




## We Need A New Kind of Leadership

### Equity Competent Leadership

Erica Merritt, Equius Group, LLC

2021 CHHSM 83rd Annual Gathering: Together in Hope

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- Define equity competent leadership
- Explore behaviors that undergird concept
- Strategies for becoming more equity competent

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## EQUITY-COMPETENT LEADERSHIP

Practicing Equity Competent Leadership means understanding the dynamics of power and privilege and proactively embodying attitudes and actions that produce equitable power, access, opportunities, treatment, impact and outcomes for all. While reinforcing and creating practices and policies that support that effort.

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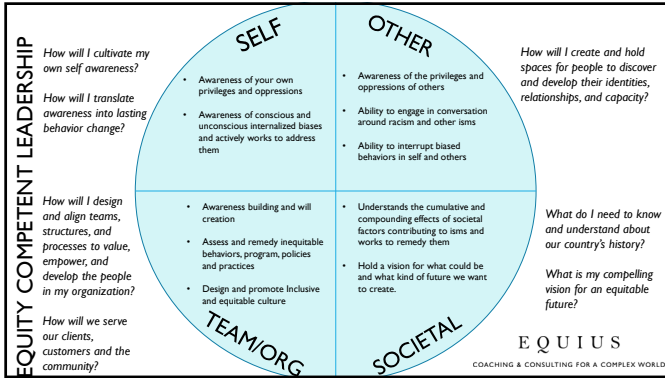
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### Privilege

Unearned social power accorded by the formal and informal institutions of society to ALL members of a dominant group. Privilege is usually invisible to those who have it because we're taught not to see it, but nevertheless it puts them at an advantage over those who do not have it. Some people who can "pass" as members of the privileged group might have access to some levels of privilege. *-Racial Equity Tools*

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### Oppression

Systemic devaluing, undermining, marginalizing, and disadvantaging of certain social identities in contrast to the privileged norm; when some people are denied something of value, while others have ready access. Oppression may be felt but not named by those it impacts most directly. *- Racial Equity Tools*

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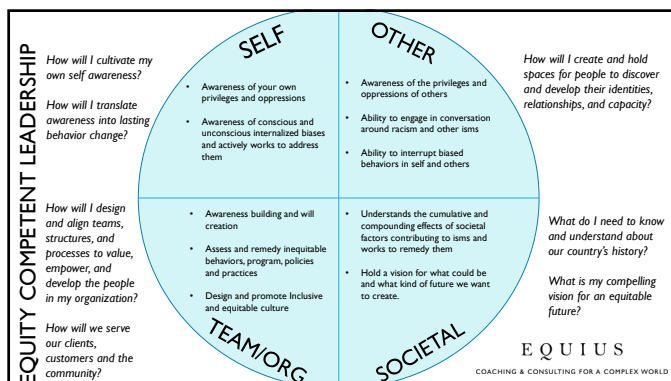
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Dimensions of Diversity	Up	Down	You	Ism
Age	Middle Age	Very young and very old		Ageism, Child Abuse, Elder Abuse
Race	White	People of Color		Racism, Colorism
Ethnicity	Western European	All others, varied hierarchy		Ethnocentrism, Xenophobia
Sexual Orientation	Heterosexual	Bi-Sexual, Gay, Lesbian, Asexual etc.		Homophobia, Heterosexism
Ability (Physical and Mental)	Able-Bodied/Minded	Physical or Mental Disability		Ableism
Religion	Christian	All others, varied hierarchy		Religious discrimination, Anti-Semitism, Islamophobia
Socioeconomic Status	Wealthy/Upper Middle	Lower Middle/Poor		Classism
Education	College Educated	High School or Less		Linked to Classism
Gender	Men	Women, Transgender etc.		Sexism, Transphobia

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## Internalized Racism (Oppression)

**INTERNALIZED RACISM** lies within individuals. This type of racism comprises our private beliefs and biases about race and racism, influenced by our culture. This can take many different forms including: prejudice towards others of a different race; internalized oppression—the negative beliefs about oneself by people of color; or internalized privilege—beliefs about superiority or entitlement by white people.

“To separate [Negro children] from others of similar age and qualifications solely because of their race generates a feeling of inferiority as to their status in the community that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone.”  
- Kenneth Clark

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## Corresponding Behaviors Patterns

### Dominant/UP Group "more power"

- Dysfunctional Rescuing (Saviorism)
- Blaming the Oppressed
- Avoidance of Contact
- Tokenization
- Denial of Differences/Denial of Social Significance of Differences

### Target/DOWN Group "less power"

- System Beating
- Covering or Denial of Identity
- Loss of personal agency
- "Over" compensation— Twice as hard, half as much
- Avoidance of Contact
- Minimization of Oppression

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## Interpersonal Racism

### INTERPERSONAL RACISM occurs *between individuals*.

This is the bias that occurs when individuals interact with others and their personal racial beliefs affect their public interactions.



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### INSTITUTIONAL RACISM occurs *within institutions and systems of power*.

This refers to the unfair policies and discriminatory practices of particular institutions (schools, workplaces, etc.) that routinely produce racially inequitable outcomes for people of color and advantages for white people. Individuals within institutions take on the power of the institution when they reinforce racial inequities.

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## Structural Racism

**Structural racism** is racial bias *among institutions and across society*. This involves the cumulative and compounding effects of an array of societal factors, including the history, culture, ideology and interactions of institutions and policies that systematically privilege white people and disadvantage people of color.

*Examples: Voting Rights, FHA Loans, Residential Segregation, GI Bill, Social Security Act, Chinese Exclusion Act*

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## Reflection Questions

1. Reflect on a time when you experienced privilege? Reflect on a time when you experienced oppression? How were you impacted? How did you respond?
2. What strategies do you use to interrupt your own biases? Where do you still struggle?
3. Are you able to have open conversations about race, racism and other forms of bias with colleagues?
4. How do you interrupt discrimination on your team or in your organization?
5. How do you recover when you get it wrong?

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EQUITY COMPETENT LEADERSHIP

SELF

- Awareness of your own privileges and oppressions
- Awareness of conscious and unconscious internalized biases and actively works to address them

OTHER

- Awareness of the privileges and oppressions of others
- Ability to engage in conversation around racism and other isms
- Ability to interrupt biased behaviors in self and others

TEAM/ORG

- Awareness building and will creation
- Assess and remedy inequitable behaviors, program, policies and practices
- Design and promote Inclusive and equitable culture

SOCIAL

- Understands the cumulative and compounding effects of societal factors contributing to isms and works to remedy them
- Hold a vision for what could be and what kind of future we want to create.

*How will I cultivate my own self awareness?*

*How will I translate awareness into lasting behavior change?*

*How will I design and align teams, structures, and processes to value, empower, and develop the people in my organization?*

*How will we serve our clients, customers and the community?*

*How will I create and hold spaces for people to discover and develop their identities, relationships, and capacity?*

*What do I need to know and understand about our country's history?*

*What is my compelling vision for an equitable future?*

**EQUIUS**  
COACHING & CONSULTING FOR A COMPLEX WORLD

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	Low Belongingness	High Belongingness
Low Value in Uniqueness	<b>Exclusion</b> Individual is not treated as an organizational insider with unique value, but there are other employees who are insiders	<b>Assimilation</b> Individual is treated as an organizational insider when they conform to the dominant culture norms and play down their uniqueness
High Value in Uniqueness	<b>Differentiation</b> Individual is not treated as an organizational insider, but their unique characteristics are seen as valuable and required for the organization's success	<b>Inclusion</b> Individual is treated as an insider and is encouraged to retain their uniqueness

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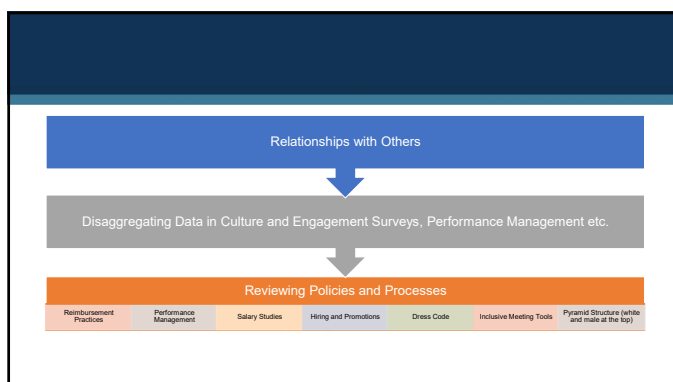
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## Opportunities to Share Power

- Give power away power to strengthen the capabilities of your team members.
- Define the limits of decision-making power.
- Cultivate a climate in which people feel free to take initiative on assignments.
- Give team members discretion and autonomy over their tasks and resources and encourage them to use these tools.
- Don't second guess the decisions of those you have empowered to do so.
- Set appropriate follow-up meetings to review progress and support

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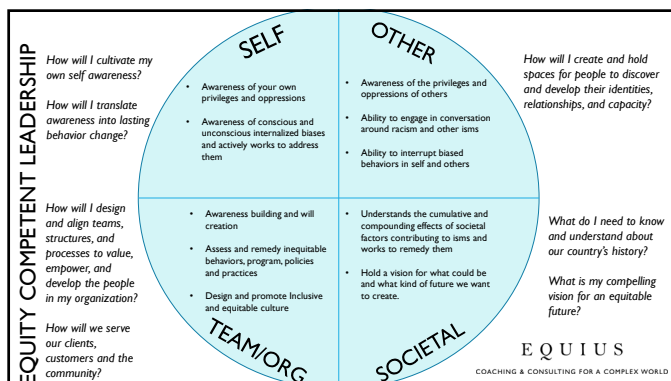
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**What is your compelling vision for the future?**

**What steps will you take to move it forward?**

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**My Vision for the Future**

"To work toward the elimination of racism, and all forms of oppression, diminishing their ongoing impact by equipping, connecting and partnering with people that have the will to do so. I want to live in a future where one's identity is not a predictor of their success or failure, where all humans understand that they are a part of a larger universe and we behave as good stewards of the earth. I want to live in a future, where even in conflict, we can find ways to see, value and respect each other's humanity."

*Erica Merritt*

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## Reflection Questions

1. What is your organization practicing inclusion, exclusion, assimilation or differentiation? How do you know?
2. What does sharing power look like on your team or in your organization?
3. What policies or practices might need attention?
4. How do you see the four levels playing out?
5. What is your vision for a more equitable and inclusive future?

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## Strategies for Becoming more Equity Competent

- Start with growing understanding of your own social identities, how they intersect and shape your thinking about yourself and others. Begin to reflect on how that impacts your behaviors. Seek feedback – engage critical friends
- Accept that you have internalized beliefs that lead to biased actions – probably daily
- Explore dimensions of diversity with which you are least familiar. Do not rely solely on others who are more competent to teach you or expect emotional labor from people around their marginalized social identities
- Disaggregate organizational data by race and other dimensions of diversity – yes it matters!
- Look for and remedy policies and practices that systematically advantage privileged identities over historically marginalized identities
- Get curious about the absence of marginalized identities represented on your team, department or organization (board, committee)
- Interrupt biased thinking and behaviors when they happen

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## Thank you for your time and attention!

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