



Principles of Anti-Racism Organizing

- 1. Always keep race, culture and history on the table.**

There is not a time that we come together that race, culture and history are not on the table. The skin we live in places our lives an “infinity apart.” We must always see and acknowledge that invisible force and respect the weight of its presence.
- 2. Demonstrate a commitment to anti-racism ideals with principles and practices that are mutually reinforcing and consistent.**

We understand racism at both the individual and systemic levels. And we suggest that to be an anti-racist organizer includes, among other things, a willingness to critique and change organizational cultures, policies, and practices that oppress and exclude people of color. Anti-racism principles must be practiced consciously and consistently.
- 3. Build a collective base to confront unequal power.**

Dismantling systemic racism requires the convergence of power from all sources. RMJJ has been and continues to be extremely successful in organizing a power base. This includes building principled relationships and accepting differences to create alliances across issues and values that have the potential to either divide us and/or bring us together. It is only our collective power that holds the prospect of defeating racism.
- 4. Create space and opportunity for various types of relationships – including professional, social, personal, political, and faith-based.**

Creating space to get to know each other in various ways will make the work more rewarding as well as foster understanding that builds trust and buffers disagreement. Practice individuation and employ perspective taking. Investment in a foundational race analysis and willingness to engage in genuine exchange facilitates transformation.
- 5. Take leadership/direction from people of color, others may lead but not without the buy-in of people of color.**

White allies must be willing to and able to take direction from, share power with, and be accountable to - people of color. And only organize with integrity and accountability to the community.
- 6. Invest in building leadership that includes youth.**

Build and invest in leadership within each organization and professional discipline insuring that as roles transition, organizations retain the will and capacity to continue

the work. Recognize that gatekeepers who operate with anti-racist values and skills and maintain an accountable relationship with the community, can generate institutional transformation instead of perpetuating an unjust status quo. Cultivate youth and young adults by creating committed opportunities for them to find their voices, hone their understanding of racism, and support their development of skills to create change in their own lives and in their shared community.

7. Do your work from where you stand and organize within your racial identity.

There is not a system or institution in this nation not impacted by racism. There is much work to do within every individual organization and institution. Defining the work of the collaboration needs to be a shared, transparent process. Include a broad base in decision-making and crafting strategies both within RMJJ and in the larger community, and then share these widely as to garner trust throughout organizations and the community. Whenever appropriate, improve decision-making by using “blinding” techniques, checklists, and objective criteria. Recognize the dignity and worth of all populations by collaborating to share resources among races/ethnicities, classes, generations, and genders, for example.

8. Continually self-examine the manifestations of a racial hierarchy and employ practices that counter them.

For People of Color, internalized racial oppression can manifest itself as: self-doubt, distancing from other POC, self-hate, anger/rage, exaggerated visibility, assimilation, acculturation, colorism, protection of White people, tolerance, ethnocentrism. For White people, internalized racial superiority can manifest itself as: perfectionism, entitlement, individualism, right to comfort, defensiveness, worship of the written word, only one right way thinking, conflict avoidance, paternalism/caretaking, either/or thinking, power hoarding, assumption of normalcy, denial, distancing. Expose and eliminate the deeply held, and often unconscious, beliefs created by racism – especially any beliefs in a hierarchy of human value.

9. Recognize that historical trauma is often a result of systemic racism.

Racism must be looked at through a trauma lens. Prolonged exposure to individual and systemic racism and discrimination has traumatic effects on persons of color and puts them at a higher risk of suffering from anxiety and depression which can lead to avoidance or confrontational behaviors, and many other manifestations of racial hierarchy.

RMJJ strives to ensure that organizational operations and decisions are transparent and conducted with the goal of building and maintaining trust within the community, the leadership team, and all other stakeholders involved in the work of RMJJ by incorporating processes that are responsive to the racial, ethnic and cultural needs of the communities we serve while recognizing and addressing the impact of historical and racial trauma. White allies should commit to learning from POC about the trauma they have experienced, allowing for courageous conversations in a safe space and without

judgement. White allies should also act in trauma informed ways while working with POC in RMJJ.

10. Remember that these anti-racism organizing principles are always in effect and that conflict can sometimes provide an opportunity to learn.

Be sure to listen, respect the experience of others, focus on racism (locally), do not expect quick fixes, sit with your discomfort, respect confidentiality, participate and be willing to struggle together. If approached earnestly, conflict can ultimately make the work stronger. This requires individuals, organizations, and communities to accept self-reflective accountability without being defensive or dismissive. Actively listen to people's concerns and critically consider why disagreement exists. When the work becomes difficult, turn to wonder – "I wonder what she's feeling right now?" "I wonder why I'm reacting this way – what can I learn from this?"