How to Be Antiracist

“In a racist society, it is not enough to be non-racist we must be anti-racist” - Angela Davis

Jenny Elsey Ed.D.
Bryce Coefield M.S.
Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge the land on which we sit and occupy today as the traditional and ancestral home of the Multnomah, Kathlamet, Clackamas, Tumwater, Watlalabands of the Chinook, the Tualatin Kalapuya, and other Indigenous nations of the Columbia River.

We acknowledge the Kalapuya are the original people of this place and the rightful inhabitants of this land. They are not a relic of the past – They are a vibrant and living people who affect the world in meaningful ways today.

We acknowledge that without them, we would not have access to this gathering and to this dialogue. We take this opportunity to thank and honor the original caretakers of this land.

CC: Dr. Tricia Hornback
Jenny Elsey Ed.D.

Taiwanese-American
1.5 Generation Immigrant
Cisgender
Female
Christian
Mother
Educator

Wife
Scholar/Practitioner
Leader
Foodie
Lakers Fan
Hiker
1st Generation College Grad
Bryce Coefield
(Ph.D. Candidate)
Black
Cisgender
Man
Christian
Mentee/Mentor
Foodie
Lakers Fan
Educator
Husband
Brother
Son
Father
Student
First-Gen
College Grad
Who’s in the room?
Ground Rules

- Actively listen
- Respect the thoughts of others even if you disagree
- Avoid generalizations and assumption
- Do not interrupt others while they’re speaking

- Use “I” statements
- Be conscious of body language
- Confidentiality
- Others?
Road Map

Where are we going?

1. Limitations
2. Terminology
3. Learning Together
4. Anti-Racism and Practical Takeaways
How to Be Antiracist (KINDA) (An overview) (101)
“But all our phrasing—race relations, racial chasm, racial justice, racial profiling, white privilege, even white supremacy—serves to obscure that racism is a visceral experience, that it dislodges brains, blocks airways, rips muscle, extracts organs, cracks bones, breaks teeth. You must never look away from this. You must always remember that the sociology, the history, the economics, the graphs, the charts, the regressions all land, with great violence, upon the body.”

— Ta-Nehisi Coates, Between the World and Me
Terminology

- Racism
- Race
- Antiracism
Racism

“Racism is a marriage of racist policies and racist ideas that produces and normalizes racial inequities” (Kendi, 2019, p. 18)

- Individual Racism
- Interpersonal Racism
- Racist Policies
  - Institutional Racism
- Structural Racism

Racist idea/policy + Power = Racial inequities (racism)
“But race is the child of racism, not the father. And the process of naming “the people” has never been a matter of genealogy and physiognomy so much as one of hierarchy. Difference in hue and hair is old. But the belief in the preeminence of hue and hair, the notion that these factors can correctly organize a society and that they signify deeper attributes, which are indelible—this is the new idea at the heart of these new people who have been brought up hopelessly, tragically, deceitfully, to believe that they are white.”

— Ta-Nehisi Coates, Between the World and Me
Narratives

Then and Now
Learning Together
Life inventory

- Who are you closest to?
  - Church
  - Friends
  - Neighbors
  - Colleagues
Life inventory

- Who are you closest to?
  - Church
  - Friends
  - Neighbors
  - Colleagues

- Who is informing your mind and spirit?
  - News Programs
  - Authors
  - Podcasters
  - Theologians
Life inventory

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- Where are you spending your money?
OVERT WHITE SUPREMACY
(socially unacceptable behavior and groups)

Thomas Jefferson Memorial Church
Racial Inequities
Racial Inequities

When two or more racial groups are not on approximate equal footing. (Kendi, 2019).

- Home Ownership
- Education
- Health Care
- Incarceration
- Wealth
- Foster Care in state of Oregon
Dominant narratives about race (family, media, society) coupled with racialized structural arrangements and differential outcomes by race all prime us to believe that people of color are inferior to white people, create and maintain harmful associations, and lead us to make harmful assumptions, consciously and unconsciously, about people of color.

Implicit Bias

For Example:
- Voting Rights
- FHA Loans
- Residential segregation
- Access to education, green space, resources, safety, healthcare, etc.
- Jobs, hiring and advancement

Structural Racism

Race is created to justify enslaving people from Africa (economic engine of country)

Policies and practices that consolidate and protect power bestowed unearned economic, social, cultural, and political advantage to people called “white,” and unearned disadvantage to people of color.

National narrative (ideology, belief system) about people of color being “less than” human (and less than white) justifies mistreatment and inequality (white supremacy).

Inequitable outcomes and experiences resulting from policy decisions in health, housing, employment, education, and life expectancy - reinforces white supremacist beliefs and ideology; dominant narrative uses disparate outcomes as evidence of white superiority, promotes whiteness as “normal” and desirable and justifies inequality.
No one is born racist or antiracist; these result from the choices we make. Being antiracist results from a conscious decision to make frequent, consistent, equitable choices daily. These choices require ongoing self-awareness and self-reflection as we move through life. In the absence of making antiracist choices, we (un)consciously uphold aspects of white supremacy, white-dominant culture, and unequal institutions and society. Being racist or antiracist is not about who you are; it is about what you do.

- Smithsonian. Talking About Race
Antiracism for White People

- Get comfortable talking about race and saying “White”
- See yourself as part of the White group.
- Understand and begin to take responsibility for your power and privilege as part of the white group—such as acknowledging the historical roots of White Supremacy and knowing that the White privilege you have as a result of that history is a real thing.
- Have all the feelings related to deepening relationships and increased multicultural experience—both the feelings of guilt, anger, or frustration that can sometimes arise in a racist system in which you experience privilege and the feelings of joy and connection to others that will emerge from pursuing diverse relationships and acting to protest and combat racism you encounter.
- Distinguish between your commitment to being a White antiracist and the part of you that wants to be a perfect antiracist—socialization is real, and racism is real, and you won’t always be perfectly antiracist.
- Know there will be hard things that come up when you explore White privilege. Learn to see these challenges as “teachers” and opportunities to learn more about your own Whiteness..
- Participate in individual and collective action against racism.
- Value self-reflection on your White identity.
- Use racist thoughts and behaviors you might engage in to deepen understanding and continue to change thoughts and behaviors.

Tema Okun (2006, p. 13)* with edits
6 “R’s” of Antiracism for White People

- **Read** and educate yourself on the effects, impacts, and other structures of racism.
- **Reflect** on what this education means for you as someone developing a White antiracist identity, such as identifying new ways to challenge everyday racism and work on racial justice initiatives.
- **Remember** how you participate in the thoughts, beliefs, and actions that uphold racism, whether you intend to or not, and how you “forget” that racism exists. Identify internalized racial attitudes you have about people of color.
- **Take risks** to challenge racism when you see it or realize when you are participating in it. Interrupt racial stereotypes when you hear them, and support people of color in your personal and professional settings when they speak out about their experiences with racism.
- **Rejection** is something you’ll experience as an antiracist, as sometimes you will make mistakes and “get it wrong” when it comes to identifying and challenging racism. Because of your White privilege, it will sometimes be tough to identify how something you are doing may be harmful to people of color. And people of color may reject what you are saying and even more so hold you accountable for these missteps. Learn to understand and accept rejection. People of color have justified anger about racism, and they may reject you or White people harshly because of it. If this happens, understand that this is the product of their treatment at the hands of a racist system. Don’t take it personally; rather, help them if you can and continue to stay in the fight against racism.
- **Relationship building** is a part of what you do along the way—with White folks and people of color who are somewhere on their journey from nonracist to antiracist.

Tema Okun (2006, p. 13)
6 “R’s” Antiracism for People of Color (POC)

1. Read and educate yourself on the effects, impacts, and other structures of racism—both on your racial group and on other groups.
2. Reflect on what this education means for you as someone developing an antiracist identity.
3. Remember how you might be participating in thoughts, beliefs, and actions that uphold racism. Identify the negative beliefs you have internalized about your own race and even apply to other people of color. Think about how you are complicit with racism when racist events are happening—ways you don’t speak up for yourself and others.
4. Take risks to challenge racism when you see it or realize when you are participating in it.
5. Understand the anger that you and people of other racial groups may have about racism, express your rejection of racism from White people, and continue to stay in the fight against racism with a clear understanding of what privileges or disadvantages you may have relative to people of other racial groups. It’s okay to be angry about racism—it has hurt you and lots of other people you care about. Turn the anger you have into energy to challenge racism and hold White people accountable for their own racism. (To be clear, in general it isn’t your job to hold White folks accountable, but it is an important aspect of being an antiracist person of color.) Keep in mind you have internalized White supremacist notions about your own race and others, so keep a lookout for how those internalized attitudes show up and provide an obstacle to your joining forces with other people of color groups.
6. Engage in relationship building with people of color and White folks alike who are on their journey from nonracist to antiracist.

Tema Okun (2006, p. 13)
Practical Takeways
Tips for disrupting interpersonal racism

- Seek clarity: “Tell me more about __________.”
- Offer an alternative perspective: “Have you ever considered __________.”
- Speak your truth: “I don’t see it the way you do. I see it as __________.”
- Find common ground: “We don’t agree on __________ but we can agree on __________.”
- Give yourself the time and space you need: “Could we revisit the conversation about __________ tomorrow.”
- Set boundaries. “Please do not say __________ again to me or around me.”
How do you engage in Antiracism?
“[We must] believe in the possibility that we can strive to be antiracist from this day forward. Believe in the possibility that we can transform our societies to be antiracist from this day forward. Racist power is not godly. Racist policies are not indestructible. Racial inequities are not inevitable. Racist ideas are not natural to the human mind.”

- Ibram X. Kendi How to be Antiracist
Homework
Systems and Inequities

- By yourself, divide two pieces of paper into 4 sections. Write the following categories, one in each section, on the page: Education, Healthcare Treatment, Neighborhoods/Housing, Criminal Justice. Do this for both pages.

- On the first sheet, jot down the racial group(s) of people you think get the best service/experience/outcomes in America for each category. You can repeat groups.

- On the second sheet, jot down the racial group(s) of people you think get the worst service/experience/outcomes in America for each category. You can repeat groups.
Systems and Inequities

- What *policies*, old and newer, do you believe might account for these groups’ experiences.

- Return to each racial group you’ve listed, one at a time. Search the internet, look up the racial group, one of the four categories, and the word “policy” (limit your search to U.S. policies and seek out fact-based sources). Browse through the results for things that strike you.
Discuss with your partner/larger:

- Was it easy or difficult to find useful information on policies in these categories having to do with race? Why do you think that was?

- For those racial groups that you thought had the best service/experience/outcomes, were you able to identify specific policies that helped them? Why yes? Or why not?

- How do you think policies can be hidden or difficult to see in operation?

- What did you discover that was new to you?

- Were you wrong about anything you thought? How did you find out?

- Was there anything uncomfortable about this exercise? Why yes? Or why not?

- How can our learning about policies, racial groups, and outcomes help support anti-racism efforts?
Thank you!
Feedback