

Decolonizing Christianity Workshops



BRYANA
CLOVER

BACKGROUND

At the intersection of most diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) matters are racial dynamics. Successful DEI initiatives require an understanding of the history of racism, the origins of White supremacy in America, and the structure and dynamics of privilege. It is our vision to build organizations with a passion for creating, within their DNA, a culture that constantly aspires to be racially equitable.

This workshop series "seeks to restore humanity, correct myths, eliminate stereotypes, decenter whiteness as a social construct, celebrate all cultures, and engage in deep truth-telling about the fabricated hierarchies of skin colors that became the basis for identifying humans into races." (Sacred Conversations to End Racism)

APPROACH

Adult learning retention and deeper level integration of knowledge occurs in small amounts, over a period of time. Traditional training focuses on surface level learning and compliance. Our approach emphasizes deeper learning by asking higher-order questions that get participants to manipulate knowledge and thereby make it more pliable.

We strive to make connections across ideas and construct knowledge rather than merely ask people to absorb it. Learning is an active process whereby individuals draw on their prior knowledge and develop their own mental representations to make sense of ideas. This is especially important in DEI curriculum. We do not seek agreement with everything we teach, we seek the absorption and integration of information for reflection and transformation.

WORKSHOP 1: ENGAGING CONSTRUCTIVELY IN BRAVE CONVERSATIONS ABOUT RACE

Before you and your church can engage in race equity work, it is important to have a foundational understanding of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) terminology and the important differences between words that can often be misused. After this guided conversation, you will leave with a DEI foundation and you will be equipped with a common language that will enable brave conversations to advance personal and institutional goals for change.

OBJECTIVES

- Address some of the challenges and share 5 guidelines that can help ensure a constructive learning experience throughout the workshops series.
- Discuss the importance of understanding knowledge construction, and the difference between opinions and knowledge.
- Understand what culture and socialization is, and how they work.

DETAILS

- <1-hour pre-work/reads
- 2-hour live session
- Workshop 1 Key Concepts Summary Handout, including supplemental materials

WORKSHOP 2: THE MYTH AND PSYCHOLOGY OF RACE AND RACISM

The topic of race can often feel like a daunting one. Where do you even begin? We believe at the intersection of most diversity, equity and inclusion matters are racial dynamics. And, that it is impossible to get to the heart of DEI work without an understanding of the history of racism, the social construct of race, and the structure and dynamics of privilege. In this unlearning exercise, we will uncover important events in history that have a critical impact on racial disparities today, both in the workplace and everyday life.

We will dig deeper into understanding how racism manifests and is sustained by individuals living within systems of power and privilege. We will cover important topics such as unconscious racial bias, awareness of privilege, and the impact of ideologies that sustain racism, including colorblind ideology. In addition, we will discuss how individuals construct and maintain their sense of themselves as racial beings within historical and ideological constructions of race. This course will leave you with practical applications related to understanding how racial and ethnic identities play a meaningful role in the human experience and in organizations.

OBJECTIVES

- Understand the history and social construction of race
- Discover Africa's Great Civilizations, and a narrative of the Power and Beauty of a Nation contrary to White Supremacist narratives.
- Review important terminology including: Prejudice, Discrimination, Power, Oppression, and Institutionalized Racism, White Supremacy, White Privilege, and Colorblind Racism..
- Gain a deeper understanding of the levels of racism, and the structural nature of racism.

DETAILS

- <1-hour pre-work/reads
- 2-hour live session
- Workshop 2 Key Concepts Summary Handout, including supplemental materials

WORKSHOP 3&4: RACE & CHRISTIANITY

Race is deeply embedded in the structure of Christianity, and, for the most part, the church has been complicit in racial oppression. We have not told the truth about our history, and we continue to introduce people to our habits and arts of civilization, while encouraging them to abandon their traditional languages, cultures and practices.

In this workshop series, we will dive deeper into the history of Christianity and Race. This knowledge will help us to engage authentically in the work of dismantling racism in the church at the local and institutional level.

OBJECTIVES

- Explore important history and concepts as it relates to the following (and more):
 - Anglo Saxon Myth
 - Crusades and Inquisition
 - Doctrine of Discovery
 - Pilgrims in a New Land
- Learn ways to dismantle colonial mindset at the individual and institutional level.

DETAILS

- <1-hour pre-work/reads
- 2-hour live session
- Workshop 3 & 4 Key Concepts Summary Handout, including supplemental materials

WORKSHOP 5: PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

As clergy or lay leadership, are you overwhelmed about the topic of race? Do you feel pressure to DO something, but not sure where to start? As a Black, or POC leader do you feel burdened with holding an underserved responsibility to drive DEI efforts in your institution, or speak for all BIPOC employees? This course is designed to help all leaders understand how BIPOC labor daily to persevere and excel despite the many racial barriers they encounter. The explicit discussion of race in institutions is still considered taboo, and sometimes irrelevant. This course will equip leaders with the knowledge and language to navigate the topic of race equity in their institutions. It will inspire and guide leaders to move their knowledge to action.

OBJECTIVES

- Unpack the Characteristics of a White Supremacy Culture.
- Identify blind-spots in your church that perpetuate this culture.

DETAILS

- <1-hour pre-work/reads
- 2-hour live session
- Workshop 5 Key Concepts Summary Handout, including supplemental materials

WORKSHOP 6: RESTORATIVE HEALING & SELF-CARE

Discussing racism is a politically and emotionally charged topic. It often requires individuals to stretch their critical thinking muscles, and expand their thinking beyond what they've been taught. Te-Nehisi Coates said in his book, *Between the World and Me*: "But all our phrasing-race relations, racial chasm, racial justice, racial profiling, white privilege, even white supremacy-serves to obscure that racism is a visceral experience, that it dislodges brains, blocks airways, rips muscle, extracts organs, cracks bones, breaks teeth...You must always remember that the sociology, the history, the economics, the graphs, the charts, the regressions all land, with great violence, upon the body." The reality is, Racism impacts all of us. And, we would be doing ourselves a disservice if we did not take time to recognize the physical, emotional and spiritual impact, as well as learn appropriate practices of restorative healing and self-care throughout this unlearning process. In this workshop, we discuss ways to create spaces for healing and self-care within our workplaces, as well as within our own communities and homes.

OBJECTIVES

- Continue learning practices for raising our race-consciousness, including a deeper dive into racial identity development, as we continue to understand ourselves as racial beings.
- Understand the impact of trauma, and the power of resilience, including healing practices to take with you as you continue your race equity journey.

DETAILS

- <1-hour pre-work/reads
- 2-hour live session
- Workshop 6 Key Concepts Summary Handout, including supplemental materials