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About the Toolkit

The toolkit was created to increase a shared understanding of racial equity and inclusion, to help us clearly define the terms we use in conversations. It is also important to be aware of how and why dimensions become racist and ways we can create change.

The racial equity toolkit is a resource list and reference tool that provides research, definitions, ideas, and guidance for employees that want to increase their own understanding of racial equity, systems, communities and culture at a large.

The Office of Equity & Inclusion

DSS is committed to ensuring dignified service delivery and fostering an inclusive environment for all clients and employees regardless of their race and/or ethnicity. This agency is invested in advancing racial equity and addressing racial disparities in all areas of our work.

The Office for Equity & Inclusion provides leadership and guidance to address systemic inequities for all employees. We want to strengthen relationships so that employees can work more effectively and collaboratively to advance equity, inclusion, and anti-racism. The Office of Equity & Inclusion is taking proactive steps to ensure the agency is:

- **Diverse**, representing individuals who vary in terms of race/nationality/ethnic origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, physical and mental ability, religious preference, veteran status, genetics, and citizenship.

- **Equitable**, in hiring, compensating, promoting, providing services and opportunities for, and otherwise treating similarly situated people represented in the various categories above.

- **Inclusive**, providing a sustained welcoming and protected environment for all people, regardless of their representation in protected classes.

Glossary and Terms

**BIPOC** is term referring to “Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.” While “POC” or People of Color is often used as well, BIPOC explicitly leads with Black and Indigenous identities, which helps to counter anti-Black racism and erasure of Native communities.

**Racial Equity** is a process of eliminating racial disparities and improving outcomes for everyone. It is the intentional and continual practice of changing policies, practices, systems, and structures by prioritizing measurable change in the lives of people of color.
**Choice Point** is a decision-making opportunity to consciously consider racial equity and influence outcomes. Example choice points may be decisions made within program development, event planning, budgeting, hiring, policy development, etc.

**Equality** is the condition under which every individual is treated in the same way, and is granted same rights and responsibilities, regardless of their individual differences.

**Equity** ensures that individuals are provided the resources they need to have access to the same opportunities, as the general population. Equity therefore represents impartiality, i.e. the distribution of resources is designed to even opportunities for all people. Equity’s conscious design contracts equality’s uniformity, where everything is evenly distributed among people.

**Ethnicity/Ethnic Group** are social constructs that divide people into smaller social groups based on characteristics such as shared sense of group membership, cultural heritage, values, behavioral patterns, language, political and economic interests, history and ancestral geographical base.

**Implicit Bias** are negative associations expressed automatically that people unknowingly hold, are known as unconscious or hidden bias. Many studies have indicated that implicit biases affect individuals’ attitudes and actions, thus creating real-world implications, even though individuals may not even be aware that those biases exist within themselves.

**Inclusion/Inclusiveness** - Authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policy making in a way that shares power.

**Intersectionality** - A lens for seeing the way in which various forms of inequality often operate together and exacerbate each other. We tend to talk about race inequality as separate from inequality based on gender, class, sexuality or immigrant status. What’s often missing is how some people are subject to all of these, and the experience is not just the sum of its parts.

**Power** - The ability of an individual, group, or institution to influence or exercise control over other people and achieve their goals despite possible opposition or resistance.

**Privilege** - Privilege refers to certain social advantages, benefits, or degrees of prestige and respect that an individual has by virtue of belonging to certain social identity groups. Within American and other Western societies, these privileged social identities—of people who have historically occupied positions of dominance over others—include whites, males, heterosexuals, Christians, and the wealthy, among others.
The Four Dimensions of Racism

Internalized: refers to biases and ideas about race induced by our human predisposition to form in-groups and out-groups and the impact of internalized racialized messages. When these processes are combined with our natural tendency to follow cognitive scripts, we begin to experience dissonance between our conscious values and unconscious biases.

Interpersonal: refers to internalized cultural messages that are shared through personal interactions. These messages may make offensive and racist behavior acceptable towards certain groups because one has witnessed these messages as normal. Since human beings do not live in isolation, these messages are sustained through shared practices that often include some individuals and groups and exclude others.

Institutional: refers to institutions and organizations adopting and/or maintaining policies and procedures that result in inequitable outcomes for people of color. Institutional racism may occur within schools, courts, the military, government agencies, businesses and any number of other organizations and societal structures. Some of these institutional practices lead to disparities in employment, education, incarceration, health and more.

Structural: refers to the way historical, social, psychological, cultural and political norms perpetuate advantages based on race. An example would be the way racial disparities in income, wealth and access to quality education originated from a combination of factors including our history of slavery, Jim Crow laws and educational or governmental policies that created access for some and barriers for others.

Systemic Problems Necessitate Systemic Solutions

As racism is systemic, the work of dismantling racism across all communities, must extend beyond reacting to instances of racism through thoughtful, vigilant, and sustained practices. Advancing antiracism across our community necessitates collective cultivation of an organizational culture that embraces continuing education and engagement to assess and address racial inequity present in behaviors, practices, policies, settings, and outcomes.

To be antiracist is to value the promise of racial equality in the charge for racial equity. It is to understand that ongoing, corrective action is needed to foster fair and desirable societal outcomes, specifically with communities that have been systemically underrepresented, underserved, undervalued, and oppressed. Fostering systemic antiracism to realize systemic racial equity requires the engagement of an expansive coalition of organizational and community partners in constructive, consistent, and communal dialogue and implementation. This effort is catalyzed and sustained by personal investments, at all levels, in the development of our racial equity consciousness— the dispositions, understanding, awareness, and skills that empower us to contemplate and cultivate racial equity.
Figure 1 - Racial equity consciousness consists of four interrelated components: racial equity dispositions, understanding of racial equity, racial equity awareness, and racial equity skills.

In other words, your racial equity consciousness reflects how much you value and are motivated towards racial equality, how well you understand the phenomenon of racial inequity, how aware or mindful you are as to whether others are experiencing fair and equitable treatment, and how capable you are to foster solutions that advance racial equity.

**Developing Racial Equity Consciousness**

No one is born racist or antiracist; these result from the choices we make. Being antiracist results from a conscious decision to make frequent, consistent, equitable choices daily. These choices require ongoing self-awareness and self-reflection as we move through life. In the absence of making antiracist choices, we (un)consciously uphold aspects of white supremacy, white-dominant culture, and unequal institutions and society. **Being racist or antiracist is not about who you are; it is about what you do.**

— National Museum of African American History & Culture —
Racial equity consciousness is not an ideal level of dispositions, understanding, awareness, or skills that we attain, after which we remain static. Rather, it is dynamic. In this sense, it is comparable to developing software coding skills. There is always something new to learn and practice.

Racial equity consciousness can be broken into six bilateral spheres of development that reflect the multi-faceted approach requisite in analyzing and engaging the complexity and pervasiveness of racism: (1) understanding racial oppression: advancing racial liberation, (2) examining racial identities: addressing racial biases, (3) embracing racial diversity: growing racial competence, (4) building racial empathy: enhancing racial stamina (5) acknowledging racial trauma: fostering racial healing, (6) gauging racial inequities: championing racial justice.

Source: Racial Equity Consciousness | Office for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion | University of Pittsburgh
Guiding Principles for Discussing Race in the Workplace

1. Stay engaged.
2. Everyone should speak their truth and respect that others are speaking their truths.
3. Expect and experience discomfort. These conversations are uncomfortable for most people.
4. Commit to ongoing dialogue. Accept and expect that a single conversation will not bring closure or resolution, and that ultimately, we may not reconcile our racial viewpoints.
5. Extend grace to yourself and others.
6. Sometimes we get it wrong. Apologize if you make a mistake. Be willing to accept feedback from those who may be harmed by your mistake.
7. Notice patterns of participation in yourself and others, and adjust accordingly (e.g.: those who speak a lot and those who do not).
8. Respect participants’ confidentiality.
10. Consider power dynamics (i.e., your place in the organizational hierarchy or your ability to influence decisions), which influence others’ willingness to be vulnerable, the impact of your words, and your perspective.
11. Consider your privilege (race, gender, sexual orientation, etc.) and the way your privilege may impact your viewpoint in a discussion on race equity.

For Managers

R – Reduce anxiety by talking about race anyway.

- Managers can help employees feel less anxious and more efficacious about engaging in conversations related to race, equity, and inclusion. One way to do this would be to discuss norms prior to engaging in difficult conversations about race. For instance, managers can invite employees to generate two or three norms they would like to observe in order to engage effectively in conversations about their racial differences.

A – Accept that anything related to race is either going to be visible or invisible.

- Managers can help employees find the space in between the extremes of invisibility and hypervisibility and normalize race as a dimension of diversity that is meaningful in the workplace. One way to do this would be for managers to share some of their positive and negative experiences around the visibility of their race at work. Then, managers can invite employees to do the same.
C – Call on internal and external allies for help.

- Managers can cultivate a network of relationships with a diverse set of internal (other managers) and external allies (professors, former colleagues, clients) who are invested in diversity, equity, and inclusion. Managers can share tips and resources with members of their network, which will enable them to have the latest insights on how to facilitate conversations about race in the workplace. Managers can also encourage employees to develop a diverse network of internal and external allies as well and lean on them for help when needed.

E – Expect that you will need to provide some “answers,” practical tools, skill-based frameworks, etc.

- It is normal for managers to question whether they are doing “the right thing” when it comes to addressing issues of race and racism in the workplace. Yet, to eradicate systemic racism, it is important for managers to empower employees and provide them with resources for having productive conversations about race. Grounding these conversations in evidence and good intentions is better than not talking about race at all.

How to Manage Your Team in Times of Political Trauma | by Michelle Kim | Awaken Blog | Medium

How the Best Bosses Interrupt Bias on Their Teams (hbr.org)

Source: How to Begin Talking About Race in the Workplace - Knowledge@Wharton (upenn.edu)

**Group Activity**

**FIRST IMPRESSIONS: RACE AND RACISM**

Reflecting on our early lessons of race is important, seeing our evolutions even more so.

**Goals & Learning Outcomes:**

- To discuss and explore how we were socialized to understand race and racial difference
- To explore our initial experience and exposure to difference in terms of racial groups
- To talk about how our own understanding of race has evolved over time
Discussion Questions

Allow the group about 8 minutes to think about the below questions.

- How and when did you come to learn that not all people were part of the same racial group? What was that learning experience like?
- What do you think most influenced your initial impressions or understanding of people from racial groups or people who identified with racial identities that were not your own (e.g., family, friends, television, books, news, place of worship)?
- When and how did you learn about the norms of your own racial group (or was that never a discussion)?
- Were you taught to ignore or to seek to understand other’s racial identities in your past (or present)?
- How has your understanding or comprehension of/around racism evolved over time?
- How has experiencing/witnessing instances of racism affected you throughout your life?

Reflection Discussion

Bring the group back together and use the questions below to facilitate the conversation.

- What was doing this activity like?
- What was it like to consider the questions about childhood/growing up? Was it hard to come up with examples?
- Was there anything that came up for you in reflecting on these ideas that you hadn’t really considered or thought of before or understood for yourself?
- What was challenging about this activity?
- What are ways you see incorporating this experience or these questions into your work or your personal life?
- In what ways can you recognize that racism and racist behavior is a product of our environment and socialization?

Wrap Up

This can be a challenging exercise to look back and reflect to see what we first learned about race and racism. For some of us it may bring up feelings of frustration or anger for others it may bring up emotions around sadness or guilt. All are important feelings to wrestle with and to share with each other. We all likely experience this activity differently depending on our upbringings, our experience talking about race or racism, and our own identities. It is important to hold that last
question about how our understanding have evolved and to continue to wonder how they may keep evolving forward in the future.

**Racial Microaggression Vocabulary**

**Microassaults:** Conscious and intentional actions or slurs, such as using racial epithets, displaying swastikas or deliberately serving a white person before a person of color in a restaurant.

**Microinsults:** Verbal and nonverbal communications that subtly convey rudeness and insensitivity and demean a person's racial heritage or identity. An example is an employee who asks a colleague of color how she got her job, implying she may have landed it through an affirmative action or quota system.

**Microinvalidations:** Communications that subtly exclude, negate or nullify the thoughts, feelings or experiential reality of a person of color. For instance, asking an Asian-American where they were born, conveying the message that they are perpetual foreigners in their own land.

**Addressing Microaggressions**

**Make the invisible, visible.** Oftentimes the perpetrator is unaware that they have engaged in demeaning or offensive comments, so you must make that visible to them.

**Disarm the microaggression** directly by steering the conversation away from a problematic remark or joke to communicate that it's offensive. You'd be modeling good behavior to other people present, and you can have a later conversation with the person about why his joke was inappropriate.


**Watch**

Digital Career Success Series: A Sense of Belonging
A Conversation with Latinos on Race
Let's get to the root of racial injustice | Megan Ming Francis | TEDxRainier - YouTube
How to Overcome Our Biases? Walk Boldly Toward Them
Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace
Want a More Just World? Be an Unlikely Ally
The Struggles of Being an Asian American
What It’s Like to be a Minority in the Workplace Today

11
Achieving Native American Visibility

**Reading**

How to Cope When Being A Minority at Work Contributes to Stress

Toward a Racially Just Workplace

For LGBTQ People of Color, Discrimination Compounds

Know My Name

What Listeners Told Us About the Importance of Getting Names Right

Overcoming Conversations Roadblocks

Race & Ethnicity in the Workplace

Mutual aid networks find roots in communities of color (apnews.com)

Take a Test (harvard.edu)-Implicit Bias Test

Racial Equity-National Association of Social Workers

How to Be Anti-Racist: A Social Worker’s Perspective

COVID-Interagency-Hate-Bias-One-Pager-FINAL-English.pdf (nyc.gov)

AAF Landing Page for Safety Resources (mailchi.mp)

Race, Ethnicity & Disability | National Disability Institute

**Wellbeing**

QTBIPOC Mental Health and Well-Being

BIPOC Meditation Collective

Conversations on Patriarchy for Women and Non-Binary Group

BIPOC Sitting Group

44 MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES FOR BLACK PEOPLE TRYING TO SURVIVE IN THIS COUNTRY

Lumos Transforms

BIPOC/AAPI Mental Health Resources
ORGANIZATIONS

Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC

Home - Stop AAPI Hate

Working Together to Strengthen America’s Immigrant Workforce: Partnerships Between Community Colleges and Immigrant-Serving Organizations - The Aspen Institute

Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center (las-americas.org)

Color Of Change – Color Of Change helps you do something real about injustice.

American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee

Dream Defenders

Center for Policing Equity

Books - Racism, Bias, and Intersectionality

- The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness by Michelle Alexander
- White Rage: The Unspoken Truth of Our Racial Divide by Carol Anderson
- The Person You Mean to Be: How Good People Fight Bias by Dolly Chugh
- Eloquent Rage: A Black Feminist Discovers Her Superpower by Brittney Cooper
- Biased: Uncovering the Hidden Prejudice That Shapes What We See, Think, and Do by Jennifer L. Eberhardt, Ph.D.
- The Memo: What Women of Color Need to Know to Secure a Seat at the Table by Minda Harts
- How to Be an Antiracist by Ibram X. Kendi
- Shifting: The Double Lives of Black Women in America by Charisse Jones and Kumea Shorter-Gooden
- So You Want to Talk About Race? by Ijeoma Oluo
- How Does it Feel to be a Problem? Being Young and Arab in America by Moustafa Bayoumi
- Discourse on Colonialism by Aime Cesaire
- An Indigenous Peoples’ History of the United States by Roxane Dunbar-Ortiz
- The Person You Mean To Be: How Good People Fight Bias by Dolly Chugh
- Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Man by Emmanuel Acho
- Beautiful Country: A Memoir by Quian Julie Wang
- Wretched of the Earth by Franz Fanon
- Women, Race, and Class by Angela Davis
- A People’s History of the United States by Howard Zinn
DCAS TRAININGS

Managers
Psychological Dimensions of Leading and Supervision
This course is intended for employees in leadership and supervisory roles – or for high potentials who already carry responsibility and seek to advance into such roles. Through experiential group learning and reflective exercises, participants acquire a deeper understanding of latent group dynamics that can inhibit, or support, group cohesion.

Storytelling for Leaders: Telling Stories for Results
In today’s multi-cultural world of rapid organizational change, leaders need to communicate to employees and stakeholders in a quick and compelling way. Storytelling is a persuasive and powerful communications tool for driving specific outcomes in the workplace.

Tackling Challenging Conversations
Collaboration, efficiencies, and performance rely on strong relationships and effective communication. Yet, when facing challenging conversations, people regularly struggle with broaching the topics.

Team Building Through Work and Social Styles
Quite often, leaders lack an understanding of their work and social style and are equally unfamiliar with their team member’s styles. Their teams frequently function in poor working environments where unique working styles are neither appreciated nor leveraged, and both productivity and interpersonal relationships are affected. This has an adverse impact on individual and agency performance.

Equity & Inclusion Trainings (DCAS)

- Building an Inclusive Culture: Understanding Unconscious Bias
- Can We Talk? The Power of Words
- Disability Etiquette: Inclusive Workplace Strategies for People with Disabilities (Webinar)
- Everybody Matters (Webinar)
- lgbTq: The Power of Inclusion
- Managing the Multi-Generational Workforce: Leveraging the Talents of 5 Generations
- Structured Interviewing and Unconscious Bias
- Structured Interviewing: Utilizing Follow-Up and Probing Questions

DSS-HRA-DHS Internal Trainings

- Anti-bias Trauma Informed (ABTI) Dignity Centered Service training