

RACISM: See It. Know It. Stop It.

COURSE NOTES Lesson 1: “Understanding Racism”

What is Racism?

- An ideology which holds that based on skin color and other physical characteristics one group (the dominant group) is inherently superior to another (the racialized group). The dominant group then uses its power and privilege to enforce and sustain this ideology over time.

How does Racism Manifest?

Three of several ways:

- *Cultural* (beliefs about others outside our culture perpetuated by means such as literature--e.g., about Matoaka)
- *Explicit* (e.g., through laws and Papal Bulls that gave Europeans the right to capture, enslave and appropriate the lands of populations deemed inferior to Europeans)
- *Systemic*: Institutions that govern our lives in society, e.g., education, policing, and child welfare, that are based on European realities and as such favors Whites over Indigenous populations.

Pyramid of White Supremacy (Equality Institute Infograph)

While we often define racism through acts like violence against racialized people, racism begins with ideas rooted in White Supremacy. For example, after a Black man is shot by Police, the response: “Well, he they must have done something wrong or the police would not have shot him”. Or when people claim to be ‘color blind’ while ignoring racism around them. These minimizing attitudes normalize and create the social root from which acts of violence can grow.

What can I do personally to stop racism?

- 1) CHALLENGE YOURSELF: What ideas am I holding that are contributing to racism?
- 2) EDUCATE YOURSELF: Where do I need to broaden my understanding on topics like racism against Indigenous Peoples, Black people and other racialized groups?
- 3) BECOME PART OF THE SOLUTION: Call out racism when you see it. Don’t remain silent.