

Transforming Organizational Culture Assessment Tool (TOCA)

Please read prior to using the Transforming Organizational Culture Assessment tool.

The TOCA tool can be a helpful instrument for deepening internal organizational work on advancing racial equity, by specifically addressing white culture. First, please keep in mind that this is just a tool to use for a long change process. This tool's purpose is NOT to diagnose an organization, nor to provide statistical evidence of an organization's capacity to work toward racial equity. This tool is an opportunity for individuals within an organization to reflect on: a) the explicit use of terms in organizational documents; b) experiences and perspectives on how race, racism and white privilege are discussed; and c) how policies and practices are aligning with the value of racial equity, specifically looking at manifestations of white/dominant culture in organizational policies and practices.

The impact on an organization when white dominant culture is not being addressed can include:

- A feeling among staff that they have limited freedom to offer different ideas in problem-solving, decision-making, etc.
- A focus on identifying individual mistakes rather than systemic challenges
- Decision-making with a lack of transparency and accountability
- Individuals within the organization holding back perspectives and insights, so not to cause conflict
- An internal communication processes which set up distinct groups of haves and have-nots for access to information
- A discussion about outcomes in which numbers trump other forms of data

Examples of internal work that organizations could adopt/continue as next steps:

- Reviewing organizational culture—that is, the unspoken and spoken rules and norms that guide behaviors in the organization—looking for examples of how white privilege and culture are manifesting.
- Reviewing policies and practices of the organization—identifying white privilege and entitlements in policies, practices, and culture, as well as aligning practices with racial equity principles.
- Looking at the theory of change for program/strategies—that is, how strategies are expected to lead to results and the worldviews and assumptions (spoken and unspoken) that undergird the program's choice of strategies.
- Reviewing the program's design, implementation and evaluation to understand how white privilege and culture may be manifesting.

Take the example of a leadership development program:

- *Recruitment*—Who is recruited? Who is involved in the decision-making process? Whose vote is privileged? What characteristics are being privileged for those candidates being defined as a “good” candidate?
- *Design*—How are decisions being made about the program's design? What assumptions are being made about the participants' needs? What is the level of involvement of past participants? How are past participants chosen to be involved with shaping the design?

- *Evaluation*—How are the outcomes of the program being tracked? Who is defining success? What and whose data is being prioritized? Are the voices of graduates who shared a critique or lower ratings part of the evaluation discussion?

As an assessment tool, TOCA can be used for discussion. The data collected can help organizations see and understand different points of view and the impact of policies and practices on different stakeholders. Additionally, the results of this assessment can help individuals within an organization to collectively create a roadmap—prioritizing what needs to be addressed and the strategies that need to be in place to make that happen. Keep in mind that one characteristic of white culture is a need to resolve or fix something quickly (rather than spending time getting to the root cause or seeing it from multiple perspectives to know if there is a problem).

Please answer these questions prior to introducing the *Transforming Organizational Culture Assessment* tool:

Does your organization have a common understanding of structural racism and white privilege? Are there individuals, including formal and informal leaders, with conceptual understanding of structural racism and white privilege? It is important for the organization to have a common analysis of structural racism and racial equity, as well as an understanding of different terms (structural racism, white privilege, racial equity, etc.) in order to be able to make full use of this tool. One training is not sufficient. There needs to be an ongoing commitment to build staff's (and other stakeholders', e.g., volunteers') knowledge and skills to talk about racism and white privilege, to identify interventions, etc. Without at least a basic shared understanding of racism and white privilege, the tool can become a frustrating exercise that yields minimal or confusing dialogue and data.

Has your organization made a commitment to work toward racial equity within the organization?

Information collected from this tool will reveal people's different perceptions about how the organization is doing in its efforts toward advancing racial equity. Prior to people sharing their perceptions and observations through this tool, it is important for the organization to commit to a process for reviewing the information and addressing the concerns and barriers noted in the tool. Without this commitment, participants will be wary about answering candidly or will doubt the usefulness of this exercise. One best practice is to create a working group focused on guiding a change process to align policies, practices and culture with the values of diversity, inclusion and racial equity. This working group should be composed of staff with diverse identities, positions and perspectives, and who are committed to be leaders, messengers and catalysts in advancing racial equity within the organization (along with the leadership of the organization).

If your organization is not ready to use this tool yet, based on your responses to the two questions above, there are several resources that can assist you located on www.racialequitytools.org—please check out the Tipsheets as well as the sections on Organizational Change Process.

Process for Using the Transforming Organizational Culture Assessment Tool:

- Prior to introducing the tool, create a plan of how the data will be reviewed, and a process for how the organization will be responsive to the data and the stories shared. We recommend having a third party review and synthesize results, and work with formal and informal leaders to report the different perspectives back to the full team. Ideally, the third party should be knowledgeable about organizational change processes, racial equity and white culture.

- It is critical for organizational members/employees to share their perceptions with full candor, and with no risk of consequences from within the organization. People's anonymity has to be preserved.
- While disaggregating data by race and gender generally can be helpful (in order to identify patterns that may be more noticeable or consequential to those with marginalized identities), consider *not* disaggregating the data if there are relatively small numbers of a particular gender and/or race within your organization. In that case, you may *not* want to collect demographic data unless a third party is keeping the survey data confidential and disaggregating it before sharing with the organization.

Also, note that this tool will not fit all organization types. TOCA was designed in the context of an organization with staff (mid to large organizations) and reflects non-profits more than other types of organizations. Therefore, modifications may need to be made so the questions and the choices reflect your organization. Though the questions are geared more for staff, it would also be helpful to collect responses with other groups who interact with your organization, e.g., board members, volunteers, and members and/or clients.

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We swim in white culture every day, and we each have different experiences in noticing its presence as well as its impact on our organizational culture. The *Transforming Organizational Culture Assessment* tool is meant to hold up a mirror to an organization's policies and practices. It is meant to provide a roadmap for what a racially equitable organization might look like. It is meant to assist in creating benchmarks for moving forward; and, it is meant to provide a vehicle for people to share their truth. Sometimes our process for moving toward racial equity is to separate, assigning judgment on who is good or bad, and using tools as hammers rather than as catalysts for change. I encourage you to remember "both and" as you move through this dynamic, exciting, frustrating, sometimes conflictual, and unifying change process for racial equity—remembering our accountability for our own personal role and behaviors, our linked fate, and our commitment to support each other through the process, and also the critical importance of holding to a steadfast belief in what is possible.

~Maggie Potapchuk, MP Associates
June, 2016

Acknowledgements: There are several resources which informed the development of TOCA, including: Tema Okun – *White Supremacy Culture*, Judith Katz – *Some Aspects and Assumptions of White Culture in the United States*, Robette Ann Dias – *Transforming Institutional Values: Revisited*, Joseph Barndt – *Understanding and Dismantling Racism: The Twenty-First Century Challenge to White America*, p. 234, Barbara Major – Chapter 7, "How does White Privilege Show Up in Foundation and Community Initiatives?", from *Flipping the Script: White Privilege and Community Building*. My appreciation goes to several people who shared their insights on white culture, which also helped shape this tool—specifically, Sally Leiderman, Shakti Butler, Gita Gulati-Partee, Donna Bivens, A. Adar Ayira, Dottye Burt-Markowitz, Avis Ransom and Dianne Lyday. Also, much gratitude to Gita Gulati-Partee, Scott Winn, Sally Leiderman, Jesse Villalobos, Alfredo Hernandez Corsen, Gail Harrison and Diane Goodman, who reviewed the tool and generously made several suggestions and additions.

Transforming Organizational Culture Assessment Tool

Demographics*:

1. How do you describe your race?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> African American/Black | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian-American/Pacific Islander | <input type="checkbox"/> White |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic/Latino/a | <input type="checkbox"/> Multiracial |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Native American/Indigenous to Americas (e.g., Indio from Central America) | <input type="checkbox"/> Arab/Persian/ Middle Eastern |

2. How do you describe your gender?

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Transgender/Gender non-conforming
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

3. How do you describe your relationship with the organization?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Upper Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Middle Management | <input type="checkbox"/> Community leader |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Entry-level | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Board member | |

4. How long have you been employed and/or affiliated with the organization?

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 0-1 year | <input type="checkbox"/> 11-15 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2-5 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 16-20 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6-10 years | <input type="checkbox"/> More than 20 years |

**You may want to add a question to track departments and/or positions in the organization.*

Organization Terms and Discourse

5. This question will track perceptions about what terms are used by the organization by those with formal involvement with the organization. In this chart, please indicate the extent to which you believe certain terms are part of various organizational documents, using the numbers from the rating scale below. For example, if you believe that your organization's website does not use the term social justice, but does imply it based on the content shared, you would give the rating "2." *We recognize that you may not be well-versed in the contents of all of these documents— your perception about whether a term is implicit or explicit is still important. Full review can occur following the collection of the data.*

Please use the following ratings:

0=Non-applicable—the document does not exist

1=You *don't think the term is used* in this particular document

2=You think the term is *not used but it is implied/implicit* by the content shared

3=You think the term *might be mentioned* in the document *though it is not discussed*

4=You think the term is *explicit* in how it is shared—*by explaining/making a case/substantive comment*

- *Example for a term being mentioned: "We also know that diversity in the workplace makes good management sense."*
- *Example for a term being explicit: "We also know that diversity in the workplace makes good management sense; it promotes fairness, creates opportunities for communities of color and increases creativity."*

TERM	Vision and/or Mission Statement	Strategic Plan	Human Resource Policies	Organization Website	Annual Report	Materials to Donors or Foundations	Program Materials	External Communication (e.g., Newsletter)	Theory of Change	Outreach Materials
Racial equity										
Racial justice										
Social justice										
White privilege										
Structural/ systemic racism										
Racial disparities										
Cultural competence										
Diversity										
Inclusion										
Equity										

Please share your comments and/or other details about the terms used and how these terms are discussed in the organization.

6. This question is designed to help you reflect on your experience with internal conversations and expectations in regards to discussions about race, racism and white privilege in your organization.

0=Unsure, 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Agree, 4=Strongly Agree

<i>To what extent do you agree with the following statements:</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
Talking about racism is encouraged in the organization.					
Talking about white privilege is encouraged in the organization.					
There is support for people who share their truth about racialized incidents at the organization.					
If someone raises issues about racism, the person can be marginalized.					
If someone raises issues about white privilege, the person can be marginalized.					
Giving feedback about a comment made or attitude about race/racism is encouraged.					
Talking through conflict/different perspectives about racism is encouraged					
Discussing whether or how a decision may be racialized is encouraged.					
Discussing what might be the impact of a decision in the context of inequities is encouraged.					
Discussing how white privilege and culture may be operating within in the organization is encouraged.					

Please provide any comments and details about your ratings:

Transforming White Culture

This next set of questions ask for your opinion about different aspects of your organization's culture and practices. Each question gives two statements which represent a spectrum of organizational behaviors.

- First, read the statements in Column A and Column B. Decide which statement better **reflects your current organization's culture or practices**.
- After you decide which statement reflects your organization, choose then whether the statement **more likely** reflects your organization or **somewhat closely** reflects your organization currently.

Don't know—We are asking for your opinion, based on your observations and perceptions. Please only select "don't know" when you really have no basis on which to offer an opinion.

7. Focus on the Organization's standards for values and behavior:

	A	More like <A-1>	Somewhat Like <A-2>		Somewhat Like <B-2>	More like <B-1>	B	Don't know
a.	The organization values individual achievement more than group achievement.						The organization values group achievement more than individual achievement.	
b.	Conflict is considered a problem to be avoided or lessened, if at all possible.						Conflict is considered a healthy part of the organization's culture.	
c.	One of the organization's messages is: "there is one right way to do the work."						One of the organization's messages is: "there are different ways to do the work."	
d.	The organization's culture allows for limited emotional responses and discourages emotional responses that go beyond those limits.						The organization's culture allows for different ways for people to respond, including high emotional responses.	
e.	The organization has strict guidelines regarding dress and appearance.						The organization provides flexibility regarding dress and appearance, in the context of the workplace, and supports individual styles and differences.	

Please provide any comments about your responses:

8. Focus on the Organization's hiring and promotion process:

	A	More like <A-1>	Somewhat Like <A-2>		Somewhat Like <B-2>	More like <B-1>	B	Don't know
a.	There is a pattern of employees being promoted in the organization who are typically white.						There is a pattern of employees being promoted in the organization who are racially diverse.	
b.	Those who support and adhere to the established organization's culture are typically the ones promoted and given other opportunities for advancement.						Promotions and opportunities for advancement are given and provided based on many factors: organizational needs, people's performance, personal goals, as well as diversity and equity issues.	
c.	Racial diversity is not an explicit goal for hiring.						Racial diversity and equity are explicit goals for hiring. There is a checks-and-balances process to assess what personal filters are being used in hiring—such as, how one defines a “good” candidate.	
d.	Racial diversity is not an explicit goal in hiring vendors.						Racial diversity and equity are explicit goals in hiring vendors. Due diligence is employed in checking on vendors' internal policies in regards to equity.	
e.	The Hiring Committee is informed about how to create a process (from job announcement to interview) which supports the organization's diversity and/or inclusion statements.						The Hiring Committee is informed about how to create a process (from job announcement to interview) which supports the organization's diversity, inclusion, and equity values.	

Please provide any comments about your responses:

9. Focus on the Organization's decision-making process:

	A	More like <A-1>	Somewhat Like <A-2>		Somewhat Like <B-2>	More like <B-1>	B	Don't know
a.	Designated leaders make decisions and communicate them as needed.						People directly impacted by decisions are included in the decision-making process and/or review of a proposed decision prior to it being finalized.	
b.	The decisions that are eventually adopted are usually made in the "meeting before the meeting" (or afterwards).						The decisions that end up being adopted are pretty much the same as the ones developed during the process.	
c.	If people with power advocate for exceptions to a policy, typically the change/exception will be made.						Policies are applied consistently, equitably and transparently.	
d.	People with the most direct life experience and/or most affected by the decision on the issue being considered <i>provide input</i> .						People with the most direct life experience and/or most affected by the decision on the issue being considered are the ones who drive the <i>decision-making</i> discussions most of the time.	

Please provide any comments about your responses:

10. Focus on how the Organization distributes information and resources:

	A	More like <A-1>	Somewhat Like <A-2>		Somewhat Like <B-2>	More like <B-1>	B	Don't know
a.	Information is held within a select group of people who decide how and when it will be shared with others.						Efforts are made to ensure information is shared consistently throughout the organization in a timely manner.	
b.	People in power may ask for feedback, though typically there is not follow-up.						People in power listen to the feedback and either act on the feedback or explain why they do not.	
c.	The budget does not include sufficient resources to implement the organization's diversity, inclusion and/or equity goals.						The budget includes sufficient resources to implement the organization's diversity, inclusion and equity goals.	
d.	Resources for staff are not distributed equitably (e.g., professional development, tools to do work, staffing).						Resources for staff are distributed equitably and transparently. (e.g., professional development, tools to do work, staffing).	

Please provide any comments about your responses

11. Focus on the Organization's process to measure progress:

	A	More like <A-1>	Somewhat Like <A-2>		Somewhat Like <B-2>	More like <B-1>	B	Don't know
a.	The assumption is that if you did not meet goals, you did not work hard enough.						When goals are not met, an assessment determines the reasons why— individual and systemic—and a response to ensure that resources and support to reach goals are provided, or the goals are modified, if warranted.	
b.	Mistakes are considered a problem—particularly for the individual who makes them.						The organization assumes that mistakes are part of the work and an opportunity for the individual and the organization to learn and make changes as needed.	
c.	The organization sometimes scapegoats individuals for mistakes, rather than the organization assuming responsibility.						The organization takes responsibility for mistakes, and works to make amends to the individuals and/or community involved.	
d.	Numbers are the most important in assessing progress.						Progress is assessed through different types of data and anecdotal information.	
e.	Defining progress is done by people with power in the organization.						A diverse group is involved in creating the data instruments and defining progress. Those most impacted are involved.	

Please provide any comments about your responses:

12. Focus on the Organization's equity practices:

	A	More like <A-1>	Somewhat Like <A-2>		Somewhat Like <B-2>	More like <B-1>	B	Don't know
a.	Time is typically a major barrier for working toward diversity, inclusion and/or equity outcomes.						Equity work is prioritized, to ensure there is time to work toward equity outcomes.	
b.	When addressing racialized situations, the organization views intent as more important than impact.						When addressing racialized situations, the organization views impact as more important than intent.	
c.	Equity goals (e.g., a goal to increase the percentage and amount of contracts for vendors of color) are not part of performance evaluations for most people.						Equity goals are part of performance evaluations for most people.	
d.	A group is designated to manage the equity work in the organization. This group is limited in their power and resources to ensure equity goals are met.						An Equity working group has the resources needed and the power to create an accountability process with consequences and incentives to reach equity goals.	
e.	Human resource policies focused on equity are not consistently enforced, and typically there are few or no consequences for not following them.						Human resource policies or practices focused on equity have teeth and are consistently enforced. There are almost always consequences for not following them.	
f.	The organization evaluates success in moving toward equity goals by internal benchmarks.						The organization evaluates success by the contribution and impact of its actions on the community's progress towards racial equity.	

Please provide any comments about your responses: