

**Racism** is a *system* that encompasses economic, political, social, and cultural structures, actions, and beliefs that *institutionalize* and *perpetuate* an unequal distribution of privileges, resources and power between White people and people of Color. This system is historic, normalized, taken for granted, deeply embedded, and works to the benefit of whites and to the disadvantage of people of color (Hilliard, 1992).

**Basic Tenets of Anti-racist Education**

- Racism exists today, in both traditional and modern forms
- All members of this society have been socialized to participate in it
- All white people benefit from racism, *regardless of intentions*; intentions are irrelevant.
- No one here chose to be socialized into racism (so no one is “bad”). But no one is neutral – to not *act* against racism is to support racism.
- Racism must be continually identified, analyzed and challenged; *no one is ever done*
- The question is not “*did* racism take place?” but rather “*how did* racism manifest in that situation?”
- The racial status quo is comfortable for most whites. Therefore, anything that maintains white comfort is suspect. If you are white, practice sitting with and building your stamina for racial discomfort.

**Common White Patterns that obscure and protect racism**

- Preference for racial segregation / isolation. Lack of a sense of loss about segregation / isolation
- Lack of understanding about what racism is
- Seeing ourselves as individuals, outside of racial socialization
- Not understanding that we bring our group’s history with us; history matters
- Cultural appropriation
- Assuming everyone is having/can have our experience
- Lack of racial humility / unwillingness to listen
- Lack of authentic interest in the perspectives of people of color
- Inability to sustain long-term relationships with people of color
- Believing we can be exempt from the power of racial socialization (because we have good intentions, experience another oppression, know some people of color, or took a class or workshop)
- Taboos on talking directly about race and racism
- Wanting to jump over the hard personal work and get to “solutions”
- Confusing “not agreeing” with not understanding
- Need to maintain white solidarity / save face / look good
- Guilt which paralyzes or is an excuse for inaction
- Defensiveness about any suggestion that we are connected to racism
- A focus on intentions over impact

**Dominant Frame: Racism as Either / Or** (Trepagnier, 2007).

<b>Racist = Bad</b>	<b>Not Racist = Good</b>
Ignorant	Progressive
Bigoted	Educated
Prejudiced	Well-intentioned
Mean	Open-minded
Old	Young
Southern	Northern

**Antiracist Frame: Racism as Ever-Present**



**More racist**

**Less racist**

(“Less racist” is not a fixed location based on good intentions, self-image, or past actions. It is continually strived for through on-going and demonstrated practice, and ultimately determined by peoples of Color. )