

Mapping Our Proximity to White Dominant (Supremacy) Culture

The purpose of this activity is to:

1. Reflect on how we see aspects of white supremacy culture manifesting in ourselves and in the organization,
2. Identify where and how harm is being done as a result, and
3. Lay the foundation for bridging the gap between who/what we say we want to be and how we are actually operating.

Remember: 1) Because we all live and work in a white supremacy culture, these characteristics show up in the attitudes and behaviors of all of us – people of color and white people; and 2) Not all of these characteristics are inherently bad. The damage comes when these are used as norms or standards without being explicitly named or chosen by the group, and/or when they are out of balance with other ways of being.

Activity Instructions:

Open the [White Dominant Culture Combo Sheet](#) to reference more detail about the characteristics as needed throughout the activity.

Step 1: Identify which characteristics of white supremacy culture you have seen manifest in your own behavior. Write your name next to these characteristics. See details in the header row.

Step 2: Identify which characteristics of white supremacy culture you *have seen* OR may have seen showing up / playing out at the organization. Every person should put a response in each box in this column - write “No” for the characteristics you have not observed.

Step 3: For the characteristics you identified in yourself (step 1), name the harm caused to yourself when you operate out of this characteristic.

Step 4: Name the harm caused to others when any one of us operates out of a particular characteristic. You can answer this question for any of the manifestations, not just the ones you observe in yourself. You can use an asterisk (*) or a comment in the margin to add emphasis to a response written by a teammate.

Step 5: Go through and read and use the comment feature to ask questions, affirm, or engage with one another for about 5-10 mins.

Characteristic of White Supremacy Culture	I have witnessed this manifestation in MYSELF. (This aspect of white dominant culture aligns with how I operate professionally or personally, and I am “comfortable” and/or fluent operating in this manner.) <i>Write your name next to characteristics you see in yourself.</i>	Have you seen this showing up / playing out at the organization? <i>Write Yes, Maybe, or No next to each characteristic.</i> Yes - I have definitely seen this. Maybe - I'm not sure if I've seen this. No - I have not seen this. (Optional: list your name next to your answer)	What is the harm (outcome) to self when I operate out of this characteristic? (i.e. what happens to me when I do this?) <i>Answer this for the manifestations you see in yourself.</i>	What is the harm to others when we (any one of us) operate out of this characteristic? <i>Answer this for any manifestations. Use an asterisk (*) or a comment to add emphasis or agree with others' responses.</i>
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<i>Example: Worship of the written word</i>	<i>Toni Pang</i>	<i>Yes Maybe - Amber Yes</i>	<i>Missing out on valuable information</i>	<i>Devaluing colleagues**, community members, harming relationships with partners</i>
Obsession with the Future				
Either / or thinking				
Over-delivering / Over-working as Unspoken Norm				
Paternalism / Fauxlaboration				
Competition				
Power Hoarding Ideas from less senior people are treated as a threat. Information and decision making is confidential. Holding on to resources. Scarcity mindset.				
Comfort with Predominantly White Leadership				
Individualism & Separateness				
Fear of Open Conflict / Niceness Above All Else				
Performative Anti-Racism				
Worship of the Written Word				

Comprehensiveness				
Transactional Relationships				
Quantity over Quality				
Defensiveness				
Progress is Bigger, More				
Perfectionism				
Exceptionalism				

Debrief:

1. How did it feel to do this activity?
2. What do we notice as we look at the chart? What themes do you see?
3. Are there any disparities between characteristics we see in the organization versus those being owned by individuals in this group?
4. If you've been part of the organization for a while, where have you seen growth / progress?
5. What characteristics aren't showing up? What practices do we have that are serving as buffers?
6. What can we learn about how to address characteristics that are showing up?