

Ways to Interrupt White Supremacy Culture and Create a More Racially Inclusive Congregation:

Remember, while the following may be challenging or distressing, these recommendations also represent opportunities for meaningful connection and an invitation to live more fully in the moment. It can be a journey and practice of self-reflection that brings joy and meaning to our lives.

- Trust: listen to, believe and respect voices of People of Color.
- Move beyond tolerating difference; open yourself up to being changed through experiences and practices that are deepened and enriched by engaging people of different racial, ethnic, or cultural identities.
- Intentionally seek to see, hear and understand people from different cultures.
- Listen and act without imposing your own values/assumptions.
- Learn about People of Color: read books, see art shows, museum exhibits, music, theater, dance, etc., about and by People of Color.
- Learn about historical UUs who are People of Color.
- Use language that reflects what people call themselves.
- Maintain a respectful communication style without manipulating or being argumentative and competitive.
- Ask questions when uncertain or unclear about the meaning or assumptions of others.
- Be curious about other persons and seek solutions that work across shared interests.
- Create opportunities to learn about and engage others in conversations across differences.
- Build relationships, offer support, promote dialogue and interaction, support local efforts.
- Do not assume that known groups are primarily white; learn about members who are People of Color.
- "Like" relevant organizations on Facebook; subscribe to email lists to be informed of issues and actions.
- Speak up and confront racism, with friends, family, fellow UUs, committee members. – When confronted about racism, be personally responsible for examining and learning rather than taking the comment personally.

Racism and White Supremacy Culture: Creating a More Inclusive Congregation

A Tool for Individuals

Each of us can use this tool in the privacy of our hearts and minds to participate in the inclusivity work at Albany UU and use it as a guide for our interactions within the congregation and beyond. We can reflect on our assumptions and perceptions, our actions and habits, and our responses and reactions as they relate to racism and white privilege in general, and regarding our inclusivity and anti-racism work here at Albany UU.

Operating Definitions:

White Supremacy Culture reinforces a set of institutional assumptions and practices, the “rules of the game,” etc., often operating unconsciously, that tend to benefit white people and exclude People of Color.

Micro-aggressions are "brief and commonplace verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color." *Columbia prof. Derald Wing Sue*

For All Albany UUs:

Which symbols, items, activities, and traditions at Albany UU:

- provide a feeling of comfort and community?
- cause a feeling of discomfort or lack of community?
- represent a white-normative or Eurocentric culture?
- represent non-white culture?

For Albany UUs Whose Racial Self-identification is Person of Color:

- How has not being white resulted in receiving or being denied privileges and opportunities at Albany UU?
- How is white supremacy culture reinforced at Albany UU?
- In what ways have the "rules of the game" or the actions of white Albany UUs adversely affected People of Color at Albany UU?
- When discussing issues of race and culture, am I willing to risk honesty - and actually say "white supremacy culture?"
- What is my experience with the willingness of white Albany UUs to embrace facts presented by Persons of Color about racism/white supremacy culture without minimizing or trying to justify.
- Based on my experience, how open are white Albany UUs to feeling uncomfortable, having their own beliefs, notions and experience challenged, without feeling defensive?
- How often do Albany UUs who are white express appreciation for the willingness of Persons of Color to risk honesty?
- How, if at all, have has the congregation confronted white supremacy culture at Albany UU?

For Albany UUs Whose Racial Self-identification is White:

- Consider how American culture is based on the preferences and experiences of white people (Americans of European ancestry) as the norm, at the center.
- How is white supremacy culture reinforced in American culture?
- How is white supremacy culture reinforced at Albany UU?
- How has the congregation's actions, regardless of intent, adversely affected People of Color? How have mine?
- How, if at all, has the congregation confronted white supremacy culture at Albany UU?
- When considering or discussing issues of race and culture, am I willing and comfortable to acknowledge and actually say "white supremacy culture"?
- How comfortable is it for me to embrace facts about racism and white supremacy culture without minimizing or trying to justify these facts?
- How willing am I to be open to feeling uncomfortable, having my own beliefs, notions, and experience challenged, instead of feeling defensive?
- How comfortable is it for me when People of Color are honest about racism and white supremacy culture? Do I take the initiative to seek out more information when this honesty causes me to feel unsure or confused, or question my own assumptions?

As an Albany UU Whose Racial Self-Identification is White, I Commit To:

- Take the responsibility for educating myself about racism and white supremacy culture.
- Listen to Robin DiAngelo's GA2017 talks (available at <http://members.albanyuu.org/secure2/>).
- Participate in an antiracism discussion group at Albany UU or elsewhere.
- Participate in local anti-racism groups and other social justice organizations.
- Include antiracism as part of the discussion at meetings.
- Take risks in relating to people across lines of difference.
- Work to identify racism as it is happening.
- Keep my defenses in check when issues about racism are raised.
- Name a micro-aggression when I observe one.
- Seek to understand and ask questions, rather than disagree or agree, when People of Color point out racism as it is happening.
- Be present emotionally when individuals need to express feelings about racism.