



## Building Racial Consciousness Guideposts



“Caminante, no hay camino, se hace camino al andar.” - Antonio Machado

### Context

Discourse around race carries the baggage of our past successes and failures in effective discourse. They have the potential to devolve from our highest aspirations to eliminate racism and other forms of oppression or ignite possibilities for change that we may not see. Part of the challenge comes from the complexity, inaccuracy and ambiguity of our shared cultural narratives concerning race and the social constructions that carry real life outcomes for our communities. Over years of work engaging communities in racial discourse and equity transformation, we have arrived at four main guideposts that, when engaged by a group or organization, lead to increased awareness, consciousness, and facility of participants to engage around race, the experience of race, and the impact of race. The Guideposts support group change by expanding shared understanding, caring for the inner experience of participants, using emotional energy constructively, engaging the intellect meaningfully, and building resolve for generative disruption of racial patterns that lead to disparity.

GUIDEPOST #1	GUIDEPOST #2	GUIDEPOST #3	GUIDEPOST #4
<b>Racial Socialization</b>  <i>How were we raised to view and engage the world racially?</i>	<b>Historical Context of Race</b>  <i>How did we get here?</i>	<b>Racialized Patterns</b>  <i>What patterns, coded language, and institutional policies uphold our disparities?</i>	<b>Generative Disruption and Allyship</b>  <i>How do we work together for change?</i>

Groups that want to advance healing, understanding and systems change need to consciously and carefully build a shared foundation for racial discourse and consciousness. The Building Racial Consciousness Guideposts point out key conversations for a group to engage in deep reflection and build the intellectual and spiritual foundations necessary for transformative work in a racialized context. There are many powerful discourse tools that help shape healthy discourse and these experiential frames serve to create a process for deepening the knowledge, skill, will, capacity, and empathy of the participants. In other words, the Guideposts were developed to help a group make the road by walking together.

*The Guideposts were developed by Anthony Galloway, Partner, Dendros Group, LLC (c) 2019 [www.dendros.com](http://www.dendros.com)*

## **Racial Socialization-How we were raised to view/engage racially**

Key Understanding: That our socialization around race differs which impacts our engagements

### *Essentials:*

- Focus on self: Telling our racial autobiographies
- Intersecting our identities
- Practicing racial discourse tools

Because we all have been socialized differently around race and the experience of race, there must be some grounding and level setting so that participants can gain an understanding of how their socialization impacts their daily decisions and racial formation. The discussions in this guidepost center around the experiences that have shaped our understanding and engagement of Race while intersecting that understanding with the experiences of others. In addition, this guidepost functions to build shared language and understanding of how race impacts us and how our socialization has an impact on our ability to see those impacts. Whether you have grown up talking openly and honestly about race or have never thought deeply about it, you have an experience to bring to the table that can deepen our understanding of how we all have been socialized. Often, this experience gives us insight into the breakdowns and synergies that can help us navigate racial complexity and nuance.

## **Historical Context-How did we get here racially?**

Key Understanding: How our lack of historical understanding of race impacts our lived experiences

### *Essentials:*

- Exploring the origins of systems of racialized oppression
- Examination of racial group experiences throughout history
- Articulation of structural implications of historical examples of race and racism

This guidepost centers around how we have been socialized around racial history and the narratives that undergird our racial discourse. Because many of us still operate with large gaps in historical perspectives around racial discourse, we miss opportunities to understand how structurally racist systems and policies were created and continue to produce their intended results beyond intent or complicity. Discussions and activities in this guidepost bring the group face to face with counternarratives that also help the group get a sense for the steps we have taken as a nation towards our current racialized environment.

## Identifying Patterns, Coded Language, Institutions

Key Understanding: How systemic and behavioral patterns show up in daily experiences and how they impact communities

*Essentials:*

- Survey of negative racialized patterns, coded language, and institutional practices experienced by people of color
- Analysis of current practice for the presence of racialized patterns
- Increased understanding of our role in systemic inequity

This guidepost centers around the patterns of behavior, language, and institutional policy that produce the inequities and negative racial experiences we encounter daily whether or not we are conscious of them. Often, we focus on individual and isolated incidents to form our understanding of inequity. From patterns of treatment to the ways we encode racist beliefs and ideas in everyday language, this guidepost deepens our skills in analysis of racialized patterns.

## Interruption and Allyship

Key Understanding: How to strategically interrupt systemic structures in ways that diminish further harm

*Essentials:*

- Awareness of mental models
- Performative Equity
- Personal and collective commitments

Allyship requires a deep understanding of those we are supporting while keeping the pressure on systems to disrupt negative practice. To engage in allyship and interruption of predictable patterns of racial inequity without this understanding can have consequences for those with less privilege in the situation. Often, communities of supporters working in good faith can become overzealous in the face of injustice and ignore the cues given from the community they are serving. This guidepost pushes participants to strategize their support and engagement in ways that keep the focus on the community we are serving. It should also examine strategic ways to interrupt predictable patterns of inequity that we observe daily.