

**Anti-racism Learning (for home, or groups) – OCTOBER
Characteristics and Antidotes of White Supremacy Culture**

<https://www.showingupforracialjustice.org/white-supremacy-culture-characteristics.html>

October - Sense of Urgency & Defensiveness

November - Quantity over Quality & Worship of the Written Word

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHILE READING:

Where is this characteristic in myself? How is it present in my life?

Where is this characteristic in our Fellowship?

How is it present in Unitarian Universalism?

How am I challenged by understanding this characteristic as part of White Supremacy Culture (WSC)? How is it surprising and/or obvious?

Which antidotes to this WSC are also present in myself and our Fellowship? What new ideas could be employed to address this characteristic?

What are some ways we, as individuals and as a congregation, can understand more about this characteristic and countermeasures we can take to unlearn it *as our default*?

101 Information on White Supremacy Culture:

What is WSC?

<https://www.showingupforracialjustice.org/white-supremacy-culture.html>

Ten insidious examples of WSC:

<https://everydayfeminism.com/2015/09/white-supremacy-everyday-life/>

Sense of Urgency

- continued sense of urgency that makes it difficult to take time to be inclusive, encourage democratic and/or thoughtful decision-making, to think long-term, to consider consequences
- frequently results in sacrificing potential allies for quick or highly visible results, for example sacrificing interests of communities of color in order to win victories for white people (seen as default or norm community)
- reinforced by funding proposals which promise too much work for too little money and by funders who expect too much for too little

Antidotes: realistic workplans; leadership which understands that things take longer than anyone expects; discuss and plan for what it means to set goals of inclusivity and diversity, particularly in terms of time; learn from past experience how long things take; write realistic funding proposals with realistic time frames; be clear about how you will make good decisions in an atmosphere of urgency

Defensiveness

- the organizational structure is set up and much energy spent trying to prevent abuse and protect power as it exists rather than to facilitate the best out of each person or to clarify who has power and how they are expected to use it
- because of either/or thinking (see below), criticism of those with power is viewed as threatening and inappropriate (or rude)
- people respond to new or challenging ideas with defensiveness, making it very difficult to raise these ideas
- a lot of energy in the organization is spent trying to make sure that people's feelings aren't getting hurt or working around defensive people
- the defensiveness of people in power creates an oppressive culture

Antidotes: understand that structure cannot in and of itself facilitate or prevent abuse; understand the link between defensiveness and fear (of losing power, losing face, losing comfort, losing privilege); work on your own defensiveness; name defensiveness as a problem when it is one; give people credit for being able to handle more than you think; discuss the ways in which defensiveness or resistance to new ideas gets in the way of the mission