



Stages of Structural Racism Awareness							
Completely Unaware	Defensive & Denial	Acknowledges Extreme Forms Interpersonal Racism	Acknowledges Racism, Denies Privilege	Begins to see the Structural Inequity	Connects the dots between Inequity and Privilege	Leaning in, Comfortable with the Discomfort	Being the Change and Making the Change
Unaware				Aware			



"I don't see color."

"It's about poverty."

"We use race neutral tools!"

"I'm not racist. Some of my best friends are..."



"I had nothing to do with that. Get over it."

"Prove it."

"I'm not racist. Some of my best friends are..."



Identifies & disapproves of a racist person's action.

"I'm not racist. Some of my best friends are..."



"My family has struggled."

"All Lives Matter!"

"I feel personally attacked by this conversation"



This awareness comes with disappointment as this new reality contradicts my worldview.

"I feel personally really angry, guilty and upset."



"My privilege doesn't reflect my morality, but my response to it does."



Conversations about race are no longer threatening.

"Now that I see structural racism, I will never un-see it."



"I understand that we need to close the racial/ethnic gaps that structural racism produces and create more equitable opportunities!"



## Self-Assessment Practice Guide Structural Racism Awareness

### Introduction of the Self-Assessment

This self-assessment is designed to help a person identify their current level of understanding of Structural Racism.

This self-assessment is not designed to place everyone squarely into one stage of the structural racism awareness spectrum. Instead, the assessment represents a range of thoughts, ideas and issues that might resonate with some and not others or points that one may identify with across multiple stages depicted here.

The quotes can help a person identify or connect with the various stages described in the tool. One person may associate themselves with one stage but recognize that they believe strongly in the quote from a different stage. This may mean they are not as far along as they thought or might highlight a specific blind spot a person may have across the spectrum. Further, these “inconsistencies” underscore the challenges associated with trying to address (or solve) structural racism with a “cookie cutter” one size fits all solution.

The purpose of this assessment is to provide a person with “food for thought” regarding their potential areas of growth and can be discussed among a group, in pairs, or used in silent reflection.

### Understanding the Different Stages of Awareness

#### Completely Unaware

- This applies to those of us who have not focused on issues of race/ethnicity in our personal or professional lives/experiences.
- Inherent in being unaware of race/ethnicity is a privilege
- In a way, people in this stage often try to unite people (i.e. I don't see color so I am not racist) without addressing racism

#### Defensive & Denial

- This applies to those of us who may feel personally (or their side, i.e. family, friends, race, culture, political affiliation) attacked during discussions about race/ethnicity and who, instead of acknowledging racism, they tend to “attack” back.
- This defensiveness is often result of fear, a belief in certain negative stereotypes etc.
- Some may also hold a zero sum mentality (to create racial equity means you will take away from my community)

#### Acknowledges Extreme Forms of Interpersonal/Personal Racism

- This applies to those of us who can quickly recognize and denounce a blatantly racist act (i.e. person to person).

- People in this stage tend to focus heavily on the belief that they do not act personally racist (i.e. they are polite to people of color; interact with acquaintances who are people of color; they have a surface level familiarity with people of color in their personal/professional life)
- People in this stage tend to interpret racism as very one dimensional – between individual people – but fail to acknowledge the impact of institutional or structural racism.

#### Acknowledges Racism but Denies Privilege

- This applies to those of us who acknowledge racism and understand the harm it does to people and communities of color, but also associate all other struggles (poverty, classism, etc.) on the same scale, and because of this association do not accept the notion of white privilege - All Lives Matter
- This applies to those of us who, to demonstrate our personal lack of privilege, often compare the access that extreme wealth grants over race.
- This applies to those of us who fail to recognize that the foundation of structural racism is the benefit of opportunity that it has provided to specific groups (White people) for hundreds of years while denying these opportunities to other groups

#### Begins to see Structural Inequity

- This applies to those of us who begin to recognize the patterns in the narratives we receive in society about people of color.
- This applies to those of us who are able to acknowledge the consequences of the denial of opportunity on people of color (e.g. redlining policies, educational access)
- At this stage we may feel extreme feelings of anger and/or guilt

#### Connects the Dots between Inequity & Privilege

- This applies to those of us who can acknowledge the consequences of the denial of opportunity on people of color AND recognize how those barriers have benefitted their group.
- This awareness transcends any feelings of guilt.

#### Leaning In, Comfortable with the Discomfort

- This applies to those of us who willingly engage in serious dialogue and strategy development to reduce racial and ethnic disparities without feeling threatened or guilty - understands that this is not a zero sum issue.

#### Being the Change and Making It Happen

- This applies to those of us who are fully committed to racial/ethnic justice, and willfully investigate and/or develop policies and practices that ensure equitable access and opportunities for all people.
- This applies to those of us who proactively encourage and engage in power sharing.
- This is where the work begins....