SIX PHASES of RACIAL EQUITY PRACTICE

supported by dR Works

Organizations that make a commitment to racial equity often move through a predictable set of "phases". Each phase leads into the phase directly following it. Determining your organization's racial equity phase can be useful in planning strategic and explicit racial equity goals.

Familiar Dysfunction

Explicit Commitment

Culture Shift/ Not Knowing

Relational Trust

Equity Goals Clarified

Equity Practice

The diagram below provides details and insight regarding these anticipated phases and is designed to support organizations in their transition through their racial equity development in order to deepen their commitment, understanding and analysis.

based on the work of dR Works

Phase I

Familiar Dysfunction

- People Of Color expected to "fit in"
- Unaware of historical impact of race on POC and resulting trauma
- Predominately White/ White-led

Most organizations start their equity commitment with an already established identity as predominately white with a dominant white culture ideology. People of Color (POC) are expected to "fit in" to existing culture. The organization is in a "fixing" stance, positioning itself as one of the "good" ones.

Phase II

Explicit Commitment to Racial Equity

- Shift begins
- Develop a shared analysis and framework
- POC gain renewed hope

Equilibrium in the organization begins to shift. People in the organization begin to develop a shared language and framework for understanding racism. People of Color (POC) often begin to hold renewed hope that the organization might become more responsive to their strengths and needs. White people begin to question what once seemed certain. Expectations of POC begin to rise, as white people in the organization may become hyper-defensive or sensitive, given the expectation of different behavior.

Phase III

Culture Shift/Not Knowing

- Either/ or thinking
- Frustration builds
- Expectation of change rises

People of Color (POC) often read white people's complacency as intentional; they may also equate racial equity with the need for white people to change, which can diminish their sense of power and agency, resulting in high levels of frustration and hopelessness. White people begin to take every challenge as one to prove they are "good", either by disassociating from other white people, intellectualizing or criticizing the process or seeking approval from POC. Organizations may begin to blame individuals for doing things "wrong". Leads to feeling unsettled and a search for quick fixes

Adapted from dR Works' Racial Equity Stages
visit www.dismantlingracism.org for more info

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Phase IV

Relational Trust

- Acknowledge messiness and chaos
- Focus on building a culture of appreciation
- Begin to identify individual and collective power

People start to identify their individual and collective power to make change or shift the organization without focusing on depending on others to change. People continue to identify useful and/or effective ways to disagree, looking for the value in different perspectives while assuming positive intent. Caucuses provide support for people to work through challenges related to racial equity work. People begin to sharpen their skills for holding each other accountable with a sense of possibility rather than judgment.

Phase V

Equity Goals Clarified

- Explicit Racial Equity Goals Named
- Address all 3 levels
- Clarity around complexities of the racial equity work

Ready to identify and name specific and explicit racial equity goals at the cultural, institutional and personal levels. Naming these goals now rather than earlier, before the culture shift and "not knowing" stages, allows these goals to address the nuance and complexities in inherent racial equity work. Naming these goals now also means the groundwork has been laid for everyone to understand the integral connection between institutional, cultural and personal work.

Phase VI

Equity Practice

- Improved open and transparent communication
- Culture of support, ongoing learning & accountability
- Long-term commitment

Once goals have been clarified, the organization leans into the racial equity work with an appreciation for complexity, ongoing learning and reflection. The organization works to establish a culture that provides support AND accountability, one that presumes good intent while continually improving on the effort to bring intent and impact closer together through improved communication and mutual respect. The organization understands racial equity as an ongoing practice rather than a specific destination, aligning with the organizations mission and values.

6 Phases of Racial Equity Practice

addressing all three levels

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THREE EXPRESSIONS of RACISM . Using this chart, identify how institutional policies and practices reinforce individual acts and how cultural beliefs and norms reinforce institutional policies and practices. Consider how institutional policies and practices and cultural norms encourage you and your organization to participate and/or collude.

Organizations move through each of these phases at different paces. Although reaching your organizations racial equity goals may feel urgent, it is important to recognize each phase and work to move through each phase deliberately. Doing this will allow your organization to focus on addressing inequity at the personal, cultural and institutional levels, creating more opportunity for sustainable, systems change. It is also good to note that organizations may find itself in multiple phases at once or digressing back to a phase depending on changes in leadership within the organization. This is not unusual. goal is to stay committed with a willing and ready team!

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