

21 DAY EQUITY CHALLENGE

DAY 1: PERSONAL RACIAL IDENTITY

“Not seeing race does little to deconstruct racist structures or materially improve the conditions which people of color are subject to daily. In order to dismantle unjust, racist structures, we must see race. We must see who benefits from their race, who is disproportionately impacted by negative stereotypes about their race, and to who power and privilege is bestowed upon – earned or not – because of their race, their class, and their gender. Seeing race is essential to changing the system.” - Reni Eddo-Lodge

We cannot cease in confronting our country's history and relationship to identity. It is time for us to take a closer look at the inequities that are deeply rooted in our systems and institutions and work together to create an America where every individual has the opportunity to succeed, regardless of race, gender, sexuality, religion, and identity. Over the next 21 days, we will explore difficult topics, like structural racism, segregation, oppression, and privilege, to open up dialogue on how we can be champions of equity in our personal and professional lives.

Today's Challenge:

How do you think about your racial identity and its relevance to your work?

Identity matters. Who we think we are and who others think we are can have an influence on all aspects of our lives. Think about the first time you became aware of your racial identity. What is the first thing that comes to mind? Choose as many options as you'd like, and write down how you felt after reading or listening to learning resources below:

Option 1: [Listen to this Stateside episode with Eddie Moore, Jr., executive director of The Privilege Institute](#), about the White Privilege Conference in Grand Rapids creating a space for people to have “tough conversations.”

Option 2: Reference this document to [view how people of color develop their racial identity.](#)

Option 3: [Watch one or more of the short videos](#) and reflections from the New York Times on racial identity in America.

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DAY 2: UNDERSTANDING AND REFLECTING ON OUR BIAS

“Worse than being less than you, is if you are perceived as a threat” - [John A. Powell](#)

[We all have bias](#). But often, we are not aware of the biases that we subconsciously hold. Research shows that years of structural and cultural constructs have deeply embedded stereotypes into our culture, and consequently into our own subconscious. For example, [according to a recent study](#), companies are more than twice as likely to call minority applicants for interviews if they submit whitened resumes as candidates who reveal their race.

But, [research also shows](#) that we can actively rewire these neural associations by being more intentional about acknowledging our biases. Today’s focus is on personal reflection - taking the time to uncover some of our own biases and reflecting on how we take control of these unconscious constructs.

Today’s Challenge:

Option 1: Listen to the WEMU Washtenaw United radio [interview with Yodit Mesfin Johnson](#), United Way of Washtenaw County’s board chair, on the role implicit bias plays in our lives. She discusses how our biases impact equity and challenges some of her own biases.

Option 2: Go deeper and [take Project Implicit Hidden Bias tests](#), created by psychologists at top universities, to uncover some of your own unconscious biases. Remember, having biases doesn’t make you a bad person—it only makes you human. *TIP: Proceed as a guest to access their library of tests and find out your implicit associations about race, gender, sexual orientation, skin tone, and other topics.*

Option 3: Read one or more of the compelling personal stories featured in the Speak Up Handbook by the Southern Poverty Law Center. We would like to point you to page 19 titled ["What Can I do About My Own Bias?"](#) but feel free to use the table of contents on page 2 to explore other topics that interest you. You can also check out the [nine tactics to ensure your actions line up with your intentions](#).

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DAY 3: WHAT IS PRIVILEGE?

“For those of us called white, whiteness simply is. Whiteness becomes, for us, the unspoken, interrogated norm, taken for granted, much as water can be taken for granted by a fish.” — [Tim Wise](#), White Like Me

Privilege is the unearned social, political, economic, and psychological benefits of membership in a group that has institutional and structural power ([source](#)). There are many types of privilege that different groups have in the US. We commonly hear about privilege because of race or gender, but privilege also exists for different groups based on religion, sexuality, ability, class, education level. Read more about [5 common types of privilege](#).

Having privilege can give you advantages in life, but having privilege is not a guarantee of success.

Today’s Challenge:

Option 1: Take this eye-opening [privilege self-assessment](#) by BuzzFeed to discover where you are on the spectrum.

Option 2: Watch this short, powerful [Buzzfeed video featuring a privilege walk](#). See how privilege shows up differently for this group of co-workers. Note: this video may be triggering for some people of color.

Option 3: Watch this [video from Robin DiAngelo, author of White Fragility](#) about how racism isn't only individual acts of discrimination, it is a deeply embedded system that impacts all of our lives.

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DAY 4: TALKING ABOUT RACE IS CHALLENGING FOR SOME. HERE'S WHY.

Have you heard of the term “White Fragility?” For white people, “White Fragility” refers to their discomfort and avoidance of racially charged stress, which perpetuates racial inequity. Many people of color, multiracial, and Indigenous people are familiar with this concept, but may not be familiar with the term.

[Dr. Robin DiAngelo](#) describes white fragility as a state of being for white people in which even a minimum amount of racial stress becomes intolerable, triggering a range of defensive moves. These moves can include the outward display of emotions such as anger, fear, and guilt, and behaviors such as argumentation, silence, and

leaving the stress-inducing situation. These behaviors shut down conversations, and inhibit actions which, in turn, function to reinstate white racial equilibrium.

Today's Challenge:

Option 1: [Take a quick quiz](#) from the publisher of "White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk about Racism," Robin DiAngelo, PhD, to see if you exhibit "White Fragility" traits. Want to dive in further? [Read a short article](#) by Dr. DiAngelo that unpacks how we continue to reproduce racist outcomes and live segregated lives.

Option 2: [Listen to Stateside interview](#) with the Detroit Equity Action Lab about what white people can do about racism in America. The episode starts by asking the question 'What can white people do about racism in America?' to people walking around Ann Arbor and Northville.

Option 3: Review this list of [28 common racist attitudes](#) and behaviors that indicate a detour or wrong turn into white guilt, denial or defensiveness.

Option 4: Read about the experiences of overt racism in Northern Michigan from our [past elected officials](#) to [even this year](#).

21 DAY EQUITY CHALLENGE DAY 5: RACIAL SOCIALIZATION

Socialization is a process we all go through – it is how we develop values, habits and attitudes and learn to function in the world. Understanding the process of socialization can help us understand how we came to where we are in our views of race and racism as well as what we are willing and "able" to do to work for justice. [Watch this short video on "the culture cycle"](#) at play around race in society.

Today's Challenge:

Option 1: Consider [this model of socialization](#) and look at the different forces at play that reinforce attitudes and beliefs, and also at what can create new patterns.

Option 2: Look at the resources on the [RESilience website](#) and see what catches your interest.

Option 3: Listen to some of the [stories on the EmbraceRace website](#) that speak to how racial socialization shapes our individual and collective lives.

Option 4: Read about how racial socialization in Northern Michigan has impacted [current residents](#), [our children](#), [our businesses](#), and even our [big economy of tourism](#).

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DAY 6: LEVELS OF RACISM

“Americans believe in the reality of ‘race’ as a defined, indubitable feature of the natural world. Racism—the need to ascribe bone-deep features to people and then humiliate, reduce, and destroy them—inevitably follows from this inalterable condition. In this way, racism is rendered as the innocent daughter of Mother Nature, and one is left to deplore the Middle Passage or Trail of Tears the way one deplores an earthquake, a tornado, or any other phenomenon that can be cast as beyond the handiwork of men. But race is the child of racism, not the father.” - [Ta-Nehisi Coates](#)

As our first week comes to an end, we hope you have taken the opportunity to look inside yourself and expand your mind through the different challenges offered. As we move into week two, prepare to shift your focus from the personal reflection that we have been exploring to a broader view of racial equity and social justice.

Are you seeing and addressing how racism operates at different levels? [Dr. Camara Jones](#), Senior Fellow at the Morehouse School of Medicine, says that in order to address racism effectively, we have to understand how it operates at multiple levels. Often what people think of first and foremost is interpersonal racism. Only seeing this level means that we fail to see the full picture that keeps the system of racism in place.

Today’s Challenge:

OPTION 1: Check out this [short video from Race Forward](#) about the levels and the importance of looking at systemic, not simply individual, racism.

OPTION 2: Watch Dr. Jones’ TED talk on the [“Allegories on Race and Racism”](#) where she shares four short stories to help us understand privilege and racism.

OPTION 3: Read a [blog post by Cynthia Silva Parker](#), which gives an overview of four levels of racism and the need for a systemic approach to seeing and addressing oppression.

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DAY 7: OPPORTUNITY IN MICHIGAN

In Michigan, 63 percent of Black households are struggling to afford basic necessities like housing, child care, food, transportation, and technology, according [recently released 2018 ALICE data](#). These households, also known as ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) earn more than the Federal Poverty Level, but not enough to cover the basic cost of living, called the ALICE threshold, in their counties. The 63 percent of Black households falling below the ALICE Threshold was almost double that of white households-just 36 percent.

During the recovery from the Great Recession, the number of Black households under the ALICE Threshold in Michigan increased by eleven percent from 2010 to 2018, while the number of white households below the Threshold increased by only one percent. And since COVID 19, in households below the ALICE threshold is even greater. This means that a very large percentage of parents, especially Black parents have to make trade-offs between necessities like rent or stocking the refrigerator or going without healthcare as a parent to ensure that a child has access to preschool.

We know that where you live and where children are raised can have a strong influence on opportunity. We also know that when these factors are combined with race, people of color are disproportionately impacted. Over the next few days, we will be exploring how ALICE, race, and other factors impact a person's housing, health, education, financial stability, and more.

Today's Challenge:

Option 1: Check out the [ALICE Report for the State of Michigan](#) (based on 2017 data) and dig down further into your county.

Option 2: See this [NY Times article](#) debunking widely held beliefs about income inequality and exploring the disproportionate impact race has on boys.

Option 3: Read about [Raj Chetty](#), a Harvard economist committed to showing how zip code shapes opportunity. Dive into his research through the [Equality of Opportunity Project](#).

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DAY 8: SEGREGATION IN MICHIGAN

Institutional Racism is defined as “the systematic distribution of resources, power and opportunity in our society to the benefit of people who are white and the exclusion of people of color.” -- [Solid Ground](#)

When you hear the word segregation, what do you think of? Many of us think back to the Civil Rights Movement. Yet, American cities continue to be highly segregated. Using U.S. Census Bureau data, [Governing Magazine](#) found Detroit ranks as the fourth-most segregated metro area in the nation, and Michigan cities such as Grand Rapids and Lansing also have a high rate of segregation in housing.

Present-day racism was built on a long history of racially distributed resources and ideas that shape our view of ourselves and others. It is a hierarchical system that comes with a broad range of policies and institutions that keep it in place. Policies shaped by institutional racism that enforce segregation include redlining, predatory lending, the exclusion of veterans from the G.I. bill, and the forced segregation of neighborhoods by the Federal Housing Authority. As a result of institutional racism, racial stratification and inequities persist in employment, housing, education, healthcare, government and other sectors. ([Source](#))

Today’s Challenge:

Option 1: Explore the [Racial Dot Map](#) created by the University of Virginia, which uses colored dots to visualize how racial segregation appears in our communities. We encourage you to zoom into Michigan and your county to see how it plays out in our backyard. Read more about the methodology [here](#).

Option 2: Why are cities still so segregated? Watch this quick video where [NPR’s Code Switch](#) looks at the factors contributing to modern day segregation.

Option 3: Fifty years after Martin Luther King Jr.’s death, our nation is still divided. Read more from [The Economist](#) about how segregation exists today in cities across America and the costly impact it has on the future of our communities.

21 DAY EQUITY CHALLENGE DAY 9: HOUSING INEQUITY

You may be wondering what housing has to do with racial equity. The reality is that housing affordability and who experiences homelessness is largely influenced by our country’s history of racism. According to the [Center for American Progress 2019](#)

[article](#), How America’s Housing System Undermines Wealth Building in Communities of Color, “For centuries, structural racism in the U.S. housing system has contributed to stark and persistent racial disparities in wealth and financial well-being, especially between Black and white households.”

Today’s Challenge:

Option 1: Watch this 5-minute [video from the Urban Institute exposing how housing discrimination](#) against racial and ethnic minorities occurs today.

Option 2: Read this brief article from the National League of Cities [Embedding Racial Equity in Housing](#).

Option 3: Learn from this thought panel conversation hosted by the Atlantic – [Discrimination in Housing Laws + What Needs to Change](#).

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DAY 10: HOW YOUR RACE AFFECTS YOUR HEALTH

You may have heard about the wealth gap, but have you heard about the wealth-health gap? According to the NY Times 1619 Project, “[racial health disparities are foundational as democracy itself](#).”

Socioeconomic status and institutional racism lead to disparities across living conditions, limit access to quality health care, and contribute to chronic stress. The factors lead to shorter life spans and higher likelihood of adverse health outcomes for people living in poverty and people of color.

Healthcare costs also make up a significant portion of a household’s annual budget, placing additional stress on families that may or may not have insurance and access to quality care. In developing the [2019 ALICE Report](#), the most significant driver of increases in the Household Survival Budget from 2010 to 2017 was health care costs, including an average 59 percent increase in out-of-pocket costs.

Today’s Challenge:

Option 1: Hear Dr. Camara Phyllis Jones explain social determinants of health through her [analogy of the “cliff of good health”](#) in a video collaboration with the Urban Institute.

Option 2: [Watch David. R Williams, a public health sociologist, on the TED stage](#) discuss why race and deep-rooted systemic racism have such a profound impact on health.

Option 3: Check out this [Fact Sheet from the American Psychological Association](#) exploring the compounding impact of socioeconomic status and race on health.

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DAY 11: Environmental Justice

Despite wanting the best for their families, people with limited means are often less geographically mobile, and have fewer affordable choices when deciding where to live. And often, their voices are not heard in society's decision making process. This has led to residents with low incomes, and often also people of color, living in areas with high rates of air and water pollution, such as in industrial areas, near highways, or in close proximity to toxic waste sites.

Studies have shown that people are exposed to more pollutants than white people. Pollution and particulate matter exposure have been linked to asthma, low birth weights, high blood pressure, and other adverse health outcomes. This is environmental racism.

Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha, an Associate Professor at Michigan State University, used science to prove that children in Flint were exposed to lead and went public with her findings to bring light to the crisis. Her book, [What the Eyes Don't See](#) is her first-hand account of how the crisis unfolded. [Watch her TEDMED talk to learn more.](#)

Today's Challenge:

Option 1: Read The [Atlantic's coverage](#) of the EPA National Center for Environmental Assessment's 2018 report that showed how people of color are more likely to experience exposure to pollutants.

Option 2: [Have you heard of environmental racism? Watch this 3-minute video](#) on how numerous systemic issues contribute to differences in exposure to potentially harmful environmental conditions.

Option 3: Check out the [Principles of Environmental Justice](#) developed at the National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit with help from Dr. Dorceta E. Taylor, University of Michigan professor and Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion for The School for Environment and Sustainability.

Option 4: Listen to [Mustafa Santiago Ali](#), former EPA staffer on why marginalized communities deserve a voice in environmental policy.

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DAY 12: The Wealth Gap and Financial Stability

According to the U.S. Federal Reserve, White households have a median net worth that is almost 10X higher than that of Black Households. To create an economy that works for all of us, we need to understand and address racial wealth inequality.

[Prosperity NOW](#) notes only half of Americans realize that there is a wide gap in financial well-being between white households and households of color. Even among those who do recognize the racial economic inequality, there is a widespread misconception that the problem is only based on income. The problem is much deeper than that: when we consider wealth, the financial capital families need to expand their economic opportunity and agency, the disparity facing households of color grows even larger.

Today's Challenge:

Option 1: Interested in seeing how the disparity developed over our nation's history? Watch Netflix, [The Racial Wealth Gap Explained](#) . Reflect on what you watched and acknowledge any new information.

Option 2: Take a look at [Asset Types Held by Race](#), by Jenna Ross, Visual Capitalist. Reflect on the asset types held by the race you identify with and those of other race identity groups.

Option 3: See how your selected city or region is doing on several key equity indicators and how inequity threatens economic prosperity - [National Equity Atlas](#) . Reflect on how you see key indicators showing up in your community and the impact it has on your own economic prosperity. Consider how equitable economic prosperity benefits you. Consider the systemic interconnections; equal distribution of wealth and power leads to greater sense of community, aligned community values, decrease in crime, increase in property values, desirable place to live, work, and grow, fewer gaps to fill, lower taxes, economic prosperity for all.

Option 4: Michigan payday lenders disproportionately place their businesses in communities of color, rural areas, and low-income areas. See this [2018 report from the Center for Responsible Lending](#) which looks into how these businesses are targeting vulnerable customers. Reflect on how many payday lenders are in your community, where they are located, and to whom they market and attract.

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DAY 13: Behind the Starting Line: Racialized Outcomes in Early Childhood

“We must acknowledge the broader diversity in and of the African American experience and celebrate that all Black children are born geniuses. Black students continue to pursue educational excellence despite the many unnecessary obstacles they face due to constructions and perceptions of race, class, gender, and sexual orientations in America.” — [David J. Johns](#)

From infancy through high school, children's educational outcomes are dependent on the quality of their early learning experience. Quality early childhood education, in particular, has been shown to have a significant positive effect on future success, because brain circuits are developing actively then. In fact, [85% of the brain's development happens before a child enters kindergarten](#). Inequities in education start early with lifelong impacts on children and communities. This gap in opportunity is not due to individual actions, but rather on present social and economic conditions.

High quality childcare is costly – [an average married couple in Michigan spends 22% of their annual income on childcare](#). Reflect back on Day 12 and consider how the high cost of care acts as a barrier to a family living in poverty's access to high quality programs for their children. Researchers have found that “the persistence of the educational achievement gap imposes on the United States the economic equivalent of a permanent national recession” ([McKinsey & Company 2009, 6](#)).

Today's Challenge:

Option 1: Watch this [2-minute CBS News report](#) on how systemic racism persists in early childhood education, where Black preschool students are disproportionately facing harsh punishments, like suspension. Reflect on your (or your child) earliest education experience and what you observed (or believed) was happening to Black Classmates.

Option 2: Read this [U.S. News article](#) on how 'Education Inequality Starts Early' for children in households with low incomes.

Option 3: Watch [Recognizing Bias and Promoting Equity in Early Childhood Settings](#), National Association for the Education of Young Children. Explore and compare your biases prior to watching this, and how any potential differences will shape your personal or professional purpose.

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DAY 14: Education and School-Aged Children

Earlier in the Challenge, we explored how segregation persists in American communities. Our economically and racially divided neighborhoods are leading to inequitable educational environments and adverse academic outcomes for our youth. [Studies show that children from families with low incomes](#) enter high school with literacy skills 5 years behind and are over 4 times more likely to drop out than those from high-income families. Students of color, who are more likely to attend under resourced schools than their white counterparts, suffer because of teachers working in under-resourced school environments and large classes sizes, which when controlling for socioeconomic status, almost entirely explain [disparities in academic achievement](#) according to Brookings.

Today's Challenge:

Option 1: Check out this [interactive database to examine racial disparities in educational opportunities and school discipline](#). Reflect on your education experiences, and the disciplinary actions taken for your (or your child) Black peers. How did this shape your ideas about Black people?

Option 2: Watch [Boston teacher Kandice Sumner on the TED stage](#) discuss the disparities she sees in her classroom every day because of segregation in our school systems. Reflect on the disparities that impact learning in your local schools due to segregation. Identify your local community resources that are working to address the disparities. Is there a way for you to help magnify their efforts?

Option 3: Michigan is in the bottom ten states for African American Students in early literacy and eighth-grade math, [Review 2020 Michigan Achieves! Indicators](#) (page 25) in 2020 State of Michigan Education Report, Education Trust-Midwest. Explore options within the workforce for people with a significantly limited education. Reflect on the terms “lazy” and “undereducated” as you explore.

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DAY 15: Adverse Childhood Experiences

[Adverse Childhood Experiences](#), or ACEs, have a tremendous impact on lifelong health and opportunity. ACEs can include things like physical and emotional abuse, neglect, caregiver mental illness, and household violence. The more ACEs a child

experiences, the more likely he or she is to suffer from things like heart disease and diabetes, poor academic achievement, and substance abuse later in life.

Disturbingly, [Black and Hispanic children and youth in almost all regions of the United States are more likely to experience ACEs than their white and Asian peers](#). To some extent, these racial disparities reflect the lasting effects of inequitable policies, practices, and social norms. Discriminatory housing and employment policies, bias in law enforcement and sentencing decisions, and immigration policies have concentrated disadvantage among Black and Hispanic children, in particular, and leave them disproportionately vulnerable to traumatic experiences like ACEs.

Today's Challenge:

Option 1: [Assess your ACEs score](#) to see how childhood trauma may be impacting your life. Then, assess your resilience score and explore resources on how to support yourself and others by [building resilience](#). Consider reading [My Grandmother's Hands](#) and reflect on how trauma has shaped your responses to inequity.

Option 2: See [Pediatrician Nadine Burke Harris on the TED stage](#) explain how the repeated stress of abuse, neglect and parents struggling with mental health or substance abuse issues has real, tangible effects on the development of the brain. Reflect on your own coping skills during the most difficult time in your life experience, and any privilege that may have helped you cope. Consider how different the outcome may have been without that privilege.

Option 3: Watch the [Michigan ACE Initiative video](#) to learn about statewide ACEs awareness, interventions and recommended state policy. Explore ways you can help magnify their work.

21 DAY EQUITY CHALLENGE

DAY 16: Equity and the LGBTQI+ Community

Imagine not feeling accepted at home, in your community or at school because of your gender identity or sexual orientation. Like race and socioeconomic status, inequities for people identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBTQI+) can be seen across many dimensions, including healthcare, education, and in the workplace. Research from the [American Progress Institute](#) shows that LGBTQI+ individuals experience widespread discrimination, often manifesting itself as getting passed over for promotions, being bullied in schools, being refused healthcare, or being denied equal treatment at a store or hotel.

The intersectionality of race and sexual orientation and gender identity also has compounding effects on individuals' well-being: [Black transgender and gender non-](#)

[conforming individuals experience some of the highest levels of discrimination](#) and threats on their personal safety.

Today's Challenge:

Option 1: Watch [this quick video to learn why](#) using correct pronouns is so important. Add your pronouns to your email signature, to show your advocacy for LGBTQI+ individuals.

Option 2: Watch Ashlee Marie Preston on the [TEDx stage discuss effective allyship](#) and intersectionality from her perspective as a Black transgender woman. She discusses when and how to speak up, and what it truly means to be an ally. Reflect on times you've shown up as an ally or been supported by an ally. How can you contribute to more of such experiences?

Option 3: Read this [article exploring how schools are struggling to support LGBT students](#) and how we can work to create safe spaces for youth to thrive. Explore how you can support LGBT students in your school district to thrive.

21 DAY EQUITY CHALLENGE

DAY 17: Building a Race Equity Culture

“And I saw that what divided me from the world was not anything intrinsic to us but the actual injury done by people intent on naming us, intent on believing that what they have named us matters more than anything we could ever actually do.” - [Ta-Nahesi Coates](#).

Every day in the workplace, individuals face challenges being their authentic selves. As leaders and colleagues, we each have a role to play in creating inclusive workspaces. Diverse perspectives enrich our workplaces, and [studies are showing](#) that involving diverse voices improves performance, problem solving and decision making. Yet, [people of color and women are underrepresented](#) in C-Suite, upper management, and Board roles compared to their representation in the overall working population. The culture of an organization provides insight into the racial dynamics and racial equity/parity within the organization. Today we will focus on how you can create a race equity culture at work.

Today's Challenge:

Option 1: Read the Building a Race Equity Culture in the Social Sector [2-pager](#) or download the full report entitled [Awake to Woke to Work: Building a Race Equity Culture](#) to learn from one or both of these excerpts: the explanation of dominant culture in the context of building a race equity culture, found in the box on top of page

10, the two-page executive summary on pages 2-3. Explore ways you can help build a race equity culture in your organization, neighborhood, and/or community.

Option 2: Listen to this podcast featuring Harvard Business Review co-hosts Alison Beard and Dan McGinn responding to some [common challenges faced by businesses in promoting diversity and inclusion](#) in their workplace (transcript included). Explore ways to help support your organizational leadership to promote diversity and inclusion.

Option 3: Get comfortable with words and language to engage in more inclusive and respectful dialogue – learn from Racial Equity Tools' new [Glossary of Racial Equity Terms](#). Examine which terms you may have been using that need to be replaced with more appropriate racial equity terms.

Option 4: Take courage by knowing you are not alone, watch this [3-minute video](#) shedding light on common struggles people face bringing their authentic selves to the workplace. Reflect on struggles your colleagues (family or friend group) may be facing in bringing their authentic selves into space with you. Explore ways you contribute to this phenomenon.

Option 5: If you are connected to an organization, consider joining the [Michigan Roundtable for Diversity and Inclusion](#), which is dedicated to confronting and undoing systemic racism impacting local communities and the state of Michigan.

21 DAY EQUITY CHALLENGE

DAY 18: Being an Ally

“The Circle of Human Concern should include everyone, including those with whom we disagree,” he said. “We are all a part of each other. We don't like it, but we're connected.” - [john a. powell](#)

In a time when it feels like the world is becoming increasingly polarizing, john a. powell asks, “How can we build bridges?” In his keynote at the [Othering & Belonging Conference](#), he says “We must hear other people's suffering and stories. Compassion means to suffer with others.”

What does it mean to be an ally? An ally seeks to understand what it feels like for another person or group to be oppressed, and despite knowing you will never fully understand how it feels, is committed to valuing and supporting people who are marginalized. Remember, being an ally is not an identity, it is a continual process – something that you have to work at, be intentional about, and commit to day in and day out. Explore what active support looks like as an ally in [Race Equity Tools' Guidelines for Being a Strong White Ally](#).

Today's Challenge:

Option 1: Read the [Do's and Don'ts of Allyship](#) that are important to know as you practice and evolve your role in supporting equity and inclusion. Explore the do's and don'ts you've perpetuated as an ally (or experienced from an ally) in support of equity and inclusion. What may change for you moving forward?

Option 2: Listen to NPR's Code Switch explore the complexities of allyship on this [30-minute podcast](#). Explore how you feel after listening to the podcast. How can you improve your allyship or support allies?

Option 3: Read about how to be a better [ally in the workplace](#). Looking for a place to start? Take time to really listen to the experiences of those around you.

Option 4: Listen to this podcast discussing the [Allyship Continuum](#) and how you can go from unaware to accomplice. Explore where you are along the continuum in contrast to where you want to be.

Option 5: Go further and [learn more about the important difference between an Ally vs. Accomplice](#) in this piece published by [Medium](#).

21 DAY EQUITY CHALLENGE

DAY 19: Tools for the Racial Equity Change Process

Over the past 19 days, we have learned how racial inequities permeate our communities on individual, institutional and systemic levels. We are all impacted by the system of racism in our country and therefore all responsible for dismantling the structures that allow it to persist. [To be antiracist is a radical choice in the face of history](#). But change is possible and there are many tools we can employ as individuals and organizations to drive individual and community transformation.

We will highlight a few of these tools below, but encourage you to explore [Racial Equity Tools](#), a comprehensive site of resources designed to support learning, planning, acting, and evaluating efforts to achieve racial equity.

Creating equitable outcomes also requires that we change the way we talk about members of our community, focusing on their aspirations rather than their challenges. In practice, this is called asset-framing and uses narratives to change the unconscious associations ingrained in our society. The opposite practice of deficit-framing, or defining people by their challenges, encourages continued stigmatization of groups of individuals.

Today's Challenge:

Option 1: Learn more about how the [Skillman Foundation](#) is using asset-framing in their work with Detroit Children, and watch videos from Trabian Shorters, founder and CEO of BMe Community, discuss how to put asset-framing into practice.

Option 2: Work to become antiracist – learn from [Ibram Kendi](#) . Reflect on how you feel after reading. Explore what the reading taught you.

Option 3: One of the best ways to continue to build empathy and learn about race is to start a conversation. [Read Race Forward's 10 Ways to Start a Conversation About Race](#) , then start a conversation with friends, family, school and work colleagues.

Option 4: If you have children in your life it's never too early to begin talking about race. Explore the many resources provided by [Embrace Race](#) to start the conversation with children and youth.

Option 5: Read about the [resolutions passing](#) now in Northern Michigan as we make strides away from racism.

21 DAY EQUITY CHALLENGE

DAY 20: Final Reflections

Today's challenge is to take time to reflect on your experience. Research shows that a critical component to learning is taking time to reflect or being intentional about processing the lessons being taught by your experiences.

Today's Challenge:

Reflection Questions:

What are my identities and in what ways have my identities impacted my life? Are there identities of mine that have provided me higher social capital or privilege in certain environments, or vice versa?

What were some of my assumptions about race and racial inequity before I started this 21-day challenge? In what ways have these assumptions been challenged? In what ways have they been reinforced?

Where have I seen evidence of inequities and systemic and structural racism in my community?

What two to three shifts, changes or actions, can I take to create a more inclusive and equitable environment in my home, workplace, and community?

As you prepare to complete the 21-Day Equity Challenge, we encourage you to write down a goal you have moving forward. Research shows that when you write down your goals, you are more likely to commit to them and achieve them.

21 DAY EQUITY CHALLENGE

DAY 21: Take Action in Your Community

Congratulations on completing the Equity Challenge with The United Way of Northwest Michigan and Northern Michigan E3. We are incredibly thankful you have come along on this journey and made time to learn and reflect on topics of equity. We know these conversations and the feelings they evoke are not always easy but making more space for brave dialogue is one of many steps we can take towards achieving equity. We challenge each of you to share a reflection on your experience with a family member, friend or co-worker to continue the momentum from this challenge.

Today's Challenge:

Option 1: Lend a hand by volunteering in your community. Find an in-person or virtual volunteer opportunity or nonprofit service project that fits your schedule and interest by visiting UWNWMI's [Get Connected volunteer center](#), by calling 2-1-1, or by visiting [Catchafire.org](#)

Option 2: [Take action on a civil rights issue](#) that you care about through the ACLU of Michigan.

Option 3: Explore the Michigan Department of Civil Rights – [Racial Equity Toolkit and identify an action to take](#) in your community or organization.

Option 4: Exercise your right to vote and help others to do the same. [Register to vote here](#), [request ballot to vote absentee here](#), and [sign up to be an election worker here](#).

Option 5: [Connect with a local chapter of Showing up for Racial Justice](#), a national network of groups and individuals working to undermine white supremacy and to work for racial justice.

Option 6: [Commit your time and talent to Michigan United](#), which organizes to build the power communities need to win the justice they deserve.

Option 7: Do better. Many white people do not get involved in the work of racial justice because they do not know where to begin or how to use their voice to promote equity. Please read and challenge yourself to take a few of the actions in this article from Medium, "[100 Things White People Can Do for Racial Justice](#)". It is going to take all of us to dismantle racism. Today, make the choice to use your voice in support of those who are rarely heard.