

# Advancing Racial Equity in our practices



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Director of Racial Justice Advocacy  
Massachusetts Law Reform Institute

Grace

# Goodwill

- Listen for understanding
- Stay Engaged
- Speak Your Truth
- Expect & Accept Non-Closure

# **Lean into the Uncomfortability**

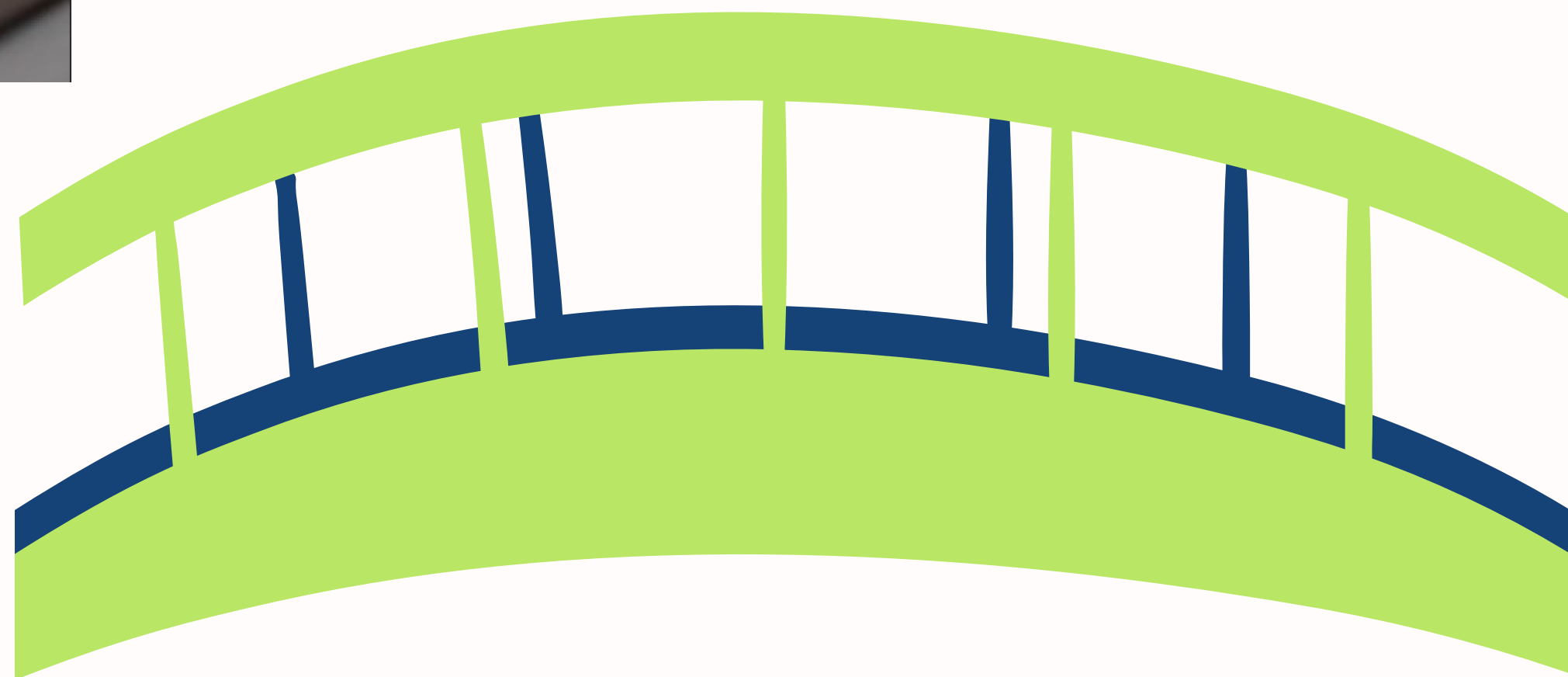
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Take Care  
of Yourself

**Meet Virginia**

# My Role

- Ensure that racial equity is embedded in our advocacy work
- Collaborate with legal and BIPOC community members on racial justice issues
- Tangible action steps to advance racial justice and support legal services organizations
- Support BIPOC attorneys







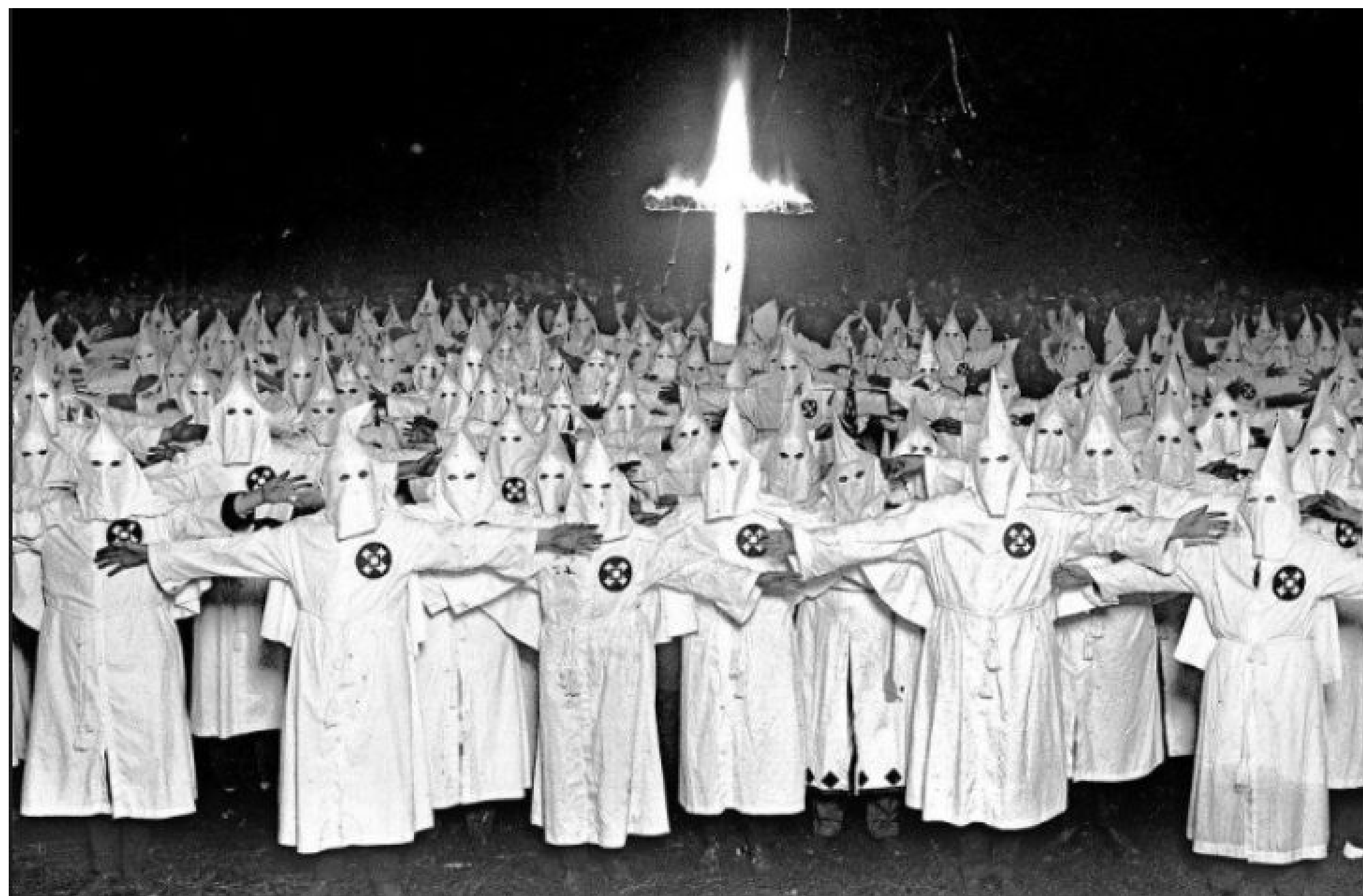
# Goals for today

- Enhance knowledge of racism
- Expand individual capacity to address racism
- Great discussion

# Agenda

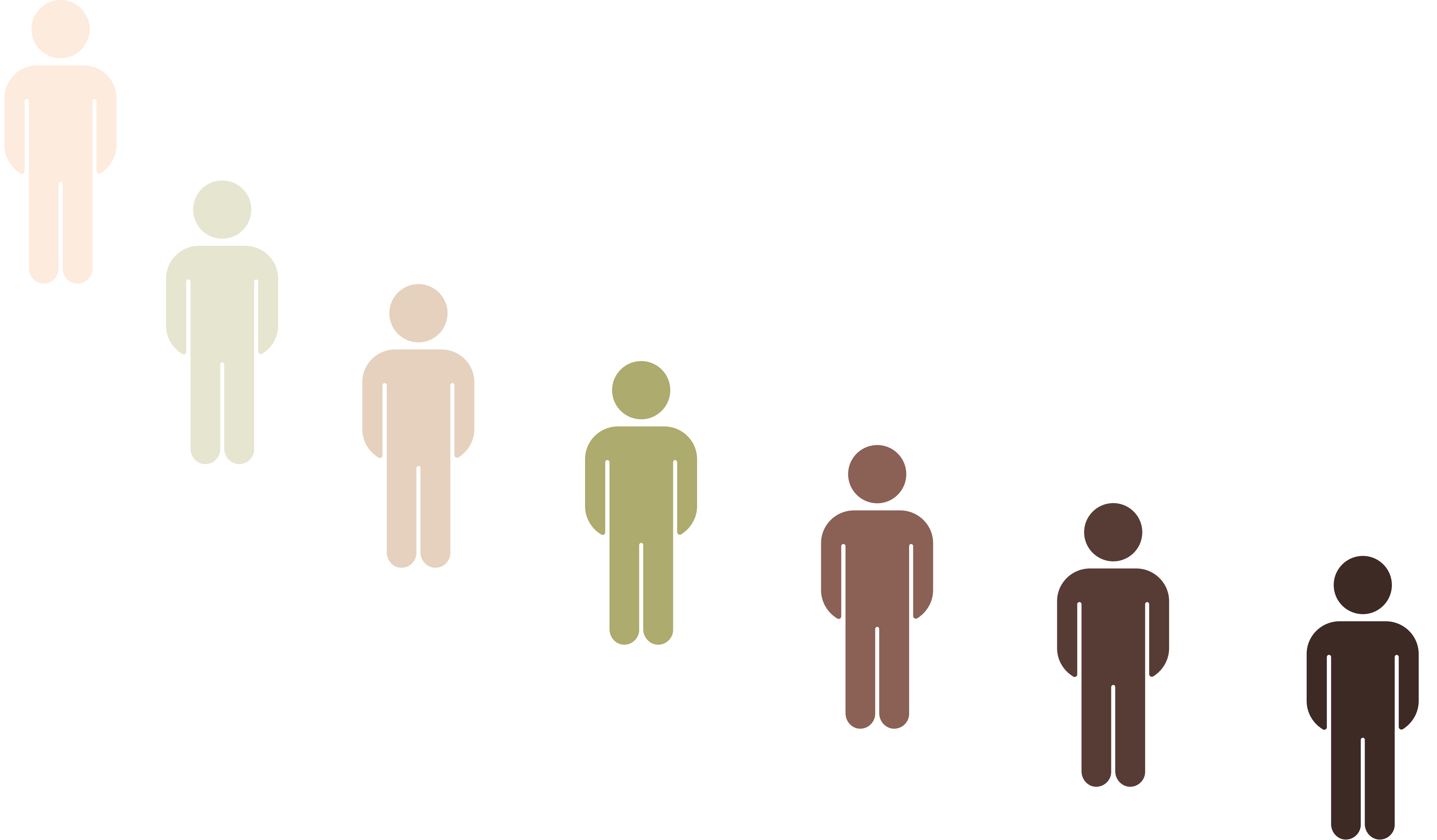
- **What we're fighting against**
- **What we want to achieve**
- **How we get there**

# Understanding Racism







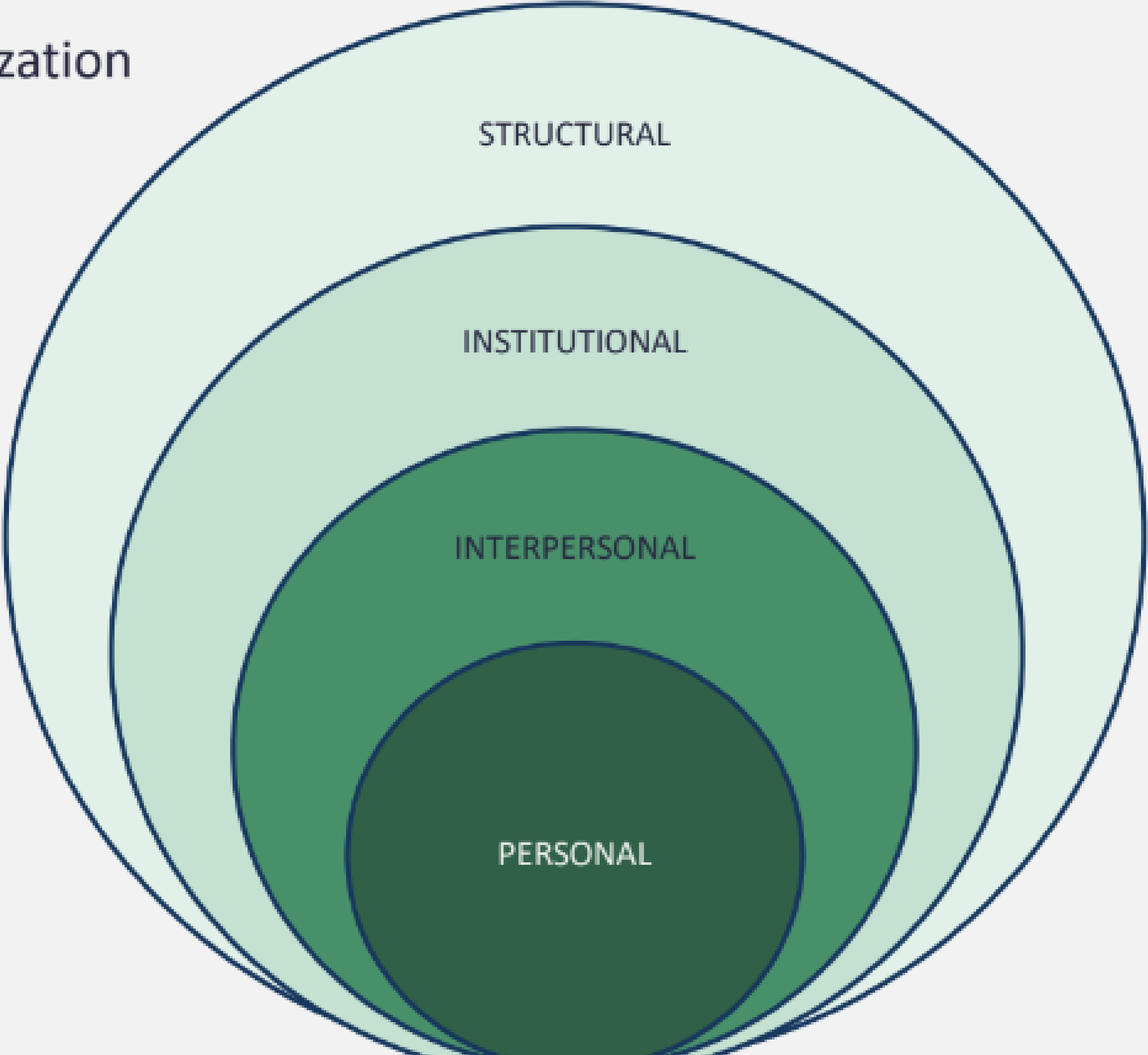




**How do you maintain oppression?**

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# Spheres of Systemic Racialization



# **Personal/Interpersonal**

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**Individual attitudes about inferiority and superiority that are learned or internalized either directly or indirectly and can be conscious or unconscious.**

# **Interpersonal Level**

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**Interactions among people that perpetuate racial hierachy and disparities, intentionally and unconsciously.**

# Implicit Bias: Everyone has it!



- **Unconscious negative and positive associations of a particular ethnicity, gender, or social group that influences actions or perceptions.**
- **Unavoidable.**
- **Predictable.**





# **Institutional Level**

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**Institutional racism occurs within and between institutions. Institutional racism is discriminatory treatment, unfair policies and inequitable opportunities, impacts and outcomes, based on race, produced and perpetuated by institutions (schools, mass media, criminal justice system, courts, etc.)**

**Columbia Legal Services**

## **Black Victims of Violent Crime Disproportionately Denied Aid in Many States**

The AP found disproportionately high denial rates in 19 out of 23 states willing to provide detailed racial data.

# Structural Level

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**Racial bias among institutions across society. It involves the cumulative and compounding effects of an array of societal factors, including history, culture, ideology and interactions of institutions and racially inequitable policies (dependence of schools on local property taxes - redlining/housing discrimination).**

**Shriver Center on Poverty Law**

The social determinants of health are the conditions in which we are born, we grow and age, and in which we live and work. The factors below impact on our health and wellbeing.



Childhood experiences



Housing



Education



Social support



# **White Supremacy & Fragility**

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The ruling class elite or the power elite in the colonies of what was to become the United States used the pseudo-scientific concept of race to create whiteness and a hierarchy of racialized value in order to disconnect and divide:

- White people from Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC);
- Black, Indigenous, and People of Color from each other;
- White people from other white people;
- Each and all of us from the earth, the sun, the wind, the water, the stars, the animals that roam(ed) the earth;
- Each of us from ourselves and from source

Tema Okun



# **Anti-Blackness**

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**Prioritizing proximity to whiteness through beliefs, attitudes, actions, practices, and behaviors of individuals and institutions that devalue, minimize, and marginalize the full participation of Black people—visibly (or perceived to be) of African descent.**

**BU Anti-Racism Center**

**How is racism at play?**

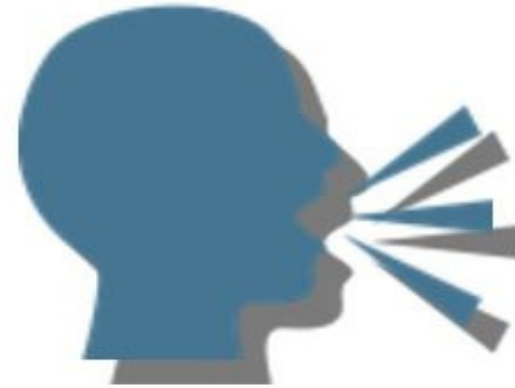
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# Understanding Racial Equity Work

# Path to Racial Equity



A New Way of Thinking



A New Way of Speaking



A New Way of Framing



A New Way of Engagement



New Advocacy Tools



A New Form of Militancy

# Racial Equity Work

## Household wealth of Black and white Americans

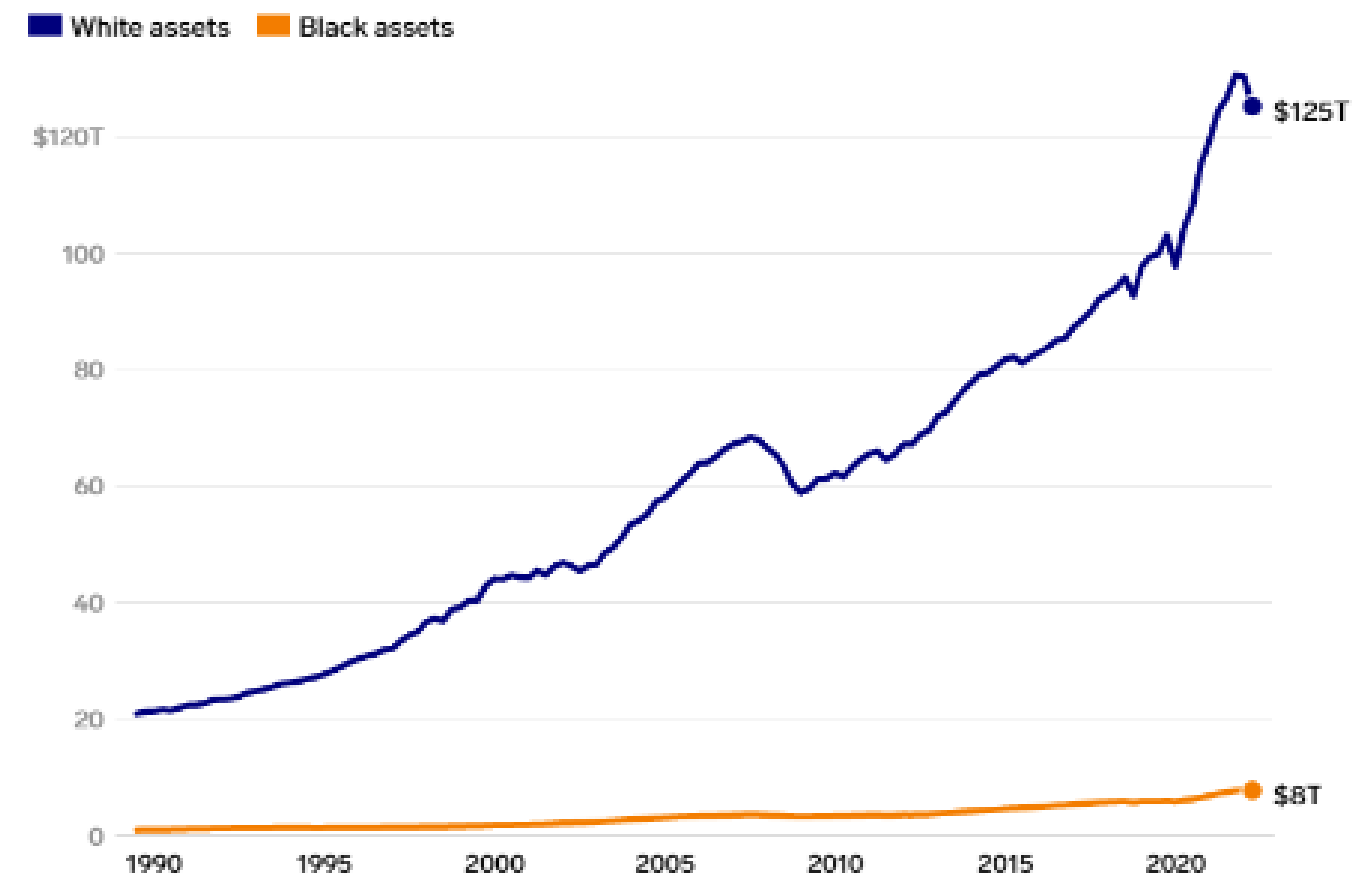


Chart: Shayanne Gal/Insider • Source: Federal Reserve Distributional Financial Accounts INSIDER

**Addressing the laws, institutions, policies, and practices that reinforce differential outcomes by race.**

# What is Racial Justice?

The systematic fair treatment of people of all races, resulting in equitable opportunities and outcomes for all.

The presence of deliberate systems and supports to achieve and sustain racial equity through proactive and preventative measures.

# Racial Equity

When one's racial identity no longer predicts, in a statistical sense, how one fares in life.



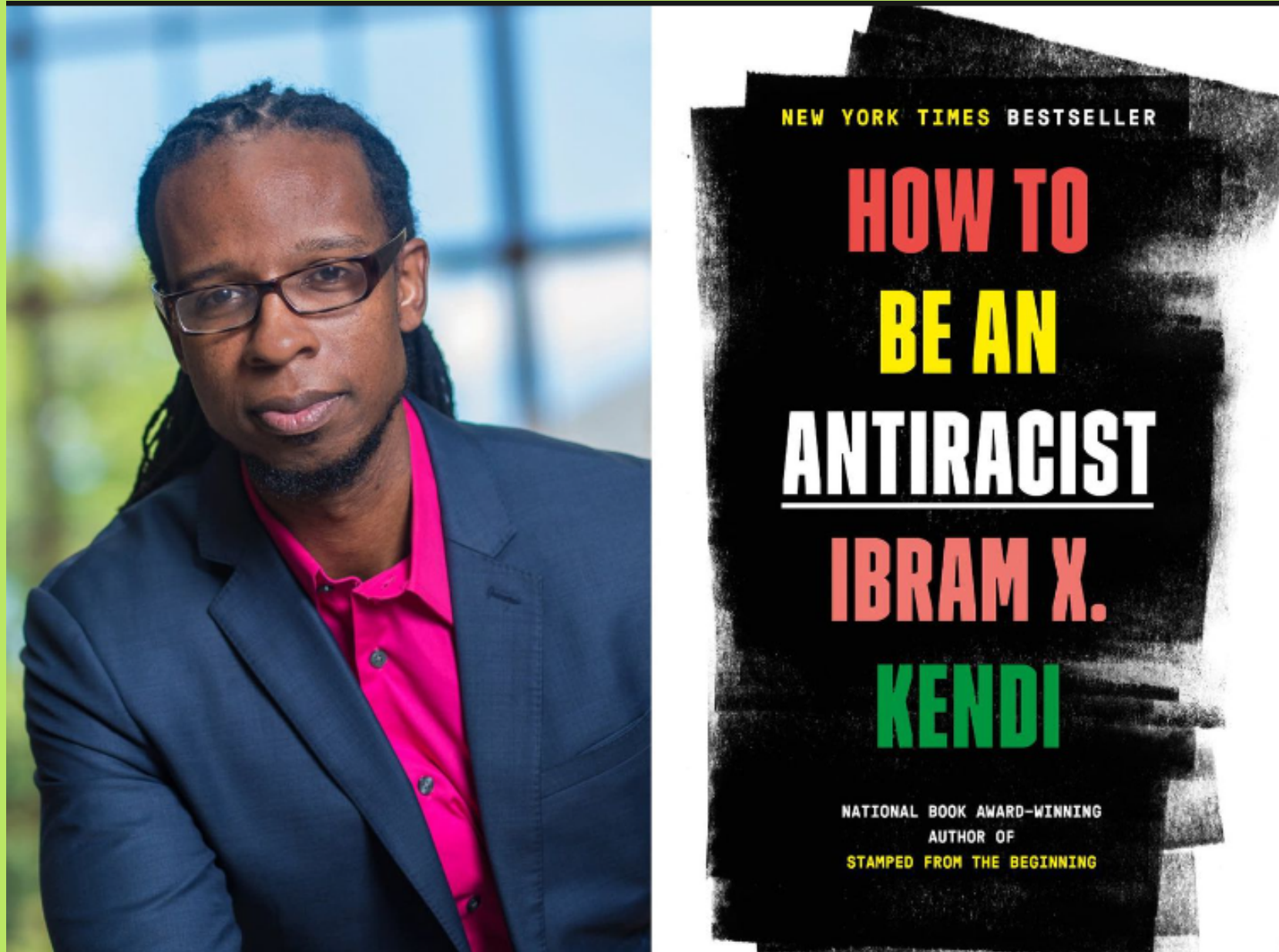
**When all races receive the  
same treatment.**

**Racial Equality**

# Inclusion

**Effort and practices in which different groups or individuals having different backgrounds and lived experiences are genuinely welcomed, authentically included, and equally treated.**

# ANTI-RACISM



The creation and proactive reinforcement of policies, practices, attitudes and actions that produce equitable power, access, opportunities treatment and outcomes for all.

# abolition

Eradication of all iterations of slavery that were enacted via state and institutional power, which shapes acceptable and accepted forms of subjectivity, safety, and social formation.

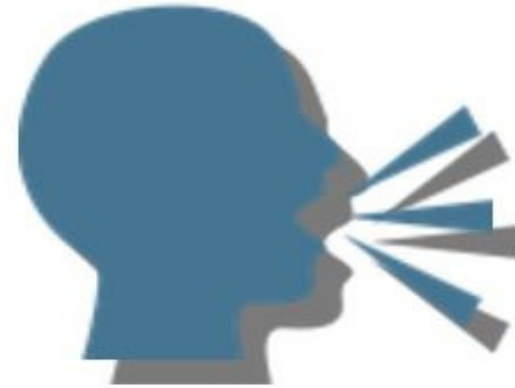
**trauma  
informed**

# **How to Embed Racial Justice in Your Work**

# Path to Racial Equity



A New Way of Thinking



A New Way of Speaking



A New Way of Framing



A New Way of Engagement



New Advocacy Tools



A New Form of Militancy



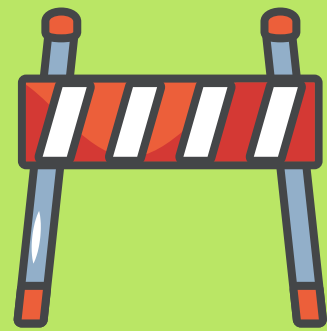


# Will & Willingness

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- **Open to learn**
- **Open to uncomfotability**
- **Open to change**
- **Open to reflection**
- **Open to creativity**
- **Open to liberation**
- **Open to transparency**

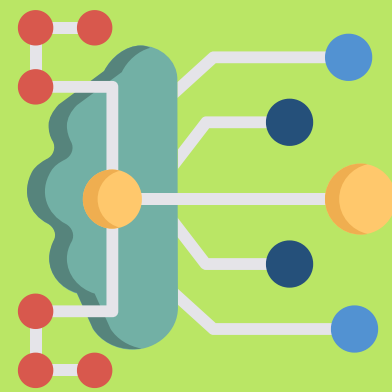
# Racial Justice Core Practices



Structural Racialization



Social Cognition & Implicit Bias



Systems Thinking



Community Lawyering



Multi-Form Advocacy

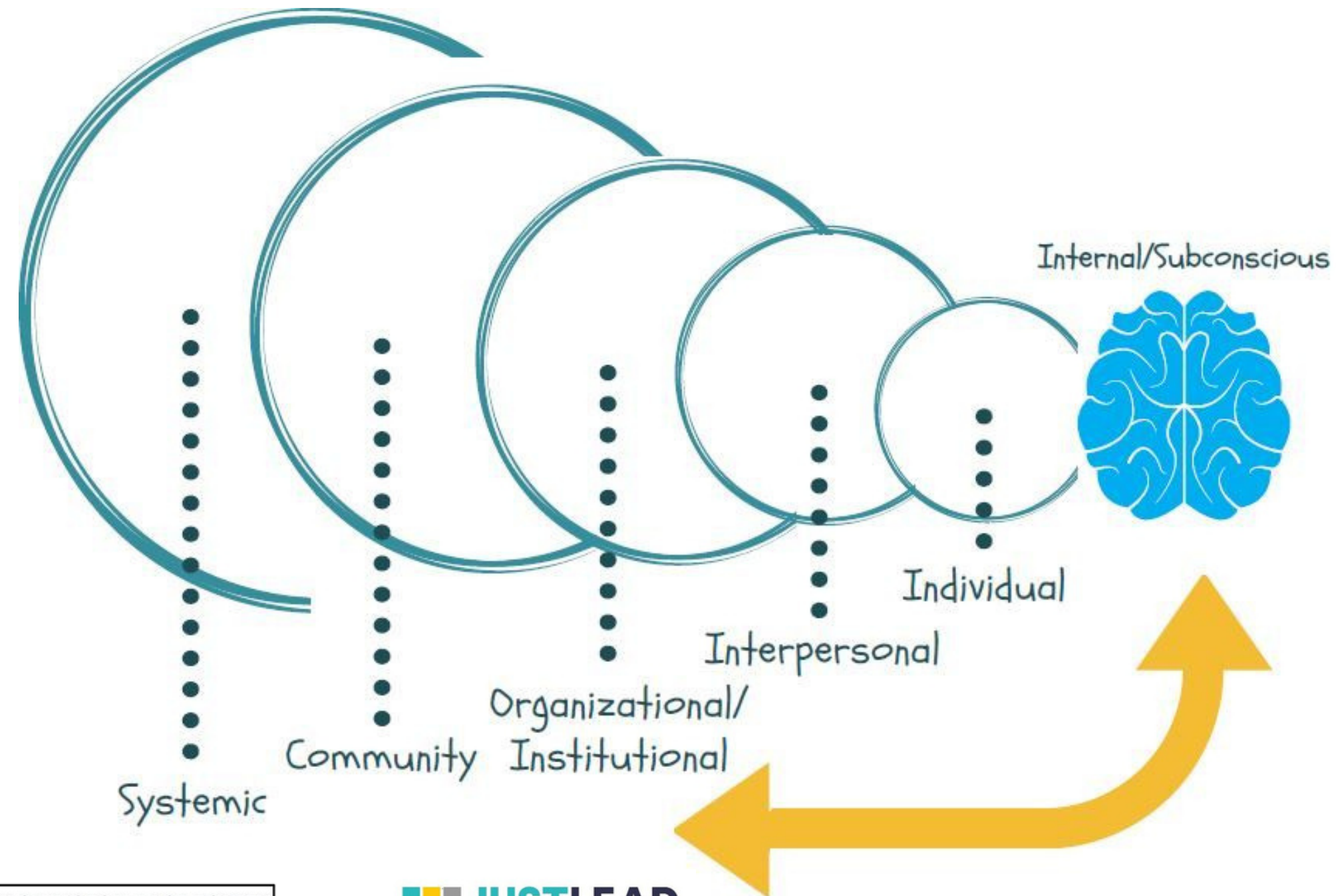


Communication & Framing



Leadership & Organizational Alignment

# The Five Levels of Race Equity Work



**How are we racialized?**

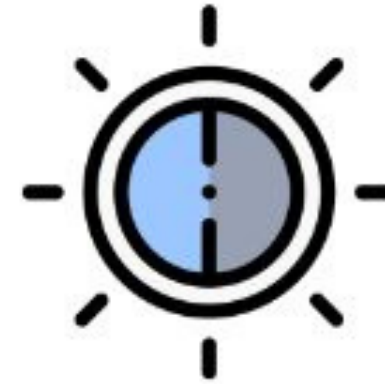
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# Understand History & Impact



# Interventions to Mitigate Bias

Awareness  
&  
Motivation



Exposure

Environment



Procedural  
Changes

# Implicit Association Test

**Measures our implicit bias via associations we have based on our own life experiences.**

**Results may not align with our explicit belief.**



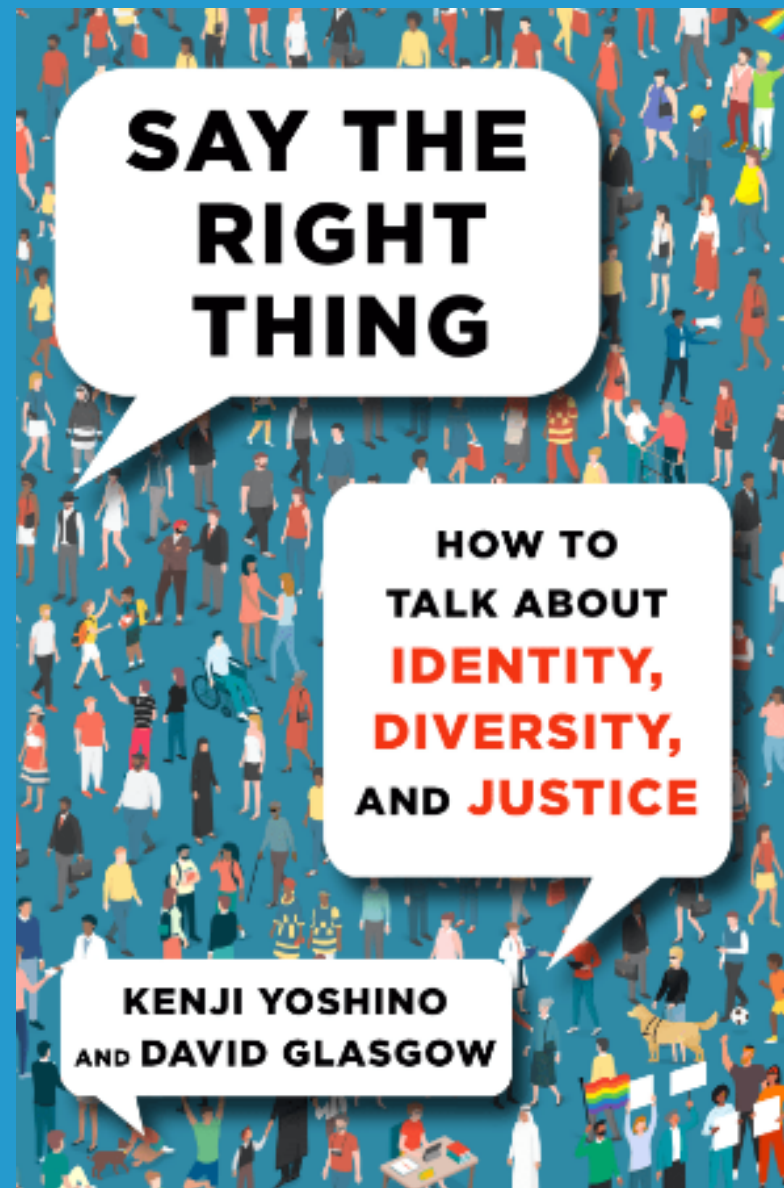
**Project Implicit®**

Project Implicit



**Emphasize the impact on you:**

**“That comment didn’t land well on me, because . . .”**



**Show how your views have evolved:**

**“I used to agree with your perspective, but I was convinced of \_\_ when . . .”**

**Affirm their values:**

**“I know you care about \_\_\_\_\_. What you just said doesn’t sound consistent with that.”**

**Affirm their intentions:**

**“While I’m sure you didn’t mean it to come across this way, I found \_\_\_ insulting.”**

### **Ask a clarifying question:**

"What made you think I was the interpreter?"

### **Appeal to organizational values:**

"As an officer of the court, it's my responsibility to uphold an inclusive democratic culture, so I need to address what you just said."

### **Educate:**

"I just read a great article/case/study on this topic. Could I send it your way?"

### **Model what they could have said:**

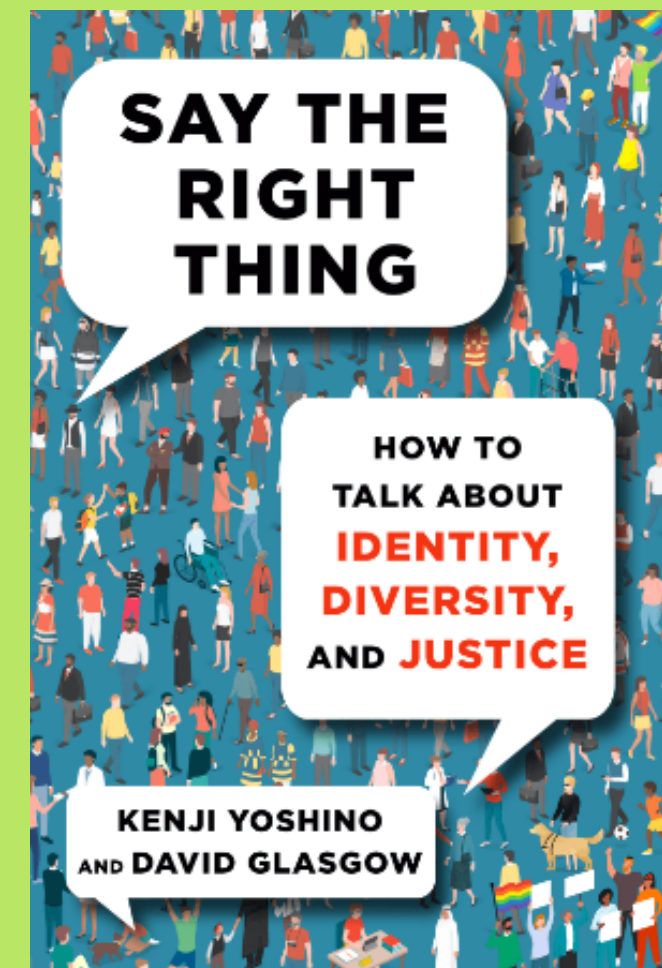
"I think the client would really like her" (in response to misgendering).

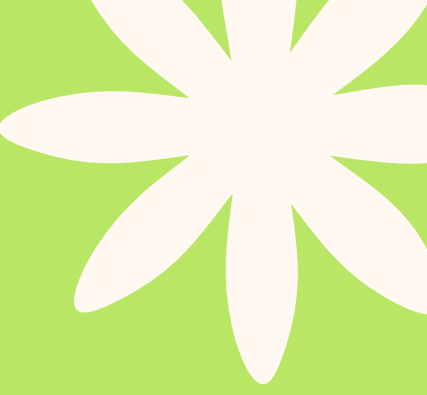
### **Ask them to explain their views:**

"I didn't get that joke. Could you explain it to me?"

### **Paraphrase or repeat what they said:**

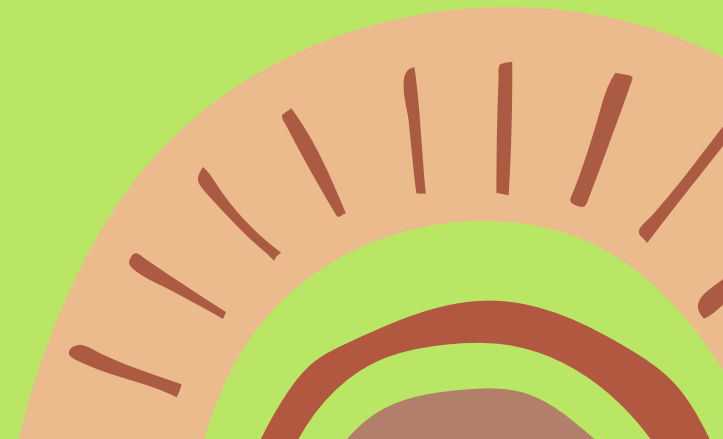
"To make sure I heard you correctly, did you just say \_\_\_?"





# SYSTEMS THINKING

The analysis of underlying structures, cause and effect relationships and interdependencies among various parts of a whole with the goal of developing effective, feasible solutions that address underlying cause of problems.



**Map it!**



# ***New Advocacy Tools***



**Columbia Legal Services**  
Race Equity Advocacy Tool Kit

Community Engagement

Systems Analysis

Goals and Objectives for  
Advocacy

Racism

**Data**

Messaging

# Language Matters

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**Does this....  
reinforce or reduce  
racial disparities?**

**David J. Harris**  
**Former Managing Director**  
**Charles Hamilton Houston Institute**  
**for Race and Justice**  
**Harvard Law School**



**Underrepresented**

Black on black  
crime

**Marginalized**

**Minority**

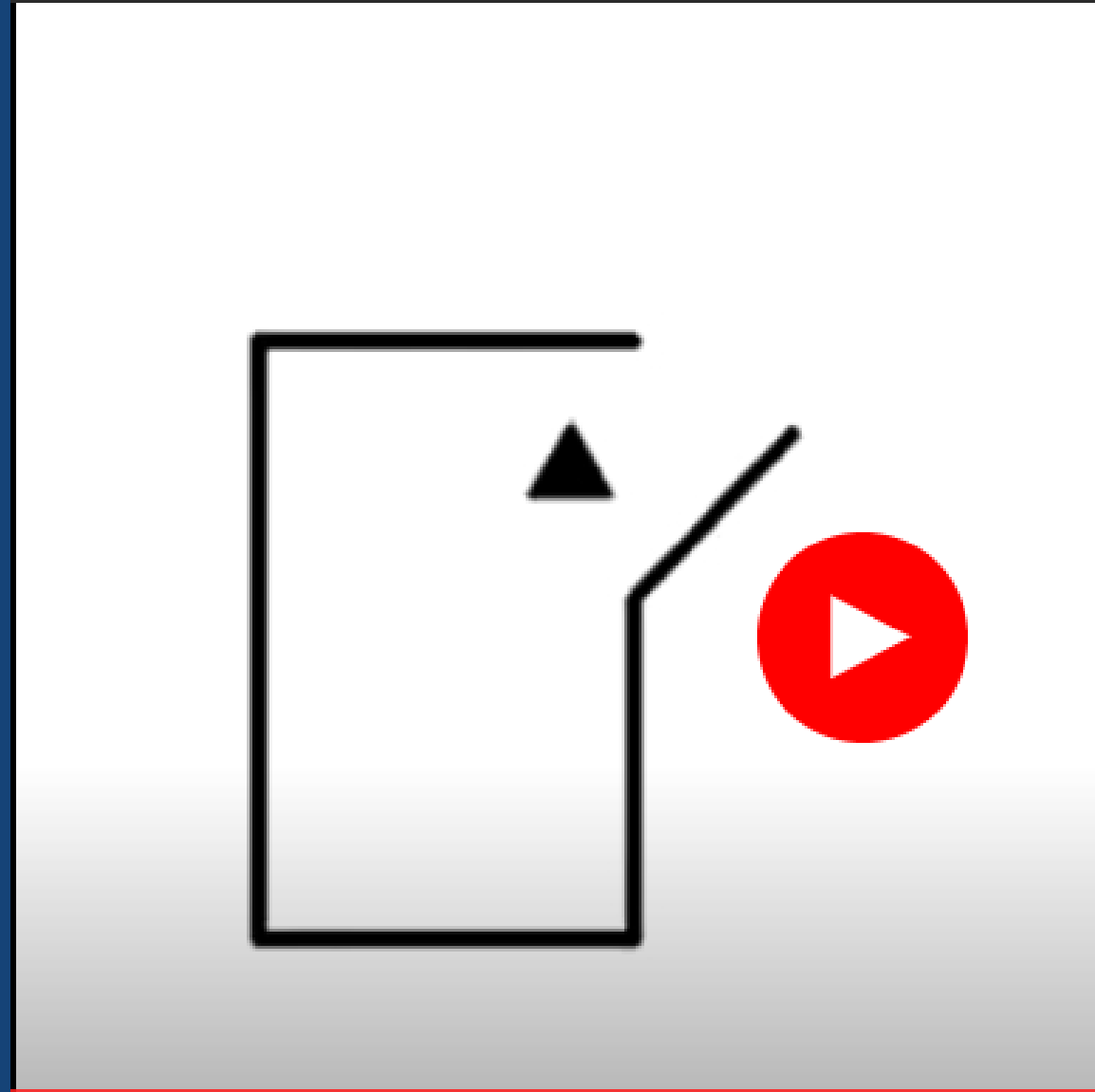
PRIVILEGE

Equity

**Lived Experience**

*Broken  
home*

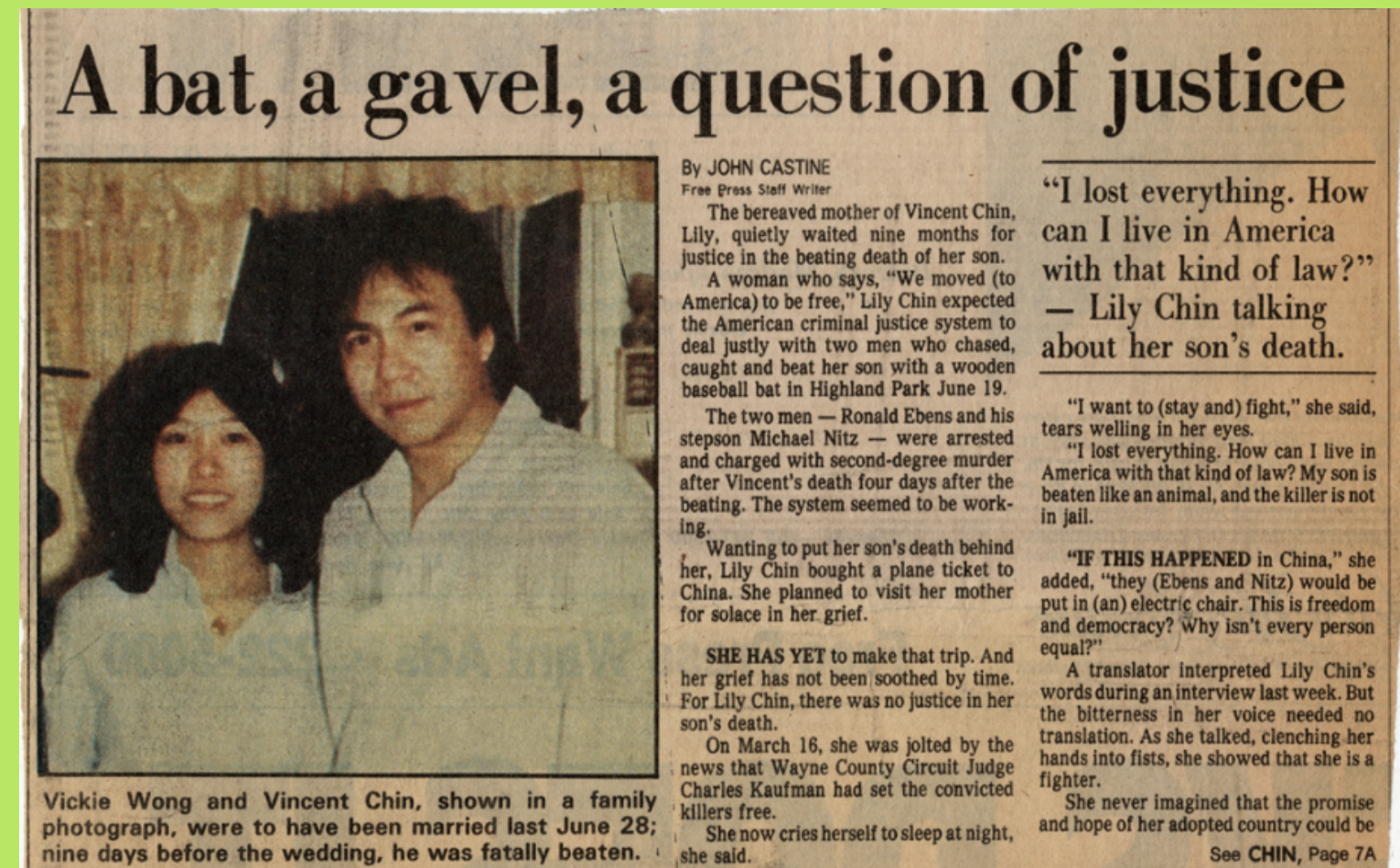
**Center the Voices**



# How the 1982 Murder of Vincent Chin Ignited a Push for Asian American Rights

Two autoworkers who reportedly mistook Chin to be Japanese received no jail time for the killing.

“These aren’t the kind of men you send to jail,” Kaufman said in defense of the sentences. “We’re talking here about a man who’s held down a responsible job for 17 or 18 years, and his son is employed and is a part-time student. You don’t make the punishment fit the crime, you make the punishment fit the criminal.”



## A bat, a gavel, a question of justice

By JOHN CASTINE  
Free Press Staff Writer

The bereaved mother of Vincent Chin, Lily, quietly waited nine months for justice in the beating death of her son.

A woman who says, “We moved (to America) to be free,” Lily Chin expected the American criminal justice system to deal justly with two men who chased, caught and beat her son with a wooden baseball bat in Highland Park June 19.

The two men — Ronald Ebens and his stepson Michael Nitz — were arrested and charged with second-degree murder after Vincent’s death four days after the beating. The system seemed to be working.

Wanting to put her son’s death behind her, Lily Chin bought a plane ticket to China. She planned to visit her mother for solace in her grief.

**SHE HAS YET** to make that trip. And her grief has not been soothed by time. For Lily Chin, there was no justice in her son’s death.

On March 16, she was jolted by the news that Wayne County Circuit Judge Charles Kaufman had set the convicted killers free.

She now cries herself to sleep at night, she said.

“I lost everything. How can I live in America with that kind of law?”  
— Lily Chin talking about her son’s death.

“I want to (stay and) fight,” she said, tears welling in her eyes.

“I lost everything. How can I live in America with that kind of law? My son is beaten like an animal, and the killer is not in jail.

“**IF THIS HAPPENED** in China,” she added, “they (Ebens and Nitz) would be put in (an) electric chair. This is freedom and democracy? Why isn’t every person equal?”

A translator interpreted Lily Chin’s words during an interview last week. But the bitterness in her voice needed no translation. As she talked, clenching her hands into fists, she showed that she is a fighter.

She never imagined that the promise and hope of her adopted country could be

See CHIN, Page 7A

Vickie Wong and Vincent Chin, shown in a family photograph, were to have been married last June 28; nine days before the wedding, he was fatally beaten.

## Man held in stabbing deaths of 2 women in Dorchester; victim remembered as advocate for transgender community

By [Associated Press](#)  
AP,  
updated on May 3, 2021



Marcus Chavis is led from the prisoner's dock after his arraignment in Dorchester Municipal Court on Monday. His defense attorney, David Leon, is at left. *Pat Greenhouse / The Boston Globe*

- **Mugshots were used in coverage of 45% of cases involving Black people accused of crimes compared to only 8% of cases involving white defendants**
- **White victims were nearly four times more likely to be presented in photos with friends and family than Black people victimized by crime**
- **Media coverage was 50% more likely to refer to white defendants by name as compared to Black defendants**

**Imagine**

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**Race is not a  
predicator of how one  
will fare in life.**

# CALLING DIVERSE JUDICIAL APPLICANTS

ON MAY 30 FROM 5:30-7:00 P.M.

Join members of the Massachusetts judiciary and JNC Chair Abim Thomas for an online webinar to learn about the judicial application process and the ins and outs of being a judge.

## MODERATED BY:

Hon William F. Sullivan (Superior)  
Hon. Robert L. Ullmann (Superior)

## FEATURING:

Hon. Kenneth V. Desmond Jr. (Appeals)  
Hon. Shannon Frison (Superior)  
Hon. Catherine H. Ham (Superior)  
Hon. Vickie L. Henry (Appeals)  
Hon. Alexander Mitchell-Munevar (Housing)  
Hon. Angela M. Ordoñez (Probate & Family)  
Hon. Nan M. Sauer (Probate & Family)  
Hon. Gloria Tan (Juvenile)

[TO REGISTER CLICK HERE](#)

PRESENTED BY THE MASSACHUSETTS AFFINITY BAR  
ASSOCIATIONS AND THE BOSTON BAR ASSOCIATION



**Thank You!**

Virginia Benzan

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