Id

Racial Equity
and *YOU*

Role Playing Syste
Characteristics Who's
lan Transparency Rep
Current Standard of
RACIAL EQUITY
Latent vs. Blatant Ider
Racial Structure Man
actions Friends
essment Positi
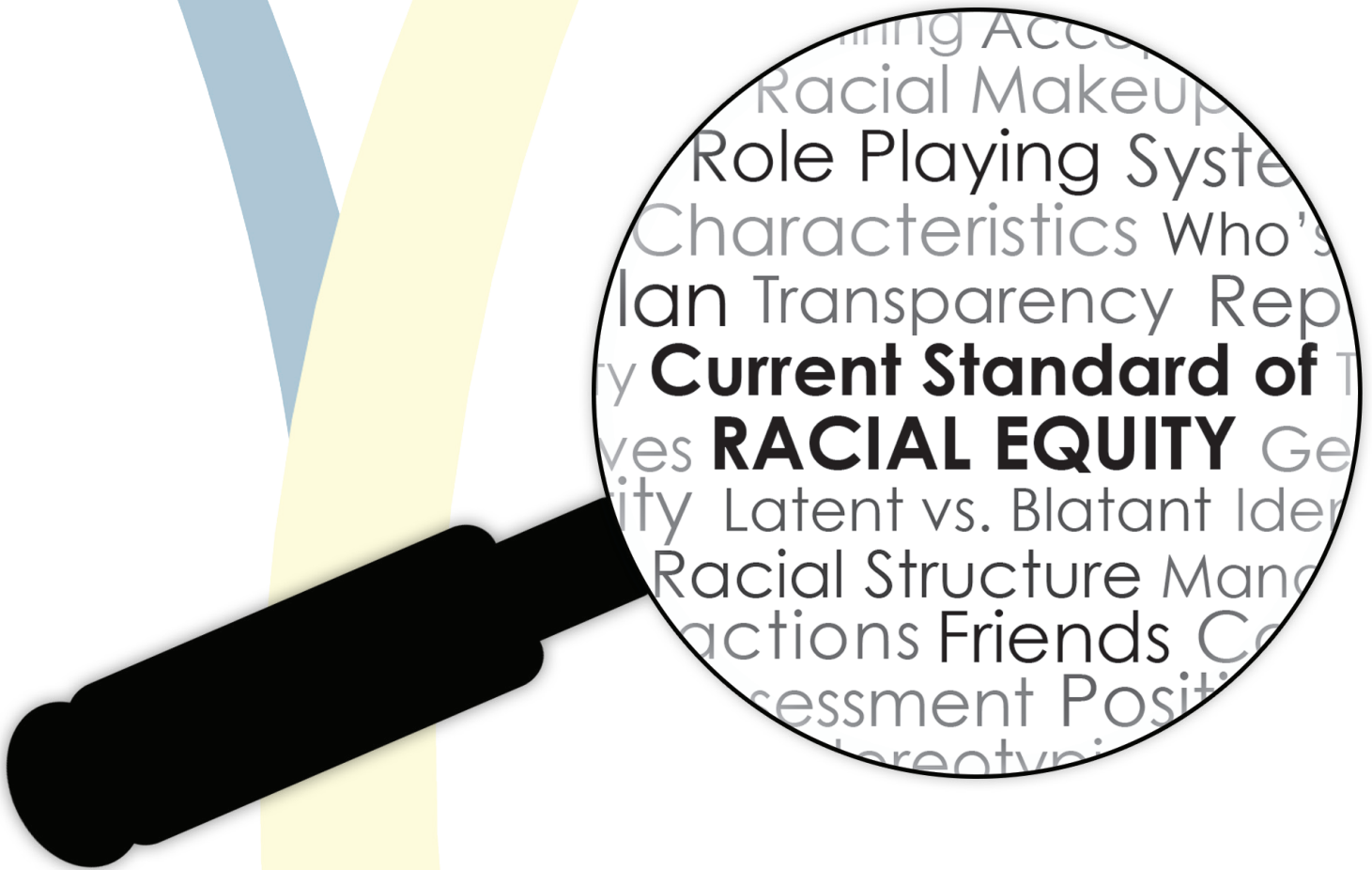
Introduction

What's in This Section?

This section will help you to identify key areas of opportunity for racial equity growth in your organization. It contains a listing of cultural elements that lead to racial oppression, role playing activities for further identification of racial inequities, and a self assessment to break everything down within your organization.

How Do I Use These Tools?

Read over the dominant culture section, engage in the role-playing activities, fill out the self-assessment tool, identify key areas of opportunity of racial equity growth in your organization, and then report back to the rest of your organization or the racial equity project leaders.

What Is the Desired Impact?

This section will help you firmly identify key challenges; from there, you can better establish what your organization needs to improve its racial equity lens.

Dominant Culture Elements

Elements of White Middle-Class Dominant Culture

adapted from Scott Winn (2010) from "White Supremacy Culture"
Dismantling Racism: A Workbook for Social Change Groups
Kenneth Jones and Tema Okun, Changework 2001

This is a list of characteristics of dominant culture which may be evident in our organizations. Culture is powerful precisely because it is so present and at the same time so very difficult to name or identify. The characteristics are detrimental because they are used as norms and standards without being proactively named or chosen by the group. They are damaging because they promote dominant ways of thinking to the exclusion of differing ways of being and thinking. The overall effects of these dominant cultural norms is to stop us from talking about power imbalances between individuals and group which stops us from creating cultures supportive of transformation towards social and economic change.

Purpose

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

How to Use this Document

This list of characteristics gives organizations a way of recognizing potential power imbalances in their culture. Some of these characteristics are indicative of cultural differences that may hinder an organization's ability to pursue racial equity work. When conducting your organization's self-assessment, doing the role-play activities, and creating your organization's plan for racial equity, think about how these characteristics may be present in your day-to-day work activities. Through recognizing dominant cultural characteristics, organizations can get one step closer to pursuing their racial equity goals.

HOUSING
DEVELOPMENT
consortium

Perfectionism

- Appreciation that is expressed is usually directed to those who already get most of the credit anyway
- Pointing out either how a person or piece of work is inadequate
- Talking to others about the inadequacies of a person or their work without ever talking directly to him or her
- Mistakes are seen as personal, i.e. they reflect badly on the person making them as opposed to being seen for what they are – mistakes

Antidotes to Perfectionism

- Develop a culture of appreciation where the organization takes time to make sure that everyone's work and efforts are appreciated
- Develop a learning organization, where it is expected that everyone will make mistakes and those mistakes offer opportunities for learning
- Separate the person from the mistake
- When offering feedback, always speak to things that went well before offering criticism
- Ask people to offer specific suggestions for how to do things differently when offering criticism

Sense of Urgency and Progress

- Continued sense of urgency that makes it difficult to take time to be inclusive, to encourage democratic and/or thoughtful decision-making, to think long-term, and to consider consequences
- Frequently results in sacrificing potential allies for quick or highly visible results, (e.g. sacrificing interests of communities of color in order to win victories for white people)
- Little time, energy, or money put into reflection or identifying lessons learned that can improve practice
- Progress that only expands (adds staff or projects) or develops the ability to serve more people (regardless of how well they are serving them)
- Gives no value, to the possible costs, (e.g. possibility that those we serve may be exploited, excluded, or underserved, focusing how many

Antidotes to Sense of Urgency and Progress

- Creating realistic workplans
- Leadership which understands that things take longer than anyone expects
- Discuss and plan for what it means to set goals of inclusivity and diversity, particularly in terms of time
- Learn from past experience how long things take
- Be clear about how you will make good decisions in an atmosphere of urgency.
- Create 'Seventh Generation' thinking by asking how the actions of the group now will affect people seven generations from now
- Make sure that any cost/benefit analysis includes all the costs, not just the financial ones, (e.g. the cost in morale, the cost in credibility, the cost in the use of resources)
- Include process goals in your

we are serving instead of quality of service or values created by the ways we serve)	planning, (e.g. making sure that your goals speak to how you want to do your work, not just what you want to do

Defensiveness	Antidotes to Defensiveness
• Any criticism of those with power is viewed as threatening, rude, or inappropriate • People respond to new or challenging ideas with defensiveness, making it very difficult to raise these ideas • A lot of energy in the organization is spent trying to make sure that people's feelings aren't getting hurt or working around defensive people	• Understand the link between defensiveness and fear (of losing power, losing face, losing comfort, losing privilege) • Work on your own defensiveness • Discuss the ways in which defensiveness or resistance to new ideas gets in the way of the mission.

Quantity over Quality	Antidotes to Quantity over Quality
• All resources of organization are directed toward producing measurable goals • Things that can be measured are more highly valued than things that cannot, (e.g. numbers of people attending a meeting, newsletter circulation, money spent are valued more than quality of relationships, democratic decision making, ability to constructively deal with conflict) • If it can't be measured, it has no value	• Include process or quality goals in your planning • Make sure your organization has a values statement that expresses the ways you want to do your work • Look for ways to measure process goals (for example if you have a goal of inclusivity, think about ways you can measure whether or not you have achieved that goal) • Recognize those times when you need to get off the agenda in order to address underlying concerns

Only One Right Way	Antidotes to Only One Right Way
• The belief that there is one right way to do things and once people are introduced to the right way, they will "see the light" and adopt it • When they do not adapt or change, then something is wrong with them (the other, those not changing), not	• Accept that there are many ways to get to the same goal • Look for the tendency for a group or a person to keep pushing the same point over and over out of a belief

with us (those who 'know' the right way) • Similar to the missionary who does not see the value in the culture of other communities, sees only value in their beliefs about what is good • Decision making is clear to those with power and unclear to those without it • Those with power think they are capable of making decisions for and in the interests to those without power • Those with power often don't think it is important or necessary to understand the viewpoint or experience of those for whom they are making decisions	that there is only one right way • When working with communities from a different culture than yours or your organization's, be clear that you have some learning to do about the communities' ways of doing • Never assume that you or your organization know what's best for the community in isolation from meaningful relationships with that community • Make sure that everyone knows and understands who makes decisions • Make sure everyone knows and understands their level of responsibility and authority in the organization • Include people who are affected by decisions in the decision-making
## Either/Or Thinking • Things are either/or – good/bad, right/wrong, with us/against us • Closely linked to perfectionism in making it difficult to learn from mistakes or accommodate conflict • No sense that things can be both/and • Results in trying to simplify complex things, for example believing that poverty is simply a result of lack of education	## Antidotes to Either/Or Thinking • Notice when people use 'either/or' language & push to come up with more than 2 alternatives • Notice when people are simplifying complex issues, particularly when the stakes seem high or an urgent decision needs to be made • Slow it down & encourage people to do a deeper analysis • Avoid making decisions under extreme pressure
## Power Hoarding • Little, if any, value around sharing power • Power seen as limited, only so much to go around • Those with power feel threatened when anyone suggests changes in how things should be done in the organization, feel suggestions for change are a reflection on their	## Antidotes to Power Hoarding • Include power sharing in your organization's values statement • Discuss what good leadership looks like & make sure people understand that a good leader develops the power & skills of others • Understand that change is inevitable & challenges to your leadership can be healthy & productive

Racial Equity and You

leadership • Those with power assume they have the best interests of the organization at heart and assume those wanting change are ill-informed, emotional, inexperienced	• Make sure the organization is focused on the mission
## Fear of Open Conflict • People in power are scared of conflict and try to ignore it or run from it • When someone raises an issue that causes discomfort, the response is to blame the person for raising the issue rather than to look at the issue which is actually causing the problem • Emphasis on being polite • Equating the raising of difficult issues with being impudent or rude	## Antidotes to Fear of Open Conflict • Role play ways to handle conflict before conflict happens • Distinguish between being polite & raising hard issues • Don't require those who raise hard issues to raise them in 'acceptable' ways • Once a conflict is resolved, take the opportunity to revisit it and see how it might have been handled differently
## Objectivity • The belief that there is such a thing as being objective • The belief that emotions are inherently destructive, irrational, and should not play a role in decision-making or group process • Invalidating people who show emotion	## Antidotes to Objectivity • Realize that everybody has a worldview & that everybody's worldview affects the way they understand things • Realize this includes you too • Push yourself to sit with discomfort when people are expressing themselves in ways which are not familiar to you
## Right to Comfort • The belief that those with power have a right to emotional & psychological comfort • Equating individual acts of unfairness against white people with systemic racism	## Antidotes to Right to Comfort • Understand that discomfort is at the root of all growth & learning • Welcome it as much as you can • Deepen your political analysis of racism & oppression • Don't take everything personally

Naming and Framing

Role Playing Activity:
Naming & Framing Racism
and White Privilege in our Everyday Lives

Adapted from the Coalition of Anti-Racist Whites, www.carw.org

Directions

Below are some role-play scenarios that your organization can set-up to help develop skills and tools for challenging racism and white privilege in your everyday workplace lives.

For each scenario, there are two roles:

Role 1: Subject of intervention: the person you need to talk to in order to intervene in the situation.

Role 2: Namer/framer: the person who is intervening in an oppressive situation or explaining the principles of racism or pointing out how the racial lens applies.

Observers: These people provide feedback on how the namer/framer did, offer suggestions or give praise.

Here's how it goes:

1. Each scenario has a description of the situation, followed by further background as necessary to set the stage. Everyone should read the situation, or have someone read it aloud before starting.
2. In most scenarios, the Subject (Role 1) reacts or says something to begin the dialogue based on the described scenario.
3. The Namer/Framer (Role 2) engages in dialogue to interrupt an oppressive moment or educate the subject.
4. The Subject can respond and play their role, but keep in mind this is only for practice, no need to get into debates. Try to keep whole interaction to a couple of minutes to give everyone plenty of time to practice.
5. Observer should stop it after two or three exchanges and give brief observations/ suggestions.

For the namer/framer: This is the time to take a risk. If you never knew what to say, now's the time to just try something and see how it works. If it doesn't work, why? What would work better? If this is old hat for you, try to go deeper.

For the subject: Try to understand where the person in your role is coming from and respond as you think they would. Don't go out of your way to put on an Oscar winning performance by trying to make it difficult, and don't try to make it easy either. Just try to understand the perspective beneath the statement and portray it honestly.

For the observers: What did you notice during the interaction? What non-verbal cues did you pick up from either of the role-play pair? What did the namer/framer do right? What could be a good thing to build on? Where did they get stuck? What alternative approaches can you suggest?

Naming & Framing Tips and Tricks

Naming – Calling out instances of racism and white privilege
Framing – Strategy of using an analysis of institutional and structural racism to reshape the conversation

Potential Approaches for Challenging Racism:

Western States approach
- Breathe
- Name it
- Give Information
- Give Direction

Out The Front Door approach
- I Observed you say/do…
- It makes me Think that…
- I Feel _____ when you say that…
- I Desire that you…

Sharing personal experience
- First I thought…/
-     …but then I realized… /
-     …now I understand that…

Inquiry approach
Ask questions to help the others figure out the situation on their own
- What do you mean…?
- Where did you learn this…?
- Why do you think that…?
- What if…?

Keep in mind
- Always use non-violent communication
- Try to get at what is motivating people
- Try to understand what people have to lose or gain by what they are saying – assess what they might want to change

Scenarios

1. Marginalization of people of color in the workplace

A person of color expresses a strong opinion supporting a suggested course of action, citing an emotional personal story. The chairperson, clearly uncomfortable with the emotion expressed, nods and asks if there are any other ideas. The suggested course of action is not discussed any further and a couple of other ideas, suggested by white people are discussed at length and someone makes a motion to accept the one that was talked about the most.

Role 1 (s): The chair says, "Well, if there is no further discussion, I will call for a vote."

Role 2 (n/f): Say something to interrupt the racism in this situation.

2. Promotion of racial stereotypes in the workplace

You notice that your company's new promotional brochure has pictures of white people in business suits shaking hands with elected officials and black people in hard hats with shovels in their hands.

Role 1 (s): A coworker who you mentioned this to has never noticed these trends and says, "I don't get it, what's the big deal?"

Role 2 (n/f): As a person in this workplace, try naming and framing the racism in this situation with your co-worker.

3. Promotion of racial stereotypes in the workplace

Your agency invites a speaker to talk about community needs in the face of the economic downturn.

Role 1 (s): He makes the statement that, "We are recommending development of family resource centers that will have parenting classes and cultural activities because in our study we have found that the community (a neighborhood that you know is mostly African American), suffers from gang violence in part because of weak family structure and lack of cultural resources."

Role 2 (n/f): As a member of the audience, try naming and framing the racism in this statement.

(This scenario is important to address because of people's general unwillingness to admit that race and class are inextricably tied. In this scenario, addressing the larger racial issues at play will help to identify the elements of structural racism that

keep certain communities from thriving)

4. Diversity Proves Racism Not an Issue in Your Office

Role 1 (s): A co-worker says, "Things are very diverse here. The last place I worked was 100% whites and mostly men. So don't tell me we need to address racism here. We are doing great."

Role 2(n/f): Try naming and framing racism in response to this statement.

5. Focusing on Race is Really the Problem

You have a good relationship with your white supervisor and feel comfortable airing your concerns and complaints about the organization you work for without fear of being fired (white privilege in action). You mention that many other social service organizations are adopting anti-racism initiatives and think it would be a good thing for your organization to do as well.

Role 1 (s): Your supervisor says, "If you keep focusing on race, we will never get past it. We are all part of the human race, the idea of race is just made up anyway – we just need to quit putting people into artificial racial classifications. By focusing on race, we just continue racism."

Role 2 (n/f): Try naming and framing racism in response to this statement.

6. Cultural Repression in the Workplace

Your manager has worked hard over the past five years to hire a staff that reflects the population your organization is serving, which is very diverse. As the office has changed from mostly white to about one third diverse people of color, the décor in the office has begun to change. Many people decorate their cubicles with textiles, art, and posters reflecting their cultures and post fliers and posters about

community events on the outside of their cubicles. After a visit from the national leadership, an email comes from HR that new standards for personal effects and decoration of cubicles has been established. The standards require that decoration of personal space must conform to business standards and should be limited to a small number of framed family photos, small, tasteful art objects and nothing that can be seen above or outside the cubicle walls.

Role 1 (s): Your boss, who is white, announces, "You all received the email from HR about office décor. I expect you to comply with it by the end of the week."

Role 2 (n/f): Try a response that names or frames the racism in this situation.

7. Discrimination in the Workplace

A powerful supervisor has disciplined several people of color resulting in demotions and undesirable reassignments. The white people in her unit get assignments that allow them to gain new skills and recognition while the people of color consistently get mundane, less desirable work or projects that are required, but under resourced, resulting in harder work and mediocre results.

Role 1 (s): A coworker who you mentioned this to has never noticed these trends and says, "It can't be intentional on the part of our supervisor, we are an equal opportunity employer and workplace. This sounds like conspiracy theory stuff to me."

Role 2 (n/f): As a white person in this workplace, try naming and framing the racism in this situation with your co-worker.

8. Moving From Education to Action

Your anti-racism group is mostly white and people are very engaged in educational activities like videos, book groups, speakers on issues of racism. They have great, insightful discussions at these events. They are not willing to go to protests against racial profiling by the police, or demonstrations following a police shooting of a black man, or school board meetings about academic disparities, or rallies for bilingual education.

Role 1 (s): Another member of your group says, "This education work we are doing is incredibly important, after all education is the solution to all problems. Besides, we are all volunteers and don't want to waste our weekends going to rallies and protests."

Role 2(n/f): Make a suggestion or ask a question to move the group toward getting involved in creating change.

9. Engaging White People

White people you work with in an anti-racism group at work feel kind of uncertain about what to do or why they should care. Although they do care, they rarely articulate why. You wonder whether they are only there because there is social pressure to be considered "anti-racist". It is considered "cool" and "progressive."

Role 1 (s): This role is one of these quiet participants and you have invited them to coffee to talk about your concerns.

Role 2 (n/f): Say something to raise this issue and move people beyond just being there.