







DAY 4: Confronting Whiteness, White Privilege, and White Supremacy

“For those of us called white, whiteness simply is. Whiteness becomes, for us, the unspoken, uninterrogated norm, taken for granted, much as water can be taken for granted by a fish.”
— [Tim Wise](#), *White Like Me*

Privilege is defined as unearned social, political, economic, and psychological benefits of membership in a group that has institutional and structural power. We commonly hear about privilege associated with race or gender, but privilege can also exist based on socio-economic class, religion, sexuality, ability, and education level.

It’s important to note that you can have privilege in one area, like being white, but not have privilege in another area, like being a woman, or living in a lower socio-economic class. Just because you have unearned (how you were born) privilege in some areas, doesn’t mean that you didn’t work hard or don’t deserve credit for what you do. But it does mean that you are getting something that may be denied to other people simply based on their different identities or social categories. Therefore you can have an advantage or privilege, even if you’re not aware of it. Read more about [5 common types of privilege](#).

Some Examples of Privilege in the USA
Adapted from University of San Francisco

 <p>If while growing up, college was an expectation of you and not a lofty dream, you have class privilege.</p>	 <p>If you’re confident that the police exist to protect you, you have white male privilege.</p>	 <p>If you can use public bathrooms without stares, fear or anxiety, you have cisgender privilege.</p>
 <p>If you can expect time off from work to celebrate your religious holidays, you have religious privilege.</p>	 <p>If you can comfortably walk down the street holding your partner’s hand, you have heterosexual privilege.</p>	 <p>If you don’t have to worry about where the elevator is, you have able-bodied privilege.</p>

When we talk about privilege, we must also talk about **intersectionality**. What does this mean? [According to Kimberle Crenshaw, originator of the term](#), “It’s basically a lens, a prism, for seeing the way in which various forms of inequality often operate together and exacerbate each other. We tend to talk about race inequality as separate from inequality based on gender, class, sexuality or immigrant status. What’s often missing is how some people are subject to all of these, and the experience is not just the sum of its parts.”

White supremacy and associated “cultural norms” show up on a spectrum. For example, there are the more outward and extreme forms of white supremacy (think Ku Klux Klan or Proud

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

Boys), and there are less extreme and less visible forms as well, like “All Lives Matter” statements (particularly when offered as a counter to “Black Lives Matter”) white “saviorism” attitudes, and workplace microaggressions.



Source: Beloved Community

[Dr. Robin DiAngelo](#) describes **white fragility** as a state of being for white people in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves. These moves can include the outward display of emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt, and behaviors such as argumentation, silence, and leaving the stress-inducing situation. These behaviors shut down conversations, and inhibit actions which, in turn, function to reinstate white racial equilibrium.

Below are tools to empower you to spark a conversation.

Today's Challenge:

Listen:

- Listen to Scene On Radio's podcast series [Seeing White](#), which aims to discuss racism by looking into the history of how the concept of 'whiteness' came to be.
- Listen to this 10 min article from Tonya Mosley, [Lean Into Discomfort When Talking About Race](#) and then explore [Talking About Race](#) a new web portal from The National Museum of African American History and Culture that's meant to spark discussion, community building and self-care.

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

Read:

- Read this VeryWell Mind article describing “[What is White Fragility](#)” – what it looks like, what causes it, and critiques of it.
- Read this short piece on [The Realities of White Rage](#).
- [This short article](#) helps illustrate the “iceberg theory of white supremacy” showing both overt and covert manifestations.

Watch:

- Watch this video [where Bonnie Billups, Jr., Executive Director of the Peace Neighborhood Center, describes the impacts of systemic racism and housing on the demographic makeup of Ann Arbor today.](#)
- Watch this video documenting the history of how whiteness came to be: “[Birth of a White Nation, the Invention of White People and its Relevance Today.](#)”
- Watch this TED talk by Russell Ellis, a “reformed racist” who aims to teach other white people how to deconstruct their own racism, [White Supremacy: Same Dog, Same Tricks-Time to Change the Training](#)

Act:

- [Complete a free bystander intervention training](#) so that you have the tools to stop anti-Asian/American and xenophobic harassment if you see it happening. Then, [download this related bystander intervention guide](#) from Right To Be!
- Review and discuss with others this list written by Debra Leigh, community organizer for the Community Anti-Racism Education Initiative, “[The 28 Common Racist Attitudes that Indicate a Detour or Wrong Turn into White Guilt, Denial, or Defensiveness.](#)”
- [Consult this White Accomplices.org website](#) on ways that white people can show up positively and proactively for racial justice.



**Discrimination?
Injustice?
Racial Inequities?**

YES.

**Click here to learn more
and join the
21-Day Equity
Challenge: 2023 Edition**

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