

From Fragility & Shame to Resiliency & Accountability: On Whiteness and Wholeness in Racial Justice Work

Presenters

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she/her/hers

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they/them/theirs & she/her/hers

Workshop Premises & Values

We live in a world which has been foundationally shaped by white supremacy, racism, and colonization.

Racism manifests both individually and systemically and must be interrupted on all levels.

The responsibility for interrupting white supremacy and racism belongs to white people.

Privilege

A right, immunity, or benefit enjoyed only by a person beyond the advantages of most.

(Random House Dictionary)

Unearned power conferred systematically.

(Peggy McIntosh)

Shame

A painful feeling of humiliation or distress caused by the consciousness of wrong or foolish behavior.

(Oxford Dictionary)

Shame derives its power from being unspeakable.

(Brené Brown)

White Fragility

A state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves:

- The display of emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt
- Behaviors such as argumentation, silence, and leaving the stress-inducing situation

These behaviors function to reinstate white racial equilibrium.

(Robin DiAngelo)

Discussion

How are shame and white fragility part of your experiences and behaviors?

Give specific examples of how these things have shown up for you around race, social justice, whiteness, etc.

When have you felt shame?

What did that look like?

What did you say, feel, think?

How did you act?

Accountability

The act of being answerable for our decisions and actions, both individually and collectively.

Accountability is built through collaborative relationships and working together.

(Showing Up for Racial Justice)

Resiliency

The capacity to recover quickly from difficulties.

(Oxford Dictionary)

Wholeheartedness:

- Vulnerability: Facing uncertainty, exposure, and emotional risk.
- Worthiness: Knowing you are enough.

(Brené Brown)

Vulnerability

- I don't know.
- I need support.
- It's important to me.
- I made a mistake, but I learned a lot.
- Can I get your take on this?
- What can I do better next time?
- I accept responsibility for that.

(Brené Brown)

Envision:

What does accountability in allyship look like?

How can you increase your resiliency in order to show up more accountably around race, social justice, whiteness, etc.?

What would developing more collective resiliency and accountability as white people look like?

Write:

Two examples each of how you can show resiliency and accountability.

Two people you can call tomorrow who you can ask to talk about white resiliency and accountability with you.

Contact

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Resources

- Bonilla-Silva, E. (2006). *Racism without racists: Color-blind racism and the persistence of racial inequality in the United States*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
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- Kendall, F. (2012). *Understanding white privilege: Creating pathways to authentic relationships across race*. Routledge.
- Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ):
National: showingupforracialjustice.org
Denver: [facebook.com/SURJDenver](https://www.facebook.com/SURJDenver)
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