Organizational Culture is Shaped by Country/Nation Culture White Supremacy Culture ~

White supremacy culture refers to the unquestioned assumptions, standards of behavior, values, and ways of operating in institutions in the United States, Canada, and European-heritaged countries. They become indistinguishable from and embedded with individual nation/societal norms.

White supremacy culture norms and values are assumed indicators of the "right, good, valued, best" way to be in all aspects of life and are deeply entrenched in organizational and institutional cultures and their policies, procedures, and practices. These beliefs have become ubiquitous values and expectations which directly support the benefit of the status quo and dominant racial and gender identity groups (white and male).

The intricacy and pervasiveness of conscious and unconscious operation of dominant group norms suppresses and oppresses expression of other values or behaviors, seeing them (and the people who express them) as ineffective, wrong, inferior, unacceptable, suspect, and potentially dangerous or violent.

Culture change to achieve effectiveness, equity, and inclusion in organizations is complex and difficult since dominant culture is imbedded within our organizational culture and individual ways of being and are at play in conscious and unconscious ways. Culture identification and change requires awareness, commitment, curiosity, persistence, fortitude, a whole systems approach, willingness to explore power and privilege and dismantle systems and procedures that foster inequity and exclusion, and more.

White Supremacy Culture Characteristics			
Characteristic	**What it is**	**Barriers & Consequences of Unconscious or Overly/Solely-Used Conscious Expression**	**What is MISSING & NEEDED to Foster Inclusion, Equity and Effectiveness**
Individualism	Independence, autonomy, rugged individualism, self-reliance, competition – who is best, winner/loser, good/not	Challenging to work interdependently and cooperatively, focus on individual credit	**Interdependence:** Cultivate team/group identity, work toward shared goals, credit to all, group accountability
Perfectionism	Highest quality only, correctness (exceeding external authorities standard) is prized, achieve to be valued, must be perfect to be good	Lack of appreciation for effort/learning, risk and mistake aversion, fault focused, competition	**Emergence:** Culture of appreciation of effort/results, valuing learning, separate person from mistake, add suggestions
Objectivity	Rational, logical, neutral, avoiding emotions especially in decision-making, group process, either/or, task, problem/solutions	Invalidating people who show emotion, impatience with relational and process, devalue story/conversation	**Exploring and Valuing Multiple Perspectives:** Explore all world-views, open to different expressions, assume everyone has a valid point, seek out perspectives different from your own

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Sense of Urgency	Focus on speed as valid driver of action and process, always "doing," take on more, punctuality held supreme, on-time all the time – or early	No/limited time to be inclusive, values "fast thinkers," prevents/ diminishes relationship building. Can be an excuse to exclude, diminish people	**Strategic Pace Setting:** Clear choice about speed required, relationship, inclusion & process as valued as "deadline," necessary urgency only, intentional pace, know negative impact of speed
Worship of Written Word	Valid if documented, published, historically recorded, written "well," or in peer-reviewed journal	Devalue or dismiss story, image, conversation, not valid or valuable nor is person/people sharing	**Valuing Creative Expression:** Seek and value multiple ways to share information, value people and their styles, write in accessible language
Paternalism	Power resides in leader who knows best, top-down, leaders(s) know and make process/decisions others unclear	Disengaged and disempowered staff, exclusive and limiting, mistrust, loss of potential	**Shared Responsibility:** Clear profile of authority / responsibility /power, clear decision-making roles, communication of decisions & rationale, involve/inform those impacted
One Right Way	There is a "right" and "wrong" way, people and work valued accordingly	Indirect, unclear what is right/wrong, creativity diminishes, disengaged staff	**Multiple right ways:** Welcoming multiple perspectives, collaboration, emergence/growth, learning orientation
Either/Or Thinking	Closely related to "one right way," good/bad, right/wrong, with us/against us as determined by those with power	Value of the "tried and true," creativity discouraged, simplification of complex, rushed process, inhibits seeking alternatives	**Both/And Thinking:** Realizing this is strong in many of us, slow down and actively seek alternatives, assume all have valid point, value innovative potentially "out there" ideas
Power Hoarding	Power concentrated at the top, power seen as limited, minimal sharing, focus on keeping and growing the power you have, powerful determine the "best interest" of others	Lack of authority to do job, seeking authority & collaboration seen as threat to personal power, value / worth tied to personal power	**Power Sharing:** Clear indication of authority, decision-making power, and participation. Shared and collaborative processes and decision-making, open to being questioned / challenged

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Fear of Open Conflict	Minimize, diminish, hide difference to avoid direct conflict, emphasis on being "polite," indirect disagreement	Blaming of person(s) for raising difference, ignore input and people, key issues don't get surfaced, avoid controversial issues, real or perceived risk and negative consequences to raising issues	**Exploring conflict – Lean in:** Raising key differences clearly, engaging in challenging conversations, valuing all perspectives, lean into discomfort, view conflict as learning opportunity
Right to Comfort	Those with greatest power have least discomfort, challenge, questioning, criticism, greater psychological safety the greater the power	Discomfort and challenges ignored, scapegoating / blaming of those raising difficult issues, most stress pushed to those with least power	**Open to discomfort:** Discomfort as necessary for learning, lowering stress and negative impact of it, fostering psychological safety
Defensiveness	Inability to hear new ideas or new ways with openness, requiring things to be done the "right way" to be heard or to dismiss new ideas out of hand	Hesitation to present new ideas, avoidance of feedback to those in power, "walk on egg shells" or find work-arounds	**Curiosity:** Feedback as cultural norm, intentional seeking of different perspectives, emotional intelligence, not taking things personally
Progress	Growth as all costs, only as good as last success, more is better	Valuing of measurable results only, negative side of growth ignored	**Expansion of capabilities:** Cost/benefit analysis that includes measurable and non-measurable factors
Learning as "Mastery"	Belief that with trainings or readings are synonymous with learning, and that completed training/reading means we "get it;" learning as a destination that is reached, and once it is reached no further learning is needed/required	Leads to "assumed" competence, resists long term investment required to be aware and responsive to complex topics/issues; perpetuates generalizations that diminish individuals' lived experience and perspectives.	**Learning as "Emergent" Knowledge/Knowing:** commitment to learning as a "lived" process. Focus on continuous learning seen as expected/needed to deepen awareness and effectiveness when differing perspectives are present.

White supremacy culture profiles comes from many sources include: Tema Okun, White Supremacy Culture, 2001; Judith Katz, Some Aspects and Assumptions of White Culture in the United States, 1985; Robette Ann Dias, Transforming Institutional Values: Revisited, 2008; Joseph Brandt, Understanding and Dismantling Racism: The 21st Century Challenge to White America, 2007; Barbara Major, How does White Privilege Show Up in Foundation and Community Initiatives, Maggie Potapchuk, Flipping the Script: White Privilege and Community Building, 2005; Maggie Potapchuk, White Culture Worksheet, Transforming White Privilege, 2012.