

Participant Handouts

Advancing Racial Justice through Union Work



Participant Handouts

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.

Lead Contacts:

Campaign Lab Manager
Kyle Serrette kserrette@nea.org

Academy Coordinator
Ellen Holmes eholmes@nea.org

Academy Logistics
Karla Medina kmedina@nea.org

Director NEA Center for Social Justice
Hilario Benzon hbenzon@nea.org

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?

PRONOUN GUIDE

This is a guide for NEA leaders, members and staff to better understand and use pronouns in a respectful way for all NEA meetings and communications. Please be aware that some of this advice may not be appropriate for your school community, depending on current state law; check with your state or local affiliate regarding questions related to state law or school district policies.

PRONOUNS

Pronouns are words that function in the place of a name. Instead of saying, “My brother Steve is coming to pick me up in Steve’s car, and we are going to Steve’s favorite restaurant,” a person could instead say, “his car/his favorite restaurant.”

In English, we have two sets of gendered pronouns: “she/her/hers” and “he/him/his” are pronouns that are attached to a particular gender. Men/males have typically been referred to using he/him/his and women/females by using she/her/hers. We likely all grew up assuming we knew someone’s pronouns just by looking at them, or knowing their gender, but that isn’t the case. In an effort to be more affirming of all, it is important to get out of the habit of assuming pronouns.

Plural pronouns are becoming more widely accepted as gender-neutral singular pronouns. It is grammatically correct to use singular ‘they’ to refer a singular person of unknown gender or to a non-binary person who does not feel gendered pronouns work for them.

Here is a list of the most common pronouns used. Always use the pronouns of the individual once they have told you what pronouns they use. You may see more pronouns outside of this list.

Subjective	Objective	Possessive Adjective	Possessive Pronouns	Reflexive	Pronunciation
She	Her	Her	Hers	Herself	
He	Him	His	His	Himself	
They	Them	Their	Theirs	Themselves	
Ze	Zim	Zir	Zirs	Zirself	Zay or Zee Zim (rhymes with them) Zir (rhymes with their)

Some people also use more than one set of pronouns. For example, “she/they” or “he/them.” When someone uses more than a single set of pronouns, it could mean that they are okay with either one being used, or that they accept both. Do not assume that they can be used interchangeably. Kindly ask if the person uses one set in particular contexts versus another.

TIPS ON USING GENDER-NEUTRAL PRONOUNS

Chances are that you’ve used ‘they, them, or their’ as neutral pronouns when you weren’t aware of a person’s gender. These pronouns are gender-neutral and are used by some transgender and gender non-conforming people. Recognizing that it’s natural to do this can help when a nonbinary person asks you to use gender-neutral pronouns for them. The following are examples when you might have used gender-neutral pronouns without realizing:

- ▶ You’re at an event, and someone left a key for you, but you can’t find it. You might ask, “Where did they leave the key?”
- ▶ You are awaiting a delivery from a postal worker and wonder, “When are they dropping off the mail?”
- ▶ Someone gives your organization a gift, but you didn’t meet the donor. You might say, “Please tell them I said thank you!”

SHARE YOUR PRONOUNS

If we want to get out of the habit of assuming pronouns, we need to learn and let people introduce their pronouns.

Role model your pronouns before inviting everyone to introduce theirs.

"Hi, my name is Meg and I use she/her/hers pronouns. Could everyone please go around and share their name and pronouns."

Explain what pronouns are and why you're asking people to introduce theirs before you do.

"Hey everyone! So during introductions we are going to introduce our name and pronouns. Pronouns are words that we use to replace names, like she/her/hers, he/him/his, or they/them/theirs. I want to make sure that we are referring to each other in the way that feels most accurate, so we are going to be going around and if everyone could share their name and pronouns that'd be great!"

A common question and fear that we may have when getting to know someone who has recently changed pronouns or who uses singular they as their pronoun, is that we will make a mistake and misgender the person.

Apologize briefly and correct yourself. For example, *"And I was saying to someone that he's a really good – sorry, she – that she was a really good painter."*

Do not over apologize. Over apologizing could sound like, *"Oh gosh I am SO SO sorry, I really am. I know it's wrong and this must happen all the time. Gosh pronouns are so difficult!"* You're doing a few things when you over apologize. Instead of the moment being about them, you've made it about your feelings.



IT'S ABOUT RESPECT

Positive experiences of social gender affirmation are critical to the health and well-being of transgender and gender diverse people. Social interactions where a person is addressed by their correct name and pronouns, consistent with their gender identity, are widely recognized as a basic – yet critical – aspect of gender affirmation. Addressing someone by the wrong name or misgendering them through the use of incorrect pronouns can feel disrespectful, harmful, and even unsafe to the person being misgendered. Misgendering results in marginalization and communicates that a person's identity is not being seen or respected. So, practice using the pronouns a transgender or nonbinary person requests... yes, even plural 'they'. It's a show of respect.

PRONOUN USE IN POLICY

Over the last few years, the transgender community has asked allies to help normalize offering pronouns during introductions, in education, and the workplace to indicate an understanding of trans identities and show that they are a safe person. As gender identity and gender expression do not always align, offering pronouns is a way to create a space where people do not need to rely on assumptions of others' gender.

However, not everyone is comfortable sharing their pronouns. Some transgender, nonbinary, or questioning individuals might not be "out" yet or ready to let others know of their status. Others might object to sharing for any number of personal reasons. Respect those who offer to share their pronouns and those who do not. No one should be forced to comply, as long as they simply skip the practice and do not mock or belittle it.

Offering your pronouns is the simplest way to put things into practice. When you meet someone new, you can say, "Hi, my name is ____ and my pronouns are ____." If you wear a nametag or ID badge, you can add your pronouns to it. If you cannot alter your official nametag, it is easy to find pronoun pins in stores and online. When you participate in an online meeting, you can change your name to include your pronouns in parentheses to the side.

For more information on pronouns and additional LGBTQ+ Resources, please visit the following:

NEA LGBTQ+ Resources | NEA EdJustice | Why Share Your Pronouns?

Levels of Racism

Individual	
Internalized Racism lies within individuals. These are our private beliefs and biases about race and racism, influenced by our culture.	Interpersonal Racism occurs between individuals. Once we bring our private beliefs about race into our interactions with others, we are now in the interpersonal realm.
Systemic	
Institutional Racism occurs within institutions and systems of power. It is the norms, policies and practices that are structured into political, societal and economic institutions that have the net effect of imposing oppressive conditions and denying rights, opportunity, and equality to identifiable groups based upon race or ethnicity.	Structural Racism is racial bias across institutions and society. It's the cumulative and compounded effects of an array of factors that systematically privilege white people and disadvantage people of color.

Key Points to Remember

Key Point 1 - There are not hard and fast lines between the levels - and changing one can affect another.

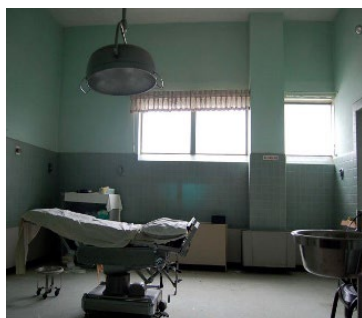
Key Point 2 - The way to effect change is by addressing institutional and structural racism - this is where injustice lives.

Expressions of Racism Exercise

INSTRUCTIONS: Please review the cases below and as a group, have a discussion on each case and decide which level of racism each case belongs to. Please ensure there is consensus in your group in your answers.

Scenario #1: Racism in Medicine

Expression of Racism:



Racism has influenced U.S. health care in the past and continues to do so today. The most shameful chapters in American history involve the U.S. government funding studies that allowed poor black men in Alabama to succumb to syphilis or Guatemalan prison inmates, mental health patients and soldiers to be afflicted with the disease and other sexually transmitted infections.

Government agencies also played a role in sterilizing black women in North Carolina, Puerto Rican women and Native American women.

Reflections:

Scenario #2: Assault in Charlottesville

Expression of Racism:

Posted Aug. 14, 2017 5:58 pm

Photographer captures apparent assault in Charlottesville garage



Zach D Roberts
@zdroberts



Earlier in a parking garage in #Charlottesville - white supremacists beat this black kid w/poles. [Photo for by @zdroberts @NationofChange]

7:52 PM - Aug 12, 2017

1,924 20,932 11,023

Reflections:

Scenario #3: The Doll Test**Expression of Racism:**

In the 1940s, psychologists Kenneth and Mamie Clark designed and conducted a series of experiments known colloquially as “the doll tests” to study the psychological effects of segregation on African-American children.

Drs. Clark used four dolls, identical except for color, to test children’s racial perceptions. Their subjects, children between the ages of three to seven, were asked to identify both the race of the dolls and which color doll they prefer. A majority of the children preferred the white doll and assigned positive characteristics to it. The Clarks concluded that “prejudice, discrimination, and segregation” created a feeling of inferiority among African-American children and damaged their self-esteem.

Reflections:**Scenario #4: Looking Death Worthy****Expression of Racism:**

According to a 2006 report, *Looking Deathworthy*, defendants with the most stereotypically Black facial features (i.e. dark skin, large/full lips, etc.) served up to 8 months longer in prison for felonies than defendants who possessed the least stereotypical features.



In this same study, researchers investigated the role of race in capital sentencing, and in particular, whether the race of the defendant or victim influences the likelihood of a death sentence. The study concludes that in cases involving a White victim, the more stereotypically Black a defendant is perceived to be, the more likely that person is to be sentenced to death.

Reflections:

Scenario #5: Biracial Boy Pushed Off Table

Expression of Racism:

Associated Press September 12, 2017

CLAREMONT, N.H. — Teenagers in New Hampshire taunted an 8-year-old biracial boy with racial slurs and then pushed him off of a picnic table with a rope around his neck, injuring him, the boy's family said.

The child was treated at a hospital for cuts to his neck following the near-hanging Aug. 28 in Claremont, the boy's grandmother, Lorrie Slattery, told the Valley News of West Lebanon, N.H. He has since been released and has returned to school in Claremont.



Slattery said the children were in a backyard when some of the teens got on the table and grabbed a rope that held a tire swing. It's not clear how the rope got around the child's neck, but Slattery said the teens pushed him off the table. No adults are believed to have witnessed the incident.

An expert on abuse who spoke to the boy at the hospital said he swung from his neck three times before being able to remove the rope, Slattery said. None of the teens came to his aid, she said.

Reflections:

Scenario #6: The School-To-Prison Pipeline

Expression of Racism:

A significant number of Chicago students are pushed into the path of juvenile and adult prisons as a result of harsh disciplinary policies and high stakes testing. By harsh disciplinary policies, we mean excessive security procedures and police involvement as well as the overuse of suspensions and expulsion for minor infractions. These policies feed the "School to Prison Pipeline", sometimes also called the "Schoolhouse to Jailhouse Track". Research suggests that students of color, in particular African American students, are disproportionately impacted by these punitive policies.



As Matt Kelley has written: "Whether or not they realize it, the punishments school officials hand out can literally determine — and derail — the path of a student's life. Which makes it even more critical that when schools make these decisions, they hand out discipline that's fair."

The "School to Prison Pipeline" describes a reality in which many young people are being pushed OUT of schools through zero tolerance policies, suspension, expulsion, discouragement and high stakes testing requirements; and INTO the juvenile and adult legal system. These zero tolerance policies involve the police in minor incidents and often lead to arrests, juvenile detention referrals, and even criminal charges and incarceration.

Reflections:

Scenario #7: Woke Girls**Expression of Racism:**

Excerpts from an article written by educator Mickey Maki, creator of Woke Girls. <https://medium.com/embrace-race/woke-girls-pushing-back-against-internalized-racism-in-children-of-color-ac048a599ab8>

Before school started every morning a 1st-grader student in my class, with very dark skin would visit me so I could apply cocoa butter lotion to his skin. I assumed it was just about the lotion, but when I tried to give him a bottle he could keep in his classroom, he cried and told me I was the only one who thought his skin was beautiful.



Just down the hall in the 3rd-grade ESL class, two Mexican American girls got into a fight. The cause? One girl called the other a “little Mexican girl.”

It made me sad to see that little had changed since I was a child myself, when I was policed for not being black enough, while simultaneously taught that being black meant fewer options and bad hair.

Besides modeling self-love and loving my students, I made an effort to fill my classroom library with books that would support my students to be who they already were. That was quite the challenge.

Reflections:**Scenario #8: Doorway To A Better Life?****Expression of Racism:**

A state government agency decides that low-income housing must be built, which will house low-income Blacks and Latinos. The agency fails to look for locations near jobs and important infrastructures, like schools, decent public transportation, and other services. In fact, it is built in a poor, mostly Black and Latino part of town.



Often times the government locates the housing where it will have the least opposition. White neighborhoods tend to oppose public and affordable housing. Resources, whether public or private, often follow whites who flee urban problems for white suburbs.

When the housing is built, the school district, already under-funded, has new residents too poor to contribute to its tax base. The local government spends its limited resources on transportation to connect largely white, well-to-do suburban commuters to their downtown jobs.

The public housing residents are left isolated, in under-funded schools, with no transportation to job centers. Whole communities of people of color lose opportunities for a good education, quality housing, living wage jobs, services and support-systems.

In this town, no one individual stands in front of the doorway to a better life and says, “No Blacks/Latinos/ Native Americans/Asians allowed.” Race, however, is the unspoken motivator behind a series of actions which lead to decisions about where to place the walls.

Reflections:

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?

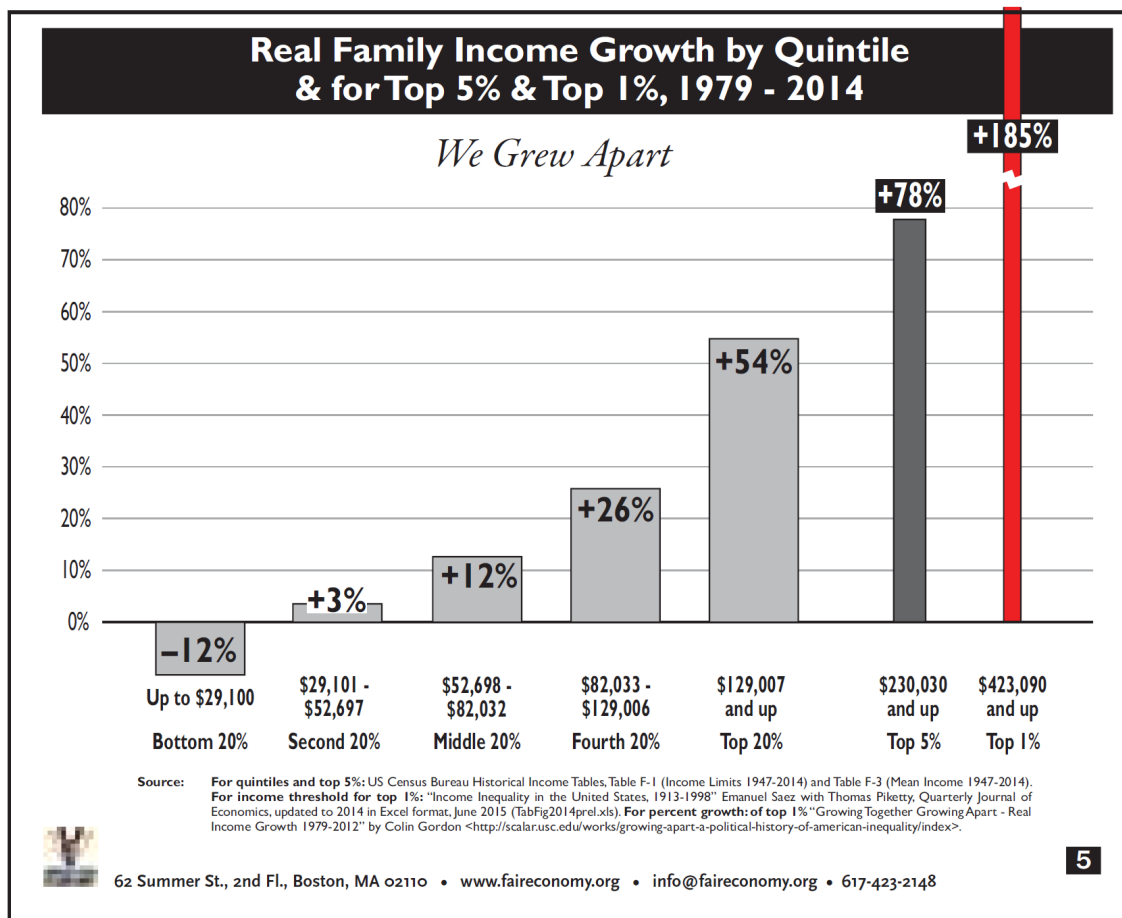
5. As a UniServ, Organizers, or Leader, what is your role in interrupting the instances of racism that you recognize?

Thinking About Systems of Injustice

Economic System
Who are the powerholders?
What are the unjust policies and systems being used?
Who is being oppressed?
What is the overall impact on society?
Housing System or other systems - Environment, Food Production, etc.
Who are the powerholders?
What are the unjust policies and systems being used?
Who is being oppressed?
What is the overall impact on society?
How are these injustices linked to the work of your Union?

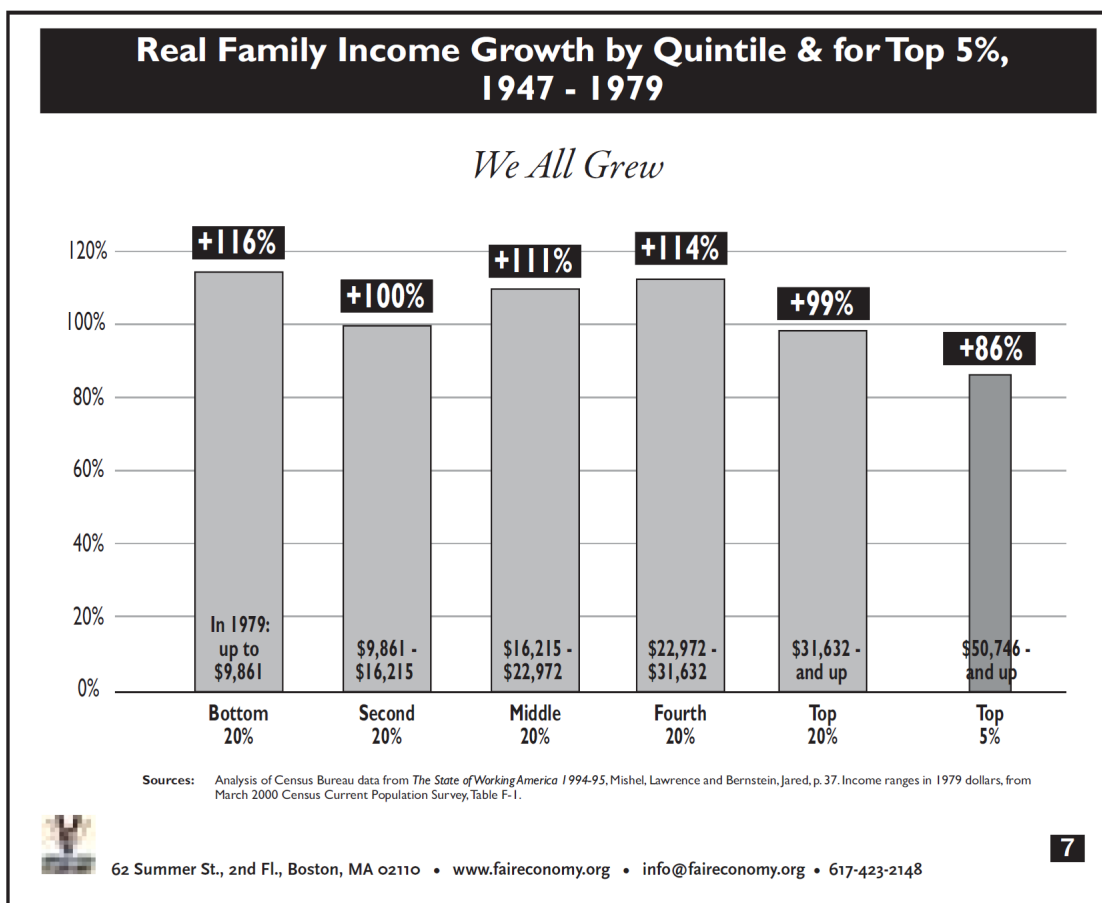
Economic System

Thinking about money...	
What is wealth?	What is income?
Are you in control over your income and your wealth? In other words, can you increase them?	



Questions for Reflection:

Which of the quintiles are my members in? What about my ESP members? Other thoughts....

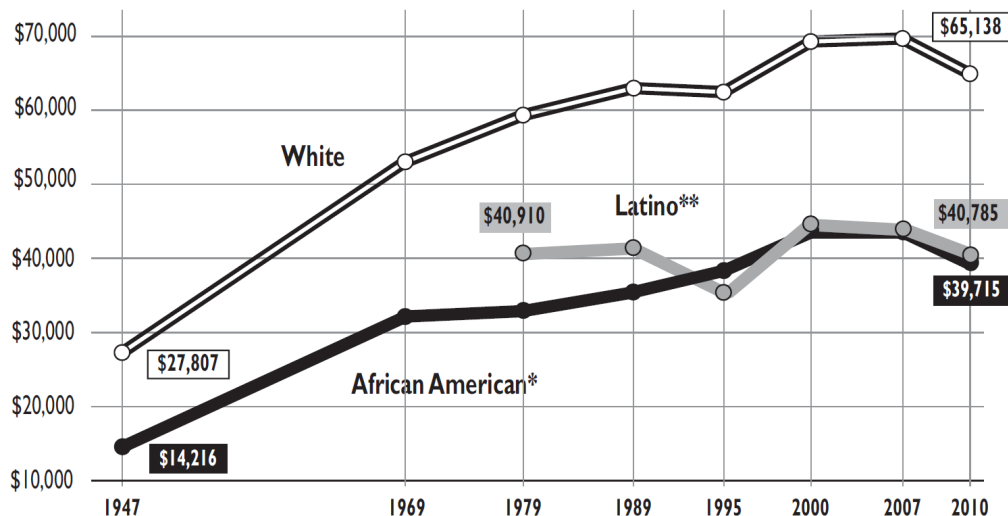


Questions for reflection:

What was the difference in politics and policies between the first time period and this one?

Median Family Income by Race, 1947-2010

Racial Income Inequality Persists



Source: Analysis of Current Population Survey Annual Social and Economic Supplement *Historical Income Tables* (Table F-5) in *The State of Working America* <<http://stateofworkingamerica.org/chart/swa-income-table-2-5-median-family-income/>> Economic Policy Institute. All income in 2011 dollars.
 * Prior to 1967, data for African Americans included all "non-whites." **The Census Bureau uses the term "Hispanic." We prefer "Latino." Persons of "Latino" origin may be of any race.



62 Summer St., 2nd Fl., Boston, MA 02110 • www.faireconomy.org • info@faireconomy.org • 617-423-2148

8

Reflections and Connections:

What are the expressions of racism apparent in the economic system?

Income and Wealth Disparity

Thinking about money...	
What is wealth?	What is income?
How is wealth different from income and why is this important?	
What is Per Capital Income?	
What is Negative Wealth and Why is this Important?	
What are Income Quintiles and why do economists use them?	
What is Actual v Perceived Wealth ?	

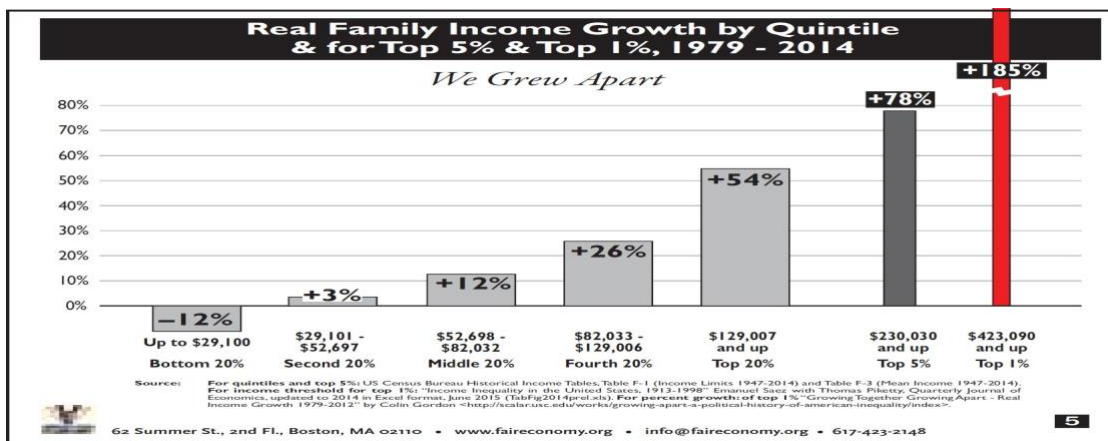
Questions for Reflection:

Which of the quintiles are my members in? What about my ESP members? Other thoughts....

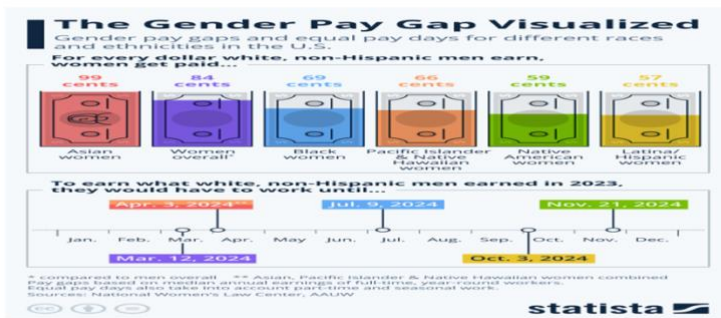
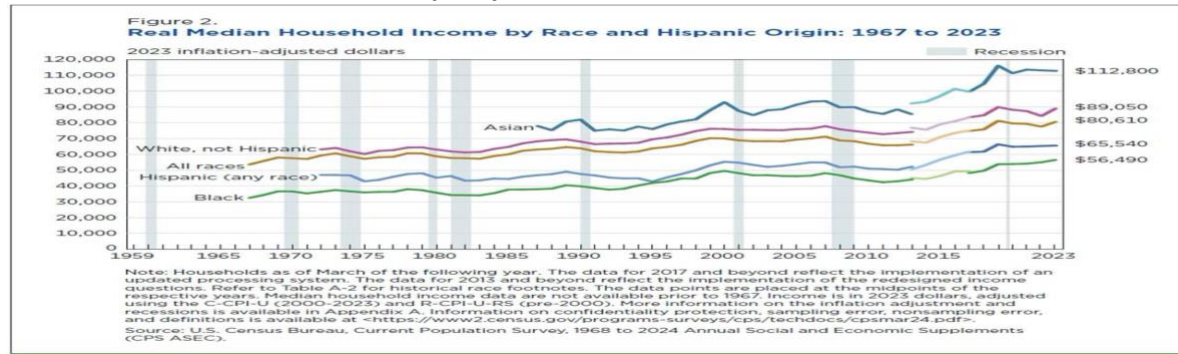
We All Grew Together-----We All Grew Apart

Questions for Reflection:

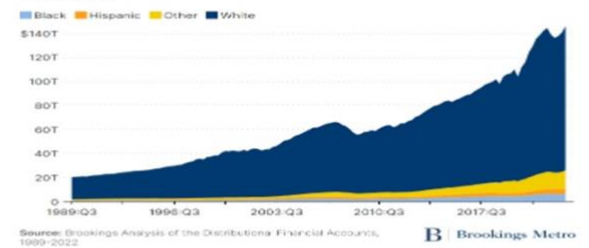
What was the difference in politics and policies between the first time period and the second time period



The Trends Wealth and Income Disparity Continue

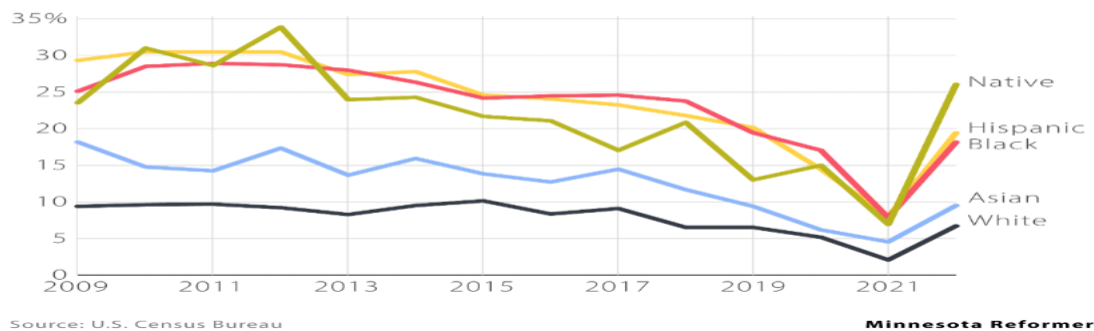


Total household wealth grew in 2022, but white households still hold the vast majority



Child poverty by race

Supplemental measure of child poverty rate, 2009 -- 2022



Reflections and Connections:

What are the expressions of racism and gender inequity by race apparent in the economic system?

What are some policy solutions that might change this racial inequity disparity trajectory?

Practice the Shift

From...	To...
Blame – Who's a racist?	Causes – What is causing the racial inequity
Intentions – What did they mean? What was their attitude?	Effects – What were the actions? What are the Impacts?
Prejudice- What beliefs made them do it?	Systems – What institutions are responsible?
Grievances- How can we fix what happened?	Solutions- What are proactive strategies?

Which scenario are you working on?

What are some questions that were particularly useful in shifting your focus to the systems level?

Reflections, Connections and Notes to Remember

Types of Oppression

Race	
Class	
Gender	
Sexual Orientation	
Sex	
Religion	
Age	
Ability	
Immigrant Status	
Language	

Matrix of Oppression*

Social Identity Categories	Privileged Social Groups	Border Social Groups	Targeted Social Groups	Biases with Power/ "Ism's"
Race	White/Caucasian	Biracial/Multiracial	Asian, Black, Latinx, Native/Indigenous	Racism
Sex	Assigned Male at birth	Intersex	Assigned Female at birth	Sexism
Gender	Gender Conforming (Cisgender), Identify as Male or Female	Gender Ambiguous, Gender Queer, Agender	Transgender, Gender Queer, Intersex, Gender Ambiguous, Agender	Transphobia/Trans* Oppression
Sexual Orientation	Heterosexual	Bisexual, Queer, Lesbian, Gay, Questioning, Aces (Asexual/Aromantic), Polyamorous	Lesbian, Gay, Queer, Questioning, Aces (Asexual/Aromantic), Polyamorous	Heterosexism, Homophobia
Social Status/Class	Wealthy, Upper Class	Middle Class	Working Class, Poor	Classism
Ability/Disability	Temporarily Able-Bodied	People with Temporary Disabilities, and/or "Invisible" Disability	People with Disabilities (<i>often physically identifiable</i>)	Ableism
Religion	Protestant, Christian	Roman Catholic (Historically), Spiritual	Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Atheist	Religious Oppression/Intolerance
Age/Generational	Adults (Ages 35-55)	Young Adults (Ages 25-35)	Elders (55+) and Adolescents/Children (25 and under)	Ageism/Adultism

NOTE*: You cannot enter a room as ONE identity or as one part of yourself. All your identities work together simultaneously. Your world experience is based on the interplay of your identities within multiple dimensions of societal oppression i.e. **intersectionality**. For more information, review the *Intersectionality Self-Guided Learning* section on our [website](#).

Vocabulary term

Definition

Race	A social construct that artificially divides people into distinct groups based on certain characteristics such as physical appearance (particularly skin color) ancestral heritage, cultural affiliation, cultural history, ethnic classification.
Ethnicity	A social construct that artificially divides people into smaller social groups based on characteristics such as shared sense of group membership, values, behavioral patterns, language, political and economic interests, history, and ancestral geographical base.
Nationality	The status of belonging to a particular nation by origin, birth or naturalization.
Prejudice	Preconceived notion or opinion formed beforehand without knowledge of the facts; injury or damage resulting from some judgment or action of another in disregard of one's rights especially detriment to one's legal rights or claims.
Racism	The systemic subordination of members of targeted groups who have relatively little social power in the United States by the members of the agent group who have relatively more social power; subordination is supported by the actions of individuals, cultural norms and values, and the institutional structures and practices of

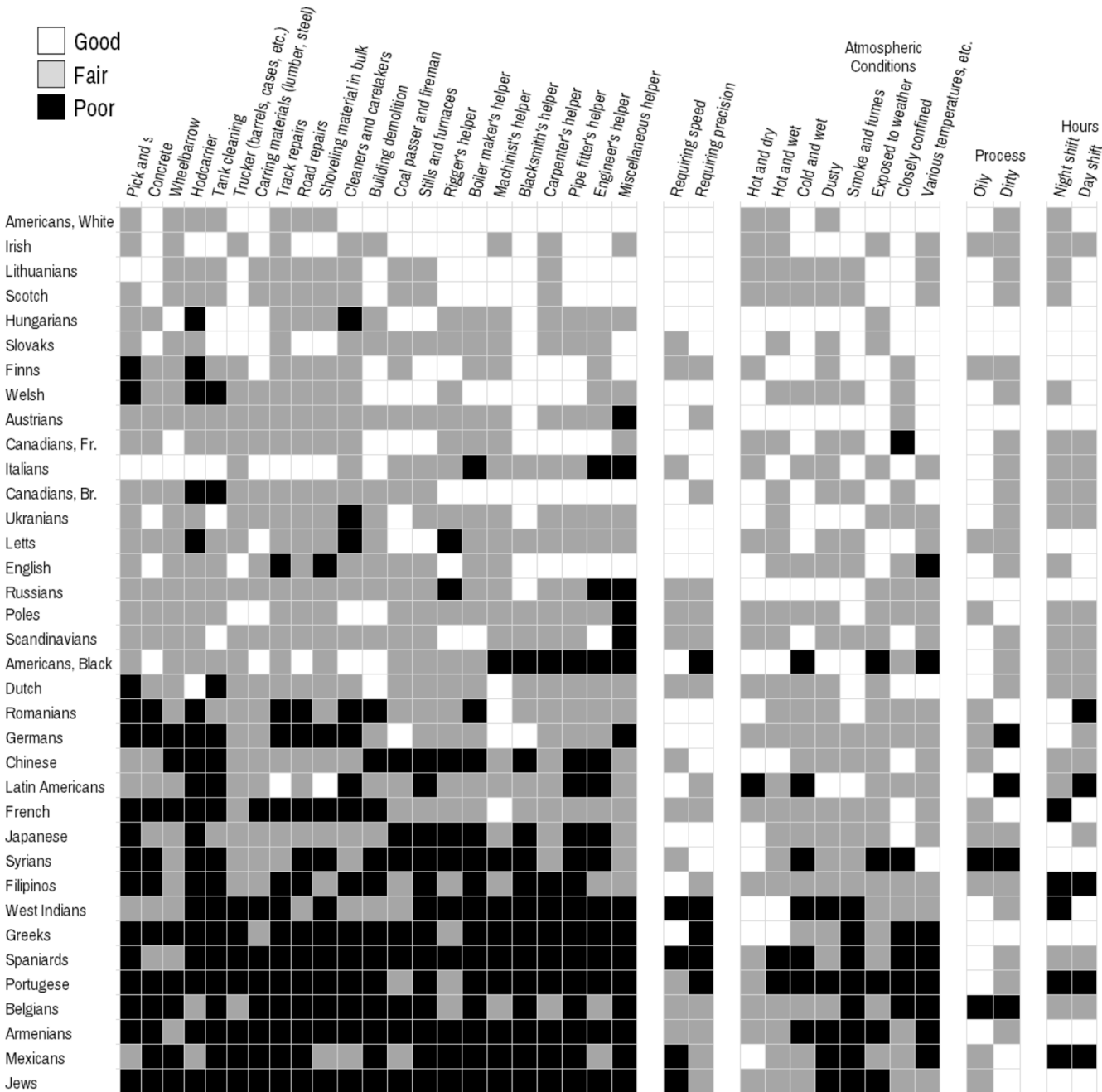
	society; Prejudice + Institutional Power.
Sexism	Attitudes or behavior based on traditional stereotypes of gender roles; discrimination or devaluation based on a person's sex or gender.
Ableism	Discrimination of and social prejudice against people with disabilities based on the belief that typical abilities are superior. At its heart, it is rooted in the assumption that disabled people require 'fixing' and defines people by their disability; classifies entire groups of people as 'less than' and includes harmful stereotypes, misconceptions, and generalizations of people with disabilities.
Nativism	The policy of protecting the interests of established inhabitants against those of immigrants.
Privilege	The concrete benefits of access to resources and social rewards and the power to shape the norms and values of society which people receive, unconsciously and consciously, by virtue of their skin color in our society.
Classism	Unfair treatment or negative opinions about someone based on their economic and social position, especially because they are thought to be from a low social class.

An Example of “Race Science” Run Wild

Employment Fact Sheet of the Central Tube Company, Pittsburgh, 1925: “Racial Adaptability to Various Types of Plant Work”

Source: Image from Pittsburgh Urban League Archive, 1925. Reprinted in John Bodnar, Roger Simon, and Michael Weber, *Lives of Their Own: Blacks, Italians, and 1900-1960* (University of Illinois Press, 1983). Misspellings in original.

Racial Adaptability
to Various Types
of Plant Work



The House We Live In Worksheet

Home Equity	
FHA - Federal Housing Authority	
Redlining	
Segregation	
Generational Wealth	
Suburbs	
Public Policy	

Types of Environmental Racism

Link your picture to one of these terms and describe its impact on Black, Brown and Indigenous communities in the United States? Think about your home, community, workplace and/or union.

1. Air Pollution

People of color and the poor in urban area, who are likely to lack health insurance, are exposed to elevated levels of air pollutants that may lead to greater health impacts from air pollution.

2. Lack of Access to Clean Water

Due to decrease funding on infrastructure and regulation, many communities of color are exposed to high level of contamination of their water sources. Lack of accountability leads to water pipes on low-income neighborhoods to be outdated and containing harmful substances.

3. Climate Migration (Climigration)

As temperature and sea levels have risen due to climate change, governments around the world are facing massive human displacement without any mechanism to address it.

4. Food Production

Low income families, who tend to be disproportionately people of color, are forced to spend a bigger proportion of their income on food than higher income families. Food chain contamination occurs through introduction of toxic substances into the environment.

5. Extreme Weather

Extreme weather events, such as heatwaves, extreme cold, droughts and flood are expected to increase in frequency and intensity due to climate change. Due to increase in the temperature, there is increased risk in cardiovascular deaths (with risks higher for African Americans). Low-income urban neighborhoods and communities of color are particularly vulnerable to because they are often segregated in the inner city, where dark-colored materials, such as asphalt, used for construction absorb heat and do not allow it to dissipate at the same rate as soil, grass, forests, and other less industrial materials. As heatwaves increase, low income families and people of color are less likely to have access to air-conditioning leading to disproportionate risk of heat-related illness and death.

6. Gentrification

Gentrification describes the movement of wealthier individuals and families (often White) into urban, working class neighborhoods. This results in an increase in property values and rents that often displaces low-income, black and brown inhabitants and businesses who are then forced to move to other neighborhoods where environmental degradation is worse.

7. Toxins in the Community and Workplace

The communities beset by hazardous pollution and toxins tend to be poor and disproportionately black, brown and indigenous communities. Due to entrenched segregation, many hazardous waste and toxic facilities end up in these communities, leading residents to experience health and wellness problems. Research describes the analysis of all permitted industrial facilities across the United States who that polluters, including commercial hazardous waste facilities, disproportionately expose communities of color and low-income populations to chemical releases.

White Culture Handout⁴

White Culture defines what is considered normal—it creates the standard for judging values.

For example, think about by whom and how these terms are defined: good parenting, stable family, well-raised child, individual self-sufficiency and effective leadership.

In your organization, what are the characteristics of a good employee? How were you informed? If unwritten rules, how did you learn about them?

White culture privileges a focus on individuals (not groups).

Independence and autonomy are valued and rewarded. An individual is in control of their environment: "You get what you deserve."

In your organization, what is rewarded? Examples: Is there encouragement to compete? Collaborative decision-making? Decisions based on common good?

White culture assigns a higher value to some ways of behaving than others. It often defines the "other" behaviors as dangerous and/or deviant.

For example: Right to comfort. Avoid conflict and emotion. Be polite. Comfort level is defined by whites, and those that cause discomfort or are involved in conflict can be marginalized. Individual acts of unfairness become equal to the pain and discomfort of systemic racism that daily targets people of color (based on Tema Okun's White Supremacy Culture).

In your organization, what behaviors are considered uncomfortable? E.g. conflict, loud voice, crying? How does the organization's culture respond when these behaviors happen?

Decision-making often reflects white cultural assumptions about the primacy of individuals, standards of behavior and the use of power "over" others.

For example: Deciding and enforcing, either/or thinking, those less affected define the problem and solution.

Reflect on the different groups you belong to. Who is included in the decision-making process? What is the rationale? Is the process different on paper vs. in reality?

White culture values certain ways of knowing and not others.

For example: If you can't measure it, it is not of value. Focus on cause and effect relationships and rational linear thinking.

In your organization, who or what informs you that a program/service is working? How is success defined? Who decides what is sufficient time?

⁴ White Culture description comes from many sources, including: Tema Okun, *White Supremacy Culture*, 2001; Judith Katz, *Some Aspects and Assumptions of White Culture in the United States*, 1985; Robette Ann Dias, *Transforming Institutional Values: Revisited*, 2008; Joseph Barnhardt, *Understanding and Dismantling Racism: The Twenty-First Century Challenge to White America*, p. 234, 2007; Barbara Major, Chapter 7—"How does White Privilege Show Up in Foundation and Community Initiatives?", *Flipping the Script: White Privilege and Community Building*, 2005.

Small Group Circle Conversation

Think about a time when race had an impact on your life. Remember that experience for a moment. Now sit silently for a one more minute or so, eyes closed or gazing downward. Who was involved? Friends, family, or strangers? Was this a public or private event? Notice what's going on inside you. In your body, mind, heart, spirit.

(People could make notes on index cards for this reflection and write what you notice— words, phrases, images to reflect the feelings you notice.)

QUESTION ROUND One: (pick one)

- Tell us about the experience. How do you feel when you remember that experience: How do your mind, body, heart, and spirit feel? If you'd like, share what you've written.
- What is the hardest thing about talking about race?

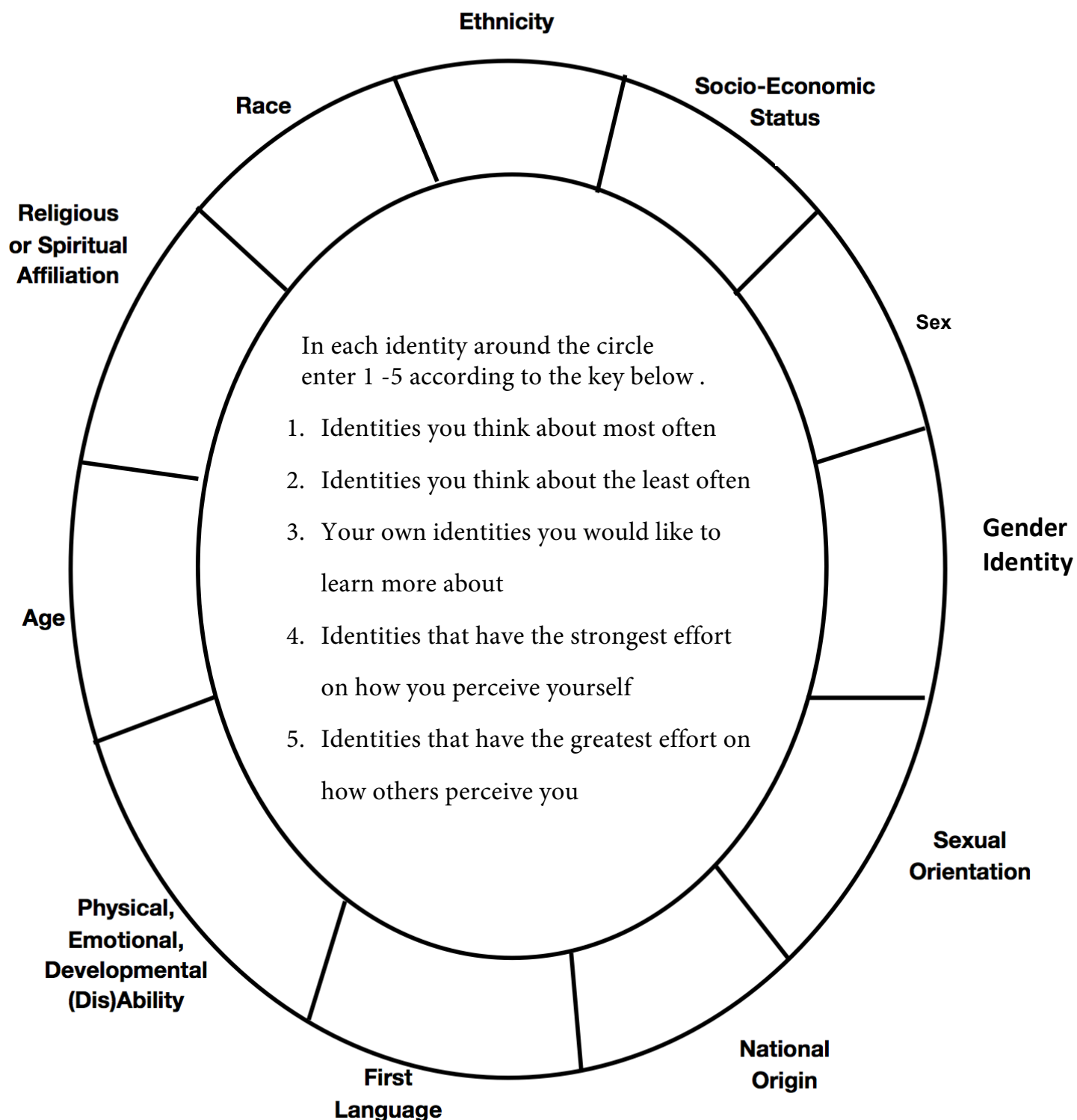
QUESTION ROUND Two: (pick one)

- Do you have conversations about race at your work or school site, and if so, describe; if not, explain.
- What wisdom about race would you want the people at your site to understand? (students, parents, staff)

QUESTION ROUND Three:

- Anything else?

You at Your Intersections



Reflections, Connections and Notes to Remember

Paying Attention to White Culture and Privilege: A Missing Link to Advancing Racial Equity

Gita Gulati-Partee, M.B.A., OpenSource Leadership Strategies, and Maggie Potapchuk, M.Ed., MP Associates

Keywords: Racial equity, white culture, white privilege, capacity building, organizational change

Introduction

Against the backdrop of persistent racial inequities in every region of the country and across nearly every aspect of U.S. life, few foundations can escape reflecting on race and how it relates to their grantmaking priorities, internal operations, and community leadership. While many foundations have chosen to focus on diversity and inclusion, a small but growing number have engaged more deeply with the cumulative impact and current reality of structural racism¹ – the ways that history, culture, public policy, institutional practices, and personal beliefs interact to maintain a racial hierarchy.

These foundations have developed and invested in compelling strategies to address the root causes of systemic racism. Some are asking their grantees to show the impact of their efforts to close racial gaps and reflect the concerns of those most affected and marginalized. Others have reviewed their grantmaking portfolio to examine the impact of their investments in communities of color, while some have increased their grants for community organizing, advocacy, or other policy change interventions to address racial inequities. And some have turned the lens inward to examine barriers that may exist to staff and board members of color, taken on recruitment and retention strategies, and assessed vendors and other policies to overcome access and inclusion issues.

Key Points

- Racial disparities are driven and maintained by public- and private-sector policies that not only disadvantage communities of color but also over-advantage whites. Foundation processes aimed at racial equity change often overlook the privileged side of inequity.
- Through our experience as racial equity practitioners, we have encountered at least three challenges to engaging foundations in exploring white privilege and white culture in their internal and external racial equity work.
- For foundations to work toward racial equity through their philanthropic investments and leadership, they must shine a light on white privilege and white culture both internally and externally.
- This article discusses tools for tackling those challenges: creating a container with intentional group norms, exploring accumulated racial advantages and disadvantages, reflecting on white culture, and caucusing by racial identity.

All of these efforts are important and necessary. But we believe they will prove insufficient to addressing structural racism or fulfilling the promise of racial justice because they ignore or obscure the other half of the problem.

The racial disparities driven and maintained by public- and private-sector policies that many foundations seek to address not only disad-

¹ To learn more about structural racism, see <http://racialequitytools.org/fundamentals/core-concepts#FUN05>

For foundations to work toward racial equity through their philanthropic investments and leadership, they must shine a light on white privilege and white culture both internally and externally.

vantage communities of color but also over-advantage whites. But processes aimed at racial equity change can overlook the privileged side of inequity. For foundations to work toward racial equity through their philanthropic investments and leadership, they must shine a light on white privilege and white culture both internally and externally. This means engaging in dialogue, reflection, and action on racial equity, not only to target their grantmaking and leadership activities to effect equity in the fields they fund, but also to examine and change their staffing, operations, and organizational culture to more closely align with their equity goals and values.

For more than a decade individually, and over the past five years in partnership, the authors – a woman of color and a white woman – have consulted on and supported the racial equity efforts of foundations and other social change organizations. Through our experience as racial equity practitioners, we have encountered at least three challenges to engaging foundations in exploring white privilege and white culture in their internal and external work toward racial equity:

1. Foundation structures often embody dominant (white) culture and white privilege. By definition, this is normalized and difficult to see, prompting resistance and defensiveness about dissecting core ways of doing business.
2. Accustomed to identifying social inequities that focus on the community, it can be chal-

lenging to turn the mirror inward, particularly on sensitive topics like race and privilege. Few organizations are prepared for the emotional responses and conflict that naturally emerge from this work.

3. This change process itself can privilege white people by centralizing and accommodating their learning curve, which is sometimes steep and often lags behind people of color – who might appreciate the change process while also at times feeling marginalized within it due to the priority given to supporting the needs of whites.

This article offers our reflections on these challenges, as well as the following tools for tackling them:

- Create a container with intentional group norms.
- Explore accumulated racial advantages and disadvantages.
- Reflect on white culture.
- Caucus by racial identity.

To be sure, as institutions dedicated to advancing the well-being of human kind and as part of a field whose existence is intertwined with the civil rights movement, many foundations steadfastly commit to racial equity as a value and goal. Leadership institutions, those that seek to address root causes and effect systemic change and leave a lasting legacy of justice, understand that this requires direct reflection on and deconstruction of white privilege and culture.

Throughout this article we will be sharing our observations of patterns of behavior by whites and people of color as we have experienced them in our racial equity capacity building work. We do not aim to oversimplify the human experience. While there is no monolithic response or behavior of all white people or all people of color, and people will demonstrate their own unique behaviors at any given moment, we have observed some patterns that reflect both the existence of and responses to white culture and privilege. We believe these patterns can be instructive, and we

offer them in the spirit of shared learning and reflection with colleagues who are doing this challenging and important work.

Challenge No. 1: White Culture Operates All Around Us, Yet Remains Invisible

By “white culture,” we mean the dominant, unquestioned standards of behavior and ways of functioning embodied by the vast majority of institutions in the United States. Because it is so normalized it can be hard to see, which only adds to its powerful hold. In many ways, it is indistinguishable from what we might call U.S. culture or norms – a focus on individuals over groups, for example, or an emphasis on the written word as a form of professional communication. But it operates in even more subtle ways, by actually defining what “normal” is – and likewise, what “professional,” “effective,” or even “good” is. In turn, white culture also defines what is not good, “at risk,” or “unsustainable.” White culture values some ways – ways that are more familiar and come more naturally to those from a white, western tradition – of thinking, behaving, deciding, and knowing, while devaluing or rendering invisible other ways. And it does this without ever having to explicitly say so.²

Most foundations, like other institutions, did not have a team meeting to debate and decide to adopt “white culture” as the mode of operating. And yet, there it is – manifesting in every policy and practice and interaction. One can understand the resistance a group of people might have to examining something they don’t consciously know exists. But when it is given a name and examples are pointed out, its presence is undeniable.

2 The following are some resources about white culture: White Culture, by J. Katz, n.d., retrieved from http://www.pps.k12.or.us/files/district-leadership/White_Culture_Judith_Katz.pdf; Lifting the White Veil, by J. Hitchcock, 2002, Roselle, NJ: Crandall, Dostie, & Douglass Books; The Emperor Has No Clothes: Teaching About Race and Racism to People Who Don’t Want to Know, by T. Okun, 2010, Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, www.dismantlingracismworks.org; Mirrors of Privilege: Making Whiteness Visible [DVD], 2006, by S. Butler, producer, <http://world-trust.org/mirrors-of-privilege-making-whiteness-visible/>; and Flipping the Script: White Privilege and Community Building, by M. Potapchuk, S. Leiderman, D. Bivens, and B. Major, 2005, <http://www.mpassociates.us/pdf/FlippingtheScriptmostupdated.pdf>

By “white culture,” we mean the dominant, unquestioned standards of behavior and ways of functioning embodied by the vast majority of institutions in the United States.

Thus begins the journey to see, deconstruct, and potentially transform white culture. In our experience it also can be the place of greatest resistance, for three primary reasons. The first is that the process can feel overwhelming. Culture lurks in every nook and cranny of organizational life, which now must be intentionally examined, considered, and negotiated. Further, an honest look at white privilege might lead to hard truths about the foundation itself, as wealth accumulation and favorable tax policy are primary manifestations of over-advantaging of whites (Kivel, 2006). The time and effort required for this scope of self-examination may exceed what the foundation team envisioned or allocated when it decided to do racial equity work. And yet, not doing this examination means that any equity conversations and work will continue to take place in a larger container that is shaped by the very dynamics that the group aims to change.

The second reason this work can spur resistance – especially to internal racial equity work – is that predominately white team members, and perhaps even some people of color, are attached to the current ways of working and do not want change to take place so close to home. Especially a foundation that sees itself as high-performing and successful can be skeptical about the degree of change needed. But racial equity is a change process; leaving out a look at white culture and privilege limits the potential for sustainable change.

The third reason is that because white culture and privilege are, by definition, ubiquitous, even if the

Our clients report that their newfound awareness can end up challenging their sense of integrity, as they must make strategic choices about sharing this new consciousness and assessing how to interact with community partners and other philanthropic organizations that don't hold the same conceptual frameworks or language about white culture and privilege.

foundation makes progress toward its own transformation it surely will continue to interact with funding partners, community decision-makers, and grantees who have not done their own examination. Our clients report that their newfound awareness can end up challenging their sense of integrity, as they must make strategic choices about sharing this new consciousness and assessing how to interact with community partners and other philanthropic organizations that do not hold the same conceptual frameworks or language about white culture and privilege.

Challenge No. 2: Conflict and Emotion Challenge the 'White' Way of Operating

Since real-life personal experiences about race and racism come packed with emotions including anger, frustration, hurt, and fear, it is hard to keep them in check when a foundation explores racial equity. Often, one goal of racial equity work is to improve relationships across race, perhaps with an implicit desire to reduce or avoid racial conflict. But an authentic process likely will increase conflict, at least in the short term, as issues of

concern become more visible, people of all races gain language and tools for talking about them, and the process itself invites more open communication.

So, intense emotions and conflict are predictable companions to racial equity work. And yet, white culture and privilege can obscure this reality, making them difficult to engage directly. Because these feelings do not always feel good, foundation leadership can mistakenly view them as “failures” of the process and reasons to abandon or restrict it, rather than accepting them as necessary and indicative of real change.

One aspect of white culture is the unspoken definition of acceptable emotions to share within the workplace, sometimes described as “professionalism.” What is meant by this, however, typically does not get discussed explicitly and transparently within the organization; it is simply assumed that all will know what this means and abide by it. It becomes a topic of conversation only when the unspoken boundary is violated – for example, when anything requiring personal reflection and disclosure gets framed as “too ‘touchy feely’.” This is bound to happen in any frank discussion of structural racism, white culture, and privilege. And the people of color and white people who violate the boundary may face consequences for taking the risk.

The hiddenness of these norms is problematic. But so is the narrowness, which can limit the range of expressions that naturally will arise in racial equity work. Once again, white culture, left unexamined, can hinder the full potential of racial equity work. And by defaulting to white culture norms, explicitly or implicitly, the organization is choosing the perceived comfort of whites over people of color.

We have observed whites shutting down because of discomfort with the rawness of emotions, fear of disclosing personal experiences that may suggest they have bias or racist thoughts, or the assumption that talking about white privilege means they are “bad” individuals instead of seeing privilege in the context of the system of racism in

which we all participate. White people's response to emotions is not a fault, but rather a manifestation of how the system is set up for people who are privileged in it. The default setting is for the structure to be invisible. For some whites, this is the first time they are realizing they have a white identity, learning about a system of racism rather than seeing racism as individual acts of hate, or even having an intense conversation on race. It may be the first time they are considering how the system is set up and may have furthered their career, performance appraisals, and quality of life. As a result of all this newness, plus discomfort with the emotions arising from their colleagues and even within themselves, whites often will advocate for even more strict boundaries around personal sharing and emotion when it gets too heated for their comfort.

On the other hand, many people of color talk about their anticipation of having an opportunity to share one's truth in a facilitated space and the potential that these discussions may result in institutional changes. In our observation, people of color are typically taking the lead in sharing personal experiences since they are more fluent in the impact of racism. They also might feel hesitation, since people of color are typically looked to for sharing their personal stories and lessons yet are covertly or overtly asked to keep their emotions in check. Some people of color have expressed fear that they will face harsh consequences for speaking truth – further marginalization, loss of credibility, or something worse.

This is a critical juncture for an organization. A foundation committing to racial equity work for the long haul must be open and receptive and make space for conflict and emotion. Without this, the process could unintentionally repeat the experience many people of color have throughout their lives – that is, efforts are made to address racial inequity, but when the conversation gets heated or uncomfortable for whites the group retreats, often blaming people of color for causing the discomfort. Business as usual returns with added anxiety for people of color, who may be unlikely to risk participating in such a process again.

The default setting is for the structure to be invisible. For some whites, this is the first time they are realizing they have a white identity, learning about a system of racism rather than seeing racism as individual acts of hate, or even having an intense conversation on race. It may be the first time they are considering how the system is set up and may have furthered their career, performance appraisals, and quality of life.

Challenge No. 3: Focusing on White Culture and Privilege Privileges Whiteness

Racial equity work depends, in part, on people of color gaining access, voice, and leadership to advocate for change within their institutions. And they can be great supporters of the wide-angle-lens approach to this work, one that looks at the structural over-advantaging of whites as well as the under-advantaging of people of color. At the same time, they can experience discomfort with this approach and can become its most vocal critics.

Racial equity practitioners have made a valuable contribution to the field by putting forth an analytical method and innovative tools for understanding and deconstructing the accumulated impact of structural racism as the cause of racially inequitable outcomes and, in turn, developing strategies to improve outcomes and transform systems. We use this approach because we believe it is imperative to understand our history, how the

People of color, who often have to accommodate, adapt, and assimilate in countless ways in order to gain entry and advance in white culture institutions, understandably might grow weary of bearing witness to white people discovering and grappling with their white privilege. Like the stages of grief, this process can include everything from denial to angry pushback from white people, jockeying to position oneself as the exception to the rule, or paralyzing white guilt and shame.

system was constructed and continues to operate, and the statistical impact of structural racism in our daily lives. In our experience, this can be useful to people of all races.

But strictly focusing on analysis and evidence can unintentionally, though not unpredictably, reify the marginalization experienced by people of color because it tends to more closely match the learning and emotional needs of white participants. We have observed this happening in at least three ways.

The first is when it is primarily a cognitive approach and does not include attention to affective or experiential needs and ways of knowing. For people of color, their lived experience of racism often hits them at a gut level as well as the cogni-

tive level, in a way that is less familiar to whites. In our racial equity capacity building sessions we typically include, for example, an overview of statistics showing racial disparities in different sectors. While these might validate the experience of people of color, they also can leave them feeling detached from their personal pain and suffering at the hands of racial oppression. Imagine the experience of crime survivors being asked to take in “data” about their victimization – their lived experience is far more powerful data than a PowerPoint© presentation ever could be. And yet, this approach is also what can make it easier for white people to take in – and finally believe – that structural racism exists. In this way, this method can privilege the convincing of white people over the comforting of people of color.

The second is when it emphasizes structural outcomes to the exclusion of personal bias or individual racism. Again, this can be helpful in engaging white people and helping participants of all races understand the systemic nature of racism. And it is an important counternarrative to the focus on the individual in U.S. culture. But it also can leave both white people and people of color detached from the structure, viewing it more like an intellectual exercise than an urgent, personal imperative. For many white people, this can be the perfect match for their learning style and sense of self, and it complies with white culture. But it can leave people of color feeling that no one is taking responsibility for the persistent pain and consistently inequitable outcomes and experience being generated by structural racism – including in everyday interactions with their white colleagues. In this way, the organization as a whole may make progress in its understanding of structural racism and its commitment to racial equity, at the same time that people of color may feel more isolated in their daily experience of racism within the organization.

The third way this analytical approach can privilege white participants while remarginalizing people of color is that the necessary focus on white culture and privilege, which we maintain is critical for racial equity work to be effective, means that the white experience takes center stage in the

change process, even as the purpose of the work is to dismantle the centrality of and privilege inherent to whiteness. People of color, who often have to accommodate, adapt, and assimilate in countless ways in order to gain entry and advance in white culture institutions, understandably might grow weary of bearing witness to white people discovering and grappling with their white privilege. Like the stages of grief, this process can include everything from denial to angry pushback from white people, jockeying to position oneself as the exception to the rule, or paralyzing white guilt and shame. Meanwhile, people of color are asked to be patient and graciously share their stories, as this is part of the necessary process of white people becoming allies in the struggle for racial justice. We can understand why people of color may lose patience or check out of this process. Like the crime victim in the example above, remediating perpetrators is important and necessary to reduce future crime, but asking survivors to witness or perhaps even participate in that remediation might feel like adding insult to injury.

Tools to Address the Challenges

Our own understanding of our racial identity and our life experiences in the context of the daily impact of structural racism is critical to being thoughtful, effective, and courageous leaders working toward racial justice. Organizations doing this work must balance the need for both conceptual frameworks and storytelling, for unpacking the personal and organizational impact of structural racism, and for developing an institutional culture that reflects racial equity principles.

So, putting white culture and privilege on the table is critical to include in racial equity work – and it is fraught with challenges due to the complex manifestations of structural racism. In our experience, there is no way to avoid these challenges; the best leaders can do is anticipate them and become equipped with tools to mitigate them. We offer four tools.³

³ In addition to these four tools, several others developed by different organizations can be found at <http://www.racialequitytools.org>; a good section to start at is under the tab, “Act.”

Tool No. 1: Create a Container With Intentional Group Norms

Some people, often whites, will say that they cannot have a conversation about difficult topics like racism and privilege without building trust and having a strong relationship with their colleagues of color. At the same time others, often people of color, will say they cannot possibly build trust or

Putting white culture and privilege on the table is critical to include in racial equity work – and it is fraught with challenges due to the complex manifestations of structural racism. In our experience, there is no way to avoid these challenges; the best leaders can do is anticipate them and become equipped with tools to mitigate them. We offer four tools.

have authentic relationships with white colleagues who are unable to have candid conversation about racism and privilege. Rather than privileging one need over the other or handicapping the process by building only one capacity when both are needed, a thoughtful process begins with attention to creating a “container” to hold the process and enable participants of all racial identities to be challenged but not traumatized.

It is important to note that we build the container not to avoid conflict and hard emotions or create some false sense of “safe space.” Rather, we build it precisely because we know conflict and emotions will arise and that “safety” can be elusive and subjective. The container helps the group support

We offer and engage groups with these norms: (1) Speak your truth. (2) Lean into discomfort and lean into each other. (3) Commit to nonclosure. (4) Embrace paradox. (5) Seek intentional learning, not perfection (OpenSource Leadership Strategies, n.d.).

one another rather than marginalize individuals, be better able to recover from challenges, and remain intact even as differences are emphasized. It also encourages community members to bring their best and full selves, be respectful in their own words and actions and of others, and create a shared sense of accountability to one another and the process.

What goes into and creates the container is important. It includes the common language and framework that is being used to understand structural racism and racial equity. We have learned that it also must include intentional group norms that enable everyone in the process to bring their cognitive, affective, and experiential wisdom into the group.

Every group has norms – standards of behavior, communication, and getting the work done. As discussed earlier, often norms arise unintentionally, reflecting the dominant white culture, and are not negotiated intentionally in a way that takes full advantage of a group's cultural diversity. The sheer act of articulating norms for the racial equity process can expose the unintentionality of current group norms while also creating a space to complement and support the change effort.

In our work, we have made the choice to offer a set of group norms for the group to “try on,” rather than generate a list from the group. Arising from our experience with a diverse range of groups, our list helps to balance power in the group from the start and offers a tool and shared frame of reference to begin using right away. If time allows, a process could include the group generating its own norms. Care should be taken, however, to balance power in the group so everyone can contribute freely to the process, make sure these norms are truly negotiated and not simply brainstormed and added to the flip chart like a grocery list, and ensure they do not simply default to dominant white culture.

We offer and engage groups with these norms: (1) Speak your truth. (2) Lean into discomfort and lean into each other. (3) Commit to nonclosure. (4) Embrace paradox. (5) Seek intentional learning, not perfection (OpenSource Leadership Strategies, n.d.).⁴

Embedded in these norms are others, like maintaining confidentiality and stepping up or back in order to balance participation across personalities, behavioral styles, and racial identities. These norms intentionally reflect different cultural perspectives. “Speak your truth” – with the emphasis on the individual “you” – surely reflects the American/western ethos of individuality. When it comes to talking about things like white privilege, however, many white Americans suddenly default to the universal “we” or the detached “you” rather than taking ownership of thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. There can be great power and value in speaking from the “I,” for both the speaker and the group. This is an example where we think a “white” norm can be useful and we are intentional about claiming it as part of the container.

Conversely, paradox is more valued in eastern schools of thought. While critical thinking skills are important to racial equity work, we find the

⁴ This original document has evolved over a decade of work with social justice groups and has been informed by many teachers and colleagues, including Angela Bryant and Visions; Claudia Horwitz and stone circles; George Lakey and Training for Change; Tema Okun and dismantlingRacismworks; and Leah Wing and Social Justice Mediation Institute.

white culture norm of “either/or” logic to be limiting. Instead, we encourage “both/and” paradoxical thinking. Similarly, the focus on nonclosure and learning is a direct challenge to the white-culture norm of perfectionism that dominates foundations and other elite U.S. institutions. So in these cases, we are intentionally challenging dominant white norms and preferencing counter-culture norms.

The norm “leaning into discomfort and each other” most directly attempts to challenge white culture norms around avoiding conflict and emotions that cause discomfort. It also attempts to bridge the seemingly disparate needs within the group to both build trust and engage in an honest conversation. This norm is not about romanticizing pain; it is about recognizing that growing pains are a normal and necessary part of the process, and that we can rely on one another to be allies as we engage the messiness that comes with learning, taking risks, and staying present.

Collectively, these norms are designed to stretch everyone – in different ways, at different times. They were intentionally created and they require intentional practice. We deliberately chose not to call them rules; few people take kindly to imposed rules, and we do not want to take on the role of policing them anyway. Instead they are norms that the group is free to take on or not, but that at the very least challenge the unspoken norms of white culture that allot privilege and deter true progress toward racial equity. We have heard from our clients that these norms have been useful beyond the specific racial equity engagement; in this way, racial equity work and specifically work on white culture and privilege can have far-reaching use for organizational development.

Tool No. 2: Explore Accumulated Advantage and Disadvantage

Understanding how racism relates to the issues a foundation funds – education or health, for example – typically would include looking at the history of the issue as well as various public and institutional policies that created and help maintain racial disparities. We have found these exercises to be most powerful when they reveal the persistent

We have been fortunate to work with some courageous organizations who have turned the lens inward to see how those accumulated privileges and disadvantages have determined who holds leadership positions in the organization, how decisions get made, what constitutes success, what and who gets rewarded, and whose voice has the most influence.

and often intentional disadvantaging of people of color through, for example, enslavement or denial of rights or barriers to participation, as well as the advantaging of white people through, for example, the explicit granting of rights. This helps reveal how privilege develops and how racial gaps grow from both ends. In turn, this means that any remedies must address structural over-advantaging of whites as well under-advantaging of people of color.

Further, seeing that these gaps have grown over time through the confluence and cumulative impact of myriad over-advantages and under-advantages also helps to lay bare that privilege exists, has been constructed, and will need to be intentionally and strategically dismantled systematically in order for racial equity to emerge.

A final step in the process is, perhaps ironically, personalizing the structural. It is not enough for foundation team members to talk in detached, intellectualized ways about how privilege has evolved in the world. We have been fortunate to work with some courageous organizations who have turned the lens inward to see how those

Are all aspects of white culture “bad?” Not necessarily. But as the default, they are unnegotiated. Our assessment process focuses on how white culture dominates within an organization and, specifically, how it discredits, marginalizes, or oppresses other ways of behaving, thinking, and doing.

accumulated privileges and disadvantages have determined who holds leadership positions in the organization, how decisions get made, what constitutes success, what and who gets rewarded, and whose voice has the most influence. This exploration can catalyze deeper reckoning with the relationship between accumulated advantages and the existence of the foundation itself, perhaps leading to radically new grantmaking priorities and processes.

Examining white culture can be difficult in any context, but examining it “out in the world” at least brings the comfort of distance. Turning the lens inward can be more risky, but also bear great rewards. George Penick (2008), the white former executive director of the Foundation for the Mid South, shares – based on personal experience – the critical importance of challenging the current ways of knowing and doing the work:

Foundations may think that they are being bold with their money when applying it toward issues affecting those outside of their walls, and yet they usually do not understand how those same issues manifest themselves within their own foundation. ... And most of all, foundation leaders who are afraid to open the issues of racial and social equity for a full discussion by board and staff alike – of what this means to their governance, their grant practices, and

their hiring, recruitment, and outreach – will find themselves isolated and clueless. (p. 12)

Privilege very much operates in here, especially when it comes to foundations. Conducting this analysis in a thorough and honest way can help put privilege on the table explicitly, where it finally can be interrogated and transformed.

Tool No. 3: Reflect on White Culture

Identifying how white culture is present within an organization’s internal and external practices and grantmaking is a critical dimension of racial equity work. The dominant white culture is ever-present in most organizations, and it can be especially invisible to members of a dominant group. We believe there are helpful steps to reveal white culture:

- Understand the concept of white culture and its different components – for example, using the White Culture worksheet (Potapchuk, 2013).
- Increase skills to identify white culture in an organizational setting – for example, through case studies.
- Assess how white culture is present within the organization and set goals for transforming it – for example, using the Transforming Organizational Culture Assessment tool.⁵

Are all aspects of white culture “bad?” Not necessarily. But as the default, they are unnegotiated. Our assessment process focuses on how white culture dominates within an organization and, specifically, how it discredits, marginalizes, or oppresses other ways of behaving, thinking, and doing. Here are some questions that guide our facilitated assessment process, looking at both internal and external dynamics of a foundation:⁶

⁵ This tool has been developed by Maggie Potapchuk as part of the Transforming White Privilege project with Sally Leiderman of the Center for Assessment and Policy Development and Shakti Butler of World Trust Educational Services, with funding from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation.

⁶ Among the sources for these questions: Consulting With Racial Equity Lens Tool by M. Potapchuk, 2011, at <http://www.mpassociates.us/documents/ConsultingwRacialEquity-LensPotapchuk.pdf>; How Can We Lay Out Assumptions to Understand Our Theory of Change? from MP Associates and the Center for Assessment and Policy Development, 2013, at http://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles%20How_Can_We_Lay_Out_Assumptions_To_Understand_Our_

- What kind of information is considered credible, and from whom?
- How is success being defined? Who is defining it? What are the consequences if the outcomes are not reached? What is the foundation's responsibility and accountability to those outcomes? Are there reparations for the community based on negative impacts from a foundation-led initiative?
- How is time for an initiative being defined? Who is defining it? How are different variables – politics, organizational issues, other priorities – being factored in? What is the time and monetary contingency plan?
- How is leadership being defined? By title? By characteristics? By individuals in the community? Who are the formal and informal leaders?
- What leadership behaviors are being rewarded? What are the consequences for those who do not embody specific leadership characteristics? Do they still have access to resources and decision-making?
- What is the decision-making process? Who is included? Is the process transparent? Are there opportunities for feedback and flexibility to make changes to the process? Who decides?
- When and how is conflict addressed? What are the responses when an individual or a group raises a difficult issue, especially one involving race, inequities, power, or privilege? Are there different patterns of response by staff groups? By race/ethnic identity groups?
- What are the consequences if the decision-making structure and process are not followed? Are there different consequences based on roles within the organization or racial/ethnic identities?
- Do the strategies and possible policy changes anticipate and address the different impacts of a practice on distinct racial groups? Do they take into consideration accumulated advantages for whites and accumulated disadvantages for people of color?

Theory_Of_Change.pdf; and Flipping the Script: White Privilege and Community Building, by M. Potapchuk, S. Leiderman, D. Bivens, and B. Major, 2005, at <http://www.mpassociates.us/pdf/FlippingtheScriptmostupdated.pdf>.

One tool we have found to be very helpful, especially in acknowledging and supporting some of the emotions that naturally occur in racial equity work, is racial identity caucusing. The value of caucusing is so both white people and people of color have intentional space and time to focus on their respective work to dismantle racism and advance racial equity.

Understanding, analyzing, and intervening on how white culture manifests within a foundation is critical for working toward racial equity, and it is especially essential for establishing credibility within a community.

Tool No. 4: Caucus by Racial Identity

One tool we have found to be very helpful, especially in acknowledging and supporting some of the emotions that naturally occur in racial equity work, is racial identity caucusing.⁷ The value of caucusing is so both white people and people of color have intentional space and time to focus on their respective work to dismantle racism and advance racial equity. Caucusing does not happen instead of integrated groups; rather, caucusing can lead to more authentic and powerful integrated groups.

Caucusing not only respects the choice of marginalized groups to be together, it also makes the dominant culture visible – an important step in making intentional changes to the culture.

⁷ For more information about caucusing as a tool, see <http://racialequitytools.org/fundamentals/core-concepts#FUN05>.

Further, working only in integrated groups puts an undue burden on people of color to be the teachers and obscures the responsibility of white people to do their own work. Both people of color and white people are needed to work collectively for racial equity. But they have different work to do, precisely because of their different experiences with and location relative to white culture and privilege.

For people of color the caucus can be a space where whiteness is not at the center or a place where one need not accommodate or assimilate to white people's responses to the emotional and conflictual nature of racial equity work.

Though there is often resistance to participating in explicit race-identified groups, these formations occur all the time – though usually without intentionality or consciousness. One common resistance to caucusing by whites is, “I don’t like to feel guilty” – though having that feeling is an opportunity to remember one’s humanity and commitment to justice. What caucus time does in part is ensure the feeling of guilt does not result in paralysis, but rather reflection and action. Caucusing can be an opportunity to transform the white space into a liberating space to build strengths, skills, and courage for white people to act purposefully toward racial equity.

A white caucus provides an opportunity for white people to:

- Unpack feelings – especially fear, anger, and sadness, all natural feelings – as well as understand how whites internalize superiority⁸ and mani-

fest it in their attitudes and interactions. It is an opportunity for people to support one another and resist marginalizing for being emotive or for honestly sharing racist beliefs.

- Continue the learning by sharing personal incidents and interactions, receive feedback from peers, and encourage responsive actions to address privilege and racism on individual, interpersonal, and institutional levels.
- Discuss current events, organizational patterns, and policies and apply a structural racism analysis to understand how white privilege and culture are present.
- Create an accountability process.⁹ Caucusing is not a time for confessionals, but rather a place to build the capacity of each person as well as the white collective to act intentionally, consistently, and effectively and not be complicit or silent.

For people of color the caucus can be a space where whiteness is not at the center or a place where one need not accommodate or assimilate to white people’s responses to the emotional and conflictual nature of racial equity work. The caucus provides an opportunity to not only speak about the impact of racism and white culture within an organization, but also about how oppression is internalized on an individual, intergroup, and institutional level. This space can build solidarity among diverse people of color while at the same time allowing that full diversity to emerge and be celebrated. This caucus can be a liberating place for people of color to heal, bring their full selves, and consider how to collectively work for racial equity.

A people of color caucus provides an opportunity for people of color to:

Racist Collective, from Crossroads Anti-Racism Organizing and Training, at <http://www.crossroadsantiracism.org/wp-content/themes/crossroads/PDFs/Racial%20Identity%20Caucusing%20Strategy.pdf>

⁹ To learn more about accountability processes, see <http://racialequitytools.org/plan/change-process#PLA26> and Accountability and White Anti-Racist Organizing: Stories of Our Work, B. Cushing, L. Cabbil, M. Freeman, J. Hitchcock, and K. Richards, eds., 2010, Roselle, NJ: Crandall, Dostie, & Douglass Books.

⁸ See Racial Identity Caucusing: A Strategy for Building Anti-

- discover patterns of white culture and privilege within the organization and how to address them on a personal and organizational level;
- provide relief and support to one another by offering space to share experiences openly and freely, without having to explain them in a way that white people can hear;
- discuss internalized manifestations of racism and how it affects each person personally and professionally;
- build solidarity and interrupt the interpersonal manifestations of racism that are imposed by the hierarchy of racial and ethnic identity; and
- discuss accountability processes and expectations of whites and the organization.

Facilitators use the caucusing tool in different ways. Typically we include a prompt question – sometimes the same for each caucus, sometimes different. Depending on the size and diversity of the group, we sometimes choose to subdivide the caucuses – for example, the people of color caucus might end up being two groups, one for African Americans and one for other people of color; the white caucus might be split by role in the organization, so that whites in leadership have their own space to contemplate their unique relationship to privilege. When we do subdivide, we create an added step to integrate each racial-identity caucus before the cross-race integration. The final step in this process is to intentionally integrate the caucuses by sharing responses to the prompt question, sometimes in a fishbowl formation. Integration does not always mean equal reporting; it is about creating common ground, respecting one another’s process, and sitting with the discomfort of the intentionally segregated groups.

Conclusion

We believe that focusing on white culture and privilege is an often overlooked but critical component of effective racial equity change processes; that this work can be challenging in some predictable ways; and that these challenges can be mitigated with some intentional tools. As Andrea Smith (2013) expresses in her blog post, *The Problem with Privilege*: “There is no simple anti-oppression formula that we can follow; we are

We believe that focusing on white culture and privilege is an often overlooked but critical component of effective racial equity change processes; that this work can be challenging in some predictable ways; and that these challenges can be mitigated with some intentional tools.

in a constant state of trial and error and radical experimentation.”

We hope the tools we have offered provide a start, though each situation requires presence, creativity, and courage. Indeed, the fact that these challenges exist should not be used as an excuse not to engage, but rather as evidence of the persistence and power of white culture and privilege – and the urgent need to take them on directly and explicitly. We encourage foundations committed to racial equity to lean into the hardest parts of the work – namely, unearthing white culture and privilege internally and externally. Anything less would fall short of their mutual accountability¹⁰ to grantees and the communities they serve, as well as their deeply held value and goal of racial equity.

¹⁰ Discussing accountability processes usually focuses on the process used with grantees to track organizational outcomes to ensure they follow the agreement on how grant monies are used. Equally important is being transparent regarding the foundation’s accountability to the grantees and communities it serves. This includes tracking responsiveness to community needs, assessing how resources are being distributed and to whom, ensuring that success is being defined by the community / grantees, conducting a structural power analysis, attending to power dynamics at all levels, and reviewing practices to assure they are not contributing to inequities or unintentionally having a racialized impact.

Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge those who have supported and/or inspired our thinking and work along the way, including the Baltimore Racial Justice Action, Donna Bivens, Angela Bryant, Shakti Butler, Ron Chisom, Robette Dias, Judith Katz, George Lakey, Sally Leiderman, Barbara Major, Tema Okun, John A. Powell, Omowale Saterwhite, Rinku Sen, Lisa Weiner-Mahfuz, Leah Wing, Scott Winn, our clients, and many others including those who've taken courageous risks to move racial justice forward.

References

- KIVEL, P. (2006). *You call this a democracy? Who benefits, who pays, and who really decides*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield.
- OPENSOURCE LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES. (n.d.). *Group norms for breakthrough social change: The OpenSource approach*. Available online at www.opensourceleadership.com
- PENICK, G. (2008). *Navigating transformation: Uncertainty and fear of the unknown*. Jackson, MS: Foundation for the Mid South. Available online at http://www.fndmidsouth.org/images/user_files/files/MoreThanWords2.pdf
- POTAPCHUK, M. (2013). *White culture*. Available online at <http://www.racialequitytools.org/resourcefiles/whiteculturehandout.pdf>
- SMITH, A. (2013, August 14). The problem with privilege [Web log post]. Retrieved from <http://andrea366.wordpress.com/2013/08/14/the-problem-with-privilege-by-andrea-smith/>

Gita Gulati-Partee, M.B.A., is founder and chief strategist of OpenSource Leadership Strategies, a national consulting practice that amplifies the work of social justice groups as both agents and units of change.

Maggie Potapchuk, M.Ed., is founder of MP Associates, a national consulting firm that builds the capacity of organizations and communities to address structural racism and privilege issues for building a just society.

I AM A PERSON
WHO WILL

INTERRUPT

ECHO

QUESTION

EDUCATE

TEACHING TOLERANCE
A PROJECT OF THE SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER
TOLERANCE.ORG

RESPOND
TO EVERYDAY
STEREOTYPES
AND BIAS

SPEAK
UP AT
SCHOOL

TEACHING TOLERANCE POCKET GUIDE

TEACHING TOLERANCE
A PROJECT OF THE SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER
TOLERANCE.ORG

SPEAK UP
AGAINST BIAS

EDUCATE

QUESTION

ECHO

INTERRUPT

I AM A PERSON
WHO WILL

SPEAK UP
AGAINST BIAS

TEACHING TOLERANCE
A PROJECT OF THE SOUTHERN POVERTY LAW CENTER
TOLERANCE.ORG

TEACHING TOLERANCE POCKET GUIDE

RESPOND
TO EVERYDAY
STEREOTYPES
AND BIAS

SPEAK
UP AT
SCHOOL

SHOULDN'T USE IT."

IS OFFENSIVE AND WE

I AGREE THAT WORD

SPEAKING UP, ALLISON

"THANKS FOR

TRY SAYING

voices together create change.

anti-bias message. One person's

hate, thank her and reiterate her

If someone else speaks up against

ECHO

THAT WORD?"

THE HISTORY OF

"DO YOU KNOW

TRY SAYING

population.

of exposure to a diverse

ignorance is at work, or lack

all hateful speech. Sometimes

expression. Hate isn't behind

person to choose a different

is offensive. Encourage the

Explain why a term or phrase

EDUCATE

"TELL ME MORE."

YOU MEAN?" OR

THAT?" WHAT DO

"WHY DO YOU SAY

TRY ASKING

situation.

how you can best address the

the offensive comment and

find out why the speaker made

response to hateful remarks to

Ask simple questions in

QUESTION

PHRASE IS HURTFUL."

"THAT" OR "THAT

"I DON'T LIKE WORDS

TRY SAYING

prepared to act instantly.

say ahead of time so you're

moment, without exception.

Think about what you'll

Speak up against every biased

INTERRUPT

INTERRUPT

Speak up against every biased

remark—every time, in the

moment, without exception.

Think about what you'll

say ahead of time so you're

prepared to act instantly.

TRY SAYING

"I DON'T LIKE WORDS

LIKE THAT." OR "THAT

PHRASE IS HURTFUL."

QUESTION

Ask simple questions in

response to hateful remarks to

find out why the speaker made

the offensive comment and

how you can best address the

situation.

TRY ASKING

"WHY DO YOU SAY

THAT?" WHAT DO

YOU MEAN?" OR

"TELL ME MORE."

EDUCATE

Explain why a term or phrase

is offensive. Encourage the

person to choose a different

expression. Hate isn't behind

all hateful speech. Sometimes

ignorance is at work, or lack

of exposure to a diverse

population.

TRY SAYING

"DO YOU KNOW

THE HISTORY OF

THAT WORD?"

ECHO

If someone else speaks up against

hate, thank her and reiterate her

anti-bias message. One person's

voice is a powerful start. Many

voices together create change.

TRY SAYING

"THANKS FOR

SPEAKING UP, ALLISON.

I AGREE THAT WORD

IS OFFENSIVE AND WE

SHOULDN'T USE IT."

Tool: Interrupting Microaggressions

MICROAGGRESSION EXAMPLE AND THEME	THIRD PARTY INTERVENTION EXAMPLE	COMMUNICATION APPROACH
Alien in One's Own Land To a Latino American: "Where are you from?" Ascription of Intelligence To an Asian person, "You're all good in math, can you help me with this problem?" Color Blindness "I don't believe in race."	"I'm just curious. What makes you ask that?" "I heard you say that all Asians are good in math. What makes you believe that?" "So, what do you believe in? Can you elaborate?"	INQUIRE Ask the speaker to elaborate. This will give you more information about where s/he is coming from, and may also help the speaker to become aware of what s/he is saying. KEY PHRASES: "Say more about that." "Can you elaborate on your point?" "It sounds like you have a strong opinion about this. Tell me why." "What is it about this that concerns you the most?"
Myth of Meritocracy "Everyone can succeed in this society, if they work hard enough." Pathologizing Cultural Values/Communication Styles Asking a Black person: "Why do you have to be so loud/animated? Just calm down."	"So you feel that everyone can succeed in this society if they work hard enough. Can you give me some examples?" "It appears you were uncomfortable when ____ said that. I'm thinking that there are many styles to express ourselves. How we can honor all styles of expression—can we talk about that?"	PARAPHRASE/REFLECT Reflecting in one's own words the essence of what the speaker has said. Paraphrasing demonstrates understanding and reduces defensiveness of both you and the speaker. Restate briefly in your own words, rather than simply parroting the speaker. Reflect both content and feeling whenever possible. KEY PHRASES: "So, it sounds like you think..." "You're saying... You believe..."
Second-Class Citizen You notice that your female colleague is being frequently interrupted during a committee meeting. Pathologizing Cultural Values/Communication Styles To a woman of color: "I would have never guessed that you were a scientist."	Responder addressing the group: "____ brings up a good point. I didn't get a chance to hear all of it. Can ____ repeat it?" "I'm wondering what message this is sending her. Do you think you would have said this to a white male?"	REFRAME Create a different way to look at a situation. KEY PHRASES: "What would happen if..." "Could there be another way to look at this..." "Let's reframe this..." "How would you feel if this happened to your ____..."
Second-Class Citizen Saying "You people...." Use of Heterosexist Language Saying "That's so gay."	"I was so upset by that remark that I shut down and couldn't hear anything else." "When I hear that remark, I'm offended too, because I feel that it marginalizes an entire group of people that I work with."	USE IMPACT AND "I" STATEMENTS A clear, nonthreatening way to directly address these issues is to focus on oneself rather than on the person. It communicates the impact of a situation while avoiding blaming or accusing the other and reduces defensiveness. KEY PHRASES: "I felt ____ (feelings) when you said or did ____ (comment or behavior), and it ____ (describe the impact on you)."
Second-Class Citizen A woman who is talked over. Making a racist, sexist or homophobic joke.	She responds: "I would like to participate, but I need you to let me finish my thought." "I didn't think this was funny. I would like you to stop."	USE PREFERENCE STATEMENTS Clearly communicating one's preferences rather than stating them as demands or having others guess what is needed. KEY PHRASES: "What I'd like is..." "It would be helpful to me if..."

Adapted from Kenney, G. (2014). *Interrupting Microaggressions*, College of the Holy Cross, Diversity Leadership & Education. Accessed on-line, October 2014. Kraybill, R. (2008). "Cooperation Skills," in Armster, M. and Amstutz, L., (Eds.), *Conflict Transformation and Restorative Justice Manual*, 5th Edition, pp. 116-117. LeBaron, M. (2008). "The Open Question," in Armster, M. and Amstutz, L., (Eds.), *Conflict Transformation and Restorative Justice Manual*, 5th Edition, pp. 123-124. Peavey, F. (2003). "Strategic Questions as a Tool for Rebellion," in Brady, M., (Ed.), *The Wisdom of Listening*, Boston: Wisdom Publ., pp. 168-189.

Tool: Interrupting Microaggressions

MICROAGGRESSION EXAMPLE AND THEME	THIRD PARTY INTERVENTION EXAMPLE	COMMUNICATION APPROACH
Color Blindness “When I look at you, I don’t see color.” Myth of Meritocracy “Of course he’ll get tenure, even though he hasn’t published much—he’s Black!”	“So you don’t see color. Tell me more about your perspective. I’d also like to invite others to weigh in.” “So you believe that _____ will get tenure just because of his race. Let’s open this up to see what others think.”	RE-DIRECT Shift the focus to a different person or topic. (Particularly helpful when someone is asked to speak for his/her entire race, cultural group, etc.) KEY PHRASES: “Let’s shift the conversation...” “Let’s open up this question to others....”
Myth of Meritocracy In a committee meeting: “Gender plays no part in who we hire.” “Of course she’ll get tenure, even though she hasn’t published much—she’s Native American!” Second-Class Citizen In class, an instructor tends to call on male students more frequently than female ones.	“How might we examine our implicit bias to ensure that gender plays no part in this and we have a fair process? What do we need to be aware of?” “How does what you just said honor our colleague?” “What impact do you think this has on the class dynamics? What would you need to approach this situation differently next time?”	USE STRATEGIC QUESTIONS It is the skill of asking questions that will make a difference. A strategic question creates motion and options, avoids “why” and “yes or no” answers, is empowering to the receiver, and allows for difficult questions to be considered. Because of these qualities, a strategic question can lead to transformation. Useful in problem-solving, difficult situations, and change efforts. KEY PHRASES: “What would allow you...” “What could you do differently....” “What would happen if you considered the impact on...”
Traditional Gender Role Prejudicing and Stereotyping In the lab, an adviser asks a female student if she is planning to have children while in postdoctoral training.	To the adviser: “I wanted to go back to a question you asked _____ yesterday about her plans for a family. I’m wondering what made you ask that question and what message it might have sent to her.” To the student: “I heard what your advisor said to you yesterday. I thought it was inappropriate and I just wanted to check in with you.”	REVISIT Even if the moment of a microaggression has passed, go back and address it. Research indicates that an unaddressed microaggression can leave just as much of a negative impact as the microaggression itself. KEY PHRASES: “I want to go back to something that was brought up in our conversation/meeting/class” “Let’s rewind ____ minutes...”

CONSIDERATIONS:

- The communication approaches are most effective when used in combination with one another, e.g., using impact and preference statements, using inquiry and paraphrasing together, etc.
- Separate the person from the action or behavior. Instead of saying “you’re racist”, try saying “that could be perceived as a racist remark.” Being called a racist puts someone on the defensive and can be considered “fighting words.”
- Avoid starting questions with “Why”—it puts people on the defensive. Instead try “how” “what made you”
- When addressing a microaggression, try to avoid using the pronoun “you” too often—it can leave people feeling defensive and blamed. Use “I” statements describing the impact on you instead or refer to the action indirectly, e.g., “when _____ was said...” or “when _____ happened...”
- How you say it is as critical as what you say, e.g., tone of voice, body language, etc. The message has to be conveyed with respect for the other person, even if one is having a strong negative reaction to what’s been said. So it is helpful to think about your intention when interrupting a microaggression—e.g., do you want that person to understand the impact of his/her action, or stop his/her behavior, or make the person feel guilty, etc. Your intention and the manner in which you execute your intention make a difference.
- Sometimes humor can defuse a tense situation.

Adapted from Kenney, G. (2014). *Interrupting Microaggressions*, College of the Holy Cross, Diversity Leadership & Education. Accessed on-line, October 2014. Kraybill, R. (2008). “*Cooperation Skills*,” in Armster, M. and Amstutz, L., (Eds.), *Conflict Transformation and Restorative Justice Manual*, 5th Edition, pp. 116-117. LeBaron, M. (2008). “*The Open Question*,” in Armster, M. and Amstutz, L., (Eds.), *Conflict Transformation and Restorative Justice Manual*, 5th Edition, pp. 123-124. Peavey, F. (2003). “*Strategic Questions as a Tool for Rebellion*,” in Brady, M., (Ed.), *The Wisdom of Listening*, Boston: Wisdom Publ., pp. 168-189.

I Didn't Know What to Say!

Directions:

Often participants will tell us that they are uncomfortable with addressing microaggressions when they occur because they don't know what to say. Our next activity will give you the opportunity to practice what to say when you are a victim or witness to microaggression.

There are three (3) roles: speaker, disrupter, and coach. The speaker is responsible for choosing a scenario (or making one up) and setting up and then saying the remark that is a microaggression. The disrupter is given the challenge of responding to the remark in a way that reduces the likelihood of future microaggressions.

Once the speaker and responder have concluded their interaction, the coaches should critique the response and provide candid feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of the response.

The roles should be rotated for another practice round with a new speaker and responder.

SCENARIO 1

Background:

New Member Orientation meeting where the UniServ Director has been asked to speak. You observe the membership chair ask a potential member the question.

Speaker 1:

Union Membership Chairperson - Comment made: "What are you? Where are you really from?"

Disrupter:

UniServ Director – How do you respond? What do you say?

SCENARIO 2

Background:

Public high school and a comment is overheard during after-school study hall.

Speaker 1:

A high school student - Comment made: "You must be good in math; can you help me with this problem."

Disrupter:

Study Hall Monitor - How do you respond? What do you say?

SCENARIO 3

Background:

A group of friends are at a Margarita Monday event. The comment is made by a friend of a friend at happy hour.

Speaker 1:

Your best friend's co-worker - Comment made: "How do Black people feel about affirmative action?"

Disrupter:

A white bystander- How do you respond? What do you say?

SCENARIO 4

Background:

A group of colleagues are sitting together eating lunch. The comment is made during lunch time period with several people at the table.

Speaker 1:

A fellow colleague// Comment: "Of course she'll get the promotion, she's a minority."

Disrupter:

UniServ director on the job for 5 years - - How do you respond? What do you say?

I Didn't Know What to Say!

SCENARIO 5

Background:

Union member approaches officer at the end of general membership meeting. There are about a dozen members still hanging around after the meeting.

Speaker 1:

Union member - Comment made: "You speak English so well, like it is your first language."

Disrupter:

Union President - How do you respond? What do you say?

SCENARIO 6

Background:

Slightly busy hotel lobby with several people in line waiting to check in at the counter.

Speaker 1:

A middle-aged white woman - Comment made: "Will you help me with my bags and where is the valet?"

Disrupter:

Black woman being mistaken for someone in a service role - How do you respond? What do you say?

Disrupter:

Bystander - How do you respond? What do you say?

SCENARIO 7

Background:

Comment was made during a family dinner in which the conversation turned to the topic of LGBTQ+ rights.

Speaker 1:

A middle-aged uncle - Comment made: "All that lesbians need is a good-looking man to convert them."

Disrupter:

A family member - How do you respond? What do you say?

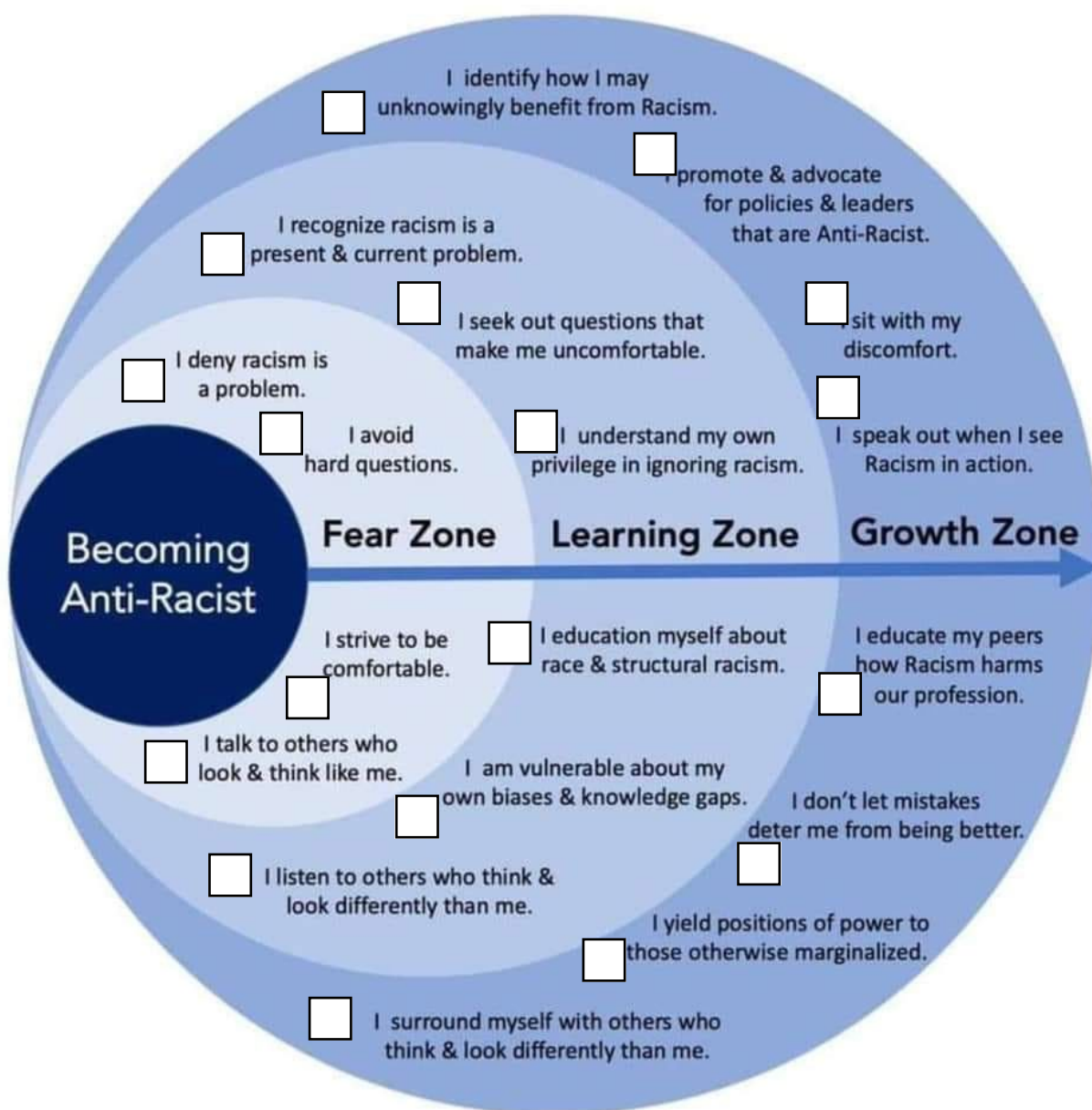
Reflections, Connections and Notes to Remember

Where am I currently in learning to become anti-racist?

Using the graphic below, check 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 circled 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?



Where do you stand?

Read the descriptions for Actor, Ally and Accomplice in each of the following categories. Check the description that best matches where you currently stand.

	Actor	Ally	Accomplice
 Protesting	Attend marches, vigils that are “comfortable” and perhaps even fun. Includes most events led by White people. ☐	Organize protests that interrupt “business as usual” and force other white people to confront / recognize the comfort we live with. If these actions are not forcing other White people to experience some discomfort, they are comparable to those in the Actor category. The exception could be getting other White people who normally don’t attend such events to show up for anything. ☐	Engage in or support civil disobedience organized by Black People and People of Color. One of the most important things that can be done as an Ally and Accomplice is be cautious on how you take up space at direct actions and protests. Ask yourself these series of questions before and while attending such events: • Am I following what the leadership is asking of me? • Am I directing media to designated Black, Brown or Indigenous People? • Am I being cautious not to control or criticize the actions of Black, Brown, or Indigenous Peoples? • Am I checking other White People for not being good accomplices? ☐
 Your Money	Donate to political candidates or organizations that don’t have an explicit racial justice mission or that are not led by directly impacted individuals ☐	Donate money explicitly to organizations with an explicit racial justice mission, led by directly impacted individuals. Also donate to bail funds for Black, Brown and Indigenous activists. Use your economic capital to support businesses owned by people of Color. Boycott companies owned by or working with Trump and other White supremacists. Be public (ex. on social media) about your actions to encourage other White people to join you to amplify your impact Educate yourself on issues such as reparations, returning stolen land, and Black, Brown and Indigenous Labor and their relationship to capitalism. Use this as a lens to help guide your actions involving money. ☐	Raise funds and bundle money for organizations with an explicit racial justice mission, led by directly impacted individuals. Raise money publicly, but donate more silently, as this is not for boosting your ego. Find ways of using your privilege and access to capital and funnel that to Black, Brown, and Indigenous grassroots organizations and peoples. ☐

	Actor	Ally	Accomplice
 Your White Communities	Reach out to other White people in your life (family members, old friends, distant social media connections) to engage them in conversations about racism, Whiteness, etc. Bonus points for seeking out and engaging (White) Trump voters in your personal networks. ☐	Organize and engage White friends, family members, neighbors to take group / collective action (actions that are in the Ally or Accomplice category) to amplify your impact. Participate in organizations that engage White people in the struggle to advance racial justice (like SURJ - Showing Up for Racial Justice) ☐	Coordinate (and pay for) organizations that conduct anti-racism trainings to facilitate their workshops within your school, church/synagogue, neighborhood, workplace. Purposefully disrupt White spaces, meaning, create discomfort in places where other White people and <i>Whiteness</i> would otherwise exist in comfort. White community is a support pillar of White supremacy. ☐
 Your Advocacy	Make phone calls and send emails (at the city/state level, with school districts, etc.) advocating on behalf of policies being put forth by racial justice organizations. ☐	Attend meetings, hearings, and other public events to advocate in person on behalf of policies being put forth by racial justice organizations. ☐	Diversify your social media. Follow radical/progressive Black, Brown, Indigenous figureheads and leaders in the movement. Then do your best to share and amplify their voice with your white social circles. This is a great way to culture shift ideas, art, and media. In quoting Amanda Gelender: <i>"Amplifying voices of color to your network is an important part of solidarity work. We are not the experts on race, but we have an opportunity to learn from so many experts and boost their influence."</i> ☐
 Your Job	Any job that doesn't somehow challenge institutionalized racism. ☐	A job that is service-oriented towards helping people from marginalized backgrounds. Be extremely cautious of these jobs, because they can easily have very negative impacts on the communities they espouse to serve. Too many organizations slip into a dominant role, and only end up enabling/ harming disenfranchised communities instead of alleviating the oppressive conditions that prevent the community from empowering themselves. Use your job position to help Black, Brown, and Indigenous People. Ex: purposefully seek out Black and Brown people to interview for jobs, and use Black caterers, or Indigenous speakers. ☐	A job that involves organizing internally and externally to fight against institutionalized racism and white supremacy and/or that supports these efforts. In other words, your work should focus on alleviating the oppressive conditions that prevent disenfranchised communities from empowering themselves. The reality is ANY job you already have or choose to apply for, you can use your position to become a collaborator with Black, Brown and Indigenous Peoples; and thus a traitor to White supremacy. ☐
 Your Time / Volunteerism	Volunteer at a service-oriented organization (tutoring, meal delivery, collecting canned goods, clothing drives) ☐	Volunteer at a local racial justice-focused organization. ☐	Join an organization with an explicit aim of naming and disrupting racial injustice ☐

	Actor	Ally	Accomplice
 Electoral Politics	Vote for Democrats. Exception could be voting for candidates of color in elections where a White person and a person of Color are running for the same position from the same political party. ☐	Donate to campaigns of progressive people of Color running for political offices. Donate to campaigns of local progressive politicians in other cities/States who are trying to unseat incumbent Republicans/conservatives. ☐	Actively fundraise for and campaign on behalf of progressive/radical politicians (especially non-White people), including those running in local elections (school boards, transportation agencies, housing authorities, city councils). Volunteer with and fundraise for organizations led by directly impacted individuals to support voter registration efforts within their communities. Don't tell Black, Brown and Indigenous People how or whom to vote for. Use your energy and resources to organize White communities to support progressive/radical politicians and policies. ☐
 Confronting Violence, Intimidation, and Micro-Agressions	Use proximity (stand close and watch) when you observe any form of intimidation, harassment, or violence against a person of Color by another white person or police officer. ☐	Film any such confrontations. Shout as a way to try to stop such a confrontation. Engage White people in conversation about their actions (perhaps focusing on intent v. impact) when you observe or hear about racialized microaggressions. ☐	Physically intervene in such confrontations. ☐
 Your Children	Ensure that the reading material you provide for your children explicitly addresses issues of justice and equity. Expose children to books, movies, and TV that feature people of Color as protagonists and heroes. Enroll in public, district-run schools, not private or charter schools. ☐	1) Take your young (age 0-16) children to events where adults (people of Color and other white people) are speaking about racism, violence against communities of Color, white supremacy, etc. 2) Talk with your children about these issues explicitly, including where they/you fit into these systems including the privileges they occupy. 2) Organizing and educating other people's children to develop critical consciousness (like a great teacher might do) ☐	Take <u>your</u> children to events, or organize events, where facilitators explicitly work with kids to explore intersection between race, power, privilege, etc. ☐
 Your Self-Education	Read, watch films, attend events, to gain greater knowledge of white privilege, white supremacy, institutionalized racism, the prison industrial complex, etc. Study and deal with your white guilt and white fragility. ☐	Take action beyond your own learning by engaging with other White people. Start conversations and share your learning with other white people in your life, especially those you are closest to (family members, children, neighbors, colleagues). Go to workshops and trainings (see resources). ☐	Organize other white people to study these issues together, attend events as a group, invite speakers to meet with your group. ☐

	Actor	Ally	Accomplice
 Your Art	Consume (enjoy, purchase) art, in all forms, produced by non-white people. Could include attending performances, choosing specific movies and documentaries, etc. (See Self-Education above). ☐	Create visual art, poetry, films, websites, social media campaigns, etc., that address what you see as the role for white people in struggles for racial justice ☐	Organize and fund opportunities for people from directly impacted communities to share their art. ☐
 Your Home	Put up signs in your windows, on your lawn, inside, like a Black Lives Matter poster ☐	Make your home available to organizers who need safe, accessible, welcoming spaces to meet, plan actions, etc. ☐	Provide free housing (do you have an extra bedroom?) to activists, organizers, or educators of Color ☐

Actor

The actions of an Actor do not disrupt the status quo, much the same as a spectator at a game, both have only a nominal effect in shifting an overall outcome. Such systems are challenged when actors shift or couple their actions with those from Allies and/or Accomplices.

The actions of an Actor do not explicitly name or challenge the pillars of White supremacy which is necessary for meaningful progress towards racial justice.

There is an excellent quote by Lilla Watson on need for Actors to shift to Accomplices: *"If you have come here to help me, you're wasting your time. If you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together."*

Ally

Ally is typically considered a verb - one needs to act as an ally, and can not bestow this title to themselves.

The actions of an Ally have greater likelihood to challenge institutionalized racism, and White supremacy. An Ally is like a disrupter and educator in spaces dominated by Whiteness.

An Ally might find themselves at a social gathering in which something inappropriate is being talked about. Instead of allowing that space to incubate Whiteness, the Ally wisely disrupts the conversation, and takes the opportunity to educate those present.

Being an Ally is not an invitation to be in Black and Brown spaces to gain brownie points, lead, take over, or explain. Keep in mind that as White people, whether as an Actor, Ally or Accomplice, we are still part of the 'oppressor class'. This means we have to be very creative in flipping our privilege to help Black, Brown and Indigenous peoples.

Allies constantly educate themselves, and do not take breaks.

Francesca Ramsey's Video: [5 Ways of Being an Ally](#)

Accomplice

The actions of an Accomplice are meant to directly challenge institutionalized racism, colonization, and White supremacy by blocking or impeding racist people, policies, and structures.

Realizing that our freedoms and liberations are bound together, retreat or withdrawal in the face of oppressive structures is not an option.

Accomplices' actions are informed by, directed and often coordinated with leaders who are Black, Brown First Nations/Indigenous Peoples, and/or People of Color.

Accomplices actively listen with respect, and understand that oppressed people are not monolithic in their tactics and beliefs.

Accomplices aren't motivated by personal guilt or shame.

Accomplices build trust through consent and being accountable - this means not acting in isolation where there is no accountability.

Continuum on Becoming an Anti-Racist Multicultural Organization

MONOCULTURAL ==> MULTICULTURAL ==> ANTI-RACIST ==> ANTI-RACIST MULTICULTURAL

Racial and Cultural Differences Seen as Deficits ==> Tolerant of Racial and Cultural Differences ==> Racial and Cultural Differences Seen as Assets

Exclusive An Exclusionary Institution	2. Passive A "Club" Institution	3. Symbolic Change A Compliance Organization	4. Identity Change An Affirming Institution	5. Structural Change A Transforming Institution	6. Fully Inclusive Anti-Racist Multicultural Organization in a Transformed Society
☐ Intentionally and publicly excludes or segregates African Americans, Native Americans, Latinos, and Asian Americans ☐ Intentionally and publicly enforces the racist status quo throughout institution ☐ Institutionalization of racism includes formal policies and practices, teachings, and decision making on all levels ☐ Usually has similar intentional policies and practices toward other socially oppressed groups such as women, gays and lesbians, Third World citizens, etc. ☐ Openly maintains the dominant group's power and privilege	☐ Tolerant of a limited number of "token" People of Color and members from other social identify groups allowed in with "proper" perspective and credentials. ☐ May still secretly limit or exclude People of Color in contradiction to public policies ☐ Continues to intentionally maintain white power and privilege through its formal policies and practices, teachings, and decision making on all levels of institutional life ☐ Often declares, "We don't have a problem." ☐ Monocultural norms, policies and procedures of dominant culture viewed as the "right" way" business as usual" ☐ Engages issues of diversity and social justice only on club member's terms and within their comfort zone.	☐ Makes official policy pronouncements regarding multicultural diversity ☐ Sees itself as "non-racist" institution with open doors to People of Color ☐ Carries out intentional inclusiveness efforts, recruiting "someone of color" on committees or office staff ☐ Expanding view of diversity includes other socially oppressed groups <i>But...</i> ☐ "Not those who make waves" ☐ Little or no contextual change in culture, policies, and decision making ☐ is still relatively unaware of continuing patterns of privilege, paternalism and control ☐ Token placements in staff positions: must assimilate into organizational culture	☐ Growing understanding of racism as barrier to effective diversity ☐ Develops analysis of systemic racism ☐ Sponsors programs of anti-racism training ☐ New consciousness of institutionalized white power and privilege ☐ Develops intentional identity as an "anti-racist" institution ☐ Begins to develop accountability to racially oppressed communities ☐ Increasing commitment to dismantle racism and eliminate inherent white advantage ☐ Actively recruits and promotes members of groups have been historically denied access and opportunity <i>But...</i> ☐ Institutional structures and culture that maintain white power and privilege still intact and relatively untouched	☐ Commits to process of intentional institutional restructuring, based upon anti-racist analysis and identity ☐ Audits and restructures all aspects of institutional life to ensure full participation of People of Color, including their world-view, culture and lifestyles ☐ Implements structures, policies and practices with inclusive decision making and other forms of power sharing on all levels of the institutions life and work ☐ Commits to struggle to dismantle racism in the wider community, and builds clear lines of accountability to racially oppressed communities ☐ Anti-racist multicultural diversity becomes an institutionalized asset ☐ Redefines and rebuilds all relationships and activities in society, based on anti-racist commitments	☐ Future vision of an institution and wider community that has overcome systemic racism and all other forms of oppression. ☐ Institution's life reflects full participation and shared power with diverse racial, cultural and economic groups in determining its mission, structure, constituency, policies and practices ☐ Members across all identity groups are full participants in decisions that shape the institution, and inclusion of diverse cultures, lifestyles, and interest ☐ A sense of restored community and mutual caring ☐ Allies with others in combating all forms of social oppression ☐ Actively works in larger communities (regional, national, global) to eliminate all forms of oppression and to create multicultural organizations.

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.

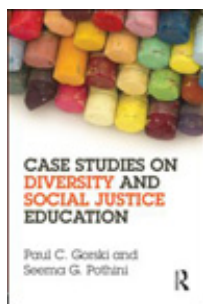
Step 3: Consider possible challenges and opportunities, paying special attention to biases and inequities and how the situation presents an opportunity for dialogue and positive change, not just for those immediately involved, but for the institution.

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: Staff Training

Your Affiliate has been participating in Anti-Racist training for the entire staff. Not all the staff think 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 colleagues discussing it by the water cooler. One colleague 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 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 – Staff Meeting Microaggression

After your equity audit, you are in a staff meeting with other UniServ Directors, your manager, and associate staff. 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 staff 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 their UniServ Director 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?

Reflections, Connections and Notes to Remember

**BARGAINING
FOR THE
COMMON GOOD
RACIAL
JUSTICE GUIDE**



NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

The National Education Association is the nation's largest professional employee organization, representing more than 3 million elementary and secondary school teachers, higher education faculty, education support professionals, school administrators, retired educators, and students preparing to become teachers.

NEA EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

Rebecca S. Pringle
President

Princess R. Moss
Vice President

Noel Candelaria
Secretary-Treasurer

NEA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Mark Jewell
North Carolina

Gladys Fátima Márquez
Illinois

Ron "Duff" Martin
Wisconsin

Shannon McCann
Washington

Robert Rodriguez
California

Christine Sampson-Clark
New Jersey

NEA OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Kim A. Anderson
Executive Director

Karen M. White
Deputy Executive Director

NEA would like to thank the Center for Innovation in Worker Organization/BCG at Rutgers for contributing to the development of this guide. We also want to thank our affiliates, who provided us with many inspiring stories of Bargaining for the Common Good for racial justice demands.

For more information:

Mary Kusler,
Senior Director for Center for Political Action and Advocacy
mkusler@nea.org

Ashley Powell
Creative Services Specialist
apowell@nea.org

Dale Templeton,
Director of Collective Bargaining and Member Advocacy
dtempleton@nea.org

CONTENTS

1

**PRINCIPLES
AND VALUES**

2

**ELEMENTS OF
A BARGAINING
FOR THE
COMMON
GOOD
CAMPAIGN**

3

**SUCCESS
STORIES**

4

RESOURCES



Since the 17th Century, our nation's system of public education has been the undisputed foundation of an inclusive democracy, economy, and society. Public school classrooms are where our students first learn how democratic systems of government work, and where they develop an understanding of the principles and practices that will allow them to participate in the operation of the U.S. government.

Unfortunately, when they should be working to strengthen our democracy, some far-right politicians, policymakers and pundits are actively working to dismantle it. Their weapon? Escalated attacks against public education. From attempting to whitewash the nation's history to eliminating the contributions and lived experiences of Black people and communities of color, to maligning and marginalizing LGBTQ+ students and educators, these attacks are only intended to fulfill the self-serving desires of the attackers and their wealthy donors.

Their efforts are rooted in the fertile ground of this sad truth: Inequity is sewn into every social system in our nation. These inequities make their presence known at every schoolhouse door, and in every other element of far too many communities.

With 3 million members, NEA is the nation's largest labor union. As education professionals devoted to ensuring that the nation's 50 million public school students receive the support, access, and opportunities they all need and deserve, we have not—and we will never—allow these unfounded and harmful attacks to go unanswered. We will continue to follow the North Star of our shared vision: to unite not just our members, but the nation to reclaim public education as a common good, as the foundation of our democracy, and then transform it into something it was never designed to be—a racially and socially just and equitable system that prepares every student, every one, to succeed in this diverse and interdependent world.

This Bargaining for the Common Good Racial Justice Guide represents a critical step toward the achievement of that vision.

The principles of Bargaining for the Common Good (BCG) are fastened to the belief that just as inequity is woven through the fabric of many communities, the collective bargaining process must have woven through it the unique needs and aspirations of the community that encircles the educators and students whose needs are represented at the bargaining table.

In addition to examples of how NEA state affiliates have bargained for the common good in schools and communities nationwide, this guide contains a roadmap for creating campaigns built from intentional, long-term partnerships between unions and community organizations. It also provides information about how those relationships can help to facilitate bargaining proposals designed to end the systemic patterns of racial inequity and injustice that hamper the progress of far too many students, educators, and public schools.

As parents, educators, and communities, we have a shared responsibility to ensure that every student—Black, White, Brown, Indigenous, or AAPI; students from underserved neighborhoods, LGBTQ+ students, and students who are disabled—all of our students—have the joy, justice and excellence they all need and deserve. Through bargaining for the common good, NEA is transforming that desire into a reality for students, educators, and communities across our nation.



Rebecca S. Pringle

President

National Education Association

PURPOSE OF THE RESOURCE GUIDE



INTRODUCTION TO RACIAL JUSTICE CENTERED EDUCATION

National Education Association (NEA) locals across the country are at the forefront of moving strategic demands grounded in racial justice that dismantle historical and pervasive racist structures in education. Locals are building with parents, students, and community partners to fight for a system where all students can thrive no matter their race, gender, or immigration status.

But for years, corporate actors and political players have stood in the way by defunding public schools and privatizing education, disproportionately impacting communities of color and low-income neighborhoods, implementing hurtful discipline policies that predominantly target students of color, and more recently censoring teachings about racial justice and the histories of Native People, Asian American and Pacific Islander, Black, Latino/a/x, Middle Eastern and North African populations.

We must unite to take on these challenges. Union members are recognizing their dual roles as both workers and key leaders in their communities. In a changing and stratified economy, we are expanding collective bargaining, policy fights, and corporate campaigns to address the challenges we face as workers, neighbors, and families. **Labor and community organizations are collaborating to advance unified demands that are relevant to both workers and the broader community.** This way of coming together is called Bargaining for the Common Good (BCG).

In 2022 and 2023, we saw the power and energy of BCG in Oakland, St. Paul, Minneapolis, Los Angeles, and in growing numbers of states. These campaigns brought community members to the bargaining table with unions and thousands into the streets to take on corporate power and fight for the schools, housing, and cities we all deserve.

How are unions and community groups Bargaining for the Common Good?

At the center of BCG campaigns are intentional, long-term alignments between unions and community organizations advancing racial justice demands. Connecting at all levels starting with membership, they build strong, lasting partnerships based on trust and a shared analysis of the systemic problems we are confronting and the solutions necessary to transform our communities. BCG campaigns are centered around joint community-labor planning that brings diverse partners to the table in union bargaining, policy fights, and corporate campaigns that build power and address the crises we all face. BCG work centers racial justice because we must collectively confront structural racism to create a powerful, unified movement.

Building strong, sustainable relationships is not easy. **Effective BCG campaigns require unions to use the bargaining process as a tool to engage members in their dual identities as workers and community members. Community organizations must also educate its members about unions and how they can bargain together.** Both groups must work to overcome any historic animosity or mistrust to develop a shared framework, from membership to leadership, that sees corporations and the wealthy elite as the perpetrators of injustice in our communities and workplaces.

In this resource guide, you will learn more about what makes a Bargaining for the Common Good campaign, along with tools and resources that your local can use to work with partners in your area to run a BCG campaign.

THE RESOURCE GUIDE IS BROKEN UP INTO THE FOLLOWING SECTIONS WITH KEY TAKEAWAYS



SECTION 1: PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

Explains Bargaining for the Common Good and the framework principles that are essential to accomplishing our vision of racially equitable and just schools.

Takeaways:

- We need to run Bargaining for the Common Good racial justice centered campaigns because class and race are not separate.
- If we want to win real people power, we have to build campaigns that include racial justice.

SECTION 2: ELEMENTS OF A BARGAINING FOR THE COMMON GOOD CAMPAIGN

Provides tools and resources to run a Bargaining for the Common Good campaign through the lens of the five elements of BCG.

Takeaways:

- Bargaining for the Common Good campaigns are rooted in building power in our local unions and communities.
- The five elements of a BCG campaign are:
 - Center racial justice in demands
 - Engage community allies as partners in issue development and the bargaining campaign
 - Expand the scope of the bargaining beyond wages and benefits
 - Expose bad actors
 - Strengthen internal organizing, membership, and member engagement
- Community building is an integral part of the strategy and tactics, which means it takes time to develop, create and build, and move forward. To build a BCG campaign, planning begins two years in advance.
- We need to clearly express who the bad actors—the real decision-makers that affect our workplaces and our communities—are and ensure there is a clear connection between the bad actors and the demands.
- Bargaining for the Common Good campaigns require ongoing organizing, base-building, and leadership development.

SECTION 3: SUCCESS STORIES

Shares stories of locals succeeding in building people power in their area.

Takeaways:

- Victories are feasible in different political conditions.
- Organizing doesn't end when we settle the contract or win the campaign. These victories are possible only if organizing is ongoing.

SECTION 4: RESOURCES

Shares links to tools and resources provided in Sections 1-3.

Takeaways:

- A compilation of BCG tools and resources developed by NEA locals.
- Includes a glossary of racial justice language.



PRINCIPLES AND VALUES



BARGAINING FOR THE COMMON GOOD

With Bargaining for the Common Good, union members partner with the community around a long-term vision for the structural changes they want to see in their communities. Together, they use collective bargaining and advocacy as critical components in a broader campaign to win that change, advance racial equity, and build people power.

Educators partner with parents and community members in order to identify issues and utilize bargaining, or other forms of advocacy, as a vehicle to make demands for the entire community.

In states with collective bargaining, contract negotiations provide an opportunity for educators and their unions to involve the larger school community in the vision they want for their school and neighborhood. Instead of going to the bargaining table alone and isolated in negotiations, unions join together with parents and the community, which builds our power. In states without collective bargaining, unions and community groups align to push for policy changes that require school districts and corporate actors to meet the demands of the community.

When we expand the continuum of bargaining, we build power and go on the offense in order to fight for social and racial justice for our students, schools, communities, and the future.

With Bargaining for the Common Good, we not only fight for better pay and benefits for educators, we also fight for students and communities. When stakeholders come together, they can determine what their community needs. NEA members have successfully used the Bargaining for the Common Good strategy to win:

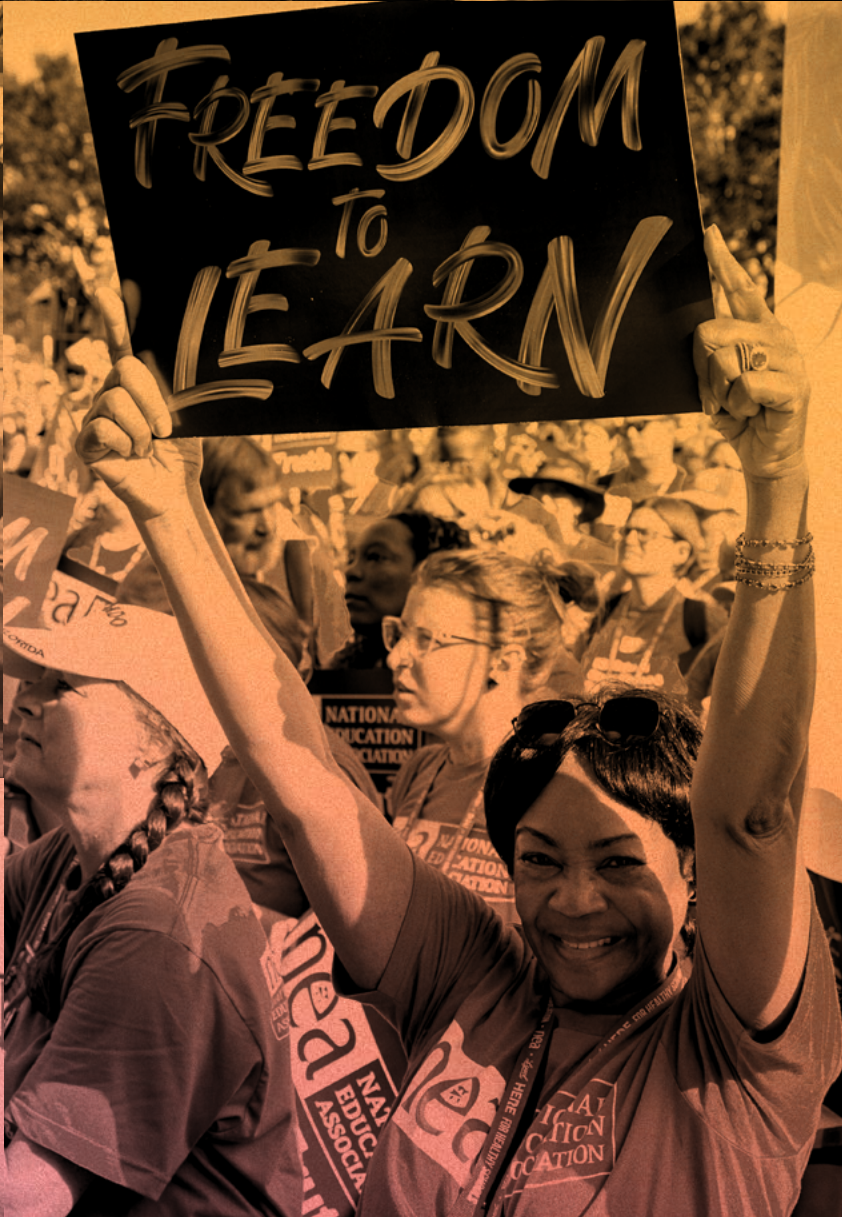
- Less testing
- Smaller class sizes
- Educator recruitment and retention programs
- Equitable school discipline policies
- Mental health support
- More nurses and counselors
- No ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) collaborations
- Implementation of restorative justice
- End random backpack checks
- Institute and/or expand ethnic studies for students

Bargaining for the Common Good works in both areas that have collective bargaining and areas that do not. The mechanics may differ, but the fundamentals are the same.



“In addition to salaries that keep up with inflation and smaller class sizes, Oakland educators held the line for almost seven days on what are known as, ‘common good demands.’ Common-good bargaining refers to agreements that go beyond issues of wages and benefits in an attempt to have a positive impact on the broader community. Under the new tentative contract, the Oakland Unified School District agreed to educators’ demands to utilize unused school buildings for nonprofit housing developments, provide resources for unhoused students, and fund programs such as the Black Thriving Community Schools that would empower Black students with leadership opportunities . . . The groundbreaking common-good demands won in Los Angeles and Oakland are proof that by standing together, educators have the power to effect change outside of normal bread-and-butter issues. Now, students and communities will benefit from the hard work that educators have put in to achieve these victories.

– Cecily Myart-Cruz, President of UTLA and Bargaining for the Common Good Advisory Committee member, “The California Teachers’ Strikes Have a Vital Lesson for the Labor Movement,” The Nation, May 19, 2023.



RACIAL JUSTICE IN EDUCATION FRAMEWORK PRINCIPLES

NEA has a vision for quality public education for every student. We know that institutional and structural racism are barriers to achieving our vision. We will leverage the power and collective voice of our members to end the systematic patterns of racial inequity and injustice that affect our Association, schools, students, and education communities.

It is our belief that these Framework principles are essential to accomplishing our vision of racially equitable and just schools:

- Our collective work promotes a vision for public education that advances inclusion, equity, and racial and social justice in our schools, Association, and society.
- Our collective work must dismantle white supremacy, and ensure that bigotry and discrimination based on gender, sexual orientation, disability, or national origin is not part of our Association, classrooms, educational curricula, classroom management, school policies, and discipline practices.
- Our Association and schools must be safe for all students, and free from state-sanctioned, racialized, and gender-based violence. Our work must actively divest from prison cultivation and invest in counselors and positive discipline practices.
- Our work must result in action—programs, campaigns, policies, and capacity-building efforts for local NEA members that dismantle institutional racism now and into the future. Initiatives should create sustainable infrastructures that can continue to create systemic change and hold decision-makers, elected officials, and institutions accountable.
- Our current governance leaders must recruit, engage, and promote leadership by educators of color to share the ladder of opportunity because we are stronger together.
- Programs, campaigns, and projects must be driven by goals that are clearly outlined, tracked, and measured, and that have accountability systems that explicitly promote racial justice.
- Our work must promote education policies, professional practices, and curricula that highlight and honor the histories and cultures of Native People and People of Color.
- We must work to ensure that all students have access to a safe and quality education, regardless of their country of origin or immigration status.
- Our work must promote and support the engagement of students of color and LGBTQ students in shaping policies that directly impact their educational experience and foster safe and inclusive schools.
- We must work to dismantle discipline systems that create the School-to-Prison Pipeline and replace them with practices that encourage inclusion and are free from racial and ethnic bias.

CONNECTING FRAMEWORK ELEMENTS

Throughout our history, the NEA has joined in partnership to move policies that would address inequities in education, but we understand now that racial justice in education requires movement beyond racial equity. A lack of movement will keep us at the precipice of doing a lot with limited ability to sustain it.

It will require that:

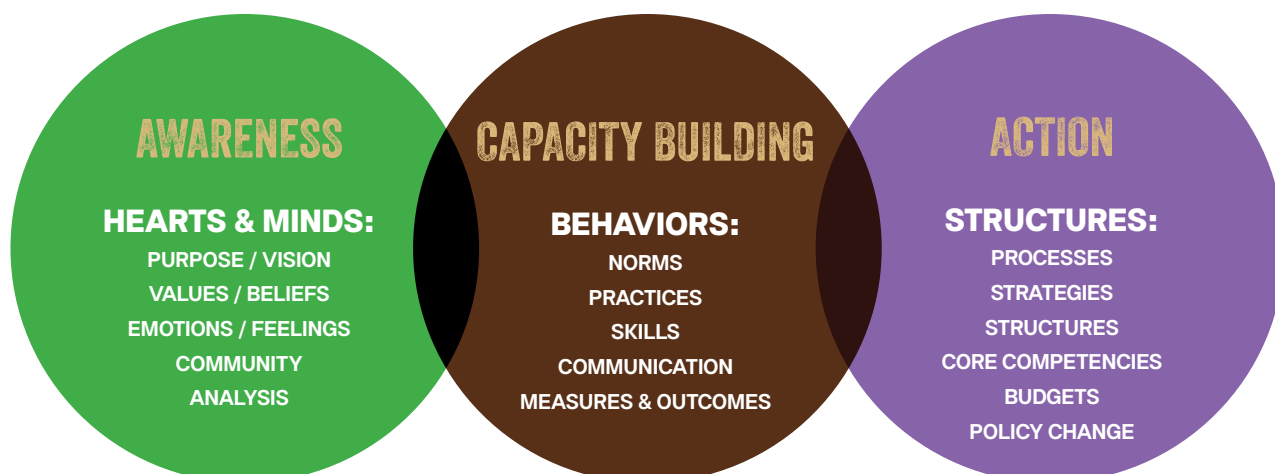
- We have a deep understanding of racial history and the associated trauma and are able to acknowledge the presence of this trauma within current systems, norms, practices, and policies.
- We focus on solutions that will build power (e.g., political, economic, civic, community) for the most sharply impacted communities and people.
- We effectively use racial impact assessment tools and develop racial justice action plans.
- We shift and share power, programs, and resources.
- We adopt anti-racist and racial justice protocols and practices.
- We shift culture and narrative.
- We use data to drive results/impacts.

The NEA Racial Justice in Education Framework was developed in conjunction with the principles and concepts embedded in the “Wheel of Change” model (adapted from the Rockwood Wheel of Change). This Framework centers and guides our systems change work, including our approach and implementation of Bargaining for the Common Good campaigns.

AWARENESS

Goal: Develop and strengthen our collective awareness and understanding of the causes and impacts of systemic (i.e., institutional and structural) racism in education and both the necessity and centrality of racial justice in achieving NEA’s mission.

- Build racial equity awareness and analytical capacity across our Association.
- Foster understanding of key concepts such as systemic (institutional and structural) racism, implicit bias, racial equity, and multiracial systemic solutions.
- Develop shared knowledge and conceptual clarity that supports normalizing explicit and constructive conversations about race.



CAPACITY BUILDING

Goal: Equip and prepare members and leaders with skills to use the strategies to take action to advance racial justice.

- Equip members, leaders, staff, and partners with the skills, tools, strategies, resources and relationships to be effective leaders and advocates in the fight for racial justice in education.
- Develop tools and resources to support organizational and cultural change through policy, practice, and behavior changes.

ACTION

Goal: Equip members and stakeholders with tools and skills to advocate, organize, and mobilize to disrupt institutional racism and advance racial justice in education.

- Engage and activate members, leaders, and stakeholders in on-the-ground efforts to combat institutional racism and advance racial justice.
- Support external organizing efforts to advance changes in our schools and communities.
- Support internal opportunities to implement equitable practices that positively impact the Association's work and promote culture change.

SECTION 1: PRINCIPLES AND VALUES

TAKEAWAYS:

- We need to run Bargaining for the Common Good racial justice centered campaigns because class and race are not separate.
- If we want to win real people power, we have to build campaigns that include racial justice.

ELEMENTS OF BARGAINING FOR THE COMMON GOOD

2

CENTER RACIAL JUSTICE IN YOUR DEMANDS

Campaign demands should address the role that employers play in creating and exacerbating structural racism in our communities.

What does it mean to center racial justice demands?

Racial dynamics, disparities, and divisions permeate our society, communities, schools, and classrooms. Systemic racism is so deeply rooted in our history, culture, and institutions that there is no escaping it. Visible or not, the impacts are ever-present. Racial justice is the systematic fair treatment of people of all races, resulting in equitable opportunities and outcomes for all. Racial justice (or racial equity) goes beyond “anti-racism.” It is not just the absence of discrimination and inequities, but also the presence of deliberate systems and supports to achieve and sustain racial equity through proactive and preventative measures.



To engage in a systems analysis of a racial issue and develop solutions or to test if the campaign demands center racial justice, good discussion questions to have with partners and union members include:

- **Problems:** What racial inequities are you noticing or experiencing? What are the impacts on different racial groups? Who benefits most and who is hurt most?
- **Causes:** What institutions, policies, or practices are causing or contributing to the inequities? What social norms, popular myths, or cultural biases may be contributing?
- **History:** How did things get this way and are things worsening or improving?
- **Solutions:** What solutions could address the root causes and eliminate the inequities? How would different racial groups be impacted by the proposed solutions?
- **Strategies:** What strategies and actions could be used to advance the solutions?
- **Leadership:** Who are the stakeholders most affected by the inequities? Are they involved in naming the issues and solutions? What kinds of active leadership roles could they take to advance the proposed solution?

Source: <https://neaedjustice.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Racial-Justice-in-Education.pdf>



OTHER TOOLS YOU CAN USE TO ENSURE A DELIBERATE ANTI-RACIST CAMPAIGN

RACIAL EQUITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

A racial equity impact assessment is used for making decisions with deliberate attention to racial justice, social justice, equity, and inclusion. It provides a guide and protocol for race- and equity-conscious decision-making that is thoughtful, transparent, participatory, and systematic. This type of tool can be used to analyze policies and contract language, institutional practices, programs, plans, and budgetary decisions.

Fix L.A. was a community-labor partnership that fought successfully for:

1. The creation of 5,000 jobs, with a commitment to increase access to jobs for Black and Latino/a/x workers.
2. The defeat of proposed concessions for city workers.
3. A commitment from the city to review why it was prioritizing payment of bank fees over funding for critical services.

“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.”

- Maurice Weeks and Marilyn Sneiderman, In These Times, “Why Labor and the Movement for Racial Justice Should Work Together”, September 02, 2016.

BARGAINING FOR THE COMMON GOOD DEMANDS:

Bargaining for the Common Good campaigns are rooted in winning racial justice demands. Many have generated amazing wins and demands across the country.

This booklet provides concrete examples of common good demands that unions and community groups have bargained for across the country. Some of these demands have been won in bargaining or outside the negotiations table, and some are still being fought for.

NEA locals have been at the forefront of winning BCG campaigns. They have identified and won racial justice demands across the country. Demands can be about a range of issues from public health and safety, safe working and learning conditions, academic success, and social and emotional well-being. The list of sample demands includes:

- Acknowledge the pandemic was not experienced equally by all communities and populations, particularly in rural areas and communities of color. Listen and learn how different families handled virtual learning.
- Provide and prioritize housing, food, health, dental, and job services in neighborhood schools because it is a common-sense way to begin to address racial justice issues and the racial inequities they create and exacerbate.
- End attempts to re-segregate our school communities with charters, vouchers, and other privatization schemes that funnel resources away from public schools.
- Ensure school plans for in-person instruction are inclusive and equitable for all educators and students by humanizing learning environments and designing spaces that are situated in the experiences of communities of color, not just through white, cis-hetero, and ableist lenses.
- Ensure adequate time is provided for classroom community-building activities and consider additional staff to allow for the development of restorative practices in schools.
- Prioritize hiring, retaining, and promoting educators of color.

BUILDING YOUR RACIAL JUSTICE TEAM:

Building the right team to make decisions and move this work is critical. Your racial justice campaign team should include a leadership team, organizing/mobilizing team, communications team, political team, and in a collective bargaining campaign, a bargaining team. There should also be team members who lead the research work and legislative/policy development.

- The **leadership team** will direct and oversee the entire campaign. They have a bird's eye view and focus on advancing the campaign forward. They provide the vision and make the tough decisions with input from the rest of the team.
- The **organizing and mobilizing team** is responsible for recruiting impacted people and new partners and mobilizing members and activists. They communicate frequently and engage members and activists in two-way conversations about the campaign's vision, strategy, and action plan.
- The **communications team** drives the internal and external communications. They educate and agitate activists and members, work with the media and develop social media to define the narrative, and build public support.
- The **political team** leads the efforts to build support from elected officials, work with political partners who support the campaign, and hold those who do not accountable.
- The **research team** is responsible for pulling together information, data, and facts to support the campaign. They ensure that any data being shared is sourced legitimately and correctly. They are critical in identifying and building a case around the bad actors.

None of these teams work in silos, they work together. They can be a combination of staff, paid release members, and/or volunteer teams. It may be that the political team is from a community partner group and the research team is from the local union. Either way, the teams should understand their roles and how they interact with each other.

It is important to note that sometimes a team is one or two people depending on resources, size of the local, and staffing capacity. The different teams should develop the racial justice demands and be able to drive the campaign forward through a racial justice lens.

CENTERING LEADERSHIP OF NATIVE PEOPLE AND PEOPLE OF COLOR:

The term Native People recognizes the first people of this land, having sovereign national and tribal status, as well as a racialized identity. The term People of Color refers to Asian American and Pacific Islander, Black, Latino/a/x, Middle Eastern and North African, and Multiracial populations. It isn't enough to have Native People and People of Color activists in the campaigns. Centering means Native People and People of Color have a leading voice, are listened to, trusted, and have decision-making power within the partnership.

ENGAGE COMMUNITY ALLIES AS PARTNERS IN ISSUE DEVELOPMENT AND THE BARGAINING CAMPAIGN:

Bring in community partners on the ground floor and develop issues, goals, and strategies together. Common good is about building long-term community-labor power.



BUILDING LONG-TERM COMMUNITY-LABOR POWER TAKES TIME.

Community building is an integral part of a Bargaining for the Common Good campaign, which means it takes time to develop, create, build, and move demands forward. It is important to remember that organizing does not end when the contract is settled or the campaign demands are met or won. As shown in the timeline below, before the launch of a campaign, there are a few steps that can take anywhere between six months to a year or more.

COMMUNITY BUILDING IS THE FIRST STEP:

Whether you live in a big city, a suburban town, or a rural community, there are people who care about the same issues and share your values. But to build a sustainable, long-term relationship, work is required upfront. This may include many 1-on-1 meetings, group presentations, follow-up calls, and more follow-up calls, Zoom calls, emails and more follow-up calls. It is not just about building your member list, but also building relationships. What do the leaders care about? Why do they do this work? What problems are their communities facing? What solutions do they see? Where do you share common ground and where do you have differences in your organization?

BASIC STEPS TO A BARGAINING FOR THE COMMON GOOD CAMPAIGN:

This outlines steps starting about 1.5 years before bargaining to after settling the contract. Bargaining for the Common Good campaigns are about building long-term power and changing the power dynamics in our communities, so it is important to think about the work as multi-year that continues after the contract campaign ends.

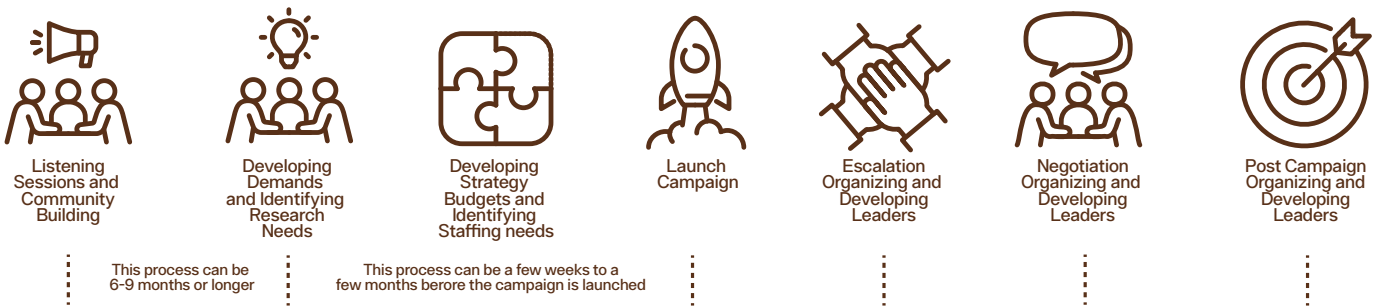
BARGAINING FOR THE COMMON GOOD ASSESSMENT TOOL:

This tool is to help reflect on how to build and strengthen a Common Good strategy for your organization or union. This will help you assess where to focus your time and resources to build towards developing transformational relationships, running strong campaigns, and winning Common Good demands!

COMMUNITY MAPPING:

Community mapping is about learning about your community and identifying resources and important networks and relationships. Community mapping includes:

- Surveying your membership and identifying where you have existing relationships and connections to community leaders, organizations, and networks.
- Developing lists of key contacts/social networks—this is the organizer's network of power.
- Proactively developing relationships with these existing networks and organizations makes it possible to mobilize their resources around a shared campaign.
- Prioritizing and focusing outreach to build relationships with the networks that most deeply represent the community, not just those that are familiar and comfortable.



COMMUNITY LISTENING TOURS:

Listening sessions are helpful to build relationships and understand partners' interests, the problems they see in the community, and potential solutions. Listening sessions can be conducted through one-on-one meetings, community meetings, or surveys.

- **Community Listening Session:** Sample list of questions developed by the Saint Paul Federation of Educators (SPFE) to learn more about the community interests and concerns.
- **Community Survey - Family Version:** Survey for families and parents about their interests and concerns.
- **Community Survey - Community Version:** Survey for community members about their issues and concerns.
- **Community Survey:** Sample survey developed by the Fix L.A. coalition.
- **Parent Interviewing:** A sample video of a meeting with parents to better understand their needs opinions, and resolutions.
- **Parent + Small Biz Organizing Conversation:** Sample conversation with questions to engage parents and small businesses.

ENGAGING COMMUNITY LEADERS AND RANK AND FILE MEMBERS:

These are not transactional “we do this for you and you do that for me” relationships. These are sustainable relationships built on trust, respect, and a shared analysis of the conditions and mutual goals to build people power. It is critical that community and labor develop and build the campaign together from the beginning. These relationships will continue after the campaign, so it is important to start with a solid foundation and build with intentionality. This includes:

CREATING A SHARED VISION:

Working with union and community partners to identify priority issues, solutions, and a vision for the campaign is crucial in creating a shared vision. Union members and community partners understand the problems that they are facing in their workplace and communities and have ideas for solutions. It is important for rank and file members and community activists to assist in identifying priority issues and solutions, including why and how it will benefit workers and the community at large, and the vision for building long-term power.

Watch a webinar that shows how a strong community-labor partnership works in action and wins people power! United Teachers Los Angeles former President Alex Caputo-Pearl; Ruby Gordillo, Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) Parent, Rudy Gonzalves of the Los Angeles Alliance for a New Economy (LAANE); Amy Schur of the Alliance of Californians for Community Engagement (ACCE), and other community leaders and parents discuss the strategies and lessons learned from the recent victorious Bargaining for the Common Good campaign and strike.

<https://vimeo.com/319978916>

DEVELOPING A JOINT STRATEGY:

The strategy is your guiding star of how to win the demands. You may choose to launch a corporate campaign, or push the school board to change a policy or a town council to pass legislation, or fight for state funding. All partners must be clear about the pathway to winning and decisions stemming from the strategy. Strategies may need to change if an assessment is made that they are not effective or a campaign may have multiple strategies. For example, a campaign may call on the state legislature to fulfill its constitutional funding requirement for public education and target the corporations that do not pay taxes.

Developing a plan in partnership takes time. There are many decisions to make such as assessments, organizing plans, communications strategies, and more. A written plan is critical to ensure that all stakeholders understand the decisions made, what is happening next, and the campaign progress. Review the following to help develop your campaign plan:

- **Local campaign plan:** A comprehensive campaign planning tool for locals and partners.
- **Power Mapping Activity:** Sample exercise developed by the Colorado Education Association to analyze the power structures, influencers, and stakeholders in your community.

DEVELOPING AN ORGANIZING PLAN:

Organizing gets people fired up (agitated) and identifies what is at stake so that participants understand how the cause is personally relevant to them and take action. At the beginning of a campaign plan, start with mild actions and escalate. Examples of mild forms of action are collecting petition signatures or wearing a union button at the workplace. Strikes or civil disobedience are bold actions.

- Use the issues that are happening in the BCG campaign to motivate members to take collective action.
- During the life of a BCG campaign, members should be able to articulate why they are taking action and what they hope to achieve before taking action.
- Different tactics will be required to move different targets.
- Evaluate in real time if the actions are helping, hindering, or not effective and why.

Escalation tactics or direct actions are important to any campaign that is designed to build long-term power. The goal of escalation tactics or direct actions goes beyond highlighting the problem and getting media attention. Escalation tactics or direct actions have four key elements:

- **ESCALATE THE CRISIS:** Deliver a message that exposes the crisis. Create the narrative about who is responsible for that crisis—target.
- **ESCALATE THE TARGET:** Expose the target; turn the target toxic. Cost the target resources—votes, money, time, influence, etc.
- **ESCALATE YOUR VOICE:** If the target ignores the tactics/actions, escalate the tension on a specific demand. Force the target to choose between ongoing direct action or meeting the demand.
- **ESCALATE YOUR BASE:** Develop and energize your leaders and base.

“Nonviolent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and foster such a tension that a community which has constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue.”

- Martin Luther King, Jr., *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*

Possible actions may include:

- Walking out of a meeting en masse
- Speaking to the media
- Calling a meeting of supporters
- Reaching out to parents
- Meeting as a small group
- Striking
- Running a social media profile picture campaign
- Wearing red on Thursdays
- Stickering up
- Circulating a public petition and deliver it to the school board
- Rallying, for example, have staff rally outside school before the start of the school day and walk in together
- Presenting signage and/or protesting in a high-visibility public space
- Red out: staff decorating their rooms in union colors
- Distributing flyers to parents at the school choice fair
- Informational picketing
- Open bargaining
- Setting up lawn signs
- Visiting corporate actors defunding public schools/ supporting charter schools

IDENTIFYING CLEAR ASKS:

Not many people spontaneously get involved. It takes an invitation to participate or an ask for people to take action. Most people will volunteer or donate to a cause that shares their values when asked. In campaigns, the same principles apply. If you can connect to their value systems and the ask is clear and concise, people will get involved. Recruiting activists, rank and file members, and members of the public to join the campaign means having a clear ask and showing why their involvement matters.

Affirm, Answer, and Redirect is a useful organizing tactic when faced with an individual who blocks or objects to the vision of the campaign or action plan.

1. Affirm:

Although you may disagree with the person, or not share their experience, it is important to show that you hear their frustration, and try to understand where they are coming from.

2. Answer:

It is very important to give an honest answer. If you can give them information that responds to their question, or helps them see the issue differently, do it. If you made a mistake, own it. If there is information that you do not know, tell them you will research it and get back to them (and make sure you do).

3. Re-direct:

At the end of the day, the power to win depends on one thing: the involvement of the people—union members and community partners. So look for ways to re-direct their frustration towards participating in a collective project that will help them see that the campaign is powerful (like the next action). Then repeat your ask.

EXPAND THE SCOPE OF BARGAINING BEYOND WAGES AND BENEFITS:

Identify issues that resonate with members, partners, and allies and that impact our communities. Put forth demands that address structural issues, not just symptoms of the problem.

DEVELOP AND DEEPEN LEADERS' SHARED POLITICAL ANALYSIS:

With an intentional approach to developing and deepening leaders' shared political analysis, BCG campaigns move away from short-term mobilization efforts that develop little to no power and instead harness collective power to develop long term and major wins for our schools and communities. This can take form in different ways like short workshops, training sessions, organizing conversations, and more.

Political education should:

- Be grounded in the racial justice demands and explain the racial dynamics that the demands are addressing.
- Articulate a clear connection between Bargaining for the Common Good demands and the problems workers and communities are facing.
- Include space for labor and community partners to share their stories, interests, and lived experiences that build trust and connections across all participants.
- Build activists' confidence and effectiveness in engaging hesitant colleagues and recruiting members of the public to join the campaign.
- Make it clear what is at stake, who the bad actors are, why the target has power, and how the campaign plan will motivate the targets to meet demands.
- Meet people's education level, literacy proficiency, and language needs. It may mean investing in translators and interpreters and/or an experienced popular educator.

EXPOSE THE BAD ACTORS:

Go on offense in your campaign by identifying, exposing, and challenging the real villains; the financial and corporate actors who profit from and increasingly drive policies and actions.

DO THE RESEARCH:

Scarcity politics and financialization of the economy have devastated our communities and schools for decades and driven funding to the one percent. Research to identify who and how divestment happened in your community is key. Groups like LittleSis and Hedge Clippers are good sources to help map out the financial and corporate actors.

Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA) called on state and federal elected officials to fund public education through progressive revenue. The MTA and its partners identified 19 billionaires in Massachusetts whose wealth grew while state coffers were depleted during the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak. They used the data to agitate and gain the public in support of the campaign's three key demands.

source:

<https://massteacher.org/-/media/massteacher/files/initiatives/education-funding/now-more-than-ever/net-worth-of-massachusetts-billionaires.pdf?la=en>

source:

https://massteacher.org/-/media/massteacher/files/initiatives/education-funding/now-more-than-ever/mta_tax_flyer.pdf?la=en

TARGET THE POWER BROKER:

Identify the decision-makers who can meet the demands. Power mapping can help identify and map the power relationships, who influences power brokers, and your groups' relationships to them. Some general questions to start the identification process include:

- Is it a corporate entity and who in the corporation has the power? Is it the CEO of the bank?
- Is it a government entity? Is it one person or a group of decision-makers? Is it the mayor or city council? Is it the school board?
- Where do they get their power? Who is in their circle of influence?
- What do they care about?

POWER MAPPING:

The Power Mapping tool can help the campaign identify the power dynamics within your community, including allies, opposition, decision-makers, and influencers.



GENERATE PUBLIC SUPPORT:

Building public support is about agitating the public against the bad actors. Be clear in your messaging as to why the bad actor is responsible. Your communications team can help generate stories for traditional outlets like radio and newspaper. Rank and file members and activists can use social media to build up the campaign. The message and narrative should be clear, concise, and consistent across platforms. The following are samples and guidelines for effective messaging:

- Social media posts and news story highlighting the same message:
 - Seattle Education Association
 - Recess, it's important, does your child get enough of it?
- Campaign websites:
 - San Antonio Alliance, Local 67
 - Reclaim Our Schools LA
 - Higher Education Labor United (HELU).
- Messaging and Media Relations Toolkit: Helps develop an effective messaging strategy and build relationships with different news sources
- Digital Best Practices: For Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and other social media outlets

STRENGTHEN INTERNAL ORGANIZING, MEMBERSHIP, AND MEMBER ENGAGEMENT:

These campaigns must deeply engage the memberships of both unions and community organizations, and there must be opportunities for deep relationship building and joint visioning among the members of the different organizations.

Engaged groups produce transparent, useful, relevant, and frequent member communications, such as printed or electronic newsletters. Most importantly, leaders should be open and transparent, which means producing relevant and frequent updates to keep members engaged and active. You should feel comfortable contacting your state/national affiliate communications department for assistance and best practices.

CONTRACT ACTION TEAM (CAT):

Establish a new internal union network of member activists to engage and activate members using a two-way pipeline of communication. The union's ability to successfully win demands for members and the community depends upon the union's strength and power. Strength and power derive from a solid foundation of organizing union members and community stakeholders that increases activism, engagement, and solidarity.

By creating vital new roles and delegating responsibilities, your local can position itself to build capacity and develop enough power to win demands. It also enables your local to identify new activists and leaders to continue to build on its successes for the future along with a strong and sustainable democratic movement.

STEWARD/MOBILIZER:

Your members, especially your stewards or mobilizers, are crucial to the success of the campaign. This requires continually building the team and communicating with them frequently, so they can organize at their workplace and in their communities. Stewards should have a WhatsApp or Signal group and an email list for their building. They should have a weekly plan of how they will communicate with other members, updates and an action plan for the day or week and an explanation of why the action is important, and a role for the members.

1-ON-1 ORGANIZING MEETINGS:

The heart of organizing is about building relationships, which means 1-on-1 organizing conversations. A strong organizing conversation is not like a chat with a friend or loved one. It's a guided conversation that builds connection, engages people in collective action, and helps develop leaders. When a worksite has good, strong leaders who can educate and move their co-workers into action, it's harder for the boss to pit workers against each other.

10-MINUTE MEETINGS:

A fundamental way to disseminate information and empower leaders at the worksite level is to develop a 10-minute meeting system. Short, concise, and frequent meetings increase attendance. Be sure your 10-minute meetings make time for two-way communication. Campaign updates can easily be broken into basic 10-minute meeting agendas. You can break up complex topics related to contract proposals, legislative initiatives, or policy demands into bite-sized pieces within these meetings. Plus, it allows decentralized conversations and a place for local action-taking/planning for early tactics such as button wearing, petition circulation, etc.

GROUP TEXTS:

Texting is an immediate communication tool for quick updates, reminders, and time-sensitive information sharing, but it does not replace the face time necessary for developing relationships and trust with members and community allies.

Before you send your first text message—remember that there are federal laws that prohibit bulk text messaging. Contact your attorney, as well as your state affiliate or NEA, to learn more about different texting platforms you can use to reach our members and supporters within the law.

WEBSITE/ONLINE RESOURCE:

Creating a landing place for members and allies to reference information can be important for the campaign, but it isn't always necessary. Only use a website if your campaign would benefit from a landing page to publicly post resources or documents. Always add a link or directions for how to take action.

SOCIAL MEDIA:

Use social media platforms that make sense to our audience—members/potential-members and community supporters. It is also a great tool for producing media during various parts of the campaign. NEA offers local leaders and staff a variety of additional [social media best practices](#).

Tools and Materials:

- [Sample 10-minute meeting agenda](#)
- [1-on-1 Organizing Conversation Guide](#)
- [Build the CAT structure](#)

SECTION 2: ELEMENTS OF A BARGAINING FOR THE COMMON GOOD CAMPAIGN

TAKEAWAYS:

- **Bargaining for the Common Good Campaigns are rooted in building people power in our local unions and communities.**
- **The five elements of a BCG campaign are:**
 - **Center racial justice in your demands**
 - **Engage community allies as partners in issue development and the bargaining campaign**
 - **Expand the scope of the bargaining beyond wages and benefits**
 - **Expose bad actors**
 - **Strengthen internal organizing, membership, and member engagement**
- **Community building is an integral part of the strategy and tactics, which means it takes time to develop, create, build, and move forward. To build a BCG campaign, planning begins two years in advance.**
- **We need to clearly express who the bad actors are and ensure there is a clear connection between the bad actors and the demands.**
- **Bargaining for the Common Good campaigns require ongoing organizing, base-building, and leadership development.**



SUCCESS STORIES

3

SUCCESS STORIES

Columbus, Ohio

The Columbus Education Association (CEA) won an agreement to help address racism and racial disparity. As part of their newest contract, CEA earned professional development opportunities for bargaining unit members in the school board's ongoing Strategic Plan.

Source: <http://www.ceaoio.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/MOU-Re-2021-2022-School-Year-Final-Signed.pdf>

Jefferson County, Colorado

The Jefferson County Education Association fought successfully to implement a staffing and classroom diversity program, including recruiting and retaining staff that reflects the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of the student body, and a mentorship program for staff of color. In addition, they formed an Equity Accountability Committee responsible for addressing equity in the district, which would engage the school community.

Source: https://cdnsm5-ss12.sharpschool.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_627881/File/Print%20Agreement%20JCEA%20Final%2007.2023%20Website.pdf

Minneapolis, Minnesota

The Minneapolis Federation of Teachers (MFT) established the Anti-Bias Anti-Racist Educator Development and Support Council, which set up sub-committees specifically tasked with recommending establishing initiatives for recruitment, retention, and development of educators of color and the improvement of district-wide climate and culture. These sub-committees will continue to work to instill a sense of permanency in anti-bias anti-racist initiatives and development.

Source: https://www.mft59.org/files/ugd/bf7435_4a4f8e-50f33e4777a22b23c598e1641e.pdf

St. Paul, Minnesota

Read about how St. Paul teachers, parents, and students organized for the schools their students deserved and won: "Teacher-Community Unionism: A Lesson from St. Paul: How one teachers union brought parents and students into the bargaining process—and won."

Source: <https://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/teacher-community-unionism-lesson-st-paul>

Seattle, Washington

Following a weeklong strike by more than 6,000 educators of the SEA, a new three-year contract was settled with major wins for both the students and educators of Seattle Public Schools (SPS). Seattle was facing a multitude of systemic problems such as increased class sizes, workload, and staffing cuts; racial inequality of resources and services; unsafe learning and working conditions; unaffordable cost of living for many lower-wage staff; and a looming educator shortage crisis. They established a Joint Task Force for multilingual education and language immersion to improve inclusionary services and student equity and create incentives for teaching.

Source: <https://vimeo.com/208734309>

Sacramento, California

The Sacramento City Teachers Association included parents, business leaders, and community members in their contract negotiations in their bid to make Sac City the destination district in California for students and educators.

Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IBPNX-tajjO>

San Diego, California

In coordination with community partners, parents, and students, the San Diego Education Association (SDEA) identified several bargaining goals with a heavy emphasis on racial justice. To address historical divestment across districts in schools located within communities of color, demands will focus on curriculum, ethnic studies, allocation of resources, educator pipelines, restorative practices, and support for educators and students of color. All these issues run parallel to their advocacy for community schools, staffing, and class size. Bargaining by the local is underway as of summer 2023.

Source: <https://www.sdea.net/2023/04/san-diego-community-schools-coalition-demands-more-after-school-opportunities-in-san-diego-unified/>



SECTION 3: SUCCESS STORIES

TAKEAWAYS:

- Victories are feasible in different political conditions but we have to plan and organize.
- Organizing doesn't end when we settle the contract or win the campaign. These victories are possible only if organizing is ongoing.

RESOURCES

4

RESOURCES

ASSESSMENT TOOL FOR RACIAL EQUITY:

Provides discussion questions to have with partners and union members.

RACIAL EQUITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT:

Is used for making decisions with deliberate attention to racial justice, social justice, equity, and inclusion. A guide and protocol for race- and equity-conscious decision-making that is thoughtful, transparent, participatory, and systematic.

BARGAINING FOR THE COMMON GOOD DEMANDS:

Concrete examples of common good demands that unions and community groups have bargained for across the country. Some of these demands have been won in bargaining or outside the negotiations table, and some have only been introduced.

RACIAL JUSTICE DEMANDS:

List of racial justice demands that local unions and community partners can develop together.

BASIC STEPS TO A BARGAINING FOR THE COMMON GOOD CAMPAIGN:

Outlines steps starting about 1.5 years before bargaining to after settling the contract.

BARGAINING FOR THE COMMON GOOD ASSESSMENT TOOL:

This tool helps organizations or unions reflect on how to build and strengthen a Common Good strategy.

COMMUNITY MAPPING:

Worksheet to map out the community networks of members and activists.

COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSION:

Sample list of questions developed by the Saint Paul Federation of Educators (SPFE) to learn about community interests and concerns.

COMMUNITY SURVEY - FAMILY VERSION:

Survey for families and parents about their interests and concerns.

COMMUNITY SURVEY - COMMUNITY VERSION:

Survey for community members about their issues and concerns.

FIX L.A. COMMUNITY SURVEY:

Sample survey to gather information about the community.

PARENT INTERVIEWING:

A sample video of a meeting with parents to better understand their needs, opinions, and resolutions.

PARENT (AND SMALL BUSINESS) ORGANIZING CONVERSATION - GUIDE:

Sample conversation with questions to engage parents and small businesses.

LOCAL CAMPAIGN PLAN:

A comprehensive campaign planning tool for locals and partners.

COLORADO EDUCATION ASSOCIATION POWER MAPPING ACTIVITY:

Sample exercise developed by the Colorado Education Association, which can be used to analyze the power structures, influencers, and stakeholders in your community.

POWER MAPPING TOOL:

Can help the campaign identify the power dynamics within your community, including the allies, opposition, decision-makers, and influencers.

MESSAGING AND MEDIA RELATIONS TOOLKIT:

Designed to help develop an effective messaging strategy and build relationships with different news sources.

DIGITAL BEST PRACTICES:

For Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and other social media outlets.

NEA GUIDE TO TRANSFORMATIONAL

ORGANIZING CONVERSATIONS:

1-on-1 organizing conversations guide to help you start recruitment conversations and navigate the tough questions that members and non-members raise.

SAMPLE 10-MINUTE MEETING AGENDA:

Sample worksite meeting agenda to help disseminate information and mobilize workers quickly.

BUILD THE CAT STRUCTURE:

Internal union network of member activists.

SECTION 4: RESOURCES**TAKEAWAYS:**

- A compilation of BCG tools and resources developed by NEA locals.
- Includes a glossary of racial justice language. See next page.



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Glossary of racial justice language

Understanding the context and historical background that many terms convey is essential to encouraging usage that reflects cultural and racial awareness. Using shared language builds a strong foundation among campaign partners, helps prevent translation issues, and empowers workers and activists to speak with confidence and knowledge.

Sources: [Equity in the Center](#) and [Dismantling Racism Works](#)

Affirmative action – This term describes policies adopted since the 1960s that require “affirmative” (or positive) actions to ensure people of color and women have opportunities equal to those of white men in promotions, salary increases, school admissions, financial aid, scholarships, and representation among vendors in government contracts. Although they have been effective in redressing injustice and discrimination that persisted in spite of civil rights laws and constitutional guarantees, these policies have been attacked because of perceived “reverse discrimination.” The Supreme Court has not ruled all affirmative action unconstitutional, but it has limited the use and ways in which policies can be written and applied. See “Reverse Racism.”

Anti-racism – The work of actively opposing racism by advocating for changes in political, economic, and social life. Anti-racism tends to be an individualized approach to oppose individual racist behaviors and impacts.

Civil rights – A group of laws designed to protect various groups against discrimination based on race, sex, religion, age, national origin, and other characteristics. Often used in connection to the civil rights movement, widely recognized as taking place from 1954 to 1968, which included issues and practices such as school desegregation, sit-ins, Freedom Rides, voter registration campaigns, and acts of civil disobedience to protest racial discrimination.

Class – Classism is the systematic oppression of subordinated class groups, held in place by attitudes that rank people according to economic status, family lineage, job status, level of education, and other divisions. One’s race can be a major determinant of one’s social or economic class. The variables of race and class, though closely connected, each need distinct attention.

“Colorblind” – A term used to describe the act or practice of disregarding or ignoring racial characteristics, or being uninfluenced by racial prejudice. The concept of colorblindness is often promoted by those who dismiss the importance of race in order to proclaim the end of racism. It presents challenges when discussing diversity, which requires being racially aware, and equity that is focused on fairness for people of all races.

Colorism – Discrimination based on skin color, which often privileges lighter-skinned people within a racial group, positioning people with darker complexions at the bottom of the racial hierarchy. It is an example of how white supremacy can operate amongst the members of a single racial or ethnic group. This form of prejudice often results in reduced opportunities for those who are discriminated against, and numerous studies have revealed differences in life outcomes by complexion.

Cultural appropriation or “misappropriation” – Adoption of elements of a culture that has been subordinated in social, political, and economic status by a different cultural group. It may rely on offensive stereotypes and is insensitive to how the culture of a group has been exploited by the culture in power, often for profit.

Discrimination – Treatment of an individual or group based on their actual or perceived membership in a social category, usually used to describe unjust or prejudicial treatment on the grounds of race, age, sex, gender, ability, socioeconomic class, immigration status, national origin, or religion.

Diversity – There are many kinds of diversity, based on race, gender, sexual orientation, class, age, country of origin, education, religion, geography, and physical or cognitive abilities. Valuing diversity means recognizing differences between people, acknowledging that these differences are a valued asset, and striving for diverse representation as a critical step towards equity. See “Equity.”

Equity – Equity means fairness and justice and focuses on outcomes that are most appropriate for a given group, recognizing different challenges, needs, and histories. It is distinct from diversity, which can simply mean variety (the presence of individuals with various identities). It is also not equality, or “same treatment,” which doesn’t take differing needs or disparate outcomes into account. Systemic equity involves a robust system and dynamic process consciously designed to create, support, and sustain social justice. See “Racial justice.”

Ethnicity – A socially constructed grouping of people based on culture, tribe, language, national heritage, and/or religion. It is often used interchangeably with race and/or national origin but should be considered an overlapping, rather than identical, category. See “Racial and ethnic categories.”

Hate crime – Criminal acts, motivated by bias, that target victims based on their perceived membership in a certain social group. Incidents may involve physical assault, damage to property, bullying, harassment, verbal abuse, offensive graffiti, letters, or email. Hate crime laws enhance the penalties associated with conduct that is criminal under other laws.

Implicit bias/unconscious bias – Attitudes that unconsciously affect our decisions and actions. People often think of bias as intentional, i.e., someone wanted to say something racist. However, brain science has shown that people are often unaware of their bias, and the concept of implicit bias helps describe a lot of contemporary racist acts that may not be overt or intentional. Implicit bias is just as harmful, so it is important to talk about race explicitly and to take steps to address it. Institutions are composed of individuals whose biases are replicated and then produce systemic inequities. It is possible to interrupt implicit bias by adding steps to decision-making processes that thoughtfully consider and address racial impacts.

Minority/minorities – A term that has historically referred to non-white racial groups, indicating that they were numerically smaller than the dominant white majority. Defining people of color as “minorities” is not recommended because of changing demographics and how it reinforces ideas of inferiority and marginalization of a group of people. Defining people by how they self-identify is often preferable and more respectful. The term “minority” may be needed in specific cases (such as “minority contracting” and “minority-owned businesses”) to reflect data that is collected using those categories. See the term “People of color.”

Mixed race, biracial, multiracial – Generally accepted terms to describe a person who has mixed ancestry of two or more races. Many terms for people of various multiracial backgrounds exist, some of which are pejorative or are no longer used. The U.S. Census first gave the option for a person to identify as belonging to more than one race in 2000, at which time approximately 9 million individuals, or 2.9 percent of the population, self-identified as multiracial.

Multicultural – Involving various cultures in a society, usually with the intent to promote tolerance, inclusion, and equal respect for cultural diversity. Does not include an explicit racial lens. Multiculturalism often focuses on interpersonal interaction and communication between people of different cultures rather than a systemic approach to advance equity.

People of color – Often the preferred collective term for referring to non-white racial groups, rather than “minorities.” Racial justice advocates have been using the term “people of color” (not to be confused with the pejorative “colored people”) since the late 1970s as an inclusive and unifying frame across different racial groups that are not white to address racial inequities. While “people of color” can be a politically useful term, and describes people with their own attributes (as opposed to what they are not, e.g., “non-white”), it is also important whenever possible to identify people through their own racial/ethnic group, as each has its own distinct experience and meaning and may be more appropriate.

“Post-racial” – A term used to describe a time in which racial prejudice and discrimination no longer exist. Deep racial disparities and divisions exist across our society, and some are even widening. Much like the notion of “colorblindness,” the idea of a “post-racial” society does not acknowledge that racism and inequity sit at the core of many of our nation’s deepest challenges. See “Colorblind.”

Privilege – A set of advantages systemically conferred on a particular person or group of people. White people are racially privileged, even when they are economically underprivileged. Privilege and oppression go hand-in-hand: They are two sides of the same power relationship, and both sides of the equation must be understood and addressed. People can be disadvantaged by one identity and privileged by another. See “Intersectionality” and “White supremacy.”

Race – While often assumed to be a biological classification, based on physical and genetic variation, racial categories do not have a scientific basis. However, the consequences of racial categorization are real, as the ideology of race has become embedded in our identities, institutions, and culture, and is used as a basis for discrimination and racial profiling. How one is racialized is a major determinant of one’s socioeconomic status and life opportunities. See “Racial and ethnic categories.”

Racial and ethnic categories – System of organizing people into groups based on their identified race and ethnicity, with categories that may change over time. Data is derived from self-identification questions; however, people often do not get to select the categories from which they must choose, making most methods of categorizing and counting highly political and often problematic.

Racial hierarchy – Ranking of different races/ethnic groups, based on physical and perceived characteristics. Racial hierarchy is not a binary of white vs. non-white, but rather a complex system where groups occupy different rungs of political, economic, and cultural power. Racist ideology relies on maintaining hierarchies, even among racial groups.

Racial justice – The systematic fair treatment of people of all races, resulting in equitable opportunities and outcomes for all. Racial justice—or racial equity—goes beyond “anti-racism.” It is not just the absence of discrimination and inequities but also the presence of deliberate systems and supports to achieve and sustain racial equity through proactive and preventative measures.

Racial profiling – The discriminatory practice by law enforcement officials of targeting people of color for suspicion of crime without evidence of criminal activity, based on their perceived race, ethnicity, national origin, or religion (e.g., “stop-and-frisk”). Racial profiling is ineffective, damages community-police relationships, and is being litigated around the country as a violation of constitutional rights. However, law enforcement authorities at the federal, state, and local levels continue to use racial profiling.

Racial slur – Derogatory, pejorative, or insulting terms for members of a racial or ethnic group. While some slurs, like the “n-word,” are understood as such and are avoided, some slurs are still used in everyday speech, with little understanding of their harm.

Racism – A historically-rooted system of power hierarchies based on race—infused in our institutions, policies, and culture—that benefits white people and hurts people of color. Racism isn’t limited to individual acts of prejudice, either deliberate or accidental. Rather, the most damaging racism is built into systems and institutions that shape our lives. Most coverage of race and racism is not “systematically aware,” meaning that it either focuses on racism at the level of an individuals’ speech or actions (individual-level racism), dismisses systemic racism, or refers to racism in the past tense.

Racist – Describes a person, behavior, or incident that perpetuates racism. Stories of race and racism that focus on personal prejudice (“who’s a racist?”) get a disproportionate share of attention in the media. This reinforces the message that racism is primarily a phenomenon of overt, intentional acts carried out by prejudiced individuals who need correcting and/or shaming and tends to spark debates of limited value about that individual’s character. Media and racial justice advocates should use a systemic lens when producing race-related stories and topics to examine systems, institutional practices, policies, and outcomes.

“Reverse racism” – A concept based on a misunderstanding of what racism is, often used to accuse and attack efforts made to rectify systemic injustices. Every individual can be prejudiced and biased at one time or another toward various people and behaviors, but racism is based on power and systematic oppression. Individual prejudice and systemic racism cannot be equated. Even though some people of color hold powerful positions, white people overwhelmingly hold the most systemic power. The concept of “reverse racism” ignores structural racism, which permeates all dimensions of our society, routinely advantaging white people and disadvantageous to people of color. Structural racism is deeply entrenched and in no danger of being dismantled or “reversed” any time soon.

Stereotype – Characteristics ascribed to a person or groups of people based on generalization and oversimplification that may result in stigmatization and discrimination. Even so-called positive stereotypes (e.g., Asian Americans as “model minorities”) can be harmful due to their limiting nature.

Systemic analysis – A comprehensive examination of the root causes and mechanisms at play that result in patterns. It involves looking beyond individual speech, acts, and practices to the larger structures—organizations, institutions, traditions, and systems of knowledge.

White supremacy – A form of racism centered upon the belief that white people are superior to people of other racial backgrounds and that white people should politically, economically, and socially dominate non-white people. While often associated with violence perpetrated by the KKK and other white supremacist groups, it also describes a political ideology and systemic oppression that perpetuates and maintains social, political, historical, and/or industrial white domination.

White supremacy culture – Characteristics of white supremacy that manifest in organizational culture and are used as norms and standards without being proactively named or chosen by the full group. The characteristics are damaging to both people of color and white people in that they elevate the values, preferences, and experiences of one racial group above all others. Organizations that are led by people of color or have a majority of people of color can also demonstrate characteristics of white supremacy culture.



NEA's Framework for Change



The National Education Association is uniquely positioned to impact racial justice in education by focusing the work on awareness, capacity building, and action. We will build a union of members who, through their organization, are more aware of racial justice, receive and use racial justice tools, and who, together with other educators and key stakeholders, take action to address racial injustice in schools and related institutions:

- If we build **awareness** about institutional racism and work towards creating racial justice in education, the National Education Association can provide shared knowledge and conceptual clarity in racially aware work;
- If we continuously create and disseminate **capacity building** tools, skills, strategies, and resources to our members, leaders, staff, students and partners, a more racially aware National Education Association can be the leader in publicly demanding racial justice in education in more powerful and meaningful ways;
- If we support, lift, connect and take **action** with an intentional focus on movement building, we will create racial equity in our classrooms, worksites, and in our communities.

POP QUIZ: What do you know about race?

* This form will record your name, please fill your name.

1. In 2003, a team of scientists finished mapping the human genome. Of the approximately 20,500 human genes they identified, how many determine a person's race?

- ☐ 17
- ☐ 10,250
- ☐ Inconclusive
- ☐ 2,358

2. Race is _____. (Check all that you believe to be true.)

- ☐ A social construct used throughout history to divide people into groups ranked as superior and inferior and to justify systems of power, privilege, and disenfranchisement
- ☐ A biological reality proven by centuries of scientific research
- ☐ A group of people sharing a common cultural, geographical, linguistic, or religious origin or background
- ☐ An empowering way to understand my identity
- ☐ Not that big of a deal
- ☐ A really big deal

3. One sure way you can identify someone's race is by...

- ☐ Looking at them
- ☐ Asking to see a picture of their parents
- ☐ Dancing with them
- ☐ Believing them when they tell you
- ☐ Um... ermmm...

4. Which of the following terms have appeared on the US Census as categories for identity?

- ☐ Slave
- ☐ Quadroon
- ☐ Hawaiian
- ☐ Negro
- ☐ Octoroon
- ☐ Indian
- ☐ Hindu
- ☐ Native American
- ☐ Mulatto
- ☐ Mexican
- ☐ All of the *above*

5. What race is Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson ?

- ☐ Wait... The Rock's not white?
- ☐ Black
- ☐ Black and Samoan
- ☐ Who cares? He is Box Office Gold

6. The racial category of "Caucasian" comes from:

- ☐ Greek philosopher Aristotle
- ☐ Eighteenth-century anthropologist Johann Friedrich Blumenbach
- ☐ The Caucasian Brothers, a nineteenth-century American vaudeville act
- ☐ Thomas Jefferson
- ☐ The myth of Prometheus

7. Jewish people are white.

- ☐ True
- ☐ False