

# dismantling racism

2013



a  
workbook  
for  
social  
change  
groups

**dR**works

[www.dismantlingracism.org](http://www.dismantlingracism.org)

## change team

The role of the change team is:

1. to **lead and organize the process** towards becoming an anti-racist social change organization
  - help move people into actively supporting (or at least avoid resisting) the changes necessary to move the organization towards that vision
  - help to resolve conflict
  - avoid becoming 'morality police' by including others in the work of the change team
2. to lead and organize a process to **evaluate** the organization as it is now
3. to lead a process to help the organization **vision** what it would look like as an anti-racist social change organization
4. lead to process to establish **specific, clear, and meaningful goals** for reaching the vision
5. **build community** and **move the organization to collective action**
  - help the organization think about how to integrate and/or educate those in the organization who have not been through a DR training
  - be in open communication with all members of the organization
6. insure the integration of the work of the change team with program work
7. **think like an organizer** in helping the organization move toward its goals
  - work with members of the organization to think strategically about how to reach the goals of the organization

## caucuses

The role of caucuses is:

1. to provide **healing** and **support**
2. to **study** and **strategize**
3. to **resolve conflict** and **solve problems collectively**
4. to **plan, discuss, debate, draft recommendations for the change team** in order to help the organization move towards its goals of building an anti-racist social change organization

*Note:* People must go through a Dismantling Racism training to be eligible for joining the change team; everyone is invited to participate in the caucuses. If people come to the caucuses who have not participated in a workshop, then those leading the caucus need to be thoughtful about how to bring those people into the discussion (keep in mind they may not share the language, analysis, or ways of thinking of those who have been through a workshop).

## change team

### **Job Description**

- adapted from James Williams, Grassroots Leadership's Barriers and Bridges program

Change team members are people who:

- really want to see positive change in the organization and/or community;
- bring enthusiasm and commitment to the process (they are role models and cheerleaders);
- have a certain degree of skill in helping make change happen;
- have some degree of leadership in their organization or community;
- are willing to see themselves as change agents;
- but understand that they can't do it alone. They must build a group or organization of people who will take over leadership of the process and in turn develop new leaders.

Their job is to develop a group of people who will work together to reach their goals. This involves working with others to:

- assess the present situation, define problems, and set goals for solving them;
- identify the values the group or organization brings to this work, i.e. making sure people are clear about how they want to be with each other as they work toward these goals;
- identify ways the group can reach out to new people, share power and develop new leadership, receive people as they are into the group, help people grow in their awareness of the issues, empower people, and get the work done;
- develop a strategy to accomplish their goals;
- insure that the strategy is carried out;
- evaluate and make changes in the strategy as needed.
- make sure that all contributions are appreciated and that everyone has a chance to grow and change throughout the process.

## change team

### Action Steps

■ adapted by Grassroots Leadership's Barriers and Bridges program from Judy H. Katz, *White Awareness: Handbook for Anti-Racism Training*.

1. Identify the problem that you want to address. Who else sees this as a problem? Is it widely felt? The answers to these questions will give you an idea of how difficult or challenging it will be to make changes (the fewer people who see it as a challenge, the harder it will be to take it on).
2. Identify who needs to be involved in helping to shape the evaluation and help carry it out. Involve a larger group whose participation will help them understand the process and make it less threatening. Remember that some people will equate evaluation with criticism of the organization and as a result will resist the evaluation process. Think about whether you need to engage those people or work around them. This will depend on how much power and influence they have to affect the process.
3. State the specific goal or goals that will move your organization toward solving the problem. These goals need to be tangible. In other words, 'eliminate racism' is not a tangible goal while 'get the board to adopt by-laws specifying percentages based on race, gender, income, sexual identity, etc.' is. Talk about how the goal (or goals) is (are) in line with your organization's values and mission.
4. Identify who needs to be involved in helping to shape these goals. Avoid setting the goals by yourself; involve a larger group whose participation in setting the goals will raise their stake in achieving them.
5. Identify who in the organization shares a desire to reach these goals. How much power do they have to influence decision-makers (answer to number 2) in the organization? What is their self-interest?
6. Identify who in the organization is threatened by or opposed to these goals. How much power do they have to influence decision-makers (answer to number 2) in the organization? What is their self-interest?
7. Identify any additional risks or barriers you face.

8. Identify the specific strategy steps the change team and/or the organization will take to meet the goals. How will you involve allies and address challenges from those who are threatened or opposed? How will you include those who might otherwise oppose you. Who should be recruited onto the change team? Who will coordinate the efforts? When and how will people meet to work on these goals? Develop a timeline.
  
9. Build in evaluation and reflection. At what points will you revise your strategy? How will you build change team morale and relationships? How will you make sure the work of the change team is integrated into the organization (as opposed to becoming a 'fringe' or 'clique' activity)?

## **change agent dilemmas**

### **1. The 'what about me?' syndrome**

The change agent wants to work to create change, but s/he also feels her/his own unmet needs; a desire to be at the center.

### **2. The inclusion dilemma**

The change agent struggles with the issue of how to include as many people as possible in the different stage of the change process.

### **3. Cognitive dissonance**

The change agent experiences conflict between what s/he considers 'normal' and new information. For example, religious teaching that homosexuality is a sin vs. the gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender liberation movement.

### **4. Fear**

The fear of the dominant group: what will I lose? The fear of the target group: what will I lose? i.e. the fear that taking action will result in the loss of friends.

### **5. Where to start**

Requires careful organizational analysis of who wants to work with the change agent and who feels threatened and what power each or all of these people have in the organization to enable or stop change efforts.

### **6. Resistance to change**

People's resistance to change can come out as: "People here are satisfied (or happy)." "Don't be a troublemaker." "Who are you to suggest these changes?" "We'd like to change, but . . . it costs too much, it's hopeless, nothing will ever be different." "The alumni (or whatever group) won't like the change."

### **7. How far is this going to go?**

Feelings that some change is all right but let's not go too far, particularly when those with power feel threatened or those who have internalized their experience are fearful of conflict that change might bring.

### **8. Despair**

The change agent's own sense of discouragement and despair when it becomes clear that many in the organization don't really want things to change.

### **9. Targeting**

The change agent is targeted for asking questions or taking action that 'rocks the boat.'

### **10. The "I have to do it myself" syndrome**

The change agent feels all the responsibility for change rests on her or his shoulders and has a hard time delegating or letting other people get involved.

## change team checklist

■ adapted from Andrea Ayvazian: Dismantling Racism: Workbook for Social Change Groups published by the Peace Development Fund.

Use this checklist about once every two or three months to make sure your change team is staying on track:

1. When did the change team last meet? Do you have plans to meet in the future?
2. Who is leading the change team? Is there someone who takes responsibility for making sure the team is meeting and getting work done? Has this responsibility changed hands, or has one person pretty much been responsible? How is this leadership pattern good or bad for the change team?
3. How would you describe the morale of the change team?
4. What are some of the strengths of the change team?
5. Where is the change team getting stuck?
6. Is the change team meeting resistance from others in the organization or community? If so, why and what can you do about it? When you look at your reasons, are you stuck in blaming others, in other words are you requiring other people to change before anything can get done? Or are you taking responsibility for addressing the problems that come up?
7. Is the change team finding the kind of support it needs in the organization or community? If not, why not and what can you do about it? Are you truly encouraging new people into the organization or community? Are you making them welcome and giving them a chance to grow?
8. Are you making time in your meetings for personal sharing and reflection? Or are your meetings all business and no fun?
9. Are you accomplishing your goals? If so, are you taking time to pat yourselves on the back and enjoy your success? If not, are you taking time to rethink your strategies?