The Fruit & Root Analysis™

A Framework for Examining and Addressing Racism in Workforce and Pathway Ecosystems

AT A GLANCE

Together, the Building Equitable Pathways (BEP) community of practice worked to identify the manifestations of racism and inequity, the "fruit," and the underlying causes and drivers of inequity, the "roots." This framework offers a similar opportunity to other practitioners and intermediaries outside of the BEP community of practice.

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About JFF

Jobs for the Future (JFF) drives transformation of the U.S. education and workforce systems to achieve equitable economic advancement for all. www.jff.org.

About JFF's Language Choices

JFF is committed to using language that promotes equity and human dignity, rooted in the strengths of the people and communities we serve. We develop our content with the awareness that language can perpetuate privilege but also can educate, empower, and drive positive change to create a more equitable society. We routinely reevaluate our efforts as usage evolves.

info.jff.org/language-matters

About Building Equitable Pathways

Building Equitable Pathways is a community of practice with 14 innovative intermediary organizations, JFF, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Bloomberg Philanthropies, and the Walton Family Foundation. Together, we seek to increase our individual and collective capacity to change our education and workforce systems for the better. We will identify best practices, create tools, and develop a theory of action to support the efforts of high-quality intermediaries to transform our systems and also scale and sustain equitable pathways. We aim to drive engagement across these systems, improve their sustainability, and ultimately, influence more equitable student outcomes in academics and careers.

About Sandra Grace LLC

Sandra Grace Counseling and Consulting Services, LLC is a change management consulting firm that provides customized consulting services to individuals, non-profits, public system leaders and private institutions. Sandra Grace works at the intersection of talent development, workforce development and racial equity supporting people, practice and policy shifts that center and prioritize racial equity. Website: www.sandragracellc.com.

Special Note: The Fruit & Root Analysis Trademark is registered by Sandra Grace LLC.

Table of Contents

UNDERSTANDING
THE FRAMEWORK

USING
THE FRAMEWORK

APPLYING
LEARNINGS

CALL TO
ACTION

SECTION I

Understanding the Framework

Executive Summary

Building Equitable Pathways (BEP) is a community of practice working to create equitable pathway systems so that more Black and Latine youth and young people experiencing poverty can succeed in college and their future careers. BEP strives to improve the education and workforce systems so that all young people can move seamlessly and successfully from high school to college, career, and beyond.

BEP focuses on the role intermediaries play in three key areas: facilitating racial equity in the design and scaling of college and career pathways, advocating for policy solutions, and building strong data and infrastructure practices. BEP aims to advance a vision for racial equity in pathways systems by implementing anti-racist practices and policies that affect the lived experiences of youth and the adults working to support them.

With a deep commitment to equity at the heart of BEP, the racial equity strand participated in a learning arc exploring the fruit and the root of inequity: **racism**. As part of this exploration, the racial equity strand journeyed together to understand and examine five levels of racism:

- **Individual/Personal Racism**
- **Interpersonal Racism**
- **Institutional Racism**
- **Cultural Racism**
- **Structural Racism**

Collectively, these factors work together to maintain inequity and perpetuate white supremacy— the normalized assumption that white people are superior to others— within systems and programs.[1]

Together, the BEP community of practice worked to identify the manifestations of racism and inequity, the "fruit," and the underlying causes and drivers of inequity, the "roots." This framework offers a similar opportunity for other practitioners and intermediaries outside of the BEP community of practice.

About the Framework

This framework provides practitioners with an opportunity to examine the roots of inequity in their communities and develop a plan to address the identified inequities. Those who use this framework will walk through a series of activities designed to help practitioners examine the manifestations of the following levels of racism in their respective systems:

- Individual/Personal Racism
- Interpersonal Racism
- Institutional Racism
- Cultural Racism
- Structural Racism

While this framework is intended to offer a process that a practitioner can use to examine and address fruit and root causes of inequity, it is not the only framework or analysis that can be used. Practitioners are encouraged to use any similarly oriented framework that will support them in exploring root causes of inequity and developing strategies to address them.

Who Should Use This Framework

This framework is designed for individuals who, at a minimum:

- have a personal and professional commitment to ongoing self-reflection and exploration on equity-related issues, including a commitment to exploring their own internalized beliefs
- have participated in and are comfortable participating in conversations about race, racism, or equity-related topics
- have participated in one or more than one equity-specific training[2]
- are committed to exploring and developing an analysis along with strategies to address the root causes of inequity[3]
- willingly engage in conversations and discussions about race, racism, or equity-related topics internally and externally
- have an understanding of their local context, audience, and key stakeholders in order to nuance discussions about equity and inequity accordingly.

Before Using This Framework

This framework will require deep personal and collective work. It will require honesty, vulnerability, and possibly discomfort. In order to prepare to do this work well, we recommend that you read this blog post and discuss how you and your team will hold space for each other while using this framework.

The Fruit & Root Analysis™

The Fruit and Root Analysis™ is a framework and process that practitioners can use to examine their systems for the manifestations of one or more of the five levels of racism. After examination, practitioners then develop strategies to address or mitigate the racism manifesting in their workforce, education, and career pathway ecosystems.

- **Individual/Personal Racism:** Individual biases against other individuals or groups and internalized biases against one's self based on a socially disadvantaged racial identity.[4]

- **Interpersonal Racism:** Interpersonal dynamics and ways individuals engage other individuals and groups of individuals who have been historically excluded by law or custom from societal benefits and resources.

- **Institutional Racism:** Institutional policies, practices, and culture that keep people marginalized based on race or ethnicity, or perpetuate segregation and social sorting, and that elevates one race and diminishes others.

- **Cultural Racism:** Representations, messages and stories conveying the idea that behaviors and values associated with white people or "whiteness" are automatically "better" or more "normal" than those associated with other racially defined groups.

- **Structural Racism:** Features of society, including systems, policies, cultural norms, and representation, that collectively operate to maintain racism and the ideology of white supremacy.

TREE of RACISM

FRUIT
INDIVIDUAL
INDIVIDUAL BIASES AGAINST OTHER INDIVIDUALS OR GROUPS & INTERNALIZED BIASES AGAINST ONE'S SELF BASED ON A SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED RACIAL IDENTITY.

TREE TRUNK
INSTITUTIONAL
INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES, PRACTICES, & CULTURE THAT KEEP PEOPLE MARGINALIZED BASED ON RACE OR ETHNICITY, OR PERPETUATE SEGREGATION & SOCIAL SORTING, & THAT ELEVATES ONE RACE & DIMINISHES OTHERS.

FRUIT & BRANCHES
INTERPERSONAL
INTERPERSONAL DYNAMICS & WAYS INDIVIDUALS ENGAGE OTHER INDIVIDUALS & GROUPS OF INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE BEEN HISTORICALLY EXCLUDED BY LAW OR CUSTOM FROM SOCIETAL BENEFITS & RESOURCES.

SOIL
CULTURAL
REPRESENTATIONS, MESSAGES, & STORIES CONVEYING THE IDEA THAT BEHAVIORS & VALUES ASSOCIATED WITH WHITE PEOPLE OR "WHITENESS" ARE AUTOMATICALLY "BETTER" OR MORE "NORMAL" THAN THOSE ASSOCIATED WITH OTHER RACIALLY DEFINED GROUPS.

ROOTS
STRUCTURAL
FEATURES OF SOCIETY, INCLUDING SYSTEMS, POLICIES, CULTURAL NORMS, & REPRESENTATION, THAT COLLECTIVELY OPERATE TO MAINTAIN RACISM & THE IDEOLOGY OF WHITE SUPREMACY.
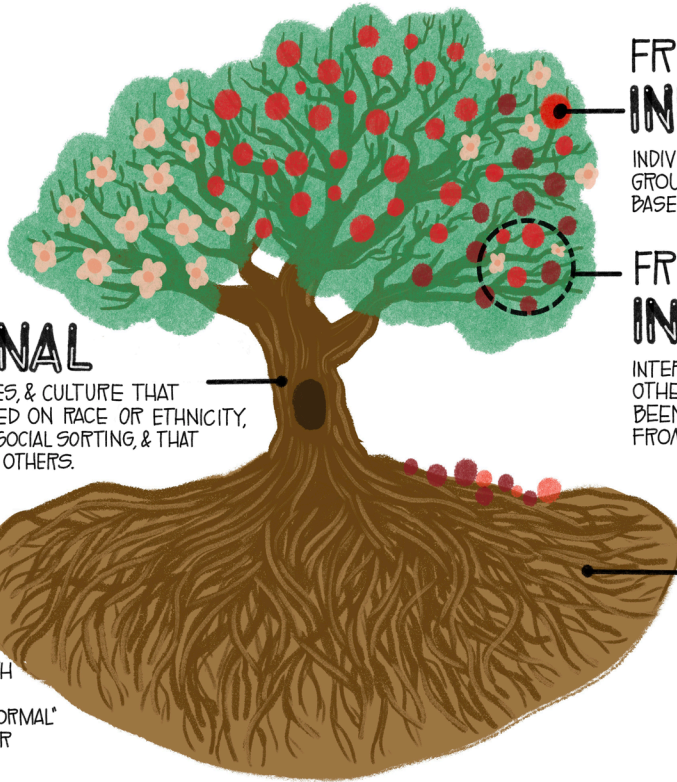
Understanding the Parts

This framework is using the "Fruit & Root Analysis™" to describe the levels of racism, their interactions with each other, and their impact on people of color in education, workforce, and career pathways. The components of this analysis include:
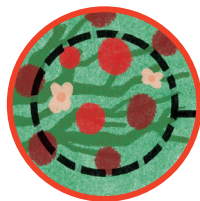
The Fruit **The Branches and The Fruit** **The Tree Trunk** **The Soil** **The Roots**

1. **The Fruit** – These are the surface level *individual manifestations and outcomes of racism*. The fruit can be **missing and rotten, blossoming, or fully ripe**. Intermediaries can review and analyze data on racial and ethnic representation in education, workforce, and career pathways to assess the fruit representation in their own ecosystems.

   a. <u>Missing and Rotten fruit</u> represent limited-to-no students/learners or workers of color in career pathways and occupations in a local or regional context. It's important to note that people aren't "rotten," rather the lack of representation of people of color in career pathways is indicative of a rotten and exclusionary system.
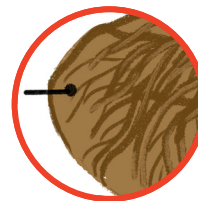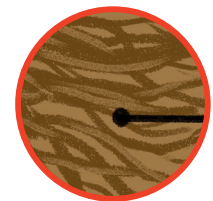
   b. <u>Blossoming fruit</u> represents the growing numbers of students/learners and workers of color in and moving through education and workforce systems into career pathways. While there are some blossoms, students/learners and workers are still subjected to racism in their educational, training, and work experiences.

   c. <u>Fully Ripe fruit</u> represents an equitable system where education, workforce, and career pathways are fully representative of all members of the community, particularly individuals who've been historically excluded. Fully ripe fruit represents what's possible when the roots of inequity are removed and replaced with equitable and just roots.

2. **The Branches and The Fruit** – The fruit and the branches represent *interpersonal racism*. Together these represent the interactions between the fruit and the larger tree, which impacts individual outcomes. At the interpersonal level, beliefs and biases held by individuals determine how they will interact or choose not to interact with others. In the context of racism, the interpersonal level is where racial microaggressions and acts of prejudice and discrimination take place.[5][6] Individuals on the receiving end of discrimination are often othered and excluded, resulting in missing or rotten fruit in education, workforce, and career pathways. Conversely, where there is fully ripe fruit, individuals are aware of their bias and in the context of interpersonal relationships, individual biases are called in or out and harm is addressed and repaired. In this context, individuals are accountable to each other and committed to addressing racism and discrimination as it manifests.
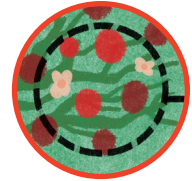
3. **The Tree Trunk** – The tree trunk represents *institutional racism*. At this level, institutional/organizational policies, practices, and culture have the potential to impact what happens at the interpersonal level (between students/teachers and workers/coworkers) while also potentially reinforcing personal and individual beliefs and biases (against people of color). The trunk sits in the middle of the soil, roots, and the branches and fruit, playing a unique role in either maintaining racism or disrupting the system of racism.

4. **The Soil** – The soil represents *cultural racism* that lives in the soil, feeding and fueling all other parts of the tree. It can lead to a healthy tree or a rotten tree. In the context of racism, the soil "silently" influences institutional policies, practices, and cultural norms. It influences interpersonal interactions and beliefs about people of color (think stereotypes), and it reinforces the ideology of a racial hierarchy, also known as white supremacy.[7] The soil of the tree of racism represents the stories, narratives, and cultural messaging that permeates society about white people, Black and African American people, Indigenous/Native peoples, Hispanic/Latine people, and Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders, referred to broadly as "people of color" throughout this framework.

5. **The Roots** – The roots represent *structural racism*. The root system is an intricate web of interlocking roots (policies, laws, regulations, institutional policies and practices, cultural messages, interpersonal behaviors) that strengthen, support, uphold, and reinforce the system of exclusion and oppression. The deeper the roots, the older the tree, the stronger the hold.
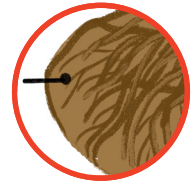
Disrupting, interrupting, and uprooting the system of racism requires an analysis of the system's roots, understanding how and where they intersect and how and where they uphold one another, and following a path to untangling and uprooting the entire system.

UNDERSTANDING
THE FRAMEWORK

USING
THE FRAMEWORK

APPLYING
LEARNINGS

CALL TO
ACTION

SECTION II
Using the Framework

Part 1:
Developing an Analysis

Activity #1 and #2 support individuals and teams in applying their critical thinking skills to developing a Fruit & Root Analysis™.

NOTE: This framework will require deep personal and collective work. It will require honesty, vulnerability, and possibly discomfort. In order to prepare to do this work well, we recommend that you read this blog post and discuss how you and your team will hold space for each other while using this framework.

TREE of RACISM

FRUIT
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TREE TRUNK
INSTITUTIONAL
INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES, PRACTICES, & CULTURE THAT KEEP PEOPLE MARGINALIZED BASED ON RACE OR ETHNICITY, OR PERPETUATE SEGREGATION & SOCIAL SORTING, & THAT ELEVATES ONE RACE & DIMINISHES OTHERS.

FRUIT & BRANCHES
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INTERPERSONAL DYNAMICS & WAYS INDIVIDUALS ENGAGE OTHER INDIVIDUALS & GROUPS OF INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE BEEN HISTORICALLY EXCLUDED BY LAW OR CUSTOM FROM SOCIETAL BENEFITS & RESOURCES.

SOIL
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REPRESENTATIONS, MESSAGES, & STORIES CONVEYING THE IDEA THAT BEHAVIORS & VALUES ASSOCIATED WITH WHITE PEOPLE OR "WHITENESS" ARE AUTOMATICALLY "BETTER" OR MORE "NORMAL" THAN THOSE ASSOCIATED WITH OTHER RACIALLY DEFINED GROUPS.

ROOTS
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Activity #1: An Individual Lens

Review the tree of racism above and as a team follow the protocol below.

Purpose: This activity was designed to help practitioners develop a Fruit & Root Analysis™ through individual reflection, group discussion, meaning making, and action planning.

Roles: For steps 3–6, designate one person to capture key themes and takeaways from the group discussions.

Time: This activity will take approximately two to three hours (dependent upon number of team members participating).

Process:

1. Getting Started *(5–8 min.)*
   a. Each individual will review the tree in silence and make notes in response to the following questions: What stands out to you? What do you notice?

   b. At the end of the time, move to the next step in the process.

2. **Describing the Graphic** *(5 min. per person)*
   a. Upon completion of the silent review, each member of the team will share their responses with each other.
   b. Team members listen to their colleagues without making judgments.
   c. After all team members have shared, move to the next step in the process.

3. **Asking Questions about the Graphic** *(10 min. per person + 15 min. group discussion)*
   a. Upon completion of the graphic description, team members will describe the relationship between the five levels on the tree in their own words:
   i. Individual

   ii. Interpersonal

   iii. Institutional

   iv. Cultural

   v. Structural

   b. Designate one person on the team to capture themes that emerge from the group.
   c. After everyone shares, the designated person will read all of the themes with the full team.
   d. The team can spend some time discussing similarities and differences.
   e. After all discussion is complete, move to the next step in the process.

4. **Speculating about the Meaning** *(30–60 min. group discussion)*
   a. It's time to make meaning of the graphic. As a group answer the questions below. Designate at least one person to whiteboard the responses.
   b. As you look at the tree of racism, describe and discuss the following:
   i. How are these five parts connected to each other?

ii. How are they supporting/upholding one another?

iii. How are they influencing one another?

iv. How does the sum of the parts make up the whole?

c.   Identify the areas where you have similarities and the areas where you have divergence and discuss as a team.

d.   After all discussion is complete, move to the next step in the process.

5.   **Discussing Implications for Your Work** *(60 min. group discussion)*

a.   One person on the team invites everyone to share key takeaways from the meaning making discussion.

b.   One designated person will whiteboard the takeaways, themes, and implications.

c.   The team will discuss the implications of "the tree of racism" on their work. The team can consider the following questions to prompt discussion:

i. What are the implications of the intersecting nature of the levels of racism on our work?

ii. What changes do we need to make to the way that we work as a result of our new analysis?

iii. The team can use this worksheet to capture the responses to similar questions. Adapt this form as needed to capture shifts and changes the team will need to make to address the manifestations of the levels of racism in their organization.

d.   **ACTION**: The team will work together to identify action steps that can be taken to ensure that this new analysis is reflected in their work. Consider using this action planning template to outline the action steps identified.

Activity #2: An Ecosystem Lens

TREE of RACISM

FRUIT
INDIVIDUAL
INDIVIDUAL BIASES AGAINST OTHER INDIVIDUALS OR GROUPS & INTERNALIZED BIASES AGAINST ONE'S SELF BASED ON A SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED RACIAL IDENTITY.

TREE TRUNK
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INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES, PRACTICES, & CULTURE THAT KEEP PEOPLE MARGINALIZED BASED ON RACE OR ETHNICITY, OR PERPETUATE SEGREGATION & SOCIAL SORTING, & THAT ELEVATES ONE RACE & DIMINISHES OTHERS.

FRUIT & BRANCHES
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STRUCTURAL
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Purpose: This activity is designed to help practitioners apply a Fruit & Root AnalysisTM to their ecosystem context.

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

Time: This activity will take approximately 3.5 hours.

Process:

1. **Getting Started** *(10–15 min.)*
   a. Silently, each individual will write down all of the key actors in your workforce, education, or career pathways ecosystem. Consider the following groups as you write down the key actors (individuals directly impacted, those involved in training, those providing funding, significant employers in your region, key legislative leaders):
   i. Students, learners, and workers

   ii. The education system (including K–12, CTE, post-secondary partners)

UNDERSTANDING
THE FRAMEWORK

USING
THE FRAMEWORK

APPLYING
LEARNINGS

CALL TO
ACTION

iii. Nonprofit training partners (CBOs, workforce providers)

iv. Public partners (the public workforce system, human and social service partners)

v. Employers and business partners

vi. Advocacy, policy, and legislative partners

vii. Philanthropic partners and funding avenues (private, corporate, and individual giving)

    b.   At the end of the 15 min., move to the next step in the process.

2.   **Discussing the Responses** *(5 min. per person)*:
    a.   Each person will share their list of key actors with the team.
    b.   Designate one person on your team to capture all of the key actors identified through the team discussion.
    c.   Identify where there are similarities and differences among who has been identified as key actors. Discuss differences.
    d.   **ACTION**: Finalize your comprehensive list of key actors.
    e.   After discussion is complete, move to the next step in the process.

3.   **Asking Questions** *(30–60 min.)*:
    a.   While looking at the list of key actors, the team will engage in an open discussion using the following prompts.
    b.   Designate one person on the team to capture responses to the questions below.
       i. How might these levels of racism be manifesting in your workforce, education, or career pathways ecosystem?

ii. How and where have you seen the levels of racism manifesting among the key actors in your ecosystem?

iii. Which levels of racism do you see manifesting more than others (if any)?

iv. Which actors hold power and which ones do not?

v. What are the spoken and unspoken rules of operating among key actors?

vi. How do key actors engage and partner with one another (or not)?

vii. How are workers, learners, and students treated and engaged among key actors (e.g., undervalued, valued, dismissed, engaged, seen as assets or liabilities)?

    c. Review and discuss the responses and themes to the questions.
    d. After discussion is complete, move to the next step in the process.

4. Speculating about the Meaning *(60 min.)*
    a. Review the responses to the questions in step 3 and answer the following questions.
    b. Designate one person on the team to capture key themes and takeaways to the below questions.
       i. What does this tell us about how racism is manifesting in our ecosystem?

       ii. Which actors appear to be unintentionally perpetuating racism?

iii. Which actors appear to be actively disrupting the manifestations of racism?

c. Review the key themes and takeaways and discuss collective responses as a team.
d. After discussion is complete, move to the next step in the process.

5. **Discussing Implications for Our Work** *(60 min.)*
   a. One person on the team invites everyone to share key takeaways from the meaning making discussion.
   b. One designated person will whiteboard the takeaways, themes, and implications. Answer the following prompts in your discussion about implications.
   i. What is our role in addressing or disrupting the manifestations of racism in our ecosystem?

   ii. What role are we best suited to play in addressing or disrupting the manifestations in our ecosystem?

   iii. Who can we partner with to address or disrupt the manifestations of racism in our ecosystem?

   iv. What is our immediate next step?

   c. **ACTION**: The team will work together to identify immediate next steps that can be taken to ensure that this new analysis is reflected in their work. Consider using this action planning template to outline the action steps identified.

UNDERSTANDING
THE FRAMEWORK

USING
THE FRAMEWORK

APPLYING
LEARNINGS

CALL TO
ACTION

Using the Framework

Part 2:
Examining the Levels of Racism

After you've completed Activity #1 and #2, complete Activities #3 through #7 to work through one level of racism at a time.

NOTE: *This framework will require deep personal and collective work. It will require honesty, vulnerability, and possibly discomfort. In order to prepare to do this work well, we recommend that you* read this blog post *and discuss how you and your team will hold space for each other while using this framework.*

Activity #3: Examining The Fruit
Individual (Personal) Racism

TREE of RACISM

FRUIT
INDIVIDUAL
INDIVIDUAL BIASES AGAINST OTHER INDIVIDUALS OR GROUPS & INTERNALIZED BIASES AGAINST ONE'S SELF BASED ON A SOCIALLY DISADVANTAGED RACIAL IDENTITY.

TREE TRUNK
INSTITUTIONAL

FRUIT & BRANCHES
INTERPERSONAL

SOIL
CULTURAL

ROOTS
STRUCTURAL
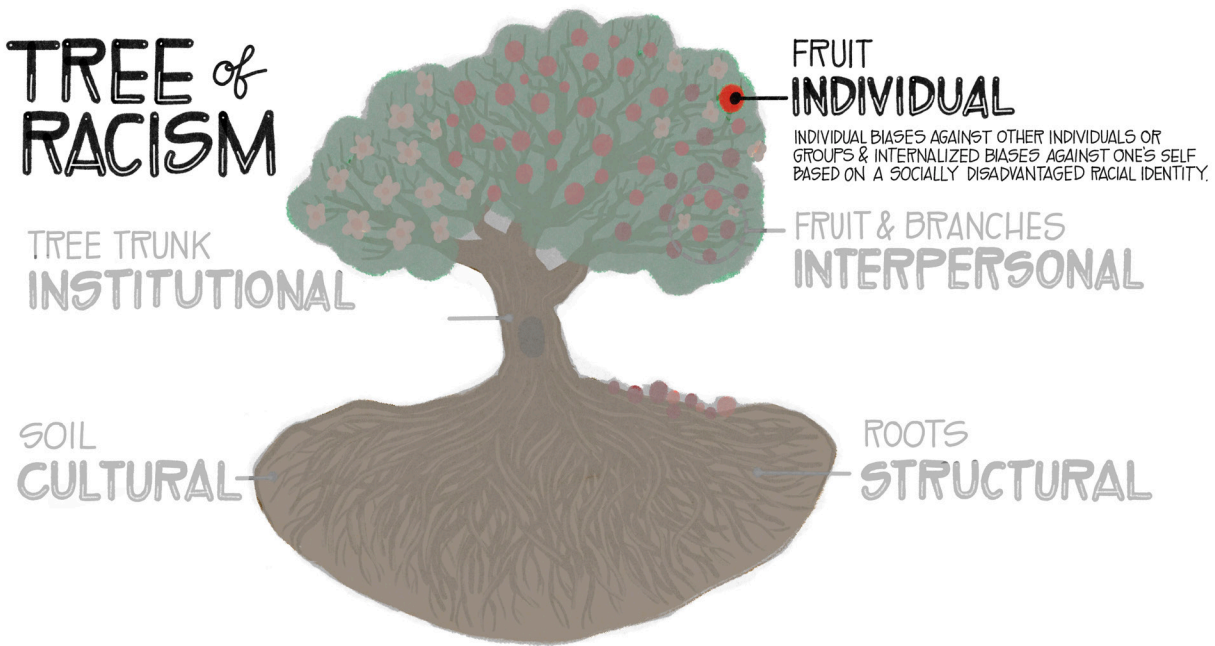
Purpose: This activity is meant to be an honest and reflective exercise with the goal of surfacing the individual biases you've internalized.

Time: This activity will take approximately one hour of individual reflection time.

Process:

1. **Getting Started** *(10 min.)*

   a. Think about your early experiences with race or racism. Journal your responses to the following questions:

   i. What did these experiences teach you about your race?

   ii. What did they teach you about other people's race?

   iii. What did they teach you about racism?

iv. As a result of these experiences, what beliefs have you internalized about yourself (and those in your race) or others (those of other races)?

b.   After you've finished journaling, move to the next step in the process.

2. **Speculating about the Meaning** *(15–20 min.)*
   a.   Review your responses to the first set of prompts and challenge yourself to go deeper. Answer the next set of prompts:
   i. As a result of your experiences navigating a racialized society, what biases do you think you hold about people who are like you?

   ii. What biases do you think you hold about people who are not like you?

   iii. How do you think these internalized beliefs show up in your day-to-day life?

   iv. Are you able to recognize when your internalized beliefs are manifesting in your life? If yes, explain how.

   b.   After you've finished journaling, move to the next step in the process.

3. **Exploring the Implications on Your Work and Life** *(15–20 min.)*
   a.   Review your responses to the second set of questions and challenge yourself to go deeper. Answer the next set of prompts:
   i. How might these internalized beliefs impact your work?

   ii. How might these internalized beliefs influence who you interact with and who you don't?

iii. How might these internalized beliefs affect whose advice you seek OR whose perspective you value?

iv. If you find that you are unaware of how these internalized beliefs impact your work, ask yourself the following questions:

- What can you do to raise your awareness of your own internalized beliefs?

- Is there someone who would be willing to help you identify your internalized beliefs?

v. **ACTION**: Based on the responses to questions 1–4, make a list of steps that you can take to increase your awareness of your internalized beliefs. If you've identified someone who can be your accountability buddy, invite them to partner with you to help you identify when you may be acting out of your internalized beliefs.

4. **Optional Individual Debrief on the Process** *(5–10 min.)*
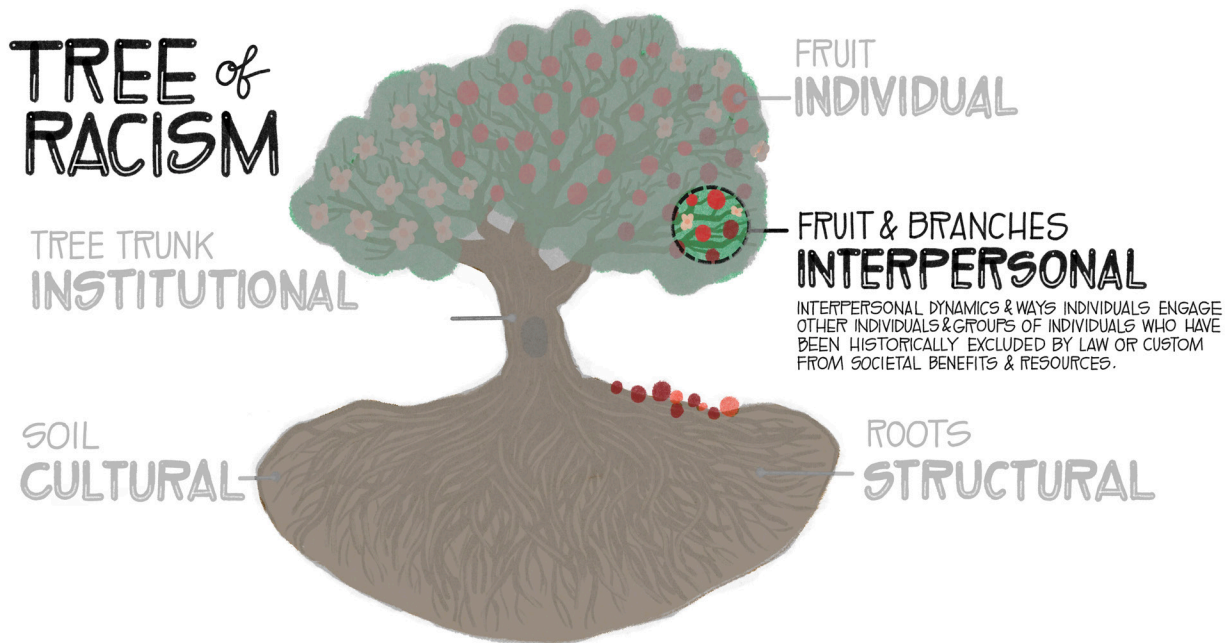   a. Reflect on the process and journal your answers the following questions:
      i. What feelings did you have while answering the questions?

      ii. Did any of these feelings surprise you? If yes, why?

   b. **NOTE**: Refer to the Feeling Wheel if you're having difficulty identifying or naming your feelings.[8]

Activity #4: Examining The Interactions Between The Fruit & The Branches
Interpersonal Racism

TREE of RACISM

FRUIT
INDIVIDUAL

FRUIT & BRANCHES
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INTERPERSONAL DYNAMICS & WAYS INDIVIDUALS ENGAGE OTHER INDIVIDUALS & GROUPS OF INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE BEEN HISTORICALLY EXCLUDED BY LAW OR CUSTOM FROM SOCIETAL BENEFITS & RESOURCES.

TREE TRUNK
INSTITUTIONAL

SOIL
CULTURAL

ROOTS
STRUCTURAL

🎯 **Purpose:** This activity is meant to be an honest and reflective exercise with the goal of increasing your awareness of the manifestations of interpersonal racism and your role in addressing and disrupting interpersonal racism.

🕐 **Time:** This activity will take approximately one hour to complete.

⚙️ **Process:**

1. **Getting Started** *(10 min.)*
   a. Think about your experiences with other people in your work and in your ecosystem. Journal your responses to the following questions:

      i. How have you seen interpersonal racism manifest in the interactions of people around you? Consider racial microaggressions (e.g., interactions among colleagues and students, people in society).[9] [10]

      ii. Do you think you are able to identify interpersonal racism as it's happening?
         1. If yes, write down how you are able to identify interpersonal racism (e.g., how do you know when it's happening?).

2. If no, write down what you will need to do differently in order to identify interpersonal racism as it's happening.

iii. After journaling is complete, move to the next step in the process.

2. **Assessing Your Experiences** *(10 min.)*
   a. Think about an interaction you've had with a person of a different race, ethnicity, or gender/gender identity and answer the following questions:
   i. Were there moments during that interaction that could have been perceived as discriminatory or as a racial microaggression?

   1. If yes, write down the interaction and the specific comment or action that could have been perceived as discriminatory or a racial microaggression.

   ii. If given the opportunity to name your action and seek to repair harm, how would you go about doing that? Write down your response.

   b. After you're done assessing your experiences, move to the next step in the process.

3. **Exploring the Implications in Your Life and Work** *(10 min.)*
   a. Once your awareness to the manifestations of interpersonal racism has increased, consider the following questions:
   i. Are you comfortable interrupting or disrupting acts of interpersonal racism as it's happening?

   ii. Are you comfortable addressing past acts of interpersonal racism?

   iii. If you are not comfortable, write down why you're not comfortable.

iv. What could increase your confidence and comfort to address interpersonal racism?

v. **ACTION:** Brainstorm ways that you could possibly interrupt or disrupt interpersonal racism when you see it happening. Reference this document on "Interrupting Bias" for sentence starters that can help you with interrupting interpersonal racism.

vi. **ACTION:** Create a list of steps that you will take to interrupt or disrupt interpersonal racism when you see it happening.

b. After you've created your list, move to the next step in the process.

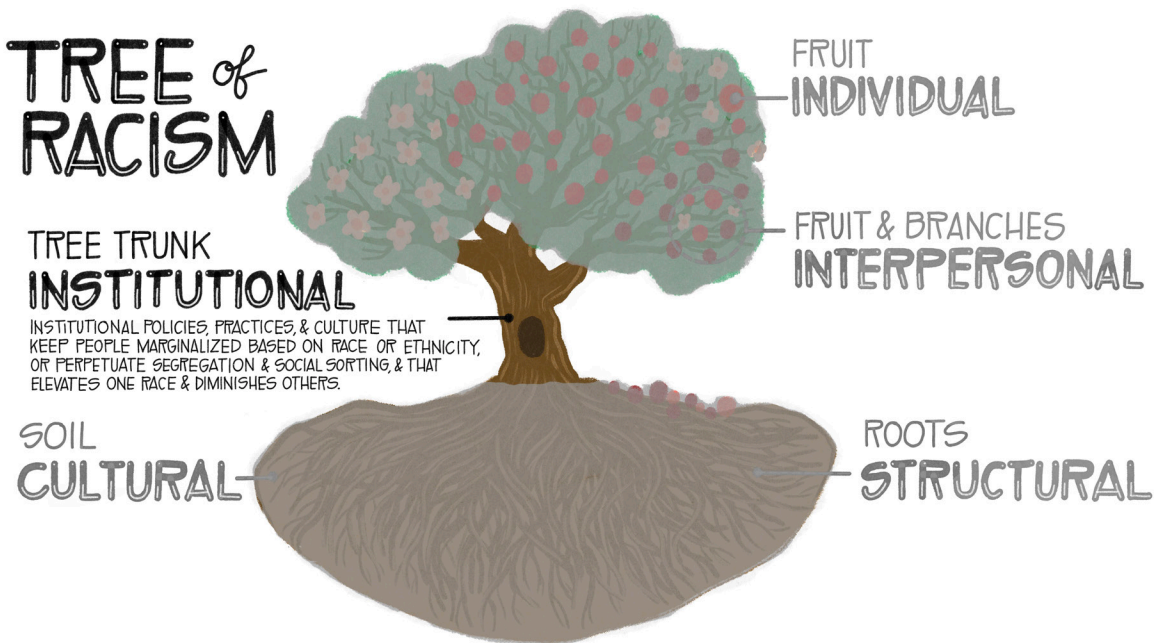4. **For Continued Individual Reflection** *(10 min.)*
   a. If any, what feelings did you have while completing the activity?

   b. If any, what feelings did you have while discussing your responses with your colleagues?

   c. Refer to the Feeling Wheel if you're having difficulty identifying or naming your feelings.[11]

Activity #5: Examining The Tree Trunk
Institutional Racism

TREE of RACISM

FRUIT
INDIVIDUAL

TREE TRUNK
INSTITUTIONAL
INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES, PRACTICES, & CULTURE THAT KEEP PEOPLE MARGINALIZED BASED ON RACE OR ETHNICITY, OR PERPETUATE SEGREGATION & SOCIAL SORTING, & THAT ELEVATES ONE RACE & DIMINISHES OTHERS.

FRUIT & BRANCHES
INTERPERSONAL

SOIL
CULTURAL

ROOTS
STRUCTURAL

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

2. **Analyzing the Environment** *(30–45 min.)*
   a. 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.
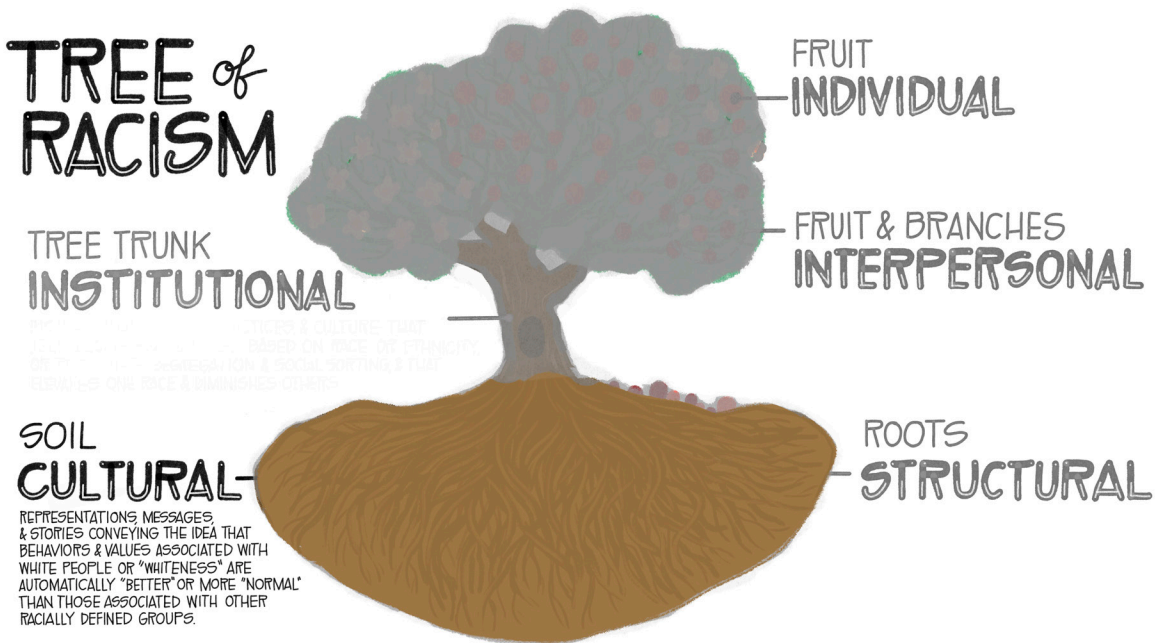
    b. Designate one person on your team to capture the brainstormed responses.
    c. **ACTION:** Use this form to outline the changes that need to be made to your policies and practices.
    d. Gut check your suggested changes using this REIA checklist.
    e. After you've completed the form and gut check, 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.

Activity #6: Examining The Soil
Cultural Racism

TREE *of* **RACISM**

FRUIT
INDIVIDUAL

TREE TRUNK
INSTITUTIONAL

FRUIT & BRANCHES
INTERPERSONAL

SOIL
CULTURAL

REPRESENTATIONS, MESSAGES, & STORIES CONVEYING THE IDEA THAT BEHAVIORS & VALUES ASSOCIATED WITH WHITE PEOPLE OR "WHITENESS" ARE AUTOMATICALLY "BETTER" OR MORE "NORMAL" THAN THOSE ASSOCIATED WITH OTHER RACIALLY DEFINED GROUPS.

ROOTS
STRUCTURAL

Purpose: This activity is meant to be an honest and reflective exercise with the goal of increasing your awareness of the manifestations of cultural racism in your organization; among your partner organizations; ecosystem stakeholders; and in your local, state, or regional context.

Time: This activity will take approximately 2.5 hours to complete.

Process:

1. **Getting Started** *(15 min.)*
    a. Designate one person to write down all the words that stand out to the team.
    b. As a team, review the graphic of the tree and read the definition of cultural racism.
    c. Team members are invited to call out words that stand out to them in the definition.
    d. Discuss why these words stood out to each of you.
    e. Review the responses and ask clarifying questions of each other if needed.
    f. After discussion is complete, move to the next phase in the process.

2. **Analyzing the Environment** *(60 min.)*
    a. Designate one person to capture responses and themes from the discussion.
    b. As a team, answer the following questions:
        i. What are the dominant narratives (stories) about people of color in your context?

ii. How are youth and young people of color talked about in your career and education ecosystem (e.g., stereotyped, problematized, as assets, as liabilities)?

iii. How are unemployed and underemployed workers of color labeled in your career and education ecosystem (e.g., stereotyped, problematized, as assets, as liabilities)?

iv. Think about the words stakeholders in your ecosystem use to describe individuals experiencing unemployment. List those words and answer the following questions:

    1. Do these words/terms cause harm to the individuals they are describing?

    2. Do these words/terms reinforce stereotypes about the individuals they are describing?

    3. Were these words/terms chosen as descriptors by the individuals they are describing OR were they put upon the individuals they are describing?

    4. Are there partners/organizations who use coded language to describe people, communities, and problems?[12]

v. Think about your grant applications. How do you describe the "problem or challenge" in your local context?

    1. How are people described?

2. How is the systemic context described (if at all)?

3. [Review this article](#) and answer the questions at the end.

vi. In your grant applications, how is your organization and its services described (e.g., hero, savior, partner, ally)?

vii. Think about the "success stories" that your organization writes:
    1. How is the challenge described?

    2. How is "success" described? In whose words?

    3. Whose voice is centered in the story?

    4. Who's the hero in the story?

    5. In preparing for the story, how were participants prepared?

viii. In your conversations and discussions with ecosystem partners and stakeholders, is there an acknowledgment of systemic racism?

    1. If yes, what's the response of those you're in conversation with?

2. If no, why not?

ix. Think about your website and literature. Are people of color represented?

1. If yes, how are they represented?

2. If not, why aren't they represented?

x. Take some time to review the collective responses to the questions.

xi. **ACTION:** As a team, map (or list) the key themes that surfaced through the responses to the questions. Discuss the similarities and differences.

xii. **ACTION:** Based on these responses, create a list of changes that need to be made in your ecosystem in order to address cultural racism.

xiii. Upon completion of the discussion, move to the next step in the process.

3. **Exploring the Implications in Your Work** *(30 min.)*
   a. Review the map (list) of key themes that surfaced during the group discussion in step 2.
   b. Discuss the implications of these themes on your work. Consider responding the following prompts:

   i. What do these themes tell us about how cultural racism is manifesting in our ecosystem?

   ii. What is our organization's commitment to addressing cultural racism in our ecosystem?

   iii. What is the work that we can do to address cultural racism in our ecosystem?

iv. Who can we partner with to address cultural racism in our ecosystem?

v. If we engage in narrative change work, what concerns do we have?

vi. What support (if any) do we need in order to address the manifestation of cultural racism in our ecosystem?

c. **ACTION:** Based on your responses, identify three to five next steps that your organization is willing to take to address cultural racism in your organization and ecosystem. Consider using this action planning template to outline the action steps identified.

4. **Reflecting on the activity** *(15 min.)*
   a. As a team, reflect on this process. Consider the following prompts for your discussion:
      i. How did it feel to move through this process?

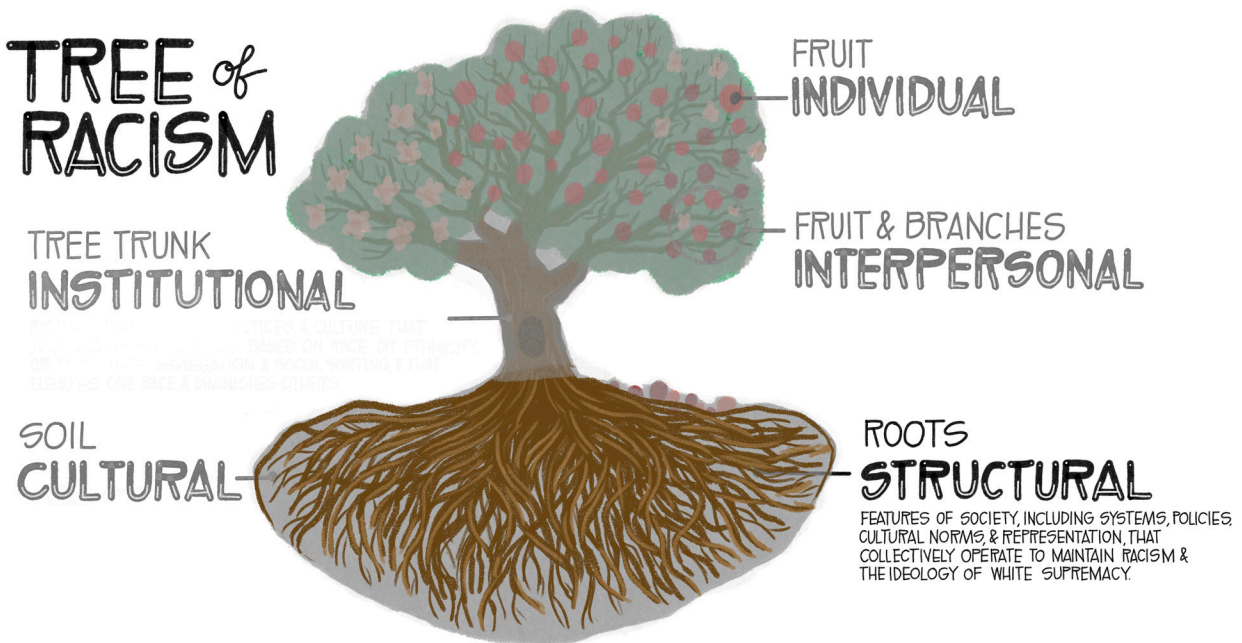
      ii. Did this activity reveal anything new to you?

      iii. Was this activity valuable to you/your work?

   b. Allow the team to reflect on any components of the process they find helpful.

Activity #7: Examining The Roots
Structural Racism

TREE of RACISM

FRUIT
INDIVIDUAL

FRUIT & BRANCHES
INTERPERSONAL

TREE TRUNK
INSTITUTIONAL

SOIL
CULTURAL

ROOTS
STRUCTURAL
FEATURES OF SOCIETY, INCLUDING SYSTEMS, POLICIES, CULTURAL NORMS, & REPRESENTATION, THAT COLLECTIVELY OPERATE TO MAINTAIN RACISM & THE IDEOLOGY OF WHITE SUPREMACY.

Purpose: This activity is meant to be an honest and reflective exercise with the goal of increasing your awareness of the manifestations of structural racism in your local, state, and regional career and education ecosystem.

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

Process:

1. **Getting Started** *(15 min.)*
   a. Designate one person to write down all the words that stand out to the team.
   b. As a team, review the graphic of the tree and read the definition of cultural racism.
   c. Team members are invited to call out words that stand out to them in the definition.
   d. Discuss why these words stood out to each of you.
   e. Review the responses and ask clarifying questions of each other if needed.
   f. After discussion is complete, move to the next phase in the process.

2. **Analyzing the Environment** *(60 min.)*
   a. Before this discussion, ask the staff to reference this report for more information about public policies and the way they impede or support progress toward racial equity.
   b. Designate one person to record the responses to the following questions:
      i. Name the primary workforce and education policies in your **state**. How may they be driving/upholding racial disparities?

ii. Name the primary workforce and education policies in your **local areas**. How may they be driving/upholding racial disparities?

iii. How do your state and local policies work together with institutional policies to uphold systems of exclusion? Explain.

iv. What are the public policies (related to workforce and education) that **impede** progress toward racial equity?

v. What are the public policies (related to workforce and education) that **support/drive** progress toward racial equity?

vi. **ACTION:** Review and discuss the responses to the answers as a team. Organize your responses in two categories: Support and Impede.

c. Upon completion of this activity, move to the next step in the process.

3. Implications for Your Work:

   a. As a team, review your two categories, Support and Impede, outlined in step 2.
   b. As a team, discuss the policies identified in both categories.
   c. **ACTION:** For the Support category, develop a plan to galvanize support/advocate for these policies. For the Impede category, brainstorm a strategy to advocate for the removal of these policies.
   d. **ACTION:** Identify at least five policies in both categories and examine the policies with this list of questions.
   e. **ACTION:** Develop a set of recommendations that can be used to advocate for more racially equitable policies.
   f. Use the responses to each action step above to prioritize your action steps. Consider using this action planning template to outline the action steps identified.

UNDERSTANDING
THE FRAMEWORK

USING
THE FRAMEWORK

APPLYING
LEARNINGS

CALL TO
ACTION

SECTION III

Applying Learnings

After completing Section II, use the following case studies and attached activities to continue practicing how to practically apply the framework in different scenarios.
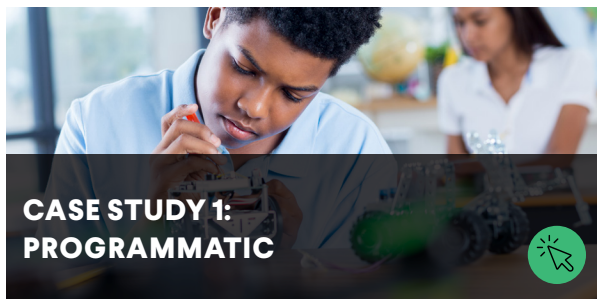
NOTE: *Similar to the framework, these activities will require deep personal and collective work. It will require honesty, vulnerability, and possibly discomfort. In order to prepare to do this work well, we recommend that you* read this blog post *and discuss how you and your team will hold space for each other while using these tools.*

UNDERSTANDING
THE FRAMEWORK

USING
THE FRAMEWORK

APPLYING
LEARNINGS

CALL TO
ACTION

Case Studies

Example scenarios and case studies are helpful ways for practitioners to continue to examine their systems for manifestations of racism beyond their initial analysis and action planning. The BEP community, and specifically the racial equity strand, used a variety of scenarios and case studies to increase their awareness and develop comfort in discussing instances of racism in their work, organization, and ecosystem.

Below are five case studies and scenarios that teams can use internally or externally to refine their skills and deepen their equity practices.

CASE STUDY 1: PROGRAMMATIC

CASE STUDY 2: YOUNG PEOPLE

CASE STUDY 3: YOUNG PEOPLE + TRANSFORMATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

WHITE DOMINANT NORM SCENARIO 1: COMMITMENT TO EQUITY AND INCLUSION

WHITE DOMINANT NORM SCENARIO 2: BOARD GOVERNANCE

Each activity includes a sample scenario as well as reflection questions to complete as a team.

Purpose: The purpose of these activities is to support your team in identifying, naming, and examining the manifestations of racism in the context of work and the workplace. Each case study and scenario offers an opportunity for teams to discuss how to address the manifestations of racism in keeping with their expressed commitment to racial equity.

Grounding: The example scenarios and case studies do not identify a specific place or organization, but are representative of interactions and experiences that workforce, education, and career pathways practitioners have in the workforce and education ecosystem. Many of these interactions and experiences are laden with implicit and explicit instances of racism, yet many times they remain unaddressed. These examples and case studies offer an opportunity for practitioners to see themselves and name the racism in the scenario or case study with little to no risk involved.

Roles: Roles include conversation facilitator, notetaker, and narrator.

Time: Each activity can take two to three hours to complete.

Process:

1. Allow team members to read the scenario or case study silently. *(5–8 min.)*
2. Identify one person to read the scenario or case study aloud. *(5 min.)*
3. Designate one person to capture themes as the team discuss the manifestations of racism in the scenario. *(15 min.)*
4. Once that discussion is complete, begin answering the questions listed beneath the scenario or case study. Designate one person to capture notes and themes as the team discusses. *(30–60 min.)*
5. Upon completion of answering the questions, review your responses and categorize and organize them by themes. *(15 min.)*
6. If your review reveals that similar instances occur within your organization, move to the "next steps" portion of the case study and collectively determine how your organization will change its policies and practices to ensure that these instances of racism do not occur within your operations and programmatic approaches. *(30–60 min.)*
7. If necessary, develop an action plan with detailed next steps. Consider using this action planning template. *(30 min.)*

SECTION IV

Call to Action

Working towards equity as an individual practice, institutional practice, societal practice, and societal goal requires a commitment to addressing the root causes of inequity. It requires intentional time, focus, and commitment to being comfortable with discomfort. The career and education systems in America are deeply intertwined with systems of racism, and in order to be reimagined/redesigned to work for all rather than some, practitioners must develop the skills to first identify manifestations of racism and then develop strategies to address them. Without the ability to identify racism, uprooting racism will be impossible, therefore the goal of equity will remain elusive.

The questions outlined in the framework are meant to be a starting point for examination and analysis. They are not an exhaustive list nor is it an exhaustive process. Ongoing work at the individual, team, and organizational level will be required. In the appendix below, additional tools are provided to support ongoing examination and practical application.

The BEP initiative is wrapping up its formal programming, but the work is not finished. We're not even close. There are persisting inequities in education to career pathways that continue to disproportionately impact college and career outcomes for Black and Latine youth and young people experiencing poverty.

Looking to the work ahead, we propose **five actions** that intermediary organizations can take to center racial equity in pathways systems:

1. **Work at all levels of racism** – In order to address inequity and realize the promise of racial equity, intermediaries must address the root causes of inequity, committing to work at all levels of racism. Each activity in this framework supports intermediaries in identifying the ways that they can work at all levels of racism.

2. **Develop a structural race analysis** – Develop an understanding of the public policies, systems, institutions, and cultural messaging upholding racial inequities. A structural race analysis

UNDERSTANDING
THE FRAMEWORK

USING
THE FRAMEWORK

APPLYING
LEARNINGS

CALL TO
ACTION

pays specific attention to three interlinking dynamics: political, social, and economic contexts. The structural racism worksheet is specifically designed to help intermediaries develop a structural race analysis.

3. **Understand the fruits and roots of racism** – The fruit equals the manifestations of racism or the impact of racism on education and career pathways, which can mean lack of racial diversity in career pathways. Or it can mean mistreatment of workers and learners of color in education and career systems. The root equals the underlying, deeply rooted challenges that foster and uphold racism and inequity in institutions, systems, and society. Conversely, a tree with fully ripe fruit represents the realization of equity in education, work, and career pathways. Understanding the fruits and roots of racism can lead to systemic, long-term, and transformative changes in the education, work, and career pathways systems. Each activity in the framework supports the development of this analysis and equips intermediaries and practitioners with the skills needed to identify the fruit and roots of racism.

4. **Commit to narrative change work** – One of the ways that racism is perpetuated in society is through stories and narratives about people and communities. These stories and narratives shape and inform individual beliefs, interpersonal interactions, institutional policies, and public policies that govern society. Stories and narratives about learners and workers of color are particularly harmful because they often create or reinforce negative stereotypes about people of color. To realize the potential of racial equity, intermediaries must commit to explicit narrative change work in education and career pathways, using asset-based language, addressing harmful narratives used by partners or colleagues, and develop a narrative change strategy as a core part of their work. Activity #6 in this framework is designed to support intermediaries in developing the skills needed to address cultural racism in their ecosystem.

5. **Work in partnership** – Racial equity is a societal goal, one that is only accomplished in partnership with like-minded people and organizations. It is not possible to achieve racial equity without relationships, community, and all ecosystem partners. Intermediaries must identify their allies in the work of racial equity, and they must be allies in the work of racial equity. Activity #2 in this framework can help intermediaries identify the right partners to advance the work of racial equity.

Although the work of racial equity is about changing systems, we must acknowledge that **people lead systems**. Therefore, individual people must commit to individual and systemic actions that will lead to equity-conscious ways of being, equity-conscious decision-making, and equity-centered policies. As part of your commitment to racial equity, consider this call to action from the Awake to Woke to Work report. Choose at least one new action step that you are willing to take to become the change you wish to see in society.

Call to Action[13]
The work of building a Race Equity Culture demands an intentional approach. People of color and whites alike must interrogate assumptions about how the work of nonprofits, grant makers, and other social sector organizations is and can be done — and by whom. There are specific practices to be followed, at all four levels on which racism operates:

PERSONAL	INSTITUTIONAL
• **Decolonize** your mind. Accept that white supremacy and institutional racism are real and practiced by all races. • **Interrogate** the dominant narrative. Understand implicit bias and your identity and role in enabling and propagating structural racism. • **Complete** your own internal work. Don't put the burden exclusively on people of color or people who you perceive to be more "woke" to explain the system to you. Hold yourself accountable for the work at all four levels on which racism operates.	• **Commit** to understanding and speaking publicly on principles of race equity, and how they apply in the institutional context. • **Disaggregate** staff engagement, performance, compensation, and promotion/retention data by race at all staff levels. Hold yourself and leadership accountable for this work. • **Engage** staff and communities of color to inform governance, decision making, and execution across organizational processes.
INTERPERSONAL	STRUCTURAL
• **Respect** the lived experience of people of color operating within white dominant culture, including your own if you're a person of color. •Commit to building, being vulnerable to, and learning through, relationships with people of a different race, especially people of color whose voices are often marginalized. • **Acknowledge** the impact of race-based power differentials within organizations.	• **Be accountable**, at the individual and organizational level, for dismantling personal, interpersonal, institutional, and structural instruments of white supremacy. • **Publicly advocate** for race equity and challenge white dominant cultural norms, including naming microaggressions in interpersonal and institutional contexts. • **Cede power** to people of color within and across teams, organizations, and systems.

Appendix

Definitions

- Shared Language

NOTE: *These definitions were used by the BEP community and specifically by the Racial Equity strand during their work together. They do not represent a comprehensive list of all the terms and concepts related to racism and equity. Rather, they represent a list of key terms and concepts that were discussed throughout the community's work together as a way to develop shared language.*

Additional Reports & Frameworks

- Awake to Woke to Work
- Constructing A Racial Equity Theory of Change
- 10 Essential Questions for Workforce Development
- 10 Essential Questions for Policy Development, Review and Evaluation
- 10 Essential Questions for Employers, Business Owners, HR Professionals and Hiring Managers
- Choice Point Tool
- How to Tell Compelling Stories While Avoiding Exploitation

BEP Racial Equity Strand Blogs

- Identifying the 'Fruit and Root' of Systemic Racial Inequity
- Putting 'Fruit and Root' Analysis of Racism to Work
- Intermediaries Must Disrupt Institutional Racism From the Inside Out
- Using Systems Change Strategies to Address Structural Racism

BEP Podcast Episodes

- The Fruit and the Root of Racial Inequity in Pathways Systems
- The Stamina, Agility, and Strength Needed for Racial Equity Work

Endnotes

1   "White supremacy." "Racial Equity Tools Glossary." Racial Equity Tools, July 2022.
    https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary.

2   Training = a minimum of six hours of training facilitated by a Racial equity trainer or Equity Subject
    Matter expert.

3   Developing an analysis = the ability to identify and name the manifestations of racism in oneself,
    in interactions with others, in institutions and in systems and structures.

4   "Individual racism." "Racial Equity Tools Glossary." Racial Equity Tools, July 2022.
    https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary.

5   Wing Sue, Derald. "Microaggressions: More Than Just Race." Psychology Today, November 17,
    2010. https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/microaggressions-in-everyday-life/201011/
    microaggressions-more-just-race.

6   "Examples of Racial Microaggressions - School of Public Health." University of Minnesota School
    of Public Health. Accessed September 22, 2023. https://www.sph.umn.edu/site/docs/hewg/
    microaggressions.pdf.

7   "White Supremacy." "Racial Equity Tools Glossary." Racial Equity Tools, July 2022.
    https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary.

8   Wilcox, Gloria. The Feeling Wheel. Accessed September 22, 2023. https://www.gnyha.org/wp-content/
    uploads/2020/05/The-Feeling-Wheel-Positive-Psycology-Program.pdf.

9   Wing Sue, Derald. "Microaggressions: More Than Just Race." Psychology Today, November 17,
    2010. https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/microaggressions-in-everyday-life/201011/
    microaggressions-more-just-race.

10 "Examples of Racial Microaggressions - School of Public Health." University of Minnesota School
    of Public Health. Accessed September 22, 2023. https://www.sph.umn.edu/site/docs/hewg/
    microaggressions.pdf.

11 Wilcox, Gloria. The Feeling Wheel. Accessed September 22, 2023. https://www.gnyha.org/wp-content/
    uploads/2020/05/The-Feeling-Wheel-Positive-Psycology-Program.pdf.

12 Coded Language is defined as substituting terms describing racial identity with seemingly race-
    neutral terms that disguise explicit and/or implicit racial animus. It injects language that triggers racial
    stereotypes and other negative associations without the stigma of explicit racism.

13 "AWW - Awake to Woke to Work." Equity In The Center, June 1, 2023.
    https://equityinthecenter.org/aww/.

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Building a Future
That Works
For Everyone