

Pre-Attendance Handouts

Advancing Racial Justice

through Union Work



UniServ Directors, Leaders, and Organizers work with members, supporters, and partners in many settings and must be highly skilled in leading, coaching and organizing across racial differences. NEA Center for Organizing and Affiliate Support in partnership with the NEA Center for Social Justice and the Campaign Lab created a training designed to build participants' understanding of individualized and systemic racism and provide examples of union-led racial justice interventions. Participants will learn how to deepen racial discourse skills in themselves and others, how to navigate issues of race that surface in their work, and how to access valuable resources for advancing racial justice.

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READ FIRST: Welcome to NEA's Advancing Racial Justice- This is an in-person event. It is required that you complete all modules in this pre-attendance session. Please download the file named Pre-Attendance Handouts to your device that you will bring to this meeting. Several pages in this document are fillable forms. You can either complete your work in the file you downloaded and save it, or you can print your document, fill it out by hand, and bring it with you.

Why Pre-Academy Assignments? The resources compiled here are short, relevant, and intended to help you shift from the day-to-day cognitive load of work to the thinking you will use as a learner at the academy. It should take no longer than 2 hours to complete the entire package.

Overview of Pre-Academy Assignments (Approximate time to Complete -3 Hours Total)

1. Community Agreements(required) – This is a separate module found in the left-hand navigation list, AND it is found on page 3 of the Pre Attendance Handouts. Please complete this module and Page 3-4 before our meeting. Estimated time to complete: 15 Minutes

2. Implicit Bias Activity (required) – There is a link and directions about this activity found on page 5 of the Pre-Attendance Handouts. Complete the activity and the reflection before attending. Estimated time to complete: 30 Minutes

3. Self-Assessment (required) – This is a fillable form found on page 6, with the option of completing an assessment either on page 7-8, or 9-10 of the Pre Attendance Handouts. Your work will be saved in this form as long as you have downloaded the file to your device. You might decide that you want to read the associated article that begins on Page 11. Estimated time to complete: 15 Minutes

4. Learning Continuum (required) - This is a fillable form found on page 15 of the Pre Attendance Handouts. Your work will be saved in this form as long as you have downloaded the file to your device. Estimated time to complete: 15 Minutes

5. Understanding Privilege (required) - This is a fillable form found on page 16 of the Pre-Attendance Handouts. Your work will be saved in this form as long as you have downloaded the file to your device. Estimated time to complete: 15 Minutes

6. Anti-Racist Checklist (required if you are white or white presenting) - This is a fillable form found on page 75 of the Pre-Attendance Handouts. Your work will be saved in this form as long as you have downloaded the file to your device. Estimated time to complete: 15 Minutes

7. NEA Policies (required) - Pages 17-24 provide several NEA policies outlining its commitment to racial and social justice. Please complete the reflection question found on Page 17- and consider all the policies. Estimated time: 10 Minutes

8. Reading to Prepare for In-Person Team Work (Don't try to do this all in one dose; devote an hour to reviewing) - Several articles, beginning on page 25, will require your familiarity. Most of these build on conversations and reflections we will do in the room. These simply need a review. However, some of these are scenarios we will use in group settings, and reading in the room can be tough. Be sure to read "Everyday Racism..." and the "Equity Case Analysis," and the following scenarios will also be central to a group activity. You must be relatively familiar with them.

Community Agreements for Our Time

Awareness and Self-Knowledge

This requires self-knowledge and self-awareness. Self-knowledge allows you to see what causes you pain and conflict and enables you to embrace your contradictions and inconsistencies. It allows the space to work on things about yourself that you are not happy with. In turn, self-awareness helps to prevent you from projecting your negative aspects onto other people. Bringing your best self also requires that you have a positive attitude, are willing to deeply explore your perspectives and remain open to the perspectives and experiences of others. While engaging with peers and content, make space for others to engage as well.

Listening for Understanding

Be an active listener. Active listening involves paying full and careful attention to the other person, looking them in the eye, avoiding interruptions, reflecting your understanding, clarifying information, summarizing the other person's perspectives and sharing your own. Remember that most people need time to open up and might not be willing to immediately share their personal stories, hopes, fears and/or concerns.

Being Gracious

Being kind is a vital way of bringing meaning to our own lives, as well as the lives of others. Kindness is about caring genuinely for others around you, wanting the best for them and recognizing in them the same wants, needs, aspirations and even fears that you may have. Being kind and generous allows us to communicate better with others, to be more self-compassionate and to be a positive force in other people's lives. We are gracious when we accept and genuinely work to use the pronouns that others ask us to use. Being gracious includes following best practices to protect the health of this learning community (ex. handwashing, PPE, staying in your room if you are sick).

Staying Engaged

Staying engaged requires you to be morally, emotionally, intellectually and socially involved in the conversation. Staying engaged means that you are listening with curiosity and willing to deepen your understanding. Staying engaged might also require you to sustain the conversation even when it gets uncomfortable or diverted. This means a commitment to keeping your electronic communications to a minimum with folks not present in this learning community. This also means being present for all portions of the learning agenda.

Being Open and Suspending Judgment

Listening with an open mind includes being receptive to the influence of others. You can suspend judgment by becoming aware of preconceived notions and listening to everything someone has to say before jumping to conclusions. Most importantly, suspending judgment also means listening to what the speaker has to say for understanding, not just to determine whether the speaker is right or wrong. This means that we recognize each of us will make mistakes and that we have the capacity to grow. We should expect imperfections.

Saying "I" - tell your truth

Speaking your truth in authentic and courageous conversations about race and other issues where experiences/perspectives may differ widely from yours requires a willingness to take risks. It means that you will be absolutely honest and candid about your own thoughts, feelings, experiences and opinions and not just saying what you perceive others want to hear. Speaking your truth will require you to speak from the "first person" and use "I" statements.

Lean into Discomfort

Leaning into discomfort will require you to let go of understandings and stereotypes that you may be holding onto in order to move forward. Leaning in means that you will avoid pre-judgment and be open to the kernel of wisdom in each individual's experiences. Leaning into discomfort will require you to sit through moments of embarrassment, confusion, anxiety, and/or fear.

Reaching Empathy

Empathy and compassion allow you to understand the other person's point of view. When you are empathetic, you are more understanding, patient and kind. Expanding your capacity to feel empathy will also allow others to enter your circle of human concern. Sharing, using, and respecting pronouns is a very simple form of empathy.

Expecting Non-Resolution and Non-Closure

Expect and accept that there may not be closure. It is not likely that you will resolve your personal understanding about race or another person's racial experience in a single conversation. The more you talk about race or other issues with another person, the more you learn and the more they will learn. Authentic and productive conversations about race and other issues where experiences/perspectives may differ widely from yours are continuous and always evolving. This means that sometimes we will have unfinished, unexplored, and shortened conversations about some concepts.

**Adapted from "Embracing equity and inclusion", Annie E. Casey Foundation*

What questions do you want to ask about any of the ideas in these agreements?

What additional agreements do you need in order to be a fully participating member of our learning community?

Can you commit to these agreements? If not, what would it take for you to be able to commit?

Task 1: Implicit Association Test (Estimated Completion Time 30 Minutes) We will be exploring what implicit bias is and how this intersects with attitudes and actions. The first step in becoming astute at racial discourse is to explore and reflect on your own possible implicit biases. This activity is designed to help you with that. It is highly recommended that prior to taking the Implicit Association test, that you visit:

<https://www.tolerance.org/professional-development/test-yourself-for-hidden-bias>
for a brief but thorough description of why we ask you to do this.

Directions for Accessing the: Implicit Association Test

Go to the following site:

<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/> Take “Project
Implicit Social Attitudes”

Choose “continue
as guest” Select
“Go”

Select “I wish to proceed” all the way to the bottom

Select “Race IAT” from the

list of tests THEN REPEAT BUT

SELECT "Sexuality IAT"

Reflect on findings and be prepared to share your thoughts, questions and/or concerns during the training. You will not be asked to disclose your findings – but will be expected to participate in the reflection on what it means to learn about your biases. Many folks have gone back and done other of the association tests, you should feel free to explore as many as you would like. This would be a one page reflection.

Reflect on findings and be prepared to share your thoughts, questions and/or concerns during the training. You will not be asked to disclose your findings – but will be expected to participate in the reflection on what it means to learn about your biases.

Task 2: Self-Assessment (Estimated Completion Time 15 Minutes) You are going to choose between two self-assessments found the next four pages. Select the one that fits you best. Follow the directions found on each one and read the page at the end of the self-assessment you selected.

For your reflection on this task:

1. At what age did you first realize what your race was?
2. What do you remember from your childhood about how you made sense of human differences? If you have kids, is it different for them today than your own experience?
3. How have external factors influenced your thinking about racial difference? Good or bad? People, things, media, etc.?

Person of Color Racial Anxiety Self-Test

Place a check next to each statement you answer "yes" to:

- ☐ 1. Do I feel nervous when a white person says "you people?"
- ☐ 2. Do I feel angry when white people tell me that I was only hired because of my color ?
- ☐ 3. When a white person wants to talk to me about race, do I feel nervous because I think they will become offended by my answers?
- ☐ 4. Do I feel angry or annoyed by the above questions?
- ☐ 5. Do I have a history of not speaking out on racism that I see and feel ashamed of that?
- ☐ 6. Does saying "Not all those people" or similar phrases make me feel better when someone calls people of color out for something?
- ☐ 7. Do I assume that I won't get an apology when I feel like I've been unfairly accused of being angry about something that is racist?
- ☐ 8. Do I feel better when I hear white people say, "I know what it is like to be your people because I am (married to, parent, dated, friends with) a person of color?"
- ☐ 9. Do I feel annoyed or angry when white people talk about how hard their ancestors had it when they immigrated, or explain their own hardships when a person of color talks about being oppressed?
- ☐ 10. Do I think that racism would go away if people stopped talking about it?
- ☐ 11. Does being told that something I say, think, do, or otherwise value is not as important make me want to shut down, leave, or express my discomfort/displeasure in some way?
- ☐ 12. Do I feel annoyed or angry when white people need to state that they have friends/family who are people of color when someone accuses them of racism?
- ☐ 13. Do I feel the need to prove that I'm as good as my white colleagues?
- ☐ 14. Do I feel that my opinions and perspectives about race will be discounted by white people, that they will not believe I have something unique and important to contribute to the race conversation, and/or that I will not be fully listened to when I speak?
- ☐ 15. Do I feel the need to defend myself on any of the above points in the comment section?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you are dealing with Racial Anxiety. Take time to reflect on why you feel the way that you do. Take time to listen to different perspectives.

Racial anxiety can be acute, experienced as physiological threat (and cognitive depletion in anticipation of and following an interracial interaction. When people experience the physical symptoms of anxiety during a cross-racial interaction, they often distance themselves, are less apt to share eye contact, and use a less friendly and engaging verbal tone – behaviors which can obviously undermine an interaction (Dovidio et al., 2002).

At its worst, racial anxiety can cause an emotionally unhealthy situation for people of color because of racial power dynamics and the weight of being responsible for white folks' feelings while not having

space to express their own. There is also the weight that comes with people that you care about lashing out at and abusing you (verbally, emotionally, and/or digitally).

When we experience racial anxiety, we may not recognize it – and we are even less likely to recognize that the person with whom we are interacting may be experiencing it as well. Thus, as a result of “pluralistic ignorance,” whites and people of color are apt to behave in ways that confirm the other’s fears – failing to initiate contact through open body language, eye contact, and other non-verbal signals of welcoming interaction (Shelton & Richeson, 2005). The absence of this kind of body language makes both people appear unfriendly or unwelcoming. In sum, racial anxiety begets more racial anxiety.

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White Person Racial Anxiety Self-Test

Place a check next to each statement you answer "yes" to:

- ☐ 1. Do I feel defensive when a person of color says "white people?"
- ☐ 2. Do I feel unsettled when people tell me that I benefit from white privilege?
- ☐ 3. When a person of color talks about race, do I feel defensive because they're describing things that I do or think as racist?
- ☐ 4. Do I feel angry or annoyed by the above questions?
- ☐ 5. Do I have a history of embracing or growing up in racism that I feel ashamed of and so I need to show people that I'm not racist anymore?
- ☐ 6. Does saying "Not all white people" or similar phrases make me feel better when someone calls white people out for something?
- ☐ 7. Do I expect an apology when I feel like I've been unfairly accused of racism?
- ☐ 8. Do I feel better when I say, hear, or read, "It's okay to be white?"
- ☐ 9. Do I try to convince people of color that they're wrong about racism by pointing out people from their racial group who agree with me?
- ☐ 10. Do I feel the need to talk about how hard my ancestors had it when they immigrated, or explain my own hardships when a person of color talks about being oppressed?
- ☐ 11. Do I think that racism would go away if people stopped talking about it?
- ☐ 12. Does being told that something I say, think, do, or otherwise value is racist make me want to shut down, leave, or express my discomfort/displeasure in some way?
- ☐ 13. Do I feel the need to state that I have friends/family who are people of color when someone accuses me of racism?
- ☐ 14. Do I feel the need to prove that I'm not racist?
- ☐ 15. Do I feel that my opinions and perspectives about race should be given equal weight to that of a person of color, that I have something unique and important to contribute to the race conversation, and/or that it is unfair to be told to listen more than I speak?
- ☐ 16. Do I feel the need to defend myself on any of the above points in the comment section?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you are dealing with white fragility. Take time to reflect on why you feel the way that you do. Take time to listen to different perspectives.

If you are white, then your experience with Racial Anxiety has been named White fragility (Robin DiAngelo). This anxiety is a hindrance to racial healing because it prevents white people from being able to engage with non-white people in honest conversation as they may feel that they are expected to bear the burden of catering to white people's emotional comfort.

At its worst, white fragility can cause an emotionally unhealthy situation for people of color because of racial power dynamics and the weight of being responsible for white folks' feelings while not having space to express our own. There is also the weight that comes with people that you care about lashing out at and abusing you (verbally, emotionally, and/or digitally).

If we cannot talk honestly about the issues, then we cannot make progress.

*White Fragility, as defined by DiAngelo, is the result of white racial socialization. A state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves. These moves include the outward display of emotions such as anger, fear, guilt, and behaviors such as argumentation, silence, and leaving the stress-inducing situation. These behaviors, in turn, function to reinstate white racial comfort and status quo.

PART II

RACIAL ANXIETY

Racial anxiety can be acute, experienced as physiological threat (Blascovich et al., 2001; Page-Gould et al., 2008) and cognitive depletion (Richeson & Shelton, 2003; Richeson et al., 2003; Richeson & Shelton, 2007) in anticipation of and following an interracial interaction. When people experience the physical symptoms of anxiety during a cross-racial interaction, they often distance themselves, are less apt to share eye contact, and use a less friendly and engaging verbal tone – behaviors which can obviously undermine an interaction (Dovidio et al., 2002).

Racial anxiety matters on multiple levels, and its effects can spill over into virtually every important life domain. Members of both racial minority and majority groups may experience racial anxiety and its concomitant discomfort in cross-race interactions; moreover, members of racial minority groups may be subject to adverse effects of the racial anxiety among members of the dominant group with whom they interact. Given that white people continue to be overrepresented in positions of greater power, their anxiety can have significant consequences for members of other racial and ethnic groups. What this means is, for example, a black patient may suffer the effects of her own experience of interracial anxiety with a white doctor, but may also suffer the effects of the doctor's anxiety. As a result, it is in everyone's interest to identify and address the effects of racial anxiety.

A. INTERGROUP ANXIETY AS AN EVERYDAY OBSTACLE

Beginning in the 1980s with work by Walter and Cookie Stephan (Stephan & Stephan, 1984, 1985), social scientists have developed a robust literature addressing the fact that people often feel more anxious when interacting with “out-group” members than with “in-group” members. In a review of the literature, Tropp and Page-Gould (2014) explain that this observation has been replicated with a “host of convergent measures of anxiety, ranging from self-reported anxiety (Britt et al., 1996; Stephan & Stephan, 1985) to anxious behaviors (Dovidio et al., 2006; Dovidio et al., 2002) and physiological stress responses” (Amodio, 2009; Mendes et al., 2007; Page-Gould et al., 2008, Tropp & Page-Gould, 2014). Although the studies are not limited to race as the source of stigma (Blascovich et al., 2001), we are particularly interested in the application of this research to racial dynamics because race – and specifically relations between whites and African Americans – has represented such a salient divide in the United States.

Who Experiences Racial Anxiety

Racial anxiety, like implicit bias, is common, but not experienced by everyone. Some people may be more susceptible to experiencing racial anxiety, and it may have different underlying causes for the people who do experience it. For some, bias or prejudice is the source of the racial anxiety (Page-Gould et al., 2008; Stephan & Stephan, 1985). However, for others, it is the concern that the interracial interaction will not go well – rather than bias – that causes the racial anxiety (Tropp & Page-Gould, 2014; Trawalter et al., 2009). As we will discuss below in the interventions section, it is important to know the source of the anxiety to know how best to ameliorate it.

Other research emphasizes the role of both actual and perceived psychological threat as fundamental components of intergroup anxiety (Stephan & Stephan, 2000; Tropp & Page-Gould, 2014). This model when applied to race can be applicable both to whites as the dominant group and people of color as stigmatized groups. Among many whites, racial or ethnic prejudice predicts anxiety. These whites are more likely to perceive interactions with people of color as demanding (Dovidio et al., 2002; Trawalter et al., 2009), and they are worried about how they will be seen during the interactions (Amodio, 2009; Vorauer, 2006; Vorauer & Kumhyr, 2001; Vorauer et al., 2000). In a set of intriguing studies, prejudiced whites were actually likely to spend more cognitive resources trying to make the interaction go smoothly (Richeson & Shelton, 2003; Richeson et al., 2003; Richeson & Shelton, 2007). People with little prior contact with out-group members have also been found to react viscerally and more negatively to cross-group interactions (Blascovich et al., 2001; Mendes et al., 2002).

On average, people of color have more contact with whites and, as a result, may feel a greater sense of efficacy about interacting with whites (Doerr et al., 2011). Nonetheless, they may still experience anxiety when they expect to be rejected on the basis of race or ethnicity (Mendoza-Denton et al., 2006; Page-Gould et al., 2008; Pinel, 1999; Stephan & Stephan, 1989; Tropp, 2003).

Some may find it surprising that whites may experience “racial anxiety” given the continued dominance of whites generally – but in light of the importance of the prevailing social norm of egalitarianism, many whites truly fear being perceived as racist. Racial anxiety is more likely when whites are externally motivated not to appear racist than whites who are internally motivated by egalitarianism (Plant et al., 2008). In other words, we can be focused on not being racist – or focused on whether other people see us as racist. The latter can translate into the phenomenon of stereotype threat described in the next part of the report.

In light of the importance of the prevailing social norm of egalitarianism, many whites truly fear being perceived as racist.

B. ANXIETY FEEDBACK LOOPS IN INTERACTION

People who are experiencing racial anxiety exhibit some of the same behaviors as those who have implicit bias – even though, as discussed above, the source may be different. Researchers have found that people who feel anxious during interactions with people of other races or ethnicities are less likely to seek out or engage in subsequent interactions (Butz & Plant, 2011; Dovidio et al., 2006; Plant & Butz, 2006; Plant & Devine, 2003; Tropp, 2003). A negative experience with someone of another race or ethnicity can trigger a negative feedback loop where the experience of racial anxiety predicts fewer and lower-quality interactions with other racial and ethnic groups in the future (Paolini et al., 2006; Tropp & Page-Gould, 2014). This negative feedback loop creates a barrier to effective interracial contact because people with limited contact experience are more likely to have awkward or negative interactions (Blascovich et al., 2001) and so will be more motivated to avoid future contact.

Conversely, prior positive interracial contact can have a wide range of positive consequences, including improved interracial attitudes, more successful interracial interactions, and following from these, more positive inclinations toward future interracial interactions (Levin et al., 2003; Swart et al., 2011; Tropp, 2003). Importantly, prior positive experiences with people of other races or ethnicities can reduce the effects of later negative experience (Paolini et al., 2014). These positive interactions also translate into greater resilience when a later interracial experience is stressful (Page-Gould et al., 2010).

The positive effects of interracial or ethnic contacts may not occur immediately, particularly among strangers after a single brief meeting (Page-Gould et al., 2008; Tropp & Page-Gould, 2014). Rather, these effects generally develop over time (Page-Gould et al., 2008). In other words, people become more comfortable and

As a result of “pluralistic ignorance,” whites and people of color are apt to behave in ways that confirm the other’s fears.

experience less racial anxiety if they have repeated interactions with members of other groups rather than meeting just once. Indeed, even people with high levels of implicit bias who showed physiological signs of stress during a first interracial interaction showed fewer signs of stress in a second meeting, and by the third meeting showed no more stress than they would have with a person of the same race

(Page-Gould et al., 2008). Stress levels during interracial experiences are important because they make that particular interaction more successful – but also because the lower stress level of one interracial interaction has been shown to make later interracial experiences more positive (Page-Gould et al., 2010).

C. DISTINGUISHING EFFECTS OF RACIAL ANXIETY AND BIAS

When we experience racial anxiety, we may not recognize it – and we are even less likely to recognize that the person with whom we are interacting may be experiencing it as well. Thus, as a result of “pluralistic ignorance,” whites and people of

color are apt to behave in ways that confirm the other's fears – failing to initiate contact through open body language, eye contact, and other non-verbal signals of welcoming interaction (Shelton & Richeson, 2005). The absence of this kind of body language makes both people appear unfriendly or unwelcoming. In sum, racial anxiety begets more racial anxiety.

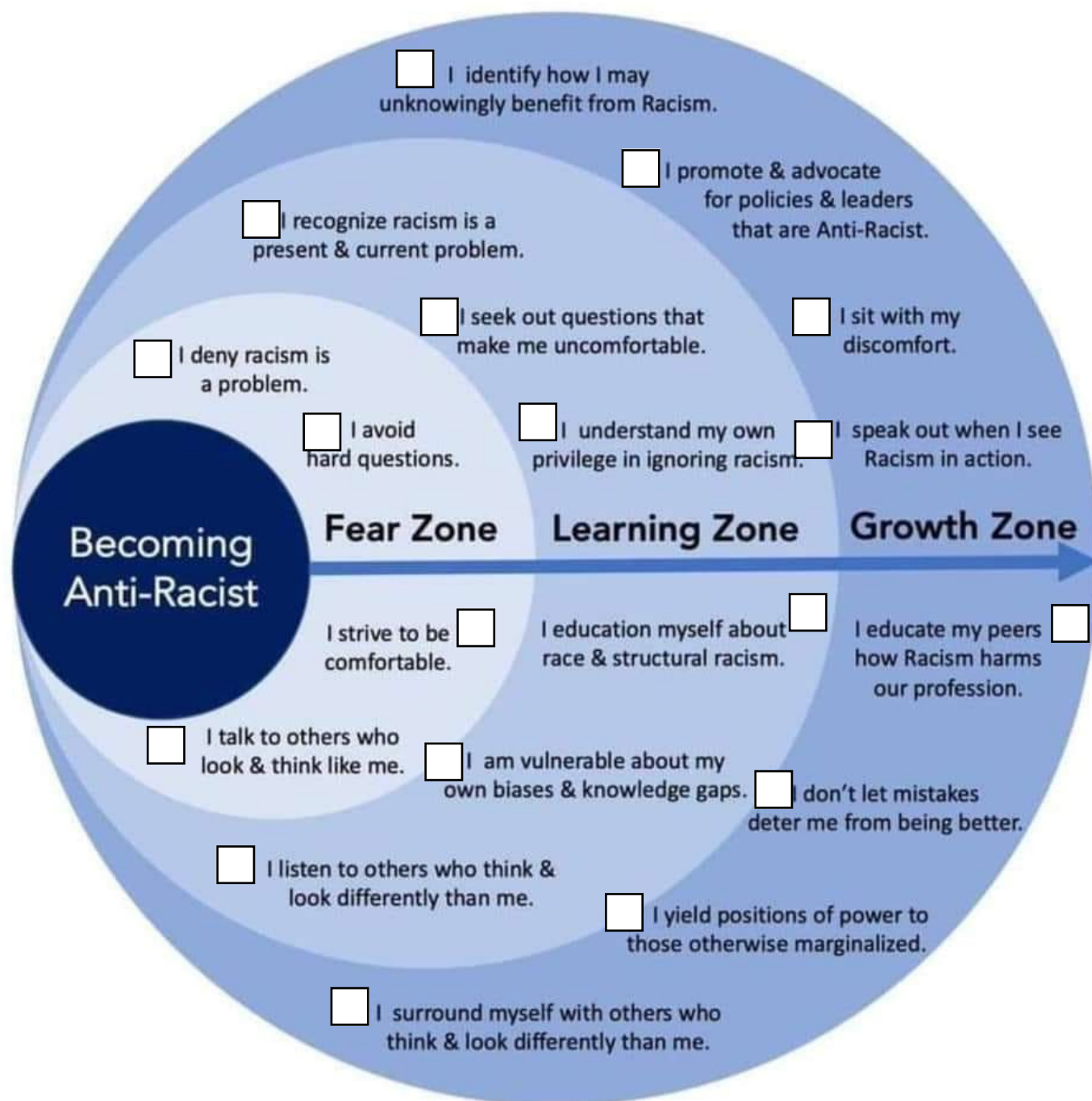
Pluralistic ignorance occurs when “people observe others behaving similarly to themselves but believe that the same behaviors reflect different feelings and beliefs” (Shelton & Richeson, 2005). Shelton and Richeson have concluded that both whites and blacks report interest in contact with one another, but both believe the other group will have little interest in interaction with them (Shelton & Richeson, 2005). The studies confirmed that both attributed their own lack of action to engage in interracial contact to be a fear of rejection, but presume that inaction by the member of the other racial group reflects lack of interest.

These tendencies are particularly acute in the context of race. Because of continued patterns of segregation, people are particularly likely to generalize from a single act committed by an individual member of a different race to the larger racial group to which that individual belongs. For instance, a white person who does not feel welcome to sit at a table with a black person may generalize this experience into a broad conclusion that black people as a group are not interested in interacting with whites. Similarly, a black person who observed the white person walking by the open seat at the table will conclude that whites as a group are not interested in interacting with black people.

Such interactional dynamics may seem trivial when compared to structural challenges, but they are crucially important in our day-to-day experiences, including interactions with teachers, employers, and health care providers.

Task 3: Where am I currently in learning to become anti-racist? (Estimated Completion Time 15 Minutes) Using the graphic below, place a check by any of the descriptors that you feel match how you think and act as it relates to your learning about anti-racism. The goal is for you to become aware of where you are in your “journey” so that you can more finely tune what you need to continue to grow. Once you have checked the descriptors that best match your actions and thoughts, notice which of the three zones you are primarily operating in.

Reflection Question: How does this help you think about what your next steps might need to be?



Task 4: Understanding Privilege (Expected Completion Time 15 Minutes)

On your own, read through the following privilege statements. If you identify with one of the privileges listed, make a check mark.

☐	1. The leader of my country is also a person of my racial group. (RACE)
☐	2. When going shopping, I can easily find clothes that fit my size and shape. (SIZE)
☐	3. In public, I can kiss and hold hands with the person I am dating without fear of name-calling or violence. (SEXUALITY)
☐	4. When I go shopping, I can be fairly certain that sales or security people will not follow me. (RACE/APPEARANCE)
☐	5. Most of the religious and cultural holidays celebrated by my family are recognized with days off from work or school. (RELIGION/CULTURE)
☐	6. When someone is trying to describe me, they do not mention my race. (RACE)
☐	7. When I am angry or emotional, people do not dismiss my opinions as symptoms of "that time of the month." (GENDER)
☐	8. When expressing my opinion, I am not automatically assumed to be a spokesperson of my race. (RACE)
☐	9. I can easily buy greeting cards that represent my relationship with my significant others. (SEXUALITY)
☐	10. I can easily find hair products and people who know how to style my hair. (RACE)
☐	11. In my family, it is seen as normal to obtain a college degree. (CLASS)
☐	12. If I am going out to dinner with friends, I do not worry if the building will be accessible to me. (ABILITY)
☐	13. I can be certain that when I attend an event there will be people of my race there. (RACE)
☐	14. People do not make assumptions about my work ethic or intelligence based on the size of my body. (SIZE)
☐	15. When I strongly state my opinion, people see it as assertive rather than aggressive. (RACE/GENDER)
☐	16. When I am with others of my race, people do not think that we are segregating ourselves. (RACE)
☐	17. I can feel comfortable speaking about my culture without feeling that I'll be judged. (RACE/ETHNICITY)
☐	18. I can usually afford (without much hardship) to do the things that my friends want to do for entertainment. (CLASS)
☐	19. When filling out forms for school or work, I easily identify with the box that I have to check. (GENDER/RACE)
☐	20. I can choose the style of dress that I feel comfortable in and most reflects my identity, and I know that I will not be stared at in public. (GENDER/APPEARANCE)
☐	21. If pulled over by a police officer, I can be sure that I have not been singled out because of my race. (RACE)
☐	22. My professionalism is never questioned because of my age. (AGE)
☐	23. I do not worry about walking alone at night. (GENDER/RACE)
☐	24. People do not make assumptions about my intelligence based upon my style of speech. (RACE)
☐	25. When attending class or other events, I do not have to worry about having an interpreter present to understand or to participate. (ABILITY/LANGUAGE)
☐	26. I can book an airline flight, go to a movie, or ride in a car and not worry about whether there will be a seat that can accommodate me. (SIZE/ABILITY)
☐	27. People assume I was admitted to school or hired based upon my credentials, rather than my race or gender. (RACE/GENDER)
☐	28. As a child, I could use the "flesh-colored" crayons to color my family and have it match our skin (RACE)

Setting the Stage

Resolution I: White Supremacy Culture (2018)

The National Education Association believes that, in order to achieve racial and social justice, educators must acknowledge the existence of White supremacy culture as a primary root cause of institutional racism, structural racism, and White privilege. Additionally, the Association believes that the norms, standards, and organizational structures manifested in White supremacy culture perpetually exploit and oppress people of color and serve as detriments to racial justice.

Further, the invisible racial benefits of White privilege, which are automatically conferred irrespective of wealth, gender, and other factors, severely limit opportunities for people of color and impede full achievement of racial and social justice. Therefore, the Association will actively advocate for social and educational strategies fostering the eradication of institutional racism and White privilege perpetuated by White supremacy culture.

Reflection – as a Member, Leaders, or UniServ Director what do you think this means in your work?

New Business Item B (2015)

We, the members of the National Education Association, acknowledge the existence in our country of institutional racism—the societal patterns and practices that have the net effect of imposing oppressive conditions and denying rights, opportunity, and equality based upon race. This inequity manifests itself in our schools and in the conditions our students face in their communities. In order to address institutional racism, the National Education Association shall lead by: 1) spotlighting systemic patterns of inequity—racism and educational injustice—that impact our students; and 2) taking action to enhance access and opportunity for our students.

NEA will use our collective voice to bring to light and demand change to policies, programs, and practices that condone or ignore unequal treatment and hinder student success by:

- * Providing technical assistance to state, local, and national affiliates to dialogue internally and with the external community and develop plans of action to address institutional racism.
- * Partnering with a broad coalition of national stakeholders on campaigns and actions to eradicate policies that perpetuate institutional racism in education.
- * Partnering on campaigns and actions on critical social justice issues impacting students and their communities.
- * Convening high school students and young people to gather their perspectives to inform our work and the work of others (education stakeholders, policymakers, etc.).
- * Expanding the work of the Association on issues of institutional racism, including redirecting existing resources and providing grants to affiliates to lead and partner with us on site based projects, such as:
 - + programs aimed at improving school climate and culture, particularly ending the school to prison pipeline
 - + supporting campaigns to expand the development and implementation of community schools
 - + expanding local affiliate-school district partnerships that expand educator-led professional development, particularly in areas of cultural competence, diversity, and social justice in order to address institutional racism
- * Researching implications for NEA’s Strategic Plan and Budget for 2016-2018.

NEA's Vision, Mission, and Values

Adopted at the 2006 NEA Representative Assembly

The National Education Association

We, the members of the National Education Association of the United States, are the voice of education professionals. Our work is fundamental to the nation, and we accept the profound trust placed in us.

Our Vision

Our vision is a great public school for every student.

Our Mission

Our mission is to advocate for education professionals and to unite our members and the nation to fulfill the promise of public education to prepare every student to succeed in a diverse and interdependent world.

Our Core Values

These principles guide our work and define our mission:

1. **Equal Opportunity.** We believe public education is the gateway to opportunity. All students have the human and civil right to a quality public education that develops their potential, independence, and character.
2. **A Just Society.** We believe public education is vital to building respect for the worth, dignity, and equality of every individual in our diverse society.
3. **Democracy.** We believe public education is the cornerstone of our republic. Public education provides individuals with the skills to be involved, informed, and engaged in our representative democracy.
4. **Professionalism.** We believe that the expertise and judgment of education professionals are critical to student success. We maintain the highest professional standards, and we expect the status, compensation, and respect due all professionals.
5. **Partnership.** We believe partnerships with parents, families, communities, and other stakeholders are essential to quality public education and student success.
6. **Collective Action.** We believe individuals are strengthened when they work together for the common good. As education professionals, we improve both our professional status and the quality of public education when we unite and advocate collectively.

NEA also believes every student in America, regardless of family income or place of residence, deserves a quality education. In pursuing its mission, NEA has determined that we will focus the energy and resources of our 3.2 million members on improving the quality of teaching, increasing student achievement and making schools safer, better places to learn.

<http://www.nea.org/home/19583.htm>

Bylaw 3-1(g) and Leadership Diversity (2006)

The NEA policy Bylaw 3-1(g) has been a part of the Association's governing documents for nearly 40 years and is the Association's most effective and comprehensive measure for encouraging racial/ethnic diversity in leadership at all levels of the organization. At each Representative Assembly, a state delegation is accorded an ethnic-minority numerical goal for the combined number of ethnic-minority state and local delegates in attendance. This goal is based on the percentage of ethnic minorities within the state's population according to the most recent U.S. Decennial Census. 2012 marks the first year in which the proportion of identified ethnic-minority populations within each state is calculated based on the 2010 U.S. Decennial Census.

The degree to which each state delegation annually approaches, meets, or exceeds its ethnic-minority numerical goal provides an opportunity for us to broadly examine the racial/ethnic diversity present among delegate leaders in our state and local organizations, and in the entire Representative Assembly.

Bylaw 3-1(g) has always been about more than numbers in a report. In crafting ethnic-minority involvement plans, affiliates realize that a wide range of actions and approaches must be taken to achieve and maintain successful leadership diversity. These actions include educating and informing members about the Association's ethnic-minority involvement policies through delivering presentations, distributing brochures, and through other traditional, web, or social media; establishing ethnic-minority affairs or human and civil rights committees to coordinate plan actions and activities between state and local affiliates; identifying and encouraging ethnic-minority candidates to run for delegate and other governance positions, and submitting their names as candidates for appointment to state and national committees.

At NEA, the Executive, Ethnic Minority Affairs, and Credentials Committees serve as the Association's national stakeholders in monitoring the implementation of Bylaw 3-1(g), annually collaborating with state affiliate leaders to discuss the challenges involved in policy planning and to consider effective approaches to improve and reaffirm our efforts for one of NEA's most important and longstanding programs. The range and depth of our actions to support ethnic-minority involvement at all levels enhances and sustains our local, state, and national efforts to reflect the diversity found among the students, schools, and communities we serve.

<http://www.nea.org/grants/52500.htm>

Safe, Just, and Equitable Schools

Adopted by the 2022 NEA Representative Assembly

I. Our Vision for Safe, Just, and Equitable Schools

The National Education Association’s vision for safe, just, and equitable schools is of thriving spaces that are safe and welcoming for all students, discriminatory toward none, integrate the social, emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual needs of the whole student, and equitably and fully-fund the community school model with wraparound services and resources.

NEA’s vision is the recruitment and retention of educators who reflect the community, with relevant professional development and tools for cultural competence and responsiveness, prepared to center students’ needs and lived experiences, value all voices, and ensure voices that have been historically exploited, ignored, or silenced are empowered and heard.

NEA’s vision is to emphasize evidence-based behavioral practices centered in the philosophy of restorative justice over the criminalization and policing of students, and which dismantle and eliminate inequitable policies, practices, and systems that deprive many of our students of their futures and disproportionately harm Native, Asian, Black, Latin(o/a/x), Middle Eastern and North African, Pacific Islander, and Multiracial students, including those who identify as LGBTQ+, have disabilities, and/or are English language learners.

NEA believes all educators—which includes every adult working in our schools—are indispensable both for realizing our vision and for transforming our schools and the broader community so that we may end inequitable policies, practices, and systems to avert a crisis of criminalization of our youth and instead prepare every student to achieve their full potential and succeed in a diverse and interdependent world.

This Policy Statement sets forth principles to guide the beliefs, actions, advocacy, partnerships, and other organization-wide efforts to achieve and sustain NEA’s vision for safe, just, and equitable schools for every student, educator, parent/guardian, and community.

II. Guiding Principles to Achieve Our Vision

NEA is committed to changing the policies and practices of the schools in which we work to ensure thriving spaces that are safe, just, and equitable. The Association is committed to beliefs, actions, advocacy, and partnerships for the removal of impediments that are entirely incompatible with our vision, such as institutional racism, white supremacy culture, inadequate and inequitable school funding, and the criminalization and policing of students¹ in our schools—all of which perpetuate the school-to-prison and school-to-deportation pipelines.²

The Association demands a transformative investment in the physical and mental health of all students, including Native students and Asian, Black, Latin(o/a/x), Middle Eastern and North

¹ *Criminalization and policing of students* refer to practices and enforcement of school disciplinary policies that criminalize students’ behaviors, subjecting students to potential penalties imposed by law enforcement instead of consequences imposed by educators.

² *School-to-prison and school-to-deportation pipelines* refer to policies and practices that directly and indirectly push Native, Asian, Black, Latin(o/a/x), Middle Eastern and North African, Pacific Islander, and Multiracial students, including immigrant and undocumented youth, out of school and on a pathway to prison and/or deportation including, but not limited to: harsh school discipline policies that overuse suspension and expulsion, increased policing and surveillance that create prison-like environments in schools, and overreliance by educators on referrals to law enforcement, the juvenile and criminal justice system, detention, and potentially deportation proceedings.

each student to ensure development of the expertise and understanding of what it means to be culturally competent and responsive.⁵ A culturally competent pedagogy connects students' cultures, languages, and life experiences with the school curriculum. Leveraging a student's knowledge and experiences from their families and communities helps them to access and connect with the curriculum and develop their academic skills.

Support of students who suffer from childhood trauma requires whole school involvement and transformation. To achieve our vision, the Association and its affiliates must actively engage in developing the means for schools and educators to address trauma and its implications for creating safe, just, and equitable schools. Educators must be given ongoing opportunities to develop the expertise to work with students from different racial, ethnic, and economic backgrounds, and to support those students who may be affected by childhood trauma.

The Association must fully engage and authentically partner with stakeholders to develop and implement, with fidelity, training that is relevant, proven, substantial, and ongoing, and professional development tools that are responsive to the needs of students and educators and are designed to build and increase educators' cultural competence over the course of their careers. At a minimum, these programs must address:

- A. Development of communications skills including strategies for peer-to-peer, educator-to-parent, and educator-to-student communication.
- B. Development of cultural competence and responsiveness including awareness of one's own implicit biases⁶ and trauma, understanding culturally competent pedagogy, and becoming culturally responsive in one's approach to education and discipline/behavior.
- C. Training developed for, and delivered to, pre-service, early career, and experienced educators.
- D. Understanding of trauma and its effect on a student's education.
- E. Knowledge and skills required to transform schools into trauma-informed environments.

Guiding Principle 3:

Eliminating Disparities in Disciplinary/Behavioral Practices

NEA is committed to ending harsh school discipline/behavioral policies that directly and indirectly contribute to a crisis of criminalization of our youth, and disproportionately harm Native students and students of color. National research shows that these policies specifically have a disparate impact on Native, Black, and Latin(o/a/x) students, including those who identify as LGBTQ+, have disabilities, and/or are English language learners. Regionally, Asian, Middle Eastern and North African, Pacific Islander, and Multiracial students experience harm and disparate outcomes as a result of such policies. NEA demands an end to school disciplinary/behavioral policies and practices that overuse suspension and expulsion; employ zero-tolerance⁷ policies that criminalize minor infractions of school rules; increase police presence and surveillance on school campuses that create prison-like environments; and encourage school staff to impose exclusionary discipline or refer students to law enforcement,

⁵ *Cultural competence* means the capacity to interact effectively and respectfully with people from different racial, ethnic, and/or economic backgrounds. Such competence includes understanding that different cultures have different communication codes and styles, being open to learning from others, to shift out of one's own cultural paradigm, and to refrain from judging people before honestly exploring what motivates their behavior.

⁶ *Implicit bias* means the deep-seated attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner.

⁷ *Zero-tolerance* refers to school disciplinary/behavioral policies and practices that set predetermined consequences or punishments for specific offenses or rule infractions. Zero-tolerance policies forbid persons in positions of authority from exercising discretion or changing punishments to fit individual circumstances.

juvenile justice authorities, and immigration services. Students who are suspended or expelled not only fall behind academically but are significantly more likely to drop out of school altogether, fail to secure a job, rely on social welfare programs, and end up in prison or face deportation.

The Association will advocate for schools, school districts, and states, in ensuring public accountability to the communities they serve, to take appropriate steps to review their disciplinary/behavioral policies and practices for any disparate impact on the basis of race, ethnicity, or other protected characteristics; to take prompt and effective action to eliminate any disparate impact found; and to continue to monitor disciplinary/behavioral policies and practices to ensure that they are fair and nondiscriminatory.

Guiding Principle 4:

Eliminating the Criminalization and Policing of Students in Schools

NEA believes the criminalization and policing of students obstructs a thriving and nurturing school climate. Native, Asian, Black, Latin(o/a/x), Middle Eastern and North African, Pacific Islander, and Multiracial students, including those who identify as LGBTQ+, have disabilities, and/or are English language learners are in greater jeopardy in schools with a presence of police and law enforcement.⁸ Schools with police presence rely more heavily on exclusionary discipline, and exclusionary discipline falls disproportionately on Black students and other students of color.

Ending the policing of students on school campuses is essential to ensure thriving spaces for all stakeholders and to facilitate policies that dismantle inequalities and eliminate the criminalization of youth. The Association strongly opposes the policing of students in all of its forms which perpetuate the school-to-prison and school-to-deportation pipelines.

NEA recognizes the significance of physical school facilities as a reflection of what educators want our schools to be—welcoming, inclusive, and supportive environments for our students, parents/guardians, and communities.

Therefore, the Association demands an end to:

- A. Participation in federal 1033 programs which deliver unnecessary weapons, vehicles, surveillance technology, and other equipment that unjustifiably militarize the police presence on school campuses.
- B. Overreliance by educators on referrals to law enforcement which increase the likelihood of contact with the juvenile justice system.
- C. Subjective and biased enforcement of disciplinary policies such as hair and dress codes.
- D. Construction of prison-like school environments that employ metal detectors, random searches, and other building and design elements that diminish a thriving and nurturing school climate.

Guiding Principle 5:

Student, Family, Organizational, and Community Engagement

NEA's vision is a safe, just, and equitable school in which all students' needs and lived experiences are centered and voices that have been historically exploited, ignored, or silenced are empowered and heard. The social, emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual needs of the whole student must be strengthened and supported through education, family partnerships, and relationship building. Students, parents/guardians, and other caregivers must be engaged and trained in problem-solving techniques, conflict resolution skills, mental health and wellness, and cultural competence. The development and implementation of a restorative justice philosophy paired with restorative practices is essential for building healthy relationships and

⁸ *Police* or more specifically *law enforcement* refers to any sworn individual with the power to arrest, detain, interrogate, and issue citations.

communities to prevent and address conflict and trauma. Students must be invested in their own success and understand that their actions and voices are critical in shaping and driving the decisions that affect their school communities and help create inclusive, bias-free, and thriving school climates.

The Association must fully engage and authentically partner with a comprehensive range of stakeholders that includes students, parents/guardians and family members, local and state affiliates, school boards, school districts, peer mentoring groups, community-based organizations, alternative schools/juvenile correctional institutions, mental health and wellness organizations, faith-based organizations, law enforcement, professional associations and advocacy groups, and social justice stakeholders to identify policies, practices, and activities to achieve a shared vision for safe, just, and equitable schools.

III. Implementing an Association-Wide Plan to Achieve Our Vision

NEA will utilize the Framework for Racial Justice in Education⁹ to achieve our vision for safe, just, and equitable schools through the identification of strategies, activities, stakeholders, and internal and external levers of change required to influence sustainable transformation and learnings across school systems. The framework identifies three strategies: awareness, capacity building, and action encompassed within pre- and post-qualitative and quantitative evaluations. The framework also provides direction to focus the identified strategies, tactics, and activities while determining partnerships needed to leverage systems of change within the Association and institutions.

NEA will utilize the Racial Equity Impact Assessment (REIA)¹⁰ to guide the development and implementation of Association-wide plan activities. The REIA is designed to ensure stakeholders are proactively working to prevent bias and racial inequities from appearing in identified solutions.

The goals of NEA's plan are to:

- A. Identify and support opportunities to engage, activate, and mobilize members and leaders to organize to achieve safe, just, and equitable schools for every student, educator, parent/guardian, and community.
- B. Develop an Association-wide understanding of the issues and impacts of the criminalization and policing of students.
- C. Develop and strengthen NEA's partnerships and coalitions with organizations, movements, and legislators to advocate and organize for safe, just, and equitable schools.
- D. Integrate and align the safe, just, and equitable schools vision and criteria across the NEA enterprise priorities and activities.

⁹ See *Report of the NEA Task Force on Safe, Just, and Equitable Schools*, Appendix C.

¹⁰ See *Report of the NEA Task Force on Safe, Just, and Equitable Schools*, Appendix D.



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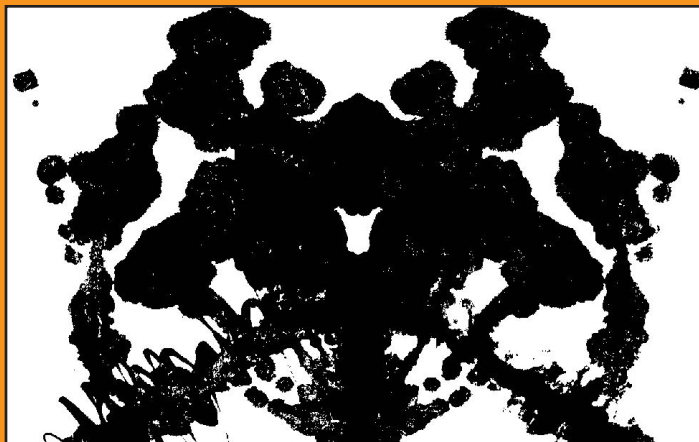
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Understanding Implicit Bias

What Is Implicit Bias



Implicit bias is a mental process that stimulates negative attitudes about people who are not members of one's own "in group." Implicit racial bias leads to discrimination against people who are not members of one's own racial group. In his book, [The Political Brain: The Role of Emotion in Deciding the Fate of](#)

[the Nation](#), Professor Drew Westen tells us that "Irrespective of what we may feel and believe consciously, most White Americans—including many who hold consciously progressive values and attitudes—harbor negative associations toward people of color." Implicit bias affects the way that we think about "out groups" and it influences the way that we react to and interact with out group members. Implicit bias operates in what researchers call our "implicit mind," the part of the brain that we commonly call the "subconscious" or the "unconscious." This means that implicit bias can operate in an individual's mind without a conscious awareness of this process. Westen suggests that, typically, our subconscious attitudes are less egalitarian than our conscious attitudes.

Implicit racial bias is a very complex mental process

Many researchers believe that implicit racial bias is a response to direct and indirect negative information that an individual receives starting in childhood. For example, consider a White adult who has had little or no interaction with African Americans. Starting in childhood, this person may be bombarded with distorted negative images of African Americans on television and in the news and negative comments about people of color from family members and other people who are respected by the individual. This input can lead to unfounded negative attitudes about African Americans.

As an emerging research field, there is not perfect agreement on the question of the precise process by which stereotypes unintentionally shape people's beliefs about and behaviors towards others. Many researchers and scholars believe that implicit bias leads to unconscious negative attitudes that reside outside our normal



cognition and beyond our control. Others believe that we may be aware of these attitudes but are reluctant to openly acknowledge them because they conflict with social norms and egalitarian values that are important to us. A third group of researchers urge that most people are aware that they have some degree of prejudiced and stereotypical thinking, but are unaware of the powerful influence those negative associations have on their behavior. More work is needed to resolve these disagreements in order to formulate strategies best able to fight against implicit bias.

Why should we care about implicit bias?

We must care because this phenomenon has the power to influence policies and conditions in the real world, to distort the opportunity that all Americans must have to achieve success. For example, an elementary school teacher may say—and explicitly believe—that she has equal expectations for all of her students, while in fact, implicit racial bias lowers her expectations for students of color, stimulates subtle differences in the way she behaves toward these students and lowers the academic performance of these students.

In the criminal justice system, implicit racial bias can negatively influence decisions made by judges. For example, research on capital punishment shows that killers of White victims are more likely to be sentenced to death than are killers of Black victims and that Black defendants are more likely than White defendants to receive the death penalty (R. Richard Banks, et al., “Discrimination and Implicit Bias in a Racially Unequal Society,” 94 CAL. L. REV. 1169, 1175: 2006). Other research shows that defendants with more afro-centric facial features are given longer sentences than defendants with fewer afro-centric features. (William T. Pizzi, Irene V. Blair and Charles M. Judd. “Discrimination in Sentencing on the Basis of Afrocentric Features.” Michigan Journal of Race & Law, Vol. 10, 2005).

Implicit racial bias can lead to devastating, sometimes fatal, consequences.

Research suggests that negative racial associations can lead people to see danger or a weapon where none exists. “Shooter studies” have documented that race affects the decision making of subjects asked to make split-second decisions about whether to discharge a weapon in self-protection. This research has established that many people stereotypically associate African Americans with violence and weapons, causing them in simulations to “fire” guns more often when presented with images of unarmed black persons, and less often when facing images of armed white persons. The February 26, 2012 fatal shooting in Florida of Trayvon Martin, an unarmed African American teenager, highlights the importance of deepening our understanding of implicit bias effects.

Implicit racial bias can also influence many of the most important decisions we make in our personal, professional, and social lives: where we live, where we work, who our children’s friends are, who our friends are, which political candidates we vote for, what social programs we support, etc. For most Americans all of these issues are influenced by racial attitudes. Implicit bias distorts these attitudes and limits the opportunity that each of us has to live a fully engaged life.

At the Kirwan Institute our work on structural racialization has shown us that the systematic processes which create and perpetuate racial inequality most often operate without racist intent. We know that racialized outcomes do not require racist actors. However, we are becoming increasingly aware that the ways in which individuals think about, talk about and act on race do have significant implications for social justice and access to opportunity. Through our emerging research on implicit bias we know that attitudes about race do influence our position on critical issues involving race—issues like affordable housing, affirmative action, school integration, and even the size and role of government. As we strive to create a just and inclusive society where all people and communities have opportunity to succeed we are working to expand the understanding of implicit bias, to expose the many ways that this phenomenon creates and reinforces racialized barriers to opportunity in critical life domains and to conceive of and implement interventions that have the power to reduce the influence of implicit bias in the real world.



The Kirwan Institute
works to **create** a just
and inclusive society where all people
and communities have
opportunity
to succeed.



KIRWAN INSTITUTE
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Everyday Racism in Union Work

We will be working on this scenario in a breakout session with others. Prior to our meeting, it would be helpful for you to familiarize yourself with the story.

Angel is a newly hired Educational Support Professional (ESP) at Rolling Seas Elementary School – a school that they attended as a child. They are an instructional aide in the special education resource room. This school is known for high poverty, large class sizes, and a high number of English language learners. Angel was the first person in their family to get a degree from the community college. Several generations of Angel's family are all from this community. Angel wanted to continue on at state college to become a certified teacher of students with special needs, but the cost of school was too much. They are a parent who works a second job to earn enough money to eventually move out of their mother's apartment. They are grateful for their family's overall support but wants their own place. Compounding the household budget issues, Angel's child fell off their trike a few years ago resulting in huge, uninsured medical bills. Despite working to pay them off, several are in collection, which is affecting Angel's applications for rental agreements.

Upon meeting the Lead Teacher, Phyllis, Angel is immediately complimented on how well they speak and their lovely, long hair. Phyllis makes sure to discuss how supportive they are of undocumented families and how Angel should feel comfortable in this room with them. As Angel helps Phyllis set up the room for the first day of school, they notice that for any child who has a "different" sounding name, Phyllis puts a bright yellow name sign on the child's desk. Curious, Angel asks about this. Phyllis lets Angel know that these students probably don't speak English and will always come to class without lunch money. All the teachers in the special education program use this as a signal for the lunch accountability tally. "It is just easier that way," says Phyllis.

Later in the day, the conversation turns to getting to know one another and Phyllis asks Angel, "What made you want to be an instructional aide?" Angel shares their story and their aspirations to get a teaching certificate. Phyllis does not have the heart to tell Angel that this dream will likely never come true. There are no reimbursements for professional development for ESP members in the district, and most of the courses required for the full certification program are at the state college in the evening. Phyllis just knows that people like Angel would never be able to overcome the issues of child-care, transportation and added debt, so they don't mention it. "It wouldn't be nice to get their hopes up," thinks Phyllis.

Angel is approached by Carol, the Union's Building Representative (a classroom teacher), and Carol asks them to join the local union. Angel asked about the cost, and Carol responded by saying, "Support staff don't pay much considering all that we have to do for you people. We used to be separate organizations. Now, I think we're more focused on professional issues instead of what matters. The dues are described in this flyer." Carol left a folder of information and a business card of a man that she said worked for the Union. He would help Angel when they got into trouble. Angel asked, "Are there any programs for getting a teaching certification?" "I'll check," says Carol. Angel took the information, but no one ever came to talk to them from the union again. They would have loved to know how to get professional development. Angel called the union office once, and when they asked for information was immediately told they had to be a member first and that they needed to contact the building rep or UniServ Director. "All I wanted was information," they thought, "and all I got was sent back to the people that did not contact me. I guess they really don't want people like me."

As the year went on, and Angel got to know more classroom teachers and instructional aides, they noticed that most of the classroom teachers were people who did not live in the neighborhood around the school, and that most of the instructional aides lived in the school's neighborhood or very close by. At lunch one day Angel shared with their co-worker and neighbor, Elise, their aspirations for becoming a classroom teacher. Overhearing their conversation, Becky, a new classroom teacher, shared her story. "I started here on a conditional certification with only a two-year degree. All I had to do was agree to get my four-year degree in the next three years. I love the state college, my colleagues in the second-grade wing watch my classroom so I can make the evening classes, and we have a babysitter who watches my son in the evenings while I am at class. It is an upfront investment, and the district reimburses up to nine credits a year. I just don't know why more of you don't take advantage of this!"

Analyzing Different Expressions of Everyday Racism

Answer the five questions below. In each box, list examples of expressions of racism you think are occurring in the story you just read. You don't have to identify every possible example because it's important to leave ample time for the last question.

1. Is Angel thriving in their institutions(school/union)? What are examples from the story that leads you to this conclusion?	2. What are examples of Systemic Racism (racism within institutions and across systems of power)?
3. What are examples of Individual Racism (racism between individuals)?	4. What race and gender is Angel? What evidence from the story leads you to these conclusions?

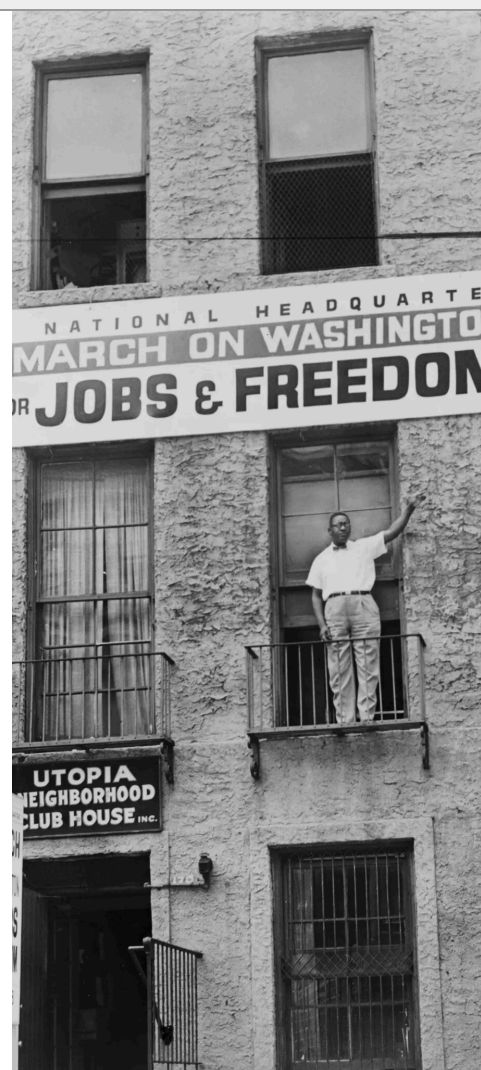
5. As a leader, what is your role in interrupting the instances of racism that you recognize?



The New York Times

The 1963 March on Washington Changed America. Its Roots Were in Harlem.

Before Martin Luther King Jr. gave his “I Have a Dream” speech to 250,000 people, a group of civil rights activists spent a summer planning an event many didn’t want to happen.



In the summer of 1963, a four-story townhouse on West 130th Street became a hive of activity as civil rights activists planned an enormous march on Washington. Library of Congress

Share full article

By **John Leland**

Aug. 26, 2023

Sixty years ago, in the summer of 1963, a four-story townhouse on West 130th Street in Harlem became the headquarters for what was then the largest civil rights event in American history, the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. For one summer the house, a former home for “[delinquent colored girls](#),” was a hive of activity — so frenetic that the receptionist twice hung up on the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. by mistake.

The march, which took place on Wednesday, Aug. 28, is now best remembered for Dr. King's "I Have a Dream" speech, and for the crowd of 250,000 filling the National Mall. But it would not have been possible without the organizing at 170 West 130th Street, led by Bayard Rustin, a brilliant tactician whose homosexuality and former communist ties made him a target both inside and outside the movement.

Under the aegis of the march's patriarch, the labor leader A. Philip Randolph, Mr. Rustin brought together the heads of the five big civil rights organizations — the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, N.A.A.C.P., National Urban League, Congress of Racial Equality and Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. Together with Mr. Randolph, they became known as the Big Six.

It was a pivotal moment in the civil rights movement, following Dr. King's [tumultuous campaign to force the desegregation of Birmingham](#) and President John F. Kennedy's sending the [National Guard to enable Black students to attend the University of Alabama](#); Medgar Evers, a field secretary for the N.A.A.C.P., was [assassinated](#) in June in Mississippi. As Courtland Cox, one of the march organizers, recalled, "People were sick and tired of being sick and tired, and they wanted to make a statement to the nation."

From a bare-bones office, Mr. Rustin managed the sometimes-fractious leaders, along with labor and religious groups and a crew of young volunteers and paid staff, to create an event that still resonates 60 years later.

Below are the memories of 10 people, now aged 75 to 92, who helped plan and organize the march. Their remarks have been edited for clarity and conciseness.

[NORMAN HILL](#), national program director, Congress of Racial Equality: The march was organized in about six weeks, which was sort of amazing, to generate that many people and have an overall impact.

[ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON](#), now a U.S. congresswoman from Washington, D.C.: There had never been a truly big march in Washington. There was a 1957 march [the [Prayer Pilgrimage for Freedom](#)], but that had maybe 25,000 people. That was seen as an indication that maybe we could not attract many people.



Eleanor Holmes Norton, now a member of Congress, helped connect participants to buses so that they could get to Washington for the march. André Chung for The New York Times

RACHELLE HOROWITZ, transportation director and aide to Bayard Rustin: Both Bayard and Mr. Randolph knew that progress had to be made in Washington. You could fight all these local fights, and they were important, but unless we got legislation and the support of the federal government, there was not going to be anything done, really.

VELMA HILL, East Coast field secretary, Congress of Racial Equality: I don't know whether I should talk about this, but there was not harmony among the Big Six. The N.A.A.C.P. was looked upon as only going through the courts. And the Urban League was looked upon by SNCC and CORE as being too beholden to business. And King was referred to as "De Lord," not in a nice way.

DR. JOYCE LADNER, field organizer, Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee: That started in SNCC. It might have been Stokely [Carmichael] that started it, and it spread.

VELMA HILL: I think that the march would not have happened unless Randolph had called it, because A. Philip Randolph was the most respected leader of the 20th century. Unfortunately, enough is not discussed about him. It's now King's march. We loved King. But he was only one-sixth of the march policy committee.



Bayard Rustin, left, brought together A. Philip Randolph, center, and the leaders of the five big civil rights organizations at the time. Everett Collection, via Alamy

NORMAN HILL: The first day was to be sit-ins in congressional offices. The second day there was to be a massive march on the nation's capital.

COURTLAND COX, program secretary, SNCC: Roy Wilkins [then executive secretary of the N.A.A.C.P.] didn't want Bayard to organize the march. And not only Roy Wilkins. But the person who could overcome that, and who people could not go up against, was A. Philip Randolph. And Bayard was his deputy. There's nothing that Roy Wilkins could have said that would've made a difference, because A. Philip Randolph was there.

LYNN KILGORE HENDY, volunteer, now treasurer of [Save Harlem Now!](#): My father [[Thomas Kilgore Jr.](#)] was pastor of Friendship Baptist Church. The church owned the building on 130th Street. My father was very good friends with Martin Luther King, since Dr. King was a child.

When they needed someplace to do the planning and have a central office, they thought that Harlem would be a good place. It would probably be dangerous to put it anywhere in the South. So my father offered the building.

DR. JOYCE LADNER: A call went out from Bayard or Mr. Randolph to each civil rights organization to send two people to staff the march. That's how Courtland Cox and I were appointed by SNCC. We were the worker bees.

SNCC wasn't especially excited about a march.

COURTLAND COX: Most people in SNCC basically thought it was taking time away from the work they were doing in Mississippi, and it was only because I had a relationship with Bayard, and his

convincing me that it was going to be an important march, that we were really much involved in the March on Washington.



“People were sick and tired of being sick and tired, and they wanted to make a statement to the nation,” said Courtland Cox. André Chung for The New York Times

CLARENCE B. JONES, lawyer and speechwriter for Dr. King:

Following the success of the [Birmingham campaign](#) in April and May of 1963, on June 21, then-President Kennedy invited all of the major leaders to come to the White House to consider the next step. He and the attorney general wanted to discourage the leaders of the civil rights organizations from planning any march directly on Congress.

NORMAN HILL: Kennedy thought there was likely to be violence, and that would set back the cause of civil rights. He was geared to introduce civil rights legislation, and he felt that if there was a march with violence, it would jeopardize the passage of the legislation.

RACHELLE HOROWITZ: The Kennedy administration put a lot of pressure on people like Wilkins not to sponsor it. It became a soft pitch: We are really for your marching, but will there be enough toilets? And will there be enough water? Bayard called them the Latrine Letters. That only encouraged Bayard to be more organized and more precise. It had a negative effect.

NORMAN HILL: Randolph said to Kennedy, “If we don’t march, we’ll lose all credibility. No one will follow us.” Randolph and the other leaders, with Bayard being the chief organizer, went back to organizing the march.



President John F. Kennedy expressed concern that marching would lead to violence and hinder the passage of civil rights legislation, the march’s organizers recalled.
Library of Congress

CLARENCE B. JONES: Dr. King traditionally after some major event took his family on vacation. They’d normally go to the Bahamas or Jamaica. But he didn’t do it this time. The thought was that he clearly couldn’t be away. So my wife and I moved out of our brand-new house in Riverdale, in the Bronx, and he moved his family in, and for the next six weeks my home became the S.C.L.C. North.

His older son, Marty Jr., said to me that of all the times they can remember being with their dad, that’s the time they most remember, because they were all together.

JINI KILGORE COCKROFT, worker for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference: I was 15. My job was to type probably thousands of envelopes and stuff them and take them downtown to the central post office, so that we would notify people around the country of the march. I was also distributing leaflets on stoops in Harlem and taking them into stores.

The Nation of Islam members and the Fruit of Islam were not in favor of integration. They favored separatism and self-help. They kind of tailed me when I was putting leaflets on stoops. They’d take them off as soon as I put them on. Their strategy was different from the S.C.L.C.’s. They didn’t think the march would do any good.



Patricia Worthy was a 19-year-old student at Brooklyn College when the march was being planned. André Chung for The New York Times

PATRICIA WORTHY, receptionist at march headquarters, now a law professor at Howard University: We used to get threats all the time. And of course, since I answered the phone, I was the one who got them. People threatening to bomb the place, or telling us there was a bomb in the place, or that they were going to kill us. And I would get rattled, and I would walk into Bayard's office and he'd say three or four things, and I would get up and go back to work. He had a sense of assurance and command. He filled up a space. His eyes sparkled and he had that gray hair, and it was all fuzzy. Just bigger than life.

COURTLAND COX: There was a lot of energy in Harlem. You would walk on 125th Street and the clothing stores' doors would be open, and you would hear the Isley Brothers' "[Twist and Shout](#)"

blasting from the various stores trying to attract people. And if you went to 125th and 7th Avenue or Lenox, people were on ladders talking about their political views or religious beliefs about what was happening in America.



"There was a lot of energy in Harlem," Courtland Cox recalled. Bob Parent/Getty Images

RACHELLE HOROWITZ: I had an apartment in the [ILG \[International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union\] co-ops in Chelsea](#). Joyce Ladner and her sister [Dorie](#) — her sister Dorie was working as a volunteer for the SNCC office — and Eleanor Holmes Norton stayed at my apartment. I had two futon-type couches in the living room where the Ladners slept, and Eleanor slept in my bedroom.

DR. JOYCE LADNER: Dorie was very close to [Bobby Dylan](#). He used to come to our apartment. He hung out at the SNCC office during the day, and he would come home with Dorie. We worked long hours, sometimes till 11 o'clock at night, and we were so tired when we got home. All I wanted was for Bobby Dylan to get off the sofa that I had to sleep on and go home, go anywhere.

He was serenading. He would write songs on the typewriter at the SNCC office during the day. He gave Dorie one. He wrote three songs that were inspired by her. One — "[Outlaw Blues](#)" — the last stanza is very much dedicated to Dorie. He'd be singing, and I'm

just sitting there exhausted, wishing this boy would go home. Eventually he'd get up and leave, and Dorie and I would open up the sofa to sleep on.



"It was the first time that the movement became national," said Dr. Joyce Ladner. "The march made racism America's problem." André Chung for The New York Times

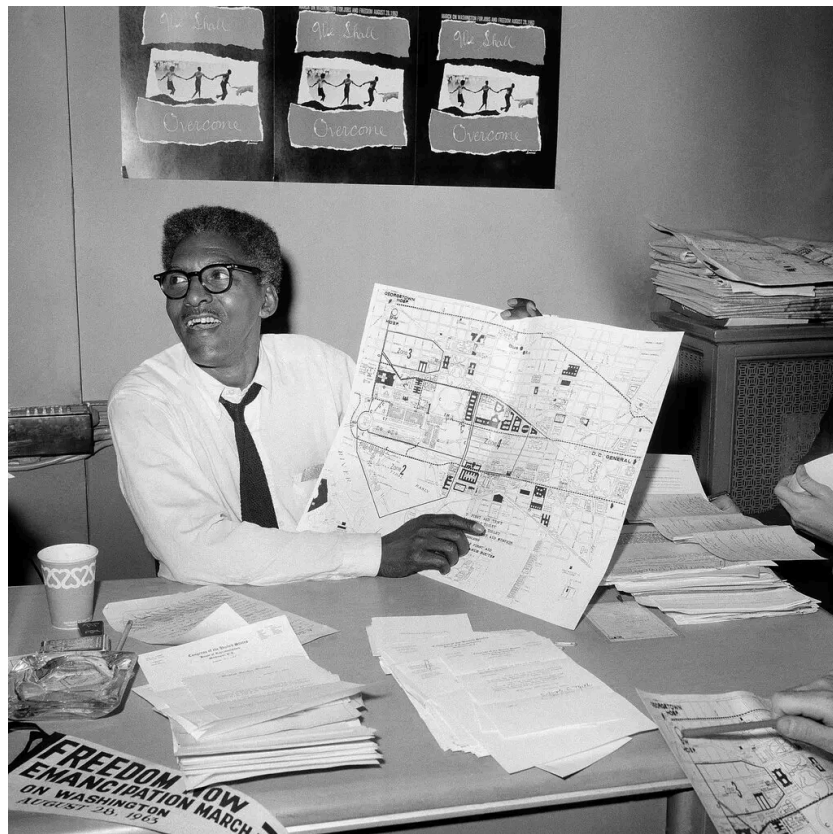
CLARENCE B. JONES: There was a meeting as to the order of the speakers, and some people didn't want Martin King to be the last speaker. Finally, I had to say, "Excuse me, have you heard Dr. King speak? Do you really want to follow him? Do any of you want to follow him?" I had to convince these ego-driven preachers and other people to let Dr. King be the last speaker. It was all out of ego.

NORMAN HILL: Early in the organizing of the march, [Strom Thurmond](#) [the segregationist Republican senator from South Carolina] spoke on the floor of the United States Senate, attacking

Bayard as a communist, pervert and draft dodger. And Randolph called a press conference in response and indicated that Bayard would continue as the chief organizer and conferred unequivocal confidence in Bayard.

ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON: Our jobs were really quite mundane. One of my jobs was to link people to buses so that they could get to Washington. That's the kind of legwork that was needed.

PATRICIA WORTHY: It was a busy place, whoa! High energy, everybody committed, everybody working late hours. I was the skinniest child when I started, and I was skinnier when I left. Wasn't much eating.



Bayard Rustin with a map showing the path of the March on Washington. Associated Press

VELMA HILL: Bayard would sing songs and we would work around the clock. He was an Elizabethan tenor.

LYNN KILGORE HENDY: He had that wonderful British accent. I have no idea where that came from, but he did have one. And I just loved to listen to him talk.

NORMAN HILL: Randolph had a deep, baritone voice, with a Shakespearean tone. He projected great dignity and a clear articulation.



Norman Hill noted that none of the march's main speakers were women. "It was male chauvinism," Velma Hill added. Amir Hamja/The New York Times

VELMA HILL: And he was a gentleman. I would get in the car with him and he would help me get into the car. And a lot of times he would say at a meeting on Sunday afternoon or evening, "I have to go home to read Shakespeare to my wife." And I remember telling Norm, "Norm, if you decide to read Shakespeare to me, I will never leave you."

COURTLAND COX: A big thing was making sure there were enough monitors and marshals and so forth to make sure paper was picked up, people were marching in line, everybody knew what the disciplines were.

RACHELLE HOROWITZ: There was an organization of Black policemen in New York called the [Guardians](#). Bayard got them to volunteer to be the internal monitors, and he actually trained them

in nonviolent crowd control, which meant encircling a crowd, not doing the policeman thing. Every day in the courtyard of the building, there would be groups of 20 policemen out there, and Bayard would be doing nonviolence training with them.



"You could fight all these local fights, and they were important," said Rachelle Horowitz, "but unless we got legislation and the support of the federal government, there was not going to be anything done, really." André Chung for The New York Times

CLARENCE B. JONES: The pied piper of the civil rights movement at that time was Harry Belafonte. He had an understanding that no matter how important an event you put on, America is a celebrity-oriented country. And he convinced Bayard Rustin and A. Philip Randolph and Dr. King. He said, you want to make sure you get great publicity coverage, we've got to bring as many stars there as possible. So he was put in charge of the celebrity delegation.

RACHELLE HOROWITZ: Harry Belafonte gets a lot of credit for bringing the movie stars, and he deserves it. But [Ossie Davis](#) came to the office all the time, came to staff meetings, was on the phone negotiating. He was just like the most wonderful staff person.

NORMAN HILL: None of the major speakers at the march were women.

VELMA HILL: It was male chauvinism.

RACHELLE HOROWITZ: Bayard was upset by it, but he didn't know how to get around it. He proposed a compromise, which was that [Daisy Bates](#), who had led the effort to integrate the schools in Little Rock, would speak and honor three or four other women who were active in the movement. There were women who were very disaffected — [Pauli Murray](#), [Ella Baker](#).



Daisy Bates, known for her work integrating schools in Little Rock, Ark., spoke at the march. Associated Press

DR. JOYCE LADNER: There was not a spotlight in the country focused on parity for women. And race was such a dominant, overbearing issue in my life that being a woman didn't even factor into it. I lived during two lynchings in Mississippi. The last one in 1959 occurred 15 miles from where I lived. So there was little room for me to delineate women out of that larger group of oppression.

RACHELLE HOROWITZ: In retrospect, obviously they should have had [Dorothy Height](#) [president of the National Council of Negro Women] or someone speak.

DR. JOYCE LADNER: Some days before the march, John Lewis [then chairman of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee] showed his speech to us. I remember looking at it. Bayard and Rachelle looked at it. It was a communal statement; it

was not John's alone. So when the word got out that the White House and the Archbishop of Washington [[Patrick Cardinal O'Boyle](#)] wanted him to change it, we said, Oh, hell no.

NORMAN HILL: The archbishop threatened to pull out of the march unless the speech was modified. A. Philip Randolph appealed to John, saying, "Please don't ruin this event and this day for an old man like myself." John said later, how could he refuse Randolph?

VELMA HILL: We wanted to have the biggest showing, the most integrated showing. We wanted to pass the Voting Rights bill. I did not think the march would be that big.



Some people didn't want Martin Luther King Jr. to be the last speaker, Clarence B. Jones remembered. "Finally, I had to say, 'Excuse me, have you heard Dr. King speak? Do you really want to follow him?'" Marissa Leshnov for The New York Times

CLARENCE B. JONES: I thought, maybe we could get 100,000 people. Possibly a large crowd, but I didn't think 250,000. Now as I look back, if we had had cellphones and laptops, there would have been five million people there.

PATRICIA WORTHY: We came down on a bus, and we sang the whole way down. "We Shall Overcome" — we must've sang that 4,000 times. We got there at maybe 5 in the morning, and I said to Mr. Rustin, "I think I've talked to everyone as far as the eye can see."

The buses were starting to come, and he came over and he said, "Wow, they're really going to show up." That was the first time I realized that he really wasn't sure that the people were coming, either. Prior to that, he'd given us the impression that he was sure this was going to be a success.

I went around Mr. Lincoln and I sat down and fell asleep, and I missed the entire march. I missed Dr. King's speech. I missed everything.

NORMAN HILL: We thought that the march would bring national attention to the demands of the civil rights movement. The march policy committee developed 10 demands. A number of them were met by the civil rights legislation of '64 and '65. The economic demands are still relevant today.

DR. JOYCE LADNER: It was the first time that the movement became national. Before the march, everything was confined to the South or to people picketing stores in support of the South. The march made racism America's problem, and not just what's happening down South among those rednecks. It became recognized as a national problem.

VELMA HILL: The Big Six never worked together that way again. Sometimes I really long for the days of the march. In a funny way I wish I were 20 again. But you know, there are some young people out here, and I think Norman and I can help them. I think we can teach them. I think the coalition can come together again.



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John Leland, a Metro reporter, joined The Times in 2000. His most recent book is “Happiness Is a Choice You Make: Lessons From a Year Among the Oldest Old,” based on a Times series. [More about John Leland](#)

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How to Be an Ally if You Are a Person with Privilege

Frances E. Kendall, Ph.D. © 2003

One way to work for social justice is as an ally. The gay and lesbian community realized ten or fifteen years ago that, without the help of straight allies, gays and lesbians don't have the clout needed to fight heterosexist and homophobic legislation. Gradually the call for allies has spread to other communities in which discrimination is systemic.

What it means to be an ally varies greatly from person to person. For some, it means building a relationship of love and trust with another; for others, it means intentionally putting one's self in harm's way so that another person remains safe. Each type of alliance has its own parameters, responsibilities, and degree of risk. For example, being an ally to someone who is in a less privileged position than I am requires different work than is necessary if the person has privileges like mine. There are also a variety of styles that an ally can use. Some of us are bold and audacious, others are more reserved. The common bond is that we align ourselves with a person or people in such a way that we "have their backs."

Being an ally is integral to my work for social justice: I align myself with an individual or group for a common cause or purpose. When I use the term "ally," I am not talking about love or friendship, although I grow to love many of the people with whom I align myself. I even see myself as an ally of people whom I don't know, individuals who are members of groups with which I align myself as a matter of principle.

Those of us who have been granted privileges based purely on who we are born (as white, as male, as straight, and so forth) often feel that either we want to give our privileges back, which we can't really do, or we want to use them to improve the experience of those who don't have our access to power and resources. One of the most effective ways to use our privilege is to become the ally of those on the other side of the privilege seesaw. This type of alliance requires a great deal of self-examination on our part as well as the willingness to go against the people who share our privilege status and with whom we are expected to group ourselves.

[Note: In the following descriptions of ally behavior, the governmental term "target groups" refers to those who are at greatest risk of being targeted for discrimination, e.g., people of color, women, gays and lesbians, people with disabilities, and so on.]

1. Allies work continuously to develop an understanding of the personal and institutional experiences of the person or people with whom they are aligning themselves. If the ally is a member of a privileged group, it is essential that she or he also strives for clarity about the impact of privileges on her or his life.

What this might look like:

Consistently asking myself what it means to be white in this situation. How would I be experienced now if I were of color? Would I be listened to? Would I be getting the support I am getting now? How would my life in this organization be different if I were not white/ male/ heterosexual/ tenured/ a manager?

Closely observing the experiences of people of color in the organization: how they are listened to, talked about, promoted, and expected to do additional jobs. For example, members of target groups counsel all the people in the organization who look like them even though that is not a part of their job description or have to speak for all members of "their" group or serve on a disproportionate number of committees so that there is "racial input." Few of us who are white ever have to be "professional whites," asked to speak for our race, represent our race, or offer support to people purely because their skin color is the same as ours.

2. Allies choose to align themselves publicly and privately with members of target groups and respond to their needs. This may mean breaking assumed allegiances with those who have the same privileges as you. It is important not to underestimate the consequences of breaking these agreements and to break them in ways that will be most useful to the person or group with whom you are aligning yourself.

What this might look like:

Stepping into a situation in which a person of color is being overrun by someone who looks like you: "John [a white man], I think Eugene [a Filipino] is making an important point. Would you hold your comment for a second so I can hear what Eugene has to say?"

Speaking out about a situation in which you don't appear to have any vested interest: "Jean, there are no women of color in this pool of candidates. How can we begin to get a broader perspective in our department if we continue to hire people who have similar backgrounds to ours or who look like us?"

Interrupting a comment or joke that is insensitive or stereotypic toward a target group, whether or not a member of that group is present. "Lu, that joke is anti-Semitic. I don't care if a Jewish person told it to you; it doesn't contribute to the kind of environment I want to work in."

This is NOT about rescuing or grandstanding, making a show of our support so that we will look good or progressive or liberal.

Other white people may perceive our stepping in as betraying of our same-race relationships. Comments such as "Who made you the political correctness police?" or "Don't you have a sense of humor?" or "Can't Beth [a Native American] take care of herself?" alert you to the fact that you have broken the unspoken code about criticizing another white, broken what Aida Hurtado calls the "unspoken rules of privilege." (The Color of Privilege, p. 128.) While we may choose to take this risk ourselves, it is important to work strategically so as not to put the person to whom we have aligned ourselves in greater jeopardy. The example above about the unbalanced pool of candidates is worded to make it clear that it is in the department's interest to interview and hire people who bring different experiences and points of view to the table. The white person could have covered himself by implying that his concern was for the lonely woman of color already present. ("Jean, there are no women of color in this pool of candidates. I know from talking with her that Josephina is sick of being the only Latina in our department.") Instead, he made it clear that a mostly white staff was not in his personal interest or that of the institution.

3. Allies believe that it is in their interest to be allies and are able to talk about why this is the case. Talking clearly about having the privilege to be able to step in is an important educational tool for others with the same privileges.

What this might look like:

Regularly prefacing what I am about to say with, "As a white person, I [think/ feel/ understand/ am not able to understand...]" By identifying one of my primary lenses on the world I let others know that I am clear that being white has an impact on how I perceive everything.

Choosing to make an issue of a situation, acknowledging that our whiteness gives us the privilege to speak with impunity. "As white women, because of our race privilege, our promotions are at far less risk than those of the women of color. Let's go as a group to the senior vice president to talk about the harassment we have all be experiencing.

4. Allies are committed to the never-ending personal growth required to be genuinely supportive. If both people are without privilege it means coming to grips with the ways that internalized oppression affects you. If you are privileged, uprooting long-held beliefs about the way that the world works will probably be necessary.

What this might look like:

Recognizing the lack of equitable access to education that I had always been told was present. A brief story. As I was finishing my Master's degree at Bank Street College of Education, I began to look at doctoral programs. My scores on the GRE did not meet minimum requirements for any of the programs I was interested in, and I had no grades because Bank Street used a pass-fail system then. Further, I was clear that the doctoral work I wanted to do was to create anti-racist curriculum. So, not only did I not have grades or scores in my favor, but I was also openly preparing to challenge the current educational system. I did, however, have four aces in my pocket: first, I had gone to Bank Street and that said a lot to the schools to which I was applying. Second, I had a recommendation from one of the most esteemed child development theorists in the country. Third, I was born with class entitlement and, thus, interviewed well. Fourth and I believe most importantly, my whiteness made me more appealing and less threatening to all of the schools. I know that rules were bent on my behalf to admit me to three prestigious schools. I also know that, had I been a person of color proposing to do anti-racist work, the chances of my being accepted into two of those programs would have been slim.

Mine is a clear example that our educational system is not a meritocracy. While I had known intellectually that racism is ingrained in every American institution, this was the first time my privilege was so obvious to me. In order to be clear about the role that white privilege played, and in order to be an ally, I had to give up my belief that we live in a world in which everyone is treated fairly, much less "the same."

Facing in an on-going way the difficult reality of the intentionality of white people's treatment of people of color, both historically and currently. In order to be an ally, I must hold in my

consciousness what my racial group has done to keep us in positions of power and authority. This is not about blaming myself or feeling guilty. In fact, I think guilt is often self-serving; if I feel terribly guilty about something, I can get mired in those feelings and not take action to change the situation. Staying conscious of our behavior as a group moves me to take responsibility for making changes. It also gives me greater insight into the experiences of those with whom I align myself.

5. Allies are able to articulate how various patterns of oppression have served to keep them in privileged positions or to withhold opportunities they might otherwise have. For many of us, this means exploring and owning our dual roles as oppressor and oppressed, as uncomfortable as that might be.

What this might look like:

Seeing (as in the story above) how my whiteness opened doors to institutions that most probably would not have opened so easily otherwise.

Understanding that as white women we are given access to power and resources because of racial similarities and our relationships with white men. In fact, we often receive those privileges at the expense of men and women of color. While we certainly experience systemic discrimination as women, our skin color makes us less threatening to the group which holds systemic power.

6. Allies expect to make some mistakes but do not use that as an excuse for inaction. As a person with privilege, it is important to study and to talk about how your privilege acts as both a shield and blinders for you. Of necessity, those without privileges in a certain area know more about the specific examples of privilege than those who are privileged.

What this might look like:

Knowing that each of us, no matter how careful or conscious we are or how long we have been working on issues of social justice, is going to say or do something dumb or insensitive. It isn't possible not to hurt or offend someone at some point. Our best bet is to acknowledge to others our mistakes and learn from them.

Questioning how your perceptions might be different if you were not a member of a privileged group. For example, consider what it might be like to be the only woman of color in a group of senior decision-makers who are all white and male. Would you read situations and conversations differently than one of the white men? What things might you say or how might you make your comments? What kind of support might you want if you were Other than white and male?

Keeping a filter in your mind through which you run your thoughts or comments. Remarks such as, "If I were you..." or "I know just how you feel..." are never very helpful in opening up communication, but, in conversations in which there is an imbalance of privilege, they take on

an air of arrogance. People with privilege can never really know what it is like to be a member of the target group. While I can sympathize with those who are of color, it is not possible for me truly to understand the experience of a person with different skin color because I am never going to be treated as they are. The goal is to show someone you are listening, you care, and you understand that being white causes you to be treated differently in the world. Much more useful comments would be "Because of my white blinders I don't always notice how he or she responds to you" or "Obviously, as a white person, I have never had your experience, but I really want to know how you feel you are being treated."

7. Allies know that those on each side of an alliance hold responsibility for their own change, whether or not persons on the other side choose to respond or to thank them. They are also clear that they are doing this work for themselves, not to "take care of" the Other.

What this might look like:

Remembering that we do this work for ourselves is really hard, but it is essential. For example, in a workshop in which I was a participant, we were talking about really painful stuff, and I heard myself say, "I have supported African American women all my life. I wish they would support me now." Luckily for me, a white woman who had done a lot of work on race was present and said, "African American women don't owe you shit. You chose freely to act as their ally." I thought to myself, "Oh, yeah, I have been knowing and saying that for years, but I forgot." I was grateful that there was another white woman to put me back on track, so that no woman of color had to make the effort to remind me.

Examining continually the institutional and personal benefits of hearing a wide diversity of perspectives, articulating those benefits, and building different points of view into the work we do.

Interrupting less-than-helpful comments and pushing for an inclusive work environment. We do it because we, as well as others, will benefit. We do not step forward because we think we should or because the people of color can't speak for themselves or because we want to look good to the people of color around us. We are allies because we know that it is in our interest.

8. Allies know that, in the most empowered and genuine ally relationships, the persons with privilege initiate the change toward personal, institutional, and societal justice and equality.

What this might look like:

Assessing who is at least risk to step into a situation and initiate change, conferring with others who are at greater risk about the best strategies, and moving forward. Being an ally is something like dancing in a ballet. Our moves should be carefully designed to have the greatest impact.

Understanding that this is not another opportunity to take charge, to ride in on our white horses to fix everything. Ally relationships are just that: relationships. Together with the people who aren't privileged, we choreograph who makes which moves and when they will be made. On

many occasions, people of color have looked at me and said, "You help her understand what's going on. She's your white sister." They implied that it is not their job to educate white women and that, because of my privilege, I am less likely to suffer from speaking straightforwardly than they would.

9. Allies promote a sense of inclusiveness and justice in the organization, helping to create an environment that is hospitable for all.

What this might look like:

Recognizing the expectation that people of color will address racism, women will take care of sexism, and gay men and lesbians will "fix" heterosexism in the organization and, in their stead, becoming the point person for organizational change on these issues.

Clues that this assumption is operating: the Diversity Committee is composed predominantly of people of color and white women, while those with greater positional and informal decision-making power are on the "important" committees; the senior manager reroutes all announcements of "diversity" conferences to a person of color with an attached note that says, "Thought you might be interested," implying that addressing issues of diversity is not his or her concern; men joking on the way to a sexual harassment seminar that they don't know why they have to go since they "already know how to harass;" the majority of people pushing for domestic partner benefits are gay or lesbian.

Paying attention to the days and times meetings are scheduled so that no one group bears the brunt of exclusion. For example, being sure that meetings are not regularly scheduled on Saturdays or other Jewish holidays, or before or after the regular work day so that parents have difficulty with childcare.

10. Allies with privilege are responsible for sharing the lead with people of color in changing the organization and hold greater responsibility for seeing changes through to their conclusion. Sharing the lead is very different from taking the lead. When we take the lead we get to keep ourselves central and see ourselves as riding in to fix everything. Sharing the lead requires that we are in alignment and partnership with people who are working toward the greater good of all of us.

What this might look like:

Working to build a strategic diversity plan for the organization, tying it to the organization's business plan, and assuring that the plan is implemented.

Securing funding for scholarships so that an economically and racially diverse student population is guaranteed.

Assessing current policies and procedures in the organization and changing them so that they don't differentially impact groups of people.

Intentionally using our access to power, resources, and influence to push those who are in positions to be able to bring about change.

11. Allies are able to laugh at themselves as they make mistakes and at the real, but absurd, systems of supremacy in which we all live. As many oppressed people know, humor is a method of survival. Those with privilege must be very careful not to assume that we can join in the humor of those in a target group with whom we are in alliance.

What this might look like:

Appreciating that there are times when laughing together is the only thing we can do short of throwing ourselves off a bridge. As Cornel West, an African American scholar, asked, "What could be more Theater of the Absurd than being Black in America?"

Paying attention to the boundaries of who-can-say-what-to-whom: While it may be OK for a person of color to call me his "white sister," it would be presumptuous for me to call him my "Latino brother." In some communities, African Americans call white men "white boys" to lessen the feeling of white men's power. It would be very insensitive, on the other hand, for a white male ally to call African American men "Black boys." This is because of the history of that phrase and the indication that a person with privilege is ignoring the impact of race and believes that we are really all the same under the skin.

12. Allies understand that emotional safety is not a realistic expectation if we take our alliance seriously. For those with privilege, the goal is to "become comfortable with the uncomfortable and uncomfortable with the too-comfortable" and to act to alter the too-comfortable.

What this might look like:

Being alert to our desire to create a "safe" environment for an interracial conversation. My experience is that when white people ask for safety they mean they don't want to be held accountable for what they say, they want to be able to make mistakes and not have people of color take them personally, and they don't want to be yelled at by people of color. Those of us who are white are almost always safer, freer from institutional retribution, than people of color. That knowledge should help us remain in uncomfortable situations as we work for change.

Identifying committees, decision-making teams, and departments that are "too white" and working to bring a critical mass of people of color and white allies into the group. We do this not because it will look good but because the current composition is less able to make wise decisions due to its narrow vision. While discomfort is certain to follow, the benefits of inclusiveness far outweigh the discomfort.

13. Allies know the consequences of not being clear about the Other's experience. Some of these are:
 - lack of trust

- lack of authentic relationships
 - lack of foundation for coalition
14. For allies with privilege, the consequences of being unclear are even greater. Because our behaviors are rooted in privilege, those who are in our group give greater credence to our actions than they might if we were members of groups without privilege. Part of our task is to be models and educators for those like us.

What this might look like:

Understanding that because we don't see a colleague of color being mistreated doesn't mean that daily race-related experiences aren't occurring. I often hear white people make comments such as, "Well, my friend is Black but he's beyond all this race stuff. He is never treated poorly." Or, "I'm sure she doesn't have any problems with white people. You'd hardly know she's Hispanic." Or, "He is Black, but he's really like a white Black person. He is treated better than I am."

Comments such as these alert a person of color to the fact that we don't have those experiences, we can't imagine other people having them, and therefore put little credence in the stories that people of color share. If we are to be genuine allies to people of color, we must constantly observe the subtleties and nuances of other white people's comments and behaviors just as we observe our own. And we must take the risk of asking, "What if I am wrong about how I think people of color are being treated in my institution? What can I do to seek out the reality of their experiences? How will I feel if I discover that people I know, love, and trust are among the worst offenders? And what will I do?"

Reminding a colleague who says, "She's always whining about race. This is not about race," that as white people we simply can't know what it is like to be of color. We will never be treated as if we were. While not everything is about race, there is always the possibility that it is an element in any situation. To deny that reality signals people of color and other white people that we can't be trusted as allies or as members of a coalition.

DR. SEUSS' RACIST PAST ISN'T THE PROBLEM - YOUR REFUSAL TO HAVE HARD CONVERSATIONS IS



Read Across America is upon us, which is strategically scheduled on Dr. Seuss birthday. It's also the time of year when woke white folks around the country decide that protesting Dr. Seuss is their social justice project for the year. They post about why they're trashing their Dr. Seuss collection because don't you know he was a racist asshole?

To which, I inevitably respond, "what white person isn't racist?" No, seriously, all y'all are racist and choosing to throw away his books doesn't make you any less racist. It does, however, make you the type of person who insists on talking about racism in hushed tones.

I want to acknowledge that part of the reason I'm writing this post is because I get asked about my thoughts on Seuss often around this time of year. Sesame is a huge fan of his books and even requested a Dr. Seuss themed party when he turned five years old. His books are special in our family but they also will help us discuss restorative justice as he gets older.

Now before I go any further, let me just say that yes, Dr. Seuss most certainly drew racist caricatures of Black and Asian people. He dressed in Blackface, as many white folks did during that time period. He also grew up and is, in my opinion, a lesson of what happens when you realize you were wrong and work to do better. Seuss arguably spent the rest of his career writing children's books that teach about the importance of inclusion and acceptance of others and yourself.

- ***Horton Hears a Who*** is a metaphor for the biggest amongst us speaking for the smallest.
- ***The Lorax*** asks us to consider the generations who will come after us in regards to environmental justice.
- ***The Sneetches*** is a clear stance against the oppression of Jews in Germany.

Trashing your collection of Seuss books is easier than doing the real work. It's easier to erase the books from your children's bookshelves than to sit them down and talk about Seuss' past. Instead of asking the library to remove Seuss Day, ask them to spend some time talking about the mistakes that Dr. Seuss made at the beginning of his career.

Justice is not always about canceling someone and their body of work. Sometimes it looks like providing room for restorative justice to take place. In my opinion, Dr. Seuss using the remainder of his career to focus on writing books full of important lessons is an example of restorative justice. While I wish that we had a public apology from him on the record, I also understand that the time he lived in didn't really require those statements from people who weren't politicians or in similar positions of authority.

How will our children learn from our past, if we continue to whitewash it in an effort to seem perfect?

http://mamademics.com/drseuss-racist-past-hard-conversations/?fbclid=IwAR2hHPSRGb7wAoPZj8nd8Ygn4oTx4b_mbSTTOJIOJtDGp1GC-VvuFmAV0

Working » September 2, 2016

Why Labor and the Movement for Racial Justice Should Work Together

BY [Maurice Weeks and Marilyn Sneiderman](#)

The Movement for Black Lives (M4BL) has made tremendous strides in exposing and challenging racial injustice, and has won real policy victories. The policies, while often imperfect, are a testament to the strength of the organizing and activism of the moment. Not coincidentally, this uprising comes at a time when income and wealth inequality are at peak levels and the economy for most black people looks markedly different than the economy for their white counterparts.

Just as we are in a critical moment in the movement for racial justice, we are in a critical moment for the right to unionize. Unions, which have been a major force for economic justice for people of color in the past 50 years, have been decimated to historically low levels.

Labor should work alongside the Movement for Black Lives, a coalition with more than 50 organizations, to usher in a radically new economic and social order. The path won't be easy. But recent history has shown that one of the ways to get at this new reality is through union bargaining. Consider the example of Fix L.A.

Fix L.A. is a community-labor partnership that fought to fund city services and jobs alike, using city workers' bargaining as a flashpoint to bring common good demands to the table. The coalition started after government leaders in Los Angeles drastically cut back on public services and infrastructure maintenance during the Great Recession. The city slashed nearly 5,000 jobs, a large portion of which had been held by black and Latino workers. Not only did these cuts create infrastructure problems—like overgrown and dangerous trees and flooding—but they also cost thousands of black and Latino families their livelihoods.

Fix L.A. asked why the city was spending more on bank fees than on street services, and demanded that it renegotiate those fees and invest the savings in underserved communities.

What was the result of this groundbreaking campaign?

The creation of 5,000 jobs, with a commitment to increase access to those jobs for black and Latino

workers, the defeat of proposed concessions for city workers and a commitment from the city to review why it was prioritizing payment of bank fees over funding for critical services in the first place!

Bargaining for the common good

Fix L.A. may seem novel, but the context is no different from many places. We have seen massive disinvestment from public services in a way that disproportionately affects black people. This structurally-racist disinvestment is often driven by the corporate interests that bankroll elected officials' campaigns and by Wall Street actors that use their influence over public finance to push an austerity agenda. Everywhere you look, public officials are making a choice between paying fees and providing critical services.

Chicago Public Schools paid \$502 million to banks in toxic swap fees at the same time that it was slashing special education programs and laying off teachers to close a budget deficit. Detroit raised its water rates and paid \$537 million in Wall Street penalties, setting the stage for mass water shutoffs when tens of thousands of poor residents of the overwhelmingly black city could not afford the higher water bills.

Wall Street and other corporations don't hesitate to profit off of and perpetuate disinvestment in communities of color, and too often we forget to look up the food chain to see that at the other end of community crises there are rich bankers and billionaires lining their pockets. Campaigns, like Fix L.A., that involve direct actions targeting banks, hedge funds, corporations and billionaires are effective.

This sort of organizing can be hard. In order to isolate workers from their broader communities, the other side has done a terrific job of narrowly defining the scope of bargaining as wages and benefits. In many states, labor laws prohibit public sector workers from bargaining over issues that concern the welfare of the broader community or the quality of the services they provide.

The theory of "bargaining for the common good" seeks to challenge this status quo. As articulated by Joseph McCartin of Georgetown University's Kalmanovitz Initiative for Labor and the Working Poor, bargaining for the common good has three main tenets: 1) transcending the bargaining frameworks written in law and rejecting them as tools for the corporate elite to remain in power; 2) crafting demands between local community groups and unions at the same time and in close coordination with each other from the very beginning; and 3) embracing collective direct action as key to the success of organizing campaigns.

These may seem like simple ideas, but they stand in complete opposition to the way the power elite expects union bargaining to be done. Therein lies their power.

Therein also lies the opportunity for unions to partner with the Movement for Black Lives. For all of

their complicated racial histories, unions are some of the largest organizations of black people in the country. About 2.2 million black Americans are union members—some 14 percent of the employed black workforce.

That's a huge number of black people who are already members of organizations with the capacity to organize and mobilize. And these black workers, like all black people in America, face real challenges of structural economic racism in almost all aspects of their lives. Their communities have been underfunded; their schools are being dismantled; they face massive poverty and are under economic assault; and they regularly encounter police violence.

Stronger together

Widening the scope of bargaining in Los Angeles led to real wins for the city's black and Latino communities. The rest of the labor movement should take note. Imagine the power that could be added to the Movement for Black Lives if unions, recognizing the trauma that systematic racism wreaks on their membership, brought solutions that have been elevated by the Movement for Black Lives to the bargaining table in negotiations with employers ranging from the City of Baltimore to private equity giant Blackstone.

But unions cannot do this unilaterally and expect unconditional support from the black community.

Unions must make the effort on the front end to build a real relationship with Movement for Black Lives groups and members, and partner with them in developing common good bargaining demands that start to go on the offense against Wall Street and the structurally-racist economic power structure. There are groups of people organizing for racial justice under the banner of the Movement for Black Lives near every union local in the country. The onus is on labor leaders and rank-and-file union members to reach out to those groups and start to build a strong relationship where one does not exist. This process will not be easy, especially because of the history of racism that plagues unions, especially police unions. But the truth remains that there is a real opportunity to leverage the power of both movements to win real gains for black people and other people of color through a strong partnership.

It is exciting to imagine potential bargaining demands major unions could undertake alongside racial justice organizations. For example, they could demand that their employers make a commitment to job training programs to strengthen the pipeline for black workers; city and state workers could demand progressive taxation measures that raise funds from corporate actors to fund schools and services in black communities; teachers could demand school districts enact restorative justice policies to stem the school-to-prison pipeline; hospital workers could bargain for targeted health care access programs in communities of color; retail workers could demand that their employers “ban the box” and let the formerly incarcerated work. The list is almost infinite.

Bargaining for racial justice is a radical idea and will not be easily won. It will require concerted direct

action targeting the real decision makers in both the public and private sectors that have a vested interest in keeping racial inequities in place. The Movement for Black Lives has proven that it can execute effective and creative direct actions backed by solid demands. They are also innovating creative tactics that move beyond traditional marches and picket lines to new types of disruptive actions that make power holders directly confront those they are harming. By combining the vision and militant tactics of the Movement for Black Lives with the membership and resources of the labor movement, we can usher in a more just and equitable society.

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[More information about Maurice Weeks and Marilyn Sneiderman](#)

—in a small Southern city on the edge of Appalachia—where the benefits of claiming white womanhood are crystal clear.

Several months ago, I was stopped by a police officer on a rural highway. As he ran my license and registration, I thought of Sandra Bland, a Black woman pulled over by the police in 2015 for failure to use a turn signal. She later died under mysterious circumstances in a jail cell. I thought of Muhaysia Booker, a Black trans woman, who ten months before my own encounter with the police was yanked from her car and viciously beaten by a transphobic mob in Dallas, Texas. Black motorists have long known the dangers of “driving while Black.” But for me, as long as I lean into my whiteness and my femininity (not too much, not campy, just demure and polite) I know that I will be safe from violence. This performance of white womanhood is a privilege that I routinely use as a white trans person to keep me safe. While I often hear white trans folks talk about “passing” privilege, i.e. passing as cis, it is even more important that we talk about our whiteness.



Tatiana:

I am a Virginian. I am Black with a white mother. I am non-binary with effeminate features. I am conscious of consistently being on the precipice of privilege. I could, as many mixed-race people choose to do, reject my Blackness. It is at times admittedly easier to allow people to label me as a woman rather than trans. My privilege is that my identity is conflated with whiteness and womanhood. My survival depends on this oversimplification and my ability to appeal to white supremacist, heteronormative, patriarchal structures that fester inside of me until I, like the rest of the world, might explode. This June, as Black people cried out for justice all over the world, it was more apparent to me than ever that Pride is not felt equally in the LGBTQ community.

Like many queer and trans Black people, I am unsure where I belong. I often feel I have to choose between my transness and my Blackness.

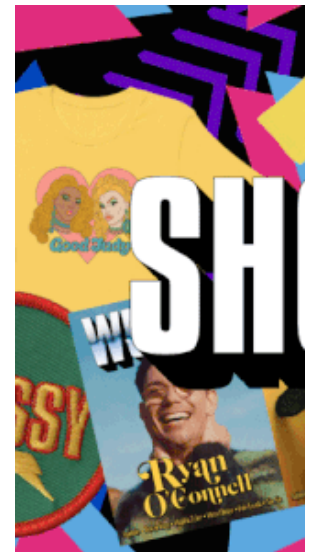


I use my privilege and my voice to empower those who suffer more than myself. I am consistently isolated by LGBTQ and feminist movements that disregard intersectionality with ideologies supposedly outside of race. When it comes to Black liberation I hesitate to broadcast my trans identity. Sometimes I fear that laying my work at the mercy of society's transphobia and anti-Blackness will harm the progress I am working to achieve. It is in these moments, when my Black comrades are just as disempowered to take a stand as I am, that I genuinely wonder if white LGBTQ allies will show up in defense of me.

In the South, LGBTQ organizations and spaces historically emerged in the leftover spaces of Jim Crow-era segregation. Gay male narrators in a [local oral history project](#) remember Roanoke's first gay bar as an all-white space in the 1960s. Roanoke's historic gay neighborhood, Old Southwest, was nearly 99 percent white in the early 1970s. [Decades of gay and lesbian newsletters](#) published since the 1970s in Roanoke almost never discussed issues of race. We live with the legacies of this history—of movements and spaces made “gay” but never actually made for Black people.

Black Queer people, especially Black trans women, are disproportionately vulnerable to the violence wrought by systemic racism and overpolicing, and in most cases their white LGBTQ allies have done little to use their privileges to protect Black queer lives.

Over the past month many LGBTQ organizations have spoken up in solidarity with Black Lives Matter. But solidarity is the wrong framework. Solidarity assumes that LGBTQ people are allies to (and thus separate from) the Movement for Black Lives. The reality is that these movements are intimately intertwined. White LGBTQ people are complicit in the very systems of white supremacy that harm Black LGBTQ people. Solidarity assumes a mythical distance between queer liberation and Black



ARCHIVE



liberation and erases the very existence of Black LGBTQ people within queer spaces. Rather than solidarity, LGBTQ groups must adopt an intersectional lens that acknowledges how white supremacy operates within our communities. We must affirm that systemic racism is an LGBTQ issue just as much as it is a Black issue.

Black queer women have been saying this for decades. The Combahee River Collective released a [manifesto](#) in the 1970s on how Black queer women experience the intersections of race, gender, and sexuality. They laid out the political implications of this understanding for supporting and challenging Black, feminist, and gay movements. During the 1960s and '70s, scholar, activist, and lesbian [Angela Davis](#) transformed abolition to target the country's punitive justice system as a continuation of slavery—a principle which the Black Lives Matter Movement holds at its core. Audre Lorde, in her essay "[The Uses of Anger](#)," writes of how well meaning white women often become defensive when Black women suggest that their womanhood is always racialized. White LGBTQ people similarly get defensive when told that their queerness and transness is racialized. Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi, three Black queer women, founded the Black Lives Matter movement with [an explicit call for supporting and uplifting Black queer and trans lives](#). White LGBTQ people who think that race is not an LGBTQ issue need to at least start by acknowledging and learning this history.

White queer people can also do so much more. White LGBTQ people need to hold other white queer folks accountable and discuss the racial privileges inherent in their identities. There are structured spaces for doing this work without burdening queer people of color: join a SURJ ([Showing Up for Racial Justice](#)) chapter or get involved with SONG ([Southerners on New Ground](#)) whose "[Race Traitors](#)" workshop is particularly geared toward white queer people committed to anti-racism. White-majority LGBTQ organizations also need to make more explicit acknowledgement and analysis of their own racist pasts and the steps they will take to cut off the arteries of those legacies. White-majority

LGBTQ organizations must redistribute resources into the hands of Black queer and trans people, and hire Black LGBTQ people to lead their organizations. Without doing this work, the LGBTQ community further cultivates the harm of white supremacy. Finally, anti-racism should be an integral component of the mission of all LGBTQ organizations. These are not new ideas, but they represent new work for many small and regional LGBTQ organizations across the South.

Just as the feminist movement is still reckoning with its ugly history of centering white womanhood as a universal womanhood, the LGBTQ movement must also acknowledge the ways in which it has long articulated gender and sexuality-based oppression as universal while erasing distinctions of race and class. The mainstream LGBTQ community often defines identity within the same parameters as western, white supremacist society, neglecting how gender and sexuality manifest in unique ways in non-white communities and in pre- and post-colonial cultures. The language of LGBTQ people as a “minority” is extremely problematic without an intersectional approach to how white LGBTQ people experience marginalization in ways always mediated by their whiteness. Both oppression and privilege are nuanced. Just as Black LGBTQ people are more vulnerable to the harm inflicted by white supremacy, white LGBTQ people benefit from it. Solutions such as solidarity or diversity and inclusivity still center whiteness as the default, and for true healing and progress in the LGBTQ community to occur, the perspectives of Black queer people must be at the forefront when it comes to defining the future of LGBTQ communities.

Black LGBTQ people are leading the way. Yet the work of white queer folks confronting their own racism is still raw and nascent and fifty years too late. Now that Pride month is over, let us commit ourselves to doing this important work for the next eleven months and beyond.

—

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WHITE SUPREMACY – BLACK – NO JUSTICE NO PEACE – GREGORY SAMANTHA ROSENTHAL – TATIANA DURANT – ROANOKE – BLM – LGBTQ – COMMUNITY – PRIDE – QUEER – MOVEMENT – SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA – PROTEST



LOUDSPEAKER:: POETRY BY WO CHAN

REVIEW: CICEY BELLE BLAIN LYRICALLY
EXPLORES BLACK & QUEER SELF-LOVE IN
“BURNING SUGAR”



SCIENCE | UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Weathering: How racism impacts the body on a cellular level

Clare Roth
04/11/2024

We know health outcomes frequently differ based on race. The 'Weathering theory' could help explain why, at least in the US.



Although it is not new, the concept of weathering gained interest in 2020 after the death of George Floyd and amid a pandemic that laid bare race-based health inequities

Image: Christoph Soeder/dpa/picture alliance

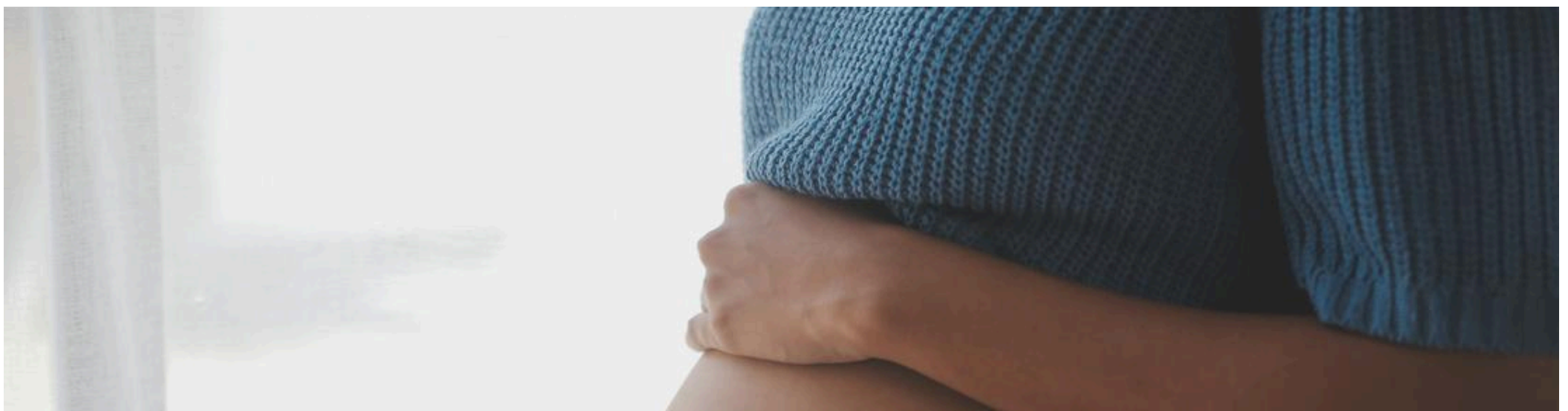
Rocks, soils and minerals — the elements that make up the land we live upon — have no protection from the weather. They are struck by lightning, flooded by rains and baked by blistering sunlight. This natural process, which represents the gradual chipping away of the surface of our Earth, is called weathering.

Over the past two decades, and particularly in the past few years, public health researchers have been using this term in a different context: to describe a process they say occurs in the bodies of Black people who grow up in white American society.

The theory is gaining traction — data from 2021 found deaths due to Covid-19 were 2.8 times higher in Black/African Americans compared to whites, and [studies](#) [↗](#) have linked this to weathering.

The term "weathering" was first used in the context of public health by Arline Geronimus, now a professor of Health Behavior and Health Education at the University of Michigan in the US. While facilitating [research](#) [↗](#) on teenage mothers in the 1990s, she came upon an unexpected finding: babies born to Black mothers in their 20s and 30s had more [health complications](#) than those born to mothers in their teens. This was the opposite of what was observed in white women, who tended to have better outcomes if they gave birth in their 20s and 30s compared to Black women.

Geronimus concluded that the health of Black women deteriorated more quickly than their white counterparts because of racism-induced stress experience in their daily lives.





Geronimus found that Black teenage mothers had better health outcomes than Black mothers in their 20s

Image: Armsamsung/Pond5 Images/IMAGO

'Wear and tear' on the body

Years of research appear to have given credibility to her theory.

Around the same time as Geronimus's initial findings, researchers who study chronic stress introduced the concept of allostatic load, which refers to the 'wear and tear' to the body caused by stress.

A person's allostatic load can be quantified by measuring their levels of a series of different indicators: cortisol, dehydroepiandrosterone (DHEA), epinephrine, norepinephrine, cholesterol, glycosylated hemoglobin, resting systolic and diastolic blood pressure, body mass index, and waist-hip ratio. A high allostatic load is linked to many health problems like [migraine](#) and heart disease.

The higher a person's score, the more likely they are to experience negative health effects. In a 2006 [paper](#) [↗](#), Geronimus and her team set out to measure peoples' allostatic load scores.

They found that the differences in these scores between Black and white and wealthy and poor participants started to widen in their early 20s and grew largest between the ages of 35 and 64. Blacks had higher scores across the board than white participants.

What backed up Geronimus' theory was that these differences could not be connected to poverty: Black women, regardless of income status, were most likely to have high scores, before poor white men and women and poor Black men.

The 'caps' that indicate aging

In recent years, scientists have also started measuring telomeres to better understand weathering. Telomeres are "caps" on the ends of our chromosomes that play a key role in the process of aging. They protect our chromosomes during cell division, like the plastic on the ends of a shoelace protects it from unraveling.

The more our cells divide, the shorter the telomeres become. Once the telomeres are gone, the cell division process ends and they die. Once that happens, our tissues start to age.

That's why the length of our telomeres is relevant for studying aging. The longer they are, the longer it takes for us to experience the detrimental side effects of getting old.

A 2014 [Harvard study](#) [↗](#) found that although telomere length in young Black adults in their 20s was longer than those of their white counterparts, lengths evened out among 50-60-year-olds, indicating the Black adults were aging at a quicker rate. Among 80-year-olds, whites had longer telomeres than the Black participants.





Although Black people often have longer telomeres when they are young, as they get older, their telomeres shorten to the same length as, or smaller than, their white counterparts

Image: Yuri Arcurs/Zoonar II/Imago Images

Weathering across the globe?

Most of the research on weathering so far has been conducted in the US, meaning it's difficult to generalize the theory to other countries round the world.

But Devon Payne-Sturges, a professor at the Maryland Institute for Applied Environmental Health, said it is likely that weathering is occurring "anywhere where you have this social hierarchy where you have a group of people who are discriminated against, put at the bottom of society, more marginalized," she said. "I'm afraid that's just about everywhere."

One thing that could be preventing the concept of weathering from study at an international level could be a lack of data on race. In the US, health data accessed by researchers includes sections that denote race. That is not the case in countries [like Germany](#).

Although it took time — some three decades — to catch on in the US (Geronimus published a book that received widespread media attention in 2023), the concept of weathering could, with more research, help explain race-based health disparities across the globe.

That information could lead to conclusions on how to [improve health](#) in minority groups. One [study](#)  is already on its way: A survey of indigenous mothers in New Zealand found that those who said they had experienced an "ethnically motivated physical attack" had children with shorter telomeres than mothers who didn't report such an attack.

The paper noted that conversely, mothers who had positive feelings about their culture gave birth to babies with "significantly longer" telomeres.

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Allostatic Load and Its Impact on Health: A Systematic Review: <https://karger.com/pps/article/90/1/11/294736/Allostatic-Load-and-Its-Impact-on-Health-A>

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The weathering hypothesis and the health of African-American women and infants: evidence and speculations: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/1467758/>

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Edited by: Fred Schwaller

Equity Case Analysis Process

Step 1: Identify biases and inequities presented in the case

Step 2: Take stock of various perspectives, trying to remember the full variety of community members, including those who are involved directly and those who are involved at more of a distance.

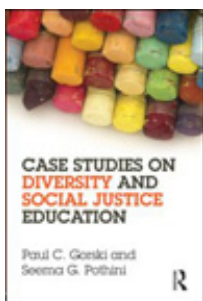
Step 3: Consider possible challenges and opportunities, paying special attention to biases and inequities and how the situation presents an opportunity for dialogue and positive change, not just for those immediately involved, but for the institution.

Step 4: Imagine equitable and just outcomes, remembering that *equity* requires a fair distribution of opportunity and access—a resolution of the bias or inequity, not just a resolution of interpersonal conflict.

Step 5: Brainstorm immediate-term responses, thinking specifically about how you might respond immediately in order to overcome challenges and maximize opportunities.

Step 6: Brainstorm longer-term policy and practice adjustments, keeping in mind that school and classroom conflict usually are symptoms of bigger structural inequities.

Step 7: Craft a plan of action, including both immediate-term and long-term components.



Designed by Paul C. Gorski (gorski@edchange.org) and Seema Pothini (sg1515@hotmail.com) for their book, ***Case Studies on Diversity and Social Justice Education*** (Routledge, 2014). Check out the book for this more than 35 school- and classroom based case studies on issues like race, class, (dis)ability, gender, sexual orientation, and religion, along with a more detailed description of the case analysis process.

Summary: The equity literacy case analysis process encourages us to reflect deeply on school and classroom scenarios by considering them within a larger context of unequal access to privilege, power, and equity.

ARJ- Case Study: Training

Your Affiliate has been participating in Anti-Racist training for the entire organization. Not everyone thinks it is necessary to do this training because the majority of your membership is white. After a ½ day training dealing with micro-aggressions, you overhear two people discussing it by the water cooler. One person states that “attending these trainings are a waste of time, and since it doesn’t impact their job directly, they shouldn’t have to attend”.

Table Work: From your perspective (affinity group identification)

1. Identify the problem or problems posed by the case
 - a. What does this scenario look like if you are an Actor?
 - b. What does this scenario look like if you are an Ally?
 - c. What does this scenario look like if you are an Accomplice?
2. Take stock of varying perspectives
 - a. Think about how this scenario affects you personally?
 - b. In turn, how does that inform your response?
 - c. Think about how this scenario would impact you if you are a BIPOC person?
3. Consider possible challenges and opportunities
 - a. Think about how you would represent this employee.
 - b. Think about how you could support/educate this employee? Or could you?
4. Imagine equitable outcomes (beyond the individual member)
5. Brainstorm immediate short-term response
6. Brainstorm longer-term policy and practice adjustments
7. Craft a plan of action
 - a. How could this be addressed through bargaining?
 - b. How could this be addressed through local leader training?
 - c. How can the affiliate be better prepared to address the impact of racist acts on staff members?

ARJ: Case Study – Staff Meeting Microaggression

After your equity audit, you are in a meeting with other UniServ Directors, management, and associate staff, and governance. The meeting includes a discussion about the organization’s revamped hiring practice. The process will discontinue an interview with local leaders and the individual candidates to determine which candidate will “be a good fit”. The equity audit indicated that the use of this interview to determine “fit” from a panel of pre-qualified candidates who have met all of the qualifications for hiring could allow bias into the selection process.

During the discussion at the statewide meeting, it is clear that not everyone is comfortable with the local/cluster/region having a more limited say in who becomes their UD based on the new hiring practice. A UD says, “nobody who talks like that and looks like that would be able to work with my local leaders. They should have the final say in who they want for their UD”.

Table Work: From your perspective (affinity group identification)

1. Identify the problem or problems posed by the comment
 - a. What does this scenario look like if you are an Actor?
 - b. What does this scenario look like if you are an Ally?
 - c. What does this scenario look like if you are an Accomplice?
2. Take stock of varying perspectives
 - a. Think about how this scenario affects you personally?
 - b. In turn, how does that inform your response?
 - c. Imagine how this scenario impacts you if you are BIPOC, a person who grew up in poverty, identify as non-binary, are transgender...
3. Consider possible challenges and opportunities
 - a. Think about how you would respond to this comment?
 - b. Think about how you could address this comment? Or could you?
4. Imagine equitable outcomes
 - a. Think about how this scenario would look if you were a white presenting person/BIPOC person.
5. Brainstorm immediate-term response
6. Brainstorm longer-term policy and practice adjustments
7. Craft a plan of action
 - a. How could this be addressed through bargaining?
 - b. How could this be addressed through local leader training?
 - c. How can the affiliate be better prepared to address the impact of racist acts on staff members?

ARJ: Case Study- NBI: Safe Space for White Members

A group of conservative white members write an NBI asking for the State Affiliate to support creating safe spaces for “white members”. They have followed the appropriate procedures to create the NBI and have it presented at the State RA. Their rationale is that the state affiliate creates safe spaces for other groups (BIPOC, LGBTQIA, etc) so it is only equitable that they get a safe space as well. The NBI is in direct conflict with the values and mission of the State Affiliate.

Table Work: From your perspective (affinity group identification)

1. Identify the problem or problems posed by the case
 - a. What does this scenario look like if you are an Actor?
 - b. What does this scenario look like if you are an Ally?
 - c. What does this scenario look like if you are an Accomplice?
2. Take stock of varying perspectives
 - a. Think about how this scenario affects you personally?
 - b. In turn, how does that inform your response?
 - c. Think about how this scenario would impact you if you are a BIPOC staff person?
3. Consider possible challenges and opportunities
 - a. Think about how you would represent this employee.
 - b. Think about how you could support/educate this employee? Or could you?
4. Imagine equitable outcomes (beyond the individual member)
5. Brainstorm immediate short-term response
6. Brainstorm longer-term policy and practice adjustments
7. Craft a plan of action
 - a. How could this be addressed through bargaining?
 - b. How could this be addressed through local leader training?
 - c. How can the affiliate be better prepared to address the impact of racist acts on staff members?

ARJ: Case Study: Use of Racial Slur

A white male teacher receives a letter of reprimand for referring to a student as the “n” word. They contacted you for representation. The teacher claims that he was working with a student on a math problem, but the student was having a hard time grasping the concept. The student began to get frustrated, and the teacher stated that they would come back and help them when they had taken a few minutes to try and work through the problem again. As the teacher walked away, the student said loudly, “it’s not my fault I can’t solve this problem, you suck as a teacher!”. The teacher muttered under his breath, “I can teach, you “n”s just can’t learn!”

Background:

- The member is a high school math teacher
- The school is located in a predominantly upper-middle class neighborhood
- The class is predominantly white, with only 3 BIPOC students
- The statement was overheard by the student involved as well as the three students sitting at his table.

Table Work: From your perspective (affinity group identification)

1. Identify the problem or problems posed by the case
 - a. What does this scenario look like if you are an Actor?
 - b. What does this scenario look like if you are an Ally?
 - c. What does this scenario look like if you are an Accomplice?
2. Take stock of varying perspectives
 - a. Think about how this scenario affects you personally?
 - b. In turn, how does that inform your response?
 - c. Think about how this scenario would impact you if you are a BIPOC staff person?
3. Consider possible challenges and opportunities
 - a. Think about how you would represent this employee.
 - b. Think about how you could support/educate this employee? Or could you?
4. Imagine equitable outcomes (beyond the individual member)
5. Brainstorm immediate short-term response
6. Brainstorm longer-term policy and practice adjustments
7. Craft a plan of action
 - a. How could this be addressed through bargaining?
 - b. How could this be addressed through local leader training?
 - c. How can the affiliate be better prepared to address the impact of racist acts on staff members?

Antiracist Checklist for Whites adapted from Dr. John Raible's (2009) checklist for antiracist white allies.

Part 1

- ☐ I demonstrate knowledge and awareness of the issues of racism.
- ☐ I continually educate myself about racism and multicultural issues.
- ☐ I recognize my own limitations in doing antiracist work.
- ☐ I raise issues about racism over and over, both in public and in private.
- ☐ I realize "it's not about me." I avoid personalizing racial issues as they are raised in conversation.
- ☐ I can identify racism as it is happening.
- ☐ At meetings, I make sure antiracism is part of the discussion.
- ☐ I can strategize and work in coalition with diverse others to advance antiracist work.
- ☐ I attend to group dynamics to ensure the participation of people of color.
- ☐ I support and validate the comments and actions of people of color and other allies (but not paternalistically)
- ☐ I strive to share power, especially with people from marginalized groups.
- ☐ I take a personal interest in the lives and welfare of individuals of different races.
- ☐ I use my position as a white "insider" to share information with people of color that they may not have access to.
- ☐ I hold high expectations for people of color and for white people.
- ☐ I reach out to initiate personal contact with people of different races.
- ☐ I listen carefully so that I am more likely to understand the needs of people from marginalized groups.
- ☐ I understand enough about people of color's perspectives that when relevant, I can share these perspectives when people of color are not present.
- ☐ I can accept leadership from people of color as well as from white people.
- ☐ I work side by side with people of different races on tasks, projects, and actions.
- ☐ I debrief with people of color to give and get "reality checks" and affirmations after meetings and interactions.
- ☐ I readily accept—with no explanations or "proof" necessary—a person of color's position or perception.
- ☐ I can be present emotionally when individuals need to express feelings about racism.
- ☐ I discuss race and racism with both whites and people of color, and in these discussions I take people of color's perspectives seriously.
- ☐ I take risks in relating to people across lines of difference.
- ☐ I demonstrate shared values with people from various communities, for example, impatience with the pace of change, anger at injustice, etc.
- ☐ I know the private lives of families and friends who are people from different backgrounds.
- ☐ I can relax, socialize, and feel at ease with people of color and with whites.

Part 2

The following are some **problem areas** where individuals sometimes get stuck. These were developed specifically for white individuals. Do any of these apply to you?

- ☐ I am not clear on the labels people of color prefer to use to identify themselves.
- ☐ When people of color point out racism as it is happening, I feel personally attacked.
- ☐ I rely on people of color for education about my own (and institutional) racism.
- ☐ I use meeting time to establish my antiracist credentials (e.g., recounting stories about how I “marched in the Sixties” or about how many friends of color I have).
- ☐ It is important to me to point out examples of “reverse racism” when I see them.
- ☐ I have been told I act in a racist manner without knowing it.
- ☐ I speak for people of color and attempt to explain their positions.
- ☐ I view myself as a mediator between people of color and other whites.
- ☐ I see my role as interpreting the behavior of people of color for other whites.
- ☐ I prefer to spend time and energy dealing with my personal feelings and issues rather than moving the antiracist agenda forward.
- ☐ I intellectualize about the struggle rather than live it daily.
- ☐ I wait for people of color to raise white people’s awareness.
- ☐ I know fewer than five individual peers of color intimately (i.e., adults, not children, or family members, or employees, or co-workers).

While a checklist may seem simplistic, many will find that these guidelines are very difficult to put into action and take on-going commitment and practice. We will make mistakes but cannot give up.

Dr. Raible explains his list by stating, “The main goal is to develop relationships of solidarity, mutuality, and trust, rooted in a praxis of intentional antiracist thought, action, and reflection. When I observe people consistently taking the above steps (in Part 1), I recognize that they ‘get it’ when it comes to race and racism.”