

DAY 1: Racial Socialization and Forming Your Racial Identity

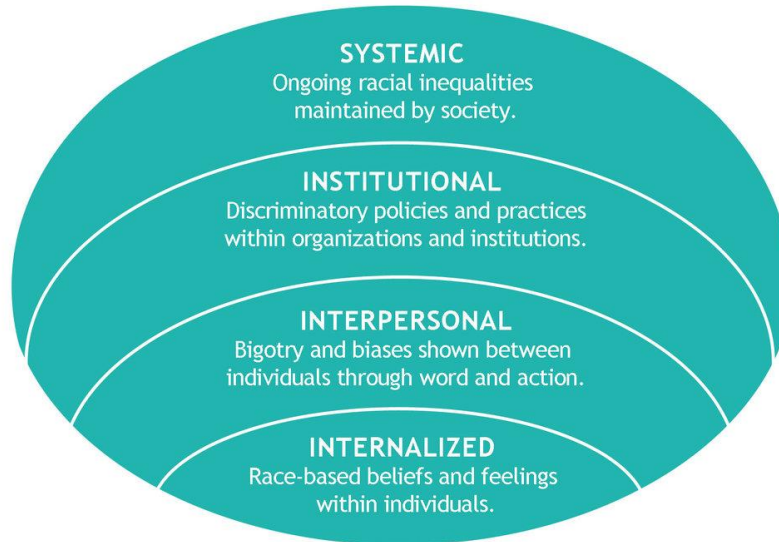
“Not seeing race does little to deconstruct racist structures or materially improve the conditions which people of colour are subject to daily. In order to dismantle unjust, racist structures, we must see race. We must see who benefits from their race, who is disproportionately impacted by negative stereotypes 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

It is time for us to take a closer look at the inequities that are deeply rooted in our systems and institutions and work together to create an America where every individual has the opportunity to succeed, regardless of race, gender, sexuality, religion, and identity. Over the next 21 days, we will explore difficult topics, like structural racism, segregation, and privilege, to open up dialogue on how we can be champions of equity in our personal and professional lives.

Race can be defined as “each of the major groupings into which humankind is considered (in various theories or contexts) to be divided on the basis of physical characteristics or shared ancestry.” Racial identity, on the other hand, is understood as “a sense of collective identity that is based on a perceived common heritage with a racial group.” The concept of racial identity takes into account the complexity of lived experiences and systems of power and privilege perpetuated by the ideology of race.

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](#).

LEVELS ON WHICH RACISM EXISTS



Today's Challenge:

How do you think about your racial identity and its relevance to your work/volunteerism/studies? Identity matters. Who we think we are and who others think we are can have an influence on all aspects of our lives. Think about the first time you became aware of your racial identity. What comes up for you?

Option 1: [Listen to this Stateside episode with Eddie Moore, Jr., executive director of The Privilege Institute](#), to learn more about the White Privilege Conference in Grand Rapids created a space for people to have “tough conversations.”

Option 2: Reference this document to view how people of color [develop their racial identity](#).

Option 3: Watch one or more of the [short videos and reflections from the New York Times](#) on racial identity in America.

Option 4: 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.

Option 5: Journal about your own racial identity. You might consider:

- When did you first become aware of your racial identity?
- What messages did you learn about race from your school and family? Did they align with what you've seen in your life?
- When has how others perceived your racial identity affected how they treat you?
- How have the events over the past 18 months impacted your awareness of race?

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

