From White Racist to White Anti-Racist

the life-long journey

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Note 1: This article is written by a white person about white people. Therefore, I have written using personal pronouns (I, we, ours, us). I did this because I find it difficult to write in the 'third person' as if I am not somehow attached to this material or part of the group to which this material applies.

Note 2: I dedicate this article to my long-time colleague Kenneth Jones, who is responsible for much of what I understand about life and kept me laughing about all that I don't. I love you and miss you beyond words.

This article is meant to accompany the ladder of empowerment for white people, which is our attempt (referring to **dRworks**, an organization which is described below) to distinguish the different stages that white people go through as we develop awareness of our relationship to racism. This work draws on the thinking and experience of many people; those who have been directly quoted are listed at the end. The rest is the result of my exposure to the thinking and experience of many trainers and participants in the Dismantling Racism process, including **dRworks** colleagues, as well as friends and colleagues doing anti-racism work. Any usefulness found here should be credited to the larger community of anti-racism activists; any errors or flawed thinking is mine alone.

The basic purpose of this article is to help white people understand our identity as white people within a racist system which assumes our superiority while at the same time challenging that assumption and replacing it with a positive, anti-racist identity. While many white people seem to think that the solution is to claim 'colorblindness,' both with regards to ourselves and to people of color, we believe that it is absolutely critical to accept our identity as white people within a white group, understanding that this association profoundly affects the quality of our lives politically, economically, socially. We must then work, in the words of Beverly Daniel Tatum in her excellent book on racial identity development **Why Are All the Black Kids Sitting in the Cafeteria Together** (p. 94), "to feel good about it in the context of a commitment to a just society. This requires two tasks: the abandonment of individual racism and the recognition of and opposition to institutional and cultural racism."

THE LADDER

Community of Love and Resistance

Collective Action

Taking Responsibility / Self-Righteousness
white can do right / especially me

Open Up / Acknowledgement
Houston, we've got a problem

Guilt and Shame
white is not right / I'm bad

Denial and Defensiveness
I am not the problem

Be Like Me
we're all the same, you're the problem

What Are You?
first contact

I'm Normal

It is important to note that although the ladder of empowerment appears linear, it is only linear in that a person cannot move from a lower stage to a higher stage without going through each intermediary stage. For example, I cannot go from the perception and experience that "I'm normal" to the perception and experience that "I'm opening up" without first going through the stages of 'what are you?,' 'be like me,' 'denial and defensiveness,' and 'guilt and shame.'

It is not linear in that we can move through to 'higher' stages and then five minutes later drop back to a 'lower' stage as a result of a challenging interaction. Unlike moving up, it is possible to skip stages moving down. For example, I can feel like I am 'taking responsibility' as a white person for my racism and then, when challenged by a colleague on something I have done that is assumptive and/or patronizing, quickly slide back into 'denial and defensiveness.' We move up and down this ladder in a lifetime, in a year, in a week, in a day, in an hour. The lower we are on the ladder, the more we collude, or cooperate, with racism. In fact, one of the ways that institutional and cultural racism works is to keep pushing us down the ladder. Our goal, as we develop our practice as anti-racist white activists, is that we stay for shorter periods at the lower stages and for longer periods at the higher stages.

This is also not a linear ladder in that the stages don't begin and end distinctly. They overlap and elements of one stage will show up in another. You will notice seemingly contradictory elements in the same stage and similar elements showing up in different stages. This is the nature of identity development. The ladder is a generalized attempt to describe the different steps that we go through as white people in developing our awareness and abilities as anti-racist activists. Where we are on the ladder depends at any given moment on our history, our experience, our relationships, our experience with other oppressions, and our exposure to information.

Movement up the ladder tends to happen as a result of both relationships and information. We have found that relationships with people of color and other white people struggling to deal with racism have been very important in helping us to move up the ladder. Actually knowing someone who can help us, through their life stories and experience, see the world in a new way and understand the different realities of being white and a person of color in the U.S., has proven to be extremely critical to our development as white anti-racists. These relationships teach us that racism is not a thing of the past and that it has to do with institutional and cultural legacies, not just mean-spirited personal intentions. Sometimes exposure to overt (meaning hard to dismiss) incidents of

racism, either in our personal lives or through media, books, magazine articles, TV, movies, are catalysts to moving us from one stage to another. One of the reasons that we promote the development of white caucuses at **dRworks** is because caucuses can be a place where we can get the support and help we need to broaden our awareness and move up the ladder.

There are many ways to use the ladder. When we work with white caucuses, we often draw the ladder on newsprint without any words inside and ask people to talk about the different stages they have gone through as they develop in their awareness of white privilege and racism. As people name these stages, sometimes they hit on the stages we have listed here, sometimes they name emotions and thoughts that fit within the stages. We begin to sketch in each of the stages and talk about them in some depth.

Once people have an understanding of the stages and the ways in which these stages are and are not linear, we ask people to think about where they are now, where they were 10 years ago, where they were 5 years ago, and where they would like to be. We talk about what made it possible for people to move both up and down the ladder and what we can do to support each other in moving up and how we can challenge each other, with care and attention, when we move down.

This is just one way that this ladder might prove useful. Please feel free to expand its uses and to add to it, as it is an ongoing teaching and learning for us all. If you have ideas or feedback, please send it to us at the website (see last page).

The ladder begins where we all begin, which is with the belief that, in relationship to race, we're normal.

I'M NORMAL

also known as the innocence/ignorance stage

In this stage, we

- do not see ourselves as white
- assume racial differences are unimportant
- are naive about the connection of power to race and racism or oppression (we do not have a power analysis)
- do not have much experience with people of color
- believe people of color want to assimilate

- see all issues of race as individual

In this stage, we think of ourselves as the racial norm. In fact, we don't really see ourselves as white because we are the norm and therefore don't need to be racially described. We have little or no consciousness about our white privilege or other advantages we receive as a result of simply being white. We passively absorb subtle messages -- from the media, from books, from movies, from political and religious leaders, from many adults -- that "white people are generally good and they're like us, and we're like them." Beverly Daniel Tatum notes that, because white people "represent the societal norm, they can easily reach adulthood without thinking much about their racial group" (1997, p. 93). She also notes that white people and communities don't talk about race (we remain silent) and "as a consequence, whites tend to think of racial identity as something that other people have, not something that is salient for them" (p. 94).

As a result, we assume or internalize the notion that we are normal and it is people of other races who are 'the other.' This leads to a sometimes subtle (not always) internalized belief that we are better (superior) and they are inferior. These assumptions and internalized messages begin to shape our perceptions and define our reality without us even realizing it.

We tend to move out of this stage when we are exposed to information or experiences which lead us to see that difference and unfairness exists.

WHAT ARE YOU?

also known as first contact

In this stage, we:

- have our first contacts with people of color
- notice they are not like us (happens as early as the age of 3)
- work to make sense of the difference, particularly if we associate the difference with additional information about unfairness or discrimination
- begin to notice our own prejudices, or those of our family
- continue to see issues of race as individual and still have not developed a power analysis

Beverly Daniel Tatum calls this stage 'disintegration,' describing it as the point at which we have our first meaningful contact with a person of color and where we may be forced to notice firsthand that racism, or unfairness is at work. She writes "this new awareness is characterized by discomfort. The uncomfortable emotions of guilt, shame, and anger are often related to a new

awareness of one's personal prejudices or the prejudices within one's family" (p. 97).

Discomfort and guilt can be particularly strong for those of us whose family members are visibly bigoted or racist and may be less for those of us whose family members are more open or anti-racist. We still tend to assume that racial and cultural differences are unimportant. We have not developed an understanding of the ways in which racial differences are tied to power differences. We do not find or put ourselves in many situations with people of color, and when we are or do, our interactions are often characterized by naiveté, innocence, ignorance, or timidity.

We tend to move out of this stage when we take in information about racism and discrimination experienced by people of color, either through relationships with people of color, with anti-racist white people, or through exposure to new information (books, movies, news). In our attempts to understand (and sometimes control) the dissonance we feel when we notice racism and discrimination, we tend to move to the next stage, adopting either the position that *we're all the same* (so we can feel ok about the difference and unfairness) or the position that *you're the problem* (so we can blame someone for it). Our own sense or experience of difference (because of gender, sexuality, class, disability, etc.) can either help us move into a new stage or work to keep us in this one, depending on how we relate to our own difference.

BE LIKE ME

also known as we're all the same, you're the problem

In this stage, we

- want to be seen as an individual
- begin to sense white privilege with little or no awareness yet of power
- believe we can 'flatten out' differences
- believe in importance of 'fairness'
- feel apologetic, guilty, or fearful towards people of color
- see racism as a problem between individuals
- either over-identify with people of color or think people of color should 'just get over it'
- can see the differences as 'exotic' or 'erotic'
- don't see ourselves as part of the problem

One of our reactions to noticing racial difference is to believe the difference is OK as long as we assume that 'you,' 'the other,' are essentially like me or want to

be like me. Racial differences at this point feel threatening (I need you to be like me and to the extent you aren't, there is something wrong with you), invisible (I don't see any difference, we're the same), or exotic (your difference is fascinating to me as it would be to a 'tourist;' there is nothing significant about it other than as a source of fascination). In this stage, we sometimes assume the role of 'tour guide' to the dominant culture, trying to help people better assimilate because we assume this is what they want. We are not aware of this assumption (or others like it) because we also assume that our world view is the universal world view (everyone thinks like we do).

In this stage, we want to be seen as an individual and often become angry when we are 'lumped in' with the white group. As Beverly Daniel Tatum notes, "when white men and women begin to understand that they are viewed as members of a dominant racial group not only by other whites but also by people of color, they are sometimes troubled, even angered, to learn that simply because of their group status they are viewed with suspicion by many people of color. 'I'm an individual, view me as an individual!'" (p. 104) We carry a certain blindness, wanting to be seen as separate from our group while failing to acknowledge that people of color learn very early that they are seen by others as members of a group, and often only as members of that group.

Our strong feelings about this are supported by the dominant culture, which teaches us to value rugged individuality and to believe in meritocracy (the idea that our hard work is why we succeed and our success has nothing to do with membership in the white group). When we begin to hear about systemic racist barriers to achievement and success, we hear that as meaning we don't deserve and didn't earn what we have, making it even more difficult for us to identify as part of the white group, since doing so erases our precious individuality (Tatum, p. 103).

At the same, we begin to have an understanding that racism exists and so may feel apologetic towards people of color. We may see ourselves as less prejudiced than most other white people, which presents an interesting contradiction. We want to be seen as different from (and better than) the very white group which we don't acknowledge. We tend to take accusations of racism very personally because we believe that racist thoughts or behaviors require intent.

Paul Kivel, in his excellent book **Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Social Justice**, notes (p. 61) talks about how another racist response to difference is the eroticization of people of color. "White people's images of people of color . . . make them seem not only dangerous, but also exotic and erotic. Men of color . . . have been portrayed as wild, bestial, aggressive sexual

beings with little or no restraint . . . . Women of color are portrayed as more passionate and sensual than white women." This eroticization of difference produces naïve and devastating responses. For some, it appears as inappropriate curiosity about hair and skin color; for others it shows up as extreme fear and anger which in turn leads to the use of force, which has historically included and continues to include lynching, rape, mutilation, and killing.

One of our most common responses when first noticing race is fear. We are taught at an early age to fear difference, and because we are the norm, white, we are systematically taught to fear people of color, who are different. The irony is that this occurs where the psychological and physical harm done to people of color by white people is historically overwhelming, while the fear that white people feel toward people of color, who have been and continue to be portrayed as dangerous and untrustworthy, is largely "manufactured and used to justify repression and exploitation of communities of color" (Kivel, p. 53).

This manufactured fear plays an important role in keeping us in this stage. Fear supports our ability to dehumanize people of color, the 'other.' In this way, fear prevents us from forming the relationships that break through this dehumanization and encourages us to remain stuck in our stereotypes.

This is probably one of the most challenging stages from which to move, because the next stage is denial and defensiveness, which is a direct result of beginning to understand the pervasiveness of racism. Our first reaction to this understanding is to resist or deny it, staying in 'be like me' because of the psychic safety it provides.

One of the ways that we stay in the 'be like me' stage is to blame people of color for racism. We wonder why they 'have to make such a big deal about it' and become upset when racism is named (as opposed to becoming upset about the racism).

We would suggest that U.S. dominant culture is stuck in this stage precisely because our institutions and organizations want to avoid responsibility, guilt, and shame about the past. As a result, the dominant culture suggests that racism is a thing of the past, that any remaining racism is the result of the personal racism of a few ignorant people, and that the playing field is now level.

DENIAL and DEFENSIVENESS

also known as 'I am not the problem'

In this stage, we:

- are forced to see ourselves as part of the dominant group
- blame people of color for creating their problems
- deny any privilege or power we have as members of the white group
- believe people of color aren't trying hard enough
- look for evidence of reverse discrimination
- insist the playing field is level
- believe in the power of individual above all

At some point, we are forced to acknowledge the significance of racial difference, usually through the depth of an emerging relationship or by witnessing undeniable racism. At this point, Beverly Daniel Tatum notes that we either "deny the validity of the information being presented or psychologically or physically withdraw from it" (p. 98). The logic is that if I don't talk about it or spend time with people who make me think about it, I won't have to be uncomfortable. This is when we say (or think) things like "why do you have to make such a big deal about race all the time?" We may believe that too much attention is placed on cultural differences or that people of color are 'overly sensitive.' We deny that racism is the problem and believe that talking about racism is the problem.

When we do admit that racism is happening, we see it as isolated incidents rather than a daily, constant grind.

Interestingly, denial and defensiveness are often connected to fear of loss. Those of us who have developed friendships with people of color may fear losing them in the (sometimes mistaken) assumption that acknowledging our difference or our own racism will end the relationship. This is particularly acute when the person of color with whom we are friends is in a stage of denial also. We fear the loss of our ability to define (or control) our own reality (and everybody else's; this is where we begin to sense that the way we view the world is narrow and limited and may not apply to everyone).

Some of us stay in this stage because of our fear of losing family and friends, who threaten to 'leave us' if we insist on acknowledging and taking responsibility for racism, or who characterize our behavior as a 'phase' that we're going through and one we'll get over once we come to our senses.

One potent form of denial and defensiveness is intellectualizing, where we say all the right things and use our intellectual understanding of racism to distance ourselves from taking a look at how we benefit from and perpetuate racism. We may believe that any advantages we have as white people are because people of color aren't trying hard enough. It is in this stage that we experience white people as victims of reverse discrimination, insisting the

playing field is level or that people of color get unfair advantages because of affirmative action and 'quotas.' We experience the taking away of an unfair privilege (historic admission to school where admission was denied to African-American and Native students) as though we are being treated unfairly, no matter how clear it is that we have been given unfair advantages (a history of admissions because of race, family ties, ability to pay based on historical legacy of wealth, etc.). [Thanks to columnist Molly Ivins for making this point.]

A specific form of denial is the "I marched with Dr. King" defense, where we bring up past participation in civil rights marches or all that we've done to help the cause to make the point that we are not racist, do not participate in racism, and are 'good.' Joan Olsson in her extremely useful **Detour Spotting for White Anti-Racists**, notes that "this denial of contemporary racism, based on inaccurate assessment of both history and current society, romanticizes the past and diminishes today's reality" (p. 11). One of the reasons we use this form of denial is because it allows us to separate ourselves from other white people and because we assume that admitting our own continued racism means admitting that we are essentially 'bad.'

We may get angry when people of color meet together to address their problems because we feel excluded (why can't I be there with them?). We are generally unwilling to look at what it means to be white without being in a mixed group where people of color can 'help' us understand (what we are often looking for is reassurance that we are 'ok'). We may feel threatened because people of color are making decisions which we can't see (or control).

We return to this stage again and again whenever anything happens to make us feel vulnerable and/or attacked for being white. This happens, for example when we meet a person of color in a stage of rage or exclusion/immersion who doesn't want to deal with us simply because we are white.

This is another hard stage to leave because we fear admitting what we might have to do if we acknowledge the reality of difference and racism. We also fear the feelings of guilt and shame that automatically come with acknowledging racism, privilege, and internalized white supremacy.

GUILT, SHAME, and BLAME

also known as: white is not right, I'm bad

In this stage, we:

- really feel and think that racism is a very big problem and that we are part of that problem
- understand at some level that we are racist
- feel guilt and shame, often deeply
- blame people of color for racism as a way of avoiding our guilt and shame
- either feel extremely responsible for racism (sometimes taking it on as our primary issue) or deny any responsibility at all for racism (I am not racist)

In this stage, we begin to understand the pervasiveness of racism and that we have a part in it; guilt and shame are an inevitable result of this realization. As our understanding grows and we begin to 'see' white privilege and the ways in which we internalize white privilege, the feelings of guilt and shame become stronger.

> Most of the time we don't notice or question our whiteness. However, when the subject is racism many of us don't want to be white, because it opens us to charges of being racist and brings up feelings of guilt, shame, embarrassment. and hopelessness.
>
> Paul Kivel

One of the main reasons we stay in 'be like me' and/or 'denial and defensiveness' is to avoid coming to this stage and having these feelings.

Actually, this is not a stage where we want to stay very long. Guilt and shame eventually turn to resentment against the very things that are causing these feelings ("I don't want to feel guilty and ashamed any more, so I won't"). This resentment often leads us back into denial, defensiveness, and an inability to be open to what is really happening. [Thanks to Leonard Pitts, a columnist for the Miami Herald, for making this connection.] We suggest that most of white America responds with resentment when we are asked to take responsibility for our role in racism; the reason for this is because we have no models for how to handle the feelings of guilt and shame which we know are inevitably attached to taking responsibility for racism.

It is also possible for feelings of guilt and shame to turn into fear and anger directed toward people of color. Beverly Daniel Tatum explains the logic this way: "if there is a problem with racism, then you people of color must have done something to cause it. And if you would just change your behavior, the problem would go away" (p. 101). We turn to this argument because it relieves us of all responsibility for individual or social change. This is also the stage where we say things like "don't blame me" because "I never owned slaves," "I didn't vote for David Duke," or "my family didn't join the Klan." Joan Olsson explains that we respond this way because we tend to hear blame "whenever the issue of racism is brought up, whether or not blame has been placed on us. As beneficiaries of

racism and white privilege, we sometimes strike a defensive posture even when we are not being individually blamed. We may personalize the remarks, put ourselves in the center, [not realizing that] most references to racism are not directed personally at us. It is the arrogance of [our] privilege that drags the focus back to us" (p. 10).

This can also be a stage of profound personal transformation. This is the point at which many white people begin to understand that we must take responsibility for racism, even if we weren't personally involved in its historical foundations. We begin to understand that we are participants in racist institutions and a racist culture, that we do benefit from racism, and that we participate in perpetuating racism, even when that is not our intention.

This can be an opportune time for white caucuses and support from other white people, because these provide "space to speak with honesty and candor rarely possible in mixed-race groups" (Tatum, 1997, p. 111). It is at this stage, if we are to move through it, that we learn to sit with our discomfort and our feelings (without immediately taking action and/or denying them), with the understanding that the ability to sit with ourselves, with a sense of both mercy and love, is key to our development as an anti-racist.

OPENING UP/ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

also known as "Houston, we've got a problem"

In this stage, we:

- see racism as illogical
- relate to people of color who are like us
- are often frustrated by separation (by caucusing, for example)
- feel apologetic for our privileges
- have a general understanding that racism is a problem without a strong analysis of the ways in which it is personal, institutional, and cultural
- see racism as a result of flaws in the system (as opposed to understanding that the system is founded on racism)
- can over-identify with people of color
- are enthusiastic about 'celebrating' diversity, without understanding the power dynamics of racism

In this stage, those of us who believe in the power of logic see racism as illogical. We also talk about it in terms of lack of fairness. We begin to admit that racism and white privilege are serious problems. We begin to see ourselves as

members of the dominant group and to understand that there are political and social benefits attached to this group. We tend to see power differences as personal (the result of personal circumstances) and we believe in the importance of reducing all kinds of prejudice.

At this stage, we may begin to feel productive anger, or anger at the reality of racism and what it has done to us as white people in terms of separating us from people of color and deeply damaging our world view.

One of the ways in which we move from guilt and shame to this stage is to distance ourselves from white people and over-identify with people of color. Beverly Daniel Tatum quotes one of the white students from her class: "I wanted to pretend I was Black, live with them, celebrate their culture, deny my whiteness completely. Basically I wanted to escape the responsibility that came with identifying myself as white" (p. 106).
This is the stage where cultural appropriation takes place, where we take pieces of the cultures of people of color (their hair styles, their dress, their religious or spiritual rituals) without having relationships with communities of color or an understanding of the history or meaning of the relationship of these pieces to the larger culture.

We have a deeper awareness of other races as significantly different, but we may not yet have the information or awareness to understand the ways in which power differences play a role. We may be unsettled by separatism and feel we cannot learn and grow when people are separated.

Although at this stage we have come to "understand the everyday reality of racism, whiteness is still experienced as a source of shame rather than as a source of pride" (Tatum, p. 107). It's at this stage that we also tend to seek a "certificate of innocence" (Olsson, p. 18) where "we seek or expect from people of color some public or private recognition and appreciation for our anti-racism. Other times we are looking for a 'certificate of innocence' telling us we are one of the good white people." This can take us back to denial and defensiveness when a person of color is displeased with us and we take the attitude "well, if the very people I'm doing all this for don't want my help, why bother?" (Olsson, p. 18).

This is a delicate stage because we have yet to identify our own self-interest in doing anti-racism work and can easily be derailed.

We can move to the next stage through pro-active efforts to build relationships with anti-racist whites and people of color, through study and analysis of racism and its relationship to cultural and institutional power, a growing willingness to be uncomfortable so that we put ourselves in places

(emotional, intellectual, and physical) we have not been before, and through continued work on issues of racism in our lives.

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY/SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS

also known as white can do right, especially me

At this stage, we:

- see ourselves as part of the white group
- understand and begin to take responsibility for our power and privilege as part of the white group
- are comfortable with separation
- continue to have feelings of guilt, anger, frustration, but also of joy because of deepening relationships and increased multicultural experience
- distinguish between commitment and perfection
- see challenges as teachers
- participate in individual and collective action
- value self-reflection
- use our racist thoughts and behaviors to deepen understanding and change thoughts and behaviors
- think of ourselves as separate from and 'better' than most other white people
- feel our commitment to anti-racist work very deeply, leading to self-righteousness

In this stage, we begin to think about what we are going to do about racism and white privilege. We engage in the six 'Rs': reading, reflection, remembering (our own involvement in racist thoughts, beliefs, actions), risk-taking, rejection (a willingness to take risks and be rejected without turning away from a commitment to fight racism), and relationship-building. As a result, we begin to develop a power analysis, to see racism as not just individual, but as cultural and institutional.

Even though our analysis of racism is expanding, much of the work at this stage is happening on a personal level. We are deepening our understanding of our own world view and how it does not represent a universal experience. We begin to accept, respect, and appreciate white people (particularly those who are anti-racist activists) and people of color. We begin to take responsibility for our privilege and power and recognize our self-interest in dismantling racism.

At this stage, we are comfortable with the need for separation and begin to look for support from other white people. Feelings of guilt, anger, frustration, and anxiety (fear of unknown) continue to appear but can be liberating as well as painful. We begin to understand that there is no way to do anti-racist work without making mistakes, although this understanding is still 'young' and our self-judgment and judgment of others is still very high.

We are more open to seeing challenges by people of color and other white people as 'teaching moments' and opportunities instead of simply threatening. We are more able to accept the rage expressed by people of color (or white people) without taking it personally, understanding that rage is often an appropriate response to racist oppression. We seek opportunities to be involved in cross-cultural interactions. We begin to be knowledgeable about cultural differences and to understand the limits of our knowledge.

At this stage, we are also in great danger of falling victim to false pride and self-righteousness. We find ourselves talking about white people as 'they' (because we are so judgmental of the white group and most people in it and see ourselves as separate from and 'better' than the group). We say things like "what is wrong with those white people?" or "they just don't get it," or "you're wasting time with us, we're not the people who need this training." This is another form of denial called distancing, where "we put other white people down . . . and righteously consider ourselves white people who have evolved beyond our racist conditioning" (Olsson, p. 16).

We begin to move out of this stage when we become interested in working with other white people and people of color on issues of racism. We begin to take leadership and risks as we work with others to achieve a collectively defined vision of an anti-racist organization/community.

COLLECTIVE ACTION

In this stage, we

- participate in individual and collective action to address racism on the personal, institutional, and cultural levels
- work to make strategic changes in organizations/communities consistent with anti-racist analysis and vision
- are thoughtful about building alliances with people of color and white anti-racist activists
- seek structural change to address institutional racism
- work collectively with other white anti-racist allies and people of color

- claim our identity as a white person in a racist society
- admit that this work requires learning from mistakes and are more forgiving of our mistakes and those of others

In this stage, we begin to understand, as Beverly Daniel Tatum says, that "there is a history of white protest against racism, a history of whites who have resisted the role of oppressor and who have been allies to people of color" (p. 108). Tatum also quotes Clayton Alderfer, who says that at this stage "we have a more complete awareness of ourselves and of others to the degree that we neither negate the uniqueness of each person, regardless of that person's group memberships, nor deny the ever-present effects of group memberships for each individual" (p. 112).

It's at this stage that we also begin to realize that we can't understand what is really happening on our own. This is not necessarily an easy transition and requires a lot of deconditioning of the ways U.S. culture has taught us that our strength is in our individuality and ability to 'do it ourselves.' We reach out to be in relationships with other white anti-racist allies and people of color in order to develop a solid analysis of what is happening that includes the voices and experiences of a broader range of people.

We work to make strategic changes in our organizations/communities consistent with an anti-racist vision and analysis that is collectively built. We are thoughtful about building meaningful alliances with other white anti-racist allies and people of color. We tend to avoid working out of a sense of urgency in those situations where urgency reinforces our white privilege and power. We work with our allies to seek structural changes which address institutional racism. We work with our allies to define and live values which address cultural racism.

We understand the belief that all white people are racist does not mean that we have an obligation to walk up to all white people and share this insight with them; we try to be strategic about working to build white anti-racist allies. We no longer work to separate ourselves from other white people; instead we tend to understand that we are simply extensions of each other and see the beliefs, fears, and racism of other white people as reflections of our own. We claim our identity as a white person in a racist society and understand the importance of seeing ourselves as part of the white group, both in terms of the power and benefits we receive and in terms of the potential power to organize other white people to address racism. We begin to feel and see the importance of taking responsibility for working with other white people on racism and internalized white supremacy.

We don't expect perfection of others, or demand it. It's in our imperfections that we bear our common humanity.

Leonard Peltier

We're also more aware than ever of the complexities of doing anti-racist work. We understand that there is not 'one right way' to do this work. As a result, we are less judgmental and more forgiving of mistakes, our own and those of others. We continue to hold ourselves and others accountable, yet we are able to do so with less self-righteousness and more compassion.

COMMUNITY OF LOVE and RESISTANCE

Beverly Daniel Tatum notes that "those who persist in the struggle are awarded with an increasingly multiracial and multicultural existence" (p. 109). In this stage, which we are all still seeking to achieve, we are living and working in strong anti-racist organizations and communities, with all the complexities and challenges such a vision brings.

In this stage, we are consistently organizing and building a community that has the power to heal the remnants of racism, internalized racist oppression, and internalized white supremacy. We are constructing organizations and communities that can help us think critically and develop an analysis and understanding of the community, country, and world. We are constructing organizations and communities with cultures which balance the needs of the individual with those of the community and which sustain life.

The thinking behind the development of a ladder to becoming a white anti-racist ally has been developed over several years with the contributions of many people, including Andrea Ayvazian (in her contributions to the PDF Dismantling Racism curriculum), Janet Helms (in "An update of Helms's White and people of color racial identity models" in **Handbook of multicultural counseling**, Sage, 1995), **dRworks** trainers (in their contributions to the **dRworks** Dismantling Racism curriculum – this includes Bree Carlson, Meredith Dean, M.E. Dueker, Alice Johnson, Michelle Johnson, Kenneth Jones, Jonn Lunsford, Suzanne Plihcik), Paul Kivel (in **Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice**, 1995), Joan Olsson (in **Detour spotting for white anti-racists**, Cultural Bridges, PA, 1997), Beverly Daniel Tatum (in **Why are all the black kids sitting together in the cafeteria?**, HarperCollins, 1997), as well as the hundreds of participants in the caucuses of the Dismantling Racism workshops. The thinking behind the ladder is in constant development and will continue to improve in the coming years as we expose more people to it and continue to receive their ideas and input.

dRworks is a group of trainers, educators and organizers helping to build and connect thoughtful, creative, and sustainable grassroots organizations and communities grounded in an understanding of history, culture and a power analysis. **dRworks** can be reached at www,dismantlingracism.org .

white supremacy culture

by Tema Okun, **dR***works*

© I dedicate this piece to my long-time colleague Kenneth Jones, who helped me become wise about many things and kept me honest about everything else. I love you and miss you beyond words.
© This piece on white supremacy culture builds on the work of many people, including (but not limited to) Andrea Ayvazian, Bree Carlson, Beverly Daniel Tatum, M.E. Dueker, Nancy Emond, Kenneth Jones, Jonn Lunsford, Sharon Martinas, Joan Olsson, David Rogers, James Williams, Sally Yee, as well as the work of Grassroots Leadership, Equity Institute Inc, the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, the Challenging White Supremacy workshop, the Lillie Allen Institute, the Western States Center, and the contributions of hundreds of participants in the DR process.

* These sections are based on the work of Daniel Buford with the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond, who has done extensive research on white supremacy culture.

This is a list of characteristics of white supremacy culture that show up in our organizations. Culture is powerful precisely because it is so present and at the same time so very difficult to name or identify. The characteristics listed below are damaging because they are used as norms and standards without being pro-actively named or chosen by the group. They are damaging because they promote white supremacy thinking. Because we all live in a white supremacy culture, these characteristics show up in the attitudes and behaviors of all of us – people of color and white people. Therefore, these attitudes and behaviors can show up in any group or organization, whether it is white-led or predominantly white or people of color-led or predominantly people of color.

perfectionism*

- little appreciation expressed among people for the work that others are doing; appreciation that is expressed usually directed to those who get most of the credit anyway
- more common is to point out either how the person or work is inadequate
- or even more common, to talk to others about the inadequacies of a person or their work without ever talking directly to them
- mistakes are seen as personal, i.e. they reflect badly on the person making them as opposed to being seen for what they are – mistakes
- making a mistake is confused with being a mistake, doing wrong with being wrong
- little time, energy, or money put into reflection or identifying lessons learned that can improve practice, in other words little or no learning from mistakes
- tendency to identify what's wrong; little ability to identify, name, and appreciate what's right

- often internally felt, in other words the perfectionist fails to appreciate her own good work, more often pointing out his faults or 'failures,' focusing on inadequacies and mistakes rather than learning from them; the person works with a harsh and constant inner critic

antidotes: develop a culture of appreciation, where the organization takes time to make sure that people's work and efforts are appreciated; develop a learning organization, where it is expected that everyone will make mistakes and those mistakes offer opportunities for learning; create an environment where people can recognize that mistakes sometimes lead to positive results; separate the person from the mistake; when offering feedback, always speak to the things that went well before offering criticism; ask people to offer specific suggestions for how to do things differently when offering criticism; realize that being your own worst critic does not actually improve the work, often contributes to low morale among the group, and does not help you or the group to realize the benefit of learning from mistakes

sense of urgency

- continued sense of urgency that makes it difficult to take time to be inclusive, encourage democratic and/or thoughtful decision-making, to think long-term, to consider consequences
- frequently results in sacrificing potential allies for quick or highly visible results, for example sacrificing interests of communities of color in order to win victories for white people (seen as default or norm community)
- reinforced by funding proposals which promise too much work for too little money and by funders who expect too much for too little

antidotes: realistic workplans; leadership which understands that things take longer than anyone expects; discuss and plan for what it means to set goals of inclusivity and diversity, particularly in terms of time; learn from past experience how long things take; write realistic funding proposals with realistic time frames; be clear about how you will make good decisions in an atmosphere of urgency; realize that rushing decisions takes more time in the long run because inevitably people who didn't get a chance to voice their thoughts and feelings will at best resent and at worst undermine the decision because they were left unheard

defensiveness

- the organizational structure is set up and much energy spent trying to prevent abuse and protect power as it exists rather than to facilitate the best out of each person or to clarify who has power and how they are expected to use it
- because of either/or thinking (see below), criticism of those with power is viewed as threatening and inappropriate (or rude)

- people respond to new or challenging ideas with defensiveness, making it very difficult to raise these ideas
- a lot of energy in the organization is spent trying to make sure that people's feelings aren't getting hurt or working around defensive people
- white people spend energy defending against charges of racism instead of examining how racism might actually be happening
- the defensiveness of people in power creates an oppressive culture

antidotes: understand that structure cannot in and of itself facilitate or prevent abuse; understand the link between defensiveness and fear (of losing power, losing face, losing comfort, losing privilege); work on your own defensiveness; name defensiveness as a problem when it is one; give people credit for being able to handle more than you think; discuss the ways in which defensiveness or resistance to new ideas gets in the way of the mission

quantity over quality*

- all resources of organization are directed toward producing measurable goals
- things that can be measured are more highly valued than things that cannot, for example numbers of people attending a meeting, newsletter circulation, money spent are valued more than quality of relationships, democratic decision-making, ability to constructively deal with conflict
- little or no value attached to process; if it can't be measured, it has no value
- discomfort with emotion and feelings
- no understanding that when there is a conflict between content (the agenda of the meeting) and process (people's need to be heard or engaged), process will prevail (for example, you may get through the agenda, but if you haven't paid attention to people's need to be heard, the decisions made at the meeting are undermined and/or disregarded)

antidotes: include process or quality goals in your planning; make sure your organization has a values statement which expresses the ways in which you want to do your work; make sure this is a living document and that people are using it in their day to day work; look for ways to measure process goals (for example if you have a goal of inclusivity, think about ways you can measure whether or not you have achieved that goal); learn to recognize those times when you need to get off the agenda in order to address people's underlying concerns

worship of the written word

- if it's not in a memo, it doesn't exist
- the organization does not take into account or value other ways in which information gets shared
- those with strong documentation and writing skills are more highly valued, even in organizations where ability to relate to others is key to the mission

antidotes: take the time to analyze how people inside and outside the organization get and share information; figure out which things need to be written down and come up with alternative ways to document what is happening; work to recognize the contributions and skills that every person brings to the organization (for example, the ability to build relationships with

those who are important to the organization's mission); make sure anything written can be clearly understood (avoid academic language, 'buzz' words, etc.)

only one right way

- the belief there is one right way to do things and once people are introduced to the right way, they will see the light and adopt it
- when they do not adapt or change, then something is wrong with them (the other, those not changing), not with us (those who 'know' the right way)
- similar to the missionary who does not see value in the culture of other communities, sees only value in their beliefs about what is good

antidotes: accept that there are many ways to get to the same goal; once the group has made a decision about which way will be taken, honor that decision and see what you and the organization will learn from taking that way, even and especially if it is not the way you would have chosen; work on developing the ability to notice when people do things differently and how those different ways might improve your approach; look for the tendency for a group or a person to keep pushing the same point over and over out of a belief that there is only one right way and then name it; when working with communities from a different culture than yours or your organization's, be clear that you have some learning to do about the communities' ways of doing; never assume that you or your organization know what's best for the community in isolation from meaningful relationships with that community

paternalism

- decision-making is clear to those with power and unclear to those without it
- those with power think they are capable of making decisions for and in the interests of those without power
- those with power often don't think it is important or necessary to understand the viewpoint or experience of those for whom they are making decisions
- those without power understand they do not have it and understand who does
- those without power do not really know how decisions get made and who makes what decisions, and yet they are completely familiar with the impact of those decisions on them

antidotes: make sure that everyone knows and understands who makes what decisions in the organization; make sure everyone knows and understands their level of responsibility and authority in the organization; include people who are affected by decisions in the decision-making

either/or thinking*

- things are either/or — good/bad, right/wrong, with us/against us

- closely linked to perfectionism in making it difficult to learn from mistakes or accommodate conflict
- no sense that things can be both/and
- results in trying to simplify complex things, for example believing that poverty is simply a result of lack of education
- creates conflict and increases sense of urgency, as people feel they have to make decisions to do either this or that, with no time or encouragement to consider alternatives, particularly those which may require more time or resources
- often used by those with a clear agenda or goal to push those who are still thinking or reflecting to make a choice between 'a' or 'b' without acknowledging a need for time and creativity to come up with more options

antidotes: notice when people use 'either/or' language and push to come up with more than two alternatives; notice when people are simplifying complex issues, particularly when the stakes seem high or an urgent decision needs to be made; slow it down and encourage people to do a deeper analysis; when people are faced with an urgent decision, take a break and give people some breathing room to think creatively; avoid making decisions under extreme pressure

power hoarding

- little, if any, value around sharing power
- power seen as limited, only so much to go around
- those with power feel threatened when anyone suggests changes in how things should be done in the organization, feel suggestions for change are a reflection on their leadership
- those with power don't see themselves as hoarding power or as feeling threatened
- those with power assume they have the best interests of the organization at heart and assume those wanting change are ill-informed (stupid), emotional, inexperienced

antidotes: include power sharing in your organization's values statement; discuss what good leadership looks like and make sure people understand that a good leader develops the power and skills of others; understand that change is inevitable and challenges to your leadership can be healthy and productive; make sure the organization is focused on the mission

fear of open conflict

- people in power are scared of expressed conflict and try to ignore it or run from it
- when someone raises an issue that causes discomfort, the response is to blame the person for raising the issue rather than to look at the issue which is actually

causing the problem
- emphasis on being polite
- equating the raising of difficult issues with being impolite, rude, or out of line

antidotes: role play ways to handle conflict before conflict happens; distinguish between being polite and raising hard issues; don't require those who raise hard issues to raise them in 'acceptable' ways, especially if you are using the ways in which issues are raised as an excuse not to address those issues; once a conflict is resolved, take the opportunity to revisit it and see how it might have been handled differently

individualism*

- little experience or comfort working as part of a team
- people in organization believe they are responsible for solving problems alone
- accountability, if any, goes up and down, not sideways to peers or to those the organization is set up to serve
- desire for individual recognition and credit
- leads to isolation
- competition more highly valued than cooperation and where cooperation is valued, little time or resources devoted to developing skills in how to cooperate
- creates a lack of accountability, as the organization values those who can get things done on their own without needing supervision or guidance

antidotes: include teamwork as an important value in your values statement; make sure the organization is working towards shared goals and people understand how working together will improve performance; evaluate people's ability to work in a team as well as their ability to get the job done; make sure that credit is given to all those who participate in an effort, not just the leaders or most public person; make people accountable as a group rather than as individuals; create a culture where people bring problems to the group; use staff meetings as a place to solve problems, not just a place to report activities

i'm the only one

- connected to individualism, the belief that if something is going to get done right, 'I' have to do it
- little or no ability to delegate work to others

antidotes: evaluate people based on their ability to delegate to others; evaluate people based on their ability to work as part of a team to accomplish shared goals

progress is bigger, more*

- observed in how we define success (success is always bigger, more)

- progress is an organization which expands (adds staff, adds projects) or develops the ability to serve more people (regardless of how well they are serving them)
- gives no value, not even negative value, to its cost, for example, increased accountability to funders as the budget grows, ways in which those we serve may be exploited, excluded, or underserved as we focus on how many we are serving instead of quality of service or values created by the ways in which we serve

antidotes: create Seventh Generation thinking by asking how the actions of the group now will affect people seven generations from now; make sure that any cost/benefit analysis includes all the costs, not just the financial ones, for example the cost in morale, the cost in credibility, the cost in the use of resources; include process goals in your planning, for example make sure that your goals speak to how you want to do your work, not just what you want to do; ask those you work with and for to evaluate your performance

objectivity*

- the belief that there is such a thing as being objective or 'neutral'
- the belief that emotions are inherently destructive, irrational, and should not play a role in decision-making or group process
- invalidating people who show emotion
- requiring people to think in a linear (logical) fashion and ignoring or invalidating those who think in other ways
- impatience with any thinking that does not appear 'logical'

antidotes: realize that everybody has a world view and that everybody's world view affects the way they understand things; realize this means you too; push yourself to sit with discomfort when people are expressing themselves in ways which are not familiar to you; assume that everybody has a valid point and your job is to understand what that point is

right to comfort

- the belief that those with power have a right to emotional and psychological comfort (another aspect of valuing 'logic' over emotion)
- scapegoating those who cause discomfort
- equating individual acts of unfairness against white people with systemic racism which daily targets people of color

antidotes: understand that discomfort is at the root of all growth and learning; welcome it as much as you can; deepen your political analysis of racism and oppression so you have a strong understanding of how your personal experience and feelings fit into a larger picture; don't take everything personally

One of the purposes of listing characteristics of white supremacy culture is to point out how organizations which unconsciously use these characteristics as their norms and standards make it difficult, if not impossible, to open the door to other cultural norms and standards. As a result, many of our organizations, while saying we want to be multi-cultural, really only allow other people and cultures to come in if they adapt or conform to already existing cultural norms. Being able to identify and name the cultural norms and standards you want is a first step to making room for a truly multi-cultural organization.

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dRworks is a group of trainers, educators and organizers working to build strong progressive anti-racist organizations and institutions. **dRworks** can be reached at www.dismantlingracism.org.

Anti-Racist OrganizatioNal Development

The process of Dismantling Racism is not just about individuals changing our behavior and ways of thinking. This important individual work must in turn trigger a commitment to dismantling racism in organizations in order to position us to move effective and accountable racial justice organizing.

Organizations, like individuals, can evolve to become anti-racist. The transformation begins with developing a comprehensive understanding of how racism and oppression operate

within an organization's own walls. From that analysis comes a commitment and concrete plans for dismantling racism within the organization and in the larger society.

There is no cookie cutter approach to anti-racist organizational development. The road to anti-racist organizational development is necessarily impacted by the size, structure, mission, constituency and geographic location of an organization. Some organizations may need to commit to transforming their organization in to a multi-cultural anti-racist organization. Other predominantly white organizations may decide that it is most appropriate to evolve toward being an anti-racist white ally organization that can work in alliance with organizations of color. People of color organizations may decide to engage in organizational development to address internalized racist oppression within the organization in order to strengthen their ability to build power for communities of color.

This section of the Dismantling Racism Resource Book is designed to provide tools to help organizations begin the discussion of their anti-racist organizational transformation. If we build a shared and strong analysis of race and racism within our organizations then we will be able to select the tools and processes to achieve anti-racist organizational transformation most appropriate to our organization.

for organizations striving to become multi-cultural anti-racist organizations

Anti-Racist Organizational Development

Adapted by Kenneth Jones and Tema Okun based on work done by the Exchange Project of the Peace Development Fund, Grassroots Leadership's Barriers and Bridges program, and the original concept by Bailey Jackson and Rita Hardiman.

change*work*
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The goals of this exercise are to give you time to begin to analyze your organization in terms of the organization's anti-racist vision. This is an evaluation tool.

This evaluation is designed for organizations that are either all white or which include both white people and people of color.

Because racism is reflected in every institution and organization in the U.S., it is also present in progressive, social change groups. The structures and cultures of non-profits and grassroots organizations reproduce white privilege and racial oppression found in the wider society. But organizations, like individuals evolve, change and grow. Groups can transform themselves into anti-racist groups.

We are presenting four states of organizational development. Most organizations have characteristics from each of the states. No organization fits any stages precisely, although you will find that one stage may be dominant. Whatever the dominant characteristics of your organization, it is impossible for an organization at the All White Club stage to move directly into becoming an Anti-Racist Organization. Any transition requires moving through the elements of one stage to the next.

In order to use this assessment, read through the written descriptions and the chart of characteristics and think about how your organization reflects the various states. Then fill out the worksheet that follows.

The All White Club

All White Clubs are non-profits that, without trying, find themselves with an all white organization.

These are not groups that have intentionally excluded people of color. In fact, many times they have developed recruitment plans to get more people of color involved in their group. However, when people of color join the group, they are essentially asked to fit into the existing culture. Many leave after a frustrating period of trying to be heard. After years of trying, the Club cannot figure out why they do not have more people of color in their group; they begin to blame people of color for not being interested in the group's important issue or work, or they just give up. They do not understand that without analyzing and changing the organizational culture, norms, and power relations, they will always be an all white club. While they are good people, they have no analysis of racism or of power relations and no accountability to people or communities of color.

The Affirmative Action or 'Token' Organization

The Affirmative Action or 'Token' Organization is committed to eliminating discrimination in hiring and promotion.

The Affirmative Action or 'Token' Organization sets clear affirmative action goals, clear and unambiguous job qualifications and criteria, a percentage of people of color who need to be in

a candidate pool for a new job, and a bias-reduced interview process. Staff and board are encouraged to reduce and/or eliminate their prejudice and the organization may conduct prejudice reduction workshops toward this end. There may be one or two people of color in leadership positions. For people of color, coming into the organization feels like little more than tokenism.

The Affirmative Action of 'Token' Organization is still basically a white club except it now includes structural and legal means to bring people of color in.

The Multi-Cultural Organization

The Multi-Cultural Organization reflects the contributions and interests of diverse cultural and social groups in its mission, operations, and products or services.

It actively recruits and welcomes people of color and celebrates having a diverse staff and board. It is committed to reducing prejudice within the group and offers programs that help members learn more about the diverse cultures that make up the organization. White people in the organization tend to feel good about the commitment to diversity. Like the previous two, however, people of color are still asked to join the dominant culture and fit in.

An interesting point to consider is that most multi-national corporations are at this stage, while most non-profits, even social change non-profits, are still predominantly in one of the first two stages. Multi-national corporations recognize that their financial success is tied to their customer base and their customer base is racially diverse. So, for example, in states where there are active English-only campaigns, the banks are offering ATM machines in English and Spanish. This is not to say we should model ourselves after multi-national corporations, but it is worth thinking about how they are further ahead than most of us in thinking about the implications of a changing demographics for their organization.

The Anti-Racist Organization

Based on an analysis of the history of racism and power in this country, this organization supports the development of anti-racist white allies and empowered people of color through the organization's culture, norms, policies and procedures.

The Anti-Racist Organization integrates this commitment into the program, helping white people work together and challenge each other around issues of racism, share power with people of color, take leadership from and be accountable to people of color, feel comfortable with being uncomfortable while understanding that we are all learning all the time. The Anti-Racist Organization helps people of color become more empowered through taking leadership, sharing in the power, transforming the organizational norms and culture, challenging white allies and other people of color, sharing in decisions about how the organizations resources will be spent, what work gets done as well as how it gets done, the

setting of priorities, and allowing people of color to make the same mistakes as white people. The organization does this by forming white and people of color caucuses, providing training and encouraging discussions about racism, white privilege, power, and accountability, setting clear standards for inclusion at all levels of the organization, reviewing the mission, vision, policies, procedures, board agreements, etc. to insure that the commitment to end racism is a consistent theme, helping people to understand the links between the oppressions, and devoting organizational time and resources to building relationships across race and other barriers.

	All White Club	Token or Affirmative Action Organization	Multi-Cultural Organization	Anti-Racist Organization
Decision Making	▪ made by white people (often men) ▪ made in private in ways that people can't see or really know	▪ made by white people ▪ decisions made in private and often in unclear ways	▪ made by diverse group of board and staff ▪ token attempts to involve those targeted by mission in decision-making	▪ made by diverse group ▪ people of color are in significant leadership positions ▪ everyone in the organization understands how power is distributed and how decisions are made
Budget	▪ developed, controlled, and understood by (one or two) white people (often men)	▪ developed, controlled, and understood by (one or two) white people	▪ developed, controlled, and understood by (one or two) white people	▪ developed, controlled and understood by people of color and white people at all levels of the organization
Money From	▪ select foundations ▪ wealthy or middle-class college-educated white donors ▪ often a small number of very large donors	▪ foundations ▪ wealthy or middle-class college-educated donors	▪ foundations ▪ wealthy or middle-class college-educated donors ▪ some donations from people of color and lower-income people	▪ comes from the community most affected by the problem(s) being addressed ▪ supplemented by foundation grants and donations from allies (those concerned but not directly affected)
Accountable to	▪ funders ▪ a few white people on board or staff	▪ funders ▪ board ▪ staff	▪ funders ▪ board and staff ▪ token attempts to report to those targeted by mission	▪ communities targeted in mission

	All White Club	Token or Affirmative Action Organization	Multi-Cultural Organization	Anti-Racist Organization
Power and Pay	▪ white people in decision-making positions, paid very well ▪ people of color (and/or women) in administrative or service positions paying low wages ▪ few if any benefits, and little job security ▪ people at bottom have very little power	▪ white people in decision-making positions, paid relatively well ▪ people of color (and/or women) in administrative or service positions that pay less well ▪ few, if any benefits for anyone ▪ sometimes 1 or 2 people of color in token positions of power, with high turnover or low levels of real authority ▪ people at bottom have very little power	▪ white people in decision-making positions, paid relatively well ▪ people of color in administrative or service positions that pay less well ▪ 1 or 2 people in positions of power, particularly if their work style emulates those of white people in power ▪ training to upgrade skills is offered ▪ people of color may not be at equal levels of power with white people, but a level of respect is present	▪ people of color in decision-making position that pay a decent wage comparable to the wages of white people in the organization ▪ administrative and service positions perceived as stepping stone to positions of more power (if desired) and those positions reflect some decision-making power and authority ▪ training and other mentoring help provided
Located	▪ in white community ▪ decorations reflect a predominantly white culture	▪ in white community ▪ decorations reflect some cultural diversity	▪ physically accessible to people of color ▪ decorations reflect a commitment to multi-culturalism	▪ physically accessible to community served ▪ decorations reflect a commitment to multi-culturalism and power sharing
Members	▪ white people, with token number of people of color (if any) ▪ members have no real decision-making power	▪ white people and people of color, with only a token ability to participate in decision-making ▪ people of color are only aware of the organization because it is providing a direct service	▪ from diverse communities ▪ token encouragement to participate in decision-making	▪ from range of communities targeted by mission ▪ encouraged to participate in decision-making ▪ provided training to enhance skills and abilities to be successful in the organization and their communities

	All White Club	Token or Affirmative Action Organization	Multi-Cultural Organization	Anti-Racist Organization
Culture	▪ top down, paternalistic ▪ often secretive ▪ success measured by how much is accomplished ▪ little if any attention paid to process, or how work gets done ▪ little if any leadership or staff development ▪ no discussion of power analysis or oppression issues ▪ conflict is avoided at all costs ▪ people who raise issues that make people uncomfortable are considered troublemakers or hard to work with ▪ leaders assume " we are all the same"	▪ still top down although inclusivity is stressed ▪ those in power assume their standards and ways of doing things are neutral, most desirable and form the basis for what is considered "qualified" ▪ people expected to be highly motivated self-starters requiring little supervision ▪ some training may be provided ▪ no power analysis ▪ conflict avoided ▪ emphasis on people getting along ▪ discussion of race limited to prejudice reduction	▪ organization looks inclusive with a visibly diverse board and staff ▪ actively celebrates diversity ▪ focuses on reducing prejudice but is uncomfortable naming racism ▪ continues to assume dominant culture ways of doing things most desirable ▪ assume a level playing field ▪ emphasize belief in equality but still no power analysis ▪ workaholism desired and rewarded ▪ still uncomfortable with conflict	▪ organization actively recruits and mentors people of color ▪ celebrates diversity ▪ has a power analysis about racism and other oppression issues ▪ a diversity of work styles encouraged with active reflection about balancing what gets done and how it gets done ▪ a willingness to name racism and address conflict ▪ resources devoted to developing shared goals, teamwork, and sharing skills and knowledge (mentoring)
Programs	▪ not about building power for communities of color ▪ designed to help people who have little or no participation in decision-making ▪ emphasis is on serving or "helping" those in need	▪ intent is to be inclusive ▪ little analysis about root causes of issues/problems ▪ people in programs appreciated until they speak out or organize for power ▪ designed to help low-income people who have little or no participation in the decision-making	▪ designed to build power until people speak up and out ▪ some attempt to understand issue/problem in relation to big picture ▪ some participation by those served in program planning ▪ constituency may have only token representation in the organization.	▪ designed to build and share power ▪ designed to help people analyze and address root causes ▪ people most affected by issues/problems centrally involved in program planning ▪ opportunities for constituents to move into leadership roles in the organization