BIPOC and white supremacy in the workplace. Starter Pack. Sept. 2020

Information taken and adapted from https://www.dismantlingracism.org/,
The Characteristics of White Supremacy Culture and WHITE DOMINANT CULTURE & SOMETHING DIFFERENT

HOW WE SEE OURSELVES

defensiveness

White people spend energy defending against charges of racism instead of examining how racism might actually be happening

Focus placed on protecting power instead of addressing harms, naming intention instead of acknowledging impact.

The defensiveness of people in power creates an oppressive culture.

HOW WE SEE OURSELVES

either/or thinking

Believing people are racist or not racist, good or bad.

Seeing incidents of inequity as isolated events.

Closely linked to perfectionism in making it difficult to learn from mistakes or accommodate conflict

Creates conflict and increases sense of urgency.

HOW WE SEE OURSELVES

i'm the only one

Connected to individualism, the belief that if something is going to get done right, 'I' have to do it

Little or no ability to delegate work to others

Creates a lack of accountability, as the organization values those who can get things done on their own without needing supervision or guidance

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HOW WE SEE OURSELVES

individualism

Focus is on single charismatic leaders

Competition is more highly valued than cooperation and where cooperation is valued, little time or resources devoted to developing skills in how to cooperate.

HOW WE SEE OURSELVES

objectivity

The belief that there is such a thing as being objective or 'neutral'

Requiring people to think in a linear (logical) fashion and ignoring or invalidating those who think in other ways

Impatience with any thinking that does not appear 'logical'.

HOW WE SEE OURSELVES

paternalism

No consultation or transparency in decision making.

Taking over projects and services, mediating and facilitating others.

Those with power often don't think it is important or necessary to understand the viewpoint or experience of those for whom they are making decisions.

HOW WE SEE OURSELVES

right to comfort

The belief that those with power have a right to emotional and psychological comfort (another aspect of valuing 'logic' over emotion)

Scapegoating those who cause discomfort

Equating individual acts of unfairness against white people with systemic racism which daily targets people of color.

HOW WE SEE OURSELVES

perfectionism

Little appreciation expressed among people for the work that others are doing; appreciation that is expressed is usually directed to those who get most of the credit anyway

More common is to point out either how the person or work is inadequate

Making a mistake is confused with being a mistake

HOW WE INTERACT WITH ONE ANOTHER

fear of open conflict

White fragility goes unchecked

Those who bring up discomfort for others are scapegoated rather than to look at the issue which is actually causing the problem

Smaller problems left unattended become bigger ones down the road.

People in power are scared of expressed conflict and try to ignore it or run from it

Emphasis on being polite ["civil"] Politeness is valued over honesty

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HOW WE INTERACT WITH ONE ANOTHER

power hoarding

Little, if any, value around sharing power

Those with power don't see themselves as hoarding power or as feeling threatened

Those with power assume they have the best interests of the organization at heart and assume those wanting change are ill-informed (stupid), emotional, inexperienced

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HOW WE ORGANIZE OUR WORK AND INSTITUTIONS

only one right way

Similar to the missionary who does not see value in the culture of other communities, sees only value in their beliefs about what is good

The belief there is one right way to do things and once people are introduced to the right way, they will see the light and adopt it

When they do not adapt or change, then something is wrong with them (the other, those not changing), not with us (those who 'know' the right way)

HOW WE ORGANIZE OUR WORK AND INSTITUTIONS

progress is bigger, more

Observed in how we define success (success is always bigger, more)

Progress is an organization which expands (adds staff, adds projects) or develops the ability to serve more people (regardless of how well they are serving them)

HOW WE ORGANIZE OUR WORK AND INSTITUTIONS

quantity over quality

All resources of organization are directed toward producing measurable goals
Things that can be measured are more highly valued than things that cannot, for example numbers of people attending a meeting, newsletter circulation, money spent are valued more than quality of relationships, democratic decision-making, ability to constructively deal with conflict

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HOW WE ORGANIZE OUR WORK AND INSTITUTIONS

sense of urgency

Continued sense of urgency that makes it difficult to take time to be inclusive, encourage democratic and/or thoughtful decision-making, to think long-term, to consider consequences

Sacrificing interests of communities of color in order to win victories for white people (seen as default community)

HOW WE ORGANIZE OUR WORK AND INSTITUTIONS

worship of the written word

If it's not written down, it is not valued.

If it's written down in any way other than "Standard American English", it is seen as incorrect or less intelligent.

Supervisors "correct", edit and change documents to reflect a particular normalized language

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ANTIRACISM RESOURCES

- Resources for people who want to deepen their work
- BIPOC surviving PWI - evolving google sheet
- https://www.dismantlingracism.org/
- Shareable Anti-racism Resource Guide
- How to avoid doing harm when you discuss race at work
- To dismantle racism white people must be willing to give up their power

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