- includes low expectations by white people for children and adults of color
- people of color have fewer options, choices

INTERNALIZED RACIST OPPRESSION (affecting People of Color)

- carry internalized negative messages about ourselves and other people of color
- believe there is something wrong with being a person of color
- have lowered self-esteem, sense of inferiority, wrongness
- have lowered expectations, limited sense of potential for self
- have very limited choices: either 'act in' (white) or 'act out' (disrupt)
- have a sense of limited possibility (limited by oppression and prejudice)
- cycles through generations

Oppression confers unearned benefits on Individuals and groups, regardless of whether participation is overt. When people or groups oppress, targeted individuals and communities are conditioned to internalize the oppression and whenever privilege (or the benefits of oppression) occurs, individuals and communities are conditioned to internalize the privilege.

OPPRESSION classism, racism, sexism, heterosexism	**PRIVILEGE** benefits attached to your group
INTERNALIZED INFERIORITY self-hate	**INTERNALIZED SUPERIORITY** entitlement

GRANTED WHITE PRIVILEGE (for white people)

- "an invisible knapsack of special provisions and blank checks" (Peggy McIntosh)
- the default; "to be white in America is not to have to think about it" (Robert Terry)
- expect to be seen as an individual; what we do never reflects on the white race
- we can choose to avoid the impact of racism without penalty
- we live in a world where our worth and personhood are continually validated
- although hurt by racism, we can live just fine without ever having to deal with it

INTERNALIZED WHITE SUPREMACY (affecting white people)

- my world view is the universal world view; our standards and norms are universal
- my achievements have to do with me, not with my membership in the white group
- I have a right to be comfortable and if I am not, then someone else is to blame
- I can feel that I personally earned, through work and merit, any/all of my success
- •equate acts of unfairness experienced by white people with systemic racism experienced by people of color
- I have many choices, as I should; everyone else has those same choices
- I am not responsible for what happened before, nor do I have to know anything about it; I have a right to be ignorant
- I assume race equity benefits only POC

PREJUDICE

An attitude based on limited information, often on stereotypes. Prejudice is usually, but not always, negative; positive and negative prejudices alike, especially when directed toward oppressed people, are damaging because they deny the individuality of the person. In some cases, the prejudices of oppressed people ("you can't trust the police") are necessary for survival. No one is free of prejudice.

Examples: Women are emotional. Asians are good at math.

OPPRESSION

The systematic subjugation of one social group by a more powerful social group for the social, economic, and political benefit of the more powerful social group.
Rita Hardiman and Bailey Jackson state that oppression exists when the following 4 conditions are found:
- the oppressor group has the power to define reality for themselves and others,
- the target groups take in and internalize the negative messages about them and end up cooperating with the oppressors (thinking and acting like them),
- genocide, harassment, and discrimination are systematic and institutionalized, so that individuals are not necessary to keep it going, and,
- members of both the oppressor and target groups are socialized to play their roles as normal and correct.

Oppression = Power + Prejudice

SOCIAL and INSTITUTIONAL POWER

- access to resources
- the ability to influence others
- access to decision-makers to get what you want done
- the ability to define reality for yourself and others

SYSTEM

- an interlocking set of parts that together make a whole
- an established way of doing something, such that things get done that way regularly and are assumed to be the 'normal' way things get done
- runs by itself; does not require planning or initiative by a person or group

racism defined

ADVANTAGE

- a leg up, a gain, a benefit

WHITE SUPREMACY

The idea (ideology) that white people and the ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions of white people are superior to People of Color and their ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions.

RACE

- There is no such thing as race from a scientific or biological point of view.
- Even though this is true, race is a powerful political, social, and economic force. Race is essentially a political construct, in other words it was constructed for political purposes.
- The term 'white' was constructed to unite certain European groups living in the U.S. who were fighting each other and at the same time were a numerical minority in comparison to the numbers of African slaves and Native peoples.
- In order to justify the idea of a white race, every institution in this country was used to prove that race exists and to promote the idea that the white race is at the top and all other races are below, with the black race on the bottom. All institutions were used to promote the idea of white supremacy.
- All Europeans did not and do not become white at the same time (Irish, Italians, Jews). Becoming white involves giving up pieces of your original culture in order to get the advantages and privileges of being in the white group.
- This process continues today.

RACISM

- Racism = race prejudice + social and institutional power
- Racism = a system of advantage based on race
- Racism = a system of oppression based on race
- Racism = a white supremacy system

Racism is different from racial prejudice, hatred, or discrimination. Racism involves one group having the power to carry out systematic discrimination through the major institutions of society. By this definition, only white people can be racist in our society, because only white people as a group have that power.

When white Americans frankly peel back the layers of our commingled pasts, we are all marked by it. We … are marred either by our connections to the specific crimes and injuries of our fathers and their fathers. Or we are tainted by the failures of our fathers to fulfill our national credos when their courage was most needed.

We are formed in molds twisted by the gifts we received at the expense of others. It is not our "fault." But it is undeniably our inheritance.

Douglas A. Blackmon

In order for oppression to flourish, we must collude or cooperate. As Frederick Douglass points out "Find out what people will submit to, and you have found the exact amount of injustice and wrong which will be imposed upon them . . ."

In order for oppression (racism in this case) to flourish, we must:

forget / pretend – the oppressed must forget what has happened to them historically and what is happening to them in their day to day lives in order to get through their lives and their day; the dominant group must never identify as white or as benefiting from white privilege; the dominant group must 'forget' about their membership in the white group; the dominant group must pretend that everything is OK now, that the problem was in the past

lie – the oppressed must stop speaking the truth about their experience, both to themselves (to survive internally) and to others (to survive in the world); the dominant group must lie to themselves and each other about their role in oppression, positioning themselves as blameless, passive (I didn't cause it), individual and not part of a bigger system, while ignoring the internal racist conditioning and tapes (I am not racist, I'm a good white person)

stop feeling – the oppressed must cut themselves off from their feelings, become numb in order to survive, or feel that it is personal (I am bad or at fault); the dominant group must also cut themselves off from their feelings, insist on being 'rational and 'logical' and never stop to feel the cost as oppressors; the dominant group must avoid feeling, because to begin feeling means to begin feeling guilt or shame

lose voice – the oppressed must internalize the oppression, feel bad about themselves and their situation so that they are no longer able to speak to it or about it, distrust their voice and the truth they have to speak; when the oppressed do speak out, they are labeled as 'aggressive,' 'overly sensitive,' 'angry,' and discounted; the dominant group becomes afraid to speak out because of the social pressure against it, the threat of losing family and friends, and separating themselves from the white group

make power invisible – the oppressed must begin to identify more with the dominant group than with their own group and as a result lose a sense of their collective power; the dominant group must assume their right to power along with the myth that power is individual and everyone who works hard can have the same power they do; or the dominant group must act as if they don't have power as white people and deny the power that they get just by belonging to the white group

INTERNALIZED RACIST OPPRESSION

THE PROCESS OF OPPRESSION

THE IMPACT OF IRO IN OUR COMMUNITIES

Internalized Racist Oppression (IRO) is the internalization by People of Color (POC) of the images, stereotypes, prejudices, and myths promoted by the racist system about POC in this country. Our thoughts and feelings about ourselves, people of our own racial group, or other POC are based on the racist messages we receive from the broader system. For many People of Color in our communities, internalized racist oppression manifests itself as:

- Self-Doubt
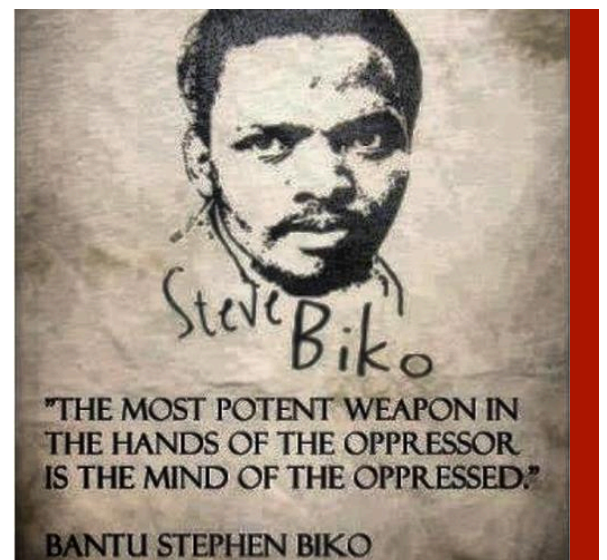- Inferiority Complex
- Self-Hate

When one looks at the history of oppression of People of Color in this country, we find that oppression uses recurring methods. Though we are talking historically, all of these methods are still being used in the continuing process of oppression.

- Violence and the Threat of Violence
- Change in Behavior
- Destruction of Culture
- Division, Separation, Isolation

Internalized Racist Oppression impacts members of communities of color in various ways. Some of the things community organizers and educators encounter when working in these communities are:

- Low Self Esteem
- Powerlessness
- Hopelessness
- Apathy
- Addictive Behavior
- Abusive and Violent Relationships
- Conflict Between Racial Groups
- Mediocrity

Steve Biko

"THE MOST POTENT WEAPON IN THE HANDS OF THE OPPRESSOR IS THE MIND OF THE OPPRESSED."

BANTU STEPHEN BIKO

the self-system

internalized racial inferiority

Adapted and developed by Vivette Jeffries-Logan and Jackie Goodwyn from Four Worlds Development Project & Raul Quinones Rosado, PhD

The Self System model illustrates the impact of racism on personal identity. This multi-generational process of dehumanization is known as Internalized Racial Oppression/Inferiority.

The four aspects of self include:

Self-Concept = Mental

Self-Esteem = Spiritual

Self-Image = Physical

Self-Love = Emotional

All aspects must be in balance for an individual to be balanced. An imbalance in one aspects results in an imbalance of the entire self.

There are two dimensions of well-being: personal is the individual dimension of well being and community is the collective dimension of well being. Communities consist of multiple individuals with varied states of well-being.


Self Concept
Mental

Self -Esteem
Spiritual

Self Image
Physical

Self Love
Emotional
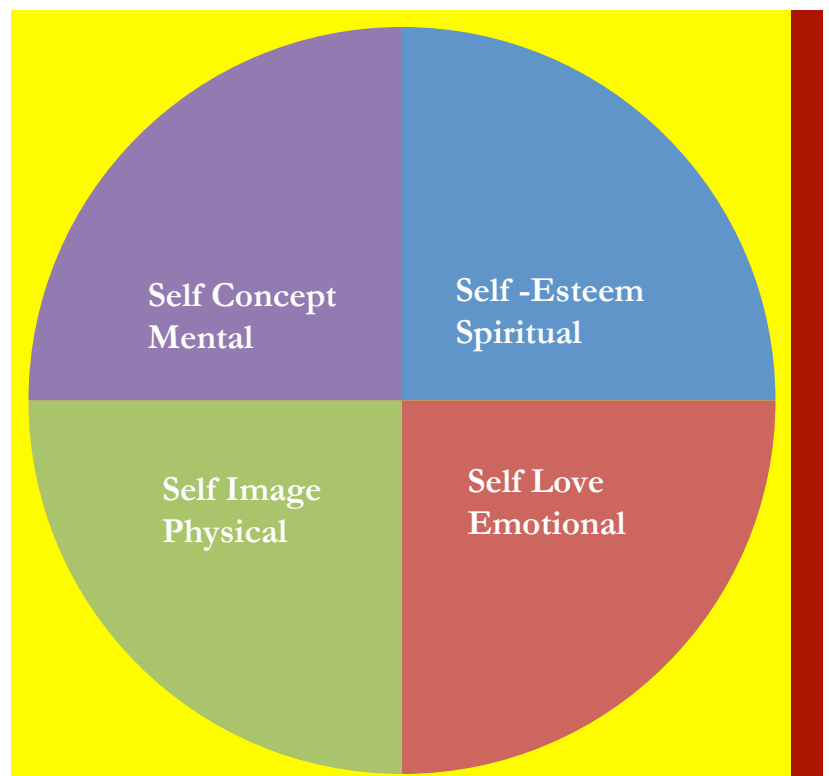
THE SELF-SYSTEM

continued

In a racist system, the dominant culture regularly sends People and Communities of Color negative messages about who they are both individually and as a community. The Self-System of People and Communities of Color is inevitably shaped by the images, values, norms, standards beliefs, attitudes and feelings that presume dominant group members and their culture are the standard by which all people are to be measured.

The arrows represent the messages, communi-cated by all institutions, that People of Color hear about themselves and their communities. There is no insulation or escape from the messages. The messages affect our individual and collective psyche despite the affirmations we may receive at home and/or in our communities.

Some of the messages include but are not limited to: Loud, Ignorant, Violent, Underachieving, High Risk, Minority, Extinct, Tokens, Mascots, Unworthy, Broken, Bad mothers, Promiscuous, Lazy, Dead beat dads, Inadequate, Poor, Criminal, Inferior.

Self Concept
Mental

Self -Esteem
Spiritual

Self Image
Physical

Self Love
Emotional
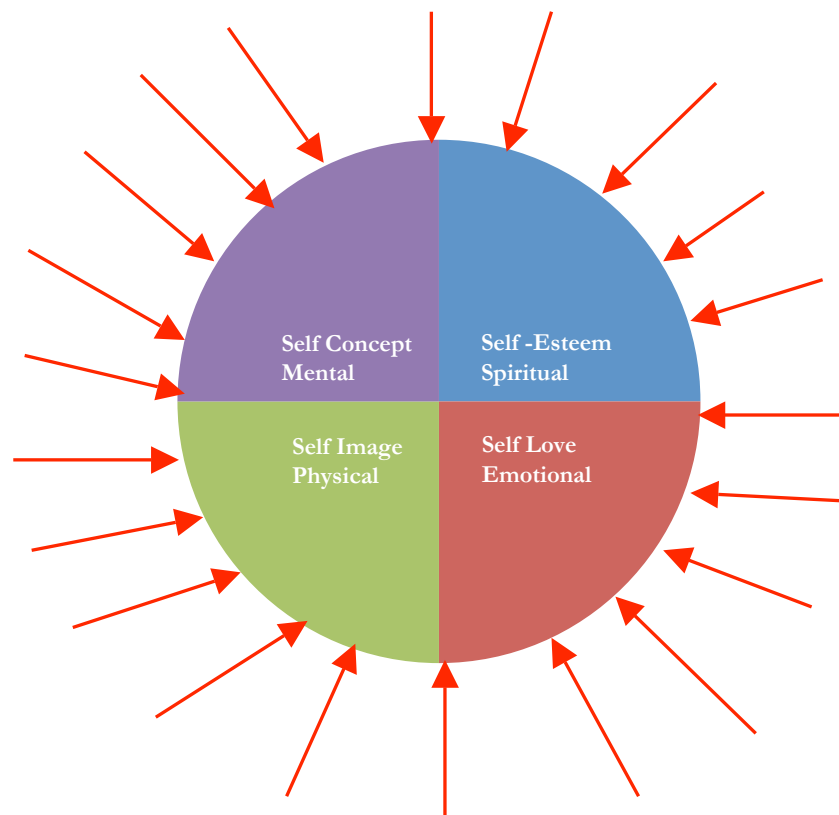
THE SELF-SYSTEM
continued

This graphic represents what happens to the Self System as a result of the internalization of racism. Some manifestations of the internalizations of the consistent messages are:

Confusion, Tolerance, Powerlessness, Anger, Apathy, Denial, Colorism, Shame, Assimilation, Rage, Protectionism, Invisibility, Emotional numbness.

The process of internalization is like a coil that spirals inward into the psyche. The attack is ongoing and repetitive.

- Self Concept is limited
- Self-esteem is lowered and corrupted
- Self-image is negated
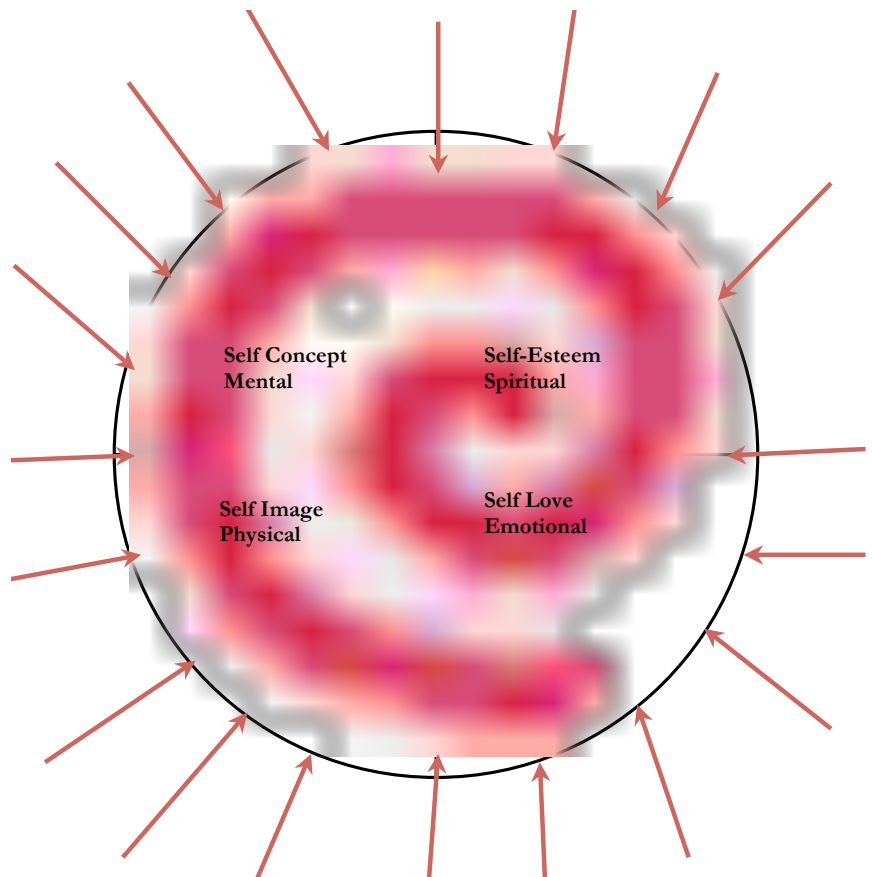- Self-love is absent

Actions we take individually or collectively because of IRO include:

- Failing to seek support from other people of color because we feel isolated in our experience;
- Intra-racial challenges, for example Black Brown conflict;
- Holding positions of power is tenuous because these positions exist in a white supremacy system and are often challenged;
- Fear and/or avoidance of risk-taking because our the taking of risks is interpreted negatively;
- Continued exploitation. For example if we share something about our experience of racism in a racially mixed group, white people benefit by learning about their privilege at the expense of our experience of racism.

The greatest loss is the damage done to the psyche, resulting in an inability to do that which is in our own best interest.

Self Concept Mental

Self-Esteem Spiritual

Self Image Physical

Self Love Emotional

the ladder of empowerment for people of color

EMPOWERMENT

community of love and resistance
collective action
challenging
investigation
self-awareness
exclusion / immersion
rage / depression
not white

INTERNALIZED RACIST OPPRESSION

white supremacy culture

This is a list of characteristics of white supremacy culture that show up in our organizations. Culture is powerful precisely because it is so present and at the same time so very difficult to name or identify. The characteristics listed below are damaging because they are used as norms and standards without being pro-actively named or chosen by the group. They are damaging because they promote white supremacy thinking. They are damaging to both People of Color and to white people. Organizations that are People of Color led or a majority People of Color can also demonstrate damaging characteristics of white supremacy culture.

perfectionism

- little appreciation expressed among people for the work that others are doing; appreciation that is expressed usually directed to those who get most of the credit anyway
- more common is to point out either how the person or work is inadequate
- or even more common, to talk to others about the inadequacies of a person or their work without ever talking directly to them
- mistakes are seen as personal, i.e. they reflect badly on the person making them as opposed to being seen for what they are – mistakes
- making a mistake is confused with being a mistake, doing wrong with being wrong
- little time, energy, or money put into reflection or identifying lessons learned that can improve practice, in other words little or no learning from mistakes
- tendency to identify what's wrong; little ability to identify, name, and appreciate what's right
- often internally felt, in other words the perfectionist fails to appreciate her own good work, more often pointing out his faults or 'failures,' focusing on inadequacies and mistakes rather than learning from them; the person works with a harsh and constant inner critic

antidotes: develop a culture of appreciation, where the organization takes time to make sure that people's work and efforts are appreciated; develop a learning organization, where it is expected that everyone will make mistakes and those mistakes offer opportunities for learning; create an environment where people can recognize that mistakes sometimes lead to positive results; separate the person from the mistake; when offering feedback, always speak to the things that went well before offering criticism; ask people to offer specific suggestions for how to do things differently when offering criticism; realize that being your own worst critic does not actually improve the work, often contributes to low morale among the group, and does not help you or the group to realize the benefit of learning from mistakes

sense of urgency

- continued sense of urgency that makes it difficult to take time to be inclusive, encourage democratic and/or thoughtful decision-making, to think long-term, to consider consequences
- frequently results in sacrificing potential allies for quick or highly visible results, for example sacrificing interests of communities of color in order to win victories for white people (seen as default or norm community)
- reinforced by funding proposals which promise too much work for too little money and by funders who expect too much for too little

antidotes: realistic workplans; leadership which understands that things take longer than anyone expects; discuss and plan for what it means to set goals of inclusivity and diversity, particularly in terms of time; learn from past experience how long things take; write realistic funding proposals with realistic time frames; be clear about how you will make good decisions in an atmosphere of urgency; realize that rushing decisions takes more time in the long run because inevitably people who didn't get a chance to voice their thoughts and feelings will at best resent and at worst undermine the decision because they were left unheard

defensiveness

- the organizational structure is set up and much energy spent trying to prevent abuse and protect power as it exists rather than to facilitate the best out of each person or to clarify who has power and how they are expected to use it
- because of either/or thinking (see below), criticism of those with power is viewed as threatening and inappropriate (or rude)
- people respond to new or challenging ideas with defensiveness, making it very difficult to raise these ideas
- a lot of energy in the organization is spent trying to make sure that people's feelings aren't getting hurt or working around defensive people
- white people spend energy defending against charges of racism instead of examining how racism might actually be happening
- the defensiveness of people in power creates an oppressive culture

antidotes: understand that structure cannot in and of itself facilitate or prevent abuse; understand the link between defensiveness and fear (of losing power, losing face, losing comfort, losing privilege); work on your own defensiveness; name defensiveness as a problem when it is one; give people credit for being able to handle more than you think; discuss the ways in which defensiveness or resistance to new ideas gets in the way of the mission

quantity over quality

- all resources of organization are directed toward producing measurable goals
- things that can be measured are more highly valued than things that cannot, for example numbers of people attending a meeting, newsletter circulation, money spent are valued more than quality of relationships, democratic decision-making, ability to constructively deal with conflict
- little or no value attached to process; if it can't be measured, it has no value
- discomfort with emotion and feelings
- no understanding that when there is a conflict between content (the agenda of the meeting) and process (people's need to be heard or engaged), process will prevail (for example, you may get through the agenda, but if you haven't paid attention to people's need to be heard, the decisions made at the meeting are undermined and/or disregarded)

antidotes: include process or quality goals in your planning; make sure your organization has a values statement which expresses the ways in which you want to do your work; make sure this is a living document and that people are using it in their day to day work; look for ways to measure process goals (for example if you have a goal of inclusivity, think about ways you can measure whether or not you have achieved that goal); learn to recognize those times when you need to get off the agenda in order to address people's underlying concerns

worship of the written word

- if it's not in a memo, it doesn't exist
- the organization does not take into account or value other ways in which information gets shared
- those with strong documentation and writing skills are more highly valued, even in organizations where ability to relate to others is key to the mission

antidotes: take the time to analyze how people inside and outside the organization get and share information; figure out which things need to be written down and come up with alternative ways to document what is happening; work to recognize the contributions and skills that every person brings to the organization (for example, the ability to build relationships with those who are important to the organization's mission); make sure anything written can be clearly understood (avoid academic language, 'buzz' words, etc.)

Civil disobedience is not our problem. Our problem is civil obedience. Our problem is that numbers of people all over the world have obeyed the dictates of the leaders of their government and have gone to war, and millions have been killed because of this obedience…. Our problem is that people are obedient all over the world in the face of poverty and starvation and stupidity, and war, and cruelty. Our problem is that people are obedient while the jails are full of petty thieves, and all the while the grand thieves are running the country. That's our problem.

Howard Zinn

only one right way

- the belief there is one right way to do things and once people are introduced to the right way, they will see the light and adopt it
- when they do not adapt or change, then something is wrong with them (the other, those not changing), not with us (those who 'know' the right way)
- similar to the missionary who does not see value in the culture of other communities, sees only value in their beliefs about what is good

antidotes: accept that there are many ways to get to the same goal; once the group has made a decision about which way will be taken, honor that decision and see what you and the organization will learn from taking that way, even and especially if it is not the way you would have chosen; work on developing the ability to notice when people do things differently and how those different ways might improve your approach; look for the tendency for a group or a person to keep pushing the same point over and over out of a belief that there is only one right way and then name it; when working with communities from a different culture than yours or your organization's, be clear that you have some learning to do about the communities' ways of doing; never assume that you or your organization know what's best for the community in isolation from meaningful relationships with that community

paternalism

- decision-making is clear to those with power and unclear to those without it
- those with power think they are capable of making decisions for and in the interests of those without power
- those with power often don't think it is important or necessary to understand the viewpoint or experience of those for whom they are making decisions
- those without power understand they do not have it and understand who does
- those without power do not really know how decisions get made and who makes what decisions, and yet they are completely familiar with the impact of those decisions on

antidotes: make sure that everyone knows and understands who makes what decisions in the organization; make sure everyone knows and understands their level of responsibility and authority in the organization; include people who are affected by decisions in the decision-making

either/or thinking*

- things are either/or — good/bad, right/wrong, with us/against us
- closely linked to perfectionism in making it difficult to learn from mistakes or accommodate conflict
- no sense that things can be both/and
- results in trying to simplify complex things, for example believing that poverty is simply a result of lack of education
- creates conflict and increases sense of urgency, as people feel they have to make decisions to do either this or that, with no time or encouragement to consider alternatives, particularly those which may require more time or resources
- often used by those with a clear agenda or goal to push those who are still thinking or reflecting to make a choice between 'a' or 'b' without acknowledging a need for time and creativity to come up with more options

antidotes: notice when people use 'either/or' language and push to come up with more than two alternatives; notice when people are simplifying complex issues, particularly when the stakes seem high or an urgent decision needs to be made; slow it down and encourage people to do a deeper analysis; when people are faced with an urgent decision, take a break and give people some breathing room to think creatively; avoid making decisions under extreme pressure

power hoarding

- little, if any, value around sharing power
- power seen as limited, only so much to go around
- those with power feel threatened when anyone suggests changes in how things should be done in the organization, feel suggestions for change are a reflection on their leadership
- those with power don't see themselves as hoarding power or as feeling threatened
- those with power assume they have the best interests of the organization at heart and assume those wanting change are ill-informed (stupid), emotional, inexperienced

antidotes: include power sharing in your organization's values statement; discuss what good leadership looks like and make sure people understand that a good leader develops the power and skills of others; understand that change is inevitable and challenges to your leadership can be healthy and productive; make sure the organization is focused on the mission

fear of open conflict

- people in power are scared of expressed conflict and try to ignore it or run from it
- when someone raises an issue that causes discomfort, the response is to blame the person for raising the issue rather than to look at the issue which is actually causing the problem
- emphasis on being polite
- equating the raising of difficult issues with being impolite, rude, or out of line

antidotes: role play ways to handle conflict before conflict happens; distinguish between being polite and raising hard issues; don't require those who raise hard issues to raise them in 'acceptable' ways, especially if you are using the ways in which issues are raised as an excuse not to address those issues; once a conflict is resolved, take the opportunity to revisit it and see how it might have been handled differently

individualism*

- little experience or comfort working as part of a team
- people in organization believe they are responsible for solving problems alone
- accountability, if any, goes up and down, not sideways to peers or to those the organization is set up to serve
- desire for individual recognition and credit
- leads to isolation
- competition more highly valued than cooperation and where cooperation is valued, little time or resources devoted to developing skills in how to cooperate
- creates a lack of accountability, as the organization values those who can get things done on their own without needing supervision or guidance

antidotes: include teamwork as an important value in your values statement; make sure the organization is working towards shared goals and people understand how working together will improve performance; evaluate people's ability to work in a team as well as their ability to get the job done; make sure that credit is given to all those who participate in an effort, not just the leaders or most public person; make people accountable as a group rather than as individuals; create a culture where people bring problems to the group; use staff meetings as a place to solve problems, not just a place to report activities

i'm the only one

- connected to individualism, the belief that if something is going to get done right, 'I' have to do it
- little or no ability to delegate work to others

antidotes: evaluate people based on their ability to delegate to others; evaluate people based on their ability to work as part of a team to accomplish shared goals
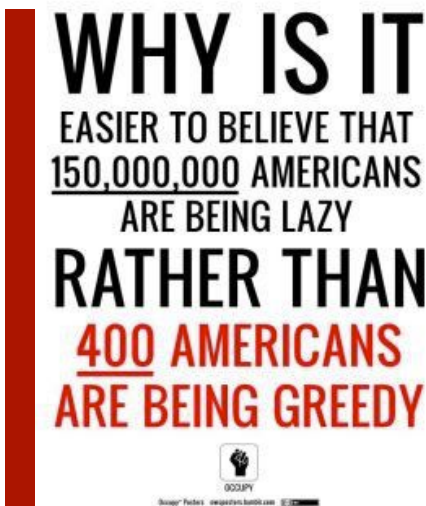
progress is bigger, more*

- observed in how we define success (success is always bigger, more)
- progress is an organization which expands (adds staff, adds projects) or develops the ability to serve more people (regardless of how well they are serving them)
- gives no value, not even negative value, to its cost, for example, increased accountability to funders as the budget grows, ways in which those we serve may be exploited, excluded, or underserved as we focus on how many we are serving instead of quality of service or values created by the ways in which we serve

antidotes: create Seventh Generation thinking by asking how the actions of the group now will affect people seven generations from now; make sure that any cost/benefit analysis includes all the costs, not just the financial ones, for example the cost in morale, the cost in credibility, the cost in the use of resources; include process goals in your planning, for example make sure that your goals speak to how you want to do your work, not just what you want to do; ask those you work with and for to evaluate your performance

objectivity*

- the belief that there is such a thing as being objective or 'neutral'
- the belief that emotions are inherently destructive, irrational, and should not play a role in decision-making or group process
- invalidating people who show emotion
- requiring people to think in a linear (logical) fashion and ignoring or invalidating those who think in other ways
- impatience with any thinking that does not appear 'logical'

antidotes: realize that everybody has a world view and that everybody's world view affects the way they understand things; realize this means you too; push yourself to sit with discomfort when people are expressing themselves in ways which are not familiar to you; assume that everybody has a valid point and your job is to understand what that point is

WHY IS IT
EASIER TO BELIEVE THAT
150,000,000 AMERICANS
ARE BEING LAZY
RATHER THAN
400 AMERICANS
ARE BEING GREEDY

OCCUPY

right to comfort

- the belief that those with power have a right to emotional and psychological comfort (another aspect of valuing 'logic' over emotion)
- scapegoating those who cause discomfort
- equating individual acts of unfairness against white people with systemic racism which daily targets people of color

antidotes: understand that discomfort is at the root of all growth and learning; welcome it as much as you can; deepen your political analysis of racism and oppression so you have a strong understanding of how your personal experience and feelings fit into a larger picture; don't take everything personally

And the point is to live everything. Live the questions now. Perhaps then, someday far in the future, you will gradually, without even noticing it, live your way into the answer.

Ranier Maria Rilke

One of the purposes of listing characteristics of white supremacy culture is to point out how organizations which unconsciously use these characteristics as their norms and standards make it difficult, if not impossible, to open the door to other cultural norms and standards. As a result, many of our organizations, while saying we want to be multi-cultural, really only allow other people and cultures to come in if they adapt or conform to already existing cultural norms. Being able to identify and name the cultural norms and standards you want is a first step to making room for a truly multi-cultural organization.

the self-system

## internalized white superiority

In a racist system, the dominant culture regularly sends white people positive messages about who they are both individually and as a community. The Self-System of white people and communities is inevitably shaped by the images, values, norms, standards beliefs, attitudes and feelings that presume dominant group members and their culture are the standard by which all people are to be measured.

The arrows represent the positive messages that white people hear about themselves and their communities, leading (often unconsciously) to an inflated sense of self. The internalization of these messages impacts white people and the dominant culture in many ways, including: Resistance to change, Avoiding conflict, Paternalism / Caretaking, Ignorance and misinformation, Scapegoating / Blaming / Labeling, Self-Righteousness / Anger, Continued oppression, Resistance to acknowledging / correcting past, Idolizing the individual, Defensiveness, Assumption of normalcy / superiority, Right to comfort.

The mental, physical, spiritual, and emotional make up the self-system for white people as well.

Privileges received on a daily basis, including for example assumed credibility, freedom of movement, unquestioned access, etc. are internalized, impacting the self-system and leading to an inflated sense of self.

These internalizations on both an individual and community level lead to the impacts like those listed at left.
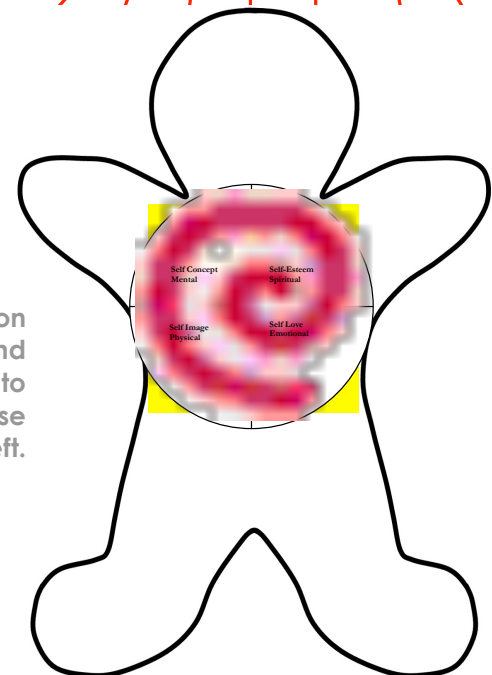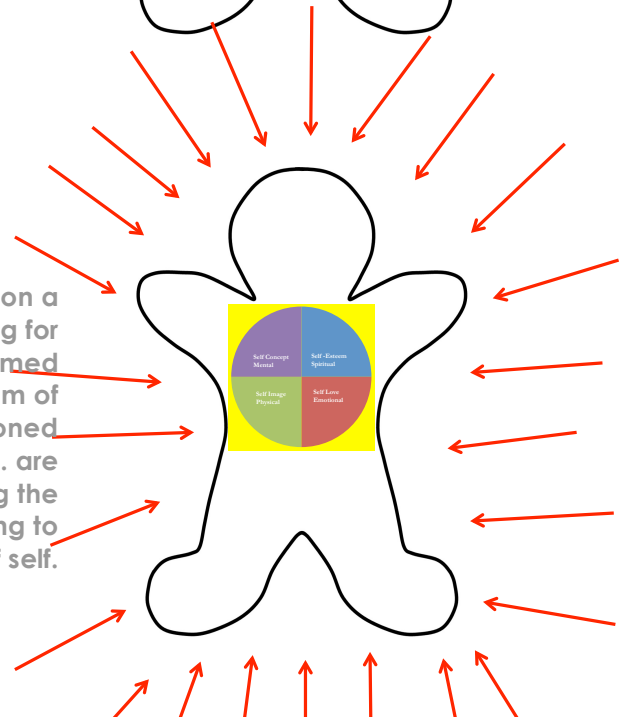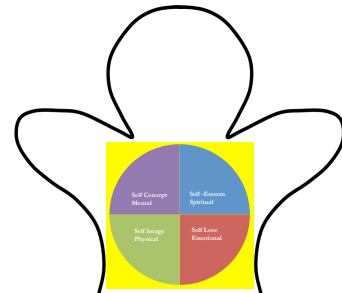
the ladder of empowerment for white people

WHITE ANTI-RACIST

community of love and resistance
collective action
taking responsibility / self-righteousness white can do right / especially me
opening up / acknowledgement
guilt and shame white is not right, I'm bad
denial and defensiveness I am not the problem
be like me white is right and we're all the same
what are you? first contact
I'm normal

INTERNALIZED WHITE SUPREMACY

white peoples' resistance

TACTICS OF RESISTANCE

From Paul Kivel's *Uprooting Racism*, 1996, pp. 40-46

Tactic	What it is	What it sounds like
Denial	denial of existence of oppression; denial of responsibility for it	Discrimination is a thing of the past. It's a level playing field. It's not my fault; I'm not responsible.
Minimization	playing down the damage	Racism isn't a big problem anymore. It's not that bad.
Blame	justifying oppression, blaming the victims of oppression for it	Look at the way they act. If they weren't so angry… Women are too emotional.
Lack of intent	claims the damage is unintentional	I didn't mean it like that. It was only a joke.
It's over now	the oppression was in the past and is no longer an issue	Slavery was over a long ago. Feminism has gone too far.
Competing victimization	claiming that targets of oppression have so much power that we are threatened	Women really have all the power. We just want our rights too. They're taking away our jobs. White people are under attack.

SOURCES OF RESISTANCE

From Arnold, Burke, James, Martin, and Thomas' *Educating for a Change*, 1991, p. 134

Our identity and relation to power: we may feel guilt or anxiety for being a member of the dominant group (a man when sexism is the issue; a white person when racism is the issue). We may be afraid to speak out because we'll be seen as a troublemaker and become isolated when we belong to the target group.

Our discomfort with the content and perspective: the implications of what we're learning may be very threatening to us if we belong to the dominant group or may not be critical or threatening enough if we belong to the target group.

Our discomfort with the process: those of us used to doing things a certain way may get impatient or frustrated when the process is unfamiliar, slow, or too 'touchy feely.' We may assume that the way we respond to the process is the way everyone responds to the process, whether or not that is true. Some of us feel we have a 'right' to be included, while others never expect to be fully included.

Our fear about losing: taking in and/or acting on the information presented may mean loss – of family, of friends, of a job. A white person who opens up to how racism is playing out in their family or community may risk losing important relationships if they decide to speak or act. A person of color who decides to work in coalition with white people may risk losing important relationships as a result.

Our fear of critical thinking: many of us tend to hear critical thinking as criticism. For example, the suggestion that we could do better on race issues in our organization is heard as criticism that we're doing a bad job. This can be particularly difficult when we have a lot of personal investment in the organization or community.

The behavior and what it is:

The 'where are the others' game:

a demand that members of the oppressed group be present for dominant group members to understand themselves or commit to analysis or action (when we don't demand the presence of poor people or politicians to analyze or act on poverty or policy-making)

This 'ism isn't the only problem' game:

the suggestion that there is little reason to concentrate on a particular 'ism' when there are others just as serious

The 'distinguished lecturer' game:
a tendency to talk about the problem without taking any action; a competition over who has the best analysis; a concentration by dominant group members on the problems of the target group without any consideration for the problems of the dominant group

The 'instant solution' game:

the proposal that 'love' is the solution, or 'changing the schools' is the solution, or a focus on one strategy which makes good sense but remains centered in how things should be rather than how they are

The 'find the racist' game:

when one or a few members of the group target another group member for inappropriate comments or ideas, leaving those doing the 'accusing' feeling righteous but actually closing down any opportunity for meaningful discussion

The 'target expert' game:

asking those from the target group to answer questions and represent the entire group with their answers

The 'geography' game:

claiming the real problems are 'in the South,' or somewhere else; or claiming, for example, that racism isn't a problem for you because there were no people of color in your community growing up (when the schools, government institutions, media, houses of worship, and other institutions in your community support racist thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors regardless of whether people of color are present)

DISTANCING BEHAVIORS

From Edler's unpublished paper **Distancing behaviors among white groups dealing with racism.**

awareness

reflection and evaluation

relationship and community building
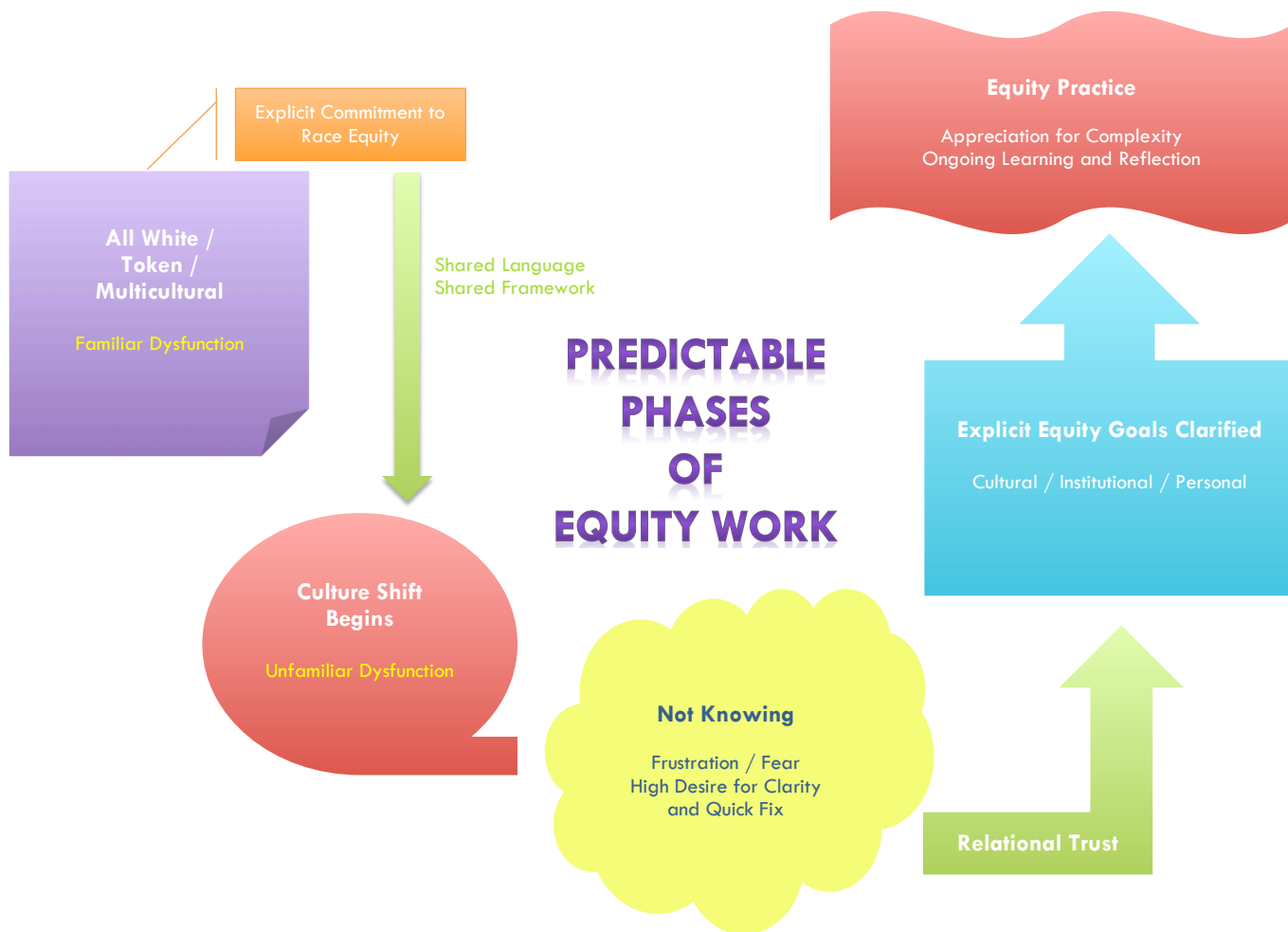
PROBLEM / ISSUE

information gathering and analysis

action

visioning and planning
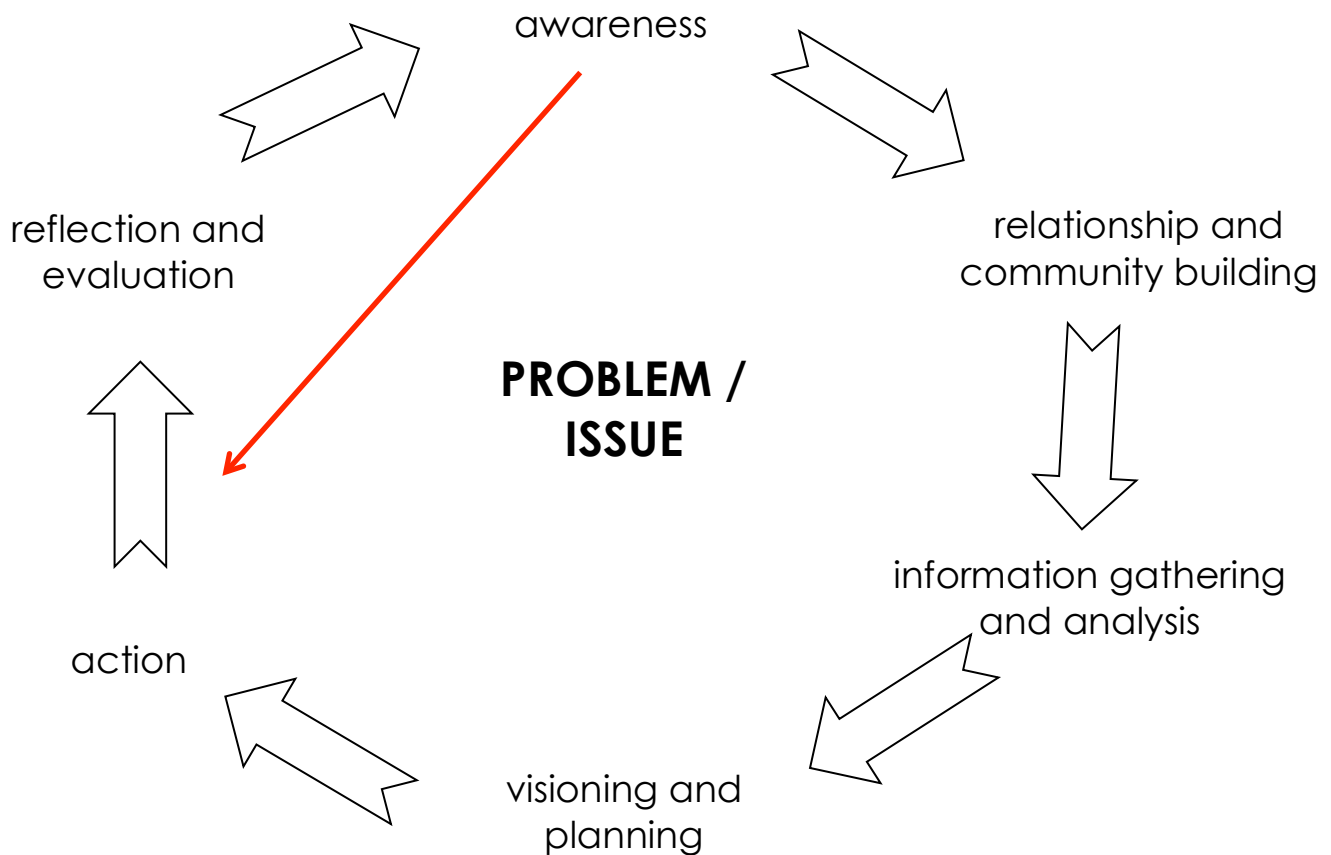
Living in an urgent culture and facing urgent problems in our communities, one of the challenges we face is how often we give into the pattern of moving from awareness to action without taking the necessary steps that help us to be more effective and successful in reaching our vision and goals. This diagram illustrates the steps that we need to take if we are going to be thoughtful, deliberate, strategic, and collaborative in crafting a shared vision and goals. Awareness of the problem leads to intentional time devoted to building relationships with and among communities most affected by the problem. Those people and communities then engage in information gathering and analysis in order to build a shared understanding of the problem, including an ability to distinguish between root causes and symptoms. The next stage is collaborative visioning, goal setting, and planning followed by deliberate and thoughtful action. Action is followed by ongoing reflection and evaluation so that we learn from our mistakes and build on our successes. The stages are not necessarily as clearly defined as they are shown in the diagram; for example relationship and community building can be integrated into every stage. They do inform how we think about moving forward; for example, our action will be more effective if we have taken time to gather information, analyze our situation, vision, and plan together.

race equity stages

Explicit Commitment to Race Equity

All White / Token / Multicultural

Familiar Dysfunction

Shared Language
Shared Framework

Equity Practice

Appreciation for Complexity
Ongoing Learning and Reflection

PREDICTABLE PHASES OF EQUITY WORK

Culture Shift Begins

Unfamiliar Dysfunction

Not Knowing

Frustration / Fear
High Desire for Clarity
and Quick Fix

Explicit Equity Goals Clarified

Cultural / Institutional / Personal

Relational Trust

Organizations who make a commitment to race equity move through somewhat predictable stages, illustrated in the accompanying diagram.

Familiar Dysfunction

Most organizations start their equity commitment with an already established identity as white-led, predominantly white, or operating out of a dominant white culture ideology. The organization might be operating as an all white organization, as an organization with token participation by POC who are expected to "fit in" to existing white dominant culture, or as a multicultural organization that appreciates diversity without challenging racist and/or dominant white culture practices and ideology. In this stage, all people in the

organization are operating in a state of what could be called "familiar dysfunction." Essentially, everyone in the organization has adjusted to the way the organization centers white dominant culture norms at the expense of everyone and particularly POC in the organization and/or communities of color served by the organization. Often (if not always), POC in the organization and those being served are experiencing levels of trauma as a result of racism and internalized racism in the larger society and in the organization. Many white people in the organization are unaware of the level of trauma POC are experiencing or if aware, are taking responsibility individually, often by separating themselves from other white people in order to position themselves as the "good" white person. People across the organization tend towards a "fixing" stance, meaning that individuals and the organization as a whole is on a mission to "fix" others, often in the name of empowerment. While individuals in the organization may be very satisfied to very dissatisfied, people have generally accepted the status quo as inevitable and have learned to function within it.

Explicit Commitment to Race Equity

As the organization begins to state an explicit commitment to race equity, equilibrium begins to shift. As people in the organization begin to develop a shared language and framework for understanding racism as race prejudice + social and institutional power, the familiar dysfunction begins to unravel. People of Color often begin to hold renewed hope that the organization might become more responsive to their strengths, needs, and wisdom; white people often begin to question what once seemed certain, particularly when it comes to their assumed power in the organization. As POC's expectations for the organization begin to rise, particularly as a framework for racism begins to be clarified, they may assume that white people know what to do and are nonetheless choosing to perpetuate racist attitudes and behaviors. As white people sense that the framework requires some change in attitudes and behaviors, they may become either hypersensitive or hyperdefensive, particularly as they sense the expectation that they should behave and believe differently while not knowing exactly what to do.

There is no such thing as a single-issue struggle because we do not lead single-issue lives.

Audre Lorde

Culture Shift

This is the beginning of a culture shift in the organization. POC often read white people's ignorance as intentional; they may also equate race equity with the need for white people to change, which can diminish their sense of power and agency. As a result, they may feel high levels of frustration and/or hopelessness. White people often become so unsettled by no longer having power to define the organizational "norms" that they begin to take every challenge by others, whether from a white person or a POC, as very personal and begin to try to prove they are one of the "good" white people, either by disassociating from other white people, intellectualizing the process, criticizing the process, or seeking approval from individual POC. People in the organization begin to "flip the script;" the organization engages in either/or thinking that positions POC as inherently good and white people as inherently bad. At this stage, the organization tends to blame individuals for doing things "wrong" and there is little ability to hold complexity or appreciate oneself or others. This flipping of the script into either/or thinking can increase the sense of traumatization on the parts of both POC and white people, as expectations for needed and desired change are not met.

Not Knowing

This leads to the stage of "not knowing," a place where many experience frustration and/or fear. Many if not most people want the process to offer clarity and quick fixes; when the process does not, both POC and white people give into the tendency to identify people and actions as "right" or "wrong." Some people in the organization move into positions of high righteousness, believing that race equity is based in "one right way" of doing things; energy goes into identifying who or what is "right" and who or what is "wrong." People can feel very unsettled because this righteous judgment can either lead to significant self-doubt and/or a desire for the

organization to address personal ego needs. At the same time, in the middle of this "not knowing," relationships may begin to subtly shift as some individuals within the organization work to negotiate conflict with heightened personal awareness and increased accountability to the mission. In addition, the organization as a whole begins to recognize ways in which racism is tending to reproduce itself and attempts are being made to address those.

Relational Trust

At this point, the organization acknowledges that culture shift is messy and chaotic and focuses on efforts to build relational trust and a culture of appreciation to help move people and the organization through the chaos. People start to identify their individual and collective power to make change or shift the organization without focusing or depending on others to change. People continue to identify useful and/or effective ways to disagree, looking for the value in different perspectives while assuming positive intent. Caucuses provide support for people to work through challenges related to equity work. People begin to sharpen their skills for holding each other accountable with a sense of possibility rather than judgment. Both POC and white people are working to bring intention and impact closer together out of a mutual respect for the hard personal work involved in a race equity commitment.

OR …

In cases where the organization is unable to hold the chaos of not knowing, it reverts to familiar dysfunction, often solidifying old patterns of power and privilege. The rationales for reverting to dysfunctional white supremacy patterns include a need for clarity (which is essentially an admission that those with power in the organization are too disturbed by changing power dynamics), urgency related to the organization's mission ("we don't have time for this," "we can't afford to be distracted,"), the need to produce measurable results for funders, among others. Some people may leave or threaten to leave the organization. While the reasons are often different, both POC and white people can become advocates for reverting to familiar dysfunction.

Equity Goals Clarified

At this stage, the organization is ready to identify and name specific and explicit race equity goals at the cultural, institutional and personal levels. Naming these goals now rather than earlier, before the culture shift and "not knowing" stages, allows these goals to address the nuance and complexities inherent in race equity work. Naming these goals now also means the groundwork has been laid for everyone to understand the integral interconnection between institutional, cultural, and personal work.

Equity Practice

Once goals have been clarified, the organization leans into the equity work with an appreciation for complexity, ongoing learning and reflection. The organization works to establish a culture that provides support *and* accountability, one that presumes good intent while continually improving on the effort to bring intent and impact closer together through improved communication and mutual respect. The organization understands race equity as an ongoing practice rather than a specific destination. People have learned how to offer appreciation, disagree, make mistakes, call into account, reflect and revise. People have also learned to identify their individual bottom lines and know when and how to stand their ground while remaining accountable to the organization's vision and mission.

HOW A MOVEMENT IS BUILT

Adapted from Parker Palmer's
Divided no More: A Movement Approach to Education Reform

Movements for social change emerge when:

- Individuals refuse to act outwardly in contradiction to something they know to be true inwardly.
- Groups emerge when these individuals find each other, begin to build community, and spread the word.
- Collective Action happens when the group begins to translate individual problems into public organizing issues that address the root cause of the issu

MOVEMENT MENTALITY

Thinking Like An Organizer

Our work within organizations must be approached as movement building work. Organizers, working to create organizational change with a movement mentality, can:

- remember, resistance is only the place where things begin,
- know that opposition merely validates the idea that change must come,
- find sources of countervailing power outside of the organizational structure,
- nurture that power,
- work together to translate individual problems into broader organizing issues,
- create alternative rewards to sustain energy for working toward your vision,
- work from a power, rather than a victim, analysis.

THE ROLE OF CAUCUSES

THE ROLE OF THE CHANGE TEAM

The role of caucuses is:

1. to provide **healing** and **support**
2. to **study** and **strategize** within the context of the organization's mission
3. to **resolve conflict** and **solve problems collectively**
4. to **plan, discuss, debate, draft recommendations for the change team** in order to help the organization move towards its goals of building an anti-racist social change organization and live into the organization's mission

Note: People must go through a Dismantling Racism training to be eligible for joining the change team; everyone is invited to participate in the caucuses. If people come to the caucuses who have not participated in a workshop, then those leading the caucus need to be thoughtful about how to bring those people into the discussion (keep in mind they may not share the language, analysis, or ways of thinking of those who have been through a workshop).

The role of the change team is:

1. to **lead and organize the process** towards becoming an anti-racist social change organization
   - help move people into actively supporting (or at least avoid resisting) the changes necessary to move the organization towards that vision
   - help to resolve conflict
   - avoid becoming 'morality police' by including others in the work of the change team
2. to lead and organize a process to **evaluate** the organization as it is now
3. to lead a process to help the organization **vision** what it would look like as an anti-racist social change organization
4. to lead a process to establish **specific, clear, and meaningful goals** for reaching the vision
5. **to build community** and **move the organization to collective action**
   - help the organization think about how to integrate and/or educate those in the organization who have not been through a DR training
   - be in open communication with all members of the organization
   - insure the integration of the work of the change team with program work
6. **think like an organizer** in helping the organization move toward its goals
   - work with members of the organization to think strategically about how to reach the goals of the organization

Change team members are people who:
- really want to see positive change in the organization and/or community;
- bring enthusiasm and commitment to the process (they are role models and cheerleaders);
- have a certain degree of skill in helping make change happen;
- have some degree of leadership in their organization or community;
- are willing to see themselves as change agents;
- and understand that they can't do it alone. They understand their job as building a group of people who will take over leadership of the process and in turn develop new leaders.

Their job is to develop a group of people who will work together to reach explicitly stated goals in line with the organization's mission. This involves working with others to:

- assess the present situation, including what's working (what people are doing well to reach equity goals), define areas where support is needed, and set visionary and realistic equity goals;
- identify the values the group or organization brings to this work, i.e. making sure people are clear about how they want to be with each other as they work toward these goals;
- identify ways the group can reach out to new people, share power and develop new leadership, receive people as they are into the group, help people grow in their awareness of the issues, empower people, and get the work done;
- develop a strategy to accomplish their goals;
- insure that the strategy is carried out;
- evaluate and make changes in the strategy as needed.
- make sure that all contributions are appreciated and that everyone has a chance to grow and change throughout the process.

CHANGE TEAM

Action Steps

1. **Identify your equity vision and the goals that will help you reach your vision**. Who else shares this vision? Is it widely felt? The answers to these questions will give you an idea of how difficult or challenging it will be to make changes (the more people who are excited by the vision, the easier it will be to take it on).

2. **Identify who needs to be involved in setting the specific goals** (see below). Involve a larger group whose participation will help them understand the process and make it less threatening.

3. **State a specific goal or goals that will move your organization toward the vision.** These goals need to be tangible. In other words, 'eliminate racism' is not a tangible goal while 'get the board to adopt by-laws specifying percentages based on race, gender, income, sexual identity, etc.' is. Talk about how the goal (or goals) is (are) in line with your organization's values and mission.

4. **Identify what's working as well as what additional support is needed.** Rather than frame your equity vision and goal as a problem to be solved, assume that people and the organization as a whole is already doing some things well in relationship to the goal. Identify what's working and then ask people to identify where they need additional support. Remember that some people will equate this process with criticism of their work or of the organization and as a result will resist the process. Think about whether you need to engage those people or work around them. This will depend on how much power and influence they have to affect the process.

5. **Identify who in the organization shares a desire to reach these goals.** How much power do they have to influence decision-makers (answer to number 2) in the organization? What is their self-interest?

6. **Identify who in the organization is threatened by or opposed to these goals.** How much power do they have to influence decision-makers (answer to number 2) in the organization? What is their self-interest?
7. **Identify the specific strategy steps the change team and/or the organization will take to meet the goals.** How will you involve allies and address challenges from those who are threatened or opposed? How will you include those who might otherwise oppose you? Who should be recruited onto the change team? Who will coordinate the efforts? When and how will people meet to work on these goals? Develop a timeline.
8. **Build in evaluation and reflection.** At what points will you revise your strategy? How will you build change team morale and relationships? How will you make sure the work of the change team is integrated into the organization (as opposed to becoming a 'fringe' or 'clique' activity)?

CHANGE TEAM

Checklist

Use this checklist about once every two or three months to make sure your change team is staying on track:

1. When did the change team last meet? Do you have plans to meet in the future?
2. Who is leading the change team? Is there someone who takes responsibility for making sure the team is meeting and getting work done? Has this responsibility changed hands, or has one person pretty much been responsible? How is this leadership pattern good or bad for the change team?
3. How would you describe the morale of the change team?
4. What are some of the strengths of the change team?
5. Where is the change team getting stuck?
6. Is the change team meeting resistance from others in the organization or community? If so, why and what can you do about it? When you look at your reasons, are you stuck in blaming others (in other words are you requiring other people to change before anything can get done)? Or are you taking responsibility for addressing the problems that come up?
7. Is the change team finding the kind of support it needs in the organization or community? If not, why not and what can you do about it? Are you truly encouraging new people into the organization or community? Are you making them welcome and giving them a chance to grow?
8. Are you making time in your meetings for personal sharing and reflection? Or are your meetings all business and no fun?
9. Are you accomplishing your goals? If so, are you taking time to pat yourselves on the back and enjoy your success? If not, are you taking time to rethink your strategies?

CHANGE AGENT DILEMMAS

1. **The 'what about me?' syndrome:** The change agent wants to work to create change, but s/he also feels her/his own unmet needs; a desire to be at the center.

2. **The inclusion dilemma:** The change agent struggles with the issue of how to include as many people as possible in the different stage of the change process.

3. **Cognitive dissonance:** The change agent experiences conflict between what s/he considers 'normal' and new information. For example, religious teaching that homosexuality is a sin vs. the gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender liberation movement.

4. **Fear:** The fear of the dominant group: what will I lose? The fear of the target group: what will I lose? i.e. the fear that taking action will result in the loss of friends.

5. **Where to start:** Requires careful organizational analysis of who wants to work with the change agent and who feels threatened and what power each or all of these people have in the organization to enable or stop change efforts.

6. **Resistance to change:** People's resistance to change can come out as: "People here are satisfied (or happy)." "Don't be a troublemaker." "Who are you to suggest these changes?" "We'd like to change, but . . . it costs too much, it's hopeless, nothing will ever be different." "The alumni (or whatever group) won't like the change."

7. **How far is this going to go?** Feelings that some change is all right but let's not go too far, particularly when those with power feel threatened or those who have internalized their experience are fearful of conflict that change might bring.

8. **Despair:** The change agent's own sense of discouragement and despair when it becomes clear that many in the organization don't really want things to change.

9. **Targeting:** The change agent is targeted for asking questions or taking action that 'rocks the boat.'

10. **The "I have to do it myself" syndrome:** The change agent feels all the responsibility for change rests on her or his shoulders and has a hard time delegating or letting other people get involved.

barriers and bridges principles

These principles were developed by Grassroots Leadership's (Charlotte, NC) Barriers and Bridges program, a precursor and contributor to the Dismantling Racism process for which this workbook is designed. These principles speak to the assumptions and values that ground dismantling racism work.

1. We need an analysis of how oppression works. This is not simply about reducing prejudice. This is about radically changing the way we do things, about redistributing power.

2. There is a difference between appreciating diversity and recognizing oppression and abuse of power.

3. To build multi-cultural organizations, we have to build cross-cultural relationships one-on-one.

4. In order to do that, we have to be willing to do personal work, learn more about who we are, and change.

5. On the other hand, we can't build multi-cultural organizations alone; we have to build a strong team of people committed to the same goal.

6. We must be open to doing things differently, sometimes radically so, than we've done them in the past. We may have to redefine the very things we thought were basic.

7. We need to learn that points of resistance, both within ourselves and as exhibited by others, are the sources of greatest learning. We must recognize discomfort as a signal for learning rather than an excuse for withdrawal or defensiveness.

8. We need to acknowledge that we get out of this process what we put in. We must be open to learning even if it is not packaged in ways that we expect or in ways with which we feel comfortable. We must be actively engaged in the learning process.

9. In this work we must learn to seek to understand before turning to judgment. At the same time, we can expect, and we deserve, appropriate, loving, and just behavior.

10. Change is often experienced by those in power as moving too quickly and by those with less power as moving too slowly. Change does not need to be slow, but often is.

Offering feedback is one method of learning about what is working and what could be improved. Offering feedback is not about judging skills, knowledge, and understanding; neither is it about hurting feelings. Often our habit is to say what we like publicly and what we dislike privately and to someone else. This makes it very difficult to learn from our experience and mistakes. It also creates a climate of distrust. Offering feedback is a tool, which should be used strategically. Because we work in organizations that must think critically, we sometimes have difficulty discerning when critical thinking is helpful and when it becomes important to offer support, regardless of the circumstances. Approval and affirmation are as important as critical thinking; both should be offered at appropriate times.

To give constructive feedback:

- **talk in the first person** – "I felt . . ." or "When I heard you say . . . I had this reaction" show that you are speaking for yourself and avoiding general or global conclusions.
- **be specific.** – Focus on the particular action or statement. Avoid saying things like "You always . . ." or "You keep on . . ." and give a specific incident or example.
- **challenge the idea or action, not the person** – Stick to the actions or behaviors that a person can do something about.
- **combine recognition of what worked with a challenge to improve** – Be as specific as possible about what worked and speak to the reasons it worked.
- **ask questions to clarify or probe the reasons** – Assume that people have a reason for what they do, and ask them to explain it so you can give more credible feedback.
- **identify the bridges** – It helps to acknowledge when you act or think in a similar way, saying things such as "I know that when I am in this situation, I tend to . . ." in a way that reminds the person that you're on the same side. You may want to bridge by acknowledging differences – "I know my experience as a man is different, but it still may be useful to note that . . ." It can help to acknowledge that you've gotten stuck or had a similar problem and the issue at hand is helping you to reflect on what to do as a facilitator.
- **wherever possible, make specific suggestions for alternative approaches** – Questions like "Have you considered . . ." or "What would happen if we tried . . ." open up possibilities. Using 'we' suggests this issue is of interest to the whole group. Encourage a range of solutions to make the point there is more than one way to do it.

Vivette Jeffries-Logan, Michelle Johnson, Tema Okun

Accountability is a well-worn word in social justice circles. The three of us, one a member of the Occaneechi Band of the Saponi Nation, one of us African-American, one of us white, have worked hard to figure out what accountability means to us as we attempt to walk our social justice talk. We have done this because we've seen too often how the concept of accountability gets (mis)used in interpersonal games of tit for tat, manipulations aimed at getting people to follow an agenda rather than reach for a shared vision. We know how challenging it is to build community-wide accountability when we are spinning in ever increasing dysfunctional circles personally.

We begin by acknowledging that accountability in the context of racial equity and justice generally refers to the ways in which white people and communities need to be accountable to people and communities of color. We understand this commitment as one attempt to redress the way in which racist oppression, all oppression, benefits those with social and institutional power at the expense of those with less.

We are not suggesting this is a one-way street, where dominant groups and people are always "wrong" while oppressed groups and people are always "right." For one, we don't believe in these kinds of binaries, and for another, we are all damaged by the false constructs designed to deliberately divide us.

At the same time, we must constantly acknowledge the longstanding institutional and structural imbalances that have created a situation where white people and communities consistently benefit at the expense of people and communities of color. We also place accountability in the larger context of capitalism; we live in a culture that values profit above all else, constructing race, class, gender, and other categories to oil the corporate profit engine. As a result, those with resources are positioned as more capable of deciding what is in the best interests of all of us. Within this context, the social justice community struggles to negotiate a system of accountability to funders generally not located in or made up of communities being organized or served and social justice gets defined in terms of access rather than equity. So how might we construct accountability in ways that help us live into a vision of racial equity and justice?

First we must understand how race is constructed specifically to set up a power imbalance with white at the top of the ladder and different communities of color "living" below, moving up and down based on the agenda of those in power. At this historical moment, for example, immigrants from Central and South America are pitted against Arab communities pitted in their turn against people of African descent in a destructive dance of access to a slightly higher rung while Indigenous com-munities are left off altogether, once again made invisible and erased. Every oppressive construct operates like this; the category of rich constructed as superior in ways that blame the working poor who make wealth possible, the category of heterosexual elevating those who construct normal in opposition to the many ways in which people can and do express sexuality and gender.

We argue that accountability requires a lens through which we see these constructs of personal and institutional power. We need to see the bigger picture, to see that we need not fight over rungs of a ladder that by its very nature underserves us all. As Winona LaDuke so wisely says, "we don't want a bigger piece of the pie, we want a different pie." The bigger picture not only keeps us from fighting among ourselves, but also provides hope, the sense of another possibility.

Second, accountability is in essence a form of solidarity, one that acknowledges the deep conditioning of all of us into a race construct that places white at the top while systematically devaluing people and communities of color. Capitalism teaches us well to hoard power, win at all costs, see "other" as threat, and live in increased anxiety about losing our share of the above-mentioned pie, all while distracted by the ever illusive pursuit of more. As a result, we are separated not just from

each other but from ourselves, as we negotiate all the ways we have internalized the messages about what's important. As such, accountability requires authentic relationship across these false yet powerful divides.

Authentic relationship refers to the ways we treat, respect, and honor both ourselves and each other based in an acknowledge-ment of our essential inter-dependence. Vivette suggests we remember "Hŭk winédéwahe;" in the words of the Tutelo language of the Sapponi people this means "all my relations, we are all related, we are accountable to each other on a human being level."

This is not particularly easy. Vivette shares how she "was 39 years old and just finding out [about systemic oppression]; it was hate, rage rolling up .... I could have bitten the heads off every white person I know and let them drop, step over the bodies and move on [even though] I was aware enough to know I didn't enjoy feeling like this." Tema shares how she spent years distancing herself from other white people in an attempt to "prove" herself as "better, more anti-racist," than them.
As we negotiate our socializations, we communicate differently, bring different needs, life experiences, and stakes in our relationships based on which identity point we are moving from or most connected to in any given moment. We also hold very different desires for accounta-bility. Therefore we must develop a level of self-awareness about our own socialization and how it inhibits or supports attitudes and

behaviors that serve us and our relationships with others. Self-awareness sharpens our skill of discernment, where we can begin to identify personal and collective interests beyond our socialized conditioning. With increased self-awareness, we can recognize that our feelings and behaviors, the result of longstanding patterns of racism and privilege, are not about us personally even though the fear, pain, or distress feels very personal. We can begin to under-stand the power of socialization on our psyches, our hearts.

We develop this self-awareness, this accountability to ourselves and each other by building systems of mutual support that help us acknowledge, normalize, and validate the inevitable emotions arising from oppression and deep socialization. Vivette was able to draw on a network outside of her organization that kept her from feeling isolated and vulnerable in a situation where her boss was acting in racist and irrational ways. Doing this, she explains, "helped me know I wasn't alone even at the lowest point when I began to internalize." Similarly, with the help of her network, Tema came to understand that she held accountability not just to people of color but to white people and communities as well; understanding the behavior of other white people as a reflection of her own has helped her build compassionate rather than judgmental relationships.

At the same time, we must acknowledge that not all of us are in a position to develop these skills. Michelle notes, "the first time someone is not accountable,

I don't shut them out, probably not even the tenth time, but then my compassion gets used up; … the relationship is harmful, feels toxic, to me and/or the community." Accountability often requires that we set boundaries because, as Vivette says, "everything that walks is not positive energy." This can be a tender process where we are again called into the task of (collaboratively) discerning the delicate balance between our own needs and those of the community.

The third aspect of accounta-bility to help us in the discern-ment process is a set of values. Without values or principles, accountability too often becomes a punitive instrument wielded for personal gain. Principles help us look beyond our own socialized confusions. These values or principles are collectively created, grounded in the generational wisdom of elders, what we have learned from history, our experience, our understanding of the Creator and/or environment, and our desires for liberation.

At a recent gathering of community aimed at creating a food collective, the group spent a significant portion of the agenda fleshing out the meaning of terms embedded in their mission and vision statement, understanding the need to assertively define what words like "liberation," "justice," and "family" mean.

When Vivette was struggling with a challenging boss, her support circle helped her be

thoughtful (as opposed to impulsive), focus on her intentions, and think both about what she needed and what was in the best interests of the organization so she could maintain alignment with the mission and the people she was meant to serve. We have to work with each other to deepen our understanding of what living into our values on both a personal and collective level actually looks like. Again, this is an ongoing process of discernment, where we make mistakes and learn from them in a spirit of generosity that our relationships make possible.

The final aspect of accountability is our responsibility to act. Here again, our actions need to be collaboratively and collectively considered, grounded in strong relationship and values.
After years of co-facilitating anti-racism workshops, Tema and Michelle were hired to teach separate sections of a class on Diversity and Oppression at a local university. Working with the same curriculum, Michelle's (white) students constantly questioned her authority, accused her of pushing a race agenda, and complained to the administration. Tema's (white) students gave her such high evaluations that she received a Dean's Teaching award. These dissonant experiences, unfortunately common, elevated and reaffirmed a white professor while marginalizing a Black one, with both financial and career consequences. Although we wanted to continue teaching, Michelle knew she could and should not tolerate another semester of such toxic dynamics while Tema knew she could not

simply proceed after witnessing Michelle's experience. Strategizing together, we informed the Dean that in the future we would co-teach the course, splitting the salary. Although this strategy did not address all the dynamics of racial inequity in the classroom or the institution, we did build accountability to each other, the students, and our principles.

The action component of accountability requires both relationship and principles grounded in a strong vision of transformative justice. We have seen how (white) people and groups attempt acts of accountability in isolation from those they are attempting to be accountable to and/or reinforce power constructs with a shallow understanding of what it means to "help."

Accountability requires some level of authentic relationship, even with those who are physically distant. For example, efforts to provide solidarity and support to people and communities in New Orleans, Haiti, Palestine can be meaningful and authentic when we take the time and effort to build a network of relationships with affected people and communities while educating ourselves about the constructed power dynamics at play and the values and princi-ples guiding solidarity efforts.

We follow in the footsteps of Tecumseh (a Shaawanwaki leader) who instructed, even as he fought for independence for his people, that "everyone must treat with respect all things that are sacred to other people whether one comprehends them or not."

In our vision of a racially just world, we understand accountability as an ongoing and fluid process of building and sustaining authentic relationships across constructed divides of race, class, gender, geography. We collaborate in the project of decolonizing our hearts and minds, grounded in an understanding and analysis of the intricate weave of power dynamics that shape and socialize us. We acknowledge our essential interdependence as we collectively live into principles that help us act effectively and with compassion to build the solidarity required for "a different pie," for justice.

principles for taking action

Taking action for racial justice can be guided by these 7 principles:

1. Use organizing mind; focus on your circle of influence
2. Identify explicit goals
3. Speak to, serve, empower, engage those on the margins
4. Think and act collectively
5. Be accountable to people and to principles
6. Know yourself
7. Work on all three interdependent levels - personal, institutional, cultural

ORGANIZING MIND

This principle is grounded in the wisdom of experienced and effective community organizers. To use organizing mind means that we begin by looking around to see who is with us, who shares our desires and our vision. We then build relationships with those people. So, for example, if we find one other person to work with, then the two of us fine another 2 people, then the four of us find another 4 people and so on. Organizing mind is based on the idea of "each one reach one" in ways that build relationships, community, solidarity, and movements.

Using organizing mind helps us to focus on who and what is within our reach so we can build a larger group of people with whom to work and play and fight for social justice.

This principle is closely tied to the work of Stephen Covey (*The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, 1992), which is its turn based on the work of Viktor Frankl (*Man's Search for Meaning*, 2006). Covey speaks to the importance of focusing on our circle of concern, which helps us build our individual and collective power and effectiveness.

Frankl, a Jewish psychotherapist, was imprisoned in a series of concentration camps during WWII and spent much of his time observing the behavior of his fellow prisoners and the Nazi prison guards. He noticed how some prisoners were more "free" than their guards because of how they used the space between what happened to them and how they chose to respond. Frankl then defined "freedom" as that space between what happens to us and how we choose to respond.

The circle of concern includes the wide range of concerns that a person or

Artwork by Ricardo
Levins Morales
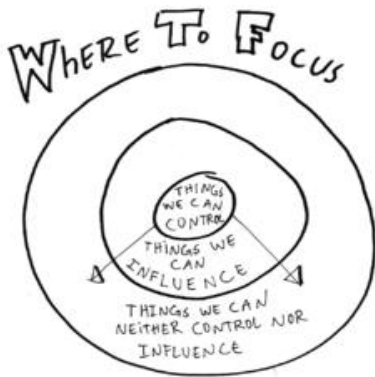
community has, including everything from a (public) health problem to the threat of war (what happens to us). The circle of influence includes those concerns that we can do something about (how we choose to respond). Proactively focusing on our circle of influence magnifies it; as a result our power and effectiveness build. Reactively focusing on concerns that are not within our circle of influence, on what's not working or on what others can or should be doing, makes us much less effective. It also leads us to blame and/or wait for others to change before we act, which leads to a sense of frustration and powerlessness.

The connection to organizing mind is that too often we focus on people who are too far away from us (our circle of concern) rather than on those who are closer who we haven't yet organized to work with us (our circle of influence). When we complain "we're preaching to the choir," our response is "yes, we need to start organizing the choir." When we complain about the apathy or disinterest of those we are trying to reach, this is often a sign we are too focused on who is not yet with us and we need to refocus on who is, even if it's only one or two other people.

EXPLICIT GOALS

We all know how easy it is to "talk the talk" – and the talk of racial justice is deeply compelling. This principle asks us to tie the talk of social justice to explicit goals so that people and communities have a clear sense of what social justice looks like up close and personal. When people in communities or institutions make a race equity commitment, they often have little to no idea of what that commitment means in terms of their role, their job, or their responsibility. Those leading the change must build a team that can help people identify what racial justice looks like in their sphere of influence, whether it is working for a policy goal to stop deportations or an internal


organizational goal to insure clear communication across language and cultural differences.

BUILD POWER ON THE MARGINS

This principle comes to us from the trans community and the writing/thinking of Dean Spade. Spade, a founder of the Sylvia Rivera Law Project, talks about how strong equity goals are best designed when they the build power and agency of those most on the margins. This principle recognizes that when we

"**Most trans folks don't have the privileges Caitlyn and I now have. It is those trans folks we must continue to lift up, get them access to healthcare, jobs, housing, safe streets, safe schools and homes for our young people. We must lift up the stories of those most at risk, statistically trans people of color who are poor and working class.**"

-Lavern Cox on Caitlyn Jenner
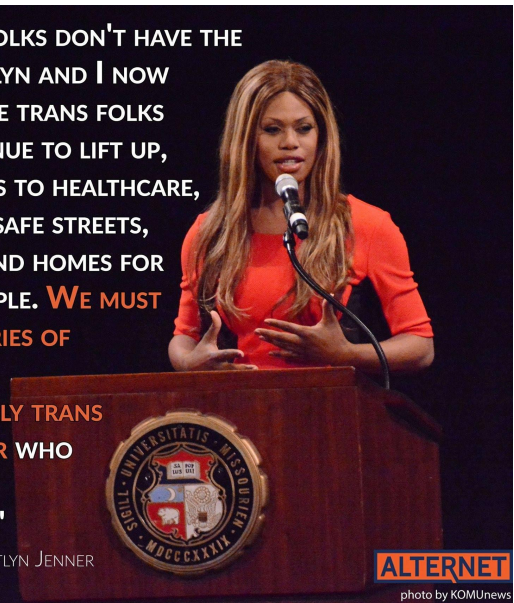
ALTERNET

photo by KOMUnews

frame goals and strategies in ways that benefit those on the margins, we're framing goals and strategies that benefit all of us, directly and indirectly. One example is health benefits; when we fought (or fight) for health coverage for domestic partners, that goal and the strategy to reach it still leaves unpartnered, trans, queer, single, unemployed, those in other than traditional relationships and a large range of poor people vulnerable. Crafting and fighting for health care that covers all of us achieves more equity and builds a larger caring community.

THINK AND ACT COLLECTIVELY AND COLLABORATIVELY

Artwork by Ricardo Levins Morales

We live in a culture enraptured by the idea of the single hero riding in on a white horse (or a inter-galactic spaceship) to save the day. We are all of us raised by institutions (schools, the media, religious institutions) that reinforce the idea of individual achievement and heroism. The reality is that our history and particularly the history of the arc of social justice is a history of movements. This principle is based on the idea that we save and are saved by each other.

By design, the dominant culture insures that we have a very weak collective impulse; the collective impulse that people and communities held originally (Indigenous nations and cultures) or brought with them from other countries and cultures has been systematically erased in the service of racism. This means that we have to teach each other and ourselves to collaborate and act collectively. We can look for guidance to those people and communities whose resilience has preserved that impulse.

Acting collaboratively and collectively means that we build strong and authentic relationships that enable us to act in concert with each other from a place of wisdom collaboratively and collectively gathered. It also means that we learn from our mistakes rather than pretend we never make them.

ACCOUNTABILITY

A central principle of every social justice movement is the power of building relationships in the service of community.

In working for racial justice, we are asked to disrupt the traditional models that assume formally educated white people are better equipped to lead and/or address problems, particularly in communities where they have few authentic relationships.

Accountability is in essence a form of solidarity, one that acknowledges the deep conditioning of all of us into a racist construct that places white at the top while systematically devaluing people and communities of color. In this culture, we are taught to hoard power, win at all costs, see "other" as threat, and live in increased anxiety about losing our share of the so-called pie. As a result, we are separated not just from each other but from ourselves. Accountability becomes a way to reconnect through the power of authentic relationship across these false yet powerful divides.

Accountability is also a form of discernment around how to live into shared values or principles. Principles help us focus beyond our own socialized confusions. Social justice values or principles are collectively created, grounded in the generational wisdom of elders, what we have learned from history, our experience, our understanding of the Creator and/or environment, and our desires for liberation.

Another way of saying this is that if we are just accountable to people, we can get in trouble if the people we're accountable to are acting out of confusion; this is where our principles help keep us grounded. If we are accountable only to principles, we tend to lose sight of the people that we are in relationship with, so our relationships can help us understand the nuance and complexity of honoring our principles.

Artwork by Ricardo Levins Morales

KNOW YOURSELF

Taking action for racial justice requires a level of self-awareness that allows us to be clear about what we are called to do, what we know how to do, and where we need to develop. Another way of thinking about this is to know our strengths, our weaknesses, our opportunities for growth, and our challenges. Knowing ourselves means that we can show up more appropriately and effectively in whatever the work is, avoid taking on tasks we are not equipped to do well, ask for help when needed, and admit when we don't know what we're doing or claim our skills gracefully when we do. White supremacy and racism affects all of us; we internalize cultural messages about our worth or lack of worth and often act on those without realizing it. We also tend to reproduce dominant culture habits of leadership and power hoarding, individualism, and either/or thinking. We may be dealing with severe trauma related to oppression. We may be addicted to a culture of critique, where all we know to do is point out what is not working or how others need to change.

Doing our personal work so that we can show up for racial justice is, ironically, a collective practice. We need to support each other as we work to build on our amazing strengths – our power, our commitment, our kindness, our empathy, our bravery, our keen intelligence, our sense of humor, our ability to connect the dots, our creativity, our critical thinking, our ability to take risks and make mistakes. We also need to support each other as we work to address the effects of trauma and the dis-ease associated with white supremacy and racism. We do this by calling each other in rather than out. We do this by holding a number of contradicitons, including that we are both very different as a result of our life experience and we are also interdependent as a growing community seeking and working for justice. We do this by taking responsibility for ourselves and how we show up to facilitate movement building.

WORK ON ALL THREE LEVELS

Racism shows up on three levels: personal/interpersonal, institutional, and cultural. This means that liberation shows up on all three as well. Working for racial justice means we need to work on each of the three levels. If our organization or community offers expertise and skills in two of the three, we can intentionally partner with organizations and communities working on the other. For example, an organizing initiative focused on teachers in a mid-size southern city is offering yoga classes for their members, led by yoga teachers committed to tying their practice to the vision of building a strong public education for all.

We must avoid being so focused on one aspect of liberation that we ignore or even disdain the others. We are all familiar with the individual committed to fighting for justice in the world while sacrificing relationships with friends or family or, in some cases, engaging in violence towards family members as a release for unexamined feelings. We are too familiar with social justice organizations that exploit the people doing the work of the organization. Similarly, we also know individuals who spend so much time engaged in personal reflection that they become lost to the movement and organizations who focus on personal work without tying that work to movement building.

An example of work on all three levels is an emerging national network of racial justice activism. The network is grounding leadership in a practice called somatics, which is designed to support transformational change rooted in the belief that we benefit from understanding how trauma impacts us. The work of understanding our own personal relationship to trauma is done as a collective practice in the service of developing our individual and collective capacity to facilitate the day-to-day work of movement building.

Strong racial justice goals and strategies are based on the principles outlined above, lead and contribute to movement-building (and are based in movement-building values), and support people and communities in meeting urgent needs.

Artwork by Ricardo Levins Morales

race equity tool

adapted from Center for Social Inclusion
www.centerforsocialinclusion.org

You can use this tool to determine goals and/or to analyze the implications of a key decision related to a goal.

Step 1:
Identify key outcomes (content).
What is the desired community (programmatic or organizational) outcome? Be as specific as possible (making the goal measurable at all levels of the community or organization will help you be specific).
How do these outcomes produce equity or racial justice? How do you know?

Step 2:
Involve stakeholders.
How do you involve community members and key stakeholders (those most affected; those living at the margins) in informing or making the goal/decision (i.e. how do you build accountability)?
What information do they have? What information do they need?
What does the data, including conversations with members and stakeholders, tell about the root cause(s) of inequity related to this goal or decision?

Step 3:
Advance opportunity. Minimize harm. (process)
How will you proceed (circle of influence; organizing mind)? What strategies will you use and why (what are underlying values driving your strategies)?
How does your approach build/serve/empower the margins?
What are unspoken assumptions that need to be surfaced?
What other organizations or institutions can be engaged (in the interests of accountability)?

Step 4:
Determine benefit and burden.
How will the approach increase and/or decrease racial justice? Be as specific as possible.
What are potential unintended consequences/outcomes?
How will you address these unintended consequences/outcomes?

Step 5:
Evaluate. Reflect. Raise racial awareness.
How will you evaluate your decision?
Who will you involve in the evaluation?
What is the role of stakeholders in
evaluating and reflecting?
How will you raise racial awareness with
this goal or decision?

Artwork by Rini Templeton

Step 6:
Report. Revise.
Who will you report to and/or share your experience and learning with?
What steps will you take to revise based on what you've learned?

a [very partial] resource list

BOOKS

Black Lives Matter Nashville has published a reading list of books "that have been helpful for us while we conceptualize and navigate this movement." You can find the list on their website at

https://blacklivesmatternashville.wordpress.com/2015/07/09/blacklivesmatter-a-biography-for-the-revolution/

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Artwork by Michelle Johnson

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