

2022-2023

Information Packet

Human Rights and
Inclusion Committee

Mission Statement

The Danvers Human Rights and Inclusion Committee (HRIC) is a cohesive task force against intolerance, bigotry, and oppression. HRIC partners with police, school administration, interfaith leaders, and several community partners on events and in discussions to create a positive atmosphere for an inclusive, multi-cultural community. We stand against hatred and support those who experience marginalization due to their age, gender, race, ethnicity, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, citizenship status, or socioeconomic status.

The Basics

The Human Rights & Inclusion Committee meets on the third Thursday of the month from September to June at 7 PM. The Committee has now reconvened in-person. The Committee meets in the Toomey Room of Town Hall. If a Committee member is not able to attend a meeting, please let the Chair know as soon as possible to ensure a quorum. As an 11-member committee, the committee needs at least 6 members to have a quorum, or a simple majority. The Committee abides by the Code of Conduct for the Town of Danvers Boards/ Committees (Appendix A).

Around the first of the month, Committee members will receive an email from the Director of Equity and Inclusion (Jasmine A. Ramón) with a save the date, and a deadline for submitting proposed agenda items for that month's meeting. On the Tuesday before the meeting, Committee members will receive an email with the posted agenda and minutes from the last meeting, as well as the Community Liaison Updates.

Conflict of Interest

Committee members are required to complete a Conflict of Interest form provided by the Town Clerk upon appointment, and Human Resources annually. Employees and committee members must acknowledge the policy annually and complete the test every other year. Instructions are communicated to Committee members through the Staff Liaison.

Accessing Meetings

The Toomey Room is located on the first floor of Danvers Town Hall, or 1 Sylvan St. Danvers, MA 01923. If you use the side entrance facing Sylvan St., walk past the Town Clerk office, and the stairwell, and the Toomey Room is located on the left.

The public is welcome to attend or is able to view the meeting by clicking the DCAT YouTube link on the posted agenda or televised local access. The public is able to ask questions and make comments in-person when directed by the Chair. Questions and comments from viewing the meeting virtually can be directed to j.ramon@danversma.gov.

Emails & Open Meeting Laws

Under Massachusetts General Law, the Committee is only able to meet when written notice has been posted by the Town Clerk at least two days in advance of the meeting, and that meeting is open to the public. Furthermore, discussion of committee business via email as a large group can also constitute a violation of Open Meeting.

Committee members will notice that almost all emails are sent with the Committee on blind copy to prevent “reply all” and violating this law. It is ok to email a few members for Subcommittee business or ideas, email the Chair and Director of Equity and Inclusion to discuss Committee business, or email the Committee as a whole and receive individual replies.

Agenda Building

The Chair builds the agenda with input from Committee members. If Committee members have items they would like to have discussed at a meeting, please communicate them to the Chair by the deadline in the “save the date” email.

Committee Members

Committee members are Danvers residents who are appointed by the Select Board and sworn in by the Town Clerk to serve three-year terms. Committee Members are expected to discuss issues, events, and other opportunities that relate to the mission, and vote on motions. With the expectation that Committee Members be present and engaged for all meetings, proper notice of absences must be given to the Chair, and contributions to the agenda must be shared in a timely manner.

The Committee Chair organizes meeting logistics including agenda and public meeting notice. Additionally, the Chair presides over all meetings, decides agenda and questions of order, and signs official documents. The Vice Chair is responsible for assuming all responsibilities of the Chair when the latter is not present or able. The Vice Chair may be asked to perform other duties as necessary.

Liaisons

Community Liaisons are non-voting positions designed to maintain communication with other community partners. Liaisons must submit bulleted points to the Director of Equity and Inclusion as soon as possible in advance of the scheduled meeting, prior to the agenda being posted. These updates will be included with the agenda and prior meeting minutes. Members will be given time to ask any questions about the updates to the Liaisons. As non-voting members, liaisons are welcome to stay for the duration of the meeting following their update to offer their input on relevant discussions but are not required to.

Historically, groups that have been represented include Police, School, Danvers Interfaith Council and Select Board. Additionally, two students are appointed by the principal of Danvers High School to serve a year term as student liaisons.

Reappointment

Appointment is for a three-year term. At the end of every term, members are able to express their written interest in reappointment. Decisions to be reappointed are made by the Select Board, with consideration from the Town Manager, Director of Equity and Inclusion, and Committee Chair. Reappointment is also contingent on committee performance and conduct, and volume of outside interest in our Talent Pool Application.

Committee Advisory Members

Committee Advisory Members are non-voting positions that recognize longevity and/or impact of individual members during their terms. Members may express intent to serve in this capacity upon reappointment, and voting members decide appointment. Advisory Members are welcome to participate in open discussions and offer guidance, but are not required to attend every meeting.

Resources

Membership in this committee is to constantly engage in reflection and learning. The Director of Equity and Inclusion provided the following resources as foundational information to begin this work. Click on the hyperlinks, or refer to Appendices B-G.

1. Appendix B [Sylvia Duckworth's Illustrated Wheel of Power/Privilege](#)
2. Appendix C [Peggy McIntosh "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack"](#)
3. Appendix D [Examples of Racial Microaggressions](#)
4. Appendix E [Becoming an Anti-Racist: Fear Zone to Growth Zone](#)
5. Appendix F [Continuum on Becoming an Anti-Racist Multicultural Organization](#)
6. Appendix G [Tema Okun "White Supremacy Culture"](#)

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VACANCY

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Websites

Human Rights and Inclusion Committee
www.danversma.gov/departments/danvers-committee-diversity

Equity and Inclusion Department
www.danversma.gov/departments/equity-inclusion/

Town Events Calendar
www.danversma.gov/events/



Code of Conduct for Town of Danvers Boards / Committees Appointed by the Selectmen, Moderator, Town Meeting, or Town Manager

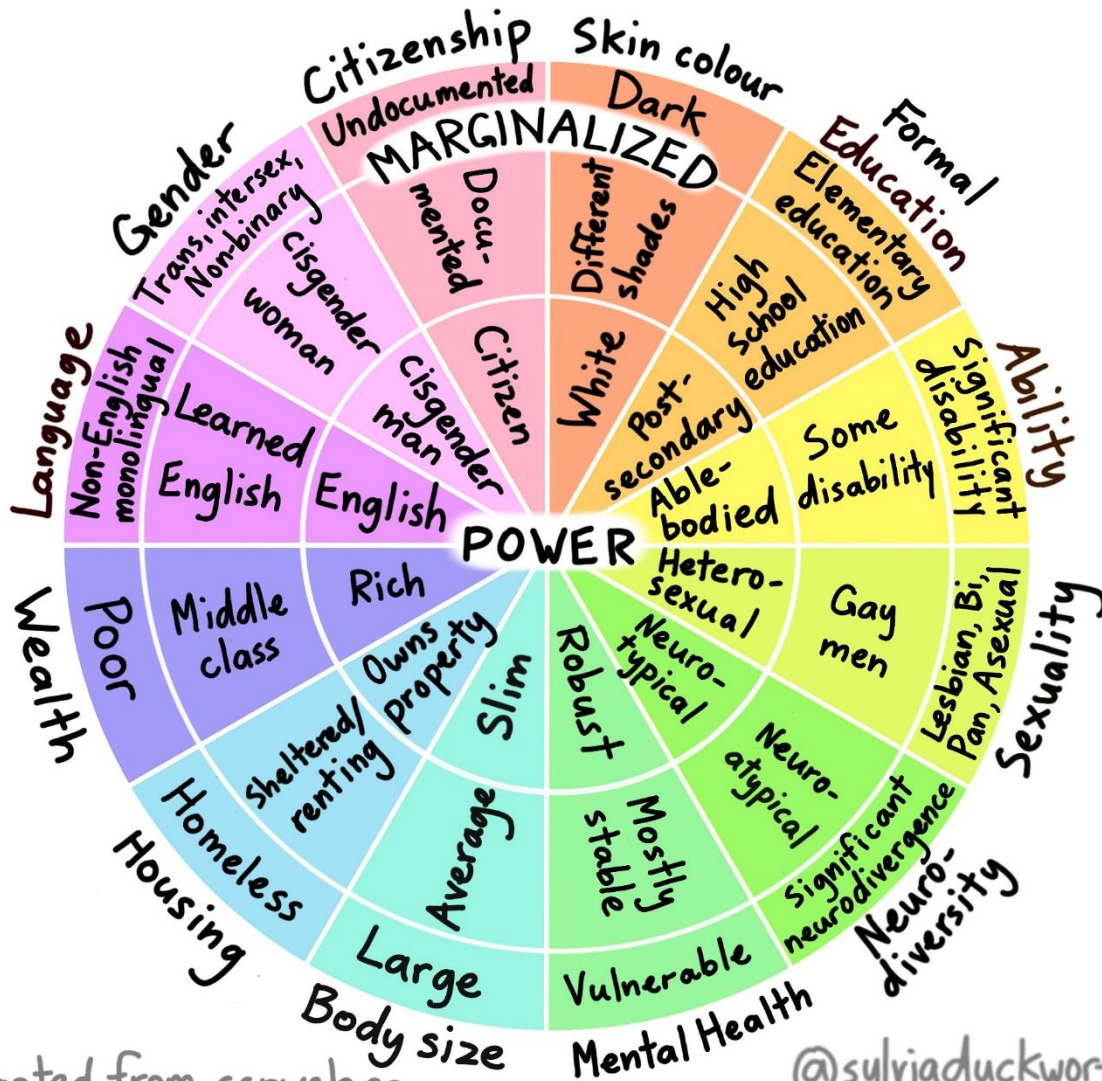
*“First and Foremost: Ladies and Gentlemen Always.” --
Cornelius Dunn, former DHS Principal*

Serving your community on a local board or committee is a privilege. As such, a member of any board or committee who has been appointed by the Town Moderator, Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting, or Town Manager is expected to comply with the following code of conduct.

1. Work to uphold the mission statement of the Committee and honor its role in governance.
2. Realize that you are part of a team, and abide by all Committee decisions once they are made.
3. Be well informed concerning the duties and responsibilities of the Committee.
4. Remember that you represent the entire community at all times; you are held to a higher standard of discourse as a representative of the Town than you would be as a private citizen.
5. Accept that the role of a Committee member is an exercise in unselfish service, not a means to personal or political benefit from Committee activities.
6. Abide by the ethics guidelines established by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
7. Abide by all policies established by the Town and/or Board of Selectmen, especially the telecommunications policy.
8. Request assistance from Town staff only through the staff person assigned to the Committee.
9. Refrain from making statements or promises of how you will vote on matters that may come before the Committee until you have had an opportunity to hear the pros and cons of the issue during a public meeting of the Committee.
10. Make decisions only after all facts on a question have been presented and discussed.
11. Refrain from communicating the Committee’s position on any matter to reporters or State officials unless the full Committee has previously agreed on both the position and the language to be used in conveying the statement.
12. Refrain from asserting personal opinions on Town business (either before your Committee or another) when such an assertion may be interpreted as a position of your Committee.
13. Treat members of your Committee and the public with respect despite differences of opinion.
14. Refrain from public criticism, including on social media, of any employee of the Town. Concerns regarding staff performance should only be made to the Town Manager through private conversation.
15. Ensure that any materials or information provided to a Committee member from Town staff should be made available to all Committee members.
16. If circumstances change so that meeting attendance on a regular basis becomes difficult, you should consider offering your resignation to the Appointing Authority, so that an appropriate replacement may be selected.

Adopted by the Danvers Board of Selectmen on August 7, 2018

WHEEL OF POWER/PRIVILEGE



Sylvia Duckworth's Wheel of Power/Privilege organizes the various identities of a person on a wheel with the identities that hold the most power in our society placed at the center, and the identities that hold the least power in our society on the outskirts. The wheel is sectioned off into 12 categories, each marked by their own unique colour. In order of most powerful to least powerful, the text on image reads:

- Citizenship: citizen, documented, undocumented
- Skin colour: white, different shades, dark
- Formal education: post-secondary, high school, elementary
- Ability: able-bodied, some disability, significant disability
- Sexuality: heterosexual; gay men; lesbian, bi, pan, asexual
- Neurodiversity: neurotypical, neuroatypical, significant neurodivergence
- Mental health: robust, mostly stable, vulnerable

- Body size: slim, average, large
- Housing: owns property, sheltered/renting, homeless
- Wealth: rich, middle class, poor
- Language: English, Learned English, non-English monolingual
- Gender: cisgender man; cisgender woman; trans, intersex, nonbinary

The content of the wheel is adapted into the chart below. As you navigate through, consider using the fill tool, highlight tool or bold tool to identify where your own identity falls.

Identity Categories	Most Power	Neither the most powerful nor the least powerful	Least Power
Citizenship	Citizen	Documented	Undocumented
Skin colour	White	Different shades	Dark
Formal Education	Post-Secondary	High school	Elementary
Ability	Able-Bodied	Some disability	Significant disability
Sexuality	Heterosexual	Gay men	Lesbian, bi, pan, asexual
Neurodiversity	Neurotypical	Some neurodivergence	Significant neurodivergence
Mental health	Robust	Mostly stable	Vulnerable
Body size	Slim	Average	Large
Housing	Owens property	Sheltered/renting	Homeless
Wealth	Rich	Middle Class	Poor
Language	English	Learned English	Non-English monolingual
Gender	Cisgender man	Cisgender woman	Trans, intersex, nonbinary

Looking at the cells you've highlighted for yourself, what do you notice? Do most aspects of your identity fall in the most powerful area of the chart? Least?

White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack

by Peggy McIntosh

Through work to bring materials from Women's Studies into the rest of the curriculum, I have often noticed men's unwillingness to grant that they are over-privileged, even though they may grant that women are disadvantaged. They may say that they will work to improve women's status, in the society, the university, or the curriculum, but they can't or won't support the idea of lessening men's. Denials which amount to taboos surround the subject of advantages which men gain from women's disadvantages. These denials protect male privilege from being fully acknowledged, lessened or ended.

Thinking through unacknowledged male privilege as a phenomenon, I realized that since hierarchies in our society are interlocking, there was most likely a phenomenon of white privilege which was similarly denied and protected. As a white person, I realized I had been taught about racism as something which puts others at a disadvantage, but had been taught not to see one of its corollary aspects, white privilege, which puts me at an advantage.

I think whites are carefully taught not to recognize white privilege, as males are taught not to recognize

Peggy McIntosh is Associate Director of the Wellesley College Center for Research on Women. This essay is excerpted from her working paper, "White Privilege and Male Privilege: A Personal Account of Coming to See Correspondences Through Work in Women's Studies," copyright © 1988 by Peggy McIntosh. Available for \$4.00 from address below. The paper includes a longer list of privileges. Permission to excerpt or reprint must be obtained from Peggy McIntosh, Wellesley College Center for Research on Women, Wellesley, MA 02181; (617) 283-2520; Fax (617) 283-2504

male privilege. So I have begun in an un-tutored way to ask what it is like to have white privilege. I have come to see white privilege as an invisible package of unearned assets which I can count on cashing in each day, but about which I was 'meant' to remain oblivious. White privilege is like an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools and blank checks.

Describing white privilege makes one newly accountable. As we in Women's Studies work to reveal male privilege and ask men to give up some of their power, so one who writes about having white privilege must ask, "Having described it, what will I do to lessen or end it?"

After I realized the extent to which men work from a base of unacknowledged privilege, I understood that much of their oppressiveness was unconscious. Then I remembered the frequent charges from women of color that white women whom they encounter are oppressive. I began to understand why we are justly seen as oppressive, even when we don't see ourselves that way. I began to count the ways in which I enjoy unearned skin privilege and have been conditioned into oblivion about its existence.

My schooling gave me no training in seeing myself as an oppressor, as an unfairly advantaged person, or as a participant in a damaged culture. I was taught to see myself as an individual whose moral state depended on her individual moral will. My schooling followed the pattern my colleague Elizabeth Minnich has pointed out: whites are taught to think of their lives as morally neutral, normative, and average, and also ideal, so that when we work to benefit others, this is seen as work which will allow "them" to be more like "us."

I decided to try to work on myself at least by identifying some of the daily

I was taught to see racism only in individual acts of meanness, not in invisible systems conferring dominance on my group.

effects of white privilege in my life. I have chosen those conditions which I think in my case *attach somewhat more to skin-color privilege* than to class, religion, ethnic status, or geographical location, though of course all these other factors are intricately intertwined. As far as I can see, my African American co[workers, friends and acquaintances with whom I come into daily or frequent contact in this particular time, place, and line of work cannot count on most of these conditions.

1. I can if I wish arrange to be in the company of people of my race most of the time.
2. If I should need to move, I can be pretty sure of renting or purchasing housing in an area which I can afford and in which I want to live.
3. I can be pretty sure that my neighbors in such a location will be neutral or pleasant to me.
4. I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed.
5. I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of my race widely represented.
6. When I am told about our national heritage or about "civilization," I am shown that people of my color made it what it is.

7. I can be sure that my children will be given curricular materials that testify to the existence of their race.

8. If I want to, I can be pretty sure of finding a publisher for this piece on white privilege.

9. I can go into a music shop and count on finding the music of my race represented, into a supermarket and find the staple foods which fit with my cultural traditions, into a hairdresser's shop and find someone who can cut my hair.

10. Whether I use checks, credit cards, or cash, I can count on my skin color not to work against the appearance of financial reliability.

11. I can arrange to protect my children most of the time from people who might not like them.

12. I can sear, or dress in second hand clothes, or not answer letters, without having people attribute these choices to the bad morals, the poverty, or the illiteracy of my race.

13. I can speak in public to a powerful male group without putting my race on trial.

14. I can do well in a challenging situation without being called a credit to my race.

15. I am never asked to speak for all the people of my racial group.

16. I can remain oblivious of the language and customs of persons of color who constitute the world's majority without feeling in my culture any penalty for such oblivion.

17. I can criticize our government and talk about how much I fear its policies and behavior without being seen as a cultural outsider.

18. I can be pretty sure that if I ask to talk to "the person in charge," I will be facing a person of my race.

19. If a traffic cop pulls me over or if the IRS audits my tax return, I can be sure I haven't been singled out because of my race

20. I can easily buy posters, postcards, picture books, greeting cards, dolls, toys, and children's magazines featuring people of my race.

21. I can go home from most meetings of organizations I belong to feeling somewhat tied in, rather than isolated, out-of-place, outnumbered, unheard, held at a distance, or feared.

22. I can take a job with an affirmative action employer without having co-workers on the job suspect that I got it because of race.

23. I can choose public accommodation without fearing that people of my race cannot get in or will be mistreated in the places I have chosen.

24. I can be sure that if I need legal or medical help, my race will not work against me.

25. If my day, week, or year is going badly, I need not ask of each negative episode or situation whether it has racial overtones.

26. I can choose blemish cover or bandages in "flesh" color and have them more or less match my skin.

I repeatedly forgot each of the realizations on this list until I wrote it down. For me white privilege has turned out to be an elusive and fugitive subject. The pressure to avoid it is great, for in facing it I must give up the myth of meritocracy. If these things are true, this is not such a free country; one's life is not what one makes it; many doors open for certain people through no virtues of their own.

In unpacking this invisible knapsack of white privilege, I have listed conditions of daily experience which I once took for granted. Nor did I think of any of these prerequisites as bad for the holder. I now think that we need a more finely differentiated taxonomy of

privilege, for some of these varieties are only what one would want for everyone in a just society, and others give license to be ignorant, oblivious, arrogant and destructive.

I see a pattern running through the matrix of white privilege, a pattern of assumptions which were passed on to me as a white person. There was one main piece of cultural turf; it was my own turf, and I was among those who could control the turf. *My skin color was an asset for any move I was educated to want to make.* I could think of myself as belonging in major ways, and of making social systems work for me. I could freely disparage, fear, neglect, or be oblivious to anything outside of the dominant cultural forms. Being of the main culture, I could also criticize it fairly freely.

In proportion as my racial group was being made confident, comfortable, and oblivious, other groups were likely being made unconfident, uncomfortable, and alienated. Whiteness protected me from many kinds of hostility, distress and violence, which I was being subtly trained to visit in turn upon people of color.

For this reason, the word "privilege" now seems to me misleading. We usually think of privilege as being a favored state, whether earned or conferred by birth or luck. Yes some of the conditions I have described here work to systematically over empower certain groups. Such privilege simply *confers dominance* because of one's race or sex.

I want, then, to distinguish between earned strength and unearned power conferred systemically. Power from unearned privilege can look like strength when it is in fact permission to escape or to dominate. But not all of the privileges on my list are inevitably damaging. Some, like the expectation that neighbors will be decent to you, or that your race will not count against you in court, should be the norm in a just society. Others, like the privilege to ignore less powerful people, distort the humanity of the holders as well as the ignored groups.

We might at least start by distinguishing between positive advantages which we can work to spread, and negative types of advantages which unless rejected will always reinforce our present hierarchies. For example, the feeling that one belongs within the human circle, as Native Americans say, should not be seen as privilege for a few. Ideally it is an *unearned entitlement*. At present, since only a few have it, it is an *unearned advantage* for them. This paper results from a process of coming to see that some of the power which I originally saw as attendant on being a human being in the U.S. consisted in *unearned advantage* and *conferred dominance*.

I have met very few men who are truly distressed about systemic, unearned male advantage and conferred dominance. And so one question for me and others like me is whether we will get truly distressed, even outraged about unearned race advantage and conferred dominance and if so, what we will do to lessen them. In any case, we need to do more work in identifying how they actually affect our daily lives. Many, perhaps most, of our white students in the U.S. think that racism doesn't affect them because they are not people of color; they do not see "whiteness" as a racial identity. In addition, since race and sex are not the only advantaging systems at work, we need similarly to examine the daily experience of having age advantage, or ethnic advantage, or physical ability, or advantage related to nationality, religion, or sexual orientation.

Difficulties and dangers surrounding the task of finding parallels are many. Since racism, sexism, and heterosexism are not the same, the advantaging associated with them should not be seen as the same. In addition, it is hard to disentangle aspects of unearned advantage which rest more on social class, economic class, race, religion, sex and ethnic identity than on other factors. Still, all of the oppressions are interlocking, as the Combahee River Collective Statement of 1977 continues to remind us eloquently.

One factor seems clear about all of the interlocking oppressions. They take both active forms which we can see and embedded forms which as a member of the dominant group one is taught not to see. In my class and place, I did not see myself as a racist because I was taught to recognize racism only in individual acts of meanness by members of my group, never in invisible systems conferring unsought racial dominance on my group from birth.

Disapproving of the systems won't be enough to change them. I was taught to think that racism could end if white individuals changed their attitudes. [But] a "white" skin in the United States opens many doors for whites whether or not we approve of the way dominance has been conferred on us. Individual acts can palliate, but cannot end, these problems.

To redesign social systems we need first to acknowledge their colossal unseen dimensions. The silences and denials surrounding privilege are the key political tool here. They keep the thinking about equality or equity incomplete, protecting unearned advantage and conferred dominance by making these taboo subjects. Most talk by whites about equal opportunity seems to me now to be about equal opportunity to try to get into a position of dominance while denying that *systems* of dominance exist.

It seems to me that obliviousness about white advantage, like obliviousness about male advantage, is kept strongly inculcated in the United States so as to maintain the myth of meritocracy, the myth that all democratic choice is equally available to all. Keeping most people unaware that freedom of confident action is there for just a small number of people props up those in power, and serves to keep power in the hands of the same groups that have most of it already.

Though systematic change takes many decades, there are pressing questions for me and I imagine for some others like me if we raise our daily consciousness on the perquisites of being light-skinned. What will we do with such knowledge? As we know from watching men, it is an open

The question is: "Having described white privilege, what will I do to end it?"

question whether we will choose to use unearned advantage to weaken hidden systems of advantage, and whether we will use any of our arbitrarily-awarded power to try to reconstruct power systems on a broader base."

Examples of Racial Microaggressions

Theme	Microaggression	Message
<i>Alien in own land</i> When Asian Americans and Latino Americans are assumed to be foreign-born	“Where are you from?” “Where were you born?” “You speak good English.” A person asking an Asian American to teach them words in their native language.	You are not American You are a foreigner
<i>Ascription of Intelligence</i> Assigning intelligence to a person of color on the basis of their race.	“You are a credit to your race.” “You are so articulate.” Asking an Asian person to help with a Math or Science problem.	People of color are generally not as intelligent as Whites. It is unusual for someone of your race to be intelligent. All Asians are intelligent and good in Math / Sciences.
<i>Color Blindness</i> Statements that indicate that a White person does not want to acknowledge race	“When I look at you, I don’t see color.” “America is a melting pot.” “There is only one race, the human race.”	Denying a person of color’s racial / ethnic experiences. Assimilate / acculturate to the dominant culture. Denying the individual as a racial / cultural being.
<i>Criminality – assumption of criminal status</i> A person of color is presumed to be dangerous, criminal, or deviant on the basis of their race.	A White man or woman clutching their purse or checking their wallet as a Black or Latino approaches or passes. A store owner following a customer of color around the store. A White person waits to ride the next elevator when a person of color is on it.	You are a criminal. You are going to steal / You are poor / You do not belong / You are dangerous.
<i>Denial of individual racism</i> A statement made when Whites deny their racial biases	“I’m not a racist. I have several Black friends.” “As a woman, I know what you go through as a racial minority.”	I am immune to races because I have friends of color. Your racial oppression is no different than my gender oppression. I can’t be a racist. I’m like you.
<i>Myth of meritocracy</i> Statements which assert that race does not play a role in life successes	“I believe the most qualified person should get the job.” “Everyone can succeed in this society, if they work hard enough.”	People of color are given extra unfair benefits because of their race. People of color are lazy and / or incompetent and need to work harder.
<i>Pathologizing cultural values / communication styles</i> The notion that the values and communication styles of the dominant / White culture are ideal	Asking a Black person: “Why do you have to be so loud / animated? Just calm down.” To an Asian or Latino person: Why are you so quiet? We want to know what you think. Be more verbal.” Speak up more.” Dismissing an individual who brings up race / culture in work / school setting.	Assimilate to dominant culture. Leave your cultural baggage outside.



Continuum on Becoming an Anti-Racist Multicultural Organization

MONOCULTURAL ==> MULTICULTURAL ==> ANTI-RACIST ==> ANTI-RACIST MULTICULTURAL <i>Racial and Cultural Differences Seen as Deficits ==> Tolerant of Racial and Cultural Differences ==> Racial and Cultural Differences Seen as Assets</i>					
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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <p style="text-align: center;"><i>But...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <p style="text-align: center;"><i>But...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional structures and culture that maintain white power and privilege still intact and relatively untouched 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.

White Supremacy Culture

Tema Okun . [dRworks](https://www.dRworks.com) . www.dismantlingracism.org

- This piece is dedicated to the late Kenneth Jones, a long-time colleague, mentor, and friend who helped me become wise about many things and kept me honest about everything else. I love you and miss you beyond words.
- This piece on white supremacy culture builds on the work of many people, including (but not limited to) Andrea Ayzajian, Bree Carlson, Beverly Daniel Tatum, Eli Dueker, Nancy Emond, Kenneth Jones, Jonn Lunsford, Sharon Martinas, Joan Olsson, David Rogers, James Williams, Sally Yee, as well as the work of Grassroots Leadership, Equity Institute Inc, the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, the Challenging White Supremacy workshop, the Lillie Allen Institute, the Western States Center, and the contributions of hundreds of participants in the DR process.

** These sections are based on the work of Daniel Buford, a lead trainer with the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond who has done extensive research on white supremacy culture.*

This is a list of characteristics of white supremacy culture that show up in our organizations. Culture is powerful precisely because it is so present and at the same time so very difficult to name or identify. The characteristics listed below are damaging because they are used as norms and standards without being proactively named or chosen by the group. They are damaging because they promote white supremacy thinking. Because we all live in a white supremacy culture, these characteristics show up in the attitudes and behaviors of all of us – people of color and white people. Therefore, these attitudes and behaviors can show up in any group or organization, whether it is white-led or predominantly white or people of color-led or predominantly people of color.

perfectionism*

- little appreciation expressed among people for the work that others are doing; appreciation that is expressed usually directed to those who get most of the credit anyway
- more common is to point out either how the person or work is inadequate
- or even more common, to talk to others about the inadequacies of a person or their work without ever talking directly to them
- mistakes are perceived as personal, i.e. they reflect badly on the person making them as opposed to being seen for what they are – mistakes
- making a mistake is confused with being a mistake, doing wrong with being wrong
- little time, energy, or money put into reflection or identifying lessons learned that can improve practice, in other words little or no learning from mistakes

- tendency to identify what's wrong; little ability to identify, name, and appreciate what's right
- often internally felt, in other words the perfectionist fails to appreciate her own good work, more often pointing out his faults or 'failures,' focusing on inadequacies and mistakes rather than learning from them; the person works with a harsh and constant inner critic

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

sense of urgency

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

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

defensiveness

- the organizational structure is set up and much energy spent trying to prevent abuse and protect power as it exists rather than to facilitate the best out of each person or to clarify who has power and how they are expected to use it
- because of either/or thinking (see below), criticism of those with power is viewed as threatening and inappropriate (or rude)
- people respond to new or challenging ideas with defensiveness, making it very difficult to raise these ideas
- a lot of energy in the organization is spent trying to make sure that people's feelings aren't getting hurt or working around defensive people
- white people spend energy defending against charges of racism instead of examining how racism is actually happening
- leaders perceive calls for change as personal attacks (because if they were leading in the "right" way, then nothing would need to change); their defensiveness creates an oppressive culture where people feel they cannot make suggestions or when they do, these are ignored

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

quantity over quality*

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

antidotes: include process or quality goals in your planning; make sure your

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

worship of the written word

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

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

only one right way

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

antidotes: accept that there are many ways to get to the same goal; once the group has made a decision about which way will be taken, honor that decision and see what you and the organization will learn from taking that way, even and especially if it is not the way you would have chosen; work on developing the ability to notice when people do things differently and how those different ways might improve your approach; look for the tendency for a group or a person to keep pushing the same point over and over out of a belief that there is only one right way and then name it; when working with communities from a different culture than yours or your organization's, be clear that you

have some learning to do about the communities' ways of doing; never assume that you or your organization know what's best for the community in isolation from meaningful relationships with that community

paternalism

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

antidotes: make sure that everyone knows and understands who makes what decisions in the organization; make sure everyone knows and understands their level of responsibility and authority in the organization; include people who are affected by decisions in the decision-making; make sure everyone understands the budget (because if you understand the budget, you understand a lot)

either/or thinking*

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

antidotes: notice when people use 'either/or' language and push to come up with more than two alternatives; notice when people are simplifying complex issues, particularly when the stakes seem high or an urgent decision needs to be made; slow it down and encourage people to do a deeper analysis; when

people are faced with an urgent decision, take a break and give people some breathing room to think creatively; avoid (when possible) making decisions under extreme pressure

power hoarding

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

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

fear of open conflict

- people in power are afraid of expressed conflict and try to ignore it or run from it
- when someone raises an issue that causes discomfort, the response is to blame the person for raising the issue rather than to look at the issue which is causing the problem
- emphasis on being polite at the surface (while often deeply offensive to those who have a beef with you or your organization); insisting on politeness as terms for conversation or negotiation (i.e. requiring people to "check" their anger, particularly when it is a logical response to what is happening)
- equating the raising of difficult issues with being impolite, rude, or out of line

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

individualism*

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

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

I'm the only one

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

antidotes: evaluate people based on their ability to delegate to others; evaluate people based on their ability to work as part of a team to accomplish shared goals

progress is bigger, more*

- observed in how we define success (success is always bigger, more)
- progress is an organization which expands (adds staff, adds projects) or develops the ability to serve more people (regardless of how well they are serving them)
- gives no value, not even negative value, to its cost, for example, increased accountability to funders as the budget grows, ways in which those we serve

may be exploited, excluded, or underserved as we focus on how many we are serving instead of quality of service or values created by the ways in which we serve

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

objectivity*

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

antidotes: realize that everybody has a world view and that everybody’s world view affects the way they understand things; realize this means you too; push yourself to sit with discomfort when people are expressing themselves in ways which are not familiar to you; assume that everybody has a valid point and your job is to understand what that point is; recognize that we can know things emotionally and intuitively in ways that we may not be able to explain “rationally;” understand that often “rational” thinking is actually an emotional response couched in logic

right to comfort

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

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

One of the purposes of listing characteristics of white supremacy culture is to

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

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dRworks can be reached at www.dismantlingracism.org.

