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Understanding Anti-Racism as a Personal Journey

Building Your Journey

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Cooperation Canada

ARC Hub - Anti-racism as a Personal Journey 2



**ANTI-RACIST
COOPERATION**

**ANTI-RACISME
EN COOPÉRATION**

Today's Agenda

Today's presentation is an interactive module comprised of self reflective activities further analyze personal responsibility and onus in combatting racism.

Please take a moment to think about what you are hoping to get out of the session.



Land Acknowledgement

For racialised people historically the land has had a considerable and active role in community. The lands they've lived on and moved through are deeply intertwined with survival, history, tradition, culture, and views of the future. So important to the work that we do is to consider the ways that we continue to honour these lands that care for us and the communities that have cared for them and to align our dreams as much as our struggles. To contribute to the global calls for re-indigenization, retribution, and an end to the colonial project are crucial to the sustainability of efforts as a sector and to intentionally and with awareness do good relevant work.

I honour the land traditionally known as Tiohtià:ke the island that has been a site of so much movement and connection. That has been a grounding space for the transit of many Indigenous communities and traditional forms of connection, exchange, and collaboration. I honour the Kanien'kehá:ka Nation the custodians of the land and water I live, fight, work, love, and grow on.

Reflection exercise

- What does honouring the land mean to you? Your org?
- How do you honour the land ? How does your org?
- What actions do you take to be in relation to the Indigenous communities of the land you work on and occupy?
- What is your relationship to your homelands? Who have been the traditional caretakers?

Who We Are/What We Do



Introduce yourself in the chat!

The Anti-Racist Cooperation (ARC) Hub is a dedicated Coordination Secretariat and a resource center for the sector.

Our goal is to support Canadian International Development and Humanitarian Organizations improve their ability to integrate anti-racism and intersectional feminism into their work by providing resources, knowledge sharing spaces, networks of support and training.

Core ARC Hub team: RJE, PC and PA (on)side the sector (taskforce, WG, affinity groups, etc.)

Our Theory of Change: Organisational vs Individual

This session focuses on the individual aspect of our theory of change which is a crucial part of success in the organizational stream

Community Agreement

What is a community agreement?

An opportunity to set a collective set of guidelines for how we engage in this space. They are free to change throughout the presentation.

We are trusting you to do what you need to ensure your full participation and that you will communicate your needs as they change

We are committing to building a safe(r) space prioritizing confidentiality, equitable participation, honesty, ownership over our words and actions

We are coming here open minded, intending to respectful and accountable. We will adress harmful behaviour.

Collective Assumptions

All systems of oppression exist and are interconnected	We are all here because we want and choose to be here
Opposing systems of oppression, building alternatives, and cultural change are all necessary	We live at intersections, we all benefit and are harmed by systematic oppression even if in different ways
Dismantling systems of oppression benefits everyone	An individual/community is the expert of their own experience and the solutions to the problems they face
Confronting social injustice can be painful and/or joyful	Everyone deserves the autonomy of choice
Liberation is possible	The body doesn't lie

What is a collective assumption?
 a list of statements that we are agreeing to treat as Truth before moving forward with a conversation or process.

Key Objectives of the Session

The objective of this session is to guide participants in mapping the arc of their personal anti-racism journey.. While anti-racism is often analyzed through institutional and systemic lenses, it's crucial to recognize that meaningful change begins at the personal level. This session will lead you through essential reflections and self-examination needed to guide and structure a journey that is not only effective but also sustainable through the challenges that are inherent to this vital work.

Understanding anti-racism beyond terminology

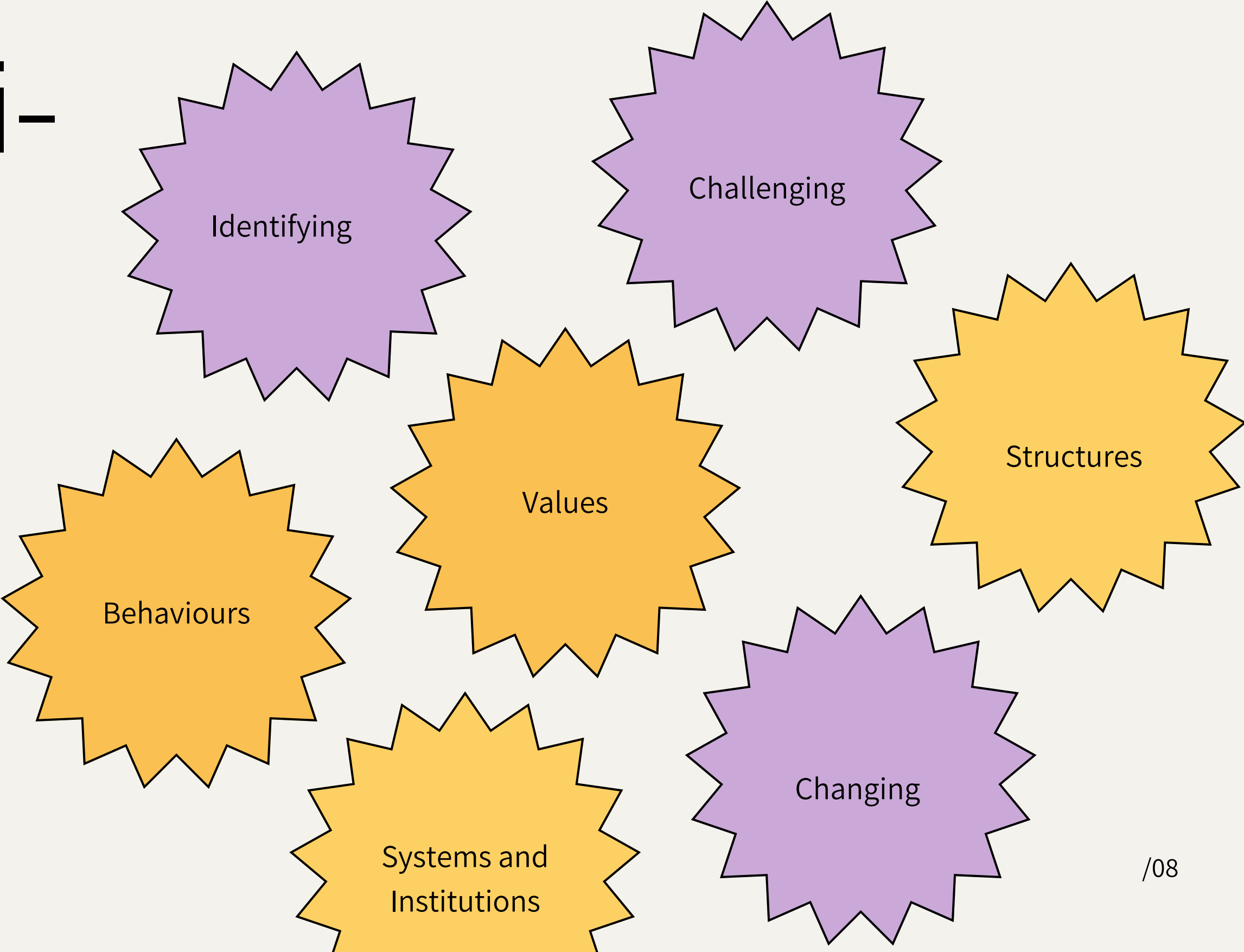
Recognize and address personal biases

Understand systemic racism and its impact

Learn actionable anti-racist practices

Defining Anti-Racism

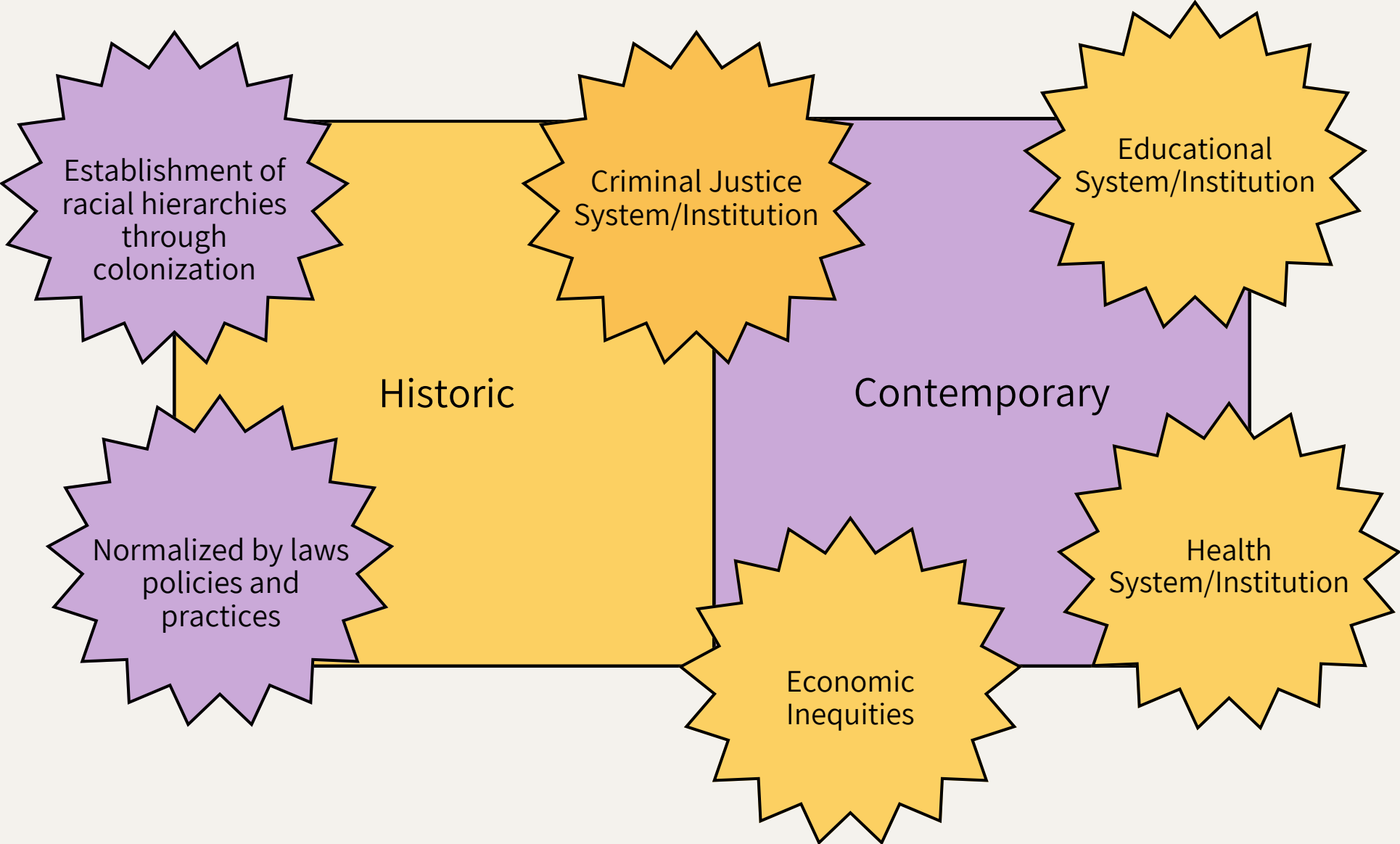
Anti-racism simplified is an active and intentional journey that requires us to identify, challenge, and change the values, beliefs, and behaviours that uphold racial inequity. This work demands a personal commitments, as the norms, structures, systems, and institutions that perpetuate racism are shaped by the collective influence of our individual actions. As we embark on this journey it is crucial to understand how anti-racism manifests in our lives and to remain committed to continuous learning and adaptation as the dynamics of racism evolve.



Understanding Sytemic Racism

Understanding these contexts is crucial for anti-racism work. The historical roots of systemic racism explain why these inequities still persist today, and acknowledging this helps us to see that racism is not just a matter of individual prejudice but is woven into the very structures of our society, This awareness is the foundation upon which we build our personal and collective anti-racism efforts. It's essential to recognize that dismantling systemic racism requires more than just addressing individual attitudes it necessitates challenging and changing policies, practices, and systems that perpetuate inequity.

By understanding the broader context we can better recognize our roles in perpetuating or challenging systemic racism and take more informed and impactful actions in our daily lives and communities.



Navigating the Complexities of Anti-Racism Work

Racism is not a singular isolated phenomenon it is deeply embedded in societal structures, cultures, and interpersonal relationships. This multifaceted nature requires us to tackle it on multiple levels. To navigate these complexities, we must be willing to engage with the layers of racism in our personal professional, and societal contexts. Anti-racism work may feel daunting as it manifests in many forms, as you deepen your anti-racism efforts you will inevitably encounter resistance both within yourself and from external sources. It is crucial that we build actionable strategies to meet this resistance and continue to prioritize sustainability:



Recognizing and Addressing Personal Biases

Anti-racism often begins by confronting internal resistance. These barriers may not be immediately visible but can significantly impede progress if left unaddressed. The first step in overcoming these challenges is self-awareness and recognizing the ways in which our personal biases, fears, or discomforts hold us back. The work of anti-racism often involves challenging deeply held beliefs about fairness, meritocracy, and the idea that racism is an issue of the past. This can lead to cognitive dissonance, where new information clashes with existing beliefs, creating discomfort, confusion, and aggression. Overcoming this requires perseverance, a willingness to sit in discomfort, and the humility to question long-held assumptions.

<p>Unconscious bias shaped by our upbringing, environment, and societal norms</p>	<p>Can lead to defensive reactions, denial, or avoidance in talking about race</p>	<p>Requires commitment to introspection, humility, willingness to learn and unlearn long-held beliefs</p>
<p>Anti-racism work is uncomfortable by design forcing us to question our role in perpetuating inequities</p>	<p>Can lead to people being afraid about doing the wrong thing</p>	<p>Requires the ability and willngness to acknowledge missteps, take accountability, and remain open to growth</p>
<p>For those who benefit from racial privilege it can be difficult to fully comprehend the extent of systemic inequities</p>	<p>Can lead to feelings of guilt or shame about one's privilege leading to either paralysis or performative allyship</p>	<p>Requires using privilege as a tool for dismantling oppression instead of a source shame</p>

Activity

These activities offer a meaningful way to explore personal biases with a supportive community or can inspire you to find one. While this reflection can be challenging, it's a crucial step in your anti-racism journey, fostering growth, accountability, and a deeper commitment to systemic change.

Implicit Bias Test

Complete one or more online implicit bias tests online and reflect on your results and how they align or don't with your conscious beliefs, your emotional reaction, anything that surprised you. This can be a good place to start.

Daily Bias Log

Keep a log over a week or more, tracking moments where you notice biased thoughts or reactions. Reflect on what triggered the bias, what assumptions you made and how you could challenge these biases in the future. See how you could have interrupted them and log when and how you interrupted bias.

Exploring Diverse Perspective

Watch a documentary, read an article, or listen to a podcast created by individuals from different racial or cultural backgrounds than your own. Afterwards reflect on how this media challenged or reinforced your biases, consider what new perspectives you gained and how this might affect future interactions.

Bias Mapping Exercise

Map out different social groups (eg. racial groups, genders, occupations, socioeconomic backgrounds, levels of education etc.) Identify your beliefs about these groups any stereotypes or assumptions and where they come from. Reflect on how these biases might influence your behaviour or decision-making and how you plan to unlearn these beliefs.

Check your Gut

Capture and analyze your gut reactions to everyday scenarios to better understand underlying biases when you encounter people in public, at work, in social settings, take note of your initial and unfiltered reactions (positive, negative, or neutral). Capture why you have these reactions, where they come from, how you can challenge them.

Lens of Privilege Reflection

Reflect on the privileges you hold and how they may shape your worldview. Use a checklist. Write a reflection on how these privileges have influenced your experiences and biases especially toward racialized or marginalized groups and your ability to recognize bias?

The Importance of Personal Connection

ACTIVITY

Understanding requires deeper and meaningful engagement far beyond understanding of the concepts in theory

Personal experiences and emotions play a key role in your ability, willingness, and success in anti-racism

Empathy and personal connection are the main drivers to sustainable and meaningful action

Activity

This activity is designed to help you explore your personal connection to anti-racism work. We encourage you to reflect on and answer the questions individually and then come together with a group to share your insights, discuss new understandings, raise questions, and navigate any challenges.

When did you first become aware of race and how it shaped your identity or the identity of others? How has this awareness influenced your views on race and racism today?

This question encourages you to explore your earliest memories related to race and how those formative experiences continue to shape your perspectives.

Can you identify a moment when you realized your actions and inactions contributed to the perpetuation of racial inequity? How did that realization feel? How do you feel it affected your personal journey in anti-racism?

This question invites you to examine moments of discomfort or realization in your journey and how these moments have or have not motivated change.

In what ways do your personal values align or conflict with the principles of anti-racism, and how have you navigated these challenges in your daily life?

This question challenges you to critically assess how your core values either support or challenge your anti-racist actions and decisions.

How do your personal and cultural identities intersect with your understanding of privilege or marginalization, and how do these intersections affect your approach to anti-racism?

This question asks you to consider the complexities of your identity and how your privileges or marginalization inform your anti-racism journey.

What role do personal relationships play in your understanding of racism and anti-racism, and how have these relationships either hindered or enhanced your growth in this area?

This question encourages you to reflect on the influence of close relationships on your journey and how these connections can either support or challenge your progress.

How do you stay committed to anti-racism when faced with resistance or discomfort, either from within yourself or from those around you?

This question explores the emotional and psychological challenges of anti-racism work and how you maintain your commitment despite challenges.

Accountability as a Pillar

Anti-racism is not performative, and it cannot be sustained without accountability. Accountability requires us to confront our shortcomings and take ownership of our growth. Again it can be easier to focus on external systems and institutions, but anti-racism starts with ourselves investing in being building the internal systems that stop us from falling back into complacency or performative allyship. To build accountability into your journey, you must develop personal systems to track your growth, reflect on mistakes, and stay engaged. Prioritizing accountability asks us to be proactive in the ways we prepare ourselves for what is challenging work and the reactions that often come from feeling that our power, privilege, or worldview is being threatened. Instead of resorting to denial, silencing, downplaying, or retaliation what are the strategies that we can put in place to keep us on this journey.

Build and
accountability
map

Identify areas of
your life or work
where you can bring
meaningful change

Ask what
accountability
looks like from the
racialized folks to
engage with

Practice Self-
Reflection

Commit to long
term goals and
continuous
learning

Build supportive
community seek
mentorship

Have a list of
resources to
support you when
you don't know
what to do

Act on the
feedback that you
receive and
commit to self-
improvement

Activity

This process is intended to be used proactively but can also serve as a guide when responding to an incident that requires your accountability and you're unsure where to begin. While accountability may feel daunting, especially in a society that often emphasizes punishment, it is a cornerstone of anti-racism and essential to building stronger, more resilient communities.

1. Define your goals

Begin by listing three specific actionable goals you want to achieve in your anti-racism journey. They should be measurable and realistic

2. Identify Accountability Partners

Identify at least 3 individuals or groups you will rely on for support, feedback, and accountability. Prioritize people who are committed to anti-racism, who will be honest and constructive and who can challenge you when needed. These are not always friends or family.

3. Key Actions and Timelines

For each goal, outline specific actions you will take to achieve them. Set deadlines or check-in points for these actions

4. Reflection and Self-Assessment

Schedule time to reflect on - What you've accomplished and how it aligned with your goals? Where you faced challenges and what you could have done differently? How your understanding of anti-racism evolved?

5. Adjustments and Next Steps

After reflection note any adjustments you plan to make to you goals, actions, or strategies. Identify new ways to stay accountable and engaged.

6. Long-Term Accountability

Think about ways to embed accountability into your daily life. Consider sustainable practices such as journaling, regular meetings with accountability partners, or public commitments. Write at least 3 long term strategies to sustain your accountability efforts.

Developing a Growth Mindset

Anti-racism is a journey not a destination. There is always more to learn, unlearn, and discover. Engaging with new perspectives, reading, attending workshops, and actively listening to those who have been historically marginalized is essential.

Instead of striving to prove that you are not racist focus on continuously learning how to be more actively antiracist.

Remain adaptable to ever-evolving understandings of race, identity, intersectionality, systemic inequities

Regularly reflect on your beliefs, actions, and how you contribute to systemic racism . Work to learn and understand the internal and external barriers to progress

Reframe setbacks as a natural part of the process. Each challenge you face is a step forward in building the resilience needed for long term change

Seeking out and reflecting on feedback especially from racialized folks. Seeing critique as an invitation for deeper reflection and understanding

Challenge yourself to question assumptions and seek innovative ways to combat inequities. Remain open minded and build a relationship with accountability

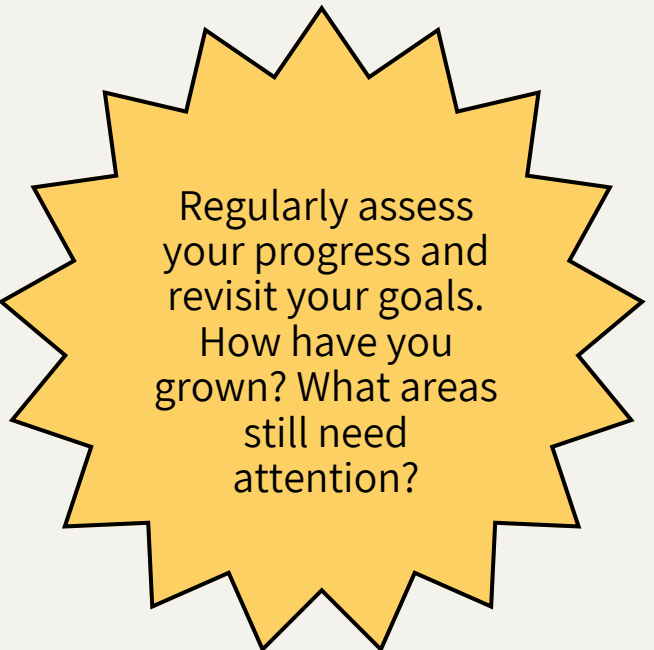
Acknowledge incremental progress - having difficult conversations, challenging bias, contributing to larger advocacy efforts

Building networks of like-minded individuals committed to anti-racism that can provide support and encouragement.

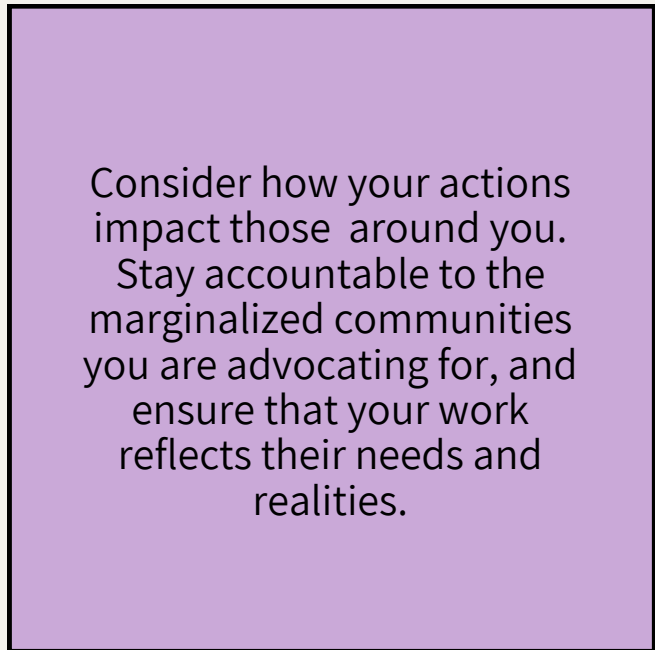
Move from intention to action by actively seeking ways to address racism in your immediate environment (workplace, community, personal circle)

Developing Long-Term Commitment

One of the most challenging aspects of anti-racism is sustaining your efforts over the long term. This requires a combination of discipline, reflection, and a sense of responsibility to continue this work even when it feels difficult or overwhelming. Self reflection, accountability to others primarily racialized folks, adaptability, and seeing this as an ever-evolving practice are all pieces of us sustaining our journey and meet the demands of an ever-changing world.



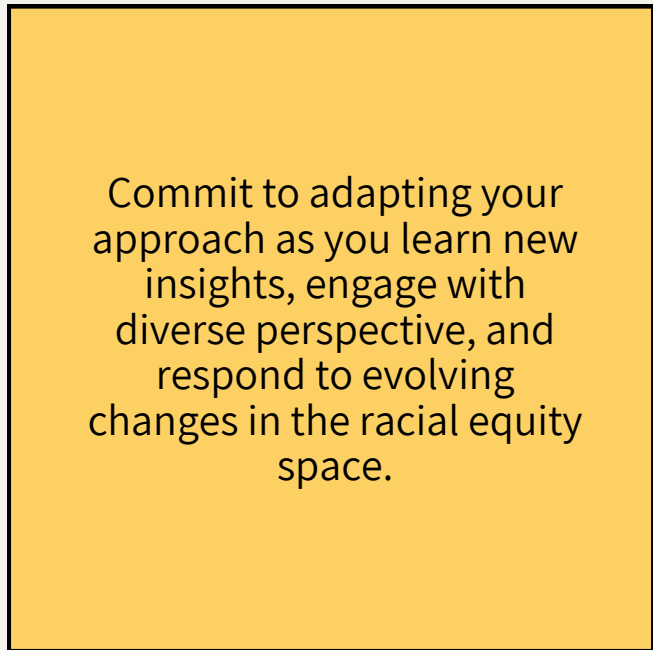
Regularly assess your progress and revisit your goals. How have you grown? What areas still need attention?



Consider how your actions impact those around you. Stay accountable to the marginalized communities you are advocating for, and ensure that your work reflects their needs and realities.



Make it a part of your daily routine through mindful conversations, supporting equitable practices at work, consuming diverse media etc.



Commit to adapting your approach as you learn new insights, engage with diverse perspective, and respond to evolving changes in the racial equity space.



Find an accountability partner(s) Share goals track progress together, challenge and push each other.

A Big Thank You!

Today we've discussed how anti-racism is a deeply personal, proactive, and evolving journey. It requires sustained reflection, accountability, and continuous learning. The question is what will I do next to deepen my commitment? Reflect on your personal goals and how you can commit to specific, actionable steps that will move your anti-racism journey forward in the coming days, months, years. Anti-racism is an ongoing dynamic process that requires a proactive evolving approach. Commit to the work, hold yourself accountable, and stay engaged.

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