The following chapter is an excerpt from a book project initiated by Catholic Workers Jenny Truax and Carolyn Griffeth.

This chapter, brimming with links to source material, is available online for download at: https://goo.gl/8zCEMj

Recipes for the Beloved Community

Gathered Wisdom from
Catholic Workers
and
Fellow Travelers

Let's face it, racially-integrated intentional communities are the exception rather than the rule. It's a very common to find an all-white community of folks situated in a neighborhood where people of color are a significant portion of the population, but only involved in the house as guests or clients. Most intentional communities would agree that they value diversity (which itself can be a nebulous and tokenistic concept) but lack the tools to examine the ways that white supremacy is influencing their community culture. Often when the whiteness of these communities is questioned, people deflect with excuses about class. While race and class are certainly connected, white folks need to be brave and acknowledge the influence that racism has on their communities.

Racism is present everywhere in the US, in church groups, parent groups, at work, play and home. Good intentions, great missions and dedicated service don't change this reality. Intentional work that directly addresses racism can help communities evolve into groups that actively embody their values. Referring back to the Anti-Oppression Introduction, anti-racism work allows our communities to develop a common language and analysis of institutional racism, power, and privilege, a shared assessment of the ways racism affects our groups, and shared priorities for change. The goal is not for our community to check a few "anti-racism boxes," adopt the badge of "ally" and go on with business as usual. Working for justice is a journey of self-discovery, challenge and growth. It is also a communal balance between looking at our internal structures, and looking at how we engage with the outside world.

White people and white-dominated communities are the benefactors of racism, and have the most to do in order to dismantle it. Many white folks want to move past the "What should we do?" and "Why aren't there any people of color in our community?" questions, but lack direction, skills and support. Or they may lack the will to change; when norms, culture, and power dynamics evolve when a community diversifies, things can feel scary. White folks may think to themselves, "Will I lose my community if we go down this path?"

In part, it is the legacy of racism that has led many white folks into their progressive communities. Unfettered access to resources, the isolation of white middle class life, and the homogenization of our culture lead many folks to seek out counter-cultural communities. That's all well and good, but should this experience be a prerequisite for membership in community? Without addressing these underlying dynamics of race and privilege, many intentional communities will continue to appeal primarily to white people.

Foundational Concepts of Racism
First, let's talk about the concept of **race.** Race and its ideology about human differences arose out of the context of African slavery; **it is actually a social construct** that has no biologic or scientific basis (for more on this, check out the chapter resources below). The concept of race was created to give power and privilege to white people and to legitimize the dominance of white people over non-white people. U.S. history provides an example of race as a flexible social construct. For the majority of the 19th century, racial categories were limited to Caucasian, Mongoloid, and Negroid. One group maintained property, civil, and voting rights while people in the other two groups were marginalized, exploited and limited. Even though race is a concept we invented and periodically alter to fit the current political situation, it has a very real impact. With that in mind, we'll continue to use the terms 'race' and 'racism,' with this extra bit of context included.

In a nutshell, the **definition of racism** is "racial prejudice + power = racism." But what does that mean? Well, anyone of any race can have "racial prejudice" (positive or negative stereotypes based on racial characteristics) and commit violent or unjust acts based on this prejudice. To be racist (rather than simply prejudiced) requires having institutional power, and in the US, this power is held by white folks. White people mostly run the banks and corporations, make up the largest proportion of lawmakers and judges, have the money and make the decisions. White people control the systems that matter. Because of this power, when white people act on their racial prejudices, they are being racist. So the punchline here is: **Only white people can be racist, because they have institutional power.** Asian Americans, Indigenous Peoples, Latino/as, and African Americans, for example, can be prejudiced, but they cannot be racist, because they do not have the institutional power.

Racism: The Elephant in the Room
Public Art Installation, photo: John Duffy

Racism operates in a variety of venues, but people often only recognize it in its most extreme form (you know, Ku Klux Klan rallies and the occasional celebrity racist slur.) In reality, racism is much more pervasive. It occurs in our progressive communities and meetings as **personal racism**: volunteers asking questions based on racist stereotypes or community members making off-hand racist characterizations. **Institutional racism** is the way government, public and private institutions (including intentional communities) systematically afford white people social, political and economic advantages while marginalizing people of color. (Remember the earlier question about qualifications for entry into our communities? That is a good example of institutional racism that systemically attracts some while discouraging others.) **Cultural racism** can be found throughout the fabric of society, for example, in the classroom, where biased and white-washed history textbooks are used and students are forced to assimilate into the dominant white culture.

No one is born a racist. In fact, racism is contrary to our fundamental human nature, which is to seek connection, love, and belonging. Because our society has adopted the social construct of race, we learn it and use it, even unconsciously, to keep ourselves separate from each other, and to justify a hierarchy of worth. Check out "The Road to Socialization" worksheet in the Introduction to Anti-Oppression Chapter through the lens of race to explore the messages you learned about race throughout your life. Messages of white supremacy are ubiquitous in society, and on a personal level become internalized and repeated by white folks who develop characteristics of **Internalized Racial Superiority,** and in people of color who can experience the characteristics of **Internalized Racial Inferiority**.

How to respond to racism is an everyday decision we all need to make. We've learned that blaming others doesn't tend to promote growth. It doesn't help the learning process or make people more receptive to feedback. It is also not useful to blame ourselves for the racism, sexism, or homophobia within ourselves. Rather we should treat ourselves and others with compassion, knowing that we have been socialized from day one to accept these unjust societal norms. In noticing and responding to our own oppressive patterns and

ideas, we can say to ourselves, "There is a good reason why I came to believe this (the way I was socialized,) but I refuse to believe it anymore." Unlike criticism and blaming which can actually further the hurts to which oppressive beliefs are linked, expressing love through compassion can serve as a healing balm. That said, let us not confuse compassion with tolerance of anyone's oppressive patterns.

There are a million ways to combat racism – in ourselves, in our communities and other organizations, in systems and cultural norms. We hope this offering will support folks in intentional communities who are looking for ways forward.

Chapter Contents

This chapter brings together the work of a myriad of thinkers and authors. Our intent was to bring together a set of resources in one place for your community to investigate racism, and also to translate some of these foundational ideas into the framework of intentional community living. This chapter was edited, written and compiled by Jenny Truax, a white woman; I take full responsibility and welcome feedback on any of the errors in thinking it contains. I wrote all the material that is not directly sourced. We encourage you to investigate the primary sources as they are works of much collaboration and years of research.

Each individual topic can be used as the basis for a retreat, a communal discussion, or clarification of thought. Hopefully this material will provide some shared language, analysis tools, and action ideas toward becoming a more anti-racist group. This chapter includes the following articles and worksheets:

- Eliminating Racism From Within – A first person reflection on applying anti-racist principles to intentional community life (specifically, the Catholic Worker)
- Worksheet: White Privilege in Community
- Worksheet: White Supremacy in Group Culture
- Worksheets: Internalized Manifestations of Racism
- Worksheets: White Folk Work
- Worksheet: Community Assessment Tool
- Worksheet: Interrupting Racism
- Anti-Racist Organizing for White Folks
- Communal Strategies to Dismantle Racism

Chapter Sources and Resources

Origin of the Idea of Race - Audrey Smedley

Dismantling Racism: A Resource Book for Social Change Groups - The Western States Center - Downloadable and incredibly helpful resource. The main source of material for this chapter.

For Now We See in a Mirror, Dimly – An Anti-Racist Critique of Pax Christi USA's Theology and Practice of Nonviolence - Tom Cordaro

White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack – Peggy McIntosh

Catalyzing Liberation Toolkit - Resource guide, compiled by Catalyst Project and Chris Crass, includes a great exercise on Racism in Social Justice Movements.

Solidarity and Nonviolence in Ferguson – Jenny Truax

Healing the Racial Divide: A Catholic Racial Justice Framework Inspired by Dr. Arthur Falls – Lincoln Rice

Re-Evaluation Counseling Materials on Internalized Racism

Racial Identity Caucusing: A Strategy for Building Anti-Racist Collectives

Waking Up White – Debby Irving

Witnessing Whiteness - Shelly Tochluk

Community Recipe:
Eliminating Racism from Within

James Meinert, 2012

Note: Many times I use the term, "we" referring to white Catholic Workers. This is not to exclude people of color but it is the white Catholic Workers, myself included, that I'm calling out.

This past summer the Midwest Catholic Worker gathering began with a large presentation on eliminating racism. The topic is pertinent to Catholic Workers here in the Midwest and beyond as we struggle to continue our prophetic work in the world. Something we noticed, which has been noticed many times before, is how white the Catholic Worker (CW) is. While many Catholic Workers may struggle for workers' rights, against poverty, against war and violence, all of which disproportionately affect people of color, those who choose to join the CW are overwhelmingly white.

Looking Back

From its inception, the CW has been involved in the struggle for justice including racial injustice. Dorothy Day would often report on worker's conditions, especially those of African Americans, race dynamics, and racism. And there were more than just words. She put her own life on the line to support the work of desegregation at the interracial farm Koinonia and was shot at while vigiling there. Peter Maurin also began what would today be called a popular education center in Harlem. Peter's vision was to have a center with shared leadership in an almost entirely black neighborhood. Later, throughout the struggles for civil rights, many Catholic Workers marched in solidarity in the South.

In addition to solidarity work we also need to recover the stories of black leadership within the movement. There have been several CW houses started by African Americans. These houses in D.C, Memphis, and Chicago were started by people committed to the vision of the CW but also rooted in the needs of their area. Helen Caldwell Day started the Blessed Martin House of Hospitality in Memphis where she ran a daycare for parents in the neighborhood who had to work but couldn't afford care. Arthur Falls started the first Chicago CW. He didn't consider the hospitality work very important. He wrote that, "the greater need in Chicago was an opportunity for intellectual exploration and an avenue for bringing together white and colored Catholics for mutual enterprise." Pete's Place, a CW drop-in center currently operating in Chicago, was co-founded by an African American and a white person. But while it is important to not forget the stories of black leadership, the movement remains predominantly white, and it is time to start taking responsibility for changing that and eliminating whatever racism is operating.

The St. Louis CW has a history similar to many of the other houses in the Midwest of being almost entirely run by white people. This isn't something that has escaped people's attention; real efforts have been made to change that. In 2000 a group formed the Dorothy Day Co-Housing community in an effort to create a community of equality that crossed both race and class. This, however, ended; some have said the reasons for that were the difficulties in overcoming the challenges created by racism and class divisions. In 2006 the St. Louis community published a Round Table titled "Privilege – Crossing the Divide," in which white privilege and racism were analyzed and put out there for all to see. Maybe someday looking back, we will see that these were the first steps in transforming the CW in St. Louis to being recognizably anti-racist.

What is getting in the way?
So what is holding us back? Robert Jensen, author of [The Heart of Whiteness: Confronting Race, Racism, and White Privilege,](#) identifies the core fear that holds racism in place to be essentially losing whiteness as the norm. As Catholic Workers we must ask ourselves, then, how have we confused protecting an inner norm of whiteness with protecting the tenets of the Catholic Worker? Are we afraid to have the CW change drastically from what it is into something else? Hopefully thinking about this together can help us move toward making some real changes and uncovering some assumptions that have gone unquestioned.

Several ideas have been tossed around as I've talked to people about this and from reading [Tom Cordaro's excellent critique of Pax Christi](#). Some questions include:
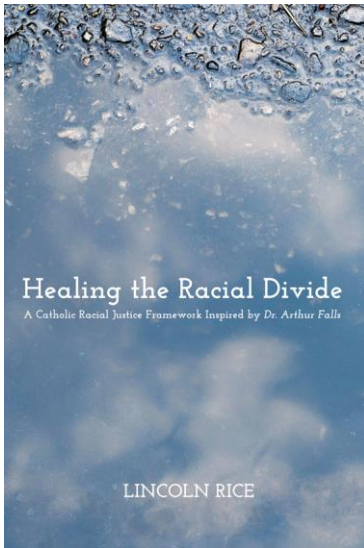
- Are we more committed to values or tenets than we are to people or communities?
- Do we act in the world in a way that puts CW ideals before the needs of those who suffer the violence we oppose and without accountability to those for whom we seek to speak and act?
- To whom are we accountable?
- Does our language perpetuate an internal culture that is attractive only to the more privileged, particularly white and middle class? (For example, having fought one's way out of poverty one may ask whom it benefits to voluntarily accept poverty?)
- Could we emphasize simplicity or solidarity with the earth and oppressed instead?
- Have we valued antiwar work or anti-poverty work more than anti-racism, anti-sexism, and anti-heterosexism work?
- Do we fail to see how these are interconnected?

For those raised in communities targeted by state violence, "nonviolence" seems to communicate passive acceptance of oppression. Instead could we emphasize direct confrontation with oppressive forces? Have we created white middle class cultures in our houses that we presume to be normative? Many houses have had people of color join the core community, but rarely have they stayed long. In St. Louis this is the case. Sometimes [this is a sign of a culture that is not willing to examine its own presumptions](#) or back the leadership and ideas of people coming from different perspectives.

The culture of volunteerism/self-sacrifice in the CW needs to be looked at hard. For those who come from groups who have been used by capitalism as servants and slaves, not getting paid for work done might not hold the same level of attractiveness as it does for the more privileged who have been given so much without working for it and want to reject this injustice. One story of St. Elizabeth's house in Chicago relates that the Workers there began to think that what their neighbors needed most were jobs. The house transitioned to hiring some of the people from their neighborhood to run the shelter. Some have claimed that it lost its "Catholic Worker identity" but does that simply mean it put the needs of people above the abstract tenets of the CW?

Looking Forward

Many in the St. Louis community have decided that [it's time for a change.](#) But sometimes this is where it gets tricky. Many predominantly white groups have made a mistake that perpetuates racism by simply asking "how do we get more people of color in our group?" This question assumes that your group looks attractive to people of color. But if a group is already all white, there is probably some racism going on that white people have trouble seeing, but may be obvious to people of color. Instead of asking how to get them to join you, how do you get yourself to join them? Here in St. Louis we have had some retreats discussing our racism and the following ideas are ways we are moving forward.

[Healing the Racial Divide](#) *tells the story of Dr. Arthur Falls, an African American Catholic Worker in Chicago.*

One basic idea involves supporting organizations that are led by people of color, even if an organization doesn't line up exactly with CW values. Make their struggle your struggle. This is where the values of rootedness and connection in an actual community that we are accountable to become more important than other abstract values.

An important move is also forming a white-allies support group—a group that meets regularly to help hold each other accountable to taking steps towards ending racism. Choosing to be a white ally in the fight against racism means pushing against a lot of enculturation that discourages that very thing, and a support group can often be helpful, so that we don't give up no matter how difficult it feels.

This is work that we must do as Catholic Workers if we want to eliminate oppression and injustice. All oppression is linked and we will never end war or poverty with racism in place. Though it may feel like adding another responsibility to an already overwhelming life, the work of eliminating racism is not burdensome with a good support group. Rather, it is liberating; it frees us from the chains that have held us in a place of isolation, disconnection, fear, shame, guilt, and embarrassment. If our goal is to integrate the Catholic Worker, we will probably fail, but if our goal is to end racism by taking whatever steps necessary, then the Catholic Worker, in whatever form it may exist come fifty years from now, will no longer be the white middle class group it is today.

Further Reading

[For Now We See in a Mirror, Dimly – An Anti-Racist Critique of Pax Christi USA's Theology and Practice of Nonviolence](#) - Tom Cordaro

[Solidarity and Nonviolence in Ferguson](#) – Jenny Truax

[Healing the Racial Divide: A Catholic Racial Justice Framework Inspired by Dr. Arthur Falls](#) – Lincoln Rice

Worksheet:
White Privilege in Community

We've listed some specific and subtle ways that white privilege plays out in an intentional community setting. This list is adapted from Peggy McIntosh's 'White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack' and can be read aloud in a circle, and then debriefed in a group discussion.

As a white person, I can generally expect these conditions to ring true for me, while the same may not be true for people of color living in community.

1. I can give talks and be considered an expert on things other than my own race.
2. I expect that the police, social workers, and volunteers will treat me with respect and friendliness.
3. My community has evoked black and brown icons (like MLK, Gandhi) without challenging present-day racism in the US.
4. My anger at social injustice will not be written off as "playing the race card," or over-reacting.
5. I am rarely mistaken for a guest or a client.
6. My group generally does not prioritize building relationships and accountability with the people in the neighborhood where we work.
7. If I do jail time, it will likely be at a time and place of my choosing.
8. I can generally drive anywhere in my city without being worried about being targeted by police.
9. My organization has many white donors, volunteers or board members who are disconnected from the communities of color that we serve.
10. Racism is something I can think about at a time of my choosing.
11. I can be pretty sure that neighbors who live around me will not be hostile to me because of my race.
12. My group serves a large number of people of color, and it is NOT an expectation that white people joining the group will learn about the culture and history of the folks we serve. For example, our orientation for new members does not include education about the customs, language, history and culture of those with whom we work.
13. My organization does not generally acknowledge the history of people of color working on the same issue.
14. My way of resolving conflict, singing songs and dressing is considered the norm.
15. Because my race has provided me with accumulated wealth, I can take up the mantle of simplicity with gusto.
16. I can join a community without being considered a representative of my race.
17. I can swear, dress in donated clothes or be unfriendly to a volunteer without having people attribute these choices to the bad morals, the poverty or the illiteracy of my race.
18. I or other white community members have at times felt desperate to help a certain person or group of people, regardless of whether we were asked for help.
19. In our community newsletter, at rallies and protests, it's accepted that we white community members can speak as authorities on issues that directly affect people of color.
20. If I lay around the house, eat unhealthy food or get drunk, it is not considered an example of my race's history of poor choices.
21. My way of dealing with conflict is considered the norm.
22. I have acted in dis-empowering and paternalistic ways when talking about the communities of color that my group serves, for example, by ignoring or underestimating a community's resourcefulness and resistance.

Worksheet:
White Supremacy in Group Culture

This is a list of characteristics of white supremacy culture that show up in our organizations. Culture is powerful precisely because it is so present and at the same time so very difficult to name or identify. The characteristics listed below are damaging because they are used as norms and standards without being actually named or chosen by the group. Because we all live in a white supremacy culture, these characteristics show up in all of us -- people of color and white people. Therefore, they can also show up in any group or organization, whether it is led by white folks or people of color.

Alone, take some time to read the characteristics and antidotes. Jot down your thoughts on the reflection questions, then as a large group share your responses.

The Affliction	Some Antidotes	Reflection Questions
Perfectionism		
Little appreciation expressed for the work that others are doing; more common is to point out either how the person or work is inadequate Talking to others about the inadequacies of a person or their work without ever talking directly to them Making a mistake is confused with being a mistake; mistakes are seen as personal, i.e. they reflect badly on the person as opposed to being seen for what they are – mistakes Internally, the perfectionist fails to appreciate their own good work and works with a harsh and constant inner critic	Develop a culture of appreciation: take time to make sure that people's work and efforts are appreciated Develop a learning organization, where it is expected that everyone will make mistakes which will offer opportunities for learning Create an environment where people can recognize that mistakes sometimes lead to positive results When offering feedback, always speak to the things that went well before offering criticism Realize that "your own worst critic" doesn't improve the work, and instead contributes to low morale	In what specific ways does your community manifest perfectionism? Can you think of examples? How does your group react to mistakes? What steps would it take for your group to manifest a culture of appreciation and learning?
Worship of the Written Word		
If it's not in a memo, it doesn't exist Group doesn't value other ways information gets shared Those with strong writing skills are more highly valued	Analyze how people inside and outside the organization get and share information Recognize the contributions and skills that every person brings to the organization (for example, the ability to build relationship)	How are newsletter articles, log notes or letters valued in your group?

The Affliction	Some Antidotes	Reflection Questions
Sense of Urgency		
Makes it difficult to take time to be inclusive, and look at group structures and processes for seeds of racism and oppression Frequently results in sacrificing potential allies for quick or highly visible results, for example sacrificing interests of communities of color in order to win victories for white people (seen as default or norm community)	Leadership which understands that things take longer than anyone expects Discuss what it means to set goals of inclusivity and diversity, particularly in terms of time Be clear about how you will make decisions in an atmosphere of urgency Confront the idea that the end justifies the means, commit to valuing group process as much as outcomes	In what ways does a sense of urgency influence the work that you do? Do any specific topics or issues bring it up? How could you personally respond better when this sense arises?
Quantity over Quality		
Things that can be measured (numbers of people attending a meeting, newsletter circulation) are more highly valued than things that cannot (quality of relationships, democratic decision-making, ability to constructively deal with conflict) Discomfort with emotion and feelings When there is a conflict between content (the agenda) and process (people's need to be heard or engaged,) content will prevail (for example, you may finish the agenda, but if you haven't paid attention to people's needs, the decisions made will be undermined and/or disregarded)	Include process or quality goals in your planning Make sure your organization has a values statement which expresses the ways in which you want to do your work Look for ways to measure process goals (for example if you have a goal of inclusivity, think about ways you can measure whether or not you have achieved that goal) Learn to recognize those times when you need to get off the agenda in order to address people's underlying concerns Push yourself to sit with discomfort when people are expressing themselves in ways that are not familiar to you	What measurable goals does your group track, and do these goals take precedence over other areas of your mission? During meetings, when strong feelings emerge, how does your group most commonly respond – by giving time or staying focused solely on finishing the agenda? In what specific ways does your group value and appreciate relationship building?
Absolute Right to Comfort		
Belief that those with power have the absolute right to emotional and psychological comfort Scapegoating those who cause discomfort Equating individual acts of unfairness against white people with systemic racism	Understand that discomfort is at the root of all growth and learning Learn to distinguish discomfort from safety Learn to contextualize your feelings and don't take everything personally	Who do you consider a "troublemaker" or "rabble rouser" in your group, and does this label have anything to do with that person threatening your right to be comfortable? How does your group typically respond when an uncomfortable topic arises?

The Affliction	Some Antidotes	Reflection Questions
Only One Right Way		
Belief there is one right way to do things and once people are introduced to the right way, they will see the light and adopt it

When they do not adapt or change, then something is wrong with them, not with us

Similar to the missionary who does not see value in the culture of other communities, sees only value in their beliefs about what is good | Accept that there are many ways to get to the same goal

When people do things differently, notice how those different ways might improve your approach

Look for the tendency for a group or a person to keep pushing the same point over and over out of a belief that there is only one right way and then name that tendency or person

When working with communities from a different culture than yours or your group's, be clear that you have some learning to do about the communities' ways of doing

Never assume that you or your organization knows what's best for the community in isolation from meaningful relationships with that community | How does your group react when a new-comer brings a new way of doing things?

How much flexibility does your group have about its engrained processes, rules and practices?

Has your community made an ongoing effort to learn about the history and practices of the larger community where it exists or serves? |
| **Paternalism** | | |
| Decision-making is clear to those with power and unclear to those without it

Those with power think they are capable of making decisions for and in the interests of those without power

Those without power don't know how decisions get made and who makes what decisions, and yet they are completely familiar with the impact of those decisions on them | Make sure that everyone knows and understands who makes what decisions in the organization

Make sure everyone knows and understands their level of responsibility and authority in the organization

Include people who are affected by decisions in the decision-making | Do your guests or clients understand the power and decision-making structures of your group? How transparent are you about your processes?

What impact can your clients or guests have on your decision-making – what space are they given? |
| **Either/Or Thinking** | | |
| Things are either/or, good/bad, right/wrong, with us/against us (no sense of both/and)

Makes it difficult to learn from mistakes or accommodate conflict

Increases sense of urgency and no encouragement to consider alternatives | Notice when people use either/or language and push to come up with more than two alternatives

Notice when people are simplifying complex issues, particularly when the stakes seem high or an urgent decision needs to be made; slow down, encourage deeper analysis | What specific topics or issues bring up this type of thinking in your group? |

Worksheets:
Internalized Manifestations of Racism

White supremacy is the ideological umbrella for racism and white privilege that grants superiority to those identified as "white" over those marked as "non-white." These messages of white supremacy are everywhere in society, and we are socialized from an early age to understand that race is a prime marker for who is considered beautiful, trustworthy, rational, safe, etc. Everyone in society receives these messages of white superiority, and obviously the consequences of internalizing the messages differ according to each person. We all tend to repeat and reinforce the messages unless we are doing active personal work to combat them.

Internalized Racial Superiority (or Internalized Superiority) is the conscious or subconscious acceptance by white people of the stereotypes and harmful racist messages perpetuated by society. These beliefs are often subconscious, and white folks would rarely admit to them, but this "scripting" guides their decisions and behavior, showing up especially in implicit bias. (Take a test to measure your own implicit bias on your choice of social identities here.)

On the other hand, **Internalized Racial Inferiority** (or Internalized Oppression) is the conscious or subconscious acceptance of the stereotypes and harmful racist messages by people of color. Internalized racism leads to replaying and buying into these messages, which leads to self-hatred and horizontal hostility towards others in one's racial group. The practices and beliefs of internalized racism are self-destructive coping mechanisms resulting from systematic and institutionalized mistreatment, not the inevitable or chosen pattern of any group of people.

Writing about Internalized Oppression, the group Cultural Bridges notes:

> "Any oppression that continues long enough will inevitably be internalized by the people targeted by that particular oppression. If children continually hear racist lies and stereotypes, experience racial prejudice and are bombarded with negative images of people like themselves, they will come to believe some of those negative messages, and act on them. Among the possible consequences of this internalization are self-doubt, loss of self-esteem, self-hatred, plus mistrust of other People of Color."

In the following pages, check out some of the characteristics of both Internalized Racial Superiority and Internalized Racial Inferiority. Reflection questions follow the characteristics.

Sources and Resources

Racial Identity Caucusing: A Strategy for Building Anti-Racist Collectives

Re-Evaluation Counseling Materials on Internalized Racism

Dismantling Racism: A Resource Book for Social Change Groups

Tendencies of Internalized Racial Superiority

These tendencies show up in white folks who are unaware of the "scripting" that white supremacy has on them.

1. **Savior Identity**: Playing the helper/savior role to feel better about ourselves. "I've sacrificed so much to be in solidarity with people of color." "What would this group do without me?"

2. **Constantly centering yourself, your feelings, and your opinions:** Making things all about you, your feelings and your experience. "What should I wear to the protest?"

3. **Superiority mentality**: I know just what these people need to do to improve their situation! Over-emphasizing intent and good will and under-emphasizing lack of skills or experience. Assuming you're the expert.

4. **Strong Belief in Meritocracy and Ambition:** Belief that one should be personally driven and autonomous—not constrained by the needs of family or community. Wanting to see the under-privileged kid **go away** to college. Related to the belief in a level playing field: "If just worked hard enough, you would succeed – I did!"

5. **Valuing of reason and efficiency over emotions and relationship building:** Reducing discussions of issues to facts and figures rather than caring and connection. Talking like the expert. Particularly common for white men.

6. **Entitlement:** Expecting to be welcome/included in all groups/cultures/countries. Expecting the best service, the best in everything despite the cost to others. Co-opting ethnic identities of communities of color.

Drawn from [Dismantling Racism: A Resource Book for Social Change Groups](#)

Reflection Questions

1. If you are white, which of these tendencies resonate with you? If you are not white, how have you experienced these dynamics in white folks?

2. How have they influenced you or your relationships?

3. What effect do these characteristics, held by the dominant group, have on your group and society as a whole?

Photo - Joe Brusky

Tendencies of Internalized Racial Oppression

These traits may or may not be present in any targeted individual, and it should be left to targeted individuals to name if any of these dynamics are at play.

Patterns of internalized racism can cause people of color to:

1. Have self-consciousness and self-hatred of physical characteristics that make them racially distinct such as skin color, hair texture or eye shape. Be ashamed of anything that ventures from the mythical perfection of the white standards ("too dark" skin, "too kinky" hair, "too loud" music, "too ethnic," "too loud" people.)

2. Believe (consciously or not) the messaging of white supremacy that whites are more trustworthy, intelligent and attractive.

3. Develop horizontal hostility towards other people of color, resulting in patterns of fear, mistrust, withdrawal, and isolation especially toward those in leadership.

4. Accept a limiting and rigid view of what "authentic" culture and behavior is (criticizing as "trying to be white" those who excel in school, people who talk in a particular way, those who like "white" music, etc.)

5. Engage in numbing behaviors (drugs, alcohol, and other addictions; compulsive sexual behaviors) and poor decision-making (flashy materialism, unwise financial decisions, elaborate street rituals and posturing,) based on these limitations. "Any black effort is doomed to failure in the long run, so I'm going to settle for making myself feel good right now. I deserve that, at least!"

6. Attempt to "take care of" white people, making sure none gets upset. This stymies one's authentic voice especially if that authentic voice might make whites uncomfortable.

Drawn from [Re-Evaluation Counseling Materials on Internalized Racism](#)

Reflection Questions

1. If you are a person of color, which of these tendencies resonate with you?

2. How do you see these characteristics related to the racist U.S. history of slavery, genocide, and Jim Crow?

Photo - The All Nite Images

White Folk Work

<u>Distancing Behaviors of White Folks</u>
(Group reflection questions follow)

Tactic	Explanation
Denial	Denial of existence or responsibility for the oppression. When an issue involves racial justice: "It's not about race, it's really more about class." "Racism ended when Obama was elected."
Deflecting or Minimizing	Changing the subject, minimizing oppression when we see it: "Enough about racism, what about the drones in Pakistan?" "People of color may have it rough here, but at least they're better off than people in Afghanistan or Mexico."
Blaming the Targeted Group	When faced with an incident of police brutality against a person of color, we think, "What was the 'victim' doing wrong to deserve it?"
Over-Analyzing	Nitpicking about definitions of oppression to prove their existence when we wouldn't do the same for other subjects. Debating the problem ad nauseum without taking any action.
Scapegoating	Shifting conversation to an extreme example of *someone else's* oppressive behavior. "We're an all-white community and haven't really looked at racism in our communal structures, true. But you should listen to my mother-in-law! She's sooooo racist! It's terrible!" The accusing person feels righteous and meaningful discussion is closed down.
They Just Didn't Know	When soup line guests make racist comments, making excuses and rationalizing: "It was only a joke, don't take everything so seriously. They don't know any better. We don't want to make a scene."
Targeting the Expert	Without a real relationship, asking a person of color to represent all others in a tokenistic way: "What do Arab Americans think about the Syria situation?"
Claiming Innocence	"There aren't that many people of color in our town, so our community doesn't make it a priority to address racism." "We participate as little as we can in 'the system' so we're not responsible for structural racism."
Competing Victimization	Claiming that people of color have too much/enough power: "The events of the local Hispanic culture group are diverting resources away from our (very important) ministry to women."
Savior Complex	Unrealistic view of ourselves as indispensable to people of color without acknowledgment of the privilege dynamics present. Guilt, shame, and a desperation to help, without being asked. "White hero" complex.
Superiority Complex	Inappropriately taking leadership positions within communities of color; overestimation of our education and skills/underestimation of our inexperience; an "I know best" attitude.
Sympathy Trap	Outrage over racism morphs into pity, causing us to act in disempowering, paternalistic ways; over-analysis without action; focusing only on the results of racism while underplaying groups' resources and successes.

Sources and Further Reading on Distancing Behaviors

The Dismantling Racism Workbook - The Western States Center

Witnessing Whiteness - Shelly Tochluk

Distancing Behaviors: Questions for Reflection

1. If you are white, what situations bring up these distancing tactics for you?

2. Have you seen the distancing tactics used ? How did people respond?

3. How can you better respond to some of these distancing behaviors?

Photo - AFSC

White Anti-Racist Attitudes *(Group reflection questions follow)*

Attitude:	In Action:
1. I do not expect to be absolved for my racism (or for the oppression white people have inflicted) either by people of color, or by the good works I do.	1. My work is not a shame or guilt-fueled penance for the sins of whites. I don't need anyone's thanks to challenge racism, and I don't seek approval or affirmation from people of color for fighting racism.
2. I intentionally seek to educate myself about racism, and lean into situations that are uncomfortable.	2. I attend discussions and actions hosted by local groups led by Hispanics and Arab Americans, for example. I read books, articles and publications that address racism. I try to leave the comfort zone of my white privilege.
3. I talk about racism at dinner, at work, and with friends. When I do, I acknowledge that people of color have been talking about these subjects for a long time, and have been routinely ignored.	3. I name racism when I see it, with a humble and open spirit. I don't pretend to be an expert, but speak the truth as I understand it, regardless of my social discomfort.
4. I remember that white privilege is not having to deal with racism all of the time. I do the inner work and examine how my own attitudes reinforce or combat racism.	4. I intentionally take time, alone and with others, to examine my relationships, actions and beliefs through an anti-racist lens.
5. I am hyper-vigilant about interrupting racism (challenging racist jokes, comments or references, etc.) but I am NOT hyper-arrogant about the badge of "ally."	5. I don't expect people of color to explain racism to white people who are ignorant, hateful or just confused. I consider "ally" to be more of a journey and an attitude than a final, static goal.
6. Following the lead of people of color, I work for social change and to defend civil rights of all people.	6. I make it a priority to promote posts and material from Mexican Americans, Asian Americans and other targeted groups in forming my opinions on social justice issues. I show up at events and actions convened by these groups.
7. Despite my best intentions, I have blind spots and make mistakes. I realize "it's not about me." I avoid over-personalizing challenges from people of color. I accept criticism as a gift.	7. When I say something that is unintentionally racist, I accept challenge graciously, knowing that it provides an opportunity for discussion, growth, and deeper relationships.
8. I contribute time, talent, or treasure to organizations that confront racism, and am willing to leave my comfort zone.	8. I am a member, and make donations of money and my time to local and national organizations that directly confront racism.
9. I listen responsively to people of color. I acknowledge that it is not their responsibility to educate me about racism.	9. I ask for feedback from the Palestinians I work with, and I'm willing to change based on that feedback. I don't ask my friends of color to prove that racism exists.
10. I choose to overcome my shame, fear and guilt, and seek out relationships with people of color that are genuine and honest.	10. I seek authentic relationships, not "token" ones, that involve both support and challenge.

Source and Further Reading on Anti-Racist Attitudes

The Dismantling Racism Workbook -The Western States Center

Waking Up White – Debby Irving

Reflection Questions: Anti-Racist Attitudes

1. What is your reaction to "Anti-Racist Attitudes" -- uncomfortable, inspired, angry, cynical? Why do you think this is your reaction?

2. If you are white, what are your individual strengths and weaknesses in regards to "Anti Racist Attitudes?"

3. Have you seen these attitudes put into action in your community – if so, how?

   ◦ If not, any guesses why? What are some of the obstacles to gaining these attitudes?

Photo: Neta Gautam
(nehagautamnyc.com)

Worksheet:

Community Assessment Tool

This tool, adapted from the [Dismantling Racism Workbook](#) from The Western States Center, describes four stages of community development, so that we can identify our starting point. Most communities have a few characteristics from each stage, while others may have one dominant stage that prevails. Evolving through the stages requires step-by-step change; unfortunately, we can't skip steps.

Some white-dominated intentional communities are geographically located in places that have tiny non-white populations. While we must be careful to not use geography as an excuse to maintain white domination, in some cases, the goal of becoming a multi-racial community just doesn't make sense. In those places, strong, independent organizations of color are most needed, and the white community can work to become an accountable, mutually-supportive ally group. This process entails developing structures of accountability to communities of color, and developing communal structures that normalize the anti-racist lens. In most cases, though, the all-whiteness of a community is something that is created, and that can be changed.

General Descriptions of the Four Stages of Community Development

The All White Community
These communities don't intentionally exclude people of color, but have not analyzed their organizational structure and culture for seeds of racism. These communities often ask the question "Where are all the people of color- why don't they volunteer here or support us?" When these communities are unsuccessful at recruiting people of color, they may tend to (subconsciously) blame people of color for not being interested in their important work, or decide that "the work" is more important than having a multi-cultural or anti-racist group.

The Token Community
These communities feel mostly like the All White Community, with a few people of color involved. This community has set specific goals for including people of color, but maintains a white dominated culture across the board.

The Multi-Cultural Community
This community celebrates diversity, with many people of color involved. It addresses race issues within the group, but is mostly controlled by decisions and standards set by whites.

The Anti-Racist Community
These communities analyze their practices and cultures regularly through an anti-racist lens. Caucusing (separate supportive discussions about racism) is used to encourage the growth of anti-racist white allies and empowered people of color. Power is shared between people of color and whites; racism and privilege are talked about regularly. The commitment to end racism is a consistent theme in community materials, ministries and meetings.

	All White Community	Token Community	Multicultural Community	Anti-Racist Community
Community Culture - What is celebrated? - What are the expectations of behavior? - How do we interact?	We primarily measure success by how much is accomplished We pay more attention to "product" than process We don't discuss our communal structures with any significant power or race analysis Consensus in name only; dominant members (whites) dictate most of the decisions We're in denial that our community may be reproducing racism	White people's ideas and practices (how meetings are conducted, how the house is run, etc.) dictate the norm When discussing oppression, we focus on individual prejudice, rather than structural racism We avoid conflict when possible Paternalistic; deep down we believe in our status quo: "the community knows best"	Non-white heroes and groups are celebrated in practical ways "Bootstraps" mentality and workaholism still encouraged While celebrating individuals who have succeeded, we still generally assume a level playing field Expectations for community behavior are clearly laid out	We encourage a diversity of work styles, and are intentional about balancing what gets done with how it gets done We name racism when we see it, both in the world, and within our community. We can engage in conflict with one another without too much fuss We devote time, energy and money to community building and mentoring
Primary Work/ Ministry - Hospitality - what kind and why? - Education? -What other groups do we work with?	Our primary work involves white people serving/helping people of color Collaborations are typically with other white-dominated organizations We don't do much analysis of the relationship between service and justice, little emphasis on resistance	This community tries to "empower" people of color but lacks the analysis of power dynamics Justice is discussed mostly in terms of international issues People of color are mostly aware of our community because it is providing a direct service	This community has some participation from people of color in its daily work We seek to learn more about structural racism and its effect on our ministry Some opportunities for guests/clients to join community	Power is shared between people of color and whites in planning and implementing this community's mission We regularly review our community's mission and practices through an anti-racist lens We have mutually supportive relationships with organizations representing people of color
Leadership & Decision-making - How are decisions made, in and out of meetings? - What is the process for entering community? -How is money handled?	Decision-making is controlled by whites, especially white men Sharing power with people of color feels threatening and not desirable Entrance into this community is on a "who you know" basis	People of color are encouraged to participate in mostly non-decision-making ways: as event speakers, cooks, or infrequent volunteers	This community includes people of color in most areas of the work Whites still set the norms and have the strongest, or best-heard voices in meetings	We are very transparent in our decision-making The process of entering community and participating in the work is easily understood and accessible to all people We're not controlling about "how things should be" and open to new ideas

	All White Community	Token Community	Multicultural Community	Anti-Racist Community
Resistance - Who participates? - Does our analysis and process mirror the change we're seeking?	Outreach for campaigns and actions is only to other white-dominated church groups and organizations Little analysis of power dynamics about the campaign itself	Messaging mostly speaks "for" targeted groups, with a few exceptions of token speakers The idea of "solidarity" retains the power imbalance between whites and people of color	Participants include a broad spectrum of people of color "Solidarity" starts to imply following the lead of people of color	Direct actions consistently include analysis and recognition of different levels of risk for whites and people of color Discussion of risking "jail time" is in the context of racism and the prison industrial complex Leadership from people of color in all realms of decision-making
Sources of Support -How do we ask for help? -What groups do we seek out? - Who are our volunteers and donors?	This community may be primarily funded by a small number of large donors In terms of volunteers and donations of food, etc. we are supported by white wealthy schools, churches, students and groups	There are a few people of color who volunteer or donate money, but they don't often stay involved for long	When we have a specific need, we ask for help from a wide range of both whites and people of color Our most regular, committed volunteers include people of color	We have a large number of individual donors from diverse backgrounds People of color take leadership in different areas of finances, donations, etc. in supporting the community's mission
Core Values & Communication -How is our philosophy communicated? -What modes to we use?	Community values presume a privileged background Writing is white-centered: speaking from whites, to whites.	In newsletters, etc. people of color are conspicuously and inappropriately highlighted in a tokenizing way	Voices from people of color throughout materiel, but interpreted and framed by whites	Philosophy communicated in flexible way, acknowledging different experiences with racism We are willing to examine our mission through an anti-racist lens and evolve as needed

Using the Community Assessment Graph

1. On a flip chart, describe your community structures (culture, work, leadership, decision-making, resistance and supporters and communication) and place them under the appropriate categories of the All-White Community, Token Community, Multi-Cultural Community, or Anti-Racist Community. Is there a **dominant category,** or categories, that describe your community?
2. With this information, you have a common language for the different elements that either mirror or combat racism. You also have named a starting place for your anti-racism work. Regardless of your starting place, you can't skip over steps. It's important to evolve slowly and intentionally to ensure authentic change.
3. Together, brainstorm **"Change ideas"** that would help the group evolve in each category.
4. As a group, **prioritize** the ideas: choose just a few to start with, and keep the rest for later in your group's development (or something like that).
5. Discuss each idea, the barriers to implementing it, and strategies to make it happen. Make specific, measurable **goals** for each priority you choose. For example: "In 2015, we will, as a community, attend the events hosted by the local Hispanic cultural group and seek to build relationships there. We will check in in March to assess how we're doing."
6. On a regular basis, evaluate your progress and adjust things as necessary. Be aware of the inevitable discomfort that comes with the territory here.
7. Use the Stages of Change worksheets in the Anti-Oppression Chapter to provide an overall framework of your community's progress

Worksheet:

Interrupting Racism

In the setting of intentional community, there are many opportunities to address racism for both white folks and people of color. The following model is just one way to address oppressive ideas and statements that you may encounter.

Assertiveness Model

1. **Breathe** - Ground yourself
2. **Name the behavio**r - Call out the remark, not the person. Naming a comment as racist is difficult; it counters the social conditioning to fit in and please.
3. **Name how the behavior makes you feel OR describe the impact of the behavior** - It helps the relationship and interaction to name your feelings. Talk about what assumptions underlie the comment, and why it is racist.
4. **Give a Direction** - Ask for the person to reconsider their comment, to avoid making such comments in the future, etc.
5. **Stay** - Depending on the nature of your relationship (is the person a close friend, or someone you've just met?) be willing to stay in the conversation, keep engaging by email conversation, or pursue it later.

Example

Volunteer: I'm glad you're reaching out to black churches for the Close Guantanamo campaign, but they're too busy with their food pantries and other social services to think about international issues. Maybe you should focus your organizing energy in other directions?

You: (Calming breath.) You're making a generalization that African Americans in these churches don't think about the world beyond their immediate communities. I feel uncomfortable with that idea because it has undertones of racism. I'd think we need to be careful about these kinds of generalizations and the harm they can do. What do you think?

Photo: southcoasting

Practice Scenarios for Interrupting Racism

In groups of 3, take turns responding to each scenario, using the Assertiveness Model, if it's helpful. People with different racial identities will have different ways of approaching these scenarios. Discuss different options for engaging.

1. During a tour for a Confirmation group of white 8th graders at your house of hospitality, the adult chaperone asks, "I assume all your guests are black?" How do you respond?

2. At a family dinner, a relative asks, "Do you make the people staying with you get a job, or do you let them sit around all day?" You want to respond well, and also you're afraid of making a scene. You say...

3. A few members are talking about trying to get healthier food donated. Someone says "The guests don't really care about eating healthy; they just want their comfort food of fried chicken." What do you say?

4. During a meeting, you notice that the people of color in the room have not spoken at all. A new topic is introduced; what do you say?

5. A white volunteer is playing with an African American child, and keeps talking about the child's hair, touching it and showing it to her fellow volunteers. What do you do and say?

6. The new website is being discussed. People are saying that it should be directed at potential volunteers, rather than potential guests. What do you say?

7. When discussing a proposal to spend money to a fundraiser for a local Palestinian group, someone says, "I'd rather we spent the money on more food for the people we already serve, rather than offending our donors on an abstract issue." How do you respond?

8. Some white volunteers are discussing your neighborhood, which happens to be in a poor black area that has a history of white flight and red-lining. "Is it safe here? It seems like there's a lot of crime." What do you say?

9. Your notice aloud that your community is financially supported by 90% white people. A fellow community member says, "So what? That's who supports us, who believes in our work, and who we have relationships with. There's nothing wrong with being supported by white people." How do you respond?

10. Your rural community is in a mostly-white area. When the subject of racism comes up, someone says, "Everyone in the whole county is white, so it's ok that we are all white too. Racism is not an issue for us." What do you say?

Community Recipe:
Anti-Racist Organizing for White Folks

1. **Remember, you are good and you are racist:** We were handed racism; we didn't choose it. White supremacy is foundational to US society and affects every single one of us, no matter how much we read or how much analysis we develop. Sitting with the defensiveness, guilt and shame that arises when we talk about racism and white privilege is part of our learning and growing.

2. **Learn about your areas of unawareness:** Just as a fish has a hard time discerning and explaining water, white people have a hard time noticing white privilege and white supremacy. It is our responsibility as individuals and communities to learn about these blind spots. A common example is our tendency to dictate and take over, and then wonder why no people of color are involved. The personal work of undoing our racism is essential to working with other people.

3. **Create mutually supportive relationships:** Showing up and supporting community groups that are led by people of color (even those that don't fit in "perfectly" with our group's philosophy) is not only important for creating coalitions, but also for challenging our own racism. It can help us acknowledge patterns of "White Hero Syndrome."

4. **Make the connections:** By focusing attention on looting, for example, white folks are silencing a more important narrative -- a narrative about the unjust murder of an innocent teenager and state violence, which includes the disproportionate imprisonment of people of color, the militarization of police, racial profiling, etc. Connecting the violence against different communities of color globally gives us more power, for example connecting the militarization of the police to U.S. war-making abroad. Making these connections is essential.

5. **Acknowledge that you are not "better" than other white people:** A common distancing behavior for white folks - especially those in anti-war circles - is to applaud themselves for "getting it" and disparage those who don't. This pattern is part of capitalist thought that encourages rugged individualism and competition. Instead, we need to draw near other white people embracing the idea of collective liberation with personal responsibility.

6. **Listen, take the lead, and elevate the voices of those who are most affected:** As white people, it is not our place to decide what a community response should be to the murder of a black teen. We should be lifting up the voices of those who are directly affected by state violence, in our social media, newsletters and events, rather than centering our own voices. When we participate, we need to make listening our priority. White people shouldn't be running every meeting, leading the march, or grabbing the megaphone.

7. **Work to better understand your white privilege:** White privilege means that you are not targeted by systems of racial oppression; it's a privilege to choose which social justice issue you want to work on. White privilege grants whites more opportunities in leadership, and therefore we feel entitled

to take on these roles in coalition work. We need to let go of control, to take background and support roles, and to be flexible.

8. **It's a privilege** to deplore violence on both sides, just as it is a privilege to not have to choose a side. You have nothing to lose in your silence. For others, being silent or "remaining calm" means that the next black teen to be murdered may be their loved one.

9. **Be accountable:** Take criticism. We will make mistakes and getting called out is uncomfortable, but it is how we grow. Be okay with making mistakes, and then make up for them. Set up relationships where you are giving and receiving feedback about your white privilege.

Adapted from a 2014 St. Louis statement penned by Colleen Kelly and Shona Clarkson during the Ferguson uprising.

Reflection Questions:

1. What feelings does this statement bring up in you?

2. What obstacles does your community have to these invitations?

3. How can you and your community grow?

Photo: Neta Gautam (nehagautamnyc.com)

Community Recipe:
Communal Strategies for Dismantling Racism

These are just a few suggestions for implementing anti-racist principles in your intentional community.

1. **Encourage Inner Work by Individual Community Members**
   Without the difficult work of examining personal prejudices, attitudes and behaviors, communal strategies will fall short. As a community, encourage and create structures for members to educate themselves, to journal, and to discuss racism and white privilege. (Book groups, journaling circles, check-ins, etc.)

2. **Examine your Communal Structures**
   Use the "Community Assessment Graph" in this Chapter as a starting place

3. **Fishbowls and Listening Sessions**
   A small group openly discusses an issue that touches on racism, surrounded by the larger group. The fishbowl helps promote understanding and is useful when some people have a lot of information, experience or interpersonal dynamics that others might not share. People within the fishbowl can alternate between people in dominant or targeted groups. People of color can talk about their experience of racism in community, and then whites can share about their experiences. An experienced facilitator is valuable as these can be very vulnerable conversations.

4. **Community Check Ins**
   Within meetings, create regular time to discuss racism. Where did you notice it this week, within yourself, in the world? Where did you succeed and fail in combating it?

5. **Retreat**
   Take time away to address racism in a community-building format. Develop a common language and understanding about racism and power dynamics that influence your community interactions.

6. **Support Groups and Caucusing**
   Separate caucusing among dominant and targeted groups can be helpful to encourage honesty and vulnerability: anti-racist white groups, support groups for people of color, etc.

7. **Communal Agreements: Being Allies for Each Other**
   Discuss and create shared expectations for each other in regards to your anti-oppression work. Some possible examples of communal expectations:
   - Each of us will challenge racism when we see it
   - Whites will try to handle racist comments made by volunteers in the house
   - We will commit to support and challenge each other in the midst of a racist society

8. **Create Accountable Relationships**
   In your neighborhood or town, make connections with groups led by people of color and ask about ways to support their work.