

SO YOU WANT TO BE AN ANTI-RACIST?

HOW TO START THE PROCESS & MAKE REAL CHANGE

This guide is a [Disrupt the Silence](#) initiative with particular attention to development by: Adaobi Anyeji, Ph.D., Margot Coggins, LMFT, Ilesha Duncan, ACSW, & Erica Hutchison, Ph.D.

WHAT IS ANTI-RACISM?

*"What's the problem with being "not racist"? It is a claim that signifies neutrality: "I am not racist, but neither am I aggressively against racism." But there is no neutrality in the racism struggle. **The opposite of "racist" isn't "not racist." It is "antiracist."** - Dr. Ibram X. Kendi*

*"Anti-racism is the **active process** of identifying and eliminating racism by changing systems, organizational structures, policies and practices and attitudes so that power is redistributed and shared equitably." - NAC International Perspectives*

THE PRACTICE OF ANTI-RACISM IN 5 FLUID STEPS

Anti-racism is a series of small daily choices that will be different depending on who you are, whether you identify as a Black, Indigenous, Person of Color (BIPOC) or White.

Like any practice, at times it will be uncomfortable and imperfect. This document is meant to be a supportive guide to your practice.



STEP 1: Define Racism

The first step of becoming an anti-racist is learning the comprehensive definition of racism that includes structural, institutional, interpersonal and internalized racism.

Racism is a complex, multi-layered system and the goal of this document is to offer a comprehensive understanding to the reader.



STEP 2: Recognize Examples

Notice when you're seeing, experiencing or contributing to racism.

Remember, some examples of racism are not overt. We all have unconscious and implicit bias and, sometimes, we need to look closely to see the examples.



STEP 3: Notice the Personal Impacts

The work of anti-racism is different for White people than it is for BIPOC. Both White people and BIPOC have internalized racist ideology. The process of becoming an anti-racist will be different depending on the individual.

Experiencing racism can be traumatic - **BIPOC may be traumatized by racism and will need to heal as part of anti-racist work.**

White people may experience some level of "White fragility", which refers to defensive reactions that get in the way of engaging in anti-racist reflection or conversation. **White people cannot expect BIPOC to do this emotional work with or for them.**



STEP 4: Name Emotions

It's normal for emotions to arise around topics of race, racism, and White supremacy.

In order to be anti-racist, individuals must try to recognize and understand their emotional experiences. **It is critical to consider and validate the emotional experiences of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color who are traumatized by racism.**



STEP 5: Take Action

Take responsibility for doing your own research and be willing to engage in uncomfortable conversations. Becoming an anti-racist will take work, like building a muscle. At times it will be hard and there may be backlash.

Disrupt the silence as often as possible - sometimes that means having the courage to speak up for people who cannot.

THE ROLE OF STRUCTURAL RACISM

To understand all types and expressions of racism, we must first understand structural racism.

WHAT IS STRUCTURAL RACISM?

Structural racism refers to the inextricable link between the origin of American society and the institutions constructed to legitimize and maintain notions of White Supremacy.

HOW DID IT DEVELOP/WHERE DID IT COME FROM?

The origin of American society is founded on stolen Indigenous land and the slave labor of Black people for the unique benefit, development, advancement and comfort of White People. **Structural racism is the cumulative result of these atrocities.**

WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT TO RECOGNIZE?

All aspects of modern society have emerged from this foundation, resulting in a societal perspective in which history, culture, ideology and interactions between institutions and policies systematically privilege White people and disadvantage Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC).



THE IMPLICATION FOR AMERICAN CULTURE & ARTS:

The consequence of structural racism on American culture can look like silencing, repressing or appropriating diverse voices and creations of BIPOC. This can cause a void in the transmission of intergenerational celebration, creativity and education.



WHAT DOES STRUCTURAL RACISM LOOK LIKE?

- ✓ **Exclusion or minimal representation** in the cultural markers of American society (i.e. film, art, literature, fashion, museums and language).
- ✓ **Widespread and accepted negative tropes / archetypes** of BIPOC in cultural depictions. Example: “sassy” Black Women, “dangerous” Black men, “magical” Native Americans, “sexy Latin lover.”
- ✓ **Historical White savior representations** describe White people who act in ways to help BIPOC but are actually self-serving and patronizing. Example: the “empathic slave owner”; Christian missionaries forcing religious conversion onto people who already had complex religious practices.
- ✓ **Sanitizing / rationalizing of violence** to support slavery and ongoing structural racism. Example: celebrating Thanksgiving rather than recognizing the genocide of Native Americans; weddings at Southern plantations.
- ✓ **Pathologizing, demonizing and trivializing** BIPOC religions and other cultural traditions and practices. Example: Referring to Obia, Santeria or Voodoo as “Black magic”; condescending attitudes towards Muslim women wearing Hijabs.

HOW IS INSTITUTIONAL RACISM DIFFERENT?

This refers to the unfair policies and discriminatory practices of professional, educational, and government institutions that routinely produce racially inequitable outcomes for BIPOC. These institutions have systematically upheld racially disparate policies and have been protected in doing so by a societal framework of racism based on historical context.

DATA MATTERS: Racism is perpetuated by institutions that were founded to legitimize structural racism



- Black children are more likely to receive an out-of-school suspension than White children, with Black boys 3x more likely and Black girls 6x more likely.



- Black, Hispanic, and Asian patients seen in the Emergency Department are significantly less likely to receive effective pain medication as compared to White patients.
- A Black woman is 22% more likely to die from heart disease, 71% more likely to die from cervical cancer and 243% more likely to die from pregnancy related causes than a White woman.



- Black Americans are incarcerated in state prisons across the country at 5 times the rate of Whites.
- Blacks are nearly four times as likely as Whites to be arrested for drug offenses and 2.5 times as likely to be arrested for drug possession - despite evidence that Whites and Blacks use drugs at the same rate.



- While Black representation in film is slowly increasing, Latinx, Asian, and Native Americans remain significantly underrepresented in film.
- 19 out of 20 acting nominees for the 92nd Academy Awards in 2020 were White.



- In 2020, only 3% of US Senators are Black.
- In the history of the US Senate, only 10 senators have been Black.

STARTING YOUR ANTI-RACIST PRACTICE

While the definitions, examples and day-to-day impacts of racism are universal and objective, the subsequent emotions and corrective actions will differ significantly depending on a person's race.

Start your practice by reviewing this page of definitions, examples, and impacts, but then skip to the next steps based on whether you identify as White or BIPOC.

INSTITUTIONAL RACISM

STEP 1: DEFINE INSTITUTIONAL RACISM

A set of organizational practices that create unequal outcomes between groups on the basis of their race or ethnicity.



STEP 2: RECOGNIZE EXAMPLES

1. Disproportionately high number of Black and Latinx people are incarcerated
2. Fewer BIPOC executive level employees and CEOs
3. Inaccurate and/or incomplete American history education curriculum
4. Discriminatory bank lending practices that result in mortgage inequities
5. Black & Latinx Americans are systematically under-treated for pain versus White Americans



STEP 3: NOTICE THE PERSONAL IMPACTS

- Eddie, an African American man, is jogging in his predominantly White neighborhood, when he is stopped by a police cruiser. The two police officers tell him there have been some recent thefts in the area and they received a complaint of suspicious activity. They ask Eddie, "Do you live around here?" Eddie is angry, humiliated, and feels unsafe. He experiences a panic attack.
- Tiffany, an African American employee, feels traumatized by the recent deaths of black people at the hands of police officers and the ensuing coverage and talk increases difficulty concentrating at work. Feelings of anger, anxiety and exhaustion are exasperated when her supervisor asks her to lead an unpaid task force on racial equity.
- Many Americans are unaware of the significant legislative role of the Klu Klux Klan (KKK) in post-reconstruction American politics, specifically in voter suppression through use of lynching, intimidation and violence of Black freedmen and White supporters.
- Jorge and Janice, a middle class Latinx couple is intimidated and isolated in the home buying process. Their families are unable to provide financial assistance towards the down payment or support in the process because they are not homeowners.
- Eileen, a Black woman, has been experiencing hamstring and shoulder pain for months. She has had to change medical providers because her concerns are minimized as "stress related." She has had to advocate for advanced testing and procedures, as she is routinely denied an MRI. She was denied pain medication because the physician was concerned about "potential dependency." Eileen is exhausted, worried, angry, and hopeless, in addition to experiencing chronic pain.



INTERPERSONAL RACISM

STEP 1: DEFINE INTERPERSONAL RACISM

Interpersonal racism occurs when individuals interact with others and their personal racial beliefs affect their interpersonal interactions.

This type of racism can range from overt to covert and be both conscious or unconscious. Individuals will not always be aware they are engaging in racist interactions. It can be passive or active.



STEP 2: RECOGNIZE EXAMPLES

- 1. **Racial microaggressions** *i.e. small, but painful and recurrent, insults and injuries that are perpetrated against members of marginalized racial groups. Microaggressions are often subconscious.*
- 2. **Denial or obliviousness of BIPOC experiences of racism**
- 3. **Racial profiling**, *e.g. the discriminatory practice of assuming individuals are more likely to engage in criminal activity based solely on their race, ethnicity, religion or national origin.*
- 4. **Racial slurs**
- 5. **Hate crimes**



STEP 3: NOTICE THE PERSONAL IMPACTS

- Jose, a Mexican American, shares that he was born in NYC and is asked by a colleague, “But where are you **really** from?”
- Susan is a Chinese-American university student. Her classmate expresses surprise and confusion when Susan tells her she is studying psychology and not math or science.
- Fatima, an Indian-American woman, tells her boss that a colleague made several racist comments and expressed frustration about “affirmative action hires.” Fatima feels hurt, frustrated, and helpless when her boss says this colleague is a “nice guy and probably didn’t mean anything by his comments.”
- Sean, an African American man, lives in LA and purposefully avoids going running in workout clothes after dark because he fears being seen as “dangerous” by his neighbors or the police.
- Ben, a White man, makes a joke that uses a racial slur against Mexicans at a family event with young children. Without additional context or experience with Mexican individuals, Ben’s nephew internalizes the joke as a fact about Mexican people.



INTERNALIZED RACISM

STEP 1: DEFINE INTERNALIZED RACISM

Internalized racism is the personal conscious or subconscious acceptance of the dominant society’s racist views, stereotypes and biases of one’s ethnic group. It gives rise to patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving that result in discriminating, minimizing, criticizing, finding fault, invalidating and hating oneself while simultaneously valuing the dominant culture.



STEP 2: RECOGNIZE EXAMPLES

- 1. **Limited ideas about how BIPOC can be successful** *i.e. professional athletes, entertainment personalities, etc.*
- 2. **Idealizing White, European beauty standards**
- 3. **Negative beliefs about oneself by Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC)**
- 4. **Internalized privilege** *i.e. beliefs about superiority and privilege by White people*



STEP 3: NOTICE THE PERSONAL IMPACTS

- His White coach regularly reminds Michael, an African American high school student that he needs to earn a basketball scholarship to be eligible for college.
- Pari has been teased for being, “kala,” or dark-skinned, her whole life. After seeing her favorite Bollywood actor endorse skin-lightening cream on T.V., Pari is planning to buy the product in hopes that people will stop teasing her.
- Molly, a White fashion magazine editor, has chosen three models for the cover of the January issue. When an assistant asks, “What about a person of color?” Molly realizes she had not considered a BIPOC model.
- Jim, a White film caster, does not want to cast more than one Hispanic character in an upcoming film for fear of the movie “becoming a Hispanic movie.”
- Leticia, a Hispanic high school student, recently transferred from a predominantly Hispanic school to a predominantly White school. Leticia’s White principle enrolled her in all remedial classes, even though she soared academically at her last school.



EMOTIONS & ACTIONS FOR WHITE PEOPLE

This information is intended to aid White individuals in starting and refining their anti-racist practice.

INSTITUTIONAL RACISM

STEP 4: RECOGNIZE EMOTIONS

- Confusion
- Denial
- Discomfort
- Powerlessness
- Shame
- Defensiveness
- Disbelief
- Hopelessness
- Sadness
- Worry



STEP 5: TAKE ACTION

- ✓ Medical school training should include robust classes that routinely examine individual and institutional biases, as well as solution-focused engagement in reviewing research on inequities in medical treatment and outcomes among different racial, ethnic and gender groups.
- ✓ Educators at every level can advocate and educate themselves on incorporating anti-racism curriculum and actively revising internal biases that impact grading and discipline.
- ✓ Universities can explore BIPOC representation at the leadership and professorial levels and actively work on solutions to increase meaningful representation.
- ✓ Leaders in banking institutions can actively examine loan and financing inequities and create task forces that educate employees on historical banking biases like 'Red Lining' and implement data driven solutions to prevent systematic inequities.
- ✓ Bias and racism assessment should be a mandatory part of the pre-selection screening for law enforcement agents. Additional, ongoing anti-racism training should be a consistent part of education for law enforcement.



INTERPERSONAL RACISM

STEP 4: RECOGNIZE EMOTIONS

- Anger
- Defensiveness
- Discomfort
- Resentment
- Shame
- Confusion
- Denial/Disbelief
- Guilt
- Sadness
- Worry



STEP 5: TAKE ACTION

- ✓ Actively learn and share about anti-racism terms.
- ✓ Take time to understand your own conscious & unconscious biases.
- ✓ Engage in conversations about race with friends, family, and colleagues – *even when it's uncomfortable*.
- ✓ Call yourself out, and apologize, when you inadvertently contribute to a racist interaction.
- ✓ Use your privilege to speak out against interpersonal racism in your workplace or social spaces.
- ✓ LISTEN to BIPOC individuals when they identify something as racist; **accept their perspective as valid even if you don't fully understand it.**
- ✓ Seek out BIPOC created books, movies, music, and art to expand your exposure and understanding of those who identify differently than you.
- ✓ Donate time, money, and resources to Anti-racist Organizations.



INTERNALIZED RACISM

STEP 4: RECOGNIZE EMOTIONS

- Anger
- Confusion
- Denial
- Embarrassment
- Resentment
- Apathy
- Defensiveness
- Guilt
- Discomfort
- Shame



STEP 5: TAKE ACTION

- ✓ Consider your assumptions about where a BIPOC lives, works, goes to school or practices worship. Take a moment to consider why you might have made that assumption, where you learned it from, and how to educate yourself regarding this potential implicit bias.
- ✓ Review your standards of beauty, question where these ideals come from, and how they impact people different from you who may have internalized these standards.
- ✓ For every history lesson you have learned from a person of European descent, research how the other party experienced that event in history, the consequences of that event for the other group, and how we might see effects of that historical event in modern times.



EMOTIONS & ACTIONS FOR BIPOC

This information is intended to aid BIPOC individuals in starting and refining their anti-racist practice.



Experiencing racism can result in trauma. You may experience difficulty concentrating, disassociation, flashbacks, nightmares, difficulty sleeping, reduced / increased appetite, anxiety, fear, sadness, or anger.

Before you engage in any of the below actions, practice self-care and check in with yourself. Your emotional experience is important. That may require investing in a mental health professional, yoga, meditation, exercise, time alone, journaling, or engaging with supportive and validating friends / family.

INSTITUTIONAL RACISM

STEP 4: RECOGNIZE EMOTIONS

- Anger
- Anxiety
- Dissociation
- Embarrassment
- Fear
- Hopelessness
- Humiliation
- Isolation
- Marginalization
- Mistrust
- Powerlessness
- Resentment
- Shame
- Suspicion
- Trauma



STEP 5: TAKE ACTION

- ✓ Medical school training should include robust classes that routinely examine individual and institutional biases, as well as solution-focused engagement in reviewing research on inequities in medical treatment and outcomes among different racial, ethnic, and gender groups.
- ✓ Educators at every level can advocate and educate themselves on incorporating anti-racism curriculum and actively revising internal biases that impact grading and discipline.
- ✓ Universities can explore BIPOC representation at the leadership and professorial level and actively work on solutions to increase meaningful representation.
- ✓ Bias and racism assessment should be a mandatory part of the pre-selection screening for law enforcement agents. Additional, ongoing antiracism training should be a consistent part of law enforcement education.
- ✓ Leaders in banking institutions can actively examine loan and financing inequities and create task forces that educate employees on historical banking biases like 'Red Lining' and implement data driven data to prevent systematic inequities.



INTERPERSONAL RACISM

STEP 4: RECOGNIZE EMOTIONS

- Anger
- Anxiety
- Devalued
- Embarrassment
- Fear
- Hopelessness
- Hyper-vigilance
- Loneliness
- Misunderstood
- Mistrust
- Powerlessness
- Shame
- Suspicion
- Terror



STEP 5: TAKE ACTION

- ✓ Actively learn about anti-racism terms <http://www.racialequityresourceguide.org/about/glossary>.
- ✓ Know that any feeling you might have as the result of a racist interaction is valid.
- ✓ Practice meaningful self-care and set boundaries that feel comfortable for you.
- ✓ Do not feel you must educate everyone who makes a racist comment/microaggression; this is not your job.
- ✓ Give yourself permission to feel exhausted and traumatized by these experiences.
- ✓ Understand that the effects of racial trauma, including microaggressions, is cumulative.
- ✓ Learn about the how trauma affects the body.



INTERNALIZED RACISM

STEP 4: RECOGNIZE EMOTIONS

- Shame
- Confusion
- Invalidation
- Anxiety
- Resentment
- Distrust
- Anger
- Apathy
- Betrayal
- Discomfort



STEP 5: TAKE ACTION

- ✓ Practice self-care and have patience with yourself; you are unlearning harmful behaviors that are the result of centuries of systemic oppression.
- ✓ Identify researchers, educators, historians or artists within your cultures and communities; this may provide validation that what you are feeling and experiencing has been felt and experienced for generations.
- ✓ Take time to separate yourself from White culture and connect to your ancestral roots.
- ✓ Notice what it has felt like to be on the giving and receiving end of micro-aggressions.



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DISRUPT THE SILENCE IS A GROUP OF ANTI-RACIST CLINICIANS AND ACADEMICS WHO ARE COMMITTED TO DISRUPTING THE SILENCE IN ACADEMIC AND CLINICAL INSTITUTIONS THAT HAVE IMPLICITLY AND EXPLICITLY PERPETUATED RACISM.