

White Supremacy Culture Audit and Supporting Material for Board, Leadership, Committees and Teams

This audit is a tool for review and discussion by a variety of organized groups within the congregation. The audit is designed to pinpoint specific areas of present and future concentration of effort. You might decide to add or amend certain items as you review this audit in the context of your committee/team’s work and goals. You might also decide to seek additional input from others. This is your tool and we encourage you to engage in a process of discernment as it relates to the unique purposes of your committee/team. Additional action items are included at the end of the document.

While its focus is currently on racism and white supremacy culture, fundamentally, this document is designed to promote *right relations* and support the joys and challenges of *being in community*, as well as increase individual and congregational commitment to the Albany UU mission.

| The Work of Leadership, Committees, Teams | Applicability to our Team/Committee | Steps Taken | Next Steps |
|--|-------------------------------------|-------------|------------|
| We have made a commitment to be intentional in our welcome and inclusion of people of color. | | | |
| Our materials and communications, including language and imagery, reflect our commitment to radical welcoming and inclusivity. | | | |
| | | | |

| The Work of Leadership, Committees, Teams | Applicability to our Team/Committee | Steps Taken | Next Steps |
|---|-------------------------------------|-------------|------------|
| We have developed a procedure or mechanism to keep issues related to welcome and inclusion on our radar and to strategize how to further this work, including outreach to other teams and committees. | | | |
| We are committed to periodic awareness training to build welcoming skills. | | | |
| We welcome input from People of Color regarding the work and impact of our committee or team. | | | |
| When planning, we make every effort to consider how to make activities inclusive. | | | |
| We take advantage of educational resources in our library that address inclusion, white supremacy, racism, history/contributions of people of color, etc., including children's books. | | | |

Culture is often invisible or difficult to name.

Groups of people typically assume everyone present shares the same norms and standards for group process and for pursuing the goals of that group. Remember, default behavior is typically unexamined behavior, and can be fraught with biased assumptions and habits of exclusion. The table below identifies examples of common but problematic habits and assumptions expressed in group behavior, as well as values and goals for interrupting the “norm”.

| Problematic Habits & Assumptions | Values and Goals |
|---|---|
| Prioritizing a sense of urgency, making it difficult to take time to be inclusive, to engage in thoughtful decision-making, and to think long-term. | Be clear about how to make good decisions in an atmosphere of conflict or urgency |
| | Set goals regarding inclusivity and diversity AND discuss and plan for what that means in the context of your committee/team. |
| Emphasis on perfectionism, past practice. Failure to identify lessons learned to improve practice. | Develop a culture of appreciation |
| | De-personalize mistakes; recognize how they can contribute to positive outcomes. |
| Defensiveness of status quo: people, power, past practice | Consider new ideas; prioritize mission. Accept there are many ways to reach the same goal. |
| | Promote culture of constructive feedback |
| | Name what’s happening when it’s happening. |
| Prioritizing quantity/outcome at expense of quality/process. | Process matters. Bad process can undermine outcomes. |
| | Learn to recognize when the agenda needs to be put on hold in order to address issues/underlying concerns. |
| | Complex issues need deeper analysis. Avoid temptation to over-simplify or ignore implications of issue at hand. |
| Opaque power/paternalism | Be clear about how decisions are made. |
| | Identify and challenge decisions made outside of group |

| Problematic Habits & Assumptions | Values and Goals |
|---|--|
| | process. |
| | Share leadership responsibilities |
| | Don't assume those with power have group's best interest at heart and those who want change do not. |
| Fear of open conflict; scapegoating those who raise conflict | Distinguish between being polite and raising difficult issues. |
| | Don't focus on how an issue is raised before dealing with issue; once issue is resolved, you can revisit how it might have been handled differently. |
| Claiming objectivity; invalidating displays of emotion; impatience with experience that is unfamiliar | Everyone has a worldview that affects the way they think and understand things – EVERYONE. No one can be truly objective. |
| | Develop ability to sit with discomfort. |

Action Steps and Food for Thought for Board, Leadership, Committees and Teams:

- Consider what symbols, items, activities or practices surrounding us at Albany UU represent a white-dominant culture? Which represent non-European American culture? What role can the committee/team have in changing any that are not welcoming to people of color? What action steps are needed?
- When discussing issues of race and culture do not be afraid to actually say "white supremacy culture" and acknowledge how we have furthered white supremacy culture, regardless of intent.
- Have a discussion about white culture and white supremacy being the default/status quo and the impact on committee/team members, the process and work of the committee/team.
- Use language that reflects how people refer to themselves.
- Start each meeting or gathering with a reading, reflection, poem, etc., written by a person of color.
- In meetings or at events, include images, movies, books or other authored materials, from people of color.
- Create opportunities to learn about and engage others in conversations across differences.
- Create opportunities for cross-cultural experiences, perhaps in coordination with local organizations.
- Build relationships, offer support, promote dialogue and interaction, actively support local efforts of organizations
- Actively reach out to groups of people of color to make Albany UU resources available.
- Be intentional about representing diversity in stories and curricula. Actively feature people of color, including as representatives from groups that are too easily identified as mostly white people.
- Foster anti-racist, multicultural educational opportunities and experiences for leaders and members.
- Examine board/committee/group membership and reach out to people of color
- With rules and decisions, consider impact rather than intent. If rules that are intended to be neutral nonetheless benefit white supremacy, then change the rules.
- Be comfortable in asking questions when uncertain or unclear about the assumptions of an individual or group.

- Promote communication styles that are not argumentative or competitive. Instead, emphasize the value in reaching shared outcomes without manipulating or wearing down others with compelling evidence.
- Engage people in diverse and creative ways based on differing learning styles.