

On Monday, May 25, 2020, in the middle of a day, George Floyd, a Black man living in Minneapolis, Minnesota, was pulled from his car and publicly executed by a white police officer. Three other police officers stood by while everything was all caught on nine minutes of tape. The nation and the world have watched and reacted. All of this is occurring while COVID-19 is also present.

OUR STAFF, OUR CLIENTS, THE PEOPLE WE SEEK TO SERVE ARE ASKING FOR OUR HELP. What CAN / SHOULD WE DO / NOT DO / TRY / BUILD / PRACTICE in these moments + beyond?

- **Racism is pervasive, predictable, and deadly**
- **Uprisings and resistance to injustice consistently occur in the U.S. + around the globe**
- **Context always matters; workplaces can take meaningful action**

Team Dynamics is a national firm of racial justice practitioners headquartered in Minnesota.

We are a mixed team¹ of Black, Latinx, API, and white adult educators that support U.S.-based workplaces to achieve racial and gender equity goals. Workers are living this collective moment.

Team Dynamics works side-by-side with organizations, leaders, and teams. We support groups who want to build their capacity to name, notice, and navigate differences that are making a difference: ex. race, gender identity, religion, disability, immigration experience, class, sexual orientation, and more. Racial equity, justice, and liberation are at the center of our practice.

In the midst of the global pandemic and economic crisis brought on by COVID-19, in the wake of the murder of yet another Black American at the hands of police, Team Dynamics has been asked by our clients, friends, and colleagues for help.

What are your options as a worker, a leader, and an organization amidst this reality?

We have quickly compiled this tool as a resource from which to draw. We acknowledge this is both beautiful and imperfect. It is complex and also incomplete.

Whether you are a current, former, or future client, we offer this tool to you with deep humility.

The purpose of this offering is to equip workplaces with some tangible ways they can meet this moment: ensuring behavior aligns with values, noticing/naming/navigating the realities as they continue to unfold, centering the humane care and support of Black colleagues, and doing the self-awareness work required to build out a practice of learning from our feelings of activation.

Again . . . people we are, and people we love, are hurting, afraid, numb, furious, and more — Black Americans are attempting to live through indescribable pain.

Say Something + Do Something

Not saying and not doing is not okay.

We have compiled actionable to-dos for workplaces and leaders. What follows is a short summary followed by in-depth questions and offerings for how workplaces can match their behavior with their espoused values at this moment and beyond.

Reminder: Self-Awareness is the CRITICAL FIRST RESPONSE.

Suppose we don't explore what is going on deep inside of ourselves. In that case, **we run the risk of being reactive, defensive, or even dismissive** when a colleague shares their emotions, analysis, and/or a set of needs that is super different than our own. Being grounded in your own experience will be what helps you help well.

Step 1: Check-In with Your People | Acknowledge Structural Racism Means Impacts of Daily Life at this moment will be different for Black colleagues, colleagues of color, and white colleagues. Different People Will Need Different Things. Be explicitly clear that your workers will not be in trouble for being traumatized. Can people get days off? What financial support will you ensure?

Step 2: Say Something | Acknowledge This is Happening | Speak the Truth

Pretending monumental moments of terror and injustice are not happening or not relevant to your workers and workplace *erodes trust in both leaders and their organizations*.

Step 3: Try Something | Do Something | Take Actions

Practice trying *something*. Doing something. Taking meaningful action.

Tools, Reflection Questions + Action Items Included Below:

- ❖ How Power + Racism Work
- ❖ Team Dynamics' Embodied Identity House
- ❖ Describe, Interpret, Evaluate Tool
- ❖ Team Dynamics Race/Racism Analysis
- ❖ Communicating INTERNALLY to Your People + Do's and Don'ts
- ❖ Communicating EXTERNALLY + Do's and Don'ts
- ❖ Role / Goal / Soul Tool
- ❖ What You, As a Workplace, Can + Should Consider Doing
- ❖ Goals and Recommendations for You as Leaders, Teams, and Organizations

Step 1: Check-In with Your People | Acknowledge Structural Racism Means Impacts of Daily Life at this moment will be different for Black colleagues, colleagues of color, and white colleagues. Different People Will Need Different Things.

Now is not the time to lazily offer a one-size-fits-all approach. People are complex, and we live inside of a complicated set of circumstances. Resist the urge to “dumb stuff down,” or make it small, or try to make it simply “go away.” This moment is not about singular acts of helping; research shows trust is built by daily actions that eventually feel reliable over time.ⁱⁱ

- ❖ **Don't assume how people are. Ask. And practice non-judgment.** – This includes not assuming what someone's mode of expressing emotions means. For example, if someone is crying, that does not automatically equate to them being “overwhelmed.” Tears are a natural part of the human experience – no one has to teach babies how to cry; it's part of how our bodies naturally work. If someone is quiet, stoic, not talkative, it doesn't mean that they don't care or that their brain, heart, and nervous systems aren't running a mile a minute. Breathe. Be with people. Ask → how are you? Is there anything I can start or stop doing? (allow the answer to be “I don't want to share” or “I don't want to share with you”)

* Tip, if you want the real answers, you can't do things as “business as usual.” You will need to be thoughtful and creative about how you reach out and how you listen and learn. For example, even though you typically communicate over email, this might be a phone call. Even though you usually connect as a whole department or project team, perhaps it's worth considering one-on-one outreach for this.

- ❖ **Practice “receiving + believing.”** – Meaning, people will be feeling the entire range of human emotions, some of which are rarely discussed or expressed in a workplace setting. For example: rage, devastation, paralyzing fear, fury, numbness, confusion, crippling anxiety. Practice breathing while you're listening to help you resist the urge to compare and contrast someone else's experience to your own.

- Example: As you are able, put both feet on the floor. Close your eyes or pick a fixed point to look at and soften your gaze (allowing the sight to blur slightly, rather than feeling like you are straining to stare). As you are able, put one hand on your chest and another hand on your tummy. As you are able, take a breath in through your nose,



feeling the hand over your tummy rise, and feeling the beating of your heart under the other hand. At your own pace, take five slow, deliberate breaths. Each one is deeper and longer than the rest. When you are complete, allow your eyes to flutter back open. As you are able, wiggle your fingers and toes, move your head and neck to return to sensations in your body. Before speaking to anyone else on your team, set a timer for three minutes and write/draw (in whatever language/medium works best for you to be in your flow – you will not be sharing this with anyone). Keep your pen/pencil on the paper the entire time, writing out whatever has arisen. Take one more deep breath, then in a pair, small group, or larger group, feel free to share some of what you are noticing about yourself.

It is easy to project – how we feel *must* be how others are also feeling. That is not important. Practice acknowledging that everyone’s truths are true. No need to compare, contrast, or rank. No need to explain away or diminish.

- ❖ **Be explicit that it is okay not to be okay.** We will not be in trouble for being traumatized. Tell us we will not be considered or discussed as incapable, unprofessional, or untrustworthy if you ask us how we are, and we really tell you.

* It is countercultural (meaning out of pattern) in most workplaces to talk openly about feelings with clarity and complexity. We use a downloaded “Feelings Wheel”ⁱⁱⁱⁱ tool from the internet to help us. And no, this is not “group therapy;” pretending we are not experiencing the human range of emotions present is not helping us be in a relationship or get closer to our goals as a team.

- ❖ **Make offerings,** including but not limited to:
 - Connect folks to resources: mental health, physical health, financial resources
 - Should we move that deadline?
 - Would it be helpful if I took that meeting?
 - What kind of time off/away and plugged into work feels feasible and healthy *today?*
 - I can listen if it feels helpful to share, talk, scream, cry with someone present.
 - I would walk with you, exercise with you if doing something physical with someone feels like it would help.
 - I could sit quietly with you, draw, listen to music, journal, just be still together if that sounds like it would help.
 - I can leave you alone and help others do the same if that’s your current request.
 - I can tap in to help with that project, client, meeting.
- ❖ **Communicate how this check-in is different** for you than a “regular Monday morning ‘how are you?’” type of checking in. Why? At work, we have so many habits, so many patterns we develop. If you are used to meeting with the people you supervise over Zoom (or any other mode), it can be easy for this conversation to feel like all the rest. But in the rest of those meetings, a “check-in” may have been more a formality – like, “how are you?” followed by “fine thanks, you?”

If you are a person with positional power in your company, **communicate clearly what you have the authority to help accomplish** (ex. approve days off, move money for temporary family relocation, redistribute deadlines/project deadlines).

Reminder: Self-Awareness is the CRITICAL FIRST RESPONSE.

Suppose we don't explore what is going on deep inside of ourselves. In that case, **we run the risk of being reactive, defensive, or even dismissive** when a colleague shares their emotions, analysis, and/or a set of needs that is super different than our own. Being grounded in your experience will be what helps you help others be well.

Questions to help you reflect before reaching out:

How are YOU? (not how do you think you should be, how are you, actually) Today? This hour? This moment?

What NEEDS do you have that could be met? (ex. sleep, water, food, emergency supplies – including cash, a safe place to sleep, time away from work?)

What is your BODY telling you that you need? (remember, American workers are trained to be deeply disembodied. “Pushing through” is not a good/possible/healthy idea right now)

What are you currently feeling most TRIGGERED/TROUBLED/CONFUSED about? Why do you think that is?

What is most on your mind as you think about WORKING this week?

You can ask one, some, or all of these questions regularly – this can help you build your practice of telling the truth, receiving and believing, and making asks and offerings at work.

Step 2: Say Something | Acknowledge This is Happening | Speak the Truth

- Acknowledging the murder of Black people is a critical part of racial truth-telling in America.
- Pretending monumental moments of terror and injustice are not happening or not relevant to your workers and workplace *erodes trust in both leaders and their organizations*.
- In the U.S. and its colonies (ex. Puerto Rico, Washington, D.C., and more), race is the single most significant difference, making the difference in our American experience. Full stop. Looking away from that truth is turning our back on the largest stain currently preventing America from actually being who we've claimed to be for the past 400 years.

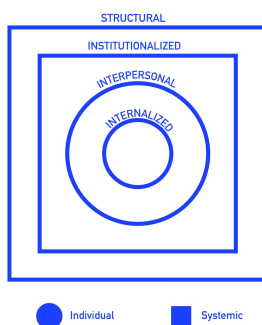
Racism is stitched into the fabric of our country, our economy, our schools, our hospitals, our neighborhoods, our relationships, our workplaces, and our own bodies. Anti-Black racism has a particular flavor in America that is brutal, dehumanizing, and designed to effectively create terror: fear of Black people by non-Black people and control of Black people by white people.

Racism, Anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, White Nationalism, White Supremacy, Xenophobia – all are a particular flavor of disgusting. In the aftermath of the murder of George Floyd, we are wholly *uninterested* in engaging in conversations pitting different communities of color and people of minority ethnicities against one another in a perverted hierarchy through some kind of “oppression Olympics.” This is not about rank-ordering human suffering.

Indigenous people, Latinx people, Asian Pacific Islanders, North African/South Asian, immigrants/forced migrants/refugees/asylum-seekers, Muslims, Jews, transgender people, people with disabilities, LGBTQ+ people, working-class people, non-white, non-Christian, non-straight bodies consistently experience the full range of bias, prejudice, discrimination, harassment, and violence at the hands of Americans and the American institutions and structures that have been created to build and protect the preservation of land, labor, and wealth for a small minority: wealth-holding, land-owning, white people. **Breathe.** It is tough to reckon with this reality.

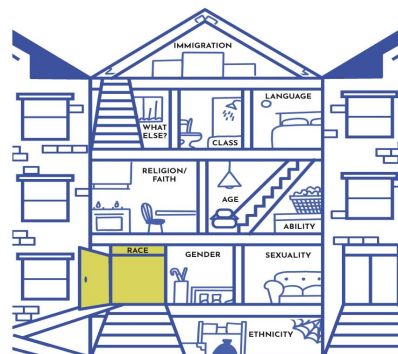
Remember: How Power + Racism Work^{iv}

Racism is not simply the individual acts of mean people. It is a pre-meditated, self-perpetuating system operating at four levels simultaneously.



Team Dynamics' Embodied Identity House^v

We are always our entire mix of identities. How we experience our experience is in large part due to how our precise mix is acknowledged and valued by others.





Americans' Commitment to Collective Amnesia is Crushing

Take time now to practice remembering, saying out loud, and wrestling with reality.

*One of the mantras we use as a staff team at Team Dynamic is "let's first start with **describe**."*

Remember to Use the Tool: Describe, Interpret, Evaluate^{vi}

DESCRIBE → Objective analysis and articulation based on observation

"What you see/observe"

Ex. Trevor cried during our staff meeting. Cindy logged in to Zoom at 9:16 am. Jessica shared that her family did not sleep at home last night.

You practice. Without interpreting, practice just naming what you know to be true, thus far.

INTERPRET → Subjective analysis and articulation based on observation

"What you think you see or observe"

Ex. Trevor appeared really upset – it looked like a mixture of sad, mad, scared, and frustrated to me. Cindy is usually on time for meetings, so I'm not sure what was different for her today, including knowing whether she and/or her family are doing okay. I'm not sure if Jessica felt safe or comfortable outside of her home, and I don't know what the state of her home, block, or neighborhood is at the moment.

You practice. Practice the curiosity that can follow "describe," acknowledging what you don't know, what you are curious about – rather than jumping to conclusions or meaning-making based on the behavior you believe you experienced?

EVALUATE → Assignment of value judgment based on descriptive and interpretive information

"What you think and/or feel about what you think you see or observe"

Ex. I would like to check in with Trevor, ask how he's feeling, and see how I can offer support based on what he would like from me. I would like to check in with Cindy to learn why she was late, including seeing if she is okay, and if her schedule needs to be adjusted for the time being. I want to check in with Jessica and learn what she needs.

You practice. What feels important to follow up about? What offers can you make?

Self-Awareness Question: How can YOU catch yourself when you are leaping past describe and starting to interpret and evaluate too early? How can you practice backing up to describe?

Team Dynamics Race/Racism Analysis

We come to our understanding of race, racism, white privilege, and white supremacy from an interdisciplinary approach rooted in practical experience within social justice movements and mainstream nonprofits and philanthropy. Making our careers in nonprofit leadership, we understand the real-life nuances of both homogenous and heterogeneous teams. We recognize that organizational roles, expectations, power dynamics, and history play a significant role in how race/racism work is approached at nonprofits.

Our analysis is informed by study and reflection on feminist/queer/anti-racist writers, activists, and scholars such as: Gloria Anzaldua, Cherrie Moraga, Angela Davis, bell hooks, Audre Lorde, James Baldwin, Huey Newton, Bobby Seale, Elaine Brown, Bayard Rustin, John D'Emilio, john a. powell. We are particularly grateful to the National LGBTQ Task Force, Queers for Economic Justice, and the First Nations Two Spirit Collective for sharing their wisdom and informing our analysis over the years.

The following are a synopsis of our beliefs and operating principles:

Stolen Land, Stolen People, Structured by Design for Supremacy

We believe it is imperative to ground our practice by acknowledging and keeping our collective history and consequent trauma. We recognize the land we inhabit and the unpaid labor that built the majority of the U.S. and its colonies. To actively dismantle the impacts of slavery, genocide, and xenophobia, we must address the construction and supremacy of whiteness in America. These dehumanizing atrocities were made, executed, and subsequently used as evidence to normalize repugnant systemic and personal behavior. Structural design choices baked supremacy into the first notions of this country; engaging in racial justice work requires vigilant resistance to white Americans' systemic supremacy.

False Borders + Body Sovereignty

Colonization, including the sale of land and people, resulted in the artificial construction of borders – now used as weapons to in-group and out-group. North, Central, and South American borders currently serve to sever family relationships, disrupt our community's traditions, and limit the free movement of bodies up and down the Western Hemisphere. False borders were constructed under the guise of securing order, belonging, or not belonging. We believe that all bodies should have the freedom of self-determination to live where they need to, build a family as they see fit, and express themselves in a way that is congruent with their innermost identity and set of beliefs.

Colorism

We know that a very real and pervasive anti-Blackness exists within this country and our institutions. We know that lighter skin privilege impacts access and influence within our work, and we seek to acknowledge and disrupt those dynamics. In addition to anti-Black colorism, we recognize that Indigenous people and other People of Color also experience the pitfalls of colorism's impact on our work.



Power + Organizing

We believe that to disrupt these problematic and pervasive system disparities, it is imperative that we analyze power in all its forms, build power among marginalized communities, and place emphasis on community organizing led by communities impacted.

Intersectionality^{vii}

Our analysis consistently considers how in any moment, relationship, room, or institution, racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia, Islamophobia, and anti-Semitism, among others, are all at play and must be noticed and disrupted. We are with our first foot forward anti-racist, with a desire to consistently bring a multi-identity lens to our bodies of work.

There are countless resources – books, movies, articles, organizations, videos – on each of the concepts above. If you are interested in digging in more, let us know, and based on your goals for learning and action, we can direct you towards resources we find powerful.

Things to consider when you are “saying something” to your workers and workplace:

Engage in some quiet self-reflection. Breathe. Why are you talking?

What do you know? What are you guessing/assuming? What do you have no idea about?

What challenges you when considering what to say and what it will be like once you’ve said something?

What is your goal? What are you hoping to accomplish by speaking/writing/communicating?

What does it feel like to know that it is highly likely that you will receive feedback, expressions of discomfort, questions of you when you speak about race and racism?



Communicating INTERNALLY to Your People

a) **Don't wait + don't rush.** We know. This is a tough rule of thumb. What do we mean? Do not wait until things "calm down" or you have "more information" *before* sharing with your staff that you see what is going on. Crisis response + dismantling racism are marathons made up of a series of sprints. In the wake of civic, public health, climate, and economic crisis, your staff needs to know you are paying attention. There will not be just one email/meeting/conversation. Your notes can be short, incomplete, and even full of uncertainty. No matter what you do, communicate with a relative speed that you see and know it impacts your staff, team, and culture.

Do's	Don'ts
Center the experience of the humans impacted	Don't make promises you can't/won't keep
Name who has been hurt/is hurting	Don't minimize or diminish the pain/impact
Name your own identities	Don't pretend or say you know or understand how anyone else feels
Share your initial ideas for response	Don't just offer thoughts and prayers alone
Ask for help/ideas/offerings for the next steps	Don't engage in "Reply All" type group discussions you are not prepared to moderate
Be clear about what is "on the table" in terms of what staff can ask for during this time	Don't project your feelings onto others – assuming people feel the "same" way
Encourage your staff to tell you what they need	Don't make People of Color support white people to process their own feelings or engage in their own learning about race and racism

b) **Match the mode of communication to your goals for the communication.** – Depending on how your colleagues usually communicate with one another, consider which modes make sense given the severity and urgency of the matter you're facing. Ex. Is there value in an all-staff email, so everything hears the same thing from your organization's leaders in the same way at the same time? Do you also imagine one-on-one and group texts, phone calls, and Slack messages (or whatever your internal messaging system is) makes sense as additional ways to check-in, learn how folks are doing, communicate? Be creative, remember you can use all the tools available to you. You are not stuck to communicating strictly on routine business matters.

c) **Tell the truth.** – Be a grown-up; don't dance around what is simply true. Describe in plain terms what is happening. Resist the urge to try to keep communications watered down or vague or "professional." **You employ adults. Adults can hear hard things.** If you don't tell the truth, you communicate that you are out of touch with reality. You are not being inappropriately "political" – whole sets of bodies have been *politicized*. Talking about Black bodies, transgender bodies, bodies of immigrants, bodies that are Muslim, bodies that are Jewish, bodies that are disabled, bodies that are LGBTQ+, bodies and lived experiences are being discussed as though they are inherently partisan. Do not avoid acknowledging the pain and lived experience of certain bodies just because others have co-opted words and phrases as convenient clickbait, political fodder, or gross over-generationalizations as though all of any kind of person is feeling the exact same way on the exact same day – that's absurd.



Speaking about current events will be uncomfortable, especially if you are new to the practice of naming and navigating race and racism on your team. Your comfort is not the most important thing to protect. You can do this. Email us if you need help: team@teamdynamicsmn.com.

Sample message: To Our Staff: Along with everyone who has access to the internet, we have seen a nearly 9-minute video of Minneapolis Police Officers murdering George Floyd, a Black man, in South Minneapolis, in broad daylight, with both George and bystanders screaming for help. We can see George Floyd become unconscious. We hear a different officer check for a pulse and say that George Floyd has none. We have witnessed another public execution of a Black American, in 2020, in our city.

d) Share what you are considering and ask for your staff's help. – Now is not the time to be making unilateral decisions in a room without your greatest asset – your people. Include your staff in the creation of creative ways your workplace can engage in anti-racism work.

There is an old adage, “no conversation about us, without us.” Do not guess what to do in times as necessary as these. Black leaders and organizers are very clear about what they are asking for at both the micro and macro levels. Get to know the work of Black leaders, groups, and organizations in your area and your sector. Practice listening, learning, and following their lead – responding to their requests for meaningful actions to the personal, interpersonal, institutional, and systemic changes they are proposing.

You may have a very clear idea of what you can, will, and want to do as a workplace, a business, and a voice in the community. As you continue to communicate with your people, share what you are thinking, and ask staff for their help/best thinking/best ideas for ways that your organization can meaningfully contribute to short, medium, and long-term efforts to end racism.

Ex. You could put together a survey where folks can type in their ideas. You could ask staff members if they would like to volunteer to research, connect with, lead efforts in ways your company could contribute: ex. money, time, volunteer skills, gather and share resources, etc.

Things to be mindful of when communicating internally to your staff teams

- You WILL receive feedback, reactions, questions from your staff. There is no “perfect” or “right” way to respond in times of crisis. Remember, discomfort is tolerable. We can learn a lot about ourselves and our colleagues in the dialogues that are sparked following crises.

- Some staff may want GUARANTEES or ASSURANCES. If there are promises you can make, like ensuring access to trauma response professionals, a new monthly commitment to giving x% of your proceeds towards x groups/people/issues/organizations, great. If there are promises you cannot make with confidence, don't. Ex. you are not sure when a particular building will be safe to return to following fire damage, etc.

- Share your plans, as best they exist now, for continued communication as the crisis and their implications unfold so your staff know what to expect and are not anxious about if/when/how they will hear about what happens next. For many businesses, COVID-19 has given us some practice. Context always matters and contexts continue to change. Build resiliency to fluidity.

Remember the Tool: ROLE / GOAL / SOUL^{viii}



What is your **ROLE** . . .

To whom and to what are you responsible? What are you expected to do?

What is your **GOAL** . . .

Precisely, what are you trying to make better and/or different?

How will you get there without losing your **SOUL** . . .

How are your current and daily behaviors a manifestation of your values?

We encourage you to ask yourself these Role / Goal / Soul questions consistently:

*For example, the idea is, “we should make sure our staff can **process** what is happening.”*

ROLE self-reflection: *Based on your mix of identities, position, and training (ex. facilitation, mental health, etc.), what is an appropriate role for you in a session designed to support staff processing? What should you do? Why? What shouldn't you do? Why? What are other staff people expecting of you – both formally and informally? Do you know?*

GOAL self-reflection: *As specifically as possible, what are your goals for this process time? For you as a leader – ex. I want to hear the range of what people are experiencing so I can match resources to people. A goal for myself is to notice what is hard for me to hear, process, and understand when my colleagues share something really different from how I'm experiencing this experience. Curiosity about the language people share and how they communicate may be similar and/or different from how we usually talk in meetings/work contexts. The goal is to learn about what ideas, resources, action steps staff recommend that our company takes.*

SOUL self-reflection: *What currently are my most deeply held values and how could/should my behavior at work in this moment act as a tangible manifestation of those values? If I were to help maintain and/or participate in a “processing space” with colleagues, how would I be able to enact compassion in both a broad and specific set of ways? If one of my values is the inherent worth of all bodies, including across race, based on my race and my racialized training, in what ways can I lead, follow, and participate under those values?*

Communicating EXTERNALLY to Your Customers / Stakeholders / Community

a) **If you're going to make a public statement – call it what it is:** ex. murder of a Black man by police. Also, discuss your goals of public statements – what do you want your readers, listeners, people who trust you to do? Don't make a statement just to make a statement. Steer people towards meaningful action. Ground your statement in your organization's vision, mission, and values. Connect.

Ex. "Minneapolis City Council Vice President Andrea Jenkins called on state and local officials Thursday (May 28, 2020) to declare racism a public health emergency. Until we name this virus, this disease that has infected America for the past 400 years, we will never, ever resolve this issue. To those who say bringing up racism is racist in and of itself, I say to you, if you don't call cancer what it is, you can never cure that disease. And so, in an effort to try and cure this disease, I am stating exactly what everyone else has witnessed, and that is racism."^{ix}

b) **Do not accept the frame offered to you by people who do not share your values:** ex. using words like "looting"^x or "thugs" or "riots." Don't get distracted and/or fixate on the distinctions between historic and current definitions of what is and isn't considered a "peaceful protest."

c) **Describe why you, as a business, are weighing in.** Make a direct connection between how you know this impacts your people, your business, and the people you seek to serve.

d) **Share what you are going to try, consider, and do.** Why? Empty rhetoric is not enough. Messages offering "thoughts and prayers" only will be seen for what they are: inaction.

Do's	Don'ts
Say relevant words: racism and Black and white	Don't overgeneralize, including speaking on behalf of or about people you are not.
Say who you are: ex. <i>as a white CEO, ...</i>	Don't talk about groups or individuals as "other," using words like "them" or "all Black people".
Run your message by people on your staff. If you are white, do not write in a vacuum, and also do not ask Black people and/or non-Black People of Color to write for you and then put your name on something. Develop a meaningful process for co-creating/writing/editing things you will put out publicly and attribute them properly.	Don't fall for frames, tropes, caricatures – exacerbating the dehumanizing rhetoric the fuels white supremacist thinking, feeling, and actions.
Encourage meaningful engagement by the people who receive your message: ex. give money, deliver needed supplies, offer talent/ skills/resources.	Don't site unreliable sources or fuel speculation.
	Share a photo op that reeks of disaster tourism – this is not the time for your org to be in company t-shirts taking photos of what "good" citizens they are. If you want to wear company t-shirts while contributing to meaningful efforts to show community solidarity, fine. Do good work. Be careful of the fine line between capturing and sharing what you're up to and asking for a pat on the back for showing up.

Step 3: Do Something | Try Something | Take Actions

- Practice trying *something*. Doing something. Taking meaningful action.
- Follow the lead of Black organizers and organizations who are asking for meaningful contributions to make a personal, interpersonal, institutional, and structural level change.

If you are not an expert in community organizing, philanthropy, policy, trauma in times of racism-induced crisis, and/or dismantling the police, don't pretend that you are. Don't wing it. And don't just take random recommendations you find on the internet and commit to them as your strategic approach. Look to the organizations for whom anti-racist action is their lives' work, and be humble enough to learn from them and follow them.

Remember: there is no such thing as a non-racist¹ - an "innocent bystander."

We are alive and awake at a particular time and in a particular country that purposely sets, practices, and enforces a racialized hierarchy, placing white people at the top and Black people at the very bottom. If you do nothing, you are complicit in the personal, interpersonal, institutional, and structural systems of racialized hierarchy that consistently and effectively stratify this nation's wealth in health in service of white bodies over all others.

Consider Your Own Intercultural Development:

- ❖ *If you are feeling like – “Why does this matter? Why are people ‘freaking out’? Given the lives lost and economic crisis due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, race and racism just cannot be that important right now.”* One idea is to do some reading/watching to learn about how and why race is currently the difference that makes the difference in how the virus impacts different people in disproportionate ways.
- ❖ *If you are feeling like – “We are on opposing teams – there is an ‘us’ and a ‘them’ right now. Either ‘us’ are the ‘good guys’ or ‘us’ are the ‘bad guys.’”* One idea if you feel like you are part of the group that has a lot to be ashamed about at the moment (for example, white people), practice remembering that there is no such thing as a ‘bad

¹ For more about the frameworks ‘non-racist’ and ‘anti-racist’:
https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-94-6300-585-2_6
<https://nmaahc.si.edu/learn/talking-about-race/topics/being-antiracist>



race of people.' Practice finding points of pride of white people whose actions you feel proud of. If you feel like you are part of the group pitted against the 'bad' guys, forced to protect and defend yourself and others, practice remembering that not all of any one group is fundamentally terrible, broken, or useless.

- ❖ *If you are feeling like* – You want to find things to do and say and solutions and experiences that 'make everyone, feel better.' Or you are feeling skittish to name and discuss race and racism but would rather think and talk about how 'we're all part of one human family' or 'we're all in this together.' Practice asking yourself many questions about what is going on for you that you're feeling activated in ways that diminish the complexity and pain of this moment? How have you been trained to be 'professional,' 'show respect,' etc.? How is your racial identity impacting how you're experiencing this experience?
- ❖ If you are feeling - **Overwhelmed by the amount of information and requests and ideas that feel like they are flying at you and don't feel like you know what to do with all this complexity**, practice trying a thing. What do we mean? Take one small action. And then another action after that. Practice trying to *do* something with what you're learning, of course evaluating and learning as you go, and then trying the next right thing. And the next right thing after that. Practice getting into a pattern of trying action rather than getting stuck in admiration of the problem. Learn for yourself when you know enough to take action in service of your values.

What You, as a Workplace, Can + Should Consider Doing:

What could you and your company start, stop, and do differently?

*** Get Money to Black People. Meaningfully. While we appreciate the intent of low-dollar fundraisers, as a company, give thousands and tens of thousands of dollars.**

- Earlier this week, Team Dynamics gave thousands of dollars to both:

- o Black Visions Collective (www.blackvisionsmn.org) +
- o Reclaim the Block (www.reclaimtheblock.org)

Both of which are now recommending other Black-led groups, organizations, and efforts to invest in now and moving forward.

*** Make Certain Your Company is NOT Giving \$ to People Who Do Not Support the Health, Wealth, Equity, Humanity +Beauty of Black People + non-Black People of Color.**

- What on earth do we mean?



- Double check your organization's investment portfolio. What are your screens? How are those enforced?
- Double check your vendor records – including your technology vendors, supply company, landlords, etc.

For example:

On Wednesday (May 27, 2020), University of Minnesota president Joan Gabel said, “our hearts are broken after watching the appalling video capturing the actions of Minneapolis Police Department (MPD) officers against George Floyd leading to his tragic death.”

RELATED: George Floyd's Death At Hands Of Police Deals Traumatic Blow To Community

Gabel said that in the wake of Floyd's death, she announced two immediate changes to the university's relationship with the Minneapolis Police Department (MPD).

First, the university will not be making contracts with the MPD for additional officer support for large events — football games, concerts, and other ceremonies.

Second, Gabel said that the university will no longer be using the MPD for any specialized services, such as K-9 explosive detection units prior to events.

“We have a responsibility to uphold our values and a duty to honor them. We will limit our collaboration with the MPD to joint patrols and investigations that directly enhance the safety of our community or that allow us to investigate and apprehend those who put our students, faculty, and staff at risk,” Gabel said. “My heart is heavy and my thoughts are with the loved ones and friends of George Floyd.”^{xi}

*** Make sure you're paying your Black people and non-Black People of Color well.** Not sure if you're doing that? We can help with pay equity study and plan of action – let us know: team@teamdynamicsmn.com.

*** Use your voice as a leader in your community, sector, professional association, etc. How can you ensure that Black voices and voices of your non-Black colleagues of color are being included, heard, and amplified?**

Where can you write, blog, post, ask questions, offer ideas including and beyond your business, campus, sector?

*** Tend to the needs of your people. Mind. Body. Spirit.**

Begin and practice new ways to check-in, connect, share resources, and meet needs. As you know, the healthier your staff are, the better your work and workplace. We are attempting to survive through a global pandemic, COVID-19, which has disproportionate negative consequences (both in terms of physical health and current and future financial health) for Black people and non-Black People of Color. Racism fueled by domestic terrorism is part of America's reality. How on earth are people supposed to eat, get sleep, homeschool their



children, avoid a potentially deadly respiratory illness, and do meaningful work? This is going to be a relay race. This will require your team to be reflective, open, flexible, earnest, and ready to do some things differently.

Ask Yourself These Questions Today and For Days to Come:

- What is *my context today*?

- What is *my team, staff, company's context today*?

- Who are *my people, your people, our people* – *who are we seeking to be in real and right relationship with – now and moving forward*?

- What are folks *asking for* – *our staff, our clients / customers / our geography*?

- What is the *variety of needs* people are expressing? Which of those can we meet?

- How could we be getting more *creative, conscious, serious* about creating the containers for conversation, processing, action, and more that you sense are required?

- Really consider, *what is this urge to act about* for me, today?
Consider: is this to make me/us feel better? Cover our asses in some way? Clean up something which is inherently a mess? Minimize, diminish the impact/disruption? Build a practice to reconcile with yourself where your urges to act are coming from and build a rubric for how you can catch yourself acting from ego rather than essence.

- Does the murder of George Floyd *feel catalyzing for you*? New? Different? Deep? Are you feeling numb? What are you comparing this experience to from your past? What are your personal reference points? How is now similar and different to traumas and civic disasters you have witnessed in the past? What questions are arising? What about this feels confusing, overwhelming, muddy to you?

As a racial justice–centered firm of intercultural development practitioners, Team Dynamics has been asked if we can help leaders, staff, and workplaces “process,” “heal,” and “learn.”

Our short answer is: “YES!”

Our more true answer is: “Absolutely, and it’s complicated, and it’s a long haul.”

We recognize that catalyzing, proximal events can serve as jumping-off points for individuals, teams, and organizations to develop new/better/more values-aligned practices, behaviors, and cultures.

Here Are Some of OUR GOALS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YOU as Leaders, Teams, and Organizations Feeling Catalyzed Right Now:

- Dive deep into meaningful self-awareness about **what is activating you** right now + why:
 - Ex. the murder of Black people
 - Ex. public protests
 - Ex. destruction of property
 - Ex. use of terms like racist, racism, white supremacy, anti-Black racism
- **Wrestle with power and how racism works:** the ever-present relationship of personal, interpersonal, institutional, and structural power dynamics, including how that impacts your staff and organization across lines of identity and position
- **Practice naming our own identities out loud with regularity as a truth/fact that impacts how we experience our experiences,** this includes saying race, racism, and race words (Black, white, People of Color) out loud
- **Practice navigating, at work, current events and real life contexts that are traumatizing and terrorizing your people** – practice acknowledging rather than avoiding or pretending
- **White people learning new ways to “receive + believe”** w/o re-centering own experience Including, developing and practicing using new kinds of curiosity - sitting with experiences that are not our own; practice not assuming and/or painting with a broad brush a whole group, a whole feeling, or a sense that our experiences are static when they are not
- Learn to live through both **expressive and restrained emotional communication preferences;** learn to bring into your practice noticing, naming, and stating both preferences and boundaries and how those are related to individual and group cultural programming
- Notice how **white dominant cultural behavioral patterns^{xii}** show up in your workplace

- Practice acknowledging and taking responsibility for the difference between intent and impact



Some of the Tactical Things Team Dynamics Can Help You Do:

- ❖ **Live Your Values Through Your Communications – Naming + Telling the Truth**
- ❖ **Lead You Through the Self-Awareness Work to Help You Get Un-Stuck**
- ❖ **Co-Create Containers and Opportunities for Your Workers to Connect**
 - ❖ **Each Container Must Be Built for the Experience You Are Aiming to Create**
 - ❖ **We Can Help You With the Frame, Format, and Facilitation**
- ❖ **Provide You with Developmentally Appropriate Learning Opportunities to Get Your Team Closer to Your Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Racial Justice Goals**
- ❖ **Connect You to Activists and Organizations in Whom You Can Invest**
- ❖ **Conduct an Equity Audit So Your Organization Knows Where You Need Help**
- ❖ **Help You Update and/or Re-Build Your Organizational Policies to Align with Your Equity Values and Goals *ex. hiring, personnel policies, benefits structure, and more***
- ❖ **Connect You to Healers, Mental Health Professionals, and Other Resources**

**Please Reach Out to Team Dynamics
team@teamdynamicsmn.com**

Endnotes:

- ⁱ <https://www.teamdynamicsmn.com/team>
- ⁱⁱ Dr. Brown’s trust research: <https://jamesclear.com/great-speeches/the-anatomy-of-trust-by-brene-brown>
- ⁱⁱⁱ About the Feelings Wheel tool: <https://www.wellandgood.com/good-advice/feelings-wheel/>
- ^{iv} Credit Race Forward (www.raceforward.org): Personal, Interpersonal, Institutional, Systemic model of power and racism.
- ^v Team Dynamics’ Embodied Identity House tool:
https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5e49e68033aa160312373e1b/t/5e8676b756ac8f6cb6cfe79c/1585870520313/House_2020_Team+Dynamics.pdf
- ^{vi} Credit Bennett, Bennet, and Stilling: “Describe, Interpret, Evaluate” model, 1977.
- ^{vii} Credit for Intersectionality Framework - Kimberle Crenshaw: (1989). Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics.
- ^{viii} Team Dynamics’ Role, Goal, Soul Worksheet
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5e49e68033aa160312373e1b/t/5e7ab2b0864e9b0fbed1d564/1585099741230/Team-Dynamics-Role-Goal-Soul-Worksheetpdf>
- ^{ix} Councilwoman Andrea Jenkins’ remarks: <https://www.axios.com/minneapolis-george-floyd-racism-public-health-568de687-8d57-411f-96c1-2420114f2327.html>
- ^x Origin of terms like “looting”: https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/29/us/looting-starts-shooting-starts.html?action=click&pgtype=Article&state=default&module=styleIn-george-floyd&variant=show®ion=TOP_BANNER&context=storylines_menu
- ^x <https://minnesota.cbslocal.com/2020/05/27/u-of-m-president-announces-plans-to-cut-some-ties-with-minneapolis-police-department/>
- ^x Article: “White Dominant Culture” by Tema Okun. “ <https://www.showingupforracialjustice.org/white-supremacy-culture-characteristics.html> This article on white supremacy culture also known as white dominant culture builds on the work of many people, including (but not limited to) Andrea Ayvazian, Bree Carlson, Beverly Daniel Tatum, M.E. 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 who has done extensive research on white supremacy culture.”

Recommended Listening – found wherever you get your podcasts:

BEHAVE - Team Dynamics’ podcast – hosted by our co-founders, Alfonso Tomás Wenker + Trina C. Olson



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Scene on Radio Podcast – Season entitled “Seeing White.” Produced and hosted by John Biewen, *Scene on Radio* comes from the Center for Documentary Studies (CDS) at Duke University and is distributed by PRX. The Peabody-nominated *Seeing White*, Biewen, and collaborator Chenjerai Kumanyika explored the history and meaning of whiteness.