

Closing the Gender Wealth Gap Forum: Understanding White Supremacy: How to Challenge and Dismantle – Community Resources

Key Terms Defined:

What is **White Supremacy**?

Per the [Anti-Defamation League \(ADL\) definition](#), **White Supremacy** is:

“a term used to characterize various belief systems central to which are one or more of the following key tenets: 1) whites should have dominance over people of other backgrounds, especially where they may co-exist; 2) whites should live by themselves in a whites-only society; 3) white people have their own “culture” that is superior to other cultures; 4) white people are genetically superior to other people. As a full-fledged ideology, white supremacy is far more encompassing than simple racism or bigotry. Most white supremacists today further believe that the white race is in danger of extinction due to a rising “flood” of non-whites, who are controlled and manipulated by Jews, and that imminent action is need to “save” the white race.”

And while many people associate the term **White Supremacy with extremism and deliberate acts of hate, the reality is much more nuanced. The ideologies of white supremacy have formed the bases for how our government, institutions, and broader society function.**

This is a term whose mainstream definition has changed within the past ten years to be more encompassing, which leads many folks to wonder if it’s appropriate to use to explain white supremacy’s ‘everyday’ resonances. Once we recognize how violent these resonances truly are, however, we can appreciate how appropriate this term is.

U.S. culture is built on white supremacy. Ta-Nehisi Coates (author and journalist, best known for his book “Between the World and Me”) and Ibram X. Kendi (author of “How to be Boston University Professor) [insist](#):

Using the explanatory lens of white supremacy “cuts through layers of euphemism to the core of American history and culture. It speaks to the reality, they say, of a nation built on slavery. To examine many aspects of American life once broadly seen as race neutral — such as mortgage lending or college faculty hiring — is to find a bedrock of white supremacy.”

***White supremacy* goes beyond systemic oppression, and refers to the “rigid nexus” of racial oppression and “the power that protects and enforces it” (See more, [here](#))**

For a breakdown of Common Myths surrounding White Supremacy, many of which prevent people from accepting and acknowledging its persistence, see: [“4 Myths About White Supremacy That Allow It To Continue”](#)

What does it mean to be **Anti-Racist**?

Being **Anti-Racist** involves *employing a counter-system to actively dismantle the system of racism. To understand this we must first understand that racism is structural, it is:*

“a system of oppression that is based in and upholds the superiority of White people and the inferiority of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. Racism was created by and upheld through policies, practices, and procedures to create inequities between racial groups”

Anti-Racism is also a system, one that seeks to actively counteract the system of racism. We employ Anti-Racism by:

1. **Creating policies, practices, and procedures to promote racial equity:**
 - “Anti-racism generates antiracist thoughts and ideas to justify the racial equity it creates by uplifting the innate humanity and individuality of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.”
2. **Analyzing the roles institutions and systems play in perpetuating racial inequities and moving blame away from individual groups and towards addressing these.**
3. **Recognizing that there are no traits inherent to race and deconstructing the conditioning that has led people to believe otherwise.**
4. **Committing to Anti-Racism as ongoing work.**

Source: National League of Cities, “What does it mean to be Anti-Racist?” by Ian Snyder and Jordan Carter.

See more: [here](#).

What are Microaggressions?

Microaggressions are:

“the everyday, subtle, intentional — and oftentimes unintentional — interactions or behaviors that communicate some sort of bias toward historically marginalized groups.”

Microaggressions usually refer to interactions and behaviors that the person committing them may not even recognize as discriminatory. This differs from *macroaggressions*, or instances and behaviors of overt discrimination.

See this [article](#) for common examples of microaggressions and discussion about why microaggressions are so dangerous. One of the most pressing examples highlighted here is acting guarded around black men out of the assumption that they are violent or dangerous. This is a microaggression that has lethal consequences, especially for men of color. For more discussion of this, see “*Featured Commentary: Trayvon, Troy, Sean: When racial biases and microaggressions kill: Subtle racism and microaggressions hurt mental and physical health of oppressed groups,*” by Dr. Kevin L. Nadal, [here](#).

What are Upstanders and Bystanders?

Upstanders are active when witnessing something wrong, and do something either to stop the situation or actively acknowledge the victim(s) and support them as much as they are able.

- When considering the role of upstanders, it is important to center the role of privilege. Certain people, especially white, cisgender, educated people, risk fewer consequences when acting as upstanders, especially in situations where law enforcement and/or the threat of arrest for intervention are present.

Bystanders bear witness, but are not active in stopping what they have witnessed. Bearing witness and validating the experience are important roles for those who would be at risk as bystanders. For those with the capacity to act as upstanders but act instead as bystanders, their actions as bystanders are considered complicit with the act they have witnessed.

What is Oppression?

Oppression is:

The systematic subjugation of one social group by a more powerful social group for the social, economic, and political benefit of the more powerful social group. Rita Hardiman and Bailey Jackson state that oppression exists when the following 4 conditions are found:

- the oppressor group has the power to define reality for themselves and others,
- the target groups take in and internalize the negative messages about them and end up cooperating with the oppressors (thinking and acting like them),
- genocide, harassment, and discrimination are systematic and institutionalized, so that individuals are not necessary to keep it going, and
- members of both the oppressor and target groups are socialized to play their roles as normal and correct.

Oppression = Power + Prejudice

SOURCE: "What Is Racism?" – Dismantling Racism Works (dRworks) web workbook.

Source: **Racial Equity Tools Glossary**. See more, [here](#).

Ongoing Learning:

One of the best ways we can confront white supremacy and its persistence, is to educate ourselves and commit to ongoing learning. Below, we've compiled a list of resources (podcasts, articles, book recommendations, and toolkits). We have also included a list of resources for BIPOC can look to for support when engaging in this emotional work.

Podcasts:

- [Seeing White Podcast](https://www.sceneonradio.org/seeing-white/), Scene on the Radio (<https://www.sceneonradio.org/seeing-white/>)
- [1619 Podcast](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/23/podcasts/1619-podcast.html), New York Times (<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/23/podcasts/1619-podcast.html>)
- [The Opt-In Podcast](https://theopt-in.com/podcast/) (<https://theopt-in.com/podcast/>)
- [Love & Rage: The Path of Liberation Through Anger with Lama Rod Owens](https://irresistible.org/podcast/68), Irresistible (fka Healing Justice Podcast) (<https://irresistible.org/podcast/68>)
- For more, see Harvard University's list of recommended podcasts, [here](#).

Important Reads:

Articles:

- [The Racial Wealth Gap](https://www.theracialwealthgap.com) (<https://www.theracialwealthgap.com>)
- "white supremacy & anti-blackness: a covert & overt beast," Dr. Nicole Caridad Ralston (<https://www.wearebeloved.org/blog/2020/5/29/white-supremacy-amp-anti-blackness-a-covert-amp-overt-beast>)
- [America, This is Your Chance](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/08/opinion/george-floyd-protests-race.html), Michelle Alexander (<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/08/opinion/george-floyd-protests-race.html>)

- "The Case for Reparations," Ta-Nehisi Coates
(<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2014/06/the-case-for-reparations/361631/>)
- "Two American Financial Plans: The Next 50 Years of the Racial Wealth Gap and What You Can Do About It," The Racial Wealth Gap (<https://www.theracialwealthgap.com>)
- "Racism is the manifestation of White supremacy and antiracism is the answer," Kelly J. Cross
(<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/jee.20362>)
- "The Mantra of White Supremacy: The idea that anti-racist is a code word for "anti-white" is the claim of avowed extremists," Ibram X. Kendi
(<https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2021/11/white-supremacy-mantra-anti-racism/620832/>)
- "White supremacy is the root of all race-related violence in the US," Jennifer Ho
(<https://theconversation.com/white-supremacy-is-the-root-of-all-race-related-violence-in-the-us-157566>)
- "White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack," by Peggy McIntosh
(https://psychology.umbc.edu/files/2016/10/White-Privilege_McIntosh-1989.pdf)

Books:

- *How to Be An Antiracist*, Ibram X. Kendi
- *Between the World and Me*, Ta-Nehisi Coates
- *Stamped from the Beginning*, Ibram X. Kendi
- *The Sum of Us: What Racism Costs Everyone and How We Can Prosper Together*, by Heather Mcghee
- *Heavy: An American Memoir*, Kiese Laymon
- *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, Michelle Alexander

Videos:

- "How Shame Can Block Accountability" (<https://vimeo.com/365579132>)
- LGBTQ #BlackLivesmMatter Town Hall, Equality Florida
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O36vJixDzw>)
- "Talks to help you understand racism in America," TED Talk Playlist
(https://www.ted.com/playlists/250/talks_to_help_you_understand_r)
- "How to be an Antiracist," Interview with Ibram X. Kendi
(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TzuOlyyQlug>)

Toolkits:

- Dismantling Racism Workbook (<https://www.dismantlingracism.org/racism-defined.html>)
- Anti-Racist Roadmap by Dr. Kate Slater
(<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5f3f08b8ce35136b743f545a/t/5ff0be24232e037c668c85f6/1609612837089/2021-Anti-Racist-Roadmap.pdf>)
- Anti-Racism Resources, Creative Equity Toolkit
(<https://creativeequitytoolkit.org/concept/anti-racism/>)

- [Confronting White Nationalism in Schools Toolkit](#), Western States Center (<https://www.westernstatescenter.org/schools>)
- [#TalkAbout Trayvon: A Toolkit for White People](#), Black Lives Matter ([#TalkAbout Trayvon: A Toolkit for White People](#))

Tools for BIPOC (from [GLAD Legal Advocates and Defenders](#)):

- [Supporting Black LGBTQ+ Youth Mental Health](#) | The Trevor Project
- [Healing in Action: A Toolkit for Black Lives Matter Healing Justice & Direct Action](#) | Black Lives Matter
- [A Holistic Toolkit for Coping With Racial Trauma](#) | Nappy Head Club
- [10 minute affirmations for black and brown lives](#) | Be Steadwell
- [Healing, Self-Care and Joy Toolkit](#) | Rochester Racial Justice Toolkit
- [Black Emotional and Mental Health: Healing and Support Virtual Spaces](#) | Beam
- [4 Self-Care Resources for Days When the World is Terrible](#) | Colorlines
- [How to Unplug, Set Boundaries, and Practice Self-Care During Tumultuous Times](#) | them.
- [Therapy Resources for People of Color/Queer Folx](#) | Gladys, Boston
- [Latino/Hispanic Communities and Mental Health](#) | Mental Health America
- [55 Mental Health Resources for People of Color](#) | Online MSW
- [Resources](#) | Black Mental Health Matters