



MENTOR

RACIAL EQUITY JOURNEY AND ACTION PLAN

2022



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A LETTER FROM OUR CEO

Youth in mentoring relationships are oftentimes told that anyone who works hard, studies, and makes good decisions will get ahead. For many youth of color, however, structural barriers based on race create unique life challenges for which mentoring alone cannot account. We recognize that a “savior mentality” has historically been embedded in mentoring through the lens of race, class, gender, and other marginalized identities. It has centered on the notion that one person (an adult from a position of influence and power) can somehow improve the life of a young person who is challenged or troubled. It emphasizes the deficits of that young person or their family’s life and the assets in the life of the adult. While born of good intentions, it reinforces the existing systemic and structural inequities in our society because it does not interrogate them or force exploration. In addition, we recognize that leadership at all levels in the mentoring field plays a role in either maintaining the status quo or in being a change agent to address institutional barriers that produce disparate racial outcomes.

With this in mind, MENTOR strives to recognize the assets of both individuals and their identities in the mentoring relationship and the power of stable, unconditional relationships to unlock opportunity and learning for both parties. There have been many folks leading the way over the years, but progress has been greatly accelerated over the last decade with several key inflection points from My Brother’s Keeper to Critical Mentoring to Black Lives Matter to the most recent broader awakening as a result of the tragic public murder of George Floyd.

For 30 years, MENTOR has built a track record of success by leveraging local Affiliates, all of whom are deeply embedded into the fabric of their community. By increasing the quality and quantity of safe and effective adult relationships in places where young people live, work, learn, and play, MENTOR (i.e. MENTOR National and its Affiliates) helps to address the persistent and growing inequities of access and opportunity threatening a community’s ability to grow and thrive.

To that end, MENTOR has been on a journey to advance racial equity inside our organizations and externally in the field for the last several years (see Appendix A). In large part, this journey was driven by the changing tides in the mentoring field at large. MENTOR, as the unifying champion for the field, responded to this change by influencing the priorities and content delivered to the field and then further exploring internal structures and processes within our National and Affiliate organizations. This process and work product were completed throughout 2020-2021 while layers of societal turmoil ensued. With all of that in mind, we believe this document reflects the journey as we see it, at this moment, as a work in progress, knowing that it is a living guide and accountability measure to deliver on this work. It is work for which we must be accountable and should reflect emerging changes and conditions in communities and the broader society, for which there is no true endpoint.

~ David Shapiro
CEO, MENTOR



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

MENTOR has engaged many individuals and organizations throughout this process and wishes to extend tremendous gratitude for the many contributions to this body of work. This work has been a multi-year effort and as such, many at our national office and local affiliates have shaped and continued their personal and professional journeys elsewhere; however, we acknowledge their contribution here referencing the corresponding organization with which they were affiliated during this work. This journey was initiated by a group of MENTOR staff, both National and Affiliate, including from National: Dr. Elizabeth Santiago, Tara Spann, Sarah Jasinski, Adrienne Popeney, and from Affiliates: Dr. Seth Bernstein (United Way of Palm Beach County), Chad Butt (MENTOR Vermont), Atrayus O. Goode (MENTOR North Carolina), Brenda Jimenez (MENTOR New York), Jack Kavanaugh (MENTOR New York), Marisa Hattab (MENTOR Nebraska), Cheryl Clark (MENTOR Colorado), Drew DeMarie (MENTOR Colorado), Jess Anna Glover (MENTOR Minnesota), LaNelle Ramey (MENTOR Milwaukee), Janeen Smith (Massachusetts Mentoring Partnership), Alese Taylor (MENTOR Memphis Grizzlies), Renée Price (MENTOR North Carolina), and Sarah Wilkinson (MENTOR Virginia).

When the MENTOR Committee on Racial Equity (CORE) was formed to shepherd the development and implementation of the Racial Equity Action Plan, charter members included from National: Adrienne Popeney, Desireé Robertson, Tara Spann, and Minnie Chen, and Affiliate members: Drew DeMarie (MENTOR Colorado), Sophia Duck (The Mentoring Partnership of Southwestern PA), Lily Mendez (Massachusetts Mentoring Partnership), Renée Price (MENTOR North Carolina), Marisa Hattab (MENTOR Nebraska), Jack Kanavaugh (MENTOR New York), and Atrayus O. Goode (MENTOR North Carolina). Saakshi Suri, National Analytics Manager, provided consultation and support around the DEI Assessment data and metrics.

MENTOR also wishes to thank Dr. Kenneth Hardy and his colleagues at the Eikenberg Institute for their invaluable contribution to supporting MENTOR's internal assessment process, providing expert consultation, and creating a safe space for growth and learning; Annette Moore, Orange County Government Attorney, and member of the Government Alliance on Racial Equity (GARE) for providing insights to the members of CORE regarding how GARE has approached accountability to racial equity metrics in local municipal settings; and the Racial Equity Institute based in Greensboro, North Carolina, for providing Phase I training to the MENTOR National Senior Leadership Team and members of CORE.



PROJECT BACKGROUND

Both MENTOR National and its Affiliates (hereinafter referred to as MENTOR) have expressed a deep commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), with a special emphasis on racial equity. For a number of years, internal work in this realm had been primarily independent, while some external work for the mentoring field, which hit an inflection point in 2014, had been shared.

During the Affiliate sub-convening at MENTOR's National Mentoring Summit in January of 2020, several Affiliate staff came together to discuss the need to center Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) and racial justice more intentionally in our collective internal and external work. At the time, MENTOR National was working with various partners to implement various external and internal strategies to move the needle in DEI and racial justice work. As a result of a meeting of the minds, the MENTOR DEI Steering Committee, with National and Affiliate representation, was formed with the intent to create an assessment process that would outline a series of recommendations to work towards unified action and progress. The Committee hired a consultant, Dr. Kenneth Hardy, to perform an assessment of the current state of the MENTOR enterprise and its thought leadership in the DEI space, and offer recommendations for forward action.



DEI ASSESSMENT

METHODOLOGY

MENTOR's DEI Steering Committee held numerous meetings between March and November of 2020 and completed the following activities:



Created the initial goals and outcomes for advancing DEI within our organizations



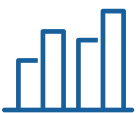
MENTOR National raised and identified funds to resource the project



Interviewed and selected a consultant, Dr. Kenneth Hardy, to drive the assessment phase



Coordinated with Dr. Hardy to implement the assessment process and create a report



Worked with our internal data analyst to prepare and analyze qualitative and quantitative data that we shared, along with the report, internally



Facilitated a data feedback process including results, reflections, and recommendations



DEI ASSESSMENT

ASSESSMENT & KEY FINDINGS

The following key findings, based on the assessment, were identified as MENTOR's strengths as they related to our DEI work:



Intentional about DEI work - DEI efforts incorporated in strategic planning and direction



Relationship-Centered - observed human-centric and relationship-oriented approaches to the work



Reflective and Open to Feedback - staff at all levels were willing to self-reflect and listen to feedback



Putting in the Work - notable time had been spent to become educated and deliver on strategies that impact the field



Provides Resources - MENTOR provides concrete and impactful resources to the field



Taking a Stance - there have been increasing examples of MENTOR making public statements about issues of social and racial justice



Ahead of the Curve - a sentiment that MENTOR is responsive to the field and elevating trends and needs in the field

The following are the key findings that were identified as opportunities for improvement across all stakeholder groups:

- A. Training (internal and external):** improve the quality and quantity of internal training offered and create spaces for staff (especially BIPOC staff) to process and reflect. Update and make more inclusive external training resources
- B. Trust:** increase trust by 1) providing clarity on policies/procedures/boundaries, 2) providing transparency and greater/clearer communication, and 3) driving accountability
- C. Racial Diversity (internal and external):** improve diversity in leadership and Board Members (internally) and mentors and mentor recruitment (externally)



FORMATION OF THE COMMITTEE ON RACIAL EQUITY (CORE)

To shepherd the organization's process of developing a Racial Equity Action Plan and to monitor outcomes, actions, and performance measures, the MENTOR Committee on Racial Equity (CORE) was formed as a natural progression and evolution of the DEI Steering Committee and its work. CORE, made up of National and Affiliate staff, exists to investigate and shift the power relationships and systems that shape individual and organizational outcomes within the mentoring field, with a particular concern for patterns of disparity and disproportionality caused by structural racism.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

To carry out this agenda, we will be driven by the following guiding principles:

Accountability: The responsibility to build and achieve a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion belongs to everyone at MENTOR. We will hold ourselves and others accountable to live our core values and advance racial equity.

Relationships: We believe relationships are central to personal growth, organizational success, and catalyzing social change. We will build and establish healthy relationships and work in unity as "One MENTOR" to make a difference.

Activism: We believe that everyone is valuable and has a right to be treated fairly and justly. We are committed to taking an active role in the fight for racial justice and will stand up for the right of all people to exist in a just society. We will have a local presence with a national impact.

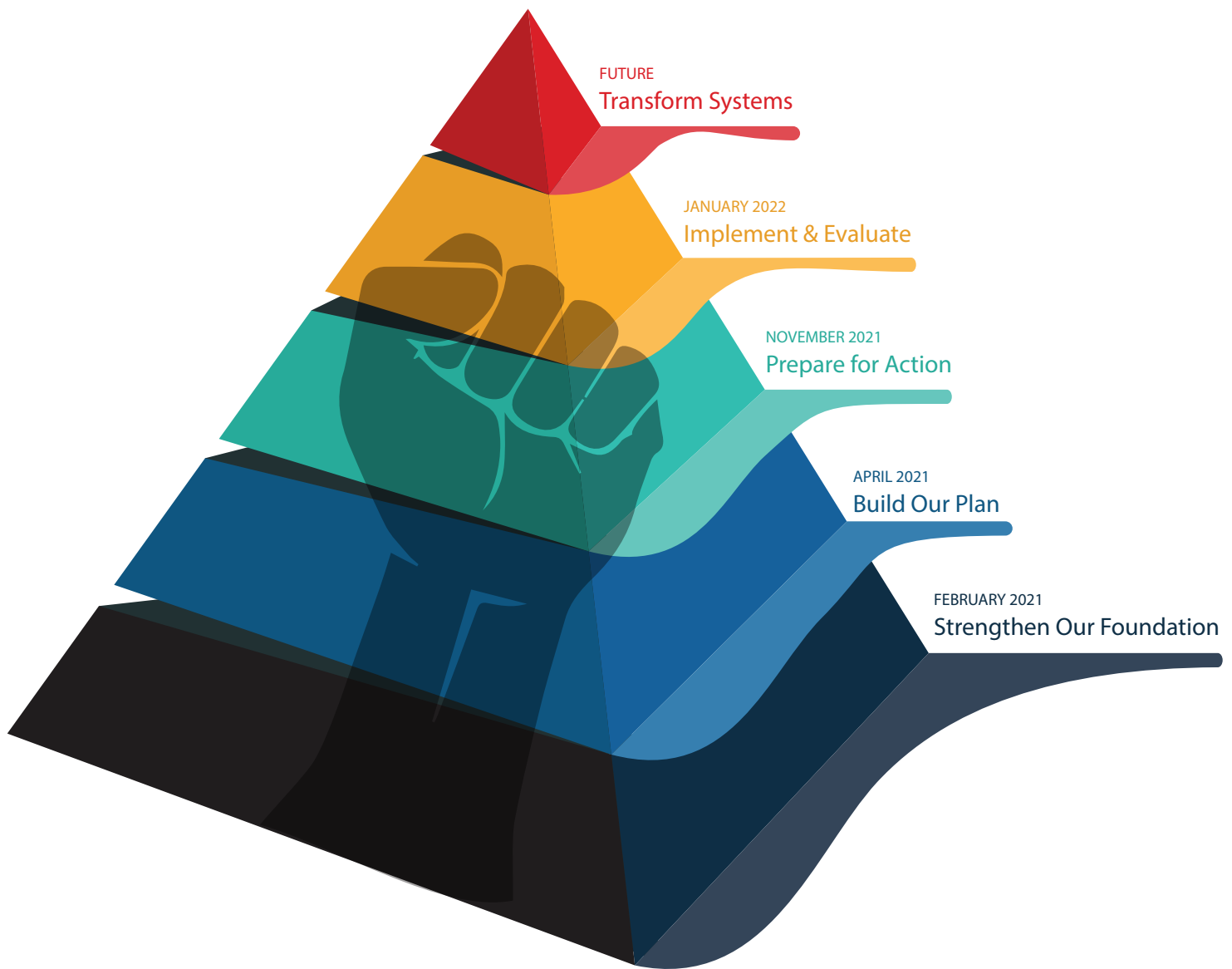
Continuous Learning: We will embark on an ongoing journey toward awareness of and accountability for racial equity and inclusion in our daily work and in our communities. We will educate ourselves and be conscious of historical experiences and the impact they have on our present state. We will use this knowledge to inform our work together moving forward.

Integrity: We will be authentic, in solidarity with one another, consistent in our words and actions, and always assume good intent. We will be courageous in our behavior and mindful in our approach. We will create space for everyone to speak their truth, to be heard, and be respected. We will take risks and be bold while building the necessary support internally and externally for that process to be sustainable.



RACIAL EQUITY ACTION PLAN FRAMEWORK

To achieve the above goals, MENTOR's Racial Equity Action Plan Framework provides a clear pathway for the roadmap with big picture objectives, high-level supporting activities, and a working timeframe to provide accountability. To achieve our aspirations, we will need to fundamentally transform the ways in which we view our organizational culture and the mentoring movement. Below are the phases of work that transpired to develop the plan:



RACIAL EQUITY ACTION PLAN FRAMEWORK

STRENGTHEN OUR FOUNDATION: FEBRUARY 2021 AND ONGOING

To maintain a clear focus on racial equity throughout the process, members of the Affiliate Network will have access to resources, training, and other tools to ensure everyone can participate in a meaningful and productive way. This includes, but is not limited to, leadership and team development activities, access to subject matter experts, and ongoing coaching and support to and from the CORE leadership team.

BUILD OUR PLAN: APRIL - OCTOBER 2021

Designing the scope, structure, and timeline of the overall process that occurred during this phase. This process was informed by facilitated discussions that supported the development of the plan, including key activities, persons responsible, timeframes, and goals/deliverables that were reviewed on a regular basis. The development of the plan was informed by research findings, content experts, and feedback from the entire network, where possible. CORE communicated with all MENTOR Stakeholders (MENTOR National Board of Directors, Affiliate Boards, and all staff) about the status of the process, results, anticipated and/or desired outcomes, and ways that each stakeholder group participated in the ongoing work ahead.

PREPARE FOR ACTION: NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2021

During this phase, funding, staffing, and accountability measures were aligned for the entire network to begin implementing the Racial Equity Action Plan. MENTOR National also ensured that the goals and metrics of this work were integrated as part of the overall organizational strategy. By the end of this phase, all members of MENTOR

were clear about desired outcomes and ways to collaborate individually, across Affiliates, and at the National level to drive collective performance and accountability.

IMPLEMENT AND EVALUATE OUR WORK: JANUARY 2022 AND ONGOING

The rollout of the plan launched the official implementation internally and externally. Public release will include a press release, social media, and a webpage. CORE will act as a stewardship body that will continue tracking and reporting on the progress of the plan to assess what actions have been implemented or are in progress, provide honest feedback regarding challenges and successes, and use results as indicators on how to improve, course-correct, or update the plan. Annual data will be collected and reported via an Affiliate level Data and Demographic Survey as well as individual-level surveys. The plan is aligned with the National strategic plan and will be incorporated increasingly into Affiliate plans. This group will also serve to define and allocate resources to deliver on the plan.

TRANSFORM SYSTEMS: FUTURE

Leadership and Organization Development practitioners John Kania, Mark Kramer, and Peter Senge introduced the Water of Systems Change framework in 2018 as an action-based approach to systems change with an eye toward equity. The model is particularly interested in shifting the conditions that hold a problem in place by working at multiple levels of change. This work requires attention to detail as it relates to the covert processes in play, including organizational politics, hidden agendas, the elephant in the room, and other dimensions.



RACIAL EQUITY ACTION PLAN FRAMEWORK

In order to pursue long-term transformational change both at MENTOR and, ultimately, the mentoring field at large, MENTOR will be committed to a tactical and disciplined approach to making visible the invisible aspects of racial equity work, with a particular focus on (1) identifying existing elements that have the potential to hinder progress and (2) taking action to advance our systems change efforts by activating key leverage points that will hold us accountable. This will include but is not limited to, the following:

- 1. MENTOR will make a good faith effort to be aware of the quality of connections and communication that occurs between actors at all levels of the organization**
- 2. MENTOR will make visible who holds decision-making power, both formal and informal, and as often as possible, share how and why decisions are made**
- 3. MENTOR will work to transform systems that have reinforced structural racism within its organization and in the mentoring field**

While this plan outlines MENTOR's work for the next 3 years, we understand the complexities of this work require a commitment that will outlive this plan and iterations to come. With that in mind, MENTOR will work to make the best decisions possible in an environment that will continue to demand both urgency and thoughtfulness, with a focus on creating a future where plans like this are no longer necessary.



RACIAL EQUITY PLAN GOALS AND METRICS

Ultimately, the racial justice work of MENTOR encompasses the following three racial equity goals that will be evaluated annually. Each goal is linked to specific outcomes we are working towards over the next few years. Each year indicators will be tracked according to relevant measurement tools and processes. **This plan directs our collective work in racial equity for the next 3 years and beyond.**

INDIVIDUAL LEVEL



GOAL 1

MENTOR's people (staff and board members) understand and are committed to achieving racial equity



OUTCOME 1

MENTOR team members self-report commitment to advancing racial equity



OUTCOME 2

MENTOR team members leverage professional development that supports racial equity



INDICATORS

COMMIT: Increased % of MENTOR team members believe that advancing racial equity should be a priority of MENTOR

EDUCATE: Increased % of MENTOR team members understand how to center racial equity in their work

ACT: Increased % of MENTOR team members complete professional development that supports racial equity



MEASUREMENT

Assessment Tools

Performance Evaluations

Surveys



PRIORITY ACTIVITIES

1. Individual Racial Equity goals created
2. Accountability Partners launched
3. Professional Development resources compiled



ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL



GOAL 2 MENTOR as an organization demonstrates a commitment to racial equity and is reflective of the mentoring field



OUTCOME 1

The racial distributions of the board, staff, vendors, and TA providers are representative of the communities served. (based on the whole network, with emphasis on BIPOC in all communities)



OUTCOME 2

Increased outreach to BIPOC-led organizations to participate in TA



OUTCOME 3

MENTOR demonstrates an operational and financial commitment to racial equity



INDICATORS

REPRESENTATION: Increased % of MENTOR staff and board members that identify as BIPOC; Increased % of MENTOR vendors and TA providers that identify as BIPOC

ACCESS: Increased % of programs that receive free TA identify as BIPOC-led organizations

INFRASTRUCTURE: Increased % of MENTOR budget is allocated to racial equity work; Increased % of MENTOR Affiliates have racial equity plan, frameworks, statements in place



MEASUREMENT

Assessment & Tracking Tools

Surveys



PRIORITY ACTIVITIES

1. Racial Equity framework and statements created/adopted
2. Racial Equity assessment and plans created
3. Board engagement plans developed
4. Human Resource best practice trainings and tools implemented
5. Inclusive Procurement practice and tools implemented
6. Racial Equity professional development trainings
7. Pass-through funding for racial equity Affiliate work



MOVEMENT LEVEL



GOAL 3 MENTOR harnesses its power and influence to disrupt structural racism in the mentoring field



OUTCOME 1

Partners and Programs in the mentoring field will have increased focus on racial equity in their organizations.



INDICATORS

QUANTITY: Increased # of local and national partners and programs will have an anti-racism agenda (statements, goals, funding)

QUALITY: Increased resources (funding, tools, processes, etc.) to Affiliates and mentoring programs to pursue racial equity work



MEASUREMENT

Tracking Tools

Surveys



PRIORITY ACTIVITIES

1. Sharing DEI/Racial Equity report and plan externally
2. Participation in cross-organizational racial equity agendas (America's Promise Alliance)
3. Updates to major systems and documentation (NQMS, NMRC, Mentoring Connector)
4. Mentoring field language audit
5. New product development (Critical Mentoring Supplement, Youth Advocacy toolkit, Essentials for Boys and Young Men of Color update)
6. Philanthropic Agenda with a focus on impact, sustainability, and equity in philanthropy across the mentoring field



CONCLUSION

As MENTOR continues to grow as an organization at the national and local levels, it has become increasingly important to define explicitly how we develop our culture, our brand, and our strategies to align with the work of racial justice. Our Racial Equity Action Plan is both a process and a product - we do not seek to negotiate existing structures of institutionalized oppression or seek short-term gains for the sake of transaction. We seek to build internal and external processes that disrupt structural and institutionalized racism. This will require a long-term focus on policy and organizational culture, collaboration with other youth-serving institutions and the political will to create the conditions necessary to achieve racial equity.

We intend that our communication and our actions will be a major indicator to reflect how MENTOR can leverage the power of relationships for racial equity and social justice.



APPENDIX A

TIMELINE OF MENTOR DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION JOURNEY

Over the years, MENTOR, as leaders of the mentoring movement, have been partnering with experts across the field to move the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Racial Equity work forward in the field. At the same time, both MENTOR National and each Affiliate have been on their own journeys with regards to their internal operational alignment with racial equity strategy and work.

Examples of centering DEI as part of the mentoring movement:

- 2014** ○ My Brother's Keeper Partnership launched
- 2016** ○ Essentials (Boys and Young Men of Color) Training developed
- 2017** ○ Critical Mentoring Guide gifted at the Summit
- 2018** ○ Essentials Training revised to include Latinx Boys
- 2019** ○ Mentoring Youth Identifying as LGBTQ+ Supplement released
- 2020** ○ Black Town Hall
Elements of Practice
Racial Equity resource page on website
Joined America's Promise Alliance and Strive DEI task forces
Affiliate BIPOC and White Leader webinars
- 2021** ○ America's Promise and the Anti-Racist Alliance

Examples of the work done internally at MENTOR National:

- 2016** ○ Training on Cross-Cultural Leadership
- 2017** ○ Formed Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity in Action (IDEA) Team
Training on Ladder of Inference
Training on Critical Mentoring
- 2018** ○ Training on Implicit Bias and Gender Identities
- 2019** ○ Gender pronouns in email signatures
Training on Understanding Racial Equity
- 2020** ○ Hired Chief People and Strategy Officer
Hired Dr. Kenneth Hardy to lead assessment for MENTOR
Training on Micro-aggressions
White Co-conspirator group
- 2021** ○ Secured \$620K to Affiliates to deliver Racial Equity and Social Justice work locally
Disability Inclusion Training
Board, Staff and Affiliate Demographics Assessment
Member of America's Promise Anti-Racist Alliance



APPENDIX B

RACIAL EQUITY TERMS GLOSSARY: SHARED LANGUAGE*

*Source: MP Associates, Center for Assessment and Policy Development, and World Trust Educational Services, October 2021.

The ways in which words are used are important in fostering understanding. At MENTOR, we will work to enhance the quality of our conversations about race by being deliberate in how we agree to interpret commonly used terms, as listed below.

Accountability: the ways in which individuals and communities hold themselves to their goals and actions, and acknowledge the values and groups to which they are responsible.

BIPOC: Black Indigenous (and) People of Color

Diversity: The range of human differences (race and ethnicity, gender identity, age, socio-economic status, religion, political affiliation, physical and mental ability).

Implicit Bias: Negative associations that people unknowingly hold about groups of people. They are expressed automatically, without conscious awareness.

Equity: Justice, fair treatment, and opportunity for the advancement of all people across all systems (workforce, housing, education, economics, healthcare, environment, social, and community)

Equity Tool: A decision-making model used to integrate equitable considerations into policies, processes, procedures, and practices

Equity Lens: Screening questions that assess the impact of proposed changes from the viewpoint of equity.

Explicit Bias: Treating people differently or making decisions about them, at the conscious level, based on their group membership.

Inclusion: Authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, decision making, and policymaking creating a true sense of belonging and the ability of everyone to engage and contribute authentically.

Individual Racism: Beliefs, attitudes, and actions of individuals that support or perpetuate racism.

Institutional (Systemic) Racism: Beliefs and behaviors that result in the creation of policies, practices, processes, and procedures that work better for white people than for people of color.

Intersectionality: The multiple identities that individuals have that crossover to create an intersection (race and gender, race and sexual identity, northerner and tall, southerner and short, parent and single, parent and married).

LGBTQ+: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning Plus

Privilege: An unearned set of advantages, entitlements, and beliefs of the dominant group reinforced by formal and informal institutions.

Race: An arbitrary social construct created by Europeans during the time of worldwide colonial growth, to assign human worth and social status, for the purpose of legitimizing power and privilege.
-Dr. Mulana Karenga



Racial Equity: The condition when racial identity cannot be used to predict individual or group outcomes (e.g., wealth, income, employment, criminal justice, housing, health care, education) and outcomes for all groups are improved.

Racial Inequity: When racial identity is a predictor of individual or group opportunities, the distribution of resources and/or life outcomes (e.g., wealth, income, employment, criminal justice, housing, health care, education).

Structural Racism: Institutional racism across multiple institutions, combining to create a system that negatively impacts communities of color.

Tokenism: White leadership recruiting and using POC as racialized props. This gives those in power the appearance of being non-racist and even champions of diversity. Examples include:

Recruiting POC to formal leadership positions, but keeping all the power.

Only hiring POC for POC-related initiatives.

Convening Special “Diversity Councils” but not building POC leadership on the governing Board of Directors.

Using POC as a mouthpiece and shield against other POC.

White Fragility: A state in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable [for white people], triggering a range of defensive moves. These moves include the outward display of emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt, and behaviors such as argumentation, silence, and leaving the stress-inducing situation. These behaviors, in turn, function to reinstate white racial equilibrium.

White Privilege: The unquestioned and unearned set of advantages, entitlements, benefits, and choices bestowed on people solely because they are white. Generally, white people who experience such privilege do so without being conscious of it.

White Supremacy Culture: Dominant, unquestioned standards of behavior and ways of functioning embodied by the vast majority of institutions in the United States (e.g. focus on individuals over groups, emphasis on the written word as a form of professional communication).

Xenophobia: Any attitude, behavior, practice, or policy that explicitly or implicitly reflects the belief that immigrants are inferior to the dominant group of people. Xenophobia is reflected in interpersonal, institutional, and systemic levels of oppression and is a function of White supremacy.





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