



BUILDING A RELATIONAL CULTURE

Adapted for the City of Seattle Race and Social Justice Initiative in collaboration with Our Bodhi Project (www.OurBodhiProject.com) from *White Supremacy Culture* by Kenneth Jones and Tema Okun (ChangeWork, 2001), *Antidotes for Taking Down White Supremacy Culture* by IfNotNow (ifnotnowmovement.org) and the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond (www.pisab.org)

See also the updated website on White Supremacy Culture by Tema Okun (<https://www.whitesupremacyculture.info>)

Transformation and culture shift begin with us. The culture that has been internalized and normalized by organizations throughout our U.S. society – from government to non-profits and even some grass roots organizations – was created by white, wealthy, Christian, cis-gender, straight, non-disabled men coming from Europe who wanted to protect their place within hierarchy and empire. Because of that, particular patterns in our organizational cultures are rooted in white supremacy, colonialism, classism, Christian hegemony, sexism, heterosexism, physical ableism, mental health oppression, all of the above or other systems of oppression. These are the systems that those early creators of organizations of all kinds, including government and non-profits, depended on to maintain their power over resources, other people, and the planet, and dominate society.

These patterns exist today within our institutions and organizations as norms, behaviors and practices that are consciously or unconsciously valued even as they disconnect us from the resilient and liberatory ways of being and doing that our many diverse human cultures have relied on to thrive for millennia. These patterns are so woven into the culture of our organizations and so tied to notions of success and the ability to survive that all of us, regardless of our agent and target positionalities, have learned to perform and perpetuate them in order to “achieve” and “succeed,” or to merely survive. **By recognizing and learning to interrupt these patterns in a holistic way – within ourselves, within our teams and throughout our organizations – we can create a relational culture that is fertile soil for our collective care, health, wellbeing, creativity, power and coliberation.** A soil that supports the reality of the interdependence of all living systems. A soil that allows us to truly be servants of the public good.

Those who are most targeted by white supremacy and those who have the least positional authority are often those who end up having to – and often are expected to – carry out the labor (emotional, physical, intellectual, spiritual) of interrupting these patterns that directly harm them. There is a greater risk of harm associated with interrupting these patterns for Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC), especially those living other targeted identities (women, transgender or gender expansive people, LGBTQIA+ people, disabled people, low-income people, immigrants, non-Christians, etc.) and those with less decision-making power and influence within an organization. It's also important to remember that white people, non-trans men, straight people, able-bodied people and others who hold agent positionalities and who name manifestations of white supremacy and advocate for relational culture are

often also labeled as “not a team player” or “confrontational” and sometimes marginalized or pushed out of positions of influence. There is therefore a great need for people with positional authority to create environments and accountable relationships that promote interruption by all people, including those who hold agent identities and/or have hierarchical positional power. All of this is required to cultivate and sustain a relational culture.

Relational culture practices are essential to interrupting the many overlapping aspects of white supremacy culture in ways that allow us to be with honest truths, tension, conflict, disconnection, pain, possibility, care and change. So that we can take action, together.

Use this resource for reflection and action, a guide toward building practices for ourselves, on our teams and across our organizations that create changes that are part of a larger movement that’s committed to liberation for all. **Each manifestation of relational culture contains practices that can serve as “antidotes” to counter the dominance of the corresponding manifestations of white supremacy culture at the expense of a culture that promotes racial equity, social justice and belonging.** These lists are not comprehensive. You are encouraged to add and edit, drawing from your own experiences.

There may be aspects of the manifestations of white supremacy culture that are useful in a particular context. For example, the “Sense of Urgency” manifestation mentions the prioritization of timelines and deadlines over relational aspects of a process. Timelines and deadlines can be useful in moving forward work designed to eliminate harms and meet the needs of those impacted by multiple forms of systemic oppression. The intention is not to create an either/or situation, where we either completely disregard the value of timelines and deadlines or we are “bad” if we tend to timelines and deadlines. Rather, the intention is to counter the existing and potential harmful impacts of over-emphasizing timelines and deadlines at the expense of humans and other living systems, especially those most impacted by the inequities and harm we’re trying to address. We do this by living into the practices described in “Spaciousness, Flexibility & Planning,” the aspect of Relational Culture offered to help orient us back toward a culture that supports racial equity, social justice and belonging.

You are also invited to note how your awareness and ideas for action shift and grow as you practice using the [Our Bodhi Project Frame](#) and its five primary guideposts: Beloved, Bestill, Behold, Believe, and Becoming. The Our Bodhi Project Frame calls for centering collective health, coliberation, and belonging throughout the culture of our organizations. These elements are part and parcel of relational culture.

<p>Manifestations of Relational Culture Reinforce <i>power with</i></p>	<p>Manifestations of White Supremacy Culture Reinforce <i>power over</i></p>
<p>Embodiment & Interconnection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on interconnection of mind, body, emotion, spirit and inner life (of individuals and communities). 	<p>Disembodiment & Disconnection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on intellect (head) and ignoring or de-emphasizing body, emotion, spirit and inner life (of individuals and communities). • De-spiritualized.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasize and integrate arts, culture, mindfulness, and body-based learning and knowing as natural and necessary aspects of processes and experiences of all kinds; treat these as fundamental parts of a healthy whole. Treat all experiences as opportunities for “collective care” and directly contributing to the whole. • Promote the narrative that embodiment and interconnection are truths about how humans connect, communicate and make meaning, and therefore exist and belong in all spaces, institutional and community. • Recognize the inherent creativity and drive to connect and belong within all people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exclude arts, culture, mindfulness, and body-based learning and knowing from processes and experiences; treats these as “enrichment” or “self care” separate from the whole. • Promote, either consciously or unconsciously, the narrative that these truths about how humans connect, communicate and make meaning don’t belong in certain (often institutional) spaces. • Does not recognize the inherent creativity and drive to connect and belong within all humans.
<p style="text-align: center;">Valuing Creativity & Healing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize, encourage and cultivate creative and healing practices in all people. • Acknowledge healing for all people as an essential component of racial equity and social justice work. • Honor/give credit to and respect the boundaries and intended uses of others’ cultural, emotional, intellectual, spiritual and/or physical labor. • Honor the knowledge, experience and histories of artists and healers (individuals and communities) who have cultivated creative and healing practices. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Extraction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use others’ cultural, emotional, intellectual, spiritual and/or physical labor without their permission and/or without crediting them. • Use resources, ideas or relationships of others, in particular those with less social or hierarchical positional power, for one’s personal or personal-professional benefit without crediting them or even letting them know. • Rely on disrespecting the Earth and denying or failing to take into account historical realities of extraction for economic purposes that have led to the destruction of communities of living systems such as people, animals and natural ecosystems.
<p style="text-align: center;">Cooperation & Strength through Trust in the Collective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include <u>process goals</u> in planning and strategy work. (For example make sure that your <i>goals speak to how you want to do your work and how you want those involved in a process to feel</i>, not just what you want to do/solve/achieve.) • Evaluate people based on their ability to collaborate with others and provide proactive, caring support. • Evaluate people based on their ability to work as part of a team to accomplish shared goals. • Check your motives: Are you acting to preserve your own or other individuals’ power or control? Are you using existing teams and structures, or are you building new ones based on your own comfort or 	<p style="text-align: center;">Individualism; Progress is Bigger, More</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value individual problem-solving. • See accountability as one-directional and to higher ups in chain of command. • Concentrate decision-making power among a small few who surround the top-most leader, with superficial inclusion of those in lower ranks. • Hold and wield an unexamined desire for individual recognition, credit or other forms of power. • Value competition over cooperation. • Believe that “doing it better” means less or no delegation. • Seek expansion – doing more, serving more – as the goal and value.

<p>needs? Did you involve those whose job it is to do a certain body of work – especially if this work is about racial equity and social justice – in the work?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lean on the collective to problem-solve, even when this makes you feel uncomfortable or like you are losing power. Notice these feelings without judgment and begin to recognize when they come up for you and how they get in the way of racial equity and social justice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on gains related to size not depth of relationship or quality of work. • Consciously or unconsciously prioritize or view the individual as superior to the collective or other living systems (including other people, the planet and animals).
<p>Appreciation, Experimentation & Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a culture of appreciation, where the organization takes time to make sure that people’s work and efforts are consistently and meaningfully appreciated. • Develop a learning organization where it is expected that everyone will make mistakes and those mistakes will offer opportunities for learning. • Recognize that failure and mistakes are important parts of the process, helping to decrease shame around natural learning experiences. • Separate the person from the mistake. • When offering feedback, always speak to the things that went well before offering criticism. • Ask people to offer specific suggestions for how to do things differently when offering criticism. 	<p>Perfectionism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack consistent expression of appreciation or has strict rules about how to appreciate. • Focus on inadequacies and/or mistakes after the fact rather than proactive check-ins about how things are going. • Consciously or unconsciously experience fear and/or shame from making mistakes. • Do little-to-no learning from mistakes. If learning happens, keep it to yourself or one or two people, but don’t share that learning for others to better understand you or learn themselves. • Promote and reward conforming, what’s needed to fit in to existing norms.
<p>Spaciousness, Flexibility & Planning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultivate being responsive, not reactive, to transformational strategies. • Make realistic work plans that include intentional moments for relationship building, even and especially in times of crisis. These moments can be brief – even a few minutes at the beginning of a meeting. • Cultivate an understanding among leadership that things take longer than anyone expects. • Discuss and plan for what it means to set goals of racial equity, social justice and belonging, particularly in terms of time (allotted and spent). • Learn from past experiences how long things take to move through. 	<p>Sense of Urgency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on timelines and getting it done now over investing in relationships and change that can transform systems and outcomes. • Not looking at the whole picture of contributing factors to success or failure; does not integrate an historical analysis as part of the whole picture. • As a result, prioritize white communities or historically white led organizations serving BIPOC communities over BIPOC communities that are of/by/for them; can also result in prioritizing BIPOC communities in a tokenizing way (without meaningfully engaging those communities in what they actually need/want).

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be clear about how you will make decisions that are rooted in racial equity, social justice and belonging in an atmosphere of urgency or crisis. • When you are still feeling anxious, scattered or fearful, be transparent in ways that center the needs of all people in the room. Be mindful of the impact or “weight” you carry based on any power you hold in your social positionality and/or positionality within the institutional hierarchy. • Allow time for pause and quiet reflection. • Be up front about decision making processes, especially when there is lack of alignment in the room: Who holds what roles to support something moving forward? How do others get to contribute to the process? • Build a culture of trust that makes addressing urgent issues possible and rooted in relationship rather than feeling shaky or uncertain. • Maintain a sense of urgency around the overall need to address historic inequities and experiences of oppression and engage communities of color and Indigenous communities in identifying which areas are most urgent and in need of focus. 	
<p style="text-align: center;">Open-heartedness, Receptivity & Relaxed Acceptance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge when you have made mistakes, whether that’s in large group, small group or 1:1 contexts. • When receiving in-the-moment feedback from others, receive it with open heartedness, trying to avoid feeling defensive or combative, or even trying to explain yourself. Notice your own defensive reactions and work on them. Try to listen actively and welcome the person’s genuine experience. It’s not about you. If need be, invite the person to meet with you later so you can receive their full story with your best attention. • Identify someone who you can go to when you feel defensive. Build regular space with this trusted person where you can both hear each other’s struggles when it comes to feeling misunderstood or attacked and give 	<p style="text-align: center;">Defensiveness/Protection of Power Structures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Power structure and individuals who hold power are set up to protect status quo, including their own comfort, power and influence. • View as “disrespectful,” “rude” and/or “not being a team player” anyone who names patterns of individuals participating in white dominant norms or of practices, policies and procedures that reinforce these norms. This occurs even in organizations that have stated commitments to racial equity. Attention is diverted to the person or people who named the patterns and this shuts down any conversation about the patterns themselves. (See Fear of Open Conflict, below.)

<p>each other space to share and unpack why those feelings are coming up. Just listening and affirming and giving ourselves space to be heard makes a big difference in how we will be able to show up next time.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Understand that structure cannot in and of itself facilitate or prevent abuse; when we are in deep, honest spaces with each other, there will likely be moments when some harm is caused. ● Understand how defensiveness works to maintain the status quo, even among those who promote antiracist ideas. ● Understand the link between defensiveness and fear (of losing power, face, comfort or privilege). ● Discuss the ways in which defensiveness or resistance to new ideas gets in the way of the mission. 	
<p>Authentic Process & Values Alignment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Include process or quality goals in your planning. ● Make sure your organization has a values statement that expresses your principles, the ways in which you want to do your work. Check in on these regularly so this is a living document that people are held accountable to as individuals and as a collective, and can use in day-to-day work. ● Be conscious of, ask about and tend to how people experience strategies and actions. Consider these experiences on mental, emotional, physical and spiritual dimensions. ● Look for ways to measure process goals (e.g.: if you have a goal of belonging, think about ways you can measure whether or not people are experiencing that). ● Create buffer space in your agendas for important conversations as they emerge. ● Return back to group norms and practices regularly throughout your meeting, process or event, to maintain accountability to the process. ● Learn how to hear people’s underlying concerns and ask questions to understand them better. ● Recognize when you need to diverge from agendas in order to address people’s underlying concerns. Lean on your facilitation team and intuition in these 	<p>Quantity over Quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Does not value/value very little process or other things that can’t be measured like many aspects of relationship building (spending time in community spaces, collective decision-making, creative practices, taking time to constructively deal with conflict, intentionally focusing on trust-building and power analyses). ● Focus largely on measurable goals that are more valued in white-dominant spaces such as things that can be counted and things that are already politically viable. ● Ignore process (people’s needs to be heard or engaged) for the sake of timelines or desired outcomes even though this leads to lack of cohesion. This includes ignoring collective health as a central organizing strategy, as well as aspects of health that are deemed to ‘soft,’ ‘not valuable’ such as emotional and mental well-being.

<p>moments and be transparent about your decision making.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create realistic outcomes for meetings, workshops, trainings, etc. so that you don't feel rushed in group space. 	
<p>Multiplicity of Wisdoms & Realities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Accept that there are many ways to get to the same goal. ● Once the group has made a decision about which way will be taken, honor that decision and see what you and the organization will learn from taking that way, even and especially if it is not the way you would have chosen. ● Work on developing the ability to notice when people do things differently and how those different ways might improve your approach. ● Look for the tendency for a group or a person to keep pushing the same point over and over out of a belief that there is only one right way and then name it. ● When working with communities from a different culture than yours or that of your organization, be clear that you have some learning to do about the communities' ways of being and doing. ● Never assume that you or your organization know what's best for a community in isolation from meaningful relationships with that community in which social positional (race, gender, ability, sexuality, immigrant status, etc.) and other power dynamics (such as funder/funded, service provider/service recipient, policy maker/resident) are named and openly discussed. ● Create spaces in any team meetings and division or all-department meetings for group-wide decision-making points. ● Strive to deemphasize the intellectual and cognitive as the sole or leading ways to understand and make meaning. (Words and phrases follow ways of thinking and making meaning.) ● When posing a strategic question to the group, first do a go-around in which everyone can share or pass, before opening it up to a larger group discussion. 	<p>Over-Emphasis on the Written Word</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In a broader sense, believes in one "right" way (such as what's written on paper), a way that reinforces the status quo. ● More literally, values written communication most; those with "strong" writing skills (according to certain academic or institutional criteria) are valued over others with other communication skills. ● These manifestations of white supremacy culture can lead to either critique and missed opportunities for those who don't have certain writing skills, avoidance of direct feedback about written communications and/or denial of opportunities for people whose communication strengths are non-written to grow those strengths.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Encourage your teams to identify what underlying assumptions of what is strategic/smart are guiding your choices, and how those assumptions may be rooted in particular traditions of knowledge and understandings of the world. ● Celebrate when your leaders offer a different process idea to achieving a goal, and recognize what the group might learn by trying on something new. ● Understand that to appeal to the community, using the white normative glorification of the written word is sometimes strategic but that to make a lasting culture shift, we must begin to model a commitment to believing and trusting a multiplicity of approaches and work to bring our people along. ● Remember that many communities are rooted in strong written, oral, visual and movement-based traditions. The complimentary gifts that all of these traditions offer have contributed to the thriving of our species and our partnership with the Earth. 	
<p>Transparency & Shared Leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Define success by the measures of the communities most affected by racial and social injustices. ● Define success by models that focus on collective health and belonging as central components of racial and social justice. ● Make sure that everyone knows and understands who makes what decisions in the organization and why. ● Make sure everyone knows and understands their level of responsibility and authority in the organization. ● “Nothing about us without us.” Include people who are affected by decisions in the decision-making and process design for making those decisions. Listen to their feedback and openly discuss any areas in which there is and is not agreement. ● Discuss what good leadership looks like and make sure people understand that a good leader develops the power and skills of others. 	<p>Paternalism & Power Hoarding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Success is defined unilaterally by those who shape the dominant narratives and realities. This often includes executive leadership, board members, donors/funders and elected officials. ● Decision-making is clear to those who hold power (not to those who don’t). ● Decision-making on important matters is kept to a small few. ● Sometimes there are “shared decision-making” processes, but often those are for less-significant decisions or are prescribed/designed by those who hold power with no input from others or consideration for unintended consequences. ● Those with hierarchical power often make decisions for others and don’t find it necessary to understand or behave differently based on what those they’re making decisions for express they need. ● Those without power know they don’t have it and don’t know how decisions get made, but they know the impacts very well.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create opportunities for those you supervise and manage to build relationships and networks. ● Understand that change is inevitable and challenges to your leadership can be healthy and productive. ● Make sure the organization is focused on the mission and that the mission has an explicit connection to racial and social justice as an outcome. Ensure the organizational vision and values name <i>how</i> the organization is/moves and that relational culture is required for racial equity and social justice efforts to move beyond diversity and inclusion. ● Create a map where leaders can clearly identify who holds which responsibilities and decision making. Make this accessible to all people within the organization. ● Train yourself out of your role by engaging in deep leadership development of other folks in your organization or team. Always be thinking about how you are growing and transitioning in your leadership. ● When coming to folks for feedback on projects or processes, be clear about what exactly you are asking of them: Are you simply sharing a decision with them to get red flags, or do you want their input in shaping the outcomes? Either way, be explicit about why you are seeking this level of their engagement and how you will integrate this feedback moving forward. ● Openly name power dynamics in group spaces from the outset, recognizing the impacts of social positionality (race, gender, etc.) and positionality within institutional hierarchy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Those in power hold onto it even unconsciously and feel suggestions for how to change the culture and patterns of behavior within the organization are a threat to their leadership or a sign of a lack of appreciation, yet they don't see themselves as hoarding power, feeling threatened or acting defensive.
<p>Embracing the Both/And & Complexity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Look for intersections between race, gender and other social positionalities. ● Notice when people use either/or language and push to come up with more than two alternatives. ● Notice when people are simplifying complex issues, particularly when the stakes seem high or an urgent decision needs to be made. ● Slow it down and encourage people to do a deeper analysis. 	<p>Either/Or Thinking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reinforce binaries. Can increase conflict because people feel they have to decide between this or that. ● Does not acknowledge the complexity of life and the adaptive, changing nature of relationships and anything involving living systems. ● This can include focusing on the “positive” or “forward moving” only and not giving attention to critiques voiced both by those

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● When your organization or team is faced with an urgent decision, take a break and give people some breathing room to think creatively; better decisions emerge when we are feeling (emotional) safety and calm. ● Start planning events/activities/actions far in advance so that decisions don't have to be made under extreme pressure. ● When there is disagreement between two choices, try to assess what the underlying values under each of these choices are, and see if there is a third way that can be guided particularly by these values. ● If there is a conflict between two options, consider if both might be possible. Could a conversation about sequencing be more supportive than a conversation about which option is correct? ● Openly name in group spaces when folks are in a space of binary thinking and encourage folks to think of all the options that fall in-between. ● Be careful not to let attempts at "both/and" obscure dynamics of oppression, such as neglecting to recognize or address an oppression-based harm because the person experiencing the harm acted in a harmful way toward the person perpetrating the harm. For example, a BIPOC person expresses strong emotions regarding a decision that a white staff person made that led to a harmful impact on a group of Black women and the group/supervisor conversation is centered around how "both people were out of line." The angry expression is a response to an action that had a racist impact. Instead of focusing on the angry expression, focus on the impact on the Black women. Seek responses that acknowledge all harms and name the specific, systemic and interpersonal conditions that breed oppression-based harm. 	<p>targeted by oppression and/or hierarchical power imbalances, or by those with social or hierarchical agency who point out these harms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Does not often take into account intersecting target positionalities such as race (people of color) and gender (women and transgender or non-binary people), race and ability, gender and sexuality, etc.
<p>Respect for Real Talk and Resilience Through Conflict</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Role play ways to handle conflict before conflict happens. 	<p>Fear of Open Conflict</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● When someone raises an issue that causes discomfort, the response is to blame the person who raised it and avoid addressing the conflict.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Build individual and collective muscle to distinguish between being polite and raising hard issues. ● Don't require those who raise hard issues to raise them in acceptable ways, especially if you are using the ways in which issues are raised as a diversion from addressing the issues being raised. ● Once a conflict is resolved, take the opportunity to revisit it and see how it might have been handled differently. ● Build in regular space in 1:1, team, division and all-staff meetings for bringing up hard issues or dynamics. Don't cut this time or schedule over even if there doesn't seem to be anything to talk about at first. When the time and space for addressing conflict exists and is honored, it normalizes the fact that many humans working together will bring up hard or sticky dynamics that otherwise feel safer under the surface. When space is carved out for it, people will have the option to begin to use it. ● When conflict comes to the surface, remember, it isn't a personal attack. This is work we <u>get</u> to do together. You are not alone in figuring this out. When we do hard work together, it brings up hard dynamics. Notice if your reaction is about what is currently happening or if this situation be reminding you of an earlier messier/harder conflict? ● Identify a couple of buddies who are positioned similar to you in terms of race, gender and other salient positionalities who are also committed to a practice of racial equity and social justice and willing to process dynamics or situations that are hard to figure out by yourself. Commit to talking about things with the goal of moving through them, bringing them up and solving them, and not as gossip. ● Note that fear of open conflict is a pattern that can be rooted in whiteness, patriarchy and in a middle or owning class drive not to "lose it," to keep things "looking good," "put together," or calm. Avoiding conflict has also been a survival mechanism for women, people of color and many other oppressed groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Emphasis is placed on being polite, "all getting along," and/or "all harms being equal." ● Emotion around oppression is equated with being rude, disrespectful, insubordinate, aggressive. ● Leaders cultivate feedback in ways that reinforce these norms and keep power-over structures in place.
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<p>Living into Discomfort, Vulnerability & Healthy Agitation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Understand that discomfort is at the root of all growth and learning; welcome it as much as you can. ● Deepen your political analysis of racism and other forms of oppression so you have a strong understanding of how your personal experience and feelings fit into a larger picture. ● Don't take everything personally. ● Realize that everybody has a world view and that everybody's world view affects the way they understand things; realize this means you too. ● Push yourself to sit with discomfort when people are expressing themselves in ways that are not familiar to you. ● Model vulnerability. Say, "I feel vulnerable sharing this..." "I'm just reflecting for a moment because I realize I'm feeling vulnerable." ● Assume that everybody has a valid point and your job is to understand what that point is. ● Open meetings, trainings, workshops, listening sessions and retreats with questions that encourage folks to share genuinely about how they are arriving. Be open to diverse experiences coming into the space. ● In training spaces or other teaching moments, don't offer leading questions where you have a "right answer" you're hoping others guess. This reinforces someone being in the right and someone being in the wrong (a binary) and a pressure to get it right. ● Consider that racial equity and social justice work should offer you a healthy amount of agitation if it will be a place for you to do deep personal growth. If you come to city government to be around people who look and think just like you, take some time to reevaluate that need and where else you could get that need met so that this space can be a place of healthy discomfort. ● In decision-making, look around at the group gathered and consider if there is representation from different perspectives present. Consider: race, ethnicity, class, religion, age, ability, gender, sexuality, 	<p>Right to Comfort & Objectivity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Believe that those with power have the right to emotional and psychological comfort. ● Equate discomfort among agent group members (such as white people) with actual oppression (such as racism). ● Scapegoat those (regardless of social positionality) who causes discomfort by speaking up about patterns of oppression, including those that manifest in the norms of the organization, team or relationship. ● Believe that there is such a thing as objectivity. ● Oriented toward objects (vs. toward relationships, all living systems) ● Invalidate or diminish the role of emotion. ● Often do one or many of these without being conscious of it. ● Often do one or many of these in concert with insisting that others are accountable for their impact on you.
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<p>geography and other identities that may be different from the dominant culture. Be wary of coming to quick conclusions or easy answers to big questions: Who still needs to be consulted?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Reflect on how right to comfort is a pattern that can be rooted in racism, sexism, classism (middle/owning class) and/or ableist perspectives about feeling deserving of good or nice things, of good health, of having “earned the right” to get what you want or feel well.	
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