

# Compelling Senior Leaders to Action Through Race Equity Dialogue

Jean Samuel and Kristin Roe





- Speak your truth from your own experiences
- Allow yourselves to become comfortable with the discomfort
- No shame, no blame
- Practice humility
- Confidentiality
- Engage in the process
- Racial Equity is a complex issue

A large, solid orange circle occupies the right side of the slide. Inside the circle, the text "Guiding Principles" is written in white. A smaller, solid blue circle is positioned at the bottom right edge of the orange circle.

## Guiding Principles

# Virtual Space Agreement

What we agree to be true:

- No intentional harm
- No shaming/no blaming
- No verbal or written racist attacks
- No debating existence of racism and anti-Black racism within institutions
- “All Lives Matter” is not the conversation

# Objectives for our time together

01

Deepen one's awareness of the structures that uphold white supremacy and colonialism among leadership

02

Create critical dialogue to assist in the dismantling and rebuilding of leadership thought and practice to achieve racial equity

03

Provide ways to vision a race equity journey as a senior leader both as a journey of the self and a journey of the organization



# Group discussion: Critically reflecting at the Root Level

**At the Branch Level:**  
The Personal Level  
*How people treat one another*



**At the Soil Level:**  
The Unconscious Level



**At the Root Level:**  
The Structural or Systemic Level  
*Power – Privilege – Status*



How do you see yourself as a senior leader operating in your own organization to uphold systemic-structural racism and anti-Black racism?

# Current Inequities in Canadian child welfare

- Ontario: Indigenous children were over-represented in 93 per cent of the 27 mainstream children's aid societies that released data to the Ontario Human Rights Commission (OHRC, 2018)
- Ontario: 41.8 per cent of kids in the care of the Children's Aid Society of Toronto were Black at a time when the city's under-18 population was just 8.2 per cent.(Toronto Star, 2013)
- Manitoba: Almost 90% of all children in care are Indigenous (Report, 2017)
- British Columbia: Rate for Indigenous children in care is 61% (Kozlowski, Milne, Silva, 2014)



# ONE VISION ONE VOICE

CHANGING THE ONTARIO CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM  
TO BETTER SERVE AFRICAN CANADIANS

## One Vision One Voice: Changing the child welfare system to better serve African Canadians

Issues in Ontario reflect the issues raised by African Americans throughout the United States. Compared to their White counterparts, African Canadian children are:

- More likely to be referred to a Children's Aid Society by educators, police, and medical professionals
- More likely to be removed from their homes
- Less likely to be returned to their families
- More likely to grow up in foster care without being adopted or finding another permanent home (Turner, 2016)



# Racial Inequities: Not a Canadian issue

**Australia:** Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children were far more likely to have been reported to child protection services (5.1 times as likely), investigated by child protection (6.3 times as likely) and placed into OOHC (9.8 times as likely) (National Voice for Our Children, 2017)

**New Zealand:** Over 70% of children in care are Māori (Cram et al., 2015)

**United States:** African Americans are overrepresented in foster care in every state (Bartholet, 2011; Harris, 2014)

**United Kingdom:** Black and other racialized children are overrepresented in England's child welfare system, and studies show that they experience discriminatory treatment when in contact with the child welfare system (Bywaters et al., 2017)

# The Roots of Oppression

## At the Branch Level:

The Personal Level  
*How people treat one another*



## At the Soil Level:

The Unconscious Level



## At the Root Level:

The Structural or Systemic Level  
*Power - Privilege - Status*



# The Good vs Bad White Binary

- Bigotry
- Ignorant
- Mean
- Older
- Southern (U.S.); Rural (Canada)
- Conservative/Republican/Independence Party

Racist =  
Bad

- Progressive
- Educated
- Nice/Good-intentioned
- Young (ish)
- Urban (Canada); Northern (U.S.)
- New Democrat/Liberal/Democrat/Labour Party

Not  
Racist =  
Good

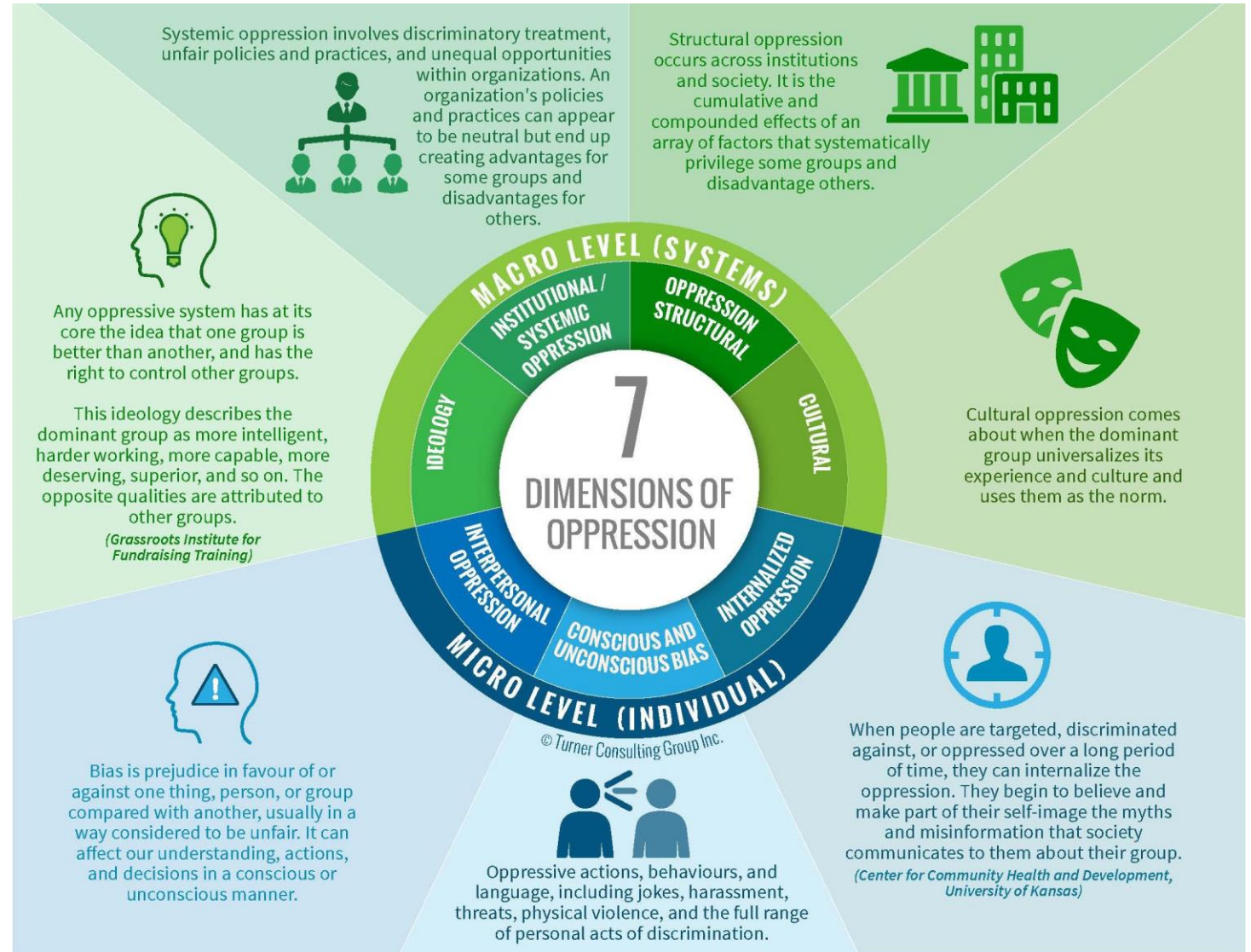
# The Good vs Bad White Myth

The myth that these factors must be evidenced for racism to exist:

- Individual → must occur from one person to another
- Overt → must be able to see it; witness it
- Intentional → must have intentions to hurt or harm



# How does systemic-structural racism function in institutions?



# Dominance of White Supremacy

It is often difficult to recognize present-day racism and anti-Black racism because it contradicts what we've been taught about Canada.

- Confiscating of land of Indigenous Peoples
- Slavery of Africans
- Stealing of the Americas
- Segregation by race in schools and public places/institutions
- Japanese internment during World War II
- Chinese Head-Tax
- Colonialism

# Internalized Racist Superiority

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- A complex, multigenerational socialization process
- Teaches white people to accept superior self-definitions and roles
- Normalizes the race construct resulting in white supremacy
- Creates Internalized Dominance

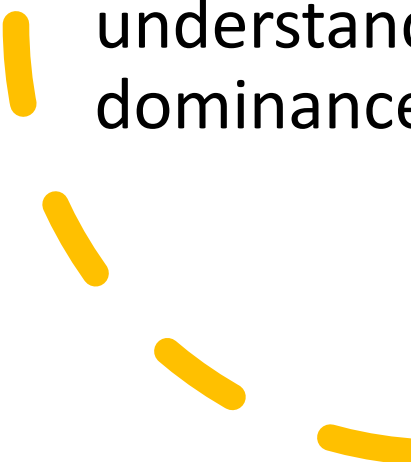




# The Take-away

Leadership competencies to ensure race equity as a critical dialogue:

How do you, as leaders, help individuals within your organization understand and feel connected to ongoing, historical struggles of dominance and white supremacy?





# Tips for Changing the Course on Racial Injustice as a Senior Leader

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01

Demonstrate nuanced understanding of institutional racism and White Supremacy

02

Enact a continual process of self-reflection about your own racism and positionality

03

Don't be afraid to *call-in* acts of racism and anti-Black racism when you hear or see operating in your institutions at the branch, soil and root levels

04

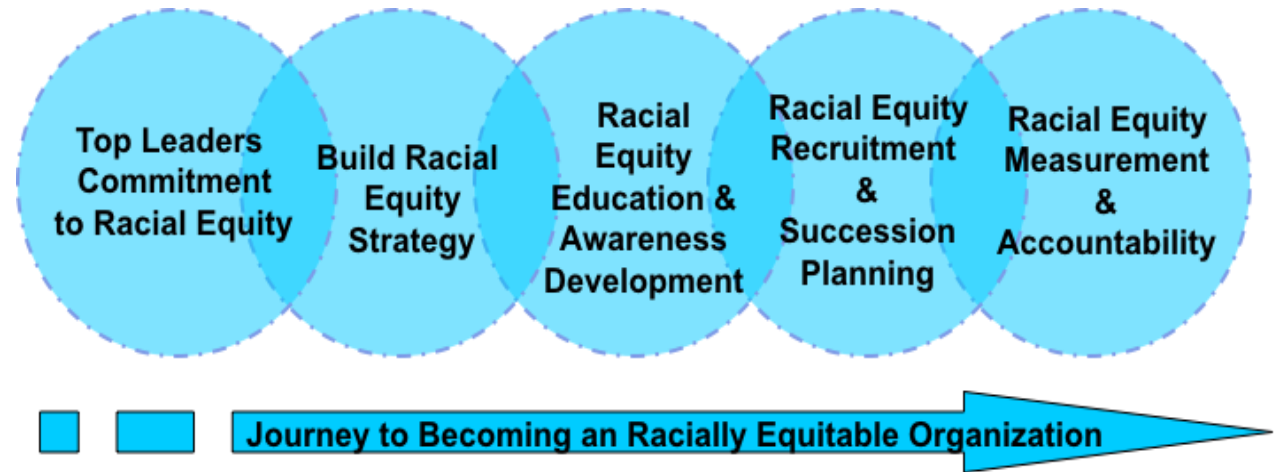
Express a sense of responsibility and commitment to using your white privilege in ways that promote racial equity and to dismantle resistance from White colleagues

05

Participate in coalition-building and work in solidarity with racialized colleagues and communities


*Adapted from Spanierman, Lisa B and Laura Smith (2017) Roles and Responsibilities of White Allies: Implications for Research, Teaching and Practice.*

# Transforming for Racial Equity



**It's about the journey NOT the destination!**

# Compelling Senior Leaders to Action Through Race Equity Dialogue

- White Supremacy, White Privilege, Whiteness is acquired knowledge for White people
  - Look at what you have done and continue to do to remain oblivious to White Supremacy
  - Understand that you are never a 'Non-Racist' and always a 'Recovering Racist'.
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## Parting Words

"Very little of the great cruelty sown by men can really be attributed to cruel instinct. Most of it comes from thoughtlessness, or inherited habit. The roots of cruelty, therefore, are not so much strong as widespread.

But the time must come when humanity protected by custom and thoughtlessness will succumb before humanity championed by thought. Let us work that this time may come".

-Albert Schweitzer



# Parting Words

"First, I must confess that over the last few years I have been gravely disappointed with the white moderate. I have almost reached the regrettable conclusion that the Negro's great stumbling block in the stride toward freedom is not the White Citizen's Council-er or the Ku Klux Klanner, but the white moderate who is more devoted to "order" than to justice; who prefers a negative peace which is the absence of tension to a positive peace which is the presence of justice; who constantly says "I agree with you in the goal you seek, but I can't agree with your methods of direct action;" who paternalistically feels he can set the timetable for another man's freedom; who lives by the myth of time and who constantly advises the Negro to wait until a "more convenient season".

**Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., 16 April 1963**



**Thank you for listening  
and participating!**

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