Principles of Antiracism

Antiracism is an active way of seeing and being in the world. While understanding the definition of antiracism is a key step towards seeing and living like an antiracist, it isn't enough. Below are a set of principles to guide your behavior and decision-making.

Lead with race informed by intersectionality and positionality.

Antiracism strives for equity using a race-focused approach while recognizing other "-isms". In addition to race, people are marginalized for their identities based on gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, age, and socio-economic status to name a few. Additionally, the experiences of marginalized people may differ depending on the intersection of these identities.

> intersectionality: the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.

> positionality:
> 1. Positionality is the social and political context that creates your identity in terms of race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability status. Positionality also describes how your identity influences, and potentially biases, your understanding of and outlook on the world.
> 2. It is the means by which individual identity influences, and potentially biases, human understanding of and perspectives on the world

The race-focused approach does not mean other marginalized groups are neglected. This approach considers the reality that a one size fits all approach to achieving equity is rarely successful, and that racism is so baked into our society, it's found in all other institutions - all communities are impacted by racism, even communities forced to the margins.

Prioritize humanity and healing.

In its simplest form, the act of striving for equity or antiracism increases our humanity. Absent the fancy terminology, tools, strategies, and frameworks, antiracism trains us to be more humane as we see the humanity in ourselves and others more clearly. Antiracism requires us to see ourselves and each other as our whole selves, full of history and life experience - worthy of belonging and connection.

Prioritizing humanity involves healing. Racial injustice is destructive to all, some more than others. In order to advance antiracism we must be willing to address the harm of our past and invest in the resources needed to restore to wholeness. Advancing antiracism is challenging work so we must also use healing practices in real time.

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The Principles of Antiracism

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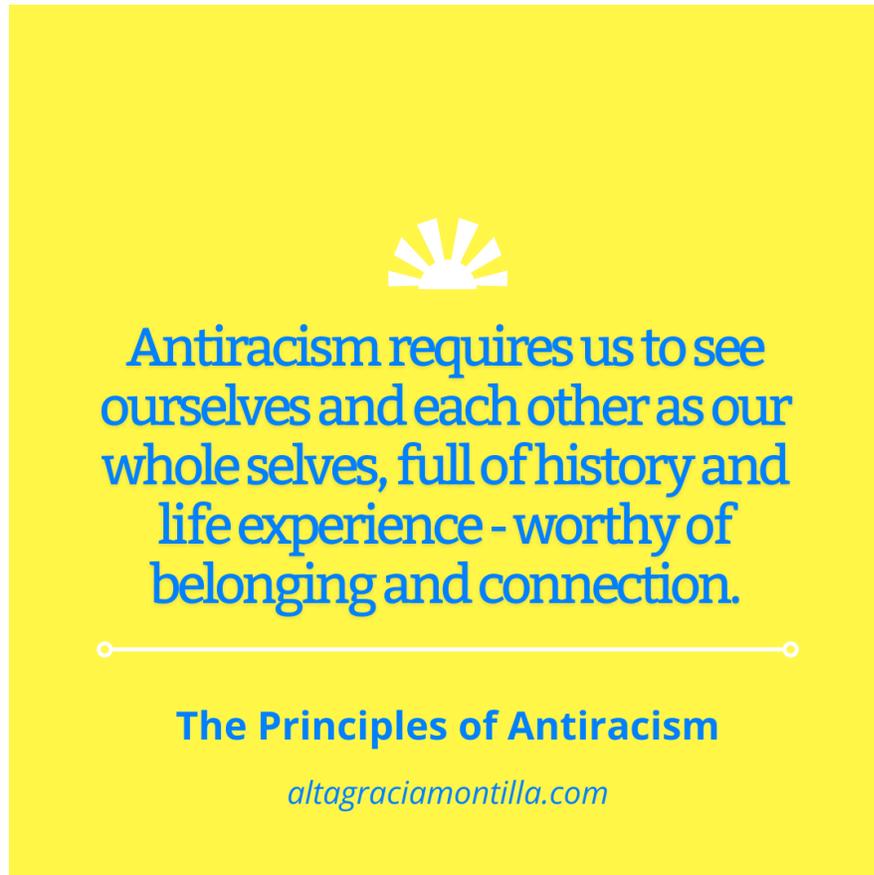
Believe in Critical Race Theory as a way of understanding the world and the effects of historical racism in modern life.

Critical Race Theory (CRT) provides a critical analysis of race and racism starting with the understanding that racism is ingrained in our society and existing power structures in our society are rooted in white supremacy culture. The intellectual movement behind the idea was started by legal scholars as a way to examine how laws and systems uphold and perpetuate inequality for traditionally marginalized groups. Today, CRT is used more generally to examine how institutional racism manifests in instances like housing segregation, bank lending, discriminatory labor practices and access to education. It has also helped to develop themes and language to address racism and inequality, such as white privilege, intersectionality and microaggressions, among others.

Isolate identities (e.g. race/ ethnicity) when exploring data.

Antiracism requires us to better understand the experiences of specific groups. In order to do this, we must isolate identities. An antiracist approach to data collection explores data across race/ ethnicity, gender, etc.

Racism is and always has been ingrained in our society and embedded in all of our nation's institutions so history is also a critical tool when evaluating data. Identifying and understanding the systems and narratives that were created in our nation to disempower specific communities, that created the internal realities our institutions and colleagues experience daily, are needed to thoughtfully, effectively, and carefully support change and each other.

Explore multiple truths existing simultaneously.

Rarely do any two or more people agree that an event happened exactly the same way or for exactly the same reasons. How things look always depends on where one sits and their perspective (which is informed by their identities, beliefs, aspirations, and past experiences) no two people have the same perspective. Does this mean that one is right and one is wrong, or that one is lying and one is telling the truth? Maybe, but if they are honest people with good intentions, they are probably both telling the truth *as they see it.* Similarly, two or more people can exist within the same team or organization and have largely different experiences based on where they sit and their perspective.

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The Principles of Antiracism

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Embrace conflict as normal parts of human relationships and a motor of change towards antiracism.

As we move towards antiracism we must expand our common understandings of conflict and confrontation. Historically, we've been socialized to fear or avoid conflict (conflict avoidance is a characteristic of White Supremacy Culture) which helps to maintain the status quo. Conflict is required for transformation to occur and be sustained. Conflict is an inherent part of interrupting patterns that maintain structural disadvantages. Given that racism is ingrained in our society, movement towards antiracism requires conflict with the status quo.

Move towards an organization or a society with a multiracial center.

Currently, American ideology, culture, institutions, structures, and systems center whiteness (a cultural, social construct not to be confused with white people). White normative culture occupies the center of our society, forcing other racial or cultural groups to the margins. Antiracism calls for the decentering of whiteness and ultimately the decentering of any one racial or cultural group instead centering a multiracial center. Multiracial communities include people from all racial/ cultural groups who are mainstream or at the community's "center".

In order to advance antiracism we must tap the well of our own collective imagination.

We must design alternatives to our current system that go beyond anything we may have seen or experienced before.

The Principles of Antiracism

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Seek leadership from and be accountable to those directly impacted.

Cultivate humility and take direction and leadership from those most affected by an issue. Those on the receiving end of inequity are forced to live with the consequences of efforts to address those injustices, they have the most to gain from victory — and the most to lose if something goes wrong. They're also best equipped to know, and to articulate, workable solutions to inequities. A campaign that ignores or minimizes their knowledge and voices could easily do more harm than good.

However, accountability is not the end-goal for antiracism; collaboration is the ultimate goal. Accountability challenges the traditional power dynamics and offers a pathway towards collaboration.

Dream.

Advancing towards antiracism can feel like trying to envision somewhere in advance of nowhere which is an extremely difficult task, yet it is a matter of great urgency. In order to advance antiracism we must tap the well of our own collective imagination. In other words, we must design alternatives to our current system that go beyond anything we may have seen or experienced before.

Be active.

"Anti" is inherently action-oriented, it is not passive. The antiracist actively voices opposition for racist views, comments, or actions.