

DAY 1: Centering Yourself: Levels of Racism

“Not seeing race does little to deconstruct racist structures or materially improve the conditions which people of colour are subject to daily. In order to dismantle unjust, racist structures, we must see race. We must see who benefits from their race, who is disproportionately impacted by negative stereotypes about their race, and to who power and privilege is bestowed upon – earned or not – because of their race, their class, and their gender. Seeing race is essential to changing the system.” - Reni Eddo-Lodge

If someone asked you “what is racism” how would you respond? Would you be able to help them understand the different ways that racism rears its ugly head in our society?

You may picture personal biases or racist interactions between people. While this is one form of racism, organizations and social systems can, and do, take actions, intentionally or unintentionally, that uphold the reality of racism. Racism exists on multiple levels: internalized, interpersonal, institutional and structural.

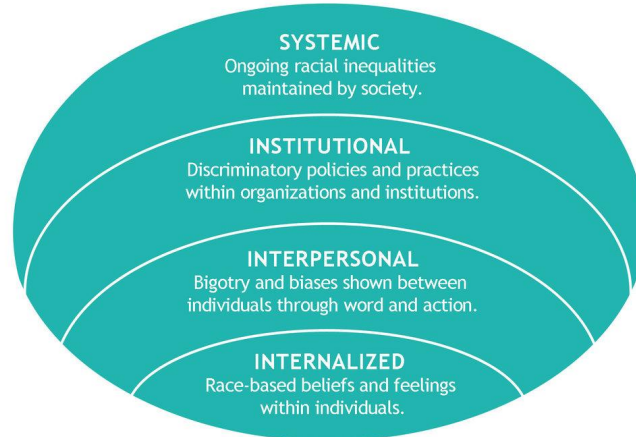
- **Internalized Racism:** A set of privately held beliefs, prejudices and ideas about the superiority of whites and the inferiority of people of color. Among people of color, it manifests as internalized oppression. Among whites, it manifests as internalized racial superiority.
- **Interpersonal Racism** (between people): The expression of racism between individuals. It occurs when individuals interact, and their private beliefs affect their interactions.
- **Institutional Racism:** Discriminatory treatment, unfair policies and practices, and inequitable opportunities and impacts within organizations and institutions, all based on race, that routinely produce racially inequitable outcomes for people of color and advantages for white people. Individuals within institutions inherit the power of that institution when they reinforce racial inequities.
- **Structural Racism:** A system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations and other norms work to perpetuate or reinforce racial group inequality. It is racial bias among institutions and across society. It involves the cumulative, compounding effects of societal factors, including the history, culture, ideology and interactions of institutions and policies that systematically privilege white people and disadvantage people of color.

Often when racism is discussed, it is done so at an interpersonal level. Only acknowledging racism in this way hinders us from addressing the myriad factors keeping the *system* of racism in place. The graphic below illustrates all [the domains in which racism operates](#).



Share your reflections on today's topic on social media using the hashtag [#unitedforequity](#) or [#uwwcequitychallenge](#) and tag [@uwwashtenaw](#).

LEVELS ON WHICH RACISM EXISTS



Today's Challenge:

Listen:

- Listen to the podcast episodes [The Land of Our Fathers, Part 1](#) and [The Land of Our Fathers, Part 2](#) which are part of the New York Times podcast '1619', for insight into how systemic racism has taken shape.
- Listen to this [episode of White Like Me, which explores whiteness as an idea and as an identity](#). Hear from an Italian American family as they reflect on a time when they weren't yet white in America.

Read:

- Read this article describing ["5 Examples of Institutional Racism in the United States."](#)
- Read this Washington Post piece to better understand [the concept of critical race theory, an intellectual tool set for examining systemic racism](#).
- Read this article to learn more about [how America's struggle with racism is being experienced by Black immigrants](#).

Watch:

- Watch ["What is Internalized Racism?"](#) to better understand how this level of racism works.
- [Watch Dr. Camara Jones' TED Talk](#) in which she shares four short stories to help us understand privilege and racism (20 minutes).
- Watch one or more of the [short videos and reflections from the New York Times](#) on racial identity in America.
- [Watch this quick video](#) from Race Forward, which provides an overview of the levels of racism and how we often focus on individuals rather than systems when addressing racism in the media.

Act:

- Explore the impact of your own social identities by completing this [social identity wheel](#). Then, start a conversation with a co-worker or a friend who is also taking the Challenge.

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- Take this eye-opening [privilege self-assessment](#) by BuzzFeed to discover where you are on the spectrum
- Help [shape United Way's 2023 Public Policy Agenda by taking this brief survey](#). Your feedback will help us advocate for public policies that change the odds for people and communities most harmed by systemic and institutional racism.
- [RSVP to one or more discussion groups](#) hosted by [Nonprofit Enterprise at Work](#) and UWWC to reflect, share and take action.



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