Interrupting Racism: Deepening the Capacity of Whites to Partner to Create Racially Just Organizations

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For complimentary downloads of my books & other resources:

...But I’m NOT Racist! Tools for Well-Meaning Whites
www.drkathyobear.com/imnotracist  |  www.drkathyobear.com/racebook
(supplemental resources, including Book Club Guide)

In It For The Long Haul: Overcoming Burnout and Passion Fatigue as Social Justice Change Agents
www.drkathyobear.com/selfcarebook  |  www.drkathyobear.com/selfcare

Turn the Tide: Rise Above Toxic, Difficult Situations in the Workplace:
(animated video and outline for a Lunch & Learn)

Webinar: Recognizing & Interrupting Racism in Your Organization

Webinar: Navigating Difficult Situations, Pt 1 & 2
https://drkathyobear.com/navigatingsituationswebinar1/
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Definitions

RACISM: “The systemic subordination of members of targeted racial groups who have relatively little social power in the United States (Blacks, Latino/as, Native Americans, and Asians), by the members of the agent racial group who have relatively more social power (Whites). This subordination is supported by the actions of individuals, cultural norms and values, and the institutional structures and practices of society.” (p. 88-89)


“Racial equity means equal access and opportunity for all people, so all can reach their full potential and are no more likely to encounter barriers or benefits based on race or ethnicity.”
Greater Milwaukee Foundation, 2015
Suggested Competencies for White Allies & Change Agents

There is a wide range of competencies that I believe whites can deepen on their own or in community with other whites. While this is not a comprehensive list, my hope is that it is a useful tool to spark conversation, assess your current level of competence, and identify goals for professional development. It may also be a good resource in learning communities for white people to plan their discussion topics and skill practice sessions.

Directions: Use the following scale as you reflect on the following competencies (knowledge, self-awareness, and skill) and rate how often you effectively demonstrate each of these:

1 = Rarely          2 = Occasionally       3 = Often          4 = Most of the time       5 = Almost Always

A. Knowledge about race, racism, white supremacy, white culture, etc.

_____ 1. I recognize how I was socialized as a white person and how these experiences still impact me today.

_____ 2. I understand the common patterns of racialized socialization and racist life experiences of people of color, Indigenous peoples, people who identify as multiracial or biracial, and white people.

_____ 3. I understand how the history of racism and colonization in the U.S. and around the world impacts current dynamics and experiences.

_____ 4. I understand the damage and devastation whites have perpetuated on people of color over the centuries and currently.

_____ 5. I understand how the cumulative impact of multiple, persistent racist interpersonal aggressions and microaggressions and institutional racism negatively impact people of color and the quality of their lives.

_____ 6. I recognize how institutional racism permeates societal institutions, including the legal, policing, and justice system, housing, health care, education, employment, the military, politics, the media, entertainment, etc.

_____ 7. I identify the common racist attitudes, perceptions, behaviors, and implicit biases of whites that perpetuate the status quo (internalized dominance).

_____ 8. I identify the common attitudes, perceptions, behaviors, and beliefs of people of color that support the status quo (internalized racism).
9. I recognize the common daily indignities and racist microaggressions that people of color experience.

10. I understand multiple ways to effectively facilitate change and create greater racial justice in organizations.

11. I am aware of how people may experience and interpret comments and nonverbal behaviors differently based upon their cultural perspective and their racial identity.

12. I understand how white cultural values and norms are infused into formal expectations and workplace culture as well as informal, unwritten rules for success.

13. I understand how white culture is infused into organizational policies, practices, programs, and services.

14. I recognize how whites most often get the privilege of being seen at the Individual Level and not viewed as a representative of all white people.

15. I recognize that people of color are generally viewed at the Group Level and their attitudes and behaviors are assumed to be reflective of all members of their racial group(s).

16. I recognize the full breadth of unearned white privileges that whites receive in society and in organizations.

17. I understand the pervasive white privileges that I still receive, even as I work for racial justice.

18. I understand I am seen and experienced as white, at the Group Level, even if I work for racial justice.

B. Use a Race Lens to notice and respond effectively to interpersonal dynamics

19. I intentionally notice/track the full range of common racist dynamics that occur during meetings, conversations, workshops, etc.

20. I describe the details or “facts” of what I observe without judgments, assumptions, interpretations, or conclusions (Panning).

21. I recognize and effectively respond to racist microaggressions and interpersonal aggressions that occur in my presence, included racially coded terms and phrases.

22. I consistently recognize and respond to racial implicit bias.
23. I recognize and intervene when whites are expecting or demanding that people of color educate them.

24. I effectively bring up and discuss issues of race and racism. I “keep race on the table” as one of the factors to be considered.

25. I notice and effectively intervene when people try to change the subject to avoid talking about issues of race and racism.

C. Engage whites effectively

26. I encourage whites to participate in conversations about race and engage them in the process.

27. I ask questions and listen deeply to increase understanding, especially if I initially disagree.

28. I use effective listening and communication techniques, including clarifying, paraphrasing, open-ended questions, silence, “connecting language,” etc.

29. I am able to “relate in” and “see myself” in other whites to find compassion and make a connection with them, rather than judging them or distancing from them.

30. I effectively share stories and personal experiences to relate in and build connections with whites.

31. I effectively use self-disclosure to authentically share my feelings, thoughts, and beliefs.

32. I minimize how much I use the “telling” style and maximize how often I pose questions or dilemmas to facilitate dialogue with whites.

33. I demonstrate compassion and empathy when engaging other whites.

34. I effectively “leave no one behind” and find ways to include all whites in the discussion.

35. If a white colleague tries to shift the focus to one of their marginalized groups, I effectively acknowledge the dynamic and redirect the conversation back to race and racism.
36. I “meet whites where they are” without judgment, and do not demand or expect them to be farther along in their understanding or skill development.

37. I effectively name common white cultural dynamics among whites and use these as “teachable moments” to facilitate deeper understanding and learning.

38. I can let go of my planned agenda, “trust the process,” and effectively engage what is happening in the moment.

39. I consistently demonstrate respect, compassion, and empathy for all white participants.

40. I effectively navigate discussions where whites are feeling and expressing deep emotions, including anger, sadness, fear, frustration, guilt, shame, hopelessness, etc.

41. I am able to be “in the moment” ~ fully present and focused on what is happening in the group and in myself during difficult dialogues.

42. I acknowledge comments which sound inappropriate or triggering.

43. I speak up and interrupt racist microaggressions and exclusionary behaviors.

44. I engage people in meaningful dialogue when I experience one of their comments as inappropriate, racist, and/or triggering.

45. I consistently communicate clear guidelines for expected behaviors that promote racial justice as well as clear consequences for exclusionary practices and inappropriate or racist behavior.

46. I recognize that “resistance” and challenges from whites are often doorways to deeper understanding and learning for them and for the group.

47. I respond effectively to challenges and resistance from whites without taking it personally or feeling deeply triggered.

48. I effectively navigate conflict and disagreement among whites in discussions about race and racism.

49. I can use triggering events as “teachable moments” for the group.

50. I respond effectively to challenges and feedback from people of color without taking it personally or feeling deeply triggered.
51. I effectively explore the unintended impact of racist comments and behaviors while also holding space to explore the person’s intentions and possible implicit bias.

52. I facilitate productive dialogue when there is a mismatch between the intent and the impact of someone’s behavior, a policy, a decision, etc.

53. I recognize effective behaviors of whites that further learning and community building.

54. I give effective feedback to other whites about the impact of their attitudes and behaviors.

55. I support and coach other whites to deepen their capacity as effective change agents.

D. Recognize and engage organizational dynamics

56. I communicate why racial justice is one of my core values and why I am committed to racial justice work.

57. I effectively discuss a wide range of compelling reasons that position racial justice as a critical factor in the organization’s success.

58. I effectively create work environments that support the success and full participation of people of color and whites.

59. I create fair and equitable selection and hiring processes that consistently identify racially diverse, culturally competent pools of final candidates.

60. I effectively intervene to shift white cultural norms and dynamics of white privilege, to create greater equity and inclusion.

61. I consistently use a Race Lens to analyze policies, practices, programs, and services to identify institutional racism and any negative differential impact on people of color as well as any undeserved privilege and access for whites.

62. I continuously engage with others to revise any policy, practice, program or service to ensure they meet the needs of people of color as well as whites.

63. I ensure that all planning processes intentionally include equitable participation and full consideration of input from people of color and whites.
64. I effectively collect and analyze data about the experiences and perceptions of people of color and whites in the organization.

65. I use these data to effectively evaluate and revise current policies, programs, services, practices, procedures, facilities, etc., to ensure racial equity and racial justice.

66. I continually research and share national/international trends and promising practices to help organizations achieve greater racial justice.

**E. Self-work and healing**

67. I continuously use a Race Lens to self-reflect and examine my behaviors, thoughts, feelings, biases, and attitudes and my impact on others.

68. I am aware of the racist and white supremacist biases, assumptions, and stereotypes that impact my thoughts, judgments, decisions, and actions.

69. I am aware of how my beliefs about what is “effective” or “professional” has been influenced by my racist socialization and white culture, (i.e., leadership; communication styles; decision-making practices; dress, attire, and appearance; dialogue; conflict styles; meeting management; supervision; etc.)

70. I continually interrupt, reframe, and unlearn these racist biases, stereotypes, and assumptions.

71. I recognize and honestly talk about the racist attitudes I still hold on to and how they have fueled racist behaviors.

72. I understand how my white identity impacts how I am perceived, experienced, and treated by others.

73. I effectively listen to, receive, and appreciate feedback from people of color and utilize their input to improve my practice.

74. I continually seek and utilize feedback about my behaviors and attitudes from other whites and utilize their input to improve my practice.

75. I am aware of my common triggers and their intrapersonal roots.

76. I am aware of my “early warning signals” that I am beginning to feel triggered.
I recognize when I am reacting out of alignment with my core values.

I recognize when I am operating out of guilt and shame.

I am able to effectively navigate my own triggered feelings of anger, fear, stress, grief, guilt, shame, etc., so that I do not “work my issues on others.”

When I react unproductively, I effectively navigate that moment, apologize, acknowledge the impact of my actions, and commit to changing my behavior in the future.

I actively do my healing work around my triggers in the moment: explore the roots; feel my feelings, shift unproductive thoughts, attitudes, and intentions, etc.

I regularly do my ongoing deep healing work to release and heal old issues, resentment, fear, guilt, shame, etc.

F. Deepen partnerships with people of color

I effectively listen to and believe people of color when they tell me about the dynamics of racism they experience.

I notice and effectively respond when whites interrupt people of color, take over the conversation, and re-center whiteness or white issues.

I effectively partner with people of color to create change.

I effectively follow the leadership of people of color.

If I am called racist, I effectively listen to the feedback, ask questions to deepen my understanding, and acknowledge the person’s perspective.

If I realize I have done something racist, I readily acknowledge my behavior and apologize for the impact.

I strategically consider how and when to engage in order to optimize the chances for meaningful change. I don’t “win the battle, but lose the war,” especially if that puts people of color at greater risk.

G. Learn with a community of white allies and change agents

I intentionally build a community of white allies for support and to accelerate my learning, growth and healing.
____ 91. I use other white allies to create greater accountability for my actions as a change agent.

____ 92. I actively create space to support other whites in their development and healing processes.

____ 93. I help other whites recognize and release the fears, guilt, shame, and racist biases that are fueling their behaviors.

____ 94. I effectively partner with other whites to create change.

____ 95. I hold other whites accountable for their behaviors and efforts to create change.

____ 96. I am committed to “staying in it”; I am committed to racial justice for the long haul.

After rating your current demonstrated competence, go back through the list and:

Identify 8-10 of your greatest strengths.

Identify 5-8 areas you want to develop further; note ways you might increase your competence in each of these areas.

Check-off which competencies are an explicit part of your unit’s hiring, training/development, and accountability processes.

Star (*) which additional competencies you believe are necessary for people in your unit to demonstrate as they intentionally create greater racial justice and inclusion in the organization.

We must be vigilant and persistent as white change agents as we continually deepen our capacity to create greater racial justice. Unlearning racism is a lifelong process of healing and re-education. I hope you choose to stay in it for the long haul. If you do, I guarantee that when you wake up each day and look in the mirror, you will realize you are closer to living a life of integrity and purpose.
Checklist for Allies and Accomplices:  
Tools and Strategies to Increase Your Capacity and Effectiveness as Change Agents

Directions: Read each of the following and rate how often you **effectively demonstrate** these skills:

1 = Hardly ever   2 = Rarely   3 = Occasionally   4 = Often   5 = Almost always

1. Consistently track interactions and group dynamics: work to create balance of engagement among all members; and speak up when you notice exclusionary comments and behaviors.

2. Cultivate relationships with other members of privileged groups who actively work to dismantle oppression and create inclusive organizations. Talk honestly about where you get stuck and ask for feedback and coaching.

3. Continue to deepen your awareness about privilege and dominant culture, and how these operate in you, others, and organizations/systems.

4. Recognize and change in the moment when you are operating out of stereotypes, privilege, and/or dominant cultural beliefs.

5. Track patterns of negative differential treatment on members of marginalized groups and intervene to stop inappropriate actions and educate others.

6. Support others when they question or challenge uninclusive or disrespectful behaviors or policies, so they are not alone. Recognize that marginalized group members have a far greater risk if they challenge and speak up.

7. Recognize and intervene when unconscious bias and prejudice are impacting opinions and decisions.

8. Continually learn more about the experiences of members of marginalized groups and oppression.

9. Recognize when members of marginalized groups might be reacting out of cumulative impact and offer space to talk about issues and their experiences.

10. Analyze policies, programs, services, and practices to assess any differential negative impact on members of marginalized groups and shift practices to create change.

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11. Track current utilization of services and assess the degree of satisfaction and usage by members of marginalized groups.

12. Regularly assess the climate and culture of organizations and analyze the data for any differential experiences from members of marginalized groups.

13. Constantly track organizational activities to ensure fairness, respect, and inclusion for all people with respect to group dynamics, communication, task assignments, professional development opportunities, decision-making, conflict management, mentoring, networking, hiring and promotion, etc.

14. Ask questions to seek to understand BEFORE disagreeing or defending your position.

15. If your behavior has had an impact on a member of a marginalized group, avoid defensively talking about your intent. Instead, listen thoughtfully to their feelings and perspective; acknowledge the impact; make amends and change your behavior as needed.

16. In meetings and conversations, ask these questions, “How might this impact members of different marginalized groups?” “What perspectives and input might we be missing from different marginalized groups?”

17. Talk with members of privileged groups who seem to be colluding, “going along to get along” ~ help them consider the consequences of their actions and shift their behaviors.
Engagement Guidelines

1. Open and honest communication
2. Participate fully (comfort zone +1); expect discomfort if learning
3. Speak from personal experience
4. Listen respectfully; listen to learn
5. Seek to understand; expect disagreement & listen harder
6. Share air time: move in, move out
7. Be fully present
8. Be open to new perspectives
9. Explore impact; acknowledge intent
10. Expect people to learn and grow; don’t freeze-frame others
11. Take risks; lean into discomfort; be brave; engage
12. Respect and maintain confidentiality
13. Notice/describe what you see happening in the group, in you
14. Recognize your triggers; share if you feel triggered
15. Trust that dialogue will take us to deeper levels of understanding and acceptance
16. Engage & embrace this opportunity; we won’t be finished
Meeting & Classroom Guidelines | Your Intentions & Guidelines

*To create environments where everyone feels heard, involved, supported, and respected

*To create productive and engaging environments for the open and respectful exchange of ideas, perspectives, and opinions

*To promote respectful dialogue, fair discussion of issues, and mutually respectful conversations

- Engage in respectful discourse
- Create a positive, collegial atmosphere
- Demonstrate mutual respect for the comments and views of all
- Speak and act in ways that do not disrupt or interfere with the learning or work of others.
- Explore controversial issues through open dialogue and respectful deliberation.
- Consider and explore new ideas and perspectives
- Express opposing ideas in a respectful manner
- Consider the potential impact of your comments and actions
- Accept responsibility for the overall welfare of the entire group
- Engage in respectful disagreement: Disagree with a person’s ideas without attacking their humanity
- Respectfully address unproductive and exclusionary behaviors from other students
Diverse Community Foundations

1. Communities are built through building relationships of trust and commitment
2. We are all doing the best we can (most of the time)
3. We don’t know all there is to know
4. Just because you are, doesn’t mean you understand: Just because you’re not, doesn’t mean you don’t understand
5. Oppression is pervasive and impacts us all
6. It is not our fault, but we must accept responsibility to create change
7. Conflict and discomfort are often a part of growth
8. Seek first to understand, then to be understood
9. Practice forgiveness and letting go
10. Self-work, healing and self-love are necessary for acceptance of others
11. Acknowledge, Appreciate, and Celebrate Progress
12. There are no quick fixes
13. Individuals and organizations DO grow and change. There is HOPE
14. We’re better together, and deeply connected soul to soul.

Developed by Jamie Washington, Ph.D., Washington Consulting Group, dr.jamiewashington@comcast.net
CYCLE OF SOCIALIZATION,
Bobbi Harro, Ed.D

BORN
Into society
Things are already set

FIRST SOCIALIZATION
- Expectations
- History/Traditions
- Stereotypes/Myths
- Missing information
- Bias history
- Norms/Habits
- Values/Dreams
- Roles/Responsibilities

CORE
Confusion
Hurt
Anger
Fear

RESULTS IN
- Dissonance
- Silence, Guilt, Anger, Self-Hatred
- Dehumanization, Lack of Reality
- Collusion, Ignorance
- Internalized Oppression/Dominance
- Horizontal Violence and Hostility

INTERNALIZED/ENFORCED
- Sanctions/Stigma
- Human difference = negative
- Rewards and punishments for behavior
- Conscious/unconscious beliefs/attitudes

INSTITUTIONAL AND CULTURAL
- Family and friends
- Schools, teachers, books
- Religious institutions
- Media
- Government/legal systems
- Cultural “standards”

Developed by Bobbie Harro
Examine Your Socialization Experiences

1. How do you identify racially?
2. Describe the racial demographics of your neighborhood, school, family, social groups...
3. When do you remember being told there were different races? What were you told?
4. What were some of the prevailing messages and images of whites and people of color as you were growing up?
5. Were there times that you didn’t believe that race and racism really existed or mattered very much?
6. What were your experiences interacting (or not) with people of different racialized groups?
7. Share some early experiences when you realized people were categorized by race and skin color.
8. How were people of your race and other racialized groups treated? Depicted? Talked about?
9. What various roles and responsibilities did people of different races have? Were shown to have?
10. When did you realize you were treated differently based on your race/skin color?
11. Share some significant moments or turning points that shaped you as a __________ (how you identify racially?)
12. Share a time you witnessed racist actions/comments. How did you feel? What did you do?
13. What are 1-2 ideas or assumptions/biases you used to have about another racial group; what happened to help you shift towards greater understanding, accuracy, or acceptance?
14. Talk about a time, you now realize, that your actions/comments were exclusionary and fueled by racial stereotypes?
15. Talk about a time you spoke up and responded when you noticed racist comments or behaviors or interrupted white privilege.
Authentic Dialogue Prompts:
Building Community Among White Allies

Directions ~ With your partner, share and relate to each other as you discuss:

1. Share an example of a time you spoke up and effectively engaged someone whose comment or behavior was biased or misinformed: How did you feel? What did you do/say?

2. When are you at your best as an ally or change agent?

3. What are some of your fears as you engage issues of race and racism?

4. What biases or stereotypes do you still notice within yourself?

5. When and where do you get stuck? How do you feel when you are stuck and less effective?

6. What would feel supportive from colleagues? To help you continue to grow and develop skills?

7. When have you:
   a. Felt fear when interacting with people of color?
   b. Felt fear when interacting with whites?
   c. Felt guilt or shame?
   d. Felt anger towards people of color?
   e. Felt anger towards whites?

8. What are 5+ ways you see people benefiting from white privilege?

9. What are some examples of how whites have intentionally used white privilege to help dismantle racism?

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10. When have you seen others use white privilege to gain an unfair advantage or greater access?

11. What racist thoughts do you still have?

12. What are 1-2 examples (over the past 1-2 years) when you have acted based on some racial stereotypes or racist thoughts?

13. When do you remember realizing that **whites** believed they were superior to people of color, people who were biracial/multiracial, Indigenous peoples? (smarter, more organized, better leaders, more competent, etc.)

14. When do you remember realizing **that you** believed whites were superior to people of color, people who were biracial/multiracial, Indigenous peoples? (smarter, more organized, better leaders, more competent, etc.)
Panning

Increase your awareness of what is happening inside of you, and around you by using this skill...

Just as a movie camera “pans” the environment to see the whole picture, we need to continuously PAN all around us and inside of us as we increase our ability to notice the patterns of treatment and experiences of members of both privileged and marginalized groups.

Some guidelines for using the skill of PANNING:

**PAN:**

**PAY ATTENTION NOW**

- Intentionally observe and notice behaviors, comments, feelings, patterns of treatment...
- Wonder: Is this an isolated incident or a possible pattern of experience?

***AVOID falling into the trap of making a SNAP JUDGMENT***

~ creating a “story” about what you see~

- PAN the specific details and facts of what you see, feel, hear...
- Describe what you PAN without any assumptions, interpretations, conclusions, or prejudices
- Notice the group memberships of people involved as you PAN, and describe the group memberships if this information is useful to the discussion...

Adapted from materials developed by Elsie Y. Cross Associates, Inc.
1994 Delyte Frost, et al. Tracking™

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Observing/Panning Group Dynamics with a Race/Inclusion Lens

Observers –
Use the following prompts as you use an Inclusion Lens to observe and track/pan group dynamics:
Identify “just the facts” and the actual details of the situation without any assumptions, interpretations, judgments, or conclusions.

1. What differences are present in the group? Which group memberships? and how many from various groups?
2. Who is talking?
3. Who is quiet? Doesn’t speak as often as others?
4. How are people reacting nonverbally?
5. Who initiates the topics?
6. What ideas are brought up? By whom?
7. Whose ideas get considered? Whose ideas don’t get much discussion?
8. Whose ideas are discounted? Or “plop” without comment?
9. How do decisions get made?
10. Who interrupts others? Who gets interrupted? Who is never interrupted?
11. How and when do the tone and energy of the conversation shift and change?
12. How much airtime do people take?
13. Who has changed their way of engaging recently?
14. Who do people look at when they are talking?
15. Who has eye contact with whom while others are talking?
16. Who engages inside conversations?
17. Who brings up issues of respect and inclusion?
18. How do people respond when different issues of inclusion are raised?
19. What issues of inclusion and respect are not being brought up or discussed?
20. As you notice interpersonal dynamics that are not inclusive, who intervenes to shift the dynamics? Who doesn’t?
21. As you observe exclusionary comments and actions, wonder: Is this an isolated incident or a possible common pattern of experience?

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Unproductive Meeting & Classroom Behaviors

a. In the 1st column, check-off any unproductive behaviors which you have observed in meetings.
b. Then in the 3rd column, check-off any of these behaviors that you have ever done.
c. Choose 5+ items, and in the 4th column, note the probable impact of each type of unproductive behavior.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Others do this</th>
<th>Unproductive meeting behaviors, when someone:</th>
<th>I've done this</th>
<th>Probable impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Makes inappropriate comments or “jokes”</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Belittles the input or comments of others</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Minimizes or rationalizes away the frustrations and comments of group members</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Interrupts or talks over others</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Engages inside conversations</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Dominates the conversation</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Makes snide or sarcastic comments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Only interacts and makes eye contact with people like them; people they like</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Gives unsolicited “advice;” tell someone how they should have felt or responded differently</td>
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<td>10.</td>
<td>Dismisses or ignores the input of others</td>
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<td>11.</td>
<td>Disregards feedback from group members</td>
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<td>12.</td>
<td>Laughs at or makes fun of other group members</td>
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<td>13.</td>
<td>Treats peers with disrespect</td>
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<td>14.</td>
<td>Gives someone the “silent treatment” or “cold shoulder”</td>
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<td>15.</td>
<td>Uses a negative, judgmental tone</td>
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<td>16.</td>
<td>Uses an overly aggressive or forceful style</td>
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<td>17.</td>
<td>Refuses to participate in the discussion or the activity</td>
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<td>18.</td>
<td>Is silent, shut down or withdrawn</td>
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<td>19.</td>
<td>Challenges the validity of the information being presented to serve a personal agenda</td>
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<td>20.</td>
<td>Questions the usefulness of an activity or a discussion to serve a personal agenda</td>
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<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Gives excuses or PLEs (Perfectly Logical Explanations) for disrespectful comments and behaviors</td>
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<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Raises their voice to try to silence others</td>
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<td>23.</td>
<td>Emphasizes “good intent” and does not also listen to the impact of actions</td>
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<td>24.</td>
<td>Makes negative stereotypic comments about others or self</td>
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<td>25.</td>
<td>Tells others they are “too sensitive”</td>
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<td>26.</td>
<td>Repeats or rewords what members with lower status have just said</td>
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<td>27.</td>
<td>“Hears” and acknowledges ideas only if they come from members with higher group status</td>
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<td>28.</td>
<td>Does not engage or “hear” comments from members with lower group status</td>
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<td>29.</td>
<td>Judges or dismisses input from members of lower status groups if they express anger or frustration</td>
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<td>30.</td>
<td>Only asks members of lower status groups to repeat what they have just said</td>
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<td>31.</td>
<td>When confronted, frames the situation as an “attack”</td>
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<td>32.</td>
<td>Go to lunch or socializes only with certain group members</td>
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<td>33.</td>
<td>Acknowledges and praises only certain group members</td>
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<td>34.</td>
<td>Rolls their eyes or makes other negative nonverbal behaviors when others are talking</td>
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<td>35.</td>
<td>Chastises others publicly</td>
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<td>36.</td>
<td>Critiques and questions only the ideas and materials presented by lower status members</td>
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<td>37.</td>
<td>Bullies other group members</td>
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<td>38.</td>
<td>Has a patronizing or condescending manner</td>
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<td>39.</td>
<td>Derails the planned format and agenda to serve a personal agenda</td>
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<td>40.</td>
<td>Criticizes the personal character of group members</td>
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<tr>
<td>41.</td>
<td>Takes credit for the work or ideas of others</td>
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</table>
Privileged and Marginalized Group Patterns

Privileged Groups

- Greater access to power and resources
- Make the Rules
- Define what is normal, “right,” the “Truth”
- Assumed to be leader, smarter, competent...
- Given the benefit of the doubt
- Often unaware of privileged group membership and privilege
- Less aware about un-inclusive and discriminatory treatment of marginalized group
- Are more comfortable with members of marginalized groups who share similar behaviors, appearance, and values to them
- Hold to privileged group cultural beliefs, often without examination
- Collude, and if challenge, risk being ostracized/punished
- Focus on “how far we’ve come”

Marginalized Groups

- Less access to power and resources
- Often seen as less than, inferior, deficient...
- Often assimilate, collude, abide by the rules, try to fit in...
- Track the daily indignities they experience; very aware of oppression
- Punished if challenge the status quo
- Have their truth and experiences questioned and often invalidated
- Know more about members of privileged groups than privileged group members know about them
- Often struggle with finding a balance between who they are and who they are told they need to be to be “acceptable”
- Often struggle with finding their voice and speaking up to challenge
- Focus on “how far we need to go”

Key Concepts of Privileged/Marginalized Group Dynamics

- Not always about numbers
- Visible and invisible; Innate and chosen
- Multiple group memberships
- Not always about individual behaviors or feelings
- You didn’t ask for it and you can’t give it back

Adapted from materials developed by Elsie Y. Cross Associates, Inc.
Dynamics of the Status Quo*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Privileged Group members focus on:</th>
<th>Marginalized Group members focus on:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual Acts</td>
<td>Patterns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victim</td>
<td>Systems/Culture</td>
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<tr>
<td>How far we have come</td>
<td>How far we need to go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intent</td>
<td>Impact</td>
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Changing the Status Quo*

- Recognize and shift collusion
- Own group membership
- Intentionally use Discretionary Power
- Recognize Differential Impact
- Demonstrate Distinguishing Behavior
- Move beyond “vs.” and Either/Or thinking to “Both/And”
- Anticipate and engage Cumulative Impact

Avoid Common Dialogue Pitfalls/Traps*

1. PLEs (perfectly logical explanations)
2. Yea, but....
3. That happens to me/my group, too....
4. I know someone who…and they don’t agree with you....
5. I don’t see it that way; therefore, it doesn’t really happen....
6. That doesn’t happen to me... (so it doesn’t exist)
7. Don’t you think that...
8. You’re overreacting...you’re too sensitive...
9. He/she’s a good person...they never meant to do that....
10. That was not my intent! You misunderstood me!

Adapted from materials developed by Elsie Y. Cross Associates

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Microaggressions

“Microaggressions are the everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership.”

Blog by Dr. Derald W. Sue, Microaggressions: More than Just Race - Can microaggressions be directed at women or gay people? Published on November 17, 2010

Microaggressions: Characteristics

- Everyday actions that occur all around us
- By people who believe they are fair-minded, without prejudice
- Possibly, without any conscious intent or malice
- Usually unaware of how their comment, tone, or behavior negatively impact others
- May be considered “no big deal”
- Few recognize the cumulative, enduring impact of constant barrage of microaggressions
- Some may not even recognize they experienced a microaggression until later

Potential impact and emotional toll on members of marginalized groups

- Uncertainty – never knowing when they will experience another microaggression
- Constantly vigilant, always tracking their surroundings
- Self-doubt ~ given the ambiguous nature of some situations, some might obsess over questions like, “Am I over-reacting? Being too sensitive? Misinterpreting what just happened? Just being paranoid?”
- If they bring it up to the member of the privileged group, often met with denial, defensiveness; fear that this could hurt their relationship, career path
- Left feeling “I don't belong, I can’t be successful here”
- May change their behavior in hopes that this may lessen their experiences of microaggressions; may come across as overly friendly, helpful, passive, soft-spoken, ingratiating.…
- Feel pressure to “act right” or their actions could be used to reinforce stereotypes about their marginalized group; carry the group on their shoulders
- Damages the respect they may have for members of privileged groups; may not use them as resources in the future
- Often invest time and energy trying to diagnose what happened, manage the impact and feelings, decide if and how to respond
- If choose to “let it go,” may judge self as colluding; feel guilty for not stepping up

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# Common Racial Microaggressions and Racist Dynamics

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<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Over time, you have notice that most whites do not greet or interact with the only Arab American on the team.</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>You notice the team members who get talked over or ignored most frequently in discussions are the few Latinx and Black team members.</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>You hear some whites making fun of how an immigrant of color pronounces some words in English.</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>A white woman clutches her purse as a dark-skinned man gets on an elevator.</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>A biracial team member has endured dismissive, uninclusive comments from a couple of colleagues. When she finally decides to discuss the racist dynamics the supervisor says, “You probably misunderstood them. I’ve worked with them a long time. They are great employees.”</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>Whites comment to a Korean American client, “You speak English so well. Where are you from?” And when she answers, “New York,” she is then asked, “No, where are you really from?”</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>A manager of color is working on the weekend in jeans and a t-shirt and is assumed to be a maintenance worker.</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>You notice that some whites seem to react negatively when they see a Palestinian woman wearing a veil/hijab in the office.</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>If more than 3 men of color are standing around, people assume they are “in a gang.”</td>
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<td>10.</td>
<td>Black or Latinx clients are often asked to show more forms of ID than white clients.</td>
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<td>11.</td>
<td>An Asian American friend of yours is talking to some whites in the hall about a racist situation that happened in the organization. One of the whites says, “Why do you have to make everything about race? They were probably just having a bad day...”</td>
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<td>12.</td>
<td>Whites seem to give respect to white leaders, but often complain about, question, and challenge leaders of color.</td>
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<td>13.</td>
<td>Whites appear nervous and uncomfortable as they talk with clients of color.</td>
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<td>14.</td>
<td>You overhear a manager “complimenting” an African American woman, “You’re very articulate!”</td>
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<td>15.</td>
<td>When someone points out the racist comment a white colleague just made, their 1st reaction is, “I’m not racist. I was just kidding. I didn’t mean it.”</td>
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<td>16.</td>
<td>A workshop is facilitated by a white woman and a woman of color. Every time the facilitator of color gives directions for an activity, someone always asks her to repeat what she just said or fails to follow her directions. In the full day session,</td>
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no one ever asks the white facilitator to repeat anything she said nor fails to follow her directions.

17. Introducing the white leaders as Dr. __, and the leader of color with a doctorate as Ms. or Mr. __, or even by their first name only.

18. A Latina was made fun of for the way she spoke and how she pronounced some words. Someone asked, “How did you even get this job?”

19. Staff follow around customers of color from a distance while white customers are eagerly greeted and asked if they need any help.

20. You overhear a white colleague muttering a comment about a black male manager: “They got that promotion because of their race!”

21. The female leader and a male direct report are having a meeting with a potential client. The female leader frames the conversation and begins to share key information. At that point, the client interrupts and asks the male direct report to share his opinion of what the leader had just said.

22. In a group meeting, an Asian American woman confronts a white male colleague and he turns and mutters, “What a B__!”

23. You overhear a white staff member saying to a woman of color, “You should straighten your hair. You’d be much more attractive.”

24. One of the newer, younger staff members, a black male, is talking with a few colleagues about being “pulled over while black” the day before. A white colleague says, “You shouldn’t get so upset and take it personally. They’re just doing their jobs. The stats show black people commit more crimes.”

25. The restaurant is playing a news show with a segment about the border wall as team members are having lunch together. Someone says, “They should just all go back to Mexico!”

26. People who are about to walk past a darker skinned man of color check to make sure their wallet is deep in their pocket.

27. Two Asian American staff, who look nothing alike, work in the same office. They are often called by each other’s name by some of the staff.

28. The Latina female supervisor is assumed to be the secretary of the department.

29. During most team meetings, whites only look at and direct their comments to other whites.

30. 

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Microaggression</th>
<th>Bias and/or assumptions possibly fueling the comment or behavior</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Woman clutches her purse as a dark-skinned South Asian man gets on elevator.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. People walk by a group of 3 Black men &amp; check to make sure their wallet is deep in their pocket.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Store clerks following around customers of color while white customers are eagerly asked if they need any help.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. In group project meeting, whites only talk to other whites, and overlook, don’t engage people of color.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. The Latina female supervisor is assumed to be the secretary of the department.</td>
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<td>6. People react negatively when they see a woman wearing a veil/hijab.</td>
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<td>7. Someone asks an Asian American, “Where are you really from?”</td>
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Common Racist Behaviors and Attitudes of Many of Whites

Directions: review these common group dynamics:

a. Check-off any dynamics which you have observed or heard a credible story about.
b. Make a note next to the dynamics that you have personally experienced, felt, or done.
c. Add any additional common patterns/dynamics you have witnessed or experienced.

Some/Many Whites Tend to (consciously and unconsciously):

1. believe they have “earned” what they have, rather than acknowledge the extensive white privilege and unearned advantages they receive; believe that if people of color just worked harder...

2. not notice the daily indignities that people of color experience; deny them and rationalize them away with PLEs (perfectly logical explanations)

3. work to maintain the status quo and protect the advantages and privileges they receive

4. believe that white cultural norms, practices and values are superior and better

5. internalize the negative stereotypes about people of color and believe that whites are smarter and superior to people of color

6. want people of color to conform and assimilate to white cultural norms and practices

7. accept and feel safer around people of color who have assimilated and are “closer to white”

8. blame people of color for the barriers and challenges they experience; believe that if they “worked harder” they could “pull themselves up by their bootstraps”

9. believe that people of color are not competent and are only hired/promoted to fill quotas

10. interrupt and talk over people of color

11. resent taking direction from a person of color

12. dismiss and minimize frustrations of people of color and categorize the person raising issues as militant, angry, having an “attitude,” working their agenda, not a team player...

13. focus on their “good intent” as whites, rather than on the negative impact of their behavior
14. focus on how much progress we have made, rather than on how much more needs to change

15. want people of color to “get over it” and move on quickly

16. get defensive when people of color express their frustrations with current organizational and societal dynamics

17. “walk on eggshells” and act more distant and formal with people of color

18. segregate themselves from people of color and rarely develop authentic relationships across race

19. exaggerate the level of intimacy they have with individual people of color

20. fear that they will be seen and “found out” as a racist, having racial prejudice

21. focus on themselves as an individual (I’m not racist; I’m a good white), and refuse to acknowledge the cultural and institutional racism people of color experience daily

22. pressure and punish whites who actively work to dismantle racism to conform and collude with white racism; criticize, gossip about, and find fault with white change agents

23. expect people of color to be the “diversity expert” and take the lead in raising and addressing racism as their “second (unpaid) job”

24. minimize, under-value, ignore, overlook and discount the talents, competencies and contributions of people of color

25. rephrase and reword the comments of people of color

26. ask people of color to repeat what they have just said

27. assume the white teacher/coach/facilitator/employee, etc., is in charge/the leader; assume people of color are in service roles

28. rationalize away racist treatment of people of color as individual incidents or the result of something the person of color did/failed to do

29. dismiss the racist experiences of people of color with comments such as: That happens to me too...You’re too sensitive...That happened because of _____, it has nothing to do with race!

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30. judge a person of color as over-reacting and too emotional when they are responding to the cumulative impact of multiple recent racist incidents

31. accuse people of color of “playing the race card” whenever they challenge racist policies and practices; instead of exploring the probability of negative differential impact based on race, or that racist attitudes and beliefs are operating

32. if confronted by a person of color, shut down and focus on what to avoid saying or doing in the future, rather than engaging and learning from the interaction

33. look to people of color for direction, education, coaching on how to act & what not to do

34. compete with other whites to be “the good white.” the best ally, the one people of color let into their circle, etc.

35. if a white person makes a racist comment or action, aggressively confront them and pile on the feedback to distance from them and prove who is a better ally

36. seek approval, validation, and recognition from people of color

37. if confronted by a person of color, view it as an “attack” and focus on and critique HOW they engaged me, not my original comments or behaviors

38. disengage if feel any anxiety or discomfort

39. avoid confronting other whites on their racist attitudes and behaviors

40. when trying to help people of color, feel angry if they don’t enthusiastically appreciate the help

41. believe there is one “right” way, meaning “my way” or the “white way”

42. engage in “tone policing” of people of color

**More productive approaches:**

43. track patterns of differential treatment of people of color and intervene to stop inappropriate actions and educate others

44. continually learn more about the experiences of people of color and racism

45. recognize when people of color might be reacting out of cumulative impact, and offer space to talk about issues and their experiences

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46. analyze policies and practices to assess any differential impact on people of color and intervene to create change

47. constantly track daily organizational activities to ensure fairness, respect, and inclusion for all people with respect to group dynamics, communication, task assignments, professional development opportunities, decision-making, conflict management, mentoring, networking, etc.

**Developed By:** Kathy Obear, Kathy@drkathyobear.com  www.drkathyobear.com
Dig Into Your Roots: What’s Fueling Your Behavior?

When you notice or are confronted about your racist actions, ask yourself:

1. What were the racist biases fueling my actions or inactions?

2. When and how were these taught and reinforced around me?

3. If the person had been white, how might I have reacted? How have I treated whites in similar situations?

4. When have I done or thought this before?

5. How can I interrupt this racist pattern in the future?
Interrupt & Shift Our Racist Internalized Dominance

When we notice we have a racist thought, we need to ask ourselves:

1. Is it true? Really true? (Adapted from Byron Katie, The Work)
2. What is my evidence that this is more true for people of color than whites?
3. When whites exhibit the same behavior, how do I make meaning of that?
4. Who does it serve for me to think this thought right now?
5. What is my pay-off for having and maintaining this racist thought?

To be more effective, more of the time:

Respond in ways that...

- Interrupt racist dynamics,
- Engage others to reflect on the impact and intentions of their racist actions,
- Educate why the comment, behavior or policy has a racist impact, and
- Build connections and relationships with whites for further dialogue, learning, and organizational change
White Privilege, Dr. Peggy McIntosh

Consider these questions to identify potential white privilege:

1. Whose ideas are considered?
2. Who is assumed to be competent?
3. Whose credentials are questioned?
4. Who is assumed to belong?
5. Who gets the benefit of the doubt?
6. Whose culture is infused in the organization as the ONLY way? The right way?
7. What does “professional” mean in your organization?
8. What behaviors are valued as competent or professional?
9. By group membership, who gets rewarded who demonstrating these?
10. By group membership, who gets ignored, overlooked or even criticized for the same behaviors?
From “White Supremacy Culture” ~ Kenneth Jones & Tema Okun, changework

http://www.cwsworkshop.org/pdfs/CARC/Overview/3_White_Sup_Culture.PDF

For each, note:

1. How is this unproductive much of the time?
2. 1-2 ways some aspect of this MIGHT be useful at times?

• Perfectionism

• A sense of urgency

• Defensiveness

• Quantity over quality

• Worship of the written word

• Paternalism

• Either/or thinking

• Power hoarding

• Fear of open conflict

• Individualism

• Progress = Bigger, More

• Objectivity

• Right to comfort
Traps and Potholes for Allies to Avoid: A Beginning List
Tanya Williams, Ed.D., and Kathy Obear Ed.D.

1. PLEs ~ Perfectly Logical Explanations (EYCA)
2. Yeah, but... (EYCA)
3. That happens to me/my group, too... (EYCA)
4. I know someone who...and they don’t agree with you... (EYCA)
5. I don’t see it that way; therefore, it doesn’t really happen... (EYCA)
6. That doesn’t happen to me (so it doesn’t exist) ...(EYCA)
7. Don’t you think that...
8. You’re overreacting...you’re too sensitive... (EYCA)
9. He/she’s a good person...they never meant to do that...
10. That was not my intent! You misunderstood me!
11. Colluding and trying to maintain the status quo culture
12. Trying to keep your status, membership in “the club” while saying you are creating change
13. Fear of losing your access, connections, and future career opportunities
14. Attached to what people will say about you
15. Afraid of the consequences and backlash if you speak truth to power
16. Thinking you know all you need to know; feeling you have arrived; done all your self-work
17. Believing you have the right answer, you know exactly what is needed
18. Perfectly logical explanations, PLEs
19. Having some information and skills, but nowhere near enough competence
20. Acting alone or in isolation
21. Going it alone or only with other privileged group members; not having accountability structures and meaningful relationships with people in the corresponding marginalized group
22. Motivated by wanting to “help” people in marginalized identities
23. Reacting out of rescuing, patronizing, or condescending energy
24. Motivated by guilt, shame, or pity
25. Unclear why you do ally work; not clear on your motives and self-interest, i.e.,
   reclaiming your humanity as you partner to create true equity and inclusion for all;
   understanding how oppression negatively impacts you in your privileged
26. Wanting recognition and appreciation for your contributions
27. Taking over and dominating conversations
28. Assuming leadership roles in cross identity groups with thoughtful group dialogue
29. Not partnering with and following the leadership of people from the corresponding
   marginalized identity(s)
30. Reacting out of self-righteous energy
31. Social justice arrogance: believing you “get it” and others “don’t get it”
32. Believing there is a progression from mediocre ally to “super ally”
33. Personal attacks on people who “don’t get it”
34. Shaming others or yourself for not knowing enough, doing enough, etc.
35. Acquiescing to anything people from marginalized groups say and do
36. Disappearing from conversations and deifying people from marginalized groups
37. Defensiveness to feedback from people from both marginalized and privileged groups
38. Resistance to looking at impact of your behavior
39. Unwilling to explore how you may be reacting out of internalized dominance
40. Holding back out of perfectionism, fear making a mistake, or being wrong
41. Fear of intense emotions (yours of others), especially anger and deep pain
42. Not seeing all people as worthy human beings, deserving of respect and dignity
43. Hiding your prejudicial thoughts and implicit bias
44. Fear of being vulnerable
45. Disengaging from other members of your privileged group(s)
46. Calling yourself an ally without engaging in active change work with people from the corresponding marginalized identity(s) ~ the people you say you are an ally to

47. Only working on a single identity; not seeing and working with the intersections and simultaneity of multiple identities

48. Having a very shallow definition and vision of change work: focused on diversity and increasing demographics without systemic, sustainable organizational change to create inclusive, socially just organizations

49. Doing for others what they can do for themselves

50. Thinking there is a checklist, a to-do list of “right” ally behaviors
A Time You Responded Effectively

Directions: Below, write about a recent exclusionary situation/microaggression and how you responded in effective, productive ways that aligned with your core values and furthered organizational goals.

- What happened?

- How did you feel?

- What did you do?

- What was productive about your response? How did it positively impact others? And advance organizational goals?

- As you look back, what do you believe helped you respond effectively in this situation?
Common Unproductive Reactions During Difficult, Triggering Situations

**Fight Responses**

- Aggressively argues and debates
- Raises their voice, yells
- Tries to silence others
- Tries to compete, win at any cost
- Interrupts
- Self-righteous, arrogant, or condescending behaviors
- Controlling, manipulative behaviors
- Intimidating, threatening behaviors
- Forces change
- Aggressively attacks and berates

- Dismisses or minimizes the comments of others
- Explodes and directs their feelings onto others
- Sarcastic or off-handed remarks
- Belittling comments
- Intentionally tries to embarrass others
- Criticizes or accuses with the intent to humiliate and shame
- Bullies others into submission
- Turns their words against them

**Flight responses**

- Gets defensive
- Becomes overly guarded
- Withdraws
- Ignores or avoids issues
- Tries to smooth over conflict
- Placating to keep things under control
- Minimizes, downplays the issues or conflict

- Shuts down
- Disengages
- Uses humor and jokes to distract and smooth things over
- Quickly changes the subject
- Pretends to agree to avoid conflict
- Uses crying to distract and not engage

**Freeze responses**

- Blanks out, forget what wanted to say or do
- Zones out
- Feels frozen, like they can’t move

- Doesn’t respond or interrupt exclusionary comments and actions
- Overly anxious and scared

**Flounder Responses**

- Giving contradictory comments/examples
- Stream of consciousness, blabbering
- Off on tangents; way off topic

- Can’t decide: maybe this or maybe that
- Out of your body, still talking
Common Fears

**Directions:** Check-off any of the following fears that you have felt or anticipate as you engage in difficult conversations.

1. What if I make a mistake?
2. What if I say something stereotypic or biased?
3. Will I be seen as a fraud?
4. What if I can’t handle a situation?
5. If I don’t manage this well, people could get hurt...
6. If I don’t manage this well, it might hurt my relationships with others
7. Am I making this worse?
8. Am I ready to participate in this discussion?
9. People will get defensive and I won’t know how to respond.
10. The conversation will “get out of control.”
11. People will get too emotional and I won’t have the skills to manage the situation.
12. I don’t know enough to engage in the conversation effectively.
13. If I don’t do this well, I’ll let people down.
15. My comments will be dismissed.
16. I’ll feel triggered by someone’s comments or behaviors.
17. My personal opinions and behaviors will become the focus of the conversation.
18. I will lose credibility and be seen as less competent.
19. If I am too confrontational, there will be repercussions.
20. People will be disappointed in me.
ADDRESS it!

Directions:

Choose 1-2 examples of microaggressions and exclusionary situations. Write each one in the left-hand column. Then discuss and note how you could ADDRESS the situation in the other column.

Consider as you discuss:

- What is the probable impact if no one speaks up in this situation?
- What could be the positive outcomes if someone does intervene and speak up?
- What could you do to ADDRESS* the situation?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Microaggression, Exclusionary Situation</th>
<th>WHAT COULD YOU DO?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</table>

A = Acknowledge (that something occurred)
D = Dialogue (in the moment or afterwards)
D = “Document” (tell someone; use the Bias Reporting System)
R = Redirect (the conversation)
E = Educate (the person)
S = Stop (the exclusionary behavior)
S = Support (the people impacted)

Developed by Naomi Sigg, Director of Office of Multicultural Affairs, Case Western University, 2015 nxs399@case.edu

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PAIRS: EFFECTIVE DIALOGUE SKILLS

**P: PAN** the environment and yourself; describe what you notice or engage others based on what you see (*Pay Attention Now*)

- I’m noticing I’m feeling...anyone else?
- I noticed how quiet everyone got; I’m wondering what is going on for folks?
- It seems some people were impacted by that statement, am I right?
- I’m noticing you’re speaking with a lot of energy and emotion...
- I’m noticing that people get interrupted as they try to share...
- You seemed to have a reaction to what I just said...

**A: ASK** about the specifics behind the person’s comment or behavior

- Could you say more about that...Tell me more...
- Can you give us an example of what you’re saying...?
- Help me understand what you meant by that?
- What were you hoping to communicate with that comment?
- Can you help me understand what your intent was when you said/did...?
- Can you give me some background on this situation...?
- How were you impacted when...? What were you feeling when...?

**I: INTERRUPT** the dynamics

- Let’s slow down the conversation and talk about what just happened...
- I’m going to interrupt and try a different approach to this conversation...
- We are not engaging according to our group norms.
- Let’s take a breath...

**R: RELATE** to the person or their comment/behavior

- I relate to what you’re saying, I...I have felt the same way...
- I remember a time when I... I did the exact same thing...
- How do others relate to that comment?
- What you’re saying seems to relate to what so-and-so just said...

**S: SHARE** about yourself ~ self-disclose with a story or example; your feelings in the moment; the impact of a comment or behavior, etc.

- When I hear you say that I think/feel...?
- Just last week I... I remember when I...
- I was socialized to believe...
- I’m beginning to feel ____...
- My heart aches as you tell that story...
- I notice I’m feeling a little triggered...
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Engaging Skills</th>
<th>Examples/Descriptions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Ask the person for more information ~ seek to understand | - Can you tell me more...?
- Can you give me an example...?
- Can you give me some background on this situation...?
- What do you mean when you say...?
- Help me understand what you disagree with...find frustrating...
- Help me understand how you came to that conclusion?
- What were you feeling when...?
- What’s your perspective?
- What led you to that conclusion? |
| Paraphrase the person’s comments | - So, you’re saying that...
- So, you feel that...
- So, you think that...
- Are you saying that...?
- So from your perspective... |
| Explore their INTENT | - Help me understand your intent when you...
- What had you wanted to communicate with your comment?
- What was your intended outcome?
- What is underneath your comment/question? |
| TRACK/PAN the person’s body language, tone, and comments | - I notice you had a reaction to what I just said...
- I don’t believe she was finished with her comment...
- I notice you just got very quiet...looked away...shook your head...
- I’m noticing your tone of voice...
- I’m noticing your body language... |
| Explore the IMPACT on them | - It seems my behavior had an impact on you...
- How did that impact you?
- What were you feeling when... |
| Acknowledge and validate their points as much as possible | - I hear that you feel...
- I can see that from your perspective you think...
- I’d probably feel ____ , too... |
| Explore possible solutions | - What do you think we can do?
- What do you see as the next steps?
- One thought could be to...what do you think?
- Might it be possible to... |
| State your desired outcome | - This is what I suggest we do...
- I want to...I need... |
| Summarize the dialogue | - Summarize the dialogue without stating opinions or judging the dialogue.
- So we’ve discussed...we agreed to... |
When confronted with the following situations or scenarios, how would you respond?

1. You overhear a co-worker blame people of color for the barriers and challenges they experience; stating, "If they worked harder, they could pull themselves up by their bootstraps."
2. You overhear a co-worker talking about a new hire, believing that person (of color) was only hired/promoted to fill a diversity quota.
3. Your supervisor tells you they believe a new hire, a person of color, was only hired/promoted to fill a diversity quota.
4. You witness your supervisor routinely interrupting and talking over people of color.
5. You witness your subordinate or direct report routinely interrupting and talking over people of color.
6. You overhear some senior leaders discussing how they want people of color to "get over it" and move on quickly.
7. You are part of a peer discussion when someone states a need for people of color to "get over it" and move on quickly.
8. You witness a co-worker get defensive when a person of color expresses their frustrations with current organizational and societal dynamics.
9. You witness a friend get defensive when a person of color expresses their frustrations with current organizational and societal dynamics.
10. One of your direct reports confides in you that they are "walking on eggshells" and acting more distant and formal with people of color.
11. You notice that one of your supervisors are "walking on eggshells" and acting more distant and formal with people of color.
12. You notice a friend exaggerating the level of intimacy they have with individual people of color.
13. You notice your boss exaggerating the level of intimacy they have with individual people of color.
14. You see your team members expecting people of color to be the "diversity expert" and take the lead in raising and addressing racism as their "second (unpaid) job".
15. You witness your significant other assuming the white teacher/coach/facilitator/employee, etc., is in charge/the leader; and assuming people of color are in low-level service roles.
16. You witness your direct report assuming the white teacher/coach/facilitator/employee, etc., is in charge/the leader; and assuming people of color are in low-level service roles.
17. You hear a co-worker rationalize away racist treatment of people of color as individual incidents or the result of something the person of color did or failed to do.
18. You hear a senior leader rationalize away racist treatment of people of color as individual incidents or the result of something the person of color did or failed to do.
19. You hear a friend dismiss the racist experience of a person of color with comments such as: That happens to me too...You’re too sensitive...That happened because of ______ it has nothing to do with race!
20. You hear a supervisor judge a person of color as over-reacting and too emotional when they are responding to the cumulative impact of multiple recent racist incidents.
21. A team member accuses a person of color of "playing the race card".

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22. A friend accuses a person of color of "playing the race card".
23. You see a direct report competing with other whites to be "the good white:" the best ally, the one people of color let into their circle, etc.
24. You see a co-worker competing with other whites to be "the good white:" the best ally, the one people of color let into their circle, etc.
25. You see a co-worker seeking approval, validation, and recognition from people of color.
26. You witness a supervisor avoid confronting other whites on their racist attitudes and behaviors.
27. In a meeting, a manager is pushing for a new policy or program that you believe advantages whites and creates barriers for people of color.
28. While discussing which candidates to invite for an in-person interview, the chair of the Selection Committee refers to a candidate of color by saying, “I don’t think they’d be a good fit.”
Steps to Engage in Difficult Dialogues

1. Get grounded in positive intentions ~ The DESTINATION:
   • Create a teachable moment
   • Stir cognitive dissonance
   • Demonstrate respect and dignity
   • Leave them feeling whole…
   • Plant seeds…Influence hearts and minds…
   • Help person(s) explore the impact of their behavior, understand the reasons their behavior has a negative impact on others/building an inclusive community
   • Re-establish the boundaries for civil discourse
   • Do no harm!
   • Make a human connection; build the relationship for future dialogue
   • Support those impacted by the comments/actions

   **P.A.I.R.S. ~ Skills to Engage**
   
   **P:** PAN the environment, yourself
   ~ as data to diagnose; name your pan as an intervention
   **A:** ASK questions to explore
   **I:** INTERRUPT the process
   **R:** RELATE to others, their comments
   **S:** Share, use self-disclosure as your response

2. Based on what you PAN, engage others in the conversation
   • I noticed that…. I overheard your conversation and thought I heard you say…. 
   • I notice that folks were laughing…I’m curious what that’s about? 
   • I noticed how quiet everyone just got…I’m wondering what is going on for folks? 
   • It seems some people were impacted by that statement. 
   • I’m noticing you’re speaking with a lot of energy and emotion… 
   • We’ve had some comments from this side of the room, what are your thoughts and reactions? (looking at the other side of the room) 
   • I’m wondering if people are feeling triggered right now. 
   • The energy in the discussion seemed to shift after…
3. **A: ASK about the specifics behind the person’s comment or behavior**
   - Gives you time to center, better understand the comment, choose a response
   - May help the person hear themselves and reflect on what they said, the impact...

4. **A: ASK clarifying questions**
   - I want to make sure I understand your point...you think that...
   - Are you saying that...?
   - Help me understand what you mean by that?
   - I don’t understand your point...
   - What do you mean when you say...?
   - Come again? Or Can you repeat that?

5. **A: ASK questions to gather more information**
   - Could you say more about that...Tell me more...
   - Can you give us an example of what you’re saying...?
   - Help me understand what you disagree with...find frustrating...
   - Help me understand how you got to that conclusion?
   - What has been your experience that led you to that conclusion?
   - What readings or research are you referencing?

6. **A: ASK questions to get them to reflect on their comment**
   - When was the first time you heard that?
   - How do you think others could be impacted by your comment? Behavior?
   - Why might others disagree with your comment?
   - What if I gave you a convincing argument and data that was counter to your perspective? What might that mean for you?
   - How do you think others will view you when you make similar comments?

7. **A: ASK questions to explore their intention**
   - What were you hoping to communicate with that comment?
   - Help me understand your intent when you said...
   - What did you mean to say with that comment?
   - What is underneath your comment/question?
8. **I: INTERRUPT** the process and give space to process
   - Let’s slow down the conversation and talk about what just happened...
   - I’m going to interrupt and try a different approach to this conversation...
   - We are not engaging according to our group norms.
   - Let’s take a breath...

9. **R: RELATE** to the person who made the comment (Reflectively)
   - How are you just like this person? Were just like them? (search in other categories of difference)
   - When have you said or done something similarly?
   - When might you say or do something like this in the future?

10. **R: RELATE** to the person or their comment/behavior
    - I relate to what you’re saying, I...
    - I have felt the same way...
    - I remember a time when I...
    - I did the exact same thing...
    - How do others relate to that comment?
    - Who can relate?
    - What you’re saying seems to relate to what so-and-so just said...

11. **S: SHARE**: “Put a Face on the Issue”
    - Share a personal example or one you have heard from a credible source
    - Invite others to share personal examples and stories ~ verbally; in writing
    - Offer to share resources, articles so they can review different perspectives
    - Offer to meet with them and talk about your life experiences inside and outside organization
    - Ask them to talk with 2-3 other people in the near future to hear their experiences and stories
12. **S: SHARE:** Share about yourself ~ self-disclose with a story or example; your feelings in the moment; the impact of a comment or behavior, etc.

- My heart aches as you tell that story...
- As a ___, I... (tell a story, give an example)
- I’d like to share the impact of your comment...
- I’m feeling uncomfortable with what you’re saying...
- I’m noticing I’m feeling___, anyone else?
- I notice I feel triggered right now....
- That’s a trigger word/phrase for me...
- I need to stop a moment and talk about what just happened. I...

13. **Give the “benefit of the doubt”** if you directly confront their comment ~ a face-saving tactic

- I trust/know you didn’t intend this... I
- You’re probably not aware of the impact of your comment...

---

**Further Resources**


Helpful Tactics

1. Gather more information
   - Help me understand more about what you mean?
   - I’m curious when you first heard that term or phrase?

2. Clarify what you “heard”
   - I want to make sure I understand your point... you think that...
   - Are you saying that...?
   - So, you feel...
   - You believe that...

3. Ask the person to walk you through their thought process so you can better understand how they came to their assumptions and conclusions
   - Can you help me understand how you came to that conclusion?
   - What has been your experience that led you to that conclusion?
   - What assumptions are underneath your conclusion?

4. Focus the discussion on the PROCESS of the discussion
   - I noticed that we tend to spend more time talking about these issues, and far less time talking about these other ones...
   - I’m noticing that the only time we talk about ___ is when I bring it up...
   - It seems that whenever we start talking about ____, someone changes the topic back to something else.
   - I’ve noticed that when we are discussing ____, a number of folks look down, start writing notes... I’m curious what others have noticed?

5. Name the group’s process or dynamic and shift the focus to be more inclusive
   - We’ve talked about how this policy could impact people of color and white women... I’m wondering how it may impact GLBT employees across gender and race?
   - I’m noticing that whenever we talk about race, whites turn and ask a question of one of the people of color. I’d like to hear from some of the whites in the room: What do you notice that whites, as a group, tend to say, do, and feel around issues of race in the workplace?
   - This has been a great discussion about the chilly climate for women and men of color. I don’t want to move off this too soon, and I also want to make sure we have time to have a similar conversation related to dynamics of age and length of service in the organization...
6. Give the “benefit of the doubt”
   - You probably already thought of this... You probably noticed that...
   - An unintended outcome of that idea could be that...
   - I know you didn’t intend this, but when you have a side conversation while I’m speaking....

7. If you think someone misunderstood or is misrepresenting what you said
   - I believe I said something different than that...What I said was...

8. Recognize comments and behaviors that help create greater inclusion before you give further feedback
   - I appreciate the several best practices you’ve gathered for us to review, and I was wondering if there also were some that more specifically address...
   - I appreciate your working to be inclusive in your language...and I understand the term “GLBT” to be more inclusive and current than “homosexuals”

9. Acknowledge the accumulative impact of what you are experiencing
   - I know I’m having a strong reaction to what you said....and this is only one of many times I have heard similar comments recently.... OR, and, as you know, this seems to be a pattern we keep running into that creates an obstacle...

10. Ask questions to raise their awareness
    - When did you decide/choose to be heterosexual?
    - What are some of the ways that Christianity is embedded in the way we interact, and in the policies and practices of our nation? Organization?

11. Invite others to get engaged in the dialogue
    - I’m curious what others are thinking? What other ideas do people have?
    - Name your reaction and test to see where others are: I’m feeling unsettled about this possibility, is anyone else?
    - Ask if others feel differently than what is being proposed: This is one way we could proceed. Does anyone have a different suggestion?
    - Ask others to take the "pulse" of the situation and reflect on the process: I’m curious what people are noticing about our group dynamics?
    - Ask if others have heard and experienced the situation as you did: That scene in the video hit me as Islamaphobic...What do others think?
12. How to Confront Repeated Inappropriate Behaviors…1st, 2nd, 3rd time…

1st time:
- Describe the behavior you observed
- State what you want to be different
  * I’d appreciate it if you’d…

2nd time:
- Describe the behavior: I believe this is the 2nd time we’ve talked about this...This is the IMPACT when you do that.... I need you to change your behavior ....

3rd time:
- Give clear consequences if they continue this behavior: This is the 3rd time I’ve asked you to...
- If you do this again...

13. Questions to explore possible and unintended (hopefully) exclusionary practices and attitudes in planning and decision-making discussions:
- Do we have the full breadth of social identity groups and perspectives at the table? Involved in the process?
- Does our process seriously consider the input and perspectives of a broad range of group memberships?
- How might our unconscious attitudes and assumptions about ____ be playing out in this decision?
- What could be the impact of this on leaders and staff from various and multiple privileged and marginalized groups?
- How might this inadvertently advantage some and disadvantage others?
- How can we make this inclusive for members of various and multiple group memberships?

14. Diagnosing Privileged and Marginalized Group Dynamics
Use the following prompts to diagnose the potential privileged and marginalized group dynamics as you analyze a recent situation, case study, etc.

1. What are the various group memberships of the people involved, and which privileged and marginalized group memberships seem central to this situation?
2. What are the probable perspectives and feelings of each party?
3. How might unconscious attitudes, assumptions, and bias be playing out in this situation?
4. What are the possible privileged and marginalized group behaviors and dynamics in the situation?
5. What organizational issues are relevant in this situation, such as formal and informal policies, norms, procedures, organizational practices, etc.

6. What are the probable outcomes if this situation is left unaddressed? For members of marginalized groups? Members of privileged groups? For the team? For the organization?

7. Given your diagnosis, what and/or who should be the focus of a response and why?

8. What might be some effective ways to respond? And by whom?

15. Different Communication Styles

a. Direct
   - I think that…I need...
   - It's important that... We need to...

b. Pose possibilities
   - It might be useful...
   - I'd suggest we consider...
   - One way to proceed could be....

c. Competing style
   - State your thought or opinion right after another person, no connection
   - I think...Well I think.... My idea is to...this is how we should proceed...

d. Debating style
   - Reference the other person's ideas in order to negate them or disagree with them

e. Connecting style
   - Acknowledge what was said by others
   - Connect your comment to theirs
   - Build on what has been said, i.e., Connected to what you're saying; Building on that thought; Similar to what she said, I think; I like your idea and another way to go about this is...

f. Engaging style
   - If a direct statement is made, ask a question to gather more information, deepen understanding, gain time to respond...
   - Tell me more...
   - Can you give me an example?
   - What's your intended outcome? your intent behind that?
   - How might that impact others?
   - What's your thinking behind how that helps us meet our goal?
16. Continuum for how to engage others:

- **Redirect**: Refocus group on topic/task without any reference to current group dynamics
- **Indirect**: A more vague, general comment to refocus group on topic and effective group dynamics
- **Direct**: Acknowledge the current situation, and/or the uninclusive or disrespectful dynamic
How to be an Ally: Things to Keep in Mind

A. The following behaviors may negatively impact the quality of the discussion:

Conversation stoppers

- Interrupting, speaking over each other
- Mostly using a telling and directive style
- Giving too much advice without asking questions to help others come up with their own solutions
- Pushing your point; insisting others do things your way
- Avoiding giving constructive feedback or using vague generalizations
- Overly critical focus on what they did wrong, what needs to change
- Always jumping right into task mode, without spending time developing and deepening relationships
- Assuming responsibility for the others’ situations and trying to fix it for them
- Inappropriate jokes, gossip or stereotypic comments
- Making assumptions based on social group memberships, including gender identity and expression, race, ethnicity, religion/spirituality/ways of knowing, age, sexual orientation, nationality, immigration status, educational background, disability status, veteran status, etc.

Common Dialogue Pitfalls/Traps

1. Perfectly Logical Explanations (PLEs)
2. Yea, but....
3. That happens to me/my group, too....
4. I know someone who...and they don’t agree with you....
5. I don’t see it that way; therefore, it doesn’t really happen....
6. That doesn’t happen to me... (so it doesn’t exist)
7. Don’t you think that...
8. You’re overreacting...you’re too sensitive...
9. He/she’s a good person...they never meant to do that....
10. That was not my intent! You misunderstood me!
B. Be Aware of Cumulative Impact

This concept occurs when a marginalized group member experiences repeated negative oppressive incidents, either in a short period of time or over a long period. Their feelings of anger, fear, distrust, frustration, etc., may build up and then POP for a number of reasons, including:

- It is not safe for them to challenge the people who treated them negatively
- They are tired of intervening and trying to educate others

A good ally understands that many marginalized group members may be carrying the cumulative impact of a long series of negative treatment. If they seem irritated or unusually upset, the ally tries to not take it personally, but instead, tries to offer support to the marginalized group member by:

- Acknowledging the degree of feelings that the marginalized group member is experiencing
- Offering to listen to stories of how the person has been negatively treated (without interrupting, arguing, justifying, or trying to “give advice” and “fix it”)
- Asking if there is anything that they can do to be supportive

C. Recognize Intent AND Impact

When a member of a privileged group says/does something hurtful or inappropriate, their tendency is to want to EXPLAIN their INTENT (I didn’t mean it! It was just a joke! I didn’t do it on purpose...). However, the pain and hurt, the IMPACT, is still very real to the marginalized group members.

A good ALLY first acknowledges their impact, apologizes, and asks to hear more about how they have negatively impacted the marginalized group member. And then asks how they can help, be supportive, make amends, avoid similar transgressions in the future, etc.

D. Recognize Varying Levels of Differential Risk and Credibility

It is important that all people, marginalized and privileged group members, work to intervene and stop oppression wherever they see it. AND privileged group members are generally given more credibility, listened to more seriously, and have fewer risks when they intervene, as compared to members of marginalized groups.

A good ally consistently recognizes opportunities to speak up and intervene, knowing that it is their responsibility to take action, regardless of the risks involved.
E. Recognize and Use your Discretionary Power

All people have some personal power, and possibly position power from which to speak up and intervene. They have the discretion/the choice of when or how or if to intervene. Privileged group members tend to have MORE discretionary power, given how often they are in positions of authority, and because of the greater credibility they have in society.

F. Distinguishing Behavior

Most privileged group members will be perceived as “just another man...white...administrator” UNTIL they show THROUGH THEIR ACTIONS that they are actively working as an ally against oppression. When privileged group members speak up and intervene, they DISTINGUISH themselves from the overall privileged group who generally both consciously and unconsciously perpetuate oppression.

G. Intervening in Oppressive Situations

Good allies take the initiative to try to STOP inappropriate behaviors and situations. They then look for ways to EDUCATE the person(s) who made the comment/took the action, in hopes that they may learn why what they did was harmful, and to not repeat it in the future. Allies also offer SUPPORT to the target of the negative treatment when possible.

Adapted in part from materials developed by Elsie Y. Cross Associates
Tools and Tips: Responding in Cross-Cultural Conflicts

A. Responding to Common Dialogue Blockers

1. Perfectly Logical Explanations (PLEs)

   • That may be true, but here’s how I see it.... or another way to view it...
   • There may be a number of factors that contributed to this situation. Another one that does have to do with diversity might be.......  
   • When you say that, I feel you’re discounting my experience. In that situation I felt...
   • You could be right that this one specific time it had nothing to do with prejudice. But it feels so similar to so many other times in my experience when I have been treated negatively/experienced discrimination...it’s hard to not assume this is just like all those other times....
   • Your opinion that this has nothing to do with prejudice could be true...But what would it mean if my perception was true: that this person reacted to me out of their bias and stereotypes?

2. Yea, but...

   • What do you think the impact on me is when you say that?
   • You may not have intended this, but when you give a “YEA, BUT” I feel discounted and that you have dismissed my perspective and experience.
   • I’m curious what you were hoping to communicate with that statement?
   • Honestly, I’m rather upset about what happened. And I can’t hear your perspective right now. What I need is for someone to just listen to me and acknowledge what I experienced and am feeling....
   • I’m curious why you chose to give me a “Yea, But” just then?

3. That happens to me/my group, too....

   • This dynamic/situation does happen to other groups, too. The difference might be HOW OFTEN how often it happens to them, and WHY it happens to them. For instance: most whites have received bad customer service. It rarely happens to them because some has prejudice towards them because of their race. And it probably doesn’t happen to them as frequently.
   • How does it feel when it happens to you? How often does that happen? Why does it happen to you? So you have a “window of understanding” to connect to what I and my group experience much of the time.
4. I know someone who...and they don’t agree with you...

- There might be some people who don’t see this as I do. That doesn’t discount my experience or perception.
- Not all ____ may feel like I do. And, unfortunately, there are many around here that do agree with me and have had very similar experiences. Are you open to hearing more about my experiences?

5. I don’t see it that way... (therefore, it doesn’t really happen....)

- You might not have ever recognized this dynamic before or seen it happen. There was a time I didn’t see it this way, either. But after having it happen SO MANY times and when I can’t find any other explanation, that I now believe that there most often is some prejudice underneath this type of reaction....

6. That doesn’t happen to me... (so it doesn’t exist)

- I’m glad and hopeful that it doesn’t. And hope you never do experience this. And this is what happened to me, and I’ve heard many other folks describe all too similar experiences....
- It might not, or you may not notice it happening to you.... but here’s what I’ve tracked and noticed in my life....

7. Don’t you think that...

- I’m wondering if you have a statement behind your question....
- Do you have a specific example that illustrates what you’re trying to ask or say?
- I’m curious what you think about that....

8. You’re overreacting...you’re too sensitive...

- You may not agree, but I feel very strongly about this. And I would appreciate your respecting me enough to at least acknowledge my perspective.
- When you say that, I want to end the conversation and would probably never talk to you about these serious issues again.
- Your intent might be to try to help or support me, but the impact of that statement is infuriating.
9. He/she’s a good person...they never meant to do that....

- That comment just dismissed and discounted my experience.
- Many “good people” do very inappropriate and harmful things.
- Regardless of the intent, this was the impact of their actions....
- I’m not questioning if they’re good or bad, I’m talking about the impact of their actions.

10. That was not my intent! You misunderstood me!

- I’m open to hearing your intent, but I’d first appreciate your acknowledging the impact of your comment/actions....
- What was your intent.... I hear your intent was ______, and I hope you can also realize the impact was different than what you intended.

11. That had nothing to do with _____ (an “ism”)! It’s just their personality!

- That may be what you believe, and I have observed/experienced this type of situation so many times...and I have tracked a diversity cut to this...Here’s the way I see it...

B. Responding When Someone is Triggered

- I’m noticing you’re speaking with a lot of energy and emotion...
- I’m wondering if you’re feeling triggered right now.
- This response is unusual for you.... I’m wondering what else is going on for you.
- I’m wondering if something else is going on or did something happen that’s related to why you’re feeling this way?
- You’re raising issues I want to talk about, and I’m also noticing that the depth of your emotions seems somewhat out of proportion to this situation...
- I notice I’m feeling a little triggered, and I wonder if you are, too?
- I think we’re both a bit triggered right now....
- I want to talk about this further, and I can hear you better when you’re not so triggered. What if we take a break and then come back to talk about this...?
C. Responding When Someone is Reacting out of Cumulative Impact

- Obviously, I’ve said/done something to trigger you. What’s going on?
- I can see you have a strong reaction to this. What happened?
- My guess is this is:
  - an example of what has happened to you a lot in the past....
  - what happens to you all the time...
  - not the first time something like this has happened...
- I’m open to hearing what happened if you want to talk....
- Is there anything I can do to be supportive of you?

D. Responding When Your Comment/Action Has Had a Negative Impact on Someone Else

- It seems what I said had an impact on you. I’m open to hearing it.
- I want to apologize for what I said/did.... I was wrong...and I’m open to hearing how I’ve impacted you....
- Thank you for letting me know this. It is my intention to change my behavior in the future...
- Is there anything I can do to make amends...?

E. Responding When You Feel Triggered

- I notice I feel triggered right now....
- That’s a trigger word/phrase for me...
- I need to take a break and come back to this later....
- I need to stop a moment and talk about what just happened. I’m feeling triggered and this is why....
- This may have more to do with me than you, but I’m feeling triggered by what you just said....

Adapted in part from materials developed by Elsie Y. Cross Associates
Navigating “Hot Buttons” and Triggering Situations

Characteristics of a Triggering Event

Any stimulus, either external or internal to the person, through which they experience an emotional reaction that may have some or all of the following characteristics:

- unexpectedness, the person is surprised by the arousal of their feelings
- strong intensity of feelings, the person experiences their emotions as overwhelming and disproportionate to the original stimulus
- disorienting, the person is disoriented and distracted from the flow of the workshop and the planned agenda: “stopped in their tracks”
- feeling out of control and overwhelmed by the situation
- feeling “de-skilled” and reacting less effectively
- requiring extra effort to manage the situation effectively
Common Examples of Triggering Events

Directions: Use a 0-10 scale to rate how much of a hot button or “trigger” each of the following is for you when you are engaging in dialogues about issues of equity & inclusion.

0 = no emotional reaction
1 -2 = mild level of emotional reaction
3-4 = low-moderate degree of emotional reaction
5-6 = moderate degree of emotional reaction
7-8 = high degree of emotional reaction
9-10 = extremely high level of emotional reaction

Identifying my common EXTERNAL triggers

A. When someone:

___ 1. makes an insensitive, stereotypic, or offensive comment
___ 2. acts in ways that are classist, racist, sexist, homophobic, etc.
___ 3. interrupts or speaks over me or the participants
___ 4. dismisses my point or that of a participant
___ 5. demonstrates disruptive behavior including joking, side conversations, or laughing at me or participants
___ 6. makes snide or sarcastic comments
___ 7. is belittling or demeaning
___ 8. demonstrates domineering or controlling behavior
___ 9. demonstrates bullying or threatening behavior
___ 10. is arrogant or self-righteous
___ 11. is patronizing or condescending
___ 12. has a very blunt or impersonal style
___ 13. has an aggressive or forceful style
___ 14. tries to derail the planned format and agenda
___ 15. refuses to participate in the discussion or the activity
___ 16. is silent, shut down or withdrawn
___ 17. is “set in their ways” and unwilling to shift their perspective
___ 18. will only focus on their intent, and not the impact of their behavior
___ 19. refuses to consider feedback from me or others
20. is crying and expressing deep emotions of pain or grief
21. is expressing deep anger or rage
22. is engaged in an intense, emotional conflict with me or others
23. challenges the validity of the information or statistics being presented
24. strongly disagrees with what I am saying
25. questions the usefulness of an activity or a discussion
26. criticizes my style, design, or approach
27. questions my competency as the facilitator
28. calls me classist, racist, sexist, homophobic, etc.
29. criticizes or minimizes efforts related to equity, inclusion, and social justice
30. dismisses the conversation as “political correctness”
31. portrays themselves as the “victim” of “reverse discrimination”
32. proclaims that they are “a good one” without acknowledging their unearned privilege
33. continually points out what others do that is oppressive without acknowledging their own participation in the dynamics of oppression
34. shifts the conversation away from their privileged group and to their marginalized group
35. only engages in the conversation out of marginalized identities
36. “coaches” members of marginalized groups on how to act, think and feel
37. is colluding with their own oppression, “going along to get along”
38. defends members of privileged groups who are acting out of privilege or prejudice
39. publicly criticizes other members of their marginalized group(s)

B. For me, when

40. I make a mistake or error
41. I do or say something biased, offensive or oppressive
42. I do not know the answer to a question
43. I fear I do not know how to effectively respond in a situation
44. I start to cry or lash out in anger
45. I believe the conversation is about to “get out of control”
C. When a colleague:

___ 46. is triggered and experiencing deep emotions
___ 47. mismanages an activity or makes an ineffective intervention
___ 48. makes an offensive or stereotypic comment
___ 49. changes the planned agenda without checking in with me
___ 50. steps in as I am leading and takes over
___ 51. tries to “correct,” coach, or criticize me in front of the group
___ 52. is silent and “disappears” during a group discussion in which they are a member of the privileged group
___ 53. is silent and “disappears” during a group discussion in which they are a member of the marginalized group
___ 54. takes credit for my ideas or work

Additional common hot buttons and triggers for you:
Journaling: The Triggering Event Cycle

Directions: Choose one situation when you were not satisfied with how you reacted when you felt triggered when engaging in authentic dialogue about issues of diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice.

1. What was the specific situation in which you felt triggered (Step 1)?

2. What were some of your intrapersonal roots fueling your triggered reactions? (Step 2) (see next page)

3. How did you make meaning of the situation? What “story” did you make up about what you thought was happening (Step 3)?

4. How did you know you were triggered (Step 4)?
   *physiological reactions:*
   *self-talk/thoughts:*
   *feelings:*
   *unconscious behaviors or responses:*

5. What were your intentions and motives? Hoped for outcome? What were you trying to accomplish (Step 5)?
   *unproductive motives:*
   *more productive motives:*

6. How did you react when you were triggered? Please note both your actions as well as your intrapersonal processes, such as your feelings and fears, thoughts and “self-talk” (Step 6)?
   * less effective reactions/responses: *
   * more effective reactions/responses:

7. How was your effectiveness impacted by feeling triggered? How did your reactions impact you? Others (Step 7)?
Intrapersonal “Roots” of Triggering Events

Directions:
Think about your triggering event. What do you believe were the various factors or “roots” that contributed to your feeling triggered?

1. Current life issues and dynamics (fatigue, illness, crises, stressors, etc.)

2. Cumulative impact of recent experiences: Does this situation remind you of recent events?

3. Unfinished business, unresolved or unhealed past issues, traumas, and “wounds:” Does this person remind you of anyone? Does this situation remind you of past traumas?

4. Fears (check-off all that are related and add any others)

- My personal issues will become the focus of the conversation: all eyes will be on me.
- I will lose credibility and be seen as less competent.
- If I cry and show emotion, people will think less of me…. I won’t be able to manage the situation.
- The conversation will “get out of control.”
- People will get too emotional and I won’t have the skills to manage the situation.
- I won’t know enough about the issue to engage in conversation.
- If I challenge this issue, I will be all alone without any support.
- I won’t be able to express myself clearly; I’ll be misunderstood.
- If I am too confrontational or angry, then people will judge me, be mad at me, reject me, ostracize me, etc.
- I will be seen as incompetent and “not good enough.”
- They will see how prejudiced I really am.
- I’ll let people down and disappoint them.
- People won’t like me or approve of me.
- Things won’t change.
- I will make a mistake and be wrong.
- People will be disappointed in me.
- If I don’t handle this well, people could feel uncomfortable…be hurt.
- Things will be worse off than before.
### 5. Unmet Universal Needs/What I value* (check-off all that are related and add any others)

- Respect, dignity
- Trust
- Planning, order
- Fairness
- Clarity, understanding
- Openness, honesty
- Direct communication
- Respectful disagreement
- Recognition, acknowledgement
- Appreciation
- Competence, effectiveness
- Success, to make a difference
- To be kept informed and updated
- Harmony, peace...
- Safety, security
- Integrity
- Innovation and creativity
- Ease and simplicity
- Connection
- Mutuality, partnering, collaboration
- For approval
- For acceptance, belonging
- Inclusion
- Consideration
- Dependability, follow-through

### 6. Ego-driven desires (check-off all that are related and add any others)

- To assert, regain my power and authority
- To have control
- To win the argument; prove them wrong
- To get my way
- To make people change; “fix” them
- To make people learn
- To be right
- To shut them down, put them in their place
- To make them feel the pain and hurt I feel
- To be seen as the expert, smart
- To prove I am competent
- To gain prestige and status
- To be admired; avoid disgrace
- To be liked
- To fit in
- To be seen as a “good one,” an ally
- To be perfect
- To gain certainty and predictability
- For everyone to feel happy
- To avoid deep emotions and conflict
- To make others engage as I want them to

### 7. Biases, assumptions, expectations, shoulds, and judgments

*This section was enhanced by the work of Marshall Rosenberg (2005). Nonviolent Communication.*

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**Step 3: Shift Your “Story” of What You Think is Happening**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 3: The “story” I make up about what I think is happening</th>
<th>Given this story, how I would feel and, possibly, react less effectively</th>
<th>1-2 alternative stories that leave me feeling curious, compassionate, and/or caring</th>
</tr>
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**Identify Less Productive, “Negative” Intentions (Step 5), such as:**

- win the argument
- get even; get them back
- to be right; prove the other person wrong
- to prove you are competent, smart
- assert your power and authority
- gain status and prestige; be admired
- be in control
- intimidate the other person
- “put them in their place,” shut them down
- punish the other person
- embarrass or put down
- make them feel the pain and hurt you feel
- change the other person’s views, feelings or behaviors
- to make people learn
- trick and “out fox” the other person
- keep the conversation “under control”
- avoid intense emotions: in self and others
- make everyone feel happy and harmonious
- avoid feeling or being viewed as “incompetent”
- control how others feel about you
- to be seen as a “good one,” an ally
- use the current opportunity to “right the wrongs” you experienced in the past
- change the other person to account for times you either didn’t or couldn’t shift oppressive dynamics earlier in your life
- ignore them
- seek approval of others
- to be liked, to fit in
- avoid confrontation and conflict

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### Step 5: Shift Your Intentions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My less productive, “negative” intentions</th>
<th>More productive, effective intentions</th>
<th>How I might respond more productively, effectively</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

#### When You Feel Triggered, Shift Your Intentions to Align with Your Inclusion Values:

- create greater inclusion
- leave people feeling whole
- engage in respectful dialogue
- do no harm
- “go with the flow;” trust the process
- deepen learning and growth
- meet the people “where they are” without judgment
- use the triggering moment to deepen understanding
- relate in to the person; connect with them
- create space for honest, authentic dialogue
- invite people to learn from the situation
- model the social justice behaviors you espouse - authenticity, empathy, self-reflection, engagement...
- model skills to navigate triggering moments: scan yourself, identify unmet needs, shift self-talk, stress-management, realigning intentions, exploring intrapersonal roots...
- facilitate open, honest discussion
- create space for the other person to express their feelings, perceptions
- deepen understanding across differences
- identify the deeper issues fueling the feelings, perceptions and behaviors of others
- create safety for the expression of differing viewpoints
- treat others with respect and dignity
- encourage more people to engage in the dialogue
- support people to disagree with each other in respectful ways
- model effective recovery skills after making an inappropriate comment or when your behavior results in negative impact
- re-establish credibility with the person/group
- identify inappropriate behaviors and explore the negative impact
- interrupt unproductive, inappropriate behaviors and group dynamics
- take time to “gather oneself,” navigate personal emotions, gain perspective...
- build a “bridge” and a connection with the other person
- encourage identity development and growth
- demonstrate compassion and empathy
Prepare, Envision & Take Action

1. How will you maintain your level of passion, energy, motivation, and commitment to create change?

2. Who is in your community of support? How will you expand your community (within and across racial identities) to ensure you maintain the necessary support, personal development, and accountability to work in coalition to create meaningful, sustainable change?

What is possible? List a wide range of possible next steps:

Identify 3-5 actions you will take to:
   a. Create greater racial justice in your organization

   b. Develop a broader community of white allies & change agents

   c. Support the leadership and professional development of colleagues of color

Adapted from materials developed by Shannon M. Jolliff-Dettore - Director of LGBTQ Services
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How Much Do You Need Self-Care?
A Checklist for Change Agents

**Directions:** Use the following scale to rate each of the following statements.

1 = Rarely  2 = Sometimes  3 = Much of the time  4 = Most of the time  5 = Almost always

1. I feel tired and stressed out all the time.

2. I feel overwhelmed.

3. I drop what I am doing to handle the next crisis that occurs.

4. I keep pushing myself to tackle a seemingly never-ending to-do list.

5. I have little time to be creative or innovative.

6. I interrupt time spent with friends, family, and/or my partner to respond to work demands.

7. I work late several nights during the week to try to catch-up.

8. I work on the weekends and miss out on socializing with friends, family, and/or my partner.

9. I do not get to participate in important family events due to work.

10. I over-sleep and miss important events.

11. I am more forgetful and confused.

12. I make silly, avoidable mistakes.

13. I miss deadlines and/or drop the ball on important tasks.

14. I cut back on sleep to get more things done.

15. I wake up in the middle of the night and obsess about all I have to do.
16. I cancel and cut back on leisure and self-care activities to get things done.

17. I experience stress-related physical symptoms (headaches, twitches, body aches, etc.)

18. I get sick from over-working and not taking care of my health.

19. I am irritable, judgmental, and more easily triggered.

20. I over-react and can’t moderate my emotions.

21. I resent other people who seem to live more balanced lives.

22. I use alcohol and/or drugs to relieve my stress.

23. I over-eat and/or eat foods that are not healthy for me to relieve my stress.

24. I am unhappy with my weight and body size/shape.

25. I gain unwanted weight.

26. I binge watch (tv, movies, Netflix) to relieve my stress.

27. I zone out on social media to relieve my stress.

28. I over-do other activities to relieve stress, such as: shopping, gambling, sex, working out, etc.

29. I feel weary and less motivated to create change.

30. I feel hopeless and helpless.

31. I feel apathetic and cynical.

32. I feel less joy, enthusiasm, and happiness in my life.

33. I do the bare minimum to get by.

34. I feel like I am just going through the motions.

35. I am not interested in socializing with friends.
36. People in my life are complaining about how tired and unavailable I am.

37. People in my life are complaining about my life choices.

38. The quality of my relationships with intimate partners, friends, family members, and/or work colleagues is negatively impacted by my over-working and life imbalance.
How Have I Focused on Self-Care in My Life as a
Social Justice Change Agent?

**Directions:** Reflect on your own journey as a social justice change agent and ways you have centered or disregarded your own self-care in the process. The following prompts may be useful as you journal.

1. What were some of the early messages you learned about taking care of yourself? How did you learn these messages?

2. What were some of the early messages you learned about taking care of others? How did you learn these messages?

3. What were some of your early messages about the role of work and service in your life?

4. Who would encourage you to take care of yourself?

5. Who would criticize you if you took care of yourself?

6. What were some of the images and messages about how to be a social justice change agent and the role of self-care in social change work?

7. **When, if at all, do you remember feeling close to burnout?** Experiencing burnout? How did you make meaning of these times of burnout? What did you say to yourself when you were burned out?

8. What, if any, costs or difficulties did you experience when you were feeling more burned out?

9. What, if anything, has helped you recover from burnout?

10. In what ways do you intentionally construct your life to minimize the chance of experiencing deep burnout, if at all?
Identify How You Spend Your Time
Developed by Kathy Obear, The Center for Transformation & Change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORKDAY</th>
<th>DAY OFF</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Common workday</td>
<td>Common day off</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>activities:</td>
<td>activities:</td>
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How Satisfied Are You?

Rate each of the following using a 0-10 Scale:

0 = Not at all .................................................... 10 = Completely

___ 1. work life, career
___ 2. life vision and dreams
___ 3. physical health
___ 4. exercise, fitness
___ 5. emotional and mental health
___ 6. eating
___ 7. sleep
___ 8. time with family and friends
___ 9. love life
___ 10. play, fun, adventure
___ 11. meditation, religious/spiritual/ways of knowing practices
___ 12. activities that add joy and happiness to your life
___ 13. rest, relaxation, rejuvenation
___ 14. emotional care and release
___ 15. stress management
___ 16. activities that enrich your learning, creativity, intellectual growth
___ 17. ways to be of service, pay it forward
___ 18. financial health
My Declarations: Self-Care

Directions: Below, write some declarative statements about your beliefs and intentions as you choose to center self-care in your life:

1. I deserve to take care of myself, and I will.
2. I can only serve others if I continue to replenish my energy reserves.
3. I will put myself on top of my to-do list so I can be helpful to others.
4. There is always enough time to take care of me.
5. 
6. 
7. 
8. 
9. 
10. 
My Plan for Better Self-Care

a. How I will take better care of my health? (sleep, exercise, stress management, doctor appointments, religious/spiritual practice, etc.)

b. How I will eat (and drink) in ways that are better for me.

c. How I will create a better work/life balance?