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Addressing and Interrogating How White Supremacy, White Privilege and Racism Show Up in Libraries

Understanding Historical Inequities  
 Methodologies for Self-Assessment  
 Libraries and Racial Equity  
 The Language of Racial Equity and White Supremacy  
 The Competency Continuum

Accountability, Assessment, and Implementation  
 Antiracist Objectives & Strategies for Libraries  
 Hiring, Retention & Advancement  
 Strategic Planning  
 Policies, Procedures, and Norms  
 Sharing the Work: BIPOC Communities & Allies  
 Accountability in Racial Equity Work  
 Solidarity & Librarianship  
 Power relationships within the field

Building Cross-Sector Cultural Proficiency- Influencing and Affecting Change in Other Professional, Civic, Political Spheres.

Civic  
 Information  
 Corporations

Antiracist Leadership  
 The Interconnectedness of Libraries and the Larger Institutions of ALA /ARL  
 Role of the Member- Advancing Member Impact

Background of the Framework  
 Glossary & Resources for Further Reading

This framework has been developed as a tool both theoretical and practical in its orientation, as a guide for developing personal, organizational, institutional, and systems-level knowledge and understanding of the nature of racism and its many manifestations. Racism results in differential, inequitable, and devastating impacts on Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) in the library and information science (LIS) sector, the communities libraries serve, and beyond. The framework is not intended to be

in itself--an instrument or agent that will abolish racial inequity or a step-by-step guide--but, rather to provide the grounding needed to effect change in thinking, behavior, and that will lead to better outcomes for and populations. Therefore, while the framework offers examples of implementation, these are not meant to represent an exhaustive list. Although the LIS sector cannot, on its own, solve the problem of racism in society, it can acknowledge the role it has played in contributing to and sustaining systems of inequity and oppression of communities of color, and own the responsibility for countering its effects, both historically and today. And while we acknowledge the global impacts of racism, for the purposes of this framework, we specifically address

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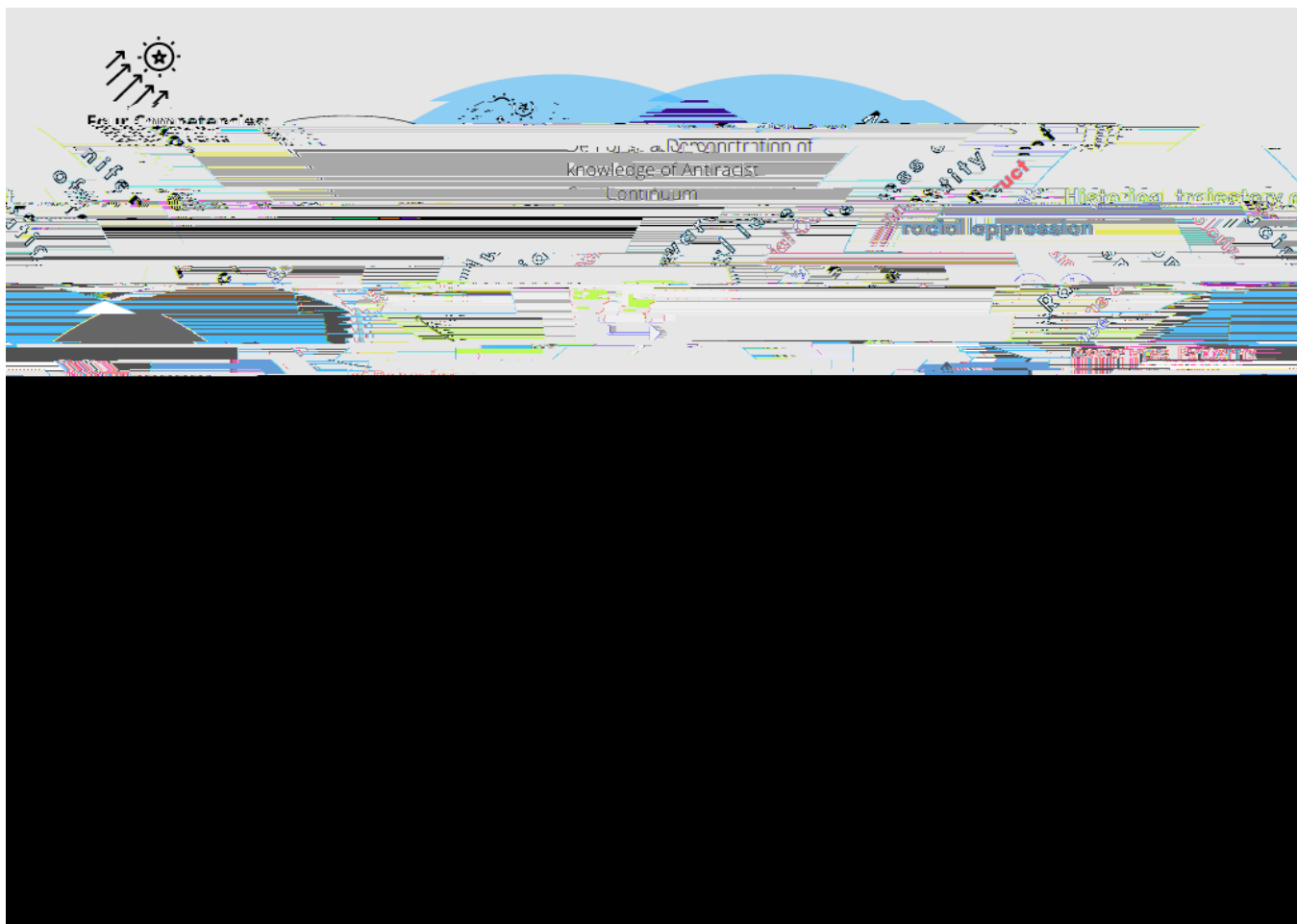
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Engaging in antiracism is multifaceted. Understanding core ideas around racial equity is one of the first steps to laying a strong foundation for racial equity work and allows us to take individual actions into a holistic practice.

homogeneity, not diversity. Reverberations of these inequities must be ac

the concept of racial identity (its historical, social construction, its development as a strategy to divide cross-racial alliances who were organizing for labor solidarity in colonial times), to understanding the contemporary manifestations or realizations of racism (e.g. anti-Black racism, mass incarceration, Indigenous invisibility). From understanding of how racism shows up historically and contemporaneously, we move to analyze the profound impacts of racism on communities of color, e.g. in disparities in access to quality healthcare, the “achievement gap” in education, the lack of generational wealth for communities of color, or the lack of representation in the library sector. Once we fully understand these principles, we can begin to explore the strategies--the behavioral, policy, and systems changes--that will bring about greater racial equity.



\* Please note that “competency” in this context does not mean that there is an ending to this process. The medical field has coined the term “cultural humility” to reflect an ongoing commitment to life-long learning, acknowledging and accepting our own limitations to cultural sensitivity, and recognizing power imbalances that exist in institutions and systems. The term “competency” is used above, with acknowledgement of both its ubiquity and its limitations.



to accept feedback without judgment, defensiveness, or retaliation, and that they act on the input provided by measuring climate systematically (at regular intervals) and creating interventions that will improve the experiences, engagement, and the sense of belonging for employees from racialized identities. Evaluation, retention, or advancement processes should include the consideration of whether such policies have greater differential impact (short- or long-term) on employees of color than on those from majority populations.

Furthermore, data must be collected and tracked concerning the opportunities for leadership and development that are provided to library employees from minoritized groups in order to

Many of the policies, procedures, and norms employed and enforced in libraries are rooted in white supremacy, and are often exclusionary to BIPOC individuals. This stems from the fact that in most settings, including libraries, cultural practices associated with "whiteness" are normalized and considered the standard or expected behaviors. As a result, policies, procedures, and norms meant to fix a problem or improve access and service, can cause harm for BIPOC communities. While not necessarily intentional, this harm emerges as a result of organizations implementing policies without considering how they will affect the different and diverse populations they serve.

Examples include:

- Both physical police presence and internal policies that negatively impact patrons;
- Inconsistent policies around library spaces that may create barriers to service for BIPOC communities;
- Descriptive/metadata practices that use offensive language;
- Library Fines & Fees;
- Requiring ID in order to access library services;
- Overemphasizing academic credentials in the hiring process.

Therefore, libraries must assess policies and procedures through the lens of racial equity to identify if and how they are causing harm to BIPOC communities. Libraries should always consider the possible unintended consequences of a policy, procedure, or norm could have on which racial or ethnic groups are most impacted, and what can be done to minimize or prevent those negative consequences.

CONCLUSION  
RECOMMENDATIONS

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Coalition building is central to moving the work forward. Examples of this include REFORMA, BCALA, and APALA statements in support of Black Lives Matter and their work speaking out against violence being perpetuated against

This includes listening for and amplifying those messages that may be hidden, ignored, or suppressed.

Racial equity can only be realized when power differentials between BIPOC and white individuals are equalized and when communities of color have the agency, rights, opportunities, and access to resources to ensure that they can thrive. Historical and systemic inequalities exist and must be deliberately addressed and remedied. This process is facilitated by ceding power and providing opportunities for BIPOC individuals to develop and cultivate power. This can only be accomplished by guaranteeing that minoritized populations will have a significant role in envisioning and implementing their desired future.

Ways in which power differentials show up in everyday practice and which must be countered at a systemic level include:

- Power structures within work distribution (ability to work from home);
- Overrepresentation of people from majority cultures/identities in manager roles;
- Examining what is considered "people fit"

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legacy of advantage for people from majority cultures and identities, or for those who acquiesce to the phenomenon of assimilation. Leaders who are committed to social justice work-

institutions like ALA/ARL. As such, these and similar associations lack the ability to mandate wide-spread change in the field. However, there are other ways in which larger associations can model commitment to anti-racist work, influence organization and policy, and provide mechanisms to support collective action. In this way, Organizations large and small can explore what contributions they can make that will advance racial equity within their



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## Glossary & Resources for Further Reading

Readings and resources discussed throughout the framework are listed here underneath the section in which they appear.

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Crossroads Ministry, Chicago, IL. n.d. "Continuum on Becoming an Anti-Racist Multicultural Organization."rt

■ Wells, Renee. "Self-Assessment-Tool-Anl-An





"An anti-racist is someone who is supporting an antiracist policy through their actions or expressing antiracist ideas. This includes the expression of ideas that racial groups are equals and do not need developing, and supporting policies that reduce racial inequity." (Racial Equity Tools 2020; summarized from Kendi 2019)

Colonialism refers to domination through economic, political, and social policies or ideologies, especially by a non-indigenous people over indigenous, minority, or marginalized populations.

"Colonialism is a practice of domination, which involves the subjugation of one people to another." (Kohn and Reddy 2017)

"Colonialism can refer to a transnational process of domination, the policies by which it is carried out, and the ideologies that underwrite it." (Ramana th 2012)

In the Americas, colonialism refers to the invasion and large-scale theft of Indigenous lands by European powers, and the continuing domination of those lands and peoples through economic, political, and social policies or ideologies (adapted from Waziya tan 2014)

Can refer to a range of differences between people that may include race, gender, sexual orientation,

A system of oppression that relies on nations exerting power and dominion over another nation or group either by direct territorial acquisitions or indirectly by exerting control over their political, economic,, mmm





"Researching and addressing the distributions of the social common good through the lens of historical power structures and social norms. Promoting just and equitable outcomes." (University of Minnesota College of Education and Human Development n.d.)

"A system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing ways to perpetuate racial group inequity. It identifies dimensions of our history and culture that have allowed privileges associated with 'whiteness' and disadvantages associated with 'color' to endure and adapt over time. Structural racism is not something that a few people or institutions choose to practice. Instead it has been a feature of the social, economic and political systems in which we all exist." (The Aspen Institute n.d.)

"The historical and contemporary policies, practices, and norms that create and maintain white supremacy" (The Urban Institute n.d.)

In some cases, systemic racism works



Kohn, Margaret and Reddy, Ka



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Ramnath, Maia. "Colonialism." [conspireforchange.org](#). Institute for Anarchist Studies, 2012.

[https://www.conspireforchange.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/lex\\_colonialism\\_master.pdf](https://www.conspireforchange.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/lex_colonialism_master.pdf)

Shalabi, N M. "Teach With Me: The Promise of a Raced Politic for Social Justice in College Classrooms." [Journal of Critical Race Theory](#), 2, no. 2 (2014).

<http://www.istaedigitalpress.com/jc tp /a rticle /id /529/>.

Sheppard, Colleen, Tamara Thernitus, and Derek J. Jones. "Understanding How Racism Becomes Systemic." [Journal of Critical Race Theory](#), August 18, 2020.

<https://www.mcgill.ca/humanrights/article/universal-human-rights/understanding-how-racism-becomes-systemic>

"Social Justice." University of Minnesota College of Education and Human Development, accessed August 16, 2021, <https://www.cehd.umn.edu/topics/social-justice/>

"Structural Racism in America." The Urban Institute, accessed August 16, 2021,

<https://www.urban.org/features/structural-racism-america>

Waziya tan. "Colonialism on the Ground." [intercontinentalcry.org](#), 2014.

