

Becoming an Anti-Racist Organization

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Important Definitions¹

Institutional/Structural Racism is the social, economic, education, and political forces or policies that operate to foster discriminatory outcomes or give preferences to members of one group over others.\

Racism is the practice of discrimination and prejudice based on racial classification supported by the power to enforce that prejudice.

Ethnocentrism is the view that one's own group is the center of everything and that all things are judged based on one's own group.

Prejudice is the negative (or positive/idealized) attitudes, thoughts, and beliefs about an entire category of people formed without full knowledge or examination of the facts.

Discrimination is acting on the basis of prejudice. Discrimination is often codified by laws, regulations, and rules.

Oppression is experienced when people are deprived of human rights or dignity and are (or feel) powerless to do anything about it.

Symbolic racism is expressed by those who may or may not perceive themselves as racist, but justify their negative judgment of others by asserting that the others do not abide by traditional values of the dominant group. People can perceive themselves as being fair and practicing equality by holding forth certain values (i.e. individualism, work ethic) and take negative action because the focal group does not share those values.

• ¹ "Institutional Racism & The Social Work Profession: A Call to Action" National Association of Social Workers , 2007. Retrieved from <http://www.socialworkers.org/diversity/institutionalracism.pdf>

Self-Assessment of Anti-Racist Behavior²

1. I educate myself about the culture and experience of other social identity groups by actively attending classes, workshops, cultural events, reading, talking to people, and so forth.
2. I spend time reflecting on my life to analyze where and how I received racist messages.
3. I look at my own attitudes and behaviors to determine how I collude with racism.
4. I evaluate my own use of language to see if I am using terms or phrases that are subtly racist or reinforce unequal status.
5. I avoid stereotyping and generalizing about people based on their race.
6. I value cultural differences and avoid statements such as “I never think of you as black,” which discredits human differences and cultural heritage.
7. I am aware of and can explore and discuss with comfort diversity issues, including racism.
8. I am open to having others point out ways in which my behavior may be racist or colludes with racism.
9. I am comfortable interacting honestly with someone of another race and am willing to discuss issues of racism with her or him.
10. I consciously monitor TV programs, newspapers, and advertising for racist content.
11. I ask people who are using racist language and behavior to refrain from doing so in my presence and state my reasons.
12. I am willing to be active in my school, workplace, and community to achieve inclusive and anti-racist environments.
13. I actively support anti-racist political action by campaigning for anti-racist candidates, participating in letter writing and other political efforts, and supporting anti-racist legislation.

² J. Katz, “White Awareness Handbook for Anti-Racism Training,” 2003.

Suggested Readings & Web Sites

- “Institutional Racism & The Social Work Profession: A Call to Action” National Association of Social Workers, 2007. Retrieved from <http://www.socialworkers.org/diversity/institutionalracism.pdf>
- A. Lorde, “The Uses of Anger: Women Responding to Racism” from Sister Outsider, The Crossing Press, 1984.
- D. Ayo, “I Can Fix It!” Retrieved from http://www.damaliayo.com/pdfs/I%20CAN%20FIX%20IT_racism.pdf
- K. Jones and T. Okum, “Dismantling Racism: A Workbook for Social Change Groups,” ChangeWork, 2001
- T. Okum, “From White Racist to White Anti-Racist: The Life-Long Journey,” dRWorks, 2006.
- J. Katz, “White Awareness Handbook for Anti-Racism Training,” 2003.
- W. Breines, “The Trouble Between Us; An Uneasy History of White and Black Women in the Feminist Movement,” Oxford Press, 2006.
- Spectra Speaks, “Straight Allies, White Anti-Racists, Male Feminists (and Other Labels That Mean Nothing to Me).” Retrieved from <http://www.spectraspeaks.com/2013/05/afrofeminism-labels-politically-correct-straight-allies-white-antiracists-male-feminists/>
- Groundwork Anti Racism Collective: <http://groundworkmadison.wordpress.com/>
- CrossRoads Anti Racism Organizing and Training: <http://crossroadsantiracism.org/>
- Everyday Feminism / How to talk with someone about privilege: <http://everydayfeminism.com/2012/12/how-to-talk-to-someone-about-privilege/>
- Multnomah County Equity & Empowerment Lens: <http://web.multco.us/diversity-equity/equity-and-empowerment-lens>
- Test Yourself for Hidden Biases: <http://www.tolerance.org/bias-self-assessment#.U0w1ckEkHYE.email>
- Alianza Cultural Competency Training: <http://dvalianza.org/cultural-competency-training/resources.html>