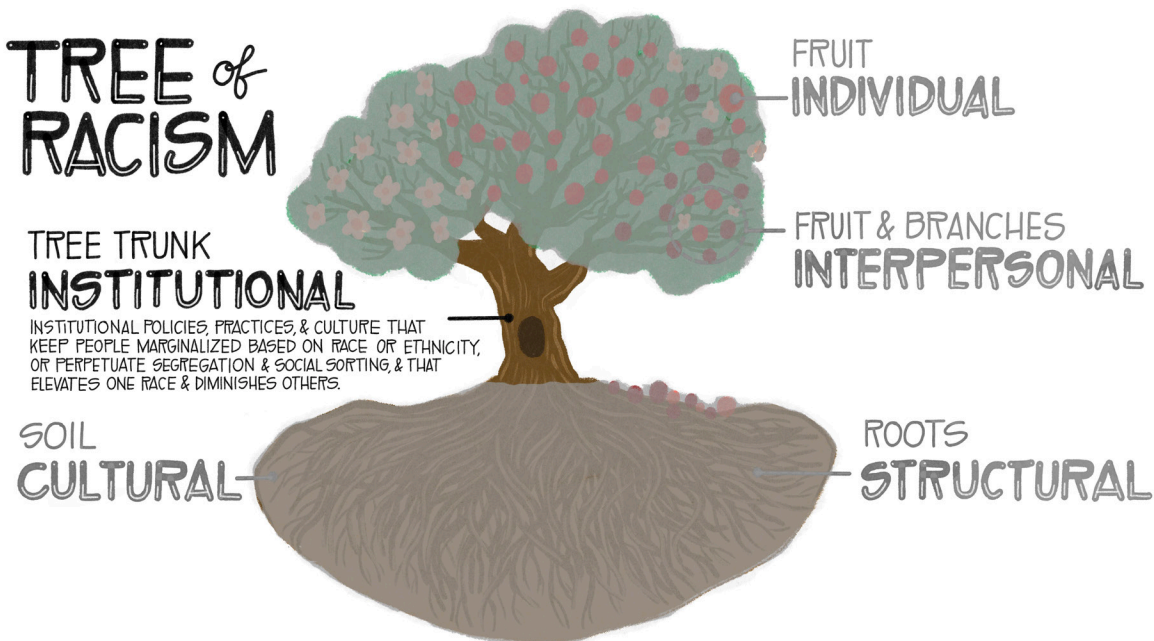


Activity #5: Examining The Tree Trunk

Institutional Racism



Purpose: This activity is designed for practitioners to reflect, assess, examine, and address the manifestations of institutional racism in their organization.



Grounding: In order to effectively work through these questions, you will need to think about the way your institution functions, the spoken and unspoken rules of operating, the institutional culture including who has power and who doesn't; how power is wielded or shared; and the ways staff, workers, and learners are valued, honored, and supported or not.



Time: This activity will take approximately two to three hours.



Process:

1. Getting Started (10 min.)

- Designate one person to write down all the words that stand out to the team.
- As a team, review the graphic of the tree and read the definition of institutional racism.
- Call out words that stand out to you in the definition.
- Discuss why these words stood out to each of you.
- After discussion is complete, move to the next phase in the process.

2. Analyzing the Environment (30–45 min.)

- As a team, analyze your environment by discussing the below questions. Designate one or two team members to capture responses and key themes that surface during the discussion.

i. How could racism be embedded within your institutional policies, e.g., are there policies that may be unintentionally excluding people or communities? Think about programmatic requirements, hiring criteria, recruitment practices?

ii. List the places where institutional racism may be living in your policies.

iii. If you need help thinking about policies, [review this list of questions](#).

iv. How could racism be embedded within your institutional practices, e.g., are there practices that may be unintentionally reinforcing a racial hierarchy or unequal power dynamics among staff and participants?

v. List the places where institutional racism may be living in your practices.

vi. If you need help thinking about practices, [review this list of questions](#).

vii. What are the **spoken** values and norms of the institution?

viii. What are the **unspoken** values and norms of the institution?

ix. When concerns are raised how are they handled and addressed? Is there a difference in response to the concerns based on a person's role or racial/ethnic/gender identity?


x. Who holds power in the institution? Think about formal (based on roles) and informal (based on social capital or influence).

xi. How is this power used in the institution?

- b. Review and discuss the key themes and responses that surfaced during the discussion.
- c. After discussion, move to the next step in the process.

3. Exploring the Implications in Your Work (30 min.)

- a. Review your policy and practice lists and as a team brainstorm the changes needed to have more equitable policies and practices.

- b. Designate one person on your team to capture the brainstormed responses.
- c.  **ACTION:** [Use this form](#) to outline the changes that need to be made to your policies and practices.
- d. Gut check your suggested changes using [this REIA checklist](#).
- e. After you've completed the form and gut check, move to the next step in the process.

4. Moving to Action (30 min.)

- a. As a team, review the policy and practice list and identify the action steps needed to make the necessary changes.
- b. Consider using [this action planning template](#) to outline the action steps identified.
- c. Review the action plan as a team and determine a schedule for regular check-ins to monitor your progress.