Slow your roll…
Know your role

Jannah Bierens, MPH, MA
Founder & Principal, PHREEEDOM LLC
Pronouns: she| they| luminary

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

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PUBLIC HEALTH RACIAL EQUITY THRU EXPLORATION & ENGAGEMENT TO DISMANTLE OPPRESSION FOR MOVEMENT

Without **LOVE**, there's no R**EVOL**UTION.

Invitations & Intentions

Notice and/or validate your feelings and tensions. Sit in your discomfort. Explore WHY you feel this way, and please take care of yourself

DISCOMFORT leads to DISCOVERY!

Note things you want to learn more about. This is merely part of the journey and process. Lean into curiosity

EXPLORATION is EDUCATION!

Honesty. Humility. Humanity. Healing. Hope.

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Since August 2021, more than 200 declarations of racism as a public health crisis have emerged nationally, a critical step for elevating the health equity conversation and acknowledging historically rooted racism. This opportunity to center elimination of racist policies and practices to advance racial justice and health equity will only be as effective as the public health workforce is equipped to address it. Advancing equity as a process and achieving it as an outcome requires much more than a training and checkbox.

With a governmental public health workforce that is predominantly white, female, and over forty, we should be concerned about performative equity. Racism as a health justice issue is not new to many public health professionals, especially those who are minoritized in society. Unfortunately, we are not given the tools to explore our racialized and socialized selves for understanding our specific roles and personal power in advancing equity. Racism and oppression shape our cultures. We are all impacted. However, our lens and how we navigate advantage/ disadvantage will always mean differing opinions and approaches.

The revolution will not be white advised

https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/revolution-white-advised-jannah-bierens-mph-ma

Dr. Camara Jones, MD, MPH

Defining racism:
System of structuring opportunity and assigning value based on social interpretation of how one looks

- **Unfairly disadvantages** some individuals and communities

- **Unfairly advantages** other individuals and communities

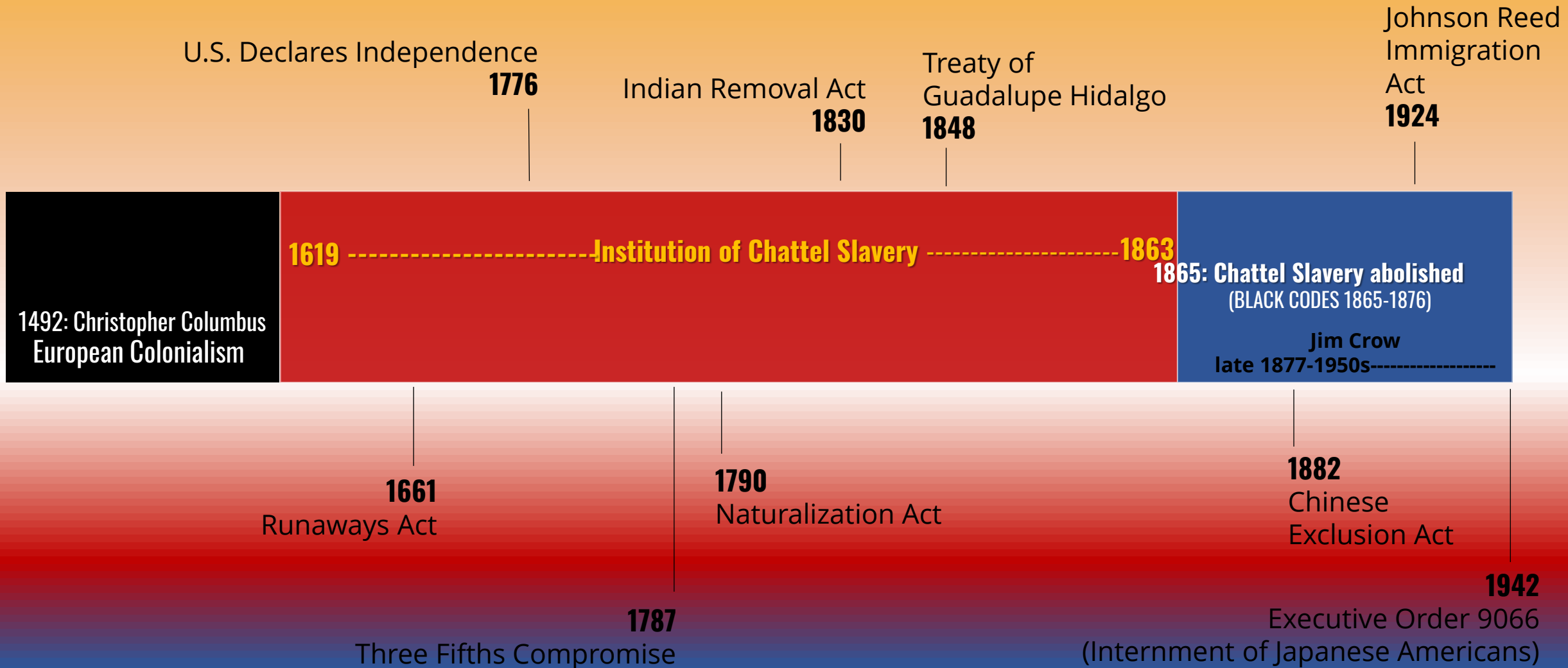- **Saps strength of the whole** society- waste of human resources

1. Personally-mediated racism
2. Internalized racism
3. **Structural/Institutional racism**

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*Social and institutional **power** combined with **race prejudice**. It is a **system of advantage** for those considered white, **and of oppression** for those who are not considered white. It is a **white supremacy system**.*

- **Racial Equity Institute**, Greensboro NC

AMERICA I AM RACE

As the idea of race expanded and infiltrated societal culture, white superiority became "common sense" in America. Racial practices were shaped by the pseudo-science of race by scholars, scientists and theorists who perpetuated skin-color determined advantage and disadvantage within American government, laws, and society. **Race is a powerful social idea** that gives people **different access to opportunities and resources**. Our government and social institutions have created advantages that disproportionately channel wealth, power, and resources to people who became known as white. Below is a brief snapshot highlighting the thread of race-based exclusivity woven from this country's foundation and throughout history, never dissolving, but ever-evolving.

Johnson Reed
Immigration
Act
1924

U.S. Declares Independence
1776

Indian Removal Act
1830

Treaty of
Guadalupe Hidalgo
1848

1619 ---------------------- **Institution of Chattel Slavery** ---------------------- 1863

1492: Christopher Columbus
European Colonialism

1865: Chattel Slavery abolished
(BLACK CODES 1865-1876)

**Jim Crow
late 1877-1950s------------------**

1661
Runaways Act

1790
Naturalization Act

1882
Chinese
Exclusion Act

1942

1787
Three Fifths Compromise

1942
Executive Order 9066
(Internment of Japanese Americans)

The Presidents of the United States

Who controls our institutions?

- Congress: 90% white
- Governors: 96% white
- Top military advisors: 100% white
- POTUS cabinet: 91% white
- People who decide which TV shows we see: 93% white
- People who decide which books we read: 90% white
- People who decide which news is covered: 85% white
- People who decide which music is produced: 95% white
- Teachers: 83% white
- Full time College Professors: 84% white
- Owners of men's pro-football teams: 97% white

No, I Won't Stop Saying White Supremacy by Dr. Robin DiAngelo (August 12, 2017)

https://goodmenproject.com/featured-content/no-i-wont-stop-saying-white-supremacy-wcz/
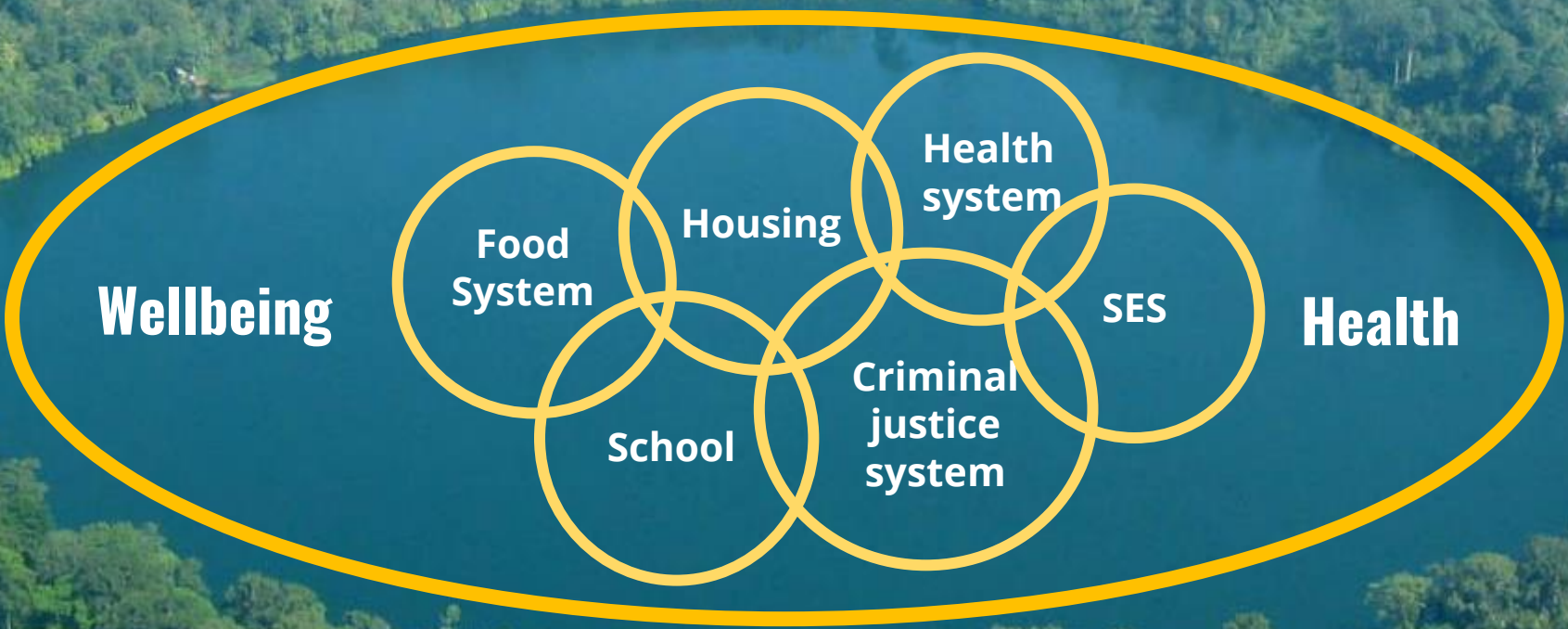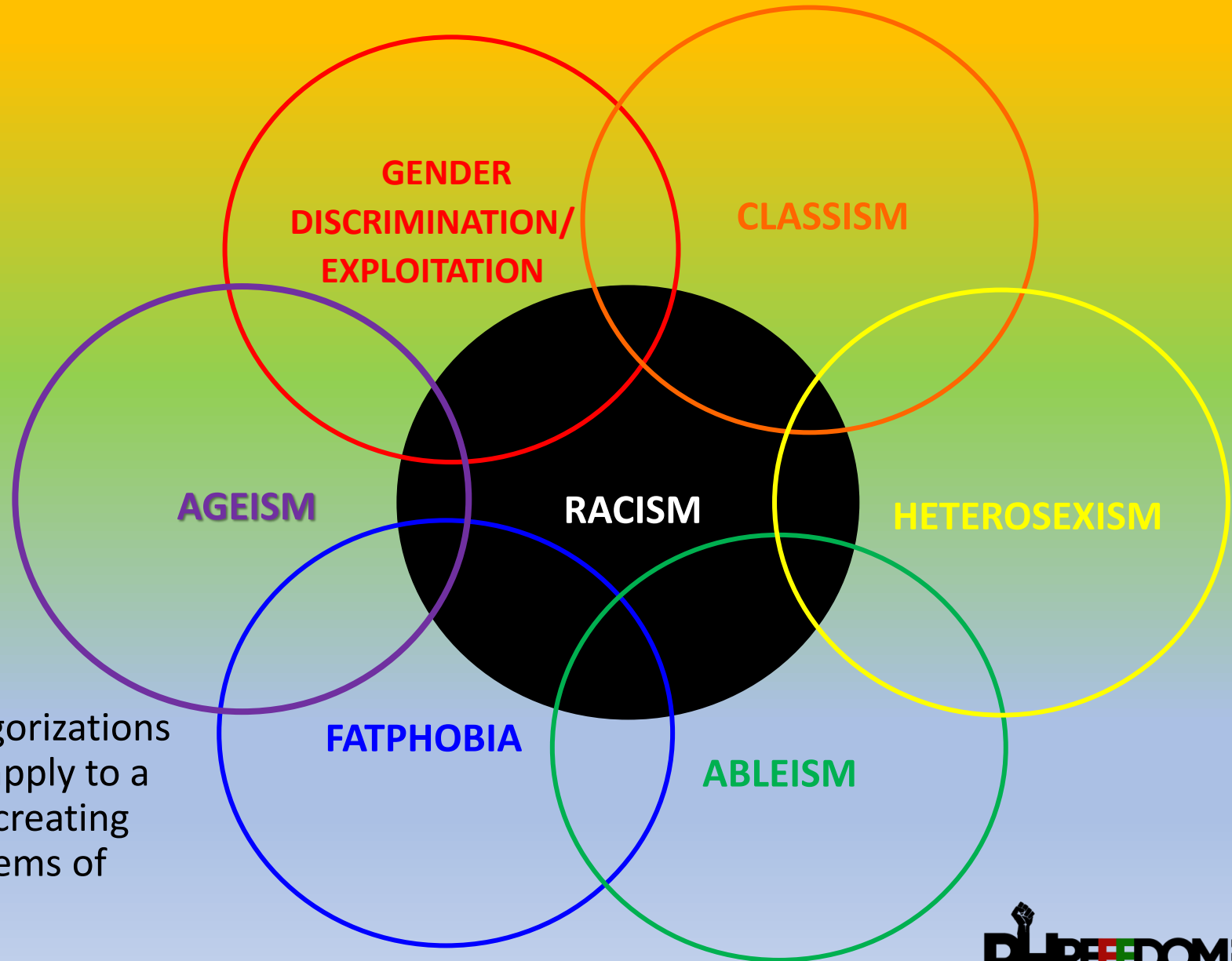
Our current approach is typically piece-meal, lacking intention, and attempting to stuff equity into the current societal and workplace culture "box" which tends to value power, production and profit over people. As a result, potential of causing and perpetuating harm increases and can hinder progress.

EQUITY

white supremacy
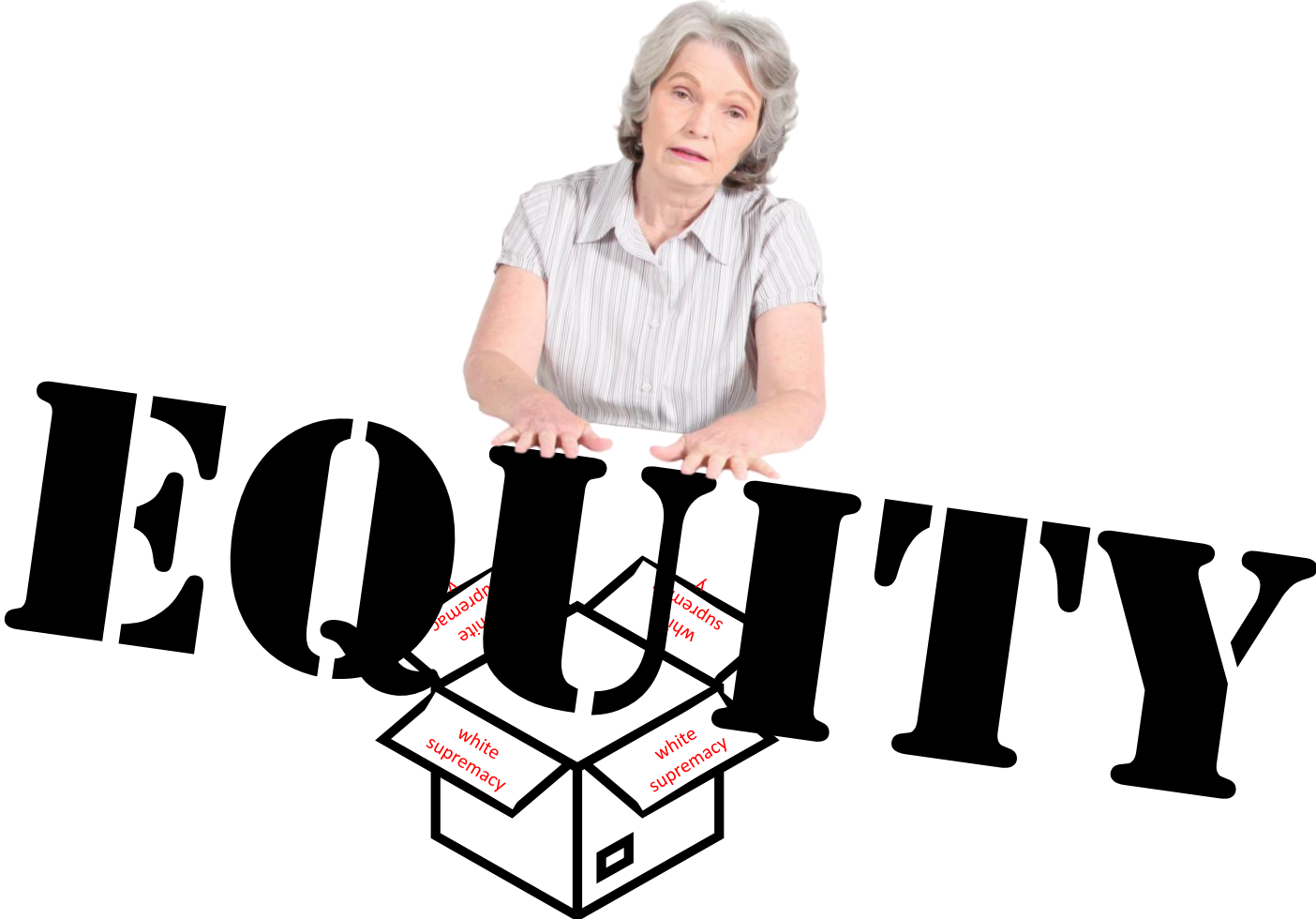
white supremacy

- **Unfairly _advantages_** other individuals and communities
- **System of advantage** for those considered white

White culture was created FOR the purpose of oppression

WHITE SUPREMACY CULTURE

- **Unfairly _disadvantages_** other individuals and communities
- **System of oppression** for those who are not considered white

Black culture emerged in resistance to and DESPITE oppression

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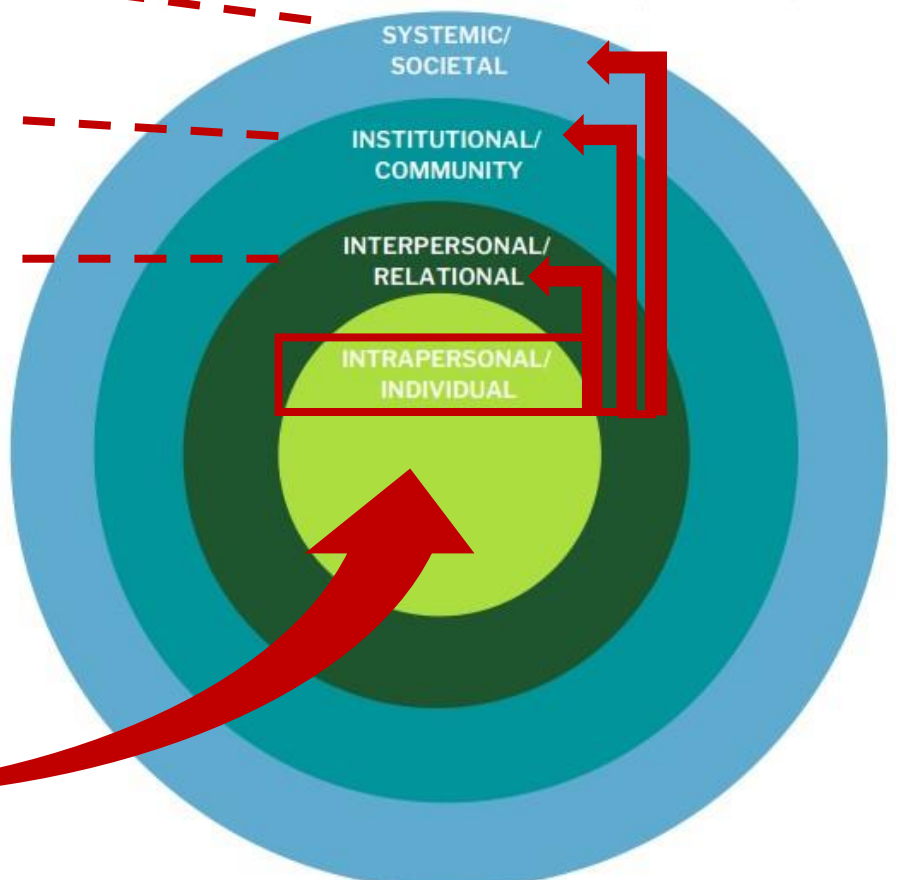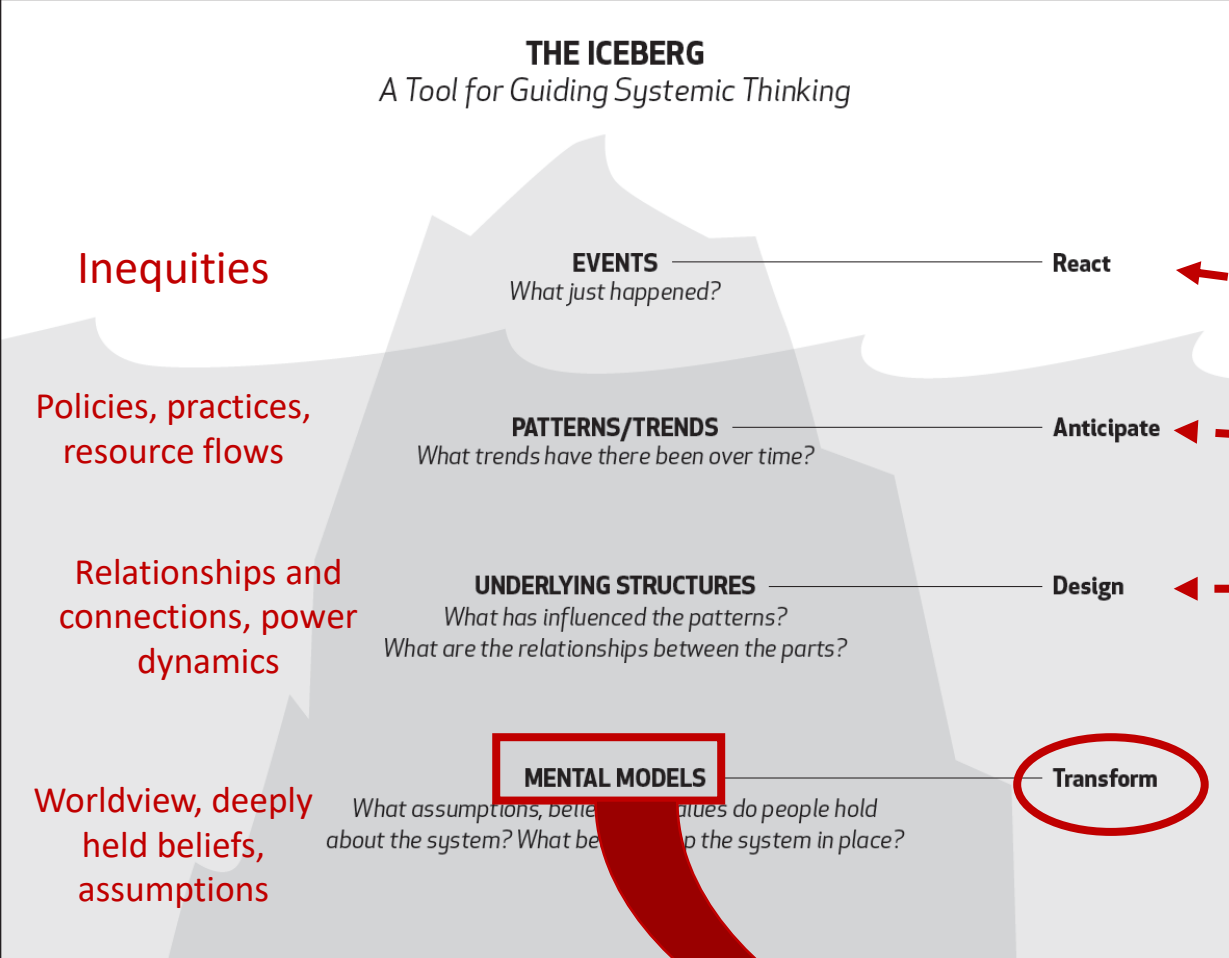CONSULTING AND FACILITATION

A lot of racial bias occurs when we **move too fast**, at the speed of *habit*, instead of slowing down to **investigate, reflect, dig deep**, and initiate new practices.

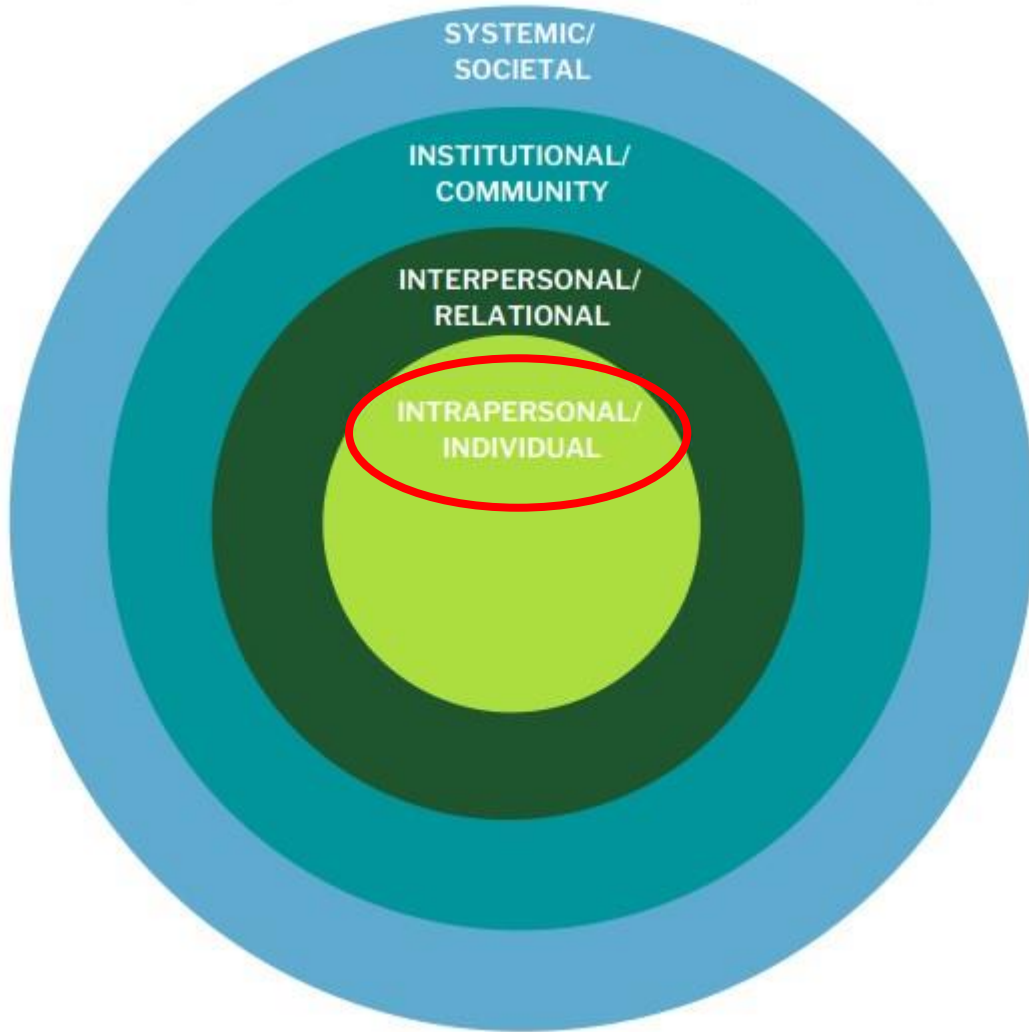-Creating Cultures & Practices for Racial Equity, *Race Forward*

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THE ICEBERG
A Tool for Guiding Systemic Thinking

Inequities

Policies, practices, resource flows

Relationships and connections, power dynamics

Worldview, deeply held beliefs, assumptions

EVENTS
What just happened? — React

PATTERNS/TRENDS
What trends have there been over time? — Anticipate

UNDERLYING STRUCTURES
What has influenced the patterns?
What are the relationships between the parts? — Design

MENTAL MODELS
What assumptions, beliefs, values do people hold about the system? What be... up the system in place? — Transform

SYSTEMIC/SOCIETAL

INSTITUTIONAL/COMMUNITY

INTERPERSONAL/RELATIONAL

INTRAPERSONAL/INDIVIDUAL

Harper Browne, C. & O'Connor, C. (2021). Social ecological model of racism & anti-racism. Center for the Study of Social Policy

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A Social-Ecological Model of Racism & Anti-Racism

SYSTEMIC/ SOCIETAL RACISM
Historical and current macro-level ideology, values, laws, policies, & practices that create and sustain differential access to power, privilege, opportunity, and resources within and across systems and that result in inequitable outcomes such as:
- Public policies that have systematically removed Native, Black, Latinx, and Asian peoples from their homes and communities
- Inadequate responses to and protections from environmental hazards and disasters for Native, Black, Latinx, and Asian communities
- Lower home values in Black neighborhoods than in White neighborhoods, resulting in a lower tax base for schools and other services
- Longer sentences for Black people than White people when convicted of similar crimes
- Less access to quality health care for Native, Black, Latinx, and Asian peoples

SYSTEMIC/ SOCIETAL ANTI-RACISM
Ideology, values, norms, laws, policies, & practices that create and sustain equitable access to power, privilege, opportunity, and resources within and across the functioning of systems and in their outcomes, characterized by:
- Valuing and protecting the fundamental humanity and rights of all people
- Acknowledgement of the racist roots of laws, policies, and systems that result in disparate outcomes—and specific, targeted efforts to redress and counteract them
- Commitment to directing resources and supports to those who have been harmed by racism
- Developing and implementing new strategies to achieve goals like public safety and child protection
- Leadership by and alongside individuals and communities who have been harmed

INSTITUTIONAL/ COMMUNITY RACISM
Discriminatory policies, procedures, and practices in organizational and community contexts that create, result in, and sustain differential access to power, privilege, opportunity, & resources, such as:
- Rules that penalize Native, Black, Latinx, and Asian peoples based on their physical traits or cultural expressions
- Lack of availability or access to quality goods, services, and resources
- Adultification bias—perceiving Native, Black, and Latinx children as less innocent and more accountable for their actions than their White peers
- Constant threat of harassment, danger, or assault

INSTITUTIONAL/ COMMUNITY ANTI-RACISM
Recognizing and eliminating discriminatory policies, procedures, and practices in organizational and community contexts in order to create and sustain equitable access to power, privilege, opportunity, and resources, characterized by:
- Settings that are accessible, welcoming, and affirming to all
- Assessment of policies, procedures, and practices that lead to disparate outcomes
- Adoption of new policies, procedures, and practices to replace or counteract harmful ones and to repair harm done
- Swift responses to racist actions or display of bias

INTERPERSONAL/ RELATIONAL RACISM
Verbal and non-verbal prejudiced and discriminatory interactions between individuals, such as:
- Stigmatization
- Social exclusion/ostracism
- "Micro"aggressions—intentional or unintentional environmental, behavioral, verbal, or racial indignities
- Racial profiling
- Police brutality

INTERPERSONAL/ RELATIONAL ANTI-RACISM
Verbal & non-verbal interactions between individuals, characterized by:
- Appreciation for each person's unique identity, experiences, and perspectives
- Not making or acting on assumptions about a person based on perceived race, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexuality, or disability
- Willingness to apologize and/or make reparations for harm caused

INTRAPERSONAL/ RELATIONAL RACISM
Negative racialized ideas, feelings, and attitudes, such as:
- Personal racism—Stereotypical, prejudiced, or biased beliefs and feelings about other races and ethnicities
- Internalized racism—Acceptance of racist ideas, feelings, and attitudes about one's own group

INTRAPERSONAL/ RELATIONAL ANTI-RACISM
Personal reflection to counteract one's own racialized ideas, feelings, and attitudes, including:
- Understanding how one's own racial socialization and identity have shaped and been influenced by personal life experiences
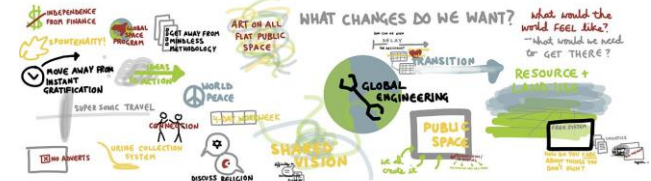- Examining the personal impact of living in a racist society

Harper Browne, C. & O'Connor, C. (2021). Social ecological model of racism & anti-racism. Center for the Study of Social Policy

ANTI-RACISM

Active process of identifying and challenging racism and redistributing power in an equitable manner, by changing policies and practices within systems and organizations, as well as individual beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors

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Becoming Anti-Racist

Fear Zone

I deny racism is a problem.

I avoid hard questions.

I strive to be comfortable.

I talk to others who look & think like me.

Learning Zone

I recognize racism is a present & current problem.

I seek out questions that make me uncomfortable.

I understand my own privilege in ignoring racism.

I educate myself about race & structural racism.

I am vulnerable about my own biases & knowledge gaps.

I listen to others who think & look differently than me.

I surround myself with others who think & look differently than me.

Growth Zone

I identify how I may unknowingly benefit from Racism.

I promote & advocate for policies & leaders that are Anti-Racist.

I sit with my discomfort.

I speak out when I see Racism in action.

I educate my peers how Racism harms our profession.

I don't let mistakes deter me from being better.

I yield positions of power to those otherwise marginalized.

www.SurgeryRedesign.com

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To shift from transactional to transformational demands that we build (or rebuild) **TRUST**. Trust requires **TRUTH** and **TRANSPARENCY**. Within a "time is money" culture of production, allocating time and funding to build relationships beyond the surface can feel as if it lacks value and often gets skipped.
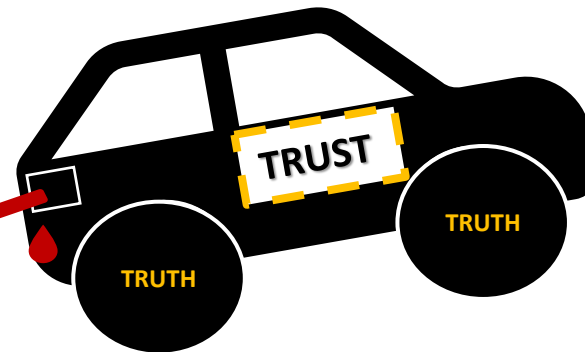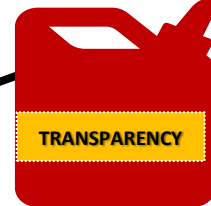

TRANSFORMATION

Practice

TRANSACTION

TRUST

TRUTH

TRUTH

TRANSPARENCY

Performance

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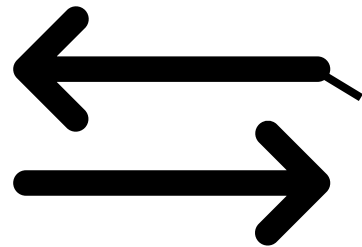
"We must transform ourselves to transform the world." -Grace Lee Boggs

System change requires people change, from the inside out, with honesty, humility, and humanity.

Public **H**ealth **R**acial **Equity** thru **Exploration** & **Engagement** to **D**ismantle **O**ppression for **M**ovement
(what)   *(how)*   *(vision/ outcome)*

EQUITY REQUIRES JUSTICE	EXPLORATION IS EDUCATION	ENGAGEMENT AS A BOTH/ AND
As a process and an outcome, equity requires us to be critical about our society and how history continues to shape our operations and influence outcomes

It starts with root cause analysis that provides knowledge about how inequities have been historically and currently rooted in INJUSTICE since this country's founding | History

Society/ Culture

Self/ Internal

Each other

Institutions | **Both:** Engagement as in *commitment* to this work with an open heart, mind, and intention

And: Engagement with self and each other. Deepening relationships with ourselves and people outside of our own experience serves as information to move forward, out of the stifling "cycle of stuck" |
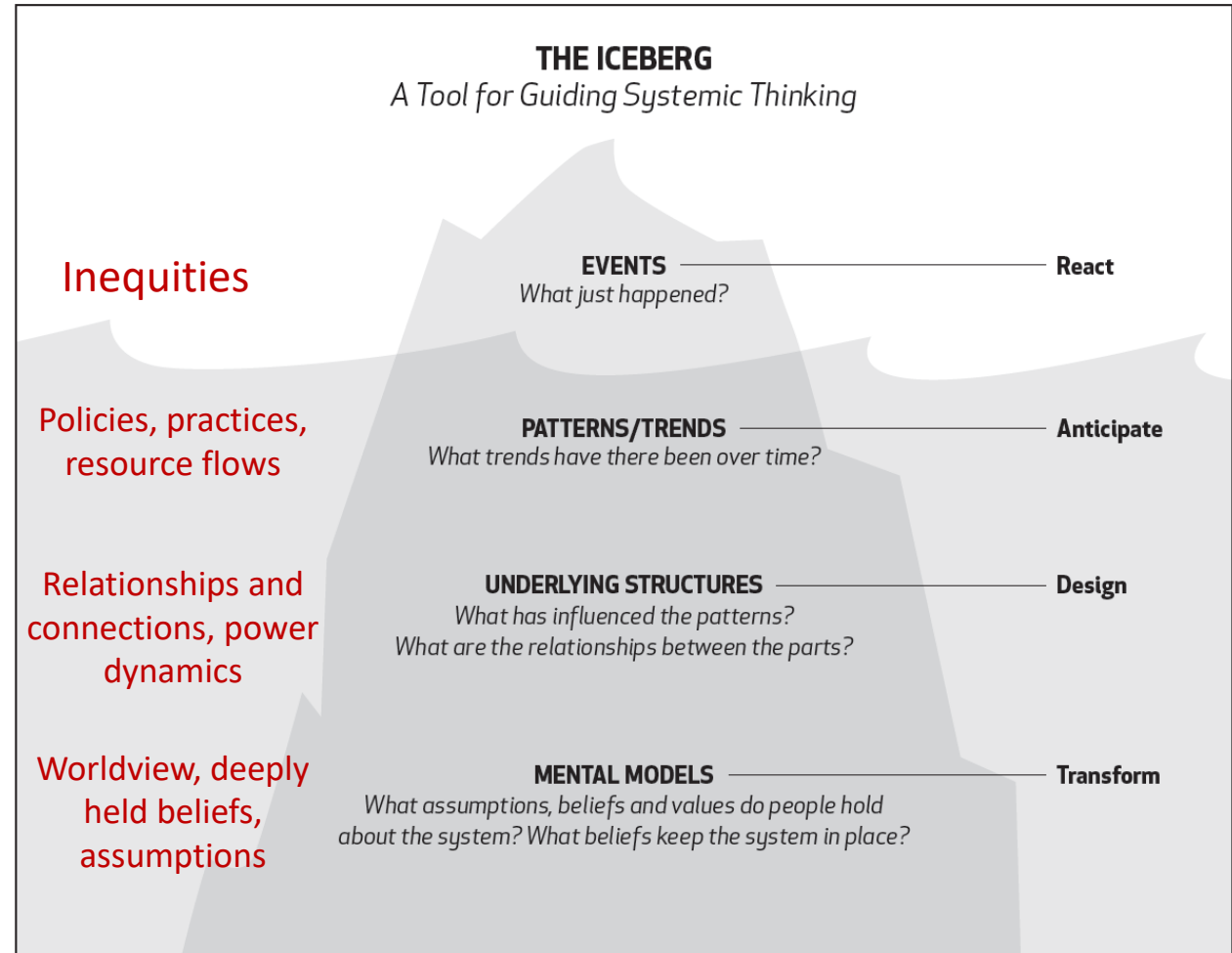
PHREEDOM LLC
CONSULTING AND FACILITATION

Stifling "cycle of stuck"

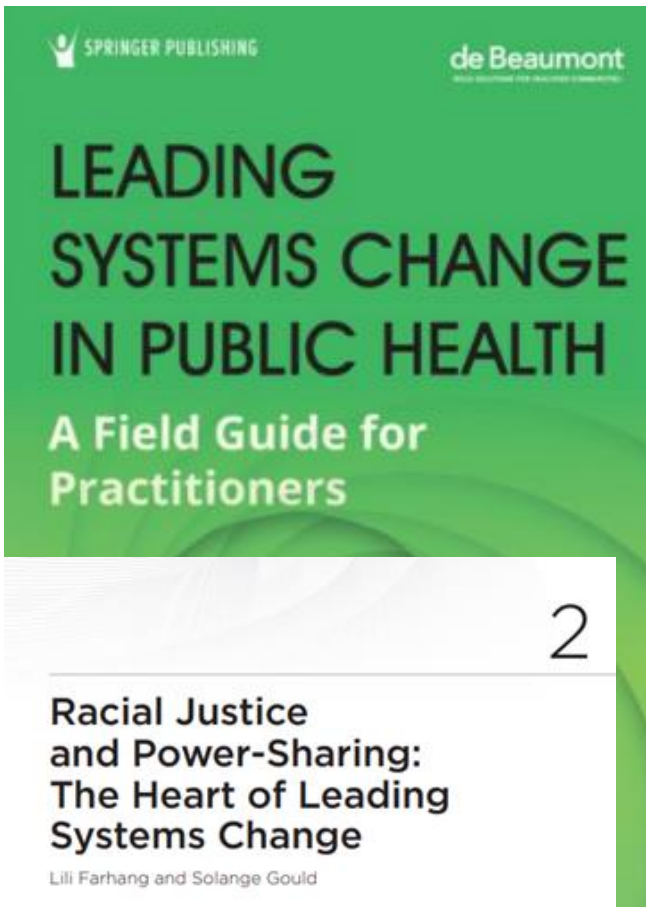The following can work alone and/ or together to hinder movement forward:

✓ Feeling overwhelmed and don't know where to start, so just don't attempt (inaction = perpetuating inequity)

✓ Ascribing to and upholding commitment to status quo and supremacy culture many of our institutions center by default because it's more convenient and easier

✓ Traditional public health funding structure is not supportive of equity efforts with intention, which requires time and space for employees to process and grow together

✓ Receive foundational training and don't know how to operationalize concepts learned

✓ Waiting for everyone to get on/ be on the same page

✓ Fear of saying and doing the "wrong" things

Reflecting on our differing truths and deepening relationship with ourselves and each other, shift us from being transactional, so that equity is not just *something we do* but being equitable is *who we become...*

Our sustainable transformation, collective healing, and mass liberation depend on it.

THE ICEBERG
A Tool for Guiding Systemic Thinking

Inequities

Policies, practices, resource flows

Relationships and connections, power dynamics

Worldview, deeply held beliefs, assumptions

EVENTS — React
What just happened?

PATTERNS/TRENDS — Anticipate
What trends have there been over time?

UNDERLYING STRUCTURES — Design
What has influenced the patterns?
What are the relationships between the parts?

MENTAL MODELS — Transform
What assumptions, beliefs and values do people hold about the system? What beliefs keep the system in place?

✓ How is racism/ oppression operating here?
✓ What power dynamics are at play?
✓ Who has power to make decisions and from what lens?
✓ Who is being centered (advantaged)?
✓ Who is being marginalized (disadvantaged)?
✓ Who is most impacted by these decisions?

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LEADING SYSTEMS CHANGE IN PUBLIC HEALTH

A Field Guide for Practitioners

2

Racial Justice and Power-Sharing: The Heart of Leading Systems Change

Lili Farhang and Solange Gould

*How systems change leaders can place the **values of power-sharing and racial justice at the heart** of our systems change practices.*

***Key set of core principles and capabilities** central to leading effective and **transformative systems** change at the interpersonal, team, organizational, and community levels.*

Key Messages

1. **Expand our mental models** and **develop a shared analysis** about how **power imbalances**, racism, and other forms of oppression define and pattern the systems that drive health

2. **Centering human "being"** and not just **human "doing"** as an important way of **deepening the relationships necessary to disrupt** these patterns

3. **Establish change processes** that are themselves a **model of sharing power** and **shifting who represents and is leading transformation** of our systems

- **Develop a shared analysis and its byproducts:** Facilitate processes to examine histories of racism, power imbalances, supremacy, and harm—and ask how these same dynamics influence the system today

- **Create a container for systems change processes**: Shared working and thinking space that allows for a different set of relational dynamics and culture to emerge

- **"Integrate the head and the heart"** to make space alongside our intellectual work to feel the physical sensations and emotions that arise when confronting the reality of racial inequities and unjust power imbalances

- **Adopt a power-sharing approach**, where systems actors shift their dominant role, positionality, or component of the system, often relinquishing control and authority and opening opportunities for those with less leverage and power to step into greater ownership and responsibility

- **Change who is at the table** to directly address racial inequities and integrate a power-sharing model by forging long-term relationships with community power building organizations that often represent and are made up of people and communities most impacted by inequities

Jannah Bierens, MPH, MA (she|they|luminary)

Founder & Principal, PHREEEDOM LLC

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PHREEEDOM4all@gmail.com
@jannah_justice on IG and Twitter

"EXPLORATION" IS EDUCATION

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Resources for continued learning

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

"Racism is a system of power relationships and thought that relegates people of color to inferior status and treatment, denying them access to society's benefits and justifying this with beliefs about their innate inferiority. White supremacy is at the heart of racism in the United States: **It is a belief in the innate superiority of White people, justifying their greater privilege and power and their right to exploit and limit the rights of others**.

Racism is not always conscious or intentional; often it is systemic or structural—that is, built into systems, laws, policies, and pervasive, deep-rooted practices, beliefs, and attitudes that produce and perpetuate unfair treatment."

Systemic Racism and Health Equity

UCSF

Robert Wood Johnson

https://www.rwjf.org/en/library/research/2021/12/systemic-racism-and-health-equity.html

THE GROUNDWATER APPROACH: building a practical understanding of structural racism

written by BAYARD LOVE AND DEENA HAYES-GREENE OF THE RACIAL EQUITY INSTITUTE

Racial Equity Institute

https://www.racialequityinstitute.com/groundwaterapproach

The Groundwater metaphor is designed to help practitioners at all levels internalize the reality that we live in a racially structured society, and that that is what causes racial inequity. The metaphor is based on three observations:

1. Racial inequity looks the same across systems

2. Socio-economic difference does not explain the racial inequity

3. Inequities are caused by systems, regardless of people's culture or behavior

Embracing these truths helps leaders confront the reality that all our systems, institutions, and outcomes emanate from the racial hierarchy, on which the United States was built. In other words, we have a "groundwater" problem, and we need "groundwater" solutions. Starting from there, we begin to unlock transformative change

White Supremacy Culture and Characteristics, Dr. Tema Okun & friends

https://www.whitesupremacyculture.info/

Social-Ecological Model, Center for the Study of Social Policy

Social-Ecological Model diagram

- SYSTEMIC/ SOCIETAL
- INSTITUTIONAL/ COMMUNITY
- INTERPERSONAL/ RELATIONAL
- INTRAPERSONAL/ INDIVIDUAL

A Social-Ecological Model of Racism & Anti-Racism

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- Examining the personal impact of living in a racist society
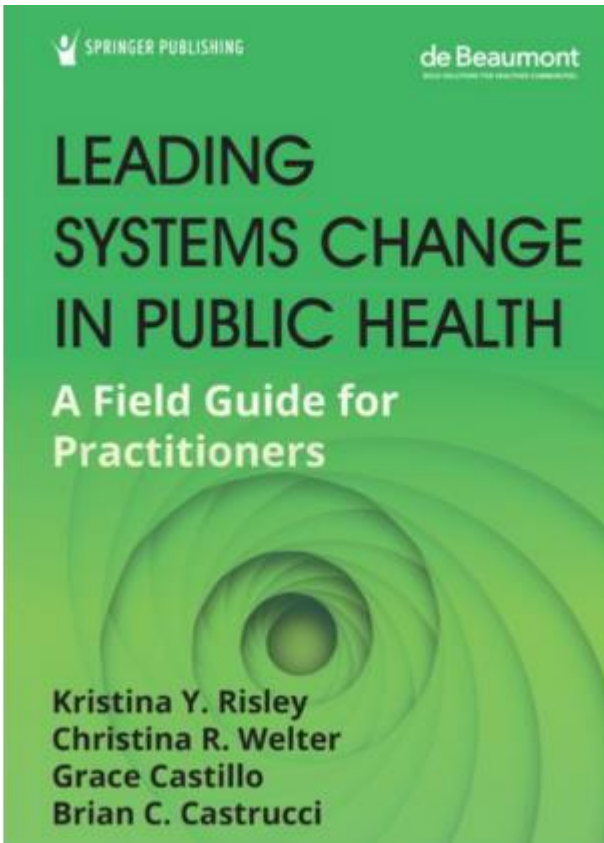
Becoming Anti-Racist

Inspired by the work of Dr. Kendi, this figure reflects a journey toward becoming anti-racist. Feel free to use, copy and share.

A high-resolution PDF of the figure can be **downloaded here**

Human Impact Partners (HIP)
https://humanimpact.org/

SPRINGER PUBLISHING   de Beaumont

LEADING SYSTEMS CHANGE IN PUBLIC HEALTH

A Field Guide for Practitioners

Kristina Y. Risley
Christina R. Welter
Grace Castillo
Brian C. Castrucci

2

Racial Justice and Power-Sharing: The Heart of Leading Systems Change

Lili Farhang and Solange Gould

"No one can define or measure justice, democracy, security, freedom, truth, or love. No one can define or measure any value. But if no one speaks up for them, if systems aren't designed to produce them, if we don't speak about them and point toward their presence or absence, they will cease to exist."
—Donella Meadows[(p177)]

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

By the end of this chapter, practitioners will have learned the following core principles and capabilities to implement our approach, which are based on our experience working with over 100 health departments and public health organizations. These include:

- How to develop a shared analysis and expand our mental models regarding the manner in which power imbalances, racism, and other forms of oppression define and structure the systems that drive health.
- Attending to the work of "being" together, and not just "doing" together, as a way of deepening the relationships necessary to disrupt these patterns at the interpersonal, team, organizational, and community levels.
- Establishing change processes that embody a model of sharing power and shifting who represents and is leading transformation.

17

Health departments are building power for health equity

After years of struggling to close health disparities, a new movement has taken root: health departments are using a set of strategic practices to confront the power imbalances and forms of oppression at the root of health inequities, change the conversation about what creates health equity, develop leadership and support innovation, and build a movement for health equity.

Strategic Practices

Mobilize Data, Research, & Evaluation	Build Organizational Capacity	Change Internal Practices and Processes	Prioritize Upstream Policy Change	Allocate Resources

See All Strategic Practices →

We want to scale up this transformation

This website is structured around a set of strategic practices that health departments can apply to more meaningfully and comprehensively advance health equity. Over and over, more health departments are asking "What are the strategic steps we can take to advance health equity at our health department?" This resource showcases success stories from across the United States to answer this question.

https://healthequityguide.org/

The revolution will not be white advised

https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/revolution-white-advised-jannah-bierens-mph-ma