

Building Racial Literacy

Understanding Unconscious Bias in Social Work and how to mitigate it.

About myself

- ▶ I am 23 years qualified as a Social Worker.
- ▶ Current role: Occupational Social Worker with the Defence Forces.
- ▶ Current member of IASW ARAG.
- ▶ I lived and worked in Western Australia for 7 years from 2012 to 2019 including in remote aboriginal communities.
- ▶ Considerable exposure to reflection and practice considerations regarding cultural security and safety.
- ▶ I am no expert! I am learning and seeing the need for lots of talking and thinking about anti-racist practice.

I gave up my whiteness in the interest of humanity, Janet Hund

- . Whiteness is considered normal, transparent, and invisible - in addition to conferring dominance.
- . Due to color blindness and a lack of class consciousness, many (white) Americans lack an understanding of whiteness and racial inequality.
- . By paying no attention to race, people think racial equality is an act of colour blindness and it will eliminate racial atmospheres.

What is white privilege?

- White privilege is the benefit that white people receive simply by being part of the dominant group (Hund & Johnson, 2021)
- White privilege is something that white Americans benefit from though many are oblivious to the daily effects of white privilege.
- In both covert and overt ways, white supremacy systematically impacts the racial order, benefiting those deemed white and operating to oppress people of color.

What is white fragility?

- ▶ Many whites experience white fragility, an outcome of white people's socialization into white supremacy and a means to protect, maintain, and reproduce white supremacy.
- ▶ We consider a challenge to our racial world views as a challenge to our very identities as good, moral people. Thus, we perceive any attempt to connect us to the system of racism as an unsettling and unfair moral offense. (Robin D'Angelo 2018).
- ▶ Society is structured in a way to prevent whites from experiencing discomfort, which means lack of conversations which means maintenance of white supremacy.

What is colour-blind racism?

- ▶ Colour-blind racism is the current dominant racial ideology__, it constructs a social reality for people of colour in its practices which are subtle, institutional and apparently non-racial.
- ▶ Race rhetoric supports a racial hierarchy that maintains white privilege and superiority, (Eduardo Bonilla-Smith 2007).

White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack, Peggy McIntosh, 1988: 26

daily effects of white privilege in her life.

1. I can if I wish arrange to be in the company of people of my race most of the time.
2. If I should need to move, I can be pretty sure of renting or purchasing housing in an area which I can afford and in which I would want to live.
3. I can be pretty sure that my neighbors in such a location will be neutral or pleasant to me.
4. I can go shopping alone most of the time, pretty well assured that I will not be followed or harassed.
5. I can turn on the television or open to the front page of the paper and see people of my race widely represented.
6. When I am told about our national heritage or about “civilization,” I am shown that people of my color made it what it is.
7. I can be sure that my children will be given curricular materials that testify to the existence of their race.
8. If I want to, I can be pretty sure of finding a publisher for this piece on white privilege.

9. I can go into a music shop and count on finding the music of my race represented, into a supermarket and find the staple foods that fit with my cultural traditions, into a hairdresser's shop and find someone who can cut my hair.

10. Whether I use checks, credit cards or cash, I can count on my skin color not to work against the appearance of financial reliability.

11. I can arrange to protect my children most of the time from people who might not like them.

12. I can swear, or dress in second-hand clothes, or not answer letters, without having people attribute these choices to the bad morals, the poverty, or the illiteracy of my race.

13. I can speak in public to a powerful male group without putting my race on trial.

14. I can do well in a challenging situation without being called a credit to my race.

15. I am never asked to speak for all the people of my racial group.

15. I can remain oblivious of the language and customs of persons of color who constitute the world's majority without feeling in my culture any penalty for such oblivion.

16. I can criticize our government and talk about how much I fear its policies and behavior without being seen as a cultural outsider.

17. I can be pretty sure that if I ask to talk to "the person in charge," I will be facing a person of my race.

18. If a traffic cop pulls me over or if the IRS audits my tax return, I can be sure I haven't been singled out because of my race.

19. I can easily buy posters, postcards, picture books, greeting cards, dolls, toys, and children's magazines featuring people of my race.

20. I can go home from most meetings of organizations I belong to feeling somewhat tied in, rather than isolated, out-of-place, outnumbered, unheard, held at a distance, or feared.

21. I can take a job with an affirmative action employer without having co-workers on the job suspect that I got it because of race.

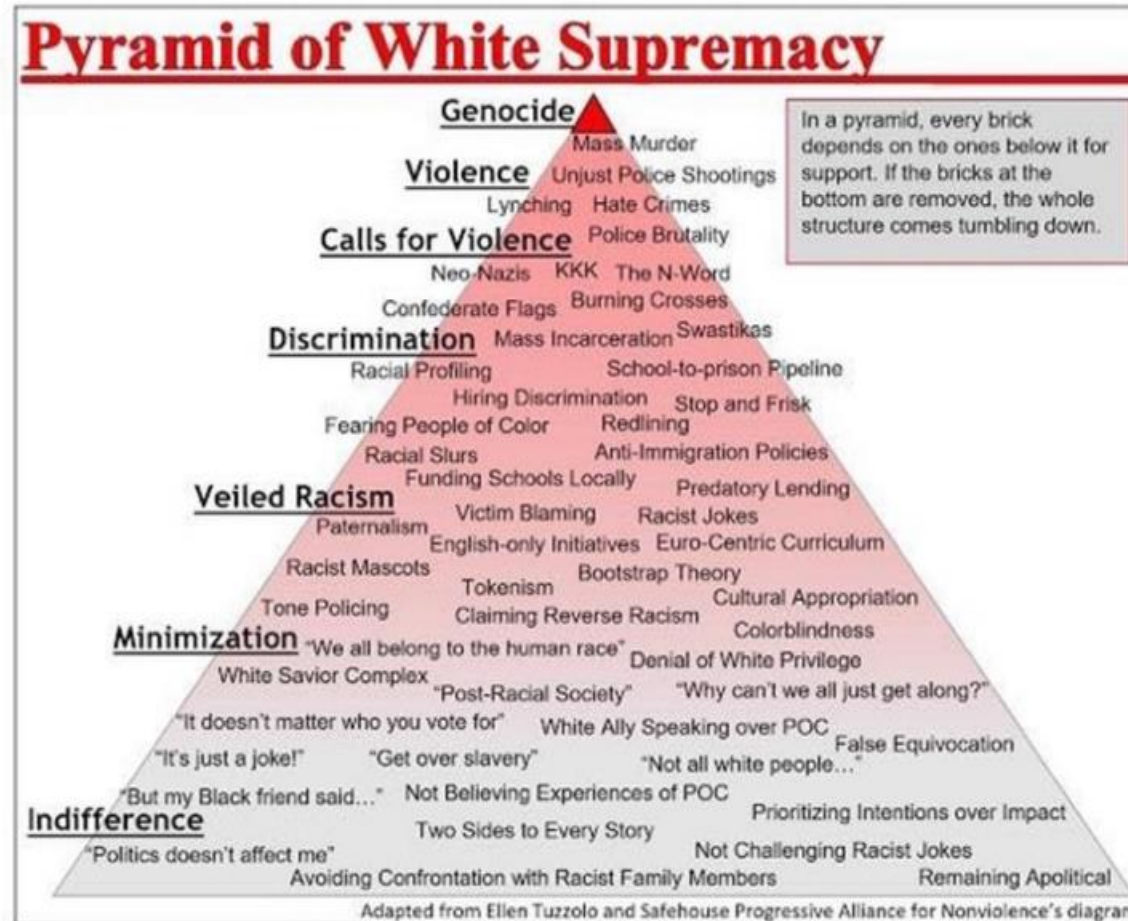
22. I can choose public accommodations without fearing that people of my race cannot get in or will be mistreated in the places I have chosen.

23. I can be sure that if I need legal or medical help, my race will not work against me.

24. If my day, week, or year is going badly, I need not ask of each negative episode or situation whether it has racial overtones.

25. I can choose blemish cover or bandages in “flesh” color and have them more less match my skin.

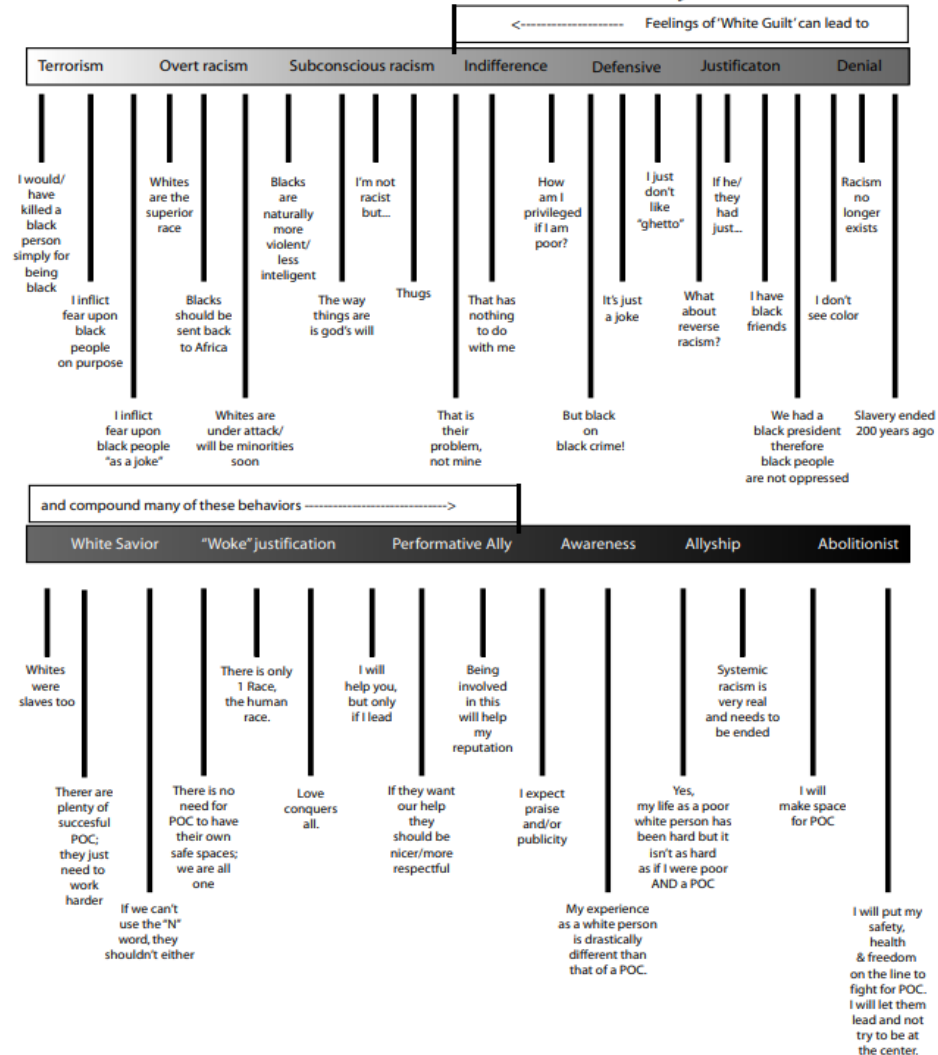
In a pyramid, every brick depends upon the ones below it for support. If the bricks at the bottom are removed, the entire structure comes tumbling down.



Racism Scale, where do you fall?

► Naadac; www.naadac.org

Racism Scale: Where do you fall?



Feelings of white guilt can lead to:

- ▶ Terrorism;
- ▶ Overt racism;
- ▶ Subconscious racism;
- ▶ Indifference;
- ▶ Defensive;
- ▶ Justification;
- ▶ Denial

And compound many of these behaviours:

- ▶ White Saviour;
- ▶ “Woke justification”
- ▶ Performative Ally

Where we want to be.....

- ▶ Awareness;
- ▶ Allyship;
- ▶ Abolitionst.

Allyship - where are we now?

- ▶ White Irish perspective?
- ▶ How do we find out more about this?
- ▶ How can we get conversations going?

What is Cultural Security/culturally safe practice?

Cultural Competence:

- ▶ Definition: the ability to understand, appreciate and interact with people from different cultures or belief systems different from ones' own.

Cultural competence compasses:

- ▶ being aware of ones' own world view,
- ▶ developing positive attitudes towards cultural differences,
- ▶ gaining knowledge of different cultural practices and world views;
- ▶ developing skills for communication and interaction.

Cultural Proficiency requires more than becoming culturally aware or practising tolerance. Rather it is the ability to identify and challenge one's own cultural beliefs and to make a commitment to communicating at the cultural interface (National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNIACC)).

Professional Standards

- ▶ **The CORU Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics:**
- ▶ **Domain 1 Standard -9** Recognise the importance of practising in a non-discriminatory, culturally sensitive way and acknowledge and respect the differences in beliefs and cultural practices of individuals or groups
- ▶ **Domain 5 Standard 5:** Critically understand and be able to apply principles of social justice in one's work including being able to appropriately challenge negative discrimination and unjust policies and practices.
- ▶ **Domain 5 Standard 6:** Demonstrate a critical understanding of cultural competence; and work towards social inclusion

Professional Standards contd;

► IASW Code of Practice:

Members must:

- 1. Treat people who use social work services and colleagues with dignity and respect.
- 2. Protect and promote the human rights of those who use social work services to while balancing their rights with those of others.
- 3. Act at all times with regard to the will and preference of those who use social work services to: a. take into account the beliefs and values of those who use social work services;
- 9. Respect diversity and difference.

Members must not:

- 4. Discriminate on the basis of gender, race, religion, age, marital status, sexual orientation. disability or membership of the Traveller community.

Embedding cultural competence in Social Work supervision, the Western Australia experience

- ▶ Dept of Communities WA, Westerman Report (Indigenous Psychological Services) 2019, found that Dept of Communities was plagued by widespread and endemic racism;
- ▶ The report expressed concerns at rate of aboriginal child removals;
- ▶ Despite only 4 per cent of the WA population being Indigenous, the Department of Communities' 2017-2018 annual report showed 55 per cent of the children in state care were Aboriginal.
- ▶ By 2020-21, the annual report stated that of the 5,344 children in care, 3,056 were Aboriginal – an increase of more than 2 per cent to 57.2 per cent.

The Western Australia Experience

- ▶ Development of the **Cultural Competency Profile for Child Protection (CCP-CP)**
- ▶ This psycho-metric tool is unique to Australia in that it is the only tool that has been both culturally and psychometrically validated as a measure of child protection cultural competence in working with Aboriginal people.
- ▶ **It measures 5 domains as follows:**
 1. Cultural knowledge;
 2. Skills and abilities; child protection;
 3. Awareness and beliefs;
 4. Resources and linkages;
 5. Organisational cultural competency.

The IASW Anti-Racism Strategy Plan 2020-2023

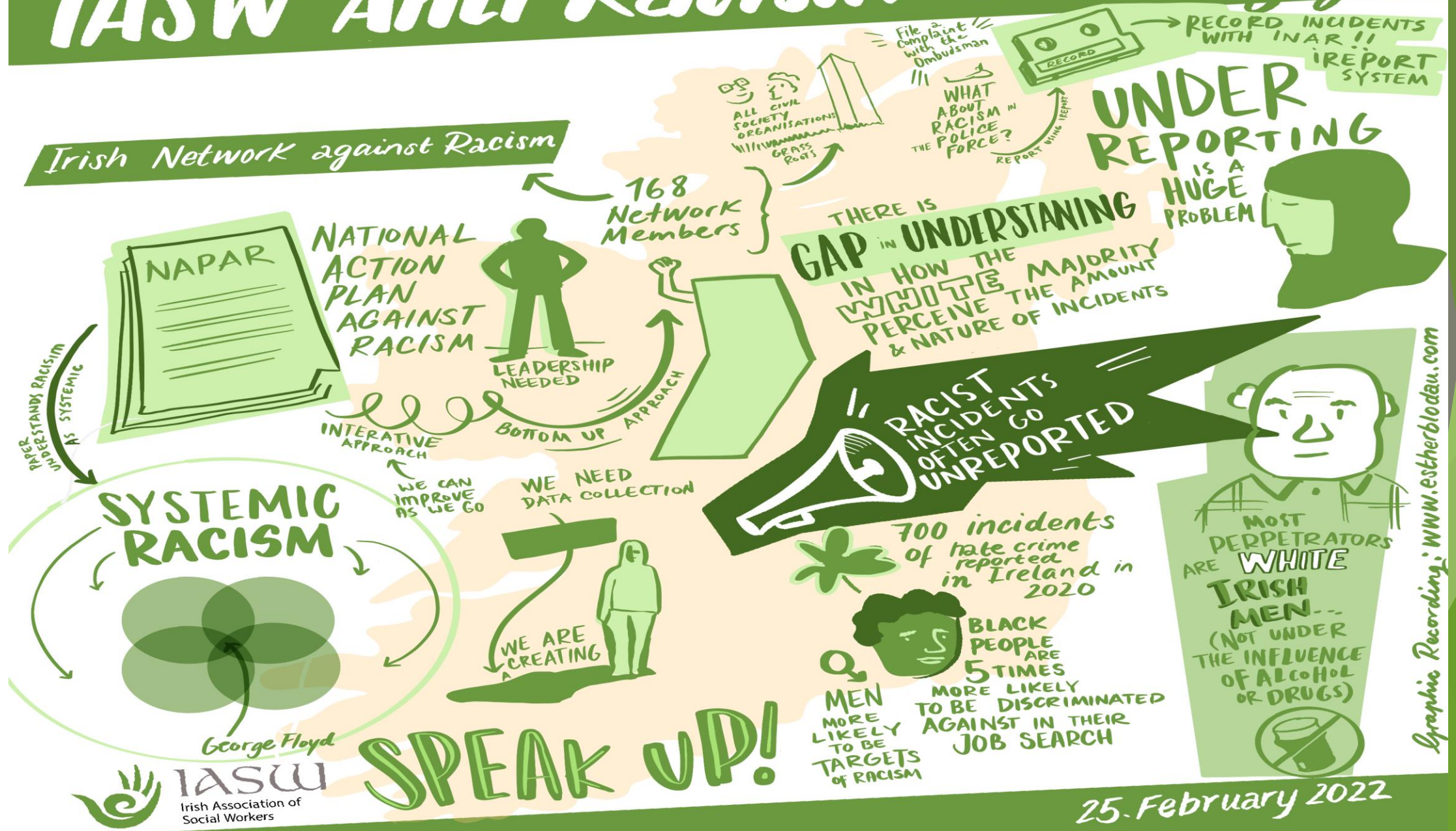
VALUES & VISION:

- Our Values and Vision based on egalitarian and social justice ethos find expression in this strategic plan's thrust towards achieving racial justice through dismantling racism and its various manifestations. To remain true to our values and mission it is imperative that we change the way we approach and dismantle racism to advance racial equity.

Other services in Ireland: INAR

- Provides Anti -Racism training which focuses on reporting and finding practical responses to racism;
- INAR & FLAC Equal Access Programme: Anti-Racism Advocacy training, launched in 2022 (Knowledge of legislation necessary when taking a case to the WRC, Dismantling Racism).
- This training is based on Responding to Racism guide: How to report Racism and where to find help.
- Hate Crime legislation: Criminal Justice (hate crime) Bill published in April 2021; INAR Love not hate campaign;
- Call for a National Action Plan against Racism;
- Reports and Research, all available online
- Ireport.ie: reports of racism in Ireland.
- INAR Report: Afrophobia in Ireland; racism against people of African descent.

IASW Anti Racism Strategy



IASW Anti Racism Strategy



What can we do?

- ▶ The 4D2P Framework (Tadam 2021) for Social Work practice
- ▶ Discuss (Build rapport/assess)
- ▶ Discover (result of assessment)
- ▶ Decide (analysis and decision)
- ▶ Disrupt (intervene/make better/improve)

We do not disrupt racism by staying silent.

Authentic Allyship

- ▶ White allies should continuously empower, educate and equip themselves in an authentic way, (Wayne Reid former edi in BASW).
- ▶ The mantra of pure, proactive and unapologetic.
- ▶ What would that be like, how would we as white allies do that?
- ▶ The work of anti-racism is to fight racism wherever you see it, even in yourself.
- ▶ Black and ethnic minority professionals must remember it is not their role to dismantle racism. They can play a part of they wish to but racism is a white problem, (Dr. Muna Abdi).