

**PARTICIPANT**

# TOOLKIT 2024



eliminating racism  
empowering women

**yw**  
boston

**UNITED  
AGAINST  
RACISM**



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# **PARTICIPANT TOOLKIT 2024**

United Against Racism is part of YWCA USA's signature campaign to raise awareness and take action against institutional racism.

When you or your organization take part, you are demonstrating your ongoing commitment to eliminating racism. And more than that, you are sharing an empowering journey with colleagues and allies across the city of Boston and identifying concrete measures to reduce the harms caused by racism and increase inclusion and equity.

Use this Participant Toolkit to support self-reflection and group conversations as you explore our curriculum and develop courage to promote racial equity. Then showcase your commitment to the work with a digital badge upon completion of the curriculum.

Thank you for uniting against racism with other champions and allies, expanding your knowledge, transforming our communities, and building the courage to take action against racism—together.





The level of enthusiasm for  
this work was inspiring.

Our group engaged in an  
open discussion about what  
we had learned, what surprised us,  
and what we would take with  
us going forward...

It needs to happen every  
year—indeed, every day.

I have been proud to be  
a small part of it.”

**Jeff Fuhrer**

EASTERN BANK FOUNDATION



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# AMPLIFYING YOUR PARTICIPATION

Communicating your support for racial equity and your opposition to racism is an important part of changing our cultural narrative. It invites more people to ask questions and get involved, and it increases the number of people united in the struggle against racism and attacks on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Let people within your organization, your friends, family, or anyone else know that you are participating in United Against Racism this year, and invite them to participate, too.

## FOUR WAYS TO ANNOUNCE YOUR PARTICIPATION

- 1 Create a **social media post** detailing you or your organization's participation in this campaign. The post can explain your organization's commitment to advancing racial equity, share similarly focused initiatives within your organization, or reflect on what having the courage to fight racism looks like to you.
- 2 Include a blurb about your participation in an upcoming **newsletter** distributed by your community or organization.
- 3 Share with LinkedIn groups, trade publications, national associations, community listservs, and other **networks** with which you are affiliated.
- 4 Share your participation and what you've learned from the curriculum on **social media**. Use the hashtag **#UnitedAgainstRacism** and tag **@ywboston**.

## EXAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

[We are/I am] proud to be participating in YW Boston's 2024 #UnitedAgainstRacism campaign! This year, [I'm/we're] learning how to apply four types of courage to antiracism and diversity, equity, and inclusion work. Learn more and sign up on @ywboston's website:  
[ywboston.org/united-against-racism](https://ywboston.org/united-against-racism)

Defending antiracism from attacks takes courage. Sign up to participate in YW Boston's 2024 #UnitedAgainstRacism campaign, an exclusive, self-paced curriculum of practical strategies for reducing the harms caused by racism and a toolkit to help guide reflection and action for individuals or groups. Plus, you'll get a digital badge for participating!

# HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

The content and structure of the United Against Racism curriculum is designed to help you build courage and support brave conversations in your organizations, social circles, or institutions. This toolkit is designed to support these conversations. Individuals may also find value here, so feel free to modify activity instructions to suit your circumstances.

Talking about race with colleagues, friends, or family can feel intimidating. Many people are taught from a young age that speaking about race and racism is taboo. But we can only make advancements in racial equity if we speak about the root causes of racism and its impact, and encourage others to examine ways they can help reduce harm and encourage systemic change.

We believe that the relationships you build through these challenging conversations are as important to the work as the ideas you'll discuss. And we hope that the skills you practice will fuel our collective pursuit of diversity, equity, and inclusion and sustain the courage to remain united against racism in the coming year and beyond.

## TIPS FOR LEADING GROUP CONVERSATIONS

- 1 Read this opening section before beginning the curriculum to help plan discussions with your colleagues or friends.
- 2 For the deepest impact, solicit one or more small groups of volunteers to participate over a set period of time.
- 3 Designate someone to be the coordinator to ensure that participants know what is expected and when, and someone to facilitate each conversation.
- 4 Schedule at least four meetings, one for each lesson of the curriculum.
- 5 Participants should read the lesson in advance of each meeting.
- 6 Use the reflection and discussion prompts in this toolkit to guide the conversation and generate questions, insights, and action steps.

# BEFORE YOU GET STARTED

- **PROVIDE PROPER FRAMING:**  
Ensure that those involved know the purpose of the conversations and why they are participating in United Against Racism.
- **CHOOSE THE RIGHT PACING:**  
Consider how much time you can dedicate to the curriculum and protect time for yourself or your group to review and discuss the material.
- **PREPARE YOURSELF OR YOUR GROUP FACILITATOR:**  
Take this role seriously—and with humility.
  - » Consider the privileges and disadvantages of your own social identities and how they may impact group dynamics.
  - » Acknowledge that you are also a part of our social systems.
  - » Model self-disclosure.
  - » Seek understanding before responding.
  - » Accept other perspectives, even if you disagree.
  - » Resist either-or thinking and avoid speaking in terms of what “should” be.
- **ESTABLISH AND PRACTICE COMMUNITY NORMS:**  
You may have your own or want to develop your own. Here are the ones we use at YW Boston:
  - » Lean into discomfort
  - » Commit to non-closure
  - » Speak from the “I” position
  - » What is shared here stays here, but what is learned here leaves here
  - » Take space, make space, and respect different forms of participation
  - » Impact, not just intent, matters
  - » Be present
  - » Reserve the right to change your mind
- **RESPECT THE GROUP ENVIRONMENT**  
There may be conflict or tension in your group environment at times. Acknowledge this up front and discuss how you will handle it together.
  - » Engage in democratic discussion, not debate.
  - » Foster learning and growth rooted in shared values.
  - » End the conversation by expressing gratitude for everyone’s willingness to participate.

# EMPATHETIC COURAGE

“Acknowledging personal bias and intentionally moving away from it in order to vicariously experience the trials and triumphs of others.”

CATHY LASSITER, ED.D.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Reflect privately on each of the prompts below for several minutes, perhaps journaling your thoughts. Then, if you like, share with a partner or a small group. Let everyone share for the same amount of time before opening up a discussion about what resonated.

- 1. What is an example of a bias you have held?**
  - What type of bias was it? (Refer to the table on the next page for examples)
  - When have you felt you were the subject of someone else’s bias, positive or negative?

.....
- 2. What is an example of a microaggression you have committed?**
  - Witnessed?
  - Experienced?
  - Were you able to see the perspectives of everyone involved?
  - Whose perspective is it easier for you to see?

.....
- 3. What can you do each day to build your empathy and avoid harming others with microaggressions?**

.....
- 4. What are some things you do each day to widen your perspective on the world around you to counteract biases that may form?**





## SOME COMMON TYPES OF BIAS

### AFFINITY BIAS

Having a preference for people or things that are similar to you.

### DECISION FATIGUE BIAS

Making decisions that are more conservative and risk-averse with each subsequent decision.

### ANCHORING BIAS

Relying too heavily on the first piece of information encountered for future judgments.

### EXPERTISE BIAS

Deferring to a perceived expert and accepting what they say as true without thinking critically about what they are saying.

### ASSOCIATION BIAS

Assuming that all the characteristics of one thing will also be true of another thing if they have something obvious in common.

### GROUPTHINK

Accepting a conclusion you don't believe in order to reach a perceived group consensus.

### AVAILABILITY BIAS

Favoring options we remember seeing or experiencing before.

### HORNS AND HALOS

Treating someone less favorably based on a negative first impression (horns), or more favorably based on a positive first impression (halos).

### CONFIRMATION BIAS

Paying more attention and assigning more weight to information that supports your beliefs, and ignoring information that challenges them.

### LENIENCY BIAS

Assessing someone less harshly out of unconscious sympathy or empathy.

# INTELLECTUAL COURAGE

“Challenging old assumptions and understandings and acting on new learnings and insights gleaned from experience and/or...research...Paul and Elder [2010] ...describe Intellectual Courage as being conscious of the need to face and fairly address ideas, beliefs, or viewpoints which we once opposed or have not given serious consideration.”

CATHY LASSITER, ED.D.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Reflect privately on each of the prompts below for several minutes, perhaps journaling your thoughts. Then, if you like, share with a partner or a small group. Let everyone share for the same amount of time before opening up a discussion about what resonated.

### 1. When have you realized you were wrong about something?

- How did it feel to find out?
  - Does it still feel that way after time passes?
- .....

### 2. What inaccurate assumptions do you think people have about your organization or community?

- What sources of data (research or experience) might exist to challenge those assumptions?
- .....

### 3. Look at the tables on the next page and think of your organization or community. Which questions do you know the answers to (or know how to access the answers)?

- Are you aware of any public discussion of these issues?
- If so, how would you characterize them (contentious, constructive)?
- Have you participated in them?

## RACIAL EQUITY IN YOUR WORKPLACE

### HIRING

How are you getting staff from marginalized identities in the door?

What messages are your job postings, website, etc., unintentionally saying?

Are you promoting jobs in places that reach a diverse audience?

Have you done work to remove implicit bias from the hiring process?

### RETENTION

What are your policies around performance evaluation?

Professional growth?

Are staff from marginalized identities provided with opportunities to grow within the organization?

### LEADERSHIP

What aspects of diversity are present on your leadership team?

Which aren't?

How invested in cultivating a more diverse workplace is your leadership?

## RACIAL EQUITY IN YOUR COMMUNITY

(SCHOOLS, CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS, FAITH ORGANIZATIONS)

### DISPARITIES

What data can you find and publicize about treatment of people of color by police?

Access to housing?

School success?

### CULTURAL NORMS

Are people free to be their authentic selves, or are there enforceable expectations around appropriate behavior, attire, or language that favor some groups over others?

### ACKNOWLEDGMENT OR REPAIR OF HISTORICAL RACISM

How has racism shaped the place or institution?

What Indigenous peoples have history there?

What is the connection to slavery?

Are these stories easy to find and openly discussed?

Have reparation efforts been made?

# MORAL COURAGE

“Speaking up or acting when injustices occur, human rights are violated, or when persons are treated unfairly.”

CATHY LASSITER, ED.D.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Reflect privately on each of the prompts below for several minutes, perhaps journaling your thoughts. Then, if you like, share with a partner or a small group. Let everyone share for the same amount of time before opening up a discussion about what resonated.

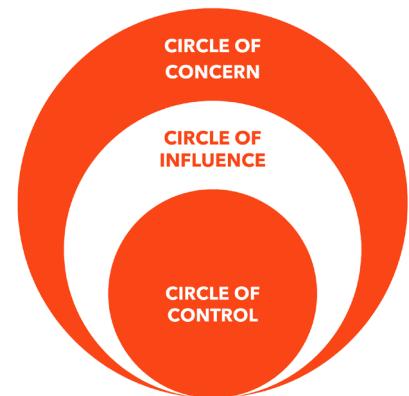
### 1. When have you exercised or witnessed an act of Moral Courage?

- Did it lead to change?
- Was it related to interpersonal or systemic injustice?
- What did you feel after exercising or witnessing the act of Moral Courage?

### 2. Choose an institution or organization you are part of in which you believe or know there to be issues of systemic racism that could be addressed more strongly. Using the table on the next page, consider what aspects of the problem fall in each circle.

- For anything within your Circle of Control or Influence, what types of courage do you feel most confident that you can employ?
- What types of courage do you need support with?
- How can your colleagues, friends, or family help you build your courage to affect change in the areas within your spheres of influence?

## SPHERES OF INFLUENCE





## SPHERES OF INFLUENCE

### CIRCLE OF CONTROL

Issues you have control over—where you have direct decision-making authority.

### CIRCLE OF INFLUENCE

You have the ability to influence these issues, even the smallest amount, even though you may not be a decision-maker.

### CIRCLE OF CONCERN

You are concerned or interested in these issues, but don't have any direct influence or control.

# DISCIPLINED COURAGE

**“Remaining steadfast, strategic, and deliberate in the face of inevitable setbacks and failures for the greater good.”**

**CATHY LASSITER, ED.D.**

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Reflect privately on each of the prompts below for several minutes, perhaps journaling your thoughts. Then, if you like, share with a partner or a small group. Let everyone share for the same amount of time before opening up a discussion about what resonated.

- 1. What are some of the common expressions of resistance to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) that you have encountered?**
  - Do these expressions align with either defending, denying, or distancing responses?
  - What type of psychological threat might be driving them?

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- 2. When have you experienced a status threat, merit threat, or moral threat?**
  - How did it make you feel?
  - Can you empathize with someone whose reaction is driven by these threats?

---
- 3. Looking at the table on the next page, do you see yourself as an Agitator, Innovator, Orchestrator, or some combination when pursuing racial justice?**
  - Can you identify others in your organization or community who could serve in the complimentary roles as you work together?



## ROLES FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

JULIE BATTILANA & MARISSA KIMSEY



### AGITATOR

- Raises equity concerns
  - Educates others
- Creates common purpose with those opposed to change

“An agitator brings the grievances of specific individuals or groups to the forefront of public awareness...in ways that create common purpose.”

Agitators establish favorable conditions for **innovators** and **orchestrators**



### INNOVATOR

- Creates solutions
  - Gets input
- Iterates upon change over time

“Innovators create actionable solutions to address problems identified by agitators... [with] a well-defined theory of change.”

Innovators evaluate their solution’s efficacy and generate the support necessary for **orchestration**



### ORCHESTRATOR

- Builds coalitions
- Ensures strategic approach
  - Gets buy-in

“The role of orchestrator involves planning and leading the strategy for change adoption...to identify and win allies, influence others, and access resources for change adoption.”

# CONGRATULATIONS... AND THANK YOU.

Now that you have completed YW Boston's 2024 United Against Racism curriculum, you can keep the conversation going by showcasing your participation. Click here to complete the curriculum and get your badge.

[GET YOUR BADGE](#)



Use the official completion badge and social media copy below and invite your networks to unite with you.

[Upon completion of curriculum. Post with badge.]

[We/I] just participated in @ywboston's 2024 #UnitedAgainstRacism campaign. [We've/I've] gained courage and insight to continue advancing racial equity in Boston and beyond! Learn more about our inclusion efforts: [link to corresponding webpage about your organization's work]



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empowering women



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**RACISM**

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[ywboston.org](http://ywboston.org)

