

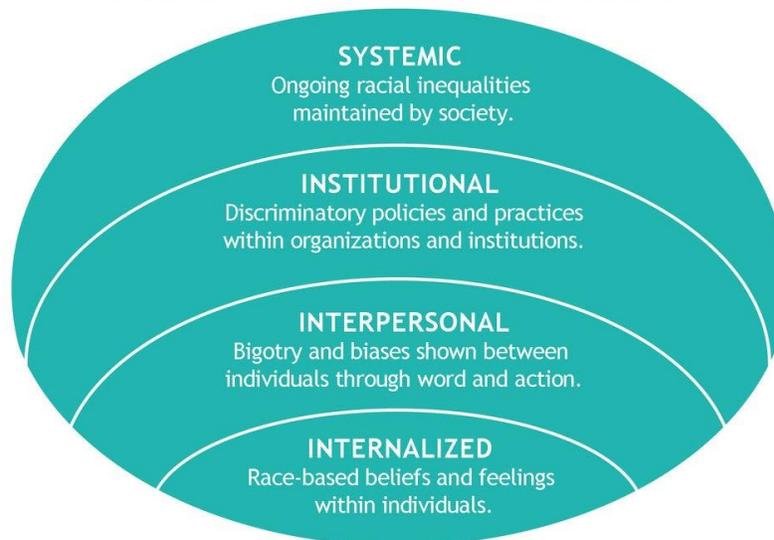
DAY 2: Levels of Racism

“Americans believe in the reality of ‘race’ as a defined, indubitable feature of the natural world. Racism—the need to ascribe bone-deep features to people and then humiliate, reduce, and destroy them—inevitably follows from this inalterable condition. In this way, racism is rendered as the innocent daughter of Mother Nature, and one is left to deplore the Middle Passage or Trail of Tears the way one deplores an earthquake, a tornado, or any other phenomenon that can be cast as beyond the handiwork of men. But race is the child of racism, not the father.” - [Ta-Nehisi Coates](#)

Are you seeing and addressing how racism operates at different levels? [Dr. Camara Jones](#), Senior Fellow at the Morehouse School of Medicine, says that in order to address racism effectively, we have to understand how it operates at multiple levels. Often what people think of first and foremost is interpersonal racism. Only seeing this level means that we fail to see the full picture that keeps the system of racism in place. The graphic below illustrates all [the domains in which racism operates](#).

One might be tempted to attribute the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on Black and Brown communities to the individual actions of Black and brown people-- that would be faulty logic. What we will explore next are some of the systems, institutions and policies that put Black and Brown communities at the front lines of the pandemic.

LEVELS ON WHICH RACISM EXISTS



Today's Challenge:

OPTION 1: Listen to Yodit Mesfin Johnson, president and CEO of Nonprofit Enterprise at Work (NEW) and board member of United Way of Washtenaw County in this [Washtenaw United interview](#) explore how systemic racism is underlined in the pandemic, but how opportunity and optimism abound.

OPTION 2: [Read this article by Hilary Beard, “Ring the Alarm: COVID-19 Presents Grave Danger to Communities of Color”](#) detailing how systemic forces are resulting in Black and Brown people being disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.

OPTION 3: Check out this [short video from Race Forward](#) about the levels and the importance of looking at systemic, not simply individual, racism.

OPTION 4: Review the [Talking About Race Toolkit](#) from the Center for Social Inclusion because how we talk about race matters and impacts our ability to work against systemic inequities.

OPTION 5: Read a [blog post by Cynthia Silva Parker](#), which gives an overview of four levels of racism and the need for a systemic approach to seeing and addressing oppression.

Share your reflections on today’s topic on social media using the hashtag **#unitedforequity** and tag **@uwwashtenaw**.