

A's

Now. New. Next

Talent & The Future of Work

2 Building an Anti-Racist Organization



TABLE OF CONTENTS

TEAR SHEET	03
WHAT BEING ANTI-RACIST MEANS	05
TAKING ACTION WHEN YOU SEE SOMETHING	06
BEING AN ANTI-RACIST ORGANIZATION	08
WHY IS ANTI-RACISM THE GOAL?	09
10 LESSONS FOR TALKING ABOUT RACE	11
GLOSSARY AND RESOURCES	16

Edition Two: Building an Anti-Racist Organization

TEAR SHEET

- Being Anti-Racist requires persistent self-awareness, constant self-criticism, and regular self-examination.
- Addressing structural racism is one of the toughest jobs that any leader in the organization can face. Although the reasons are complex, the major difficulty stems from a lack of common understanding about what structural racism is.
- Anti-Racist strategies also include confronting the racial microaggression by outwardly challenging and disagreeing with the microaggression that harms a person of color. Micro-interventions such as a verbal expression of "I don't want to hear that talk." and physical movements of disapproval are ways to confront microaggressions.
- The "Anti-Racist" organization is accountable to the communities their mission serves rather than a Board, staff, and funders. The organization is also physically located in an area that is accessible to the community it serves — either by public transportation or by foot. Its members are from the community it serves, and their voices are uplifted and seriously taken into consideration. The culture of the "Anti-Racist" organization no longer reflects White-centric work culture.
- Conversations addressing Anti-Racism need to be happening at workplaces on a regular basis and together as a group. Start meeting and keep meeting about Anti-Racism practices in your organization. Set aside time, every other week or once a month, to engage as a group with the same materials as learning and discussing are a central part of this work.
- Anti-Racism work needs to happen at all levels of an organization, but the tone should be set from the top. Leaders need to take an active role in both acknowledging where they have fallen short and visibly doing the work to learn and improve.
- Lead with shared values: justice, opportunity, community, and equity.
- While White people in particular need Anti-Racism resources and messaging that brings them into conversations about racism, there exists uncertainty or inexperience in other groups when it comes to talking about, for instance, anti-Black racism, stereotypes around Indigenous communities, or anti-immigrant sentiments that are highly racialized. In strategizing about audience, the goal should be to both energize the base and persuade the undecided.
- Embrace and communicate our racial and ethnic diversity while decentering whiteness as a lens and central frame.

CALLING OUT AN ACT OF DISCRIMINATION IS EMPOWERING



NOW. NEW. NEXT - TALENT & THE FUTURE OF WORK

A's

AN UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT BEING ANTI-RACIST MEANS

“BEING AN ANTI-RACIST REQUIRES PERSISTENT SELF-AWARENESS, CONSTANT SELF-CRITICISM, AND REGULAR SELF-EXAMINATION.”

- Ibram X Kendi

Where racism addresses the question of “what is wrong with people”, anti-racism asks a different, better question: *What is wrong with the policies?* In a society set up to support White-body privilege, the inherent social structure of that society’s institutions will naturally reflect bias unless there is deliberate action to counteract that bias.

Leaders, Boards, Managers and Supervisors must be taught to recognize that contemporary forms of racism exist and become familiar with the various forms that it takes in the lives of staff and clients. They must become vigilant in learning and identifying what those issues are and how they are perpetuated in the organization’s policies, practices, and procedures.

THE ROLE OF SENIOR LEADERSHIP.

Addressing structural racism is one of the toughest jobs that any leader in the organization can face. Although the reasons are complex, the major difficulty stems from a lack of common understanding about what structural racism is.

Prior to the perfect storm of the pandemic, police murders and racial unrest, White people viewed racism as individual acts of meanness and considered any discussion of racism in institutions as a personal affront.

When people of color experience racial microaggressions, it causes harm to their mental and physical health which can lead to many negative consequences in a work environment, learning environment, and to their overall sense of self-worth. Anti-racism work combats microaggressions and helps to break systemic racism by focusing on actions against discrimination and oppression.

Standing up against discrimination can be an overwhelming task for people of color who have been previously targeted. White allies and bystanders are people who can help victims of racial discrimination.

TAKING ACTION WHEN YOU SEE OR HEAR SOMETHING

ANTIRACIST MICRO INTERVENTIONS CAN BE A TOOL USED TO ACT AGAINST RACIAL DISCRIMINATION.

Microaggressions can be conscious acts where the perpetrator is aware of their racist actions or microaggressions can be hidden and metacommunicated without the perpetrator's awareness. Regardless of whether microaggressions are conscious or unconscious behaviors, the first antiracist intervention is to name the ways it is harmful for a person of color.


CALLING OUT AN ACT OF DISCRIMINATION CAN BE EMPOWERING BECAUSE IT PROVIDES LANGUAGE FOR PEOPLE OF COLOR TO BRING AWARENESS TO THEIR LIVED EXPERIENCES AND JUSTIFIES INTERNAL FEELINGS OF DISCRIMINATION.

Anti-Racist strategies also include confronting the racial microaggression by outwardly challenging and disagreeing with the microaggression that harms a person of color. Micro-interventions such as a verbal expression of "I don't want to hear that talk." and physical movements of disapproval are ways to confront microaggressions.

Micro-interventions are not used to attack others about their biases, but instead they are used to allow the space for an educational dialogue.

Educating a perpetrator on their biases can open a discussion about how the intention of a comment or action can have a damaging impact. For example, phrases such as "I know you meant that joke to be funny, but that stereotype really hurt me." can educate a person on the difference between what was intended and how it is harmful to a person of color.

Anti-Racist micro-intervention strategies give the tools for people of color, White allies, and bystanders to combat against microaggressions and acts of discrimination.



ANTI-RACISM IS THE
COMMITMENT TO FIGHT
RACISM WHEREVER YOU
FIND IT, INCLUDING IN
YOURSELF

BEING AN ANTI-RACIST ORGANIZATION

Organizations that fit into the “Anti-Racist” category are characterized as follows:

“The Anti-Racist Organization helps people of color become more empowered through taking leadership, sharing in the power, transforming the organizational norms and culture, challenging White allies and other people of color, sharing in decisions about how the organizations resources will be spent, what work gets done as well as how it gets done, the setting of priorities, and allowing people of color to make the same mistakes as White people.

The organization does this by forming White and people of color caucuses, providing training and encouraging discussions about racism, White privilege, power, and accountability, setting clear standards for inclusion at all levels of the organization, reviewing the mission, vision, policies, procedures, board agreements, etc. to insure that the commitment to end racism is a consistent theme, helping people to understand the links between the oppressions, and devoting organizational time and resources to building relationships across race and other barriers.”

- *Western States Center Anti-Racist Organizational Development Resource Book*

THE ANTI-RACIST ORGANIZATION’S DIVERSITY EFFORTS GO BEYOND THE TOKENISM FOUND IN THE “MULTI-CULTURAL” AND “TOKEN” ORGANIZATIONS. RATHER, PEOPLE OF COLOR HOLD SOME OF THE MOST POWERFUL POSITIONS AND ARE INVOLVED AT ALL LEVELS OF THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS. PEOPLE OF COLOR AND WHITE PEOPLE ARE PAID FAIRLY AND EQUITABLY.

The “Anti-Racist” organization is accountable to the communities their mission serves rather than a Board, staff, and funders. The organization is also physically located in an area that is accessible to the community it serves — either by public transportation or by foot. Its members are from the community it serves, and their voices are uplifted and seriously taken into consideration. The culture of the “Anti-Racist” organization no longer reflects White-centric work culture. A variety of work styles are fostered, and an emphasis is placed not on how work gets done, but what work gets done. Unlike the “Multi-Cultural” organization, the “Anti-Racist” organization is willing to identify and address racism within the organization.

WHY IS ANTI-RACISM THE GOAL?

The Anti-Racist organization allows diverse viewpoints to proliferate and puts all staff on an equal footing.

This ensures that they do their best work in a welcoming and justice-oriented environment. When staff and members of all backgrounds are uplifted, the organization will thrive and meet the goals of its mission more effectively. When we genuinely listen to the feedback of the communities we serve and compensate them for their time and insight, trust is built, and we become more capable of meeting the community's needs. If we do not aim to eliminate racism within our own organizations, we will not be able to eradicate it on the larger scale.

HAVE CONSISTENT CONVERSATIONS ABOUT ANTI-RACISM: Conversations addressing Anti-Racism need to be happening at workplaces on a regular basis and together as a group. Start meeting and keep meeting about Anti-Racism practices in your organization. Set aside time, every other week or once a month, to engage as a group with the same materials as learning and discussing are a central part of this work.

AUDIT YOUR POLICIES:


Do an audit of your policies and assess if policies are reinforcing the marginalization of any group. This may include dress codes, lack of pay equity, or hiring practices that favor one group over another. Policies can also be related to how decisions are made and how team members communicate with one another. Evaluate how your meetings allow different opinions, ideas or feelings to be voiced, or not, and then take action to create safe and welcoming spaces. Encouraging diversity cannot stop at hiring because organizations need to create environments where people can show up with their full humanity recognized every single day. Without this important aspect of organizational policy and culture, adjusting hiring practices will not make meaningful change for inclusion.

CREATE METRICS AND HOLD YOUR ORGANIZATION ACCOUNTABLE:

Every organization has business goals and metrics they strive to achieve. Diversity, equity, and inclusion should be included in those key goals and as such should be attached to metrics that define success. It's not enough to say, 'We are committed to Anti-Racism' – the organization must live it. That means clear numbers, benchmarks, and metrics.

SET THE TONE AS LEADERS:

Anti-Racism work needs to happen at all levels of an organization, but the tone should be set from the top. Leaders need to take an active role in both acknowledging where they have fallen short and visibly doing the work to learn and improve.

A grayscale photograph of a woman with her hair in a bun, wearing glasses and a white sleeveless top with a black bow at the neck. She is sitting at a desk, looking at a computer monitor. The background is a blurred office space with shelves and papers.

THE GOAL OF ANTI-
RACIST WORK IS TO
WIDEN THE CIRCLE OF
POWER AND
OPPORTUNITY

10 LESSONS FOR TALKING ABOUT RACE, RACISM, AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

As we strive to improve conversations about race, racism, and racial justice in this country, the environment in which we're speaking seems to be constantly shifting as these conversations are more important than ever. Here is a starting point for moving discussions on race, racism and social justice forward. Please note that while there are many reasons to communicate with various audiences about racial justice issues, there are many times when people need to communicate their anger, frustration, and pain to the world and to speak truth to power. Doing so may not always be persuasive, but that obviously doesn't make it any less important.

1. LEAD WITH SHARED VALUES: JUSTICE, OPPORTUNITY, COMMUNITY, AND EQUITY.

Starting with values that matter to your employees can help people to "hear" your messages more effectively than dry facts or emotional rhetoric. Encouraging people to think about shared values encourages aspirational, hopeful thinking. When possible, this can be a better place to start when entering tough conversations than a place of fear or anxiety.

2. USE VALUES AS A BRIDGE, NOT A BYPASS.

Opening conversations with shared values helps to emphasize society's role in affording a fair chance to everyone. But starting conversations here does not mean avoiding discussions of race. Begin by bridging from shared values to the roles of racial equity and inclusion in fulfilling those values for all. Doing so can move audiences into a frame of mind that is more solution-oriented and less mired in skepticism about the continued existence of discrimination or our ability to do anything about it.

3. KNOW THE COUNTER NARRATIVES.

Some themes consistently emerge in conversations about race, particularly from those who do not want to talk about unequal opportunity or the existence of racism. While we all likely feel like we know these narratives well, it's still important to examine them and to observe how they evolve and change. The point in doing this is not to argue against each theme point by point, but to understand what stories are happening in people's heads when we try to start a productive conversation. A few common themes include:

- The idea that racism is "largely" over or dying out over time.
- People of color are obsessed with race.
- Alleging discrimination is itself racist and divisive.
- Claiming discrimination is "playing the race card," opportunistic, hypocritical demagoguery.
- Civil rights are a crutch for those who lack merit or drive.
- If we can address class inequality, racial inequity will take care of itself.
- Racism will always be with us, so it's a waste of time to talk about it.

4. TALK ABOUT THE SYSTEMIC OBSTACLES TO EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND EQUAL JUSTICE.

Too often our culture views social problems through an individual lens – what did a person do to “deserve” his or her specific condition or circumstance? But we know that history, policies, culture and many other factors beyond individual choices have led to where we are today. When we’re hoping to show the existence of discrimination or racism by pointing out racially unequal conditions, it’s particularly important to tell a full story that links cause (history) and effect (outcome). Without this important link, some audiences can walk away believing that our health care, criminal justice or educational systems work fine and therefore differing outcomes exist because BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and/or People of Color) are doing something wrong.

5. BE RIGOROUSLY SOLUTION-ORIENTED AND FORWARD-LOOKING.

After laying the groundwork for how the problem has developed, it’s key to move quickly to solutions. Some people who understand that unequal opportunity exists may also believe that nothing can be done about it, leading to “compassion fatigue” and inaction. Wherever possible, link a description of the problem to a clear, positive solution and action, and point out who is responsible for taking that action.

6. CONSIDER AUDIENCE AND GOALS.

In any communications persuasion strategy, we should recognize that different audiences need different messages and different resources. In engaging on topics around race, racism, and racial justice, this is particularly important. We all know that people throughout the country are in very different places when it comes to their understanding of racial justice issues and their willingness to talk about them. While White people in particular need Anti-Racism resources and messaging that brings them into conversations about racism, there exists uncertainty or inexperience in other groups when it comes to talking about, for instance, anti-Black racism, stereotypes around Indigenous communities, or anti-immigrant sentiments that are highly racialized. In strategizing about audience, the goal should be to both energize the base and persuade the undecided.

“AT BEST, WHITE PEOPLE HAVE BEEN TAUGHT NOT TO MENTION THAT PEOPLE OF COLOR ARE ‘DIFFERENT’ IN CASE IT OFFENDS THEM. THEY TRULY BELIEVE THAT THE EXPERIENCES OF THEIR LIFE AS A RESULT OF THEIR SKIN COLOR CAN AND SHOULD BE UNIVERSAL. THEY’VE NEVER HAD TO THINK ABOUT WHAT IT MEANS, IN POWER TERMS, TO BE WHITE, SO ANY TIME THEY’RE VAGUELY REMINDED OF THIS FACT, THEY INTERPRET IT AS AN AFFRONT.

– Reni Eddo-Lodge, author

7. BE EXPLICIT ABOUT THE INTERTWINED RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RACISM AND ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY AND THE REVERBERATING CONSEQUENCES.

Many audiences prefer to think that socio-economic factors stand on their own and that if, say, the education system were more equitable or job opportunities more plentiful, then we would see equal opportunity for everyone. Racism perpetuates poverty among BIPOC and leads these communities to be stratified into living in neighborhoods that lack the resources of White peers with similar incomes. That said, we need to be clear that racism causes more and different problems than poverty, low-resourced neighborhoods or challenged educational systems do and that fixing those things is not enough. They are interrelated but study after study as well as so many people's lived experiences show that even after adjusting for socio-economic factors, racial inequity persists.

8. DESCRIBE HOW RACIAL BIAS AND DISCRIMINATION HOLD US ALL BACK.

In addition to showing how discrimination and unequal opportunity harm people of color, it's important to explain how systemic biases affect all of us and prevent us from achieving our full potential as a country. We can never truly become a land of opportunity while we allow racial inequity to persist. And ensuring equal opportunity for all is in our shared economic and societal interest. In fact, eight in ten Americans believe that society functions better when all groups have an equal chance in life.

Research also shows that people are more likely to acknowledge that discrimination against other groups is a problem – and more likely to want to do something about it – if they themselves have experienced it. Most people have at some point felt on the “outside” or that they were unfairly excluded from something, and six in ten report that they've experienced discrimination based on race, ethnicity, economic status, gender, sexual orientation, religious beliefs or accent. Reminding people of this feeling can help them think about what racism and oppression really mean for others as well as themselves.

“RACIAL INCLUSION AND INCOME INEQUALITY ARE KEY FACTORS DRIVING REGIONAL ECONOMIC GROWTH, AND ARE POSITIVELY ASSOCIATED WITH GROWTH IN EMPLOYMENT, OUTPUT, PRODUCTIVITY, AND PER CAPITA INCOME, ACCORDING TO AN ANALYSIS OF 118 METROPOLITAN REGIONS. ... REGIONS THAT BECAME MORE EQUITABLE IN THE 1990S—WITH REDUCTIONS IN RACIAL SEGREGATION, INCOME DISPARITIES, OR CONCENTRATED POVERTY—EXPERIENCED GREATER ECONOMIC GROWTH AS MEASURED BY INCREASED PER CAPITA INCOME.”

– PolicyLink publication, “All-In Nation”

9. LISTEN TO AND CENTER THE VOICES OF BIPOC TALENT.

As social justice advocates, we should be accustomed to centering the voices of those who are most affected by any issue. It should go without saying that when talking about racism, that BIPOC should lead the strategies about how to counter it and dismantle White supremacy.

This means:

- Taking cues from Anti-Racist BIPOC leaders on things like preferred language and strategy;
- Reducing pressure and unpaid labor by giving credit and/or compensation to BIPOC who have sparked movements, coined terms, tested and spread language and so on; and
- Being vigilant in ensuring that those who have power in the movement share that power with BIPOC, particularly those whose voices have been marginalized and those who experience multiple barriers and biases that affect them intersectionally on many levels.

Centering Anti-Racist BIPOC voices does not mean expecting members of each group to relive their particular oppression by describing it -- or examples of it -- for the benefit of the larger movement. It also does not mean expecting only BIPOC to speak out about racism and oppression. There is room for many voices and a role for different people with different audiences to do the work of changing the narrative about race in this country.

10. EMBRACE AND COMMUNICATE OUR RACIAL AND ETHNIC DIVERSITY WHILE DECENTERING WHITENESS AS A LENS AND CENTRAL FRAME.

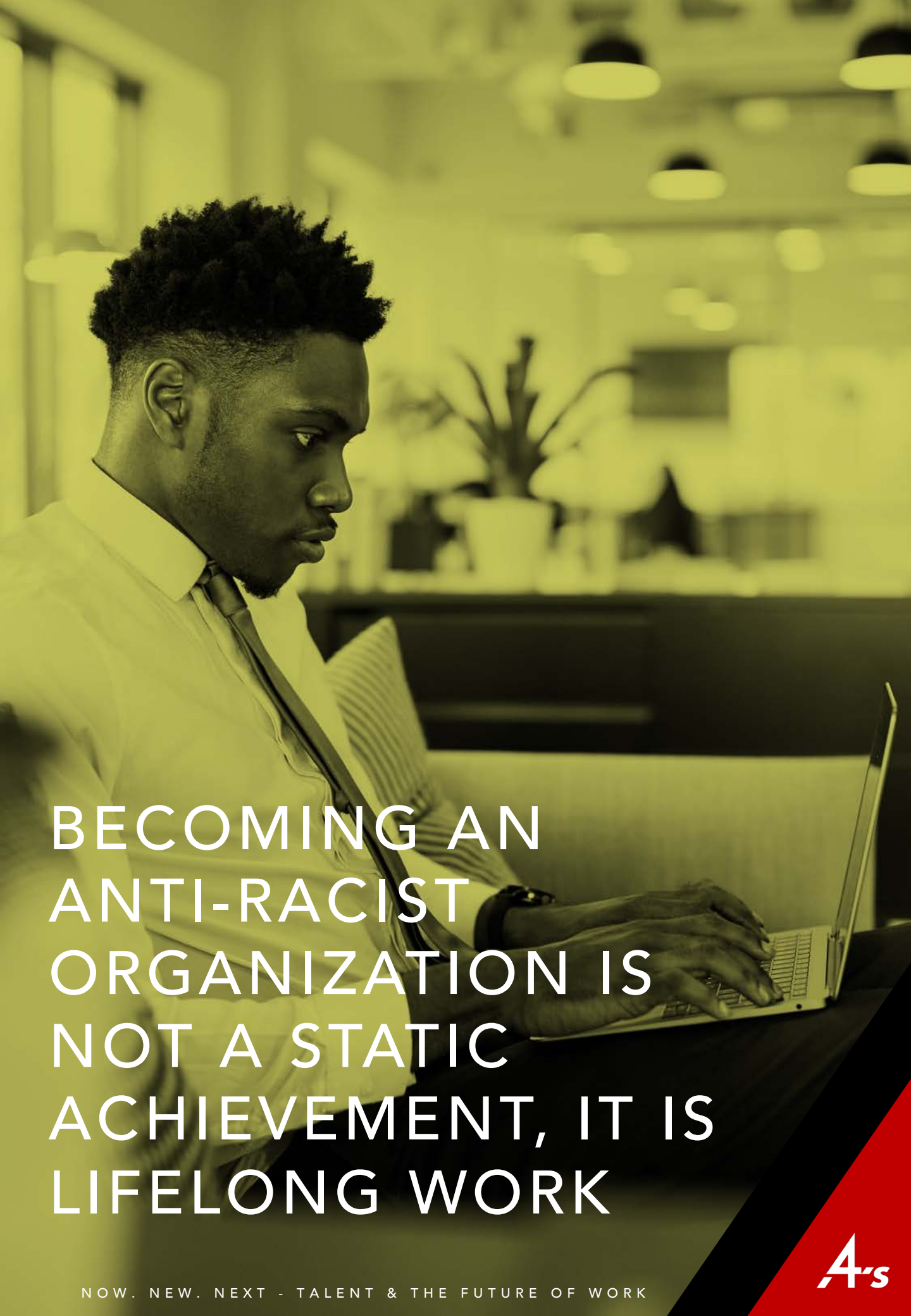
Underscore that different people and communities encounter differing types of stereotypes and discrimination based on diverse and intersectional identities. This may mean explaining the sovereign status of tribal nations, the unique challenges posed by treaty violations, and the specific solutions that are needed.

At the same time, we need to place Whiteness in the context it deserves - as a part of the larger whole and not the center of it. Too often even well-meaning language assume White as the "norm," which implies that anyone else is an "other."

APPLYING THE LESSONS

VPSA: VALUE, PROBLEM, SOLUTION, ACTION.

One useful approach to tying these lessons together is to structure communications around Value, Problem, Solution, and Action so that each message contains these four key components: Value (why the audience should care, and how they will connect the issue to themselves); Problem (framed as a threat to the shared values invoked); Solution (stating what you're for); and Action (a concrete ask of the audience, to ensure engagement and movement).



BECOMING AN
ANTI-RACIST
ORGANIZATION IS
NOT A STATIC
ACHIEVEMENT, IT IS
LIFELONG WORK

NOW. NEW. NEXT - TALENT & THE FUTURE OF WORK

A's

GLOSSARY & RESOURCES

Forbes

[Racial Inclusion, What your Black employees really need you to know](#)

[Why do D&I Initiatives fail?](#)

[If you're expecting D&I leaders to fix workplace racism, think again](#)

Harvard Business School

[Create-an-anti-racist-organization](#)

PWC

[workforce of the future](#)

[Global diversity and inclusion survey](#)

The Opportunity Agenda

[Talking about race racism and racial justice](#)

Gartner

[Diversity, Equity & Inclusion](#)

Education Week

[What is critical race theory?](#)

Trailant

[Online Diversity Training Library](#)

Perception Institute

[Race 2020](#)

A4's