

Key Words & Ideas

Anti-Racism

Anti-Racism is the active, on-going process of dismantling systems of racial inequity and creating new systems of racial equity. Anti-racism demands that this work be done at the individual, organizational/ institutional, and cultural levels in order to effectively address systemic racism. Anti-racism is an approach, not an end-point, and thus provides a useful frame for an organizational change process.

Anti-Racist Organizational Change

Anti-racist organizational change is about making organizational changes in a way that intentionally addresses structural racism and creates greater diversity, inclusion, and equity.

Caucusing

Anti-racism acknowledges that our experiences do not occur in a neutral context. Those who identify as racialized or Indigenous experience racism differently than those who do not.

Separating into groups based on this distinction—a process called “racial caucusing”—is a strategy that allows people to talk about shared experiences. The strategy is not designed to create division but to make the whole group more effective, as described in [this paper by Crossroads](#):

"When the two groups come back together as a team they are better able to understand, confront, and dismantle racism within the team itself and within the institutional setting."

The AROC project did not form a white caucus, despite acknowledging the need for white people to do the emotional labour to confront their own racism and **whiteness**. It was decided that spending the project's limited resources on

facilitation and meeting space for white people was not a priority and would actually undermine the values and goals of a process seeking to centre the experiences and needs of those most impacted by racism.

[This blog post](#) by Kad Smith at CompassPoint shares a POC view on racial caucusing in a nonprofit organization.

Sources: [Racial Identity Caucusing: A strategy for building anti-racist collectives](#) by Crossroads Ministries and [Race Caucusing in an Organizational Context: A POC's Experience](#) by Kad Smith and CompassPoint.

Diversity

Diversity refers to the wide array of differences among people and their perspectives on the world. Diversity is an important organizational goal in its own right, but it may or may not be linked to the issue of equity. A diverse workplace is not necessarily an equitable workplace. Nor does the presence of people who are diverse necessarily produce decision-making that optimizes results for the groups their diversity reflects.

Source: [Race Matters Institute](#)

Emergent Process

An emergent process is a process of change that involves non-linear, abrupt phase transitions as a system's overall structure and function is transformed into a new regime of behavior, exhibiting new properties that could not have been predicted to arise prior to the transformation.

(In other words, change transforms an entire organization into something new and different. Because the organization is complex and changes so deeply, it's difficult to predict exactly what changes will take place).

Source: [Complexity Labs](#)

Emergent work processes consist of organizational activity patterns that exhibit three characteristics in combination: no best structure or sequence; distributed across an unpredictable set of actors and roles and evolving dynamically.

(In other words, these three things happen together:

1. *There isn't just one specific order or way to do things.*
2. *We don't know exactly who will be involved and what they will be doing*
3. *Things are constantly changing as we move forward, so it is hard to predict the exact end results.)*

Source: [Ideas group, Inc. Global](#)

Equity

Equity recognizes diversity in experience, needs, etc. and creates frameworks that respond to diversity.

Source: Sahar Ibrahim & Reakash Walters, anti-racism facilitators

Equity refers to achieved results where advantage and disadvantage are not distributed on the basis of race and ethnicity. Strategies that produce equity must be targeted to address the unequal needs, conditions, and positions of people and communities that are created by institutional and structural barriers. Equity requires a set of informed policies and practices, intentionally designed to promote opportunity and rectify disparities, as well as informed people positioned to implement them effectively.

Source: [Race Matters Institute](#)

Gaslighting

Gaslighting is a reference to the 1944 film [Gaslight](#). It refers to a form of psychological abuse where someone is manipulated by another person to the point where they question whether their own experience of reality is valid.

Inclusion

Inclusion is reflected in the ability of diverse peoples to raise their perspectives authentically, and for those voices to matter and impact decisions, where the organizational culture has been enabled for that to happen. Inclusion promises a broader view of the world and a more democratic process of decision-making. Inclusion is an important organizational process goal, but it does not on its own guarantee equity in an organization's mission-critical results.

Source: [Race Matters Institute](#)

Intersectionality

Intersectionality describes how social identities and related systems of oppression, domination, or discrimination overlap or intersect. “Intersectionality was not initially about diversity or sort of watered-down versions of diversity...Now intersectionality is a little bit more like, ‘It’s complicated’...or ‘We all have our individual identities and we need to recognize all of us.’ Well yeah that’s true, but intersectionality asks what [those differences mean] when we’re thinking about social justice...It’s not just a general ‘Everybody’s gotta cool identity and we should celebrate it.’ Of course that’s true. But we’re interested in power dynamics, not individual recognition.”

Source: Adapted from Wikipedia and an [interview with Kimberlé Crenshaw](#)

Organizational Change

Organizational change is about reviewing and modifying management structures and procedures. For example, making changes to policy, hiring practices and governance.

Organizational Racism

Organizational racism refers to the way normal, seemingly neutral or objective organizational policies and systems (e.g., the way we hire people, recruit board members, develop programming, etc.) can create disparities in access and outcomes for racialized and Indigenous individuals and communities. If not addressed, these policies and systems can increase disparities in power. It refers to organizational practices, which are related to but different from the racist behaviour or unconscious bias of individuals.

Popular Education

Popular Education is an approach to education where participants engage each other as co-learners to critically reflect on the issues in their community and then take action to change them.

Source: [Practicing Freedom](#)

Race

Race is a dynamic, fluid, relational category, socially constructed for political and economic interests over groups of people. This social construct loosely refers to a group of people distinguished from others often by physical characteristics such as colour of skin, shape of eyes, hair texture or facial features.

Source: Sahar Ibrahim & Reakash Walters, anti-racism facilitators

Racial Equity

Racial equity refers to achieved results where advantage and disadvantage are not distributed on the basis of race and ethnicity. Strategies that produce equity must be targeted to address the unequal needs, conditions, and positions of people and communities that are created by institutional and structural barriers. Equity requires a set of informed policies and practices, intentionally designed to promote opportunity and rectify disparities, as well as informed people positioned to implement them effectively.

Source: [Race Matters Institute](#)

Racism

A system of power that structures opportunity and assigns value based on the social construct of race where privilege is afforded to whiteness. A system that unfairly disadvantages racialized and Indigenous communities, while subsequently unfairly advantaging those embraced by whiteness.

Source: Adapted from Sahar Ibrahim & Reakash Walters, anti-racism facilitators

Racialized / Racialization

We are working with the definition of racialization provided by the Ontario Human Rights Commission:

The Commission has explained “race” as socially constructed differences among people based on characteristics such as accent or manner of speech, name, clothing, diet, beliefs and practices, leisure preferences, places of origin and so forth.

The process of social construction of race is called racialization: “the process by which societies construct races as real, different and unequal in ways that matter to economic, political and social life.” Recognizing that race is a social construct, the Commission describes people as “racialized person” or “racialized group” instead of the more outdated and inaccurate terms “racial minority”. “visible minority”, “person of colour” or “non-White”.

Source: [Ontario Human Rights Commission](#)

Shadeism

This word shadeism (also known as colorism) describes the discrimination based on skin tone, which exists amongst members of the same community, creating a ranking of a person’s individual worth based on shade. For more about Shadeism, access the [Shadeism Film](#) on Vimeo.

Source: Nayani Thiyagarajah; [Shadeism Film](#), 2014

Structural Racism

A system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing ways to perpetuate racial group inequity. It identifies dimensions of our history and culture that have allowed privileges associated with “whiteness” and disadvantages associated with “color” to endure and adapt over time. Structural racism is not something that a few people or institutions choose to practice. Instead it has been a feature of the social, economic and political systems in which we all exist.

Source: The Aspen Institute Round Table on Community Change [Structural Racism Glossary](#)

Whiteness

A social construction referring to a dominant cultural space with political, social, and economic significance, with the purpose to keep others on the margins. ‘White’ people do not have to explain their culture/values/norms because they are part of the dominant culture that sets the norm. All those cast outside of whiteness are compared to this norm.

Source: Sahar Ibrahim & Reakash Walters, anti-racism facilitators

More Resources

[An Introduction to Popular Education](#) by Practicing Freedom.org

[Assessing Organizational Racism](#) tool from Western States Center

[Calgary Anti-Racism Education \(CARED\) Collective](#) web resource

[Continuum on Becoming an Anti-Racist Multicultural Organization](#) by Crossroads Anti-Racism Organizing and Training

[Dancing on Live Embers: Challenging Racism in Organizations](#) by Tina Lopes and Barb Thomas. Toronto: Between the Lines (2006)

[Definitions of Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity](#) by the Race Matters Institute website (2015)

[‘Equity Priority Groups’](#) as discussed in the Toronto Arts Council's Equity Framework

[Hiring and Retaining Skilled Immigrants: A Cultural Competence Toolkit](#) from the BC Human Resource Management Association (2012)

[Iceberg of Oppression](#) framework of systemic oppression from Anti-Oppression Resource and Training Alliance

[Intersectionality Meets the Mainstream](#) from Mic Media

[Moving Beyond Diversity](#) handbook from Toronto and York Region Labour Council (2014)

Onion model of organizational development concept from the [International NGO Training and Research Centre \(INTRAC\)](#)

[Ontario Human Rights Commission resources](#) and [definition of racialization](#) from Ontario Human Rights Commission website (2017)

[Race Caucusing in an Organizational Context: A POC's Experience](#) by Kad Smith from CompassPoint.org

[Racial Equity Impact Assessment Toolkit](#) from Race Forward: The Centre for Racial Justice Innovation

[Racial Identity Caucusing: A Strategy for Building Anti-Racist Collectives](#) from Crossroads Anti-Racism Organizing and Training

[Shadeism Film](#) by Nayani Thiyaharajah and Brian Han (Toronto, 2010)

[Structural Racism Glossary](#) from the Aspen Institute Round Table on Community Change

[Systems Thinking and Race: Summary & Exercises](#) from Project Linked Fate (2011)

[Why Nonprofits Need to Have a Talk About Diversity](#) with Joy Bailey and Derrick Dawson. Webinar by See3 Communications and Chicago ROAR (2016)

[19 tips for making your job posting so amazing, unicorns will weep tears of joy](#), from Nonprofit AF