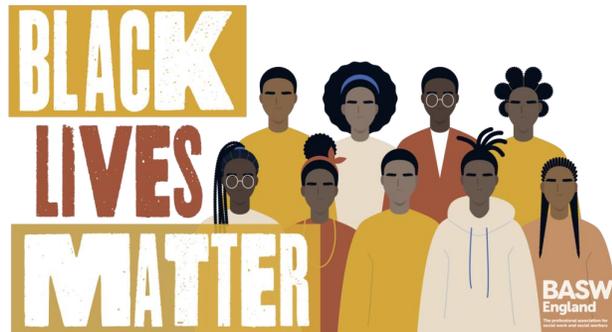




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Anti-racism in Social Work

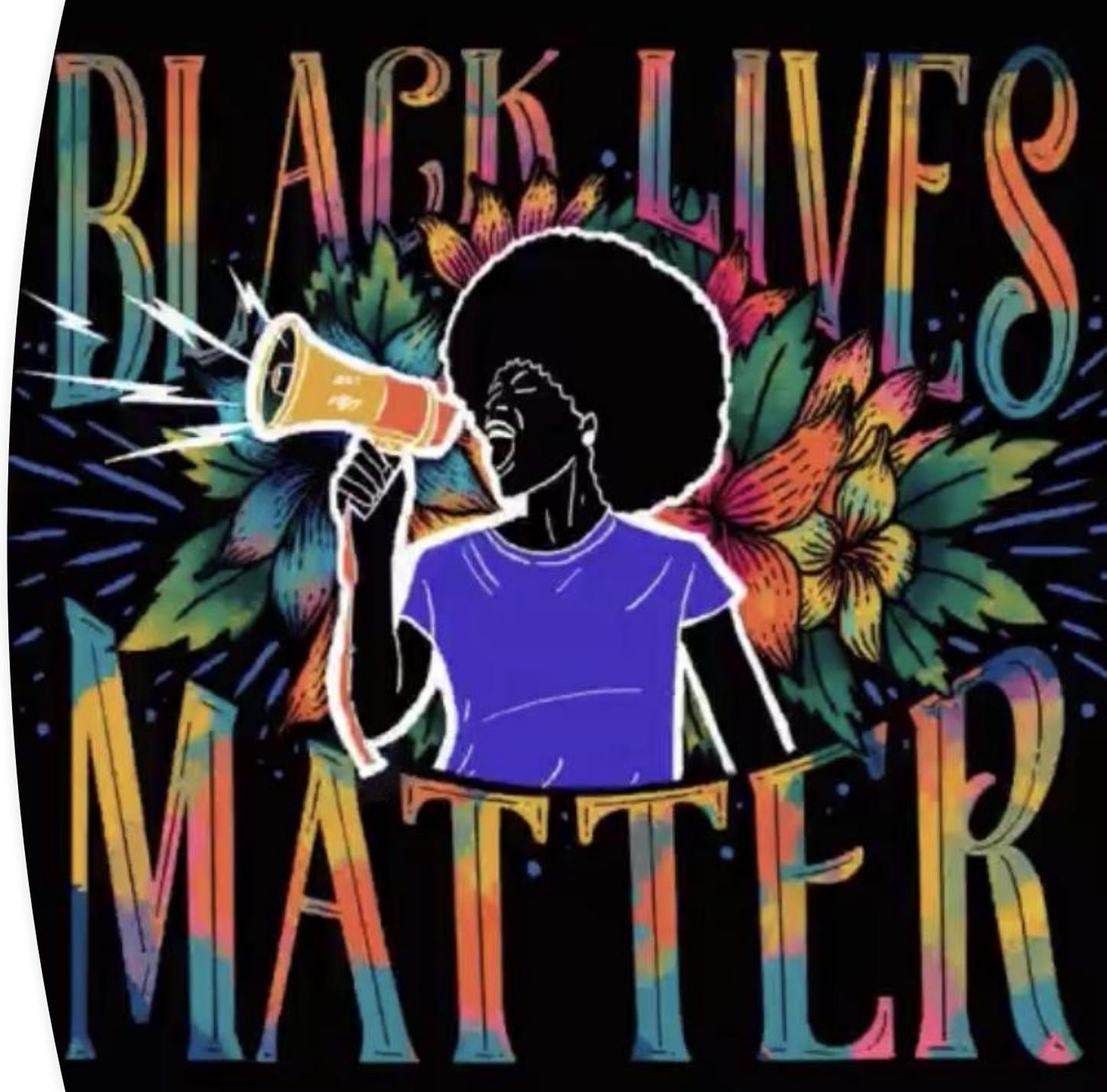


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BASW
England
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AGENDA

- My Social Work background
- The British Association of Social Workers
- George Floyd's murder
- What is 'Black Lives Matter' and why is relevant to Social Work?
- Organisational responses to anti-racism
- Implementing anti-racism in Social Work
- Questions



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My social work background

- **Professional Officer & Social Worker** (*BASW*)
- **Supervising Social Worker** (*private fostering social work*)
- **Young Person's Advisor** (*supporting care leavers*)
- **Duty & Assessment Officer** (*child protection*)
- **Adult Mental Health** (*community support / intervention*)
- **Youth Offending Service** (*court work and community intervention*)
- **Probation Services Officer** (*intensive supervision & surveillance*)
- **Placements Officer** (*private fostering administration*)



The British Association of Social Workers (BASW)

- BASW is the professional association for Social Workers in the UK (established in 1970).
- We are a member-led organisation which promotes Social Work, the interests of those working within the profession and people who use services.
- We have over 21,000 members and we have teams in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
- We are the strong independent voice of Social Work and Social Workers.

The BASW mandate

- **Strong** – We build strength and unity through vision and purpose, increasing our membership, developing our services, and influencing across the nations of the UK, in Europe and globally.
- **Independent** – We maintain our independence from governments and employers in order to be able to act in the best interests of the profession and social work professionals.
- **Voice** – We ensure a strong and positive voice in the media, with governments and working with their agencies, in order to speak up for social work and social workers, for people who use services. We campaign and lobby in order to have the best possible influence on policy, legislation and practice.
- **Social work** – We promote ownership of social work values, ethics, knowledge, education and practice. We defend, develop and strengthen social work as a unique profession rooted in social justice and respect for human dignity and worth.
- **Social workers** – We provide professional advice, support for practice, training and development opportunities. We also represent and defend social workers individually and collectively.

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Professional Support Service



What we do for Social Work

@BASW_UK @wayne_reid79

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- The Professional Capabilities Framework (PCF)
- Code of Ethics
- Collaboration with employers, education providers, service-user groups and other stakeholders (nationally)
- BASW branches and specialist groups
- Liaison with Social Work England



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- Parliamentary work with MP's and civil servants
- Events & conferences
- Training, CPD and career development
- Policy & research
- National campaigns and lobbying
- Consultation responses and position statements
- Raising the profile of social work on various media platforms
- Promote 'collective professional identity'



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What we do for Social Workers





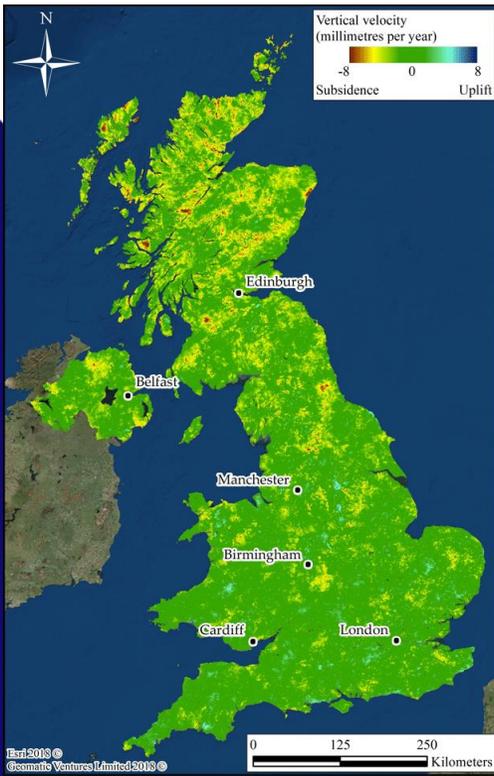
Branches & networks across the country

Policy, Practice & Education groups that focus on: children & families; adults social work; mental health; criminal justice; students and NQSW's and professional development

National consultation responses, campaigns and parliamentary work

Wide-ranging media opportunities

Policy and research activities





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- Training, CPD and career development
- SWU (trade union advice & representation)
- BASW Mentoring Scheme
- BASW Ambassadors
- Black & Ethnic Minority Professionals Symposium (BPS)
- Discounts at conferences, events and webinars
- Discounts available on BASW journals and publications
- Discounted code for membership

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Get involved!

- Join online at www.basw.co.uk
- Membership types are listed here:
<https://www.basw.co.uk/membership/membership-types>
- www.youtube.com/watch?v=P0MoJ3usFVo&feature=youtu.be



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Upcoming events...

Events nationwide at www.basw.co.uk/events

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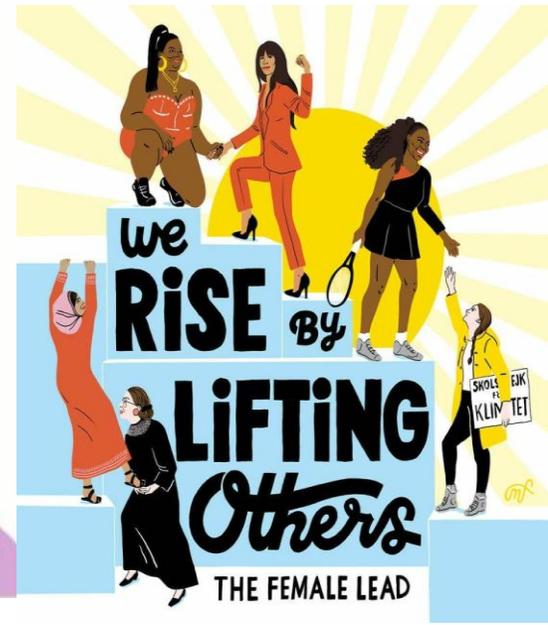


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PRIVILEGE is when YOU think something is not a PROBLEM because it's not a PROBLEM to you PERSONALLY

We are not chasing your benefits... we are fleeing your bombs!



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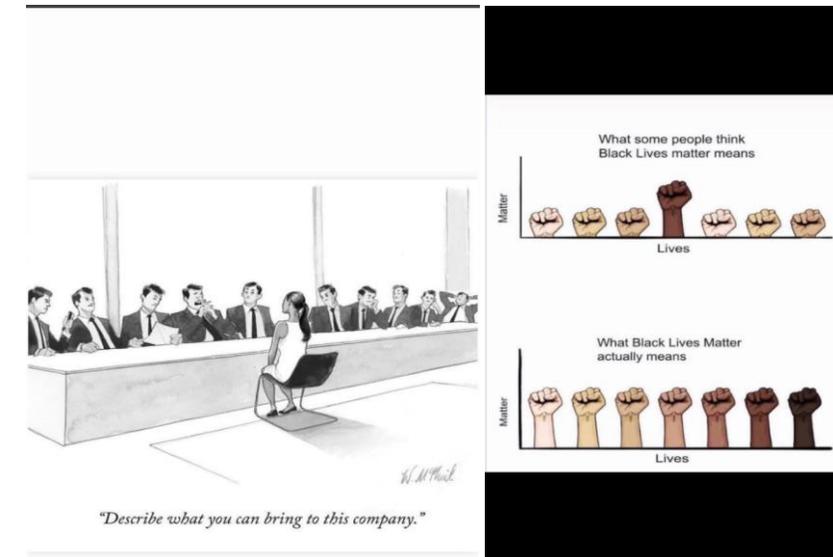
Anti-racism in Social Work

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My perspective on anti-racism in social work

- Personal and professional
- Very few black male social workers
- My opinion cannot and should not be understood as representing all Black and ethnic minority people/practitioners. We are not a homogenous group.
- I refuse to be the tokenistic 'Black voice' of BASW. I'm one of many Black voices in social work.
- I'm not an expert in organisational development/leadership, but I do consider myself as an 'expert with lived experience' of personal and professional racism in life and in social work. These are purely my opinions.



Timeline & workstreams (May-June 2020)

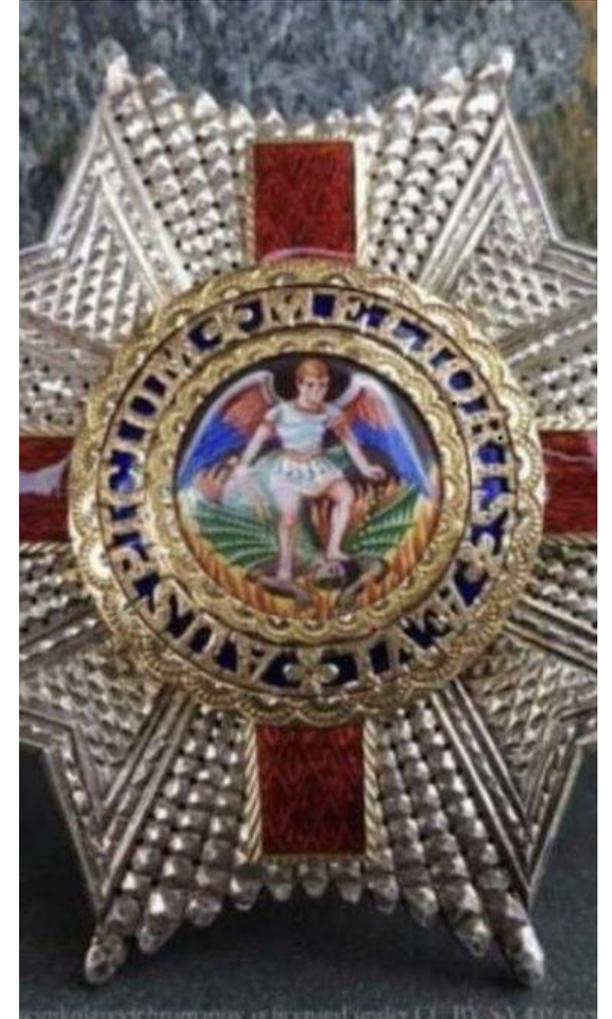
May 2020 - The Amy Cooper 'race grenade' goes viral on Twitter
-The George Floyd murder goes viral on Twitter

June 2020 – WR tweets: “It’s very revealing to observe the indifference, silence and tokenism from some social work leaders, prominent social workers and social work organisations during these times of serious racial violations... I see you... We all see you...”

- WR anti-racism and #blacklivesmatter Twitter campaign commences
- BASW issues a statement condemning the racist murder of George Floyd
- BASW condemned all forms of racism on Twitter
- Global #Blacklivesmatter protests (including many peaceful #BLM protests in the UK)
- 'Counter-protests' by far-right groups and major clashes with Police
- BASW EDI Advisory Group issues a position statement
- Counter protests in the UK from far-right groups
- BASW supports campaign for black person's statue in Bristol
- The KCMG campaign and BASW open letter to the Queen
- WR Community Care article: 'Black Lives Matter: social work must respond with action – not platitudes'
- WR 'Revolution' poem

Workstreams from July 2020 onwards

- How to promote an anti-racist culture in social work (online article)
- Podcast interviews with: David Niven; BASW NI; Jason Liosatos & Social Work Connect
- BASW Black & Ethnic Minority Professionals Symposium (BPS)
- BASW Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Advisory Group
- Black & ethnic minority social workers anthology
- Anti-racism presentations and workshops



Why was George Floyd's murder such a catalyst?

George's murder was the latest in a long line of atrocities and brutalities endured by the global Black community. This has a long history. Longer than is sometimes convenient for honest acknowledgement. Some commentators refer to George's 'death', which is a dilution of what occurred. George was brutally murdered by a Police Officer and the world has seen the evidence.

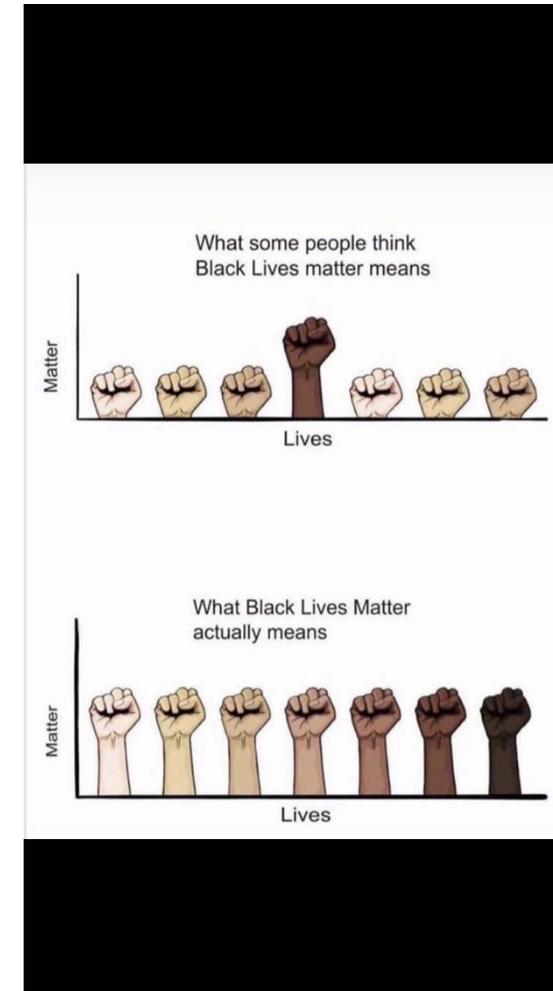
The context to George's murder is emotive and cumulative: the Amy Cooper 'race grenade'; endless examples of police brutality cases in the US and UK; modern-day systems of oppression and the historic and ongoing suppression of the effects of slavery and colonialism in mainstream education. These factors can accumulate and create an acute sense of anger and rage. These emotions can manifest into civil disorder and criminality. It is evidenced that anarchic extremists infiltrate protests to covertly fuel acts of looting and violence, which is then reported by the media in such ways to discredit the protesters. This detracts from the *causal factors* that have triggered the protests – and if we want to discuss looting, how about the longstanding looting of Africa's natural resources?

#blacklivesmatter

Black lives matter (BLM) is about:

- Black lives needing to matter more than they have - society should value them equal to White lives and does not.
- The retort of 'White' or 'all lives matter' in response to BLM is not comparable or relevant. This is like asking: "What about colon cancer?" during a discussion about breast cancer? Or advising a bereaved mother that 'all lives matter' at her child's funeral. "Save the whales" does not mean other sea life is unimportant.
- White lives have always mattered. So, to keep proclaiming 'White lives matter' adds excessive value to them, tilting us further towards white supremacy.

BLM has its critics, but it is unclear why a movement that promotes equality is demonised by some people who vehemently claim they are not 'a' racist and advocate for freedom of speech.



What is anti-racism?

‘Anti-racism’ is a belief that all races and ethnic groups are equal and deserving of the same opportunities. But the most important part of anti-racism is the next step, which is to do something about the existing inequality. Anti-racism is the active dismantling of systems, privileges, and everyday practices that reinforce and normalize the contemporary dimensions of white dominance. This, of course, also involves a critical understanding of the history of ‘whiteness’.”

Ibram X. Kendi, *How to Be an Antiracist*



How is 'anti-racism' relevant to social work?

- Social Work England's professional standards state social worker's must:
 - 1.5** Recognise differences across diverse communities and challenge the impact of disadvantage and discrimination on people and their families and communities.
 - 1.6** Promote social justice, helping to confront and resolve issues of inequality and inclusion
 - 5.1** Not abuse, neglect, discriminate, exploit or harm anyone, or condone this by others.
 - 6.1** Report allegations of harm and challenge and report exploitation and any dangerous, abusive or discriminatory behaviour or practice.
- BASW's Code of Ethics
- BASW's position statements condemning George Floyd's murder and promoting anti-racism in social work
- The bedrock of social justice: anti-oppressive, anti-discriminatory and anti-racist practice values and ethics.
- Confronting the White Elephant: White Privilege in Social Services
- 'Cultural competence' in social work practice
- Decolonising social work education and policy

How much of a priority is anti-racism in social work? Really?!

Anti-racism in social work must be fully considered and dismantled through collaboration with Black and ethnic minority social workers in roles as 'experts with (personal and professional) lived experience'.

This is the only way that Black and ethnic minority social workers' basic needs can be properly met and their wide-ranging expertise fully utilised. Of course, this approach can only improve the experiences of black and ethnic minority service-users too. It really is just a question of how much of a priority is anti-racism in social work?



Anti-racism... so what? Blah, blah. Yawn...

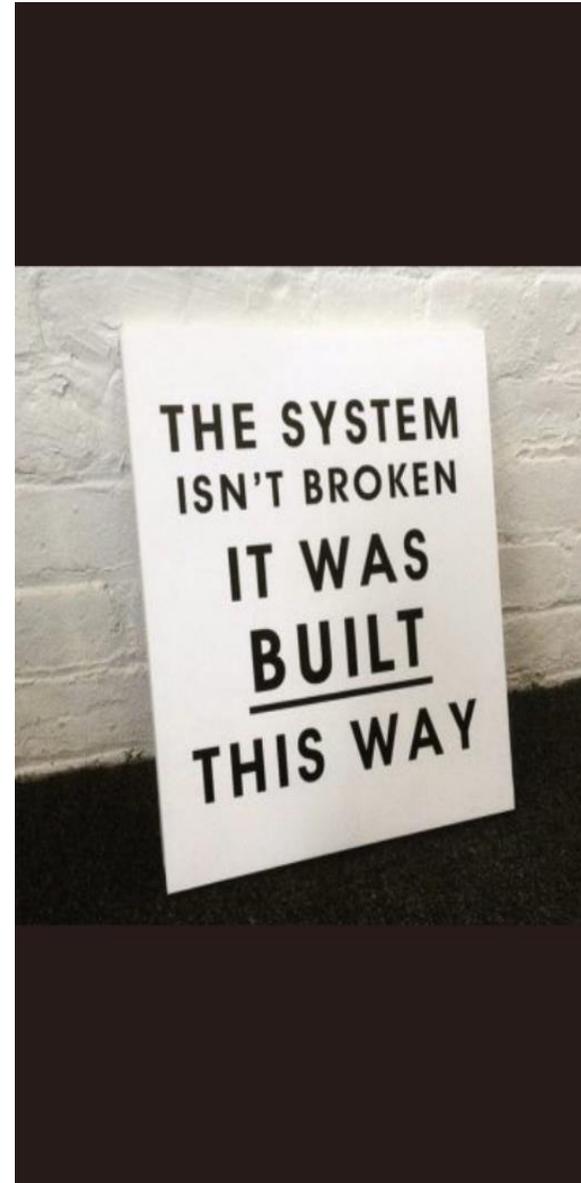
If the news of police officers taking 'selfies' beside the bodies of 2 murdered black sisters; the recent far-right violent protests in London or the racist comments by Suffolk councillors do not outrage you or alert you to the fact that racism is thriving in this country right now – then you really must consider whether you have sleepwalked into being an opponent of anti-racism. At the very least, we must be self-aware and honest (with ourselves and others) when our boredom threshold is reached. Boredom can be subliminal and counterproductive to anti-racism at every level. Everyday micro-aggressions (including 'banter' in the workplace) can fuel violent racist incidents.

“In a [multifaceted] racist society, it is not enough to be non-racist. We must be anti-racist.” – Angela Davis

'Being an ally doesn't necessarily mean you fully understand what it feels like to be oppressed. It means you are taking on the struggle as your own.'

“The burden of ending racism should not be on those subjected to it, but on those who uphold and benefit from it.”

“Racism isn't getting worse, it's getting filmed” - Will Smith



Workplace racism

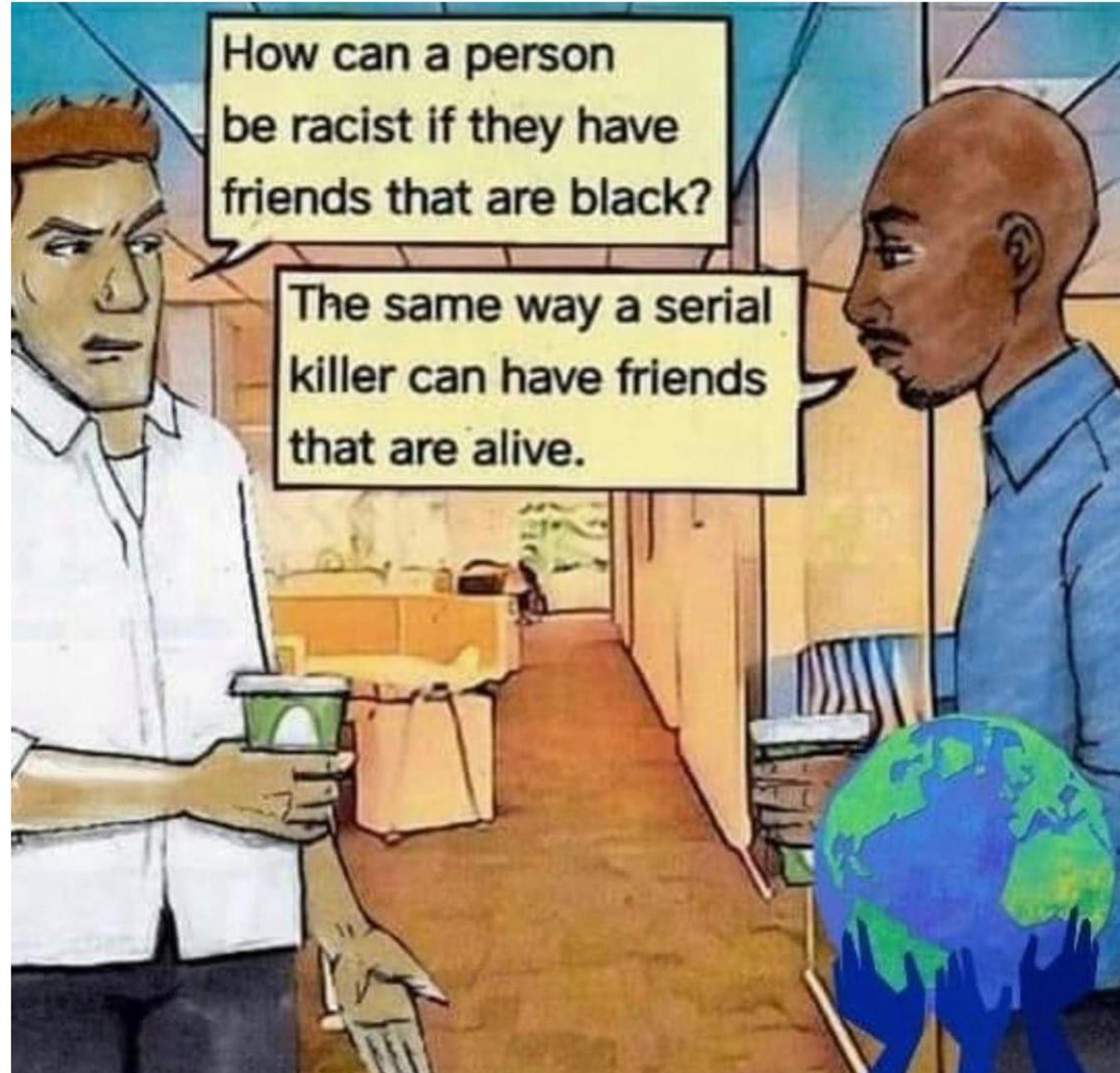
The covert, entrenched and everyday racism in the workplace sometimes indicates the lack of quality cultural diversity and multicultural education and training available (to all staff). Surprisingly, it is rarely acknowledged in social work that race is simply a socially constructed idea with no scientific validity - invented and refined principally to oppress POC. This has modern and everyday ramifications in the working environment.

Black and ethnic minority practitioners have reported to the British Association of Social Workers (BASW) that Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) has clearly been prioritised/withheld on occasions for their white colleagues. Others explained they were made/ordered to visit service-users with suspected COVID-19 (with no PPE and no guidance/support), whilst white managers stayed at the office with 'their' supply of PPE and engaged in racist banter.

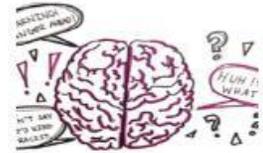
These perverse experiences can be impossible for victims of 'naked and slippery' everyday racism to articulate to others or reconcile internally themselves. Furthermore, these incidents are normalised and subsumed in many workplace cultures, with limited opportunities to 'professionally offload'. In some cases, it's really not hard to see who the direct descendants of slave-owners are. With some people, it stands out like a beacon, regardless of what they say and do.

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White Supremacy	White Indifference	White Awareness	White Allyship
			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accepts, and in some cases promotes, theories designed to justify white dominance and racial hierarchy typically associated with 'scientific racism'. • Fear/loathing/exoticisation of the non-white other which may be overt or covert. • Characterised by the 'white gaze'. • Belief that we live in a meritocracy. • Uncritical/favourable view of empire and colonialism - the white man's burden. • Subscribes to scientific racism. • *Black underachievement is seen to be due to their dysfunctionality/pathology. • Whiteness and its proxies' function as badges of honour • White privilege is rationalised as the natural order. • Onus on black People to accept their place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passionate defender of western universalism, academic freedom and the right to offend. • Belief in meritocracy but also recognises that some (deserving) disadvantaged people need help. • Characterised by a refusal to take a serious look at racism and views anti-racist initiatives as ideological endeavours linked to culture wars and political correctness. • Self-concept is based on being rational and moral, which results in avoidance of responsibility for discriminatory behaviour! • Willing to 'tolerate'/'fetishize'/'pity the 'non-white' other. • Happy to make tokenistic gestures, but total refusal to accept one's own complicity in the (re)production of racism. • Whiteness is denied, so it functions as an absent/invisible/mythical norm leaving white privilege intact. • Onus on Black People to build up their 'resilience'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belief that racism is real and that it is a product of 'prejudice plus power' • Characterised by a desire to critically reflect. • Functions like a mental illness that only white people have (Katz) hence focus on 'discovering' unconscious bias and cognitive distortions. • Desire to engage with 'black issues and people, but only in limited spaces (committees, training events) • This may be as a result of feeling guilty of historic racism and/or a desire to make some amends. • White privilege is recognised and becomes a source of shame and embarrassment. • Most activity however restricted to self-development and deployment of politically correct language. • Onus on white people to overcome unconscious bias. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Racism is a complex interaction between structural, ideological, institutional and behavioural processes, but it can be overcome. • Characterised by the desire to take responsibility for change, which is not restricted to behaviour alone. • Focus on paradigm shifts and concrete interventions • Dynamic and creative solutions through co-creation. • Rejection of deficit models and acceptance of the link between white privilege and educational outcomes. • Share power, privilege, risk and vulnerability. • Actively divesting from histories, systems and structures that reproduce racism. • Onus on white to build sustained partnerships with black people.

Note: *The term 'black' here is used to denote all those people who are positioned outside of whiteness and as a result experience racial disadvantage. The degree of racial disadvantage will vary as a result of other factors primarily associated with gender, class, ethnicity.

© Gurnam Singh, 14th July 2020.

The 8 White Identities

By Barnor Hesse

There is a regime of whiteness, and there are action-oriented white identities. People who identify with whiteness are one of these. It's about time we build an ethnography of whiteness, since white people have been the ones writing about and governing Others.

1. White Supremacist

Clearly marked white society that preserves, names, and values white superiority

2. White Voyeurism

Wouldn't challenge a white supremacist; desires non-whiteness because it's interesting, pleasurable; seeks to control the consumption and appropriation of non-whiteness; fascination with culture (ex: consuming Black culture without the burden of Blackness)

3. White Privilege

May critique supremacy, but a deep investment in questions of fairness/equality under the normalization of whiteness and the white rule; sworn goal of 'diversity'

4. White Benefit

Sympathetic to a set of issues but only privately; won't speak/act in solidarity publicly because benefitting through whiteness in public (some POC are in this category as well)

5. White Confessional

Some exposure of whiteness takes place, but as a way of being accountable to POC after; seek validation from POC

6. White Critical

Take on board critiques of whiteness and invest in exposing/marking the white regime; refuses to be complicit with the regime; whiteness speaking back to whiteness

7. White Traitor

Actively refuses complicity; names what's going on; intention is to subvert white authority and tell the truth at whatever cost; need them to dismantle institutions

8. White Abolitionist

Changing institutions, dismantling whiteness, and not allowing whiteness to reassert itself

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Overt White Supremacy (Socially Unacceptable)

Lynching
Hate Crimes
Blackface The N-word
Swastikas Neo-Nazis Burning Crosses
Racist Jokes Racial Slurs KKK

Calling the Police on Black People White Silence Colorblindness
White Parents Self-Segregating Neighborhoods & Schools
Eurocentric Curriculum White Savior Complex Spiritual Bypassing
Education Funding from Property Taxes Discriminatory Lending
Mass Incarceration Respectability Politics Tone Policing
Racist Mascots Not Believing Experiences of BIPOC Paternalism
"Make America Great Again" Blaming the Victim Hiring Discrimination
"You don't sound Black" "Don't Blame Me, I Never Owned Slaves" Bootstrap Theory
School-to-Prison Pipeline Police Murdering BIPOC Virtuous Victim Narrative
Higher Infant & Maternal Mortality Rate for BIPOC "But What About Me?" "All Lives Matter"
BIPOC as Halloween Costumes Racial Profiling Denial of White Privilege
Prioritizing White Voices as Experts Treating Kids of Color as Adults Inequitable Healthcare
Assuming Good Intentions Are Enough Not Challenging Racist Jokes Cultural Appropriation
Eurocentric Beauty Standards Anti-Immigration Policies Considering AAVE "Uneducated"
Denial of Racism Tokenism English-Only Initiatives Self-Appointed White Ally
Exceptionalism Fearing People of Color Police Brutality Fetishizing BIPOC Meritocracy Myth
"You're So Articulate" Celebration of Columbus Day Claiming Reverse-Racism Paternalism
Weaponized Whiteness Expecting BIPOC to Teach White People Believing We Are "Post-Racial"
"But We're All One Big Human Family" / "There's Only One Human Race" Housing Discrimination

Covert White Supremacy (Socially Acceptable)

Key responsibilities

It is imperative that social workers evaluate their roles and (moral and regulatory) responsibilities. Current race relations require social workers to be proactive and do our homework to stay contemporarily astute as allies to Black and ethnic minority colleagues and service-users.

Black and ethnic minority social workers cannot and should not be expected to 'fix' the racism in their workplace. However, those of us who are confident and capable enough (with the right support) can have a crucial role in educating, empowering and equipping ourselves and (potential) allies and influencers to enhance and shape anti-racism initiatives in our workplace settings.

EVERYONE has a duty to combat racism (and other forms of discrimination) in the spaces they occupy. This includes reporting racist incidents when they occur; forming like-minded alliances with peers to tackle key issues; raising awareness and making suggestions for positive reform.

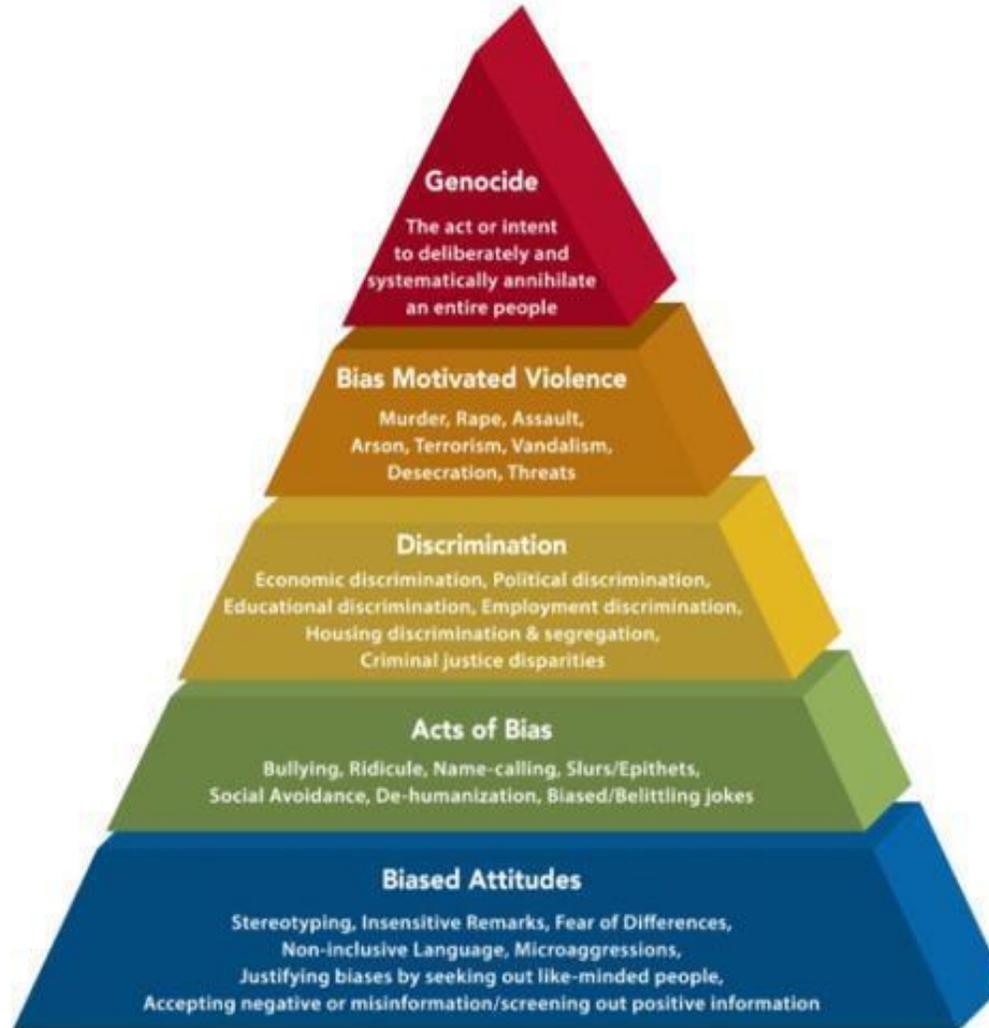
This presentation is primarily aimed at social work employers, educators and key stakeholders.

Barriers to meaningful organisational change

Before any meaningful change can be achieved, social work educators and employers must acknowledge the inherent and intrinsic nature of 'whiteness', 'White fragility', 'White privilege' and white supremacy as unconscious bias in most (if not all) institutions, structures and organisational cultures. Individual and organisational awareness is an imperative first step for social workers, social work employers and social work educators to address workplace racism effectively.



The *Pyramid* shows biased behaviors, growing in complexity from the bottom to the top. Although the behaviors at each level negatively impact individuals and groups, as one moves up the pyramid, the behaviors have more life-threatening consequences. Like a pyramid, the upper levels are supported by the lower levels. If people or institutions treat behaviors on the lower levels as being acceptable or "normal," it results in the behaviors at the next level becoming more accepted. In response to the questions of the world community about where the hate of genocide comes from, the *Pyramid of Hate* demonstrates that the hate of genocide is built upon the acceptance of behaviors described in the lower levels of the pyramid.



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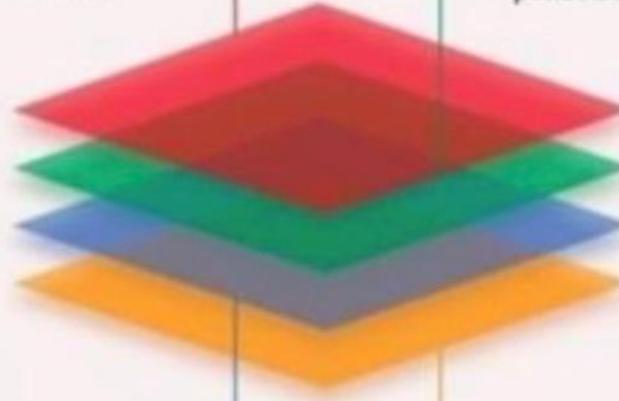
THE FOUR ^{OF} DIMENSIONS **RACISM**

INSTITUTIONAL

Policies and practices that reinforce racist standards within a workspace or organization.

STRUCTURAL

Multiple institutions collectively upholding racist policies and practices, i.e. society.



INTERPERSONAL

Racist acts and micro-aggressions carried out from one person to another.

INTERNALIZED

The subtle and overt messages that reinforce negative beliefs and self-hatred in individuals.

*Inspired by
Race Forward Trainings*

**Slow Factory
Foundation**



The "Problem" Woman of Colour in the Workplace

The Woman of Colour enters the organization



white leadership



tokenized hire

Honeymoon

- the Woman of Colour feels welcomed, needed, and happy



repetitive injury & microaggressions

Reality

- the Woman of Colour points out issues within the organization
- she tries to work within the organization's structure and policies
- she pushes for accountability



denial of racism

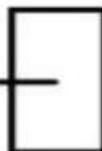
Response

- the organization denies, ignores, and blames
- the responsibility of fixing the problem is placed on the Woman of Colour
- People of Colour are pitted against one another

Retaliation

- the organization decides that the woman of colour is the problem and targets her
- the organization labels the conflict as a "communication issue" or claims that she is not qualified or "not a good fit"

target & attack



The Woman of Colour exits the organization

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3 typical organisational responses when attempting to tackle racial inequality

From my cultured social work experience, the responses below generally indicate an organisation's prioritisation and level of commitment (or not) to anti-racism.

1. Keep silent, keep things the same and “hope all this Black Lives Matter (BLM) ‘stuff’ just blows over”. This kind of inaction and paralysis of fear correlates with and reinforces perceptions of ‘White fragility’, ‘White privilege’ and white supremacy for some POC. This type of organisational response usually commends staff for being resilient and deflects attention away from the essential redesign of systems that routinely make people suffer.
2. Publish lukewarm organisational statements that recycle and regurgitate previous rhetoric on workforce unity with predictable (and borderline offensive) platitudes – often proposing only superficial changes. For example, publishing a sympathetic, but non-committal kneejerk brief statement; possibly delegating responsibilities to an already overworked Equalities Officer or proposing minor changes to already vague policies/procedures on ‘valuing diversity’ with little or no accountability. Approaches at this level are usually well-intended, but tokenistic and overlook the nuanced obstacles and pitfalls POC face every day. Unfortunately, this response is common.
3. Publish an authentic anti-racism action plan outlining significant reforms that commit to specific, measurable, achievable and realistic targets (suggestions below). For example, publishing a strong mission/position statement condemning George Floyd’s murder and racism in all its forms and committing to BASW’s Code of Ethics, anti-oppressive, anti-discriminatory and anti-racist practice. This approach interlinks with the ‘Anti-Racist commitment framework’ (below).

The acid test is to share this presentation with your social work leaders and see what response you get.

ANTI-RACIST COMMITMENT FRAMEWORK		ACTIONS FOR CHANGE
ACCELERATING DIVERSITY WITHIN	We will build a workforce more reflective of the communities we serve by promoting opportunities for black and ethnic minority people to enter and advance within the organisation.	Create a new fast-track scheme for high potential people from ethnic minority backgrounds , fuelled by targeted recruitment for senior leadership and work with partners to help grow diverse talent pools. Selected staff will be mentored by a member of the Senior Leadership Team as they progress through different opportunities designed to build their career foundations. This will be maintained by ensuring there are diverse shortlists for every senior management role across the organisation.
EDUCATING, EMPOWERING and EQUIPPING PEOPLE	We will transform the culture to zero tolerance of discrimination. Introducing new immersive training to enhance awareness and support, to underpin inclusive management and meet various learning styles.	Race and culture awareness training will be mandatory for everyone. This will go beyond routine online training by: offering guidance; peer support groups; recognising local issues; providing support to equip managers to champion diversity and utilising external specialist advice/support as/when necessary.
LEADING BY EXAMPLE	We will ensure that every one of our senior leaders has a greater understanding of the issues faced by ethnic minority communities and are equipped to lead the fight for equality.	Every senior leader will commit to either a) to have an ethnic minority reverse mentor or provide professional support to a community organisation serving ethnic minority groups.
BUILDING TRANSPARENCY	We will address any gaps in our own data collection, ensuring that senior leaders can be held to account for the progress made in tackling both discrimination and equality of opportunity.	Staff will be encouraged to self-declare their identity, enabling us to build a rich profile of the workforce's diverse needs. This will underpin the introduction of an annual ethnicity pay audit , backed by any immediate action required. An 'ethnicity dashboard' will enable us to track progress across the colleague lifecycle and set targets for senior leaders. This will be published internally annually.



What needs to happen nationally?

The existing national frameworks and initiatives to support Black and ethnic minority social workers are fragmented and optional. This can create confusion and dilution in their coherence and implementation in practice. Social work has a long history of committing to anti-discriminatory practice, but less in the way of practical mandatory implementation or robust challenge on these issues. Now is the time for the profession to properly address this. I (and no doubt many others) would welcome the prioritisation of sector leaders (including the Chief Social Workers, Social Work England, Directors of Social Services and other key stakeholders) to meaningfully and purposefully move this agenda forward to establish a mandatory 'anti-discriminatory national framework' that is universal across social work - in collaboration with BASW.

An important first step, would be to explicitly reintroduce anti-discriminatory, anti-oppressive practices and anti-racist values and ethics into the professional and qualifying education and training standards. This new regime should involve partnership working between key stakeholders to enforce these values and ethics across the professional landscape. Key aims/objectives would be to: ensure consistency, introduce mandatory requirements, emphasise 'anti-racist' values and be universally applicable to all social workers like the Professional Capabilities Framework and the professional standards.

We all know that organisations can sometimes be avoidant of anti-racism, but as social workers we must recognise that silence (or inaction) on racism is complicity with the oppressors. Unfortunately, as a profession we have been complacent and have much more to do to cultivate equality, diversity and inclusion in the workplace and society.

The 'BAME' conundrum

Labels/terms such as Commonwealth, 'hostile environment', and 'BAME' need to be re-examined. BAME does not describe who I am. BAME is a clumsy, cluttered and incoherent acronym that is opportune for categorising people of colour as a homogenous group - when we quite clearly are not. Of course, I cannot speak for all people of colour. I understand that 'BAME' can be operationally helpful when exploring the overarching effects of all things racist. However, it misses so much nuance and subtlety, that it can be seized upon by those who wish to deny racism as a white problem. Routinely, I hear people comfortably stating that BAME people "can't even agree amongst themselves". This sloppy reductivism, leads to terms being invented such as 'Black on Black' crime. I have not heard about "White on White" crime – ever.



What might an anti-racist working environment look like? What can social work employers do to promote anti-racism in the workplace? What would the experience be like for Black and ethnic minority social workers?

Recruitment

Anti-racist recruitment targets are set to employ Black and ethnic minority senior leaders and educators to better reflect local communities and the workforce (where necessary/possible).

The 'Rooney Rule' is adopted, similar to senior recruitment in American National Football League. This involves at least one POC candidate being interviewed for each senior leader vacancy.

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Operations

Anti-racism is: explicitly promoted in mission/position statements (good example here) along with other forms of discrimination; included in relevant policies/procedures and forms part of employees' employment contracts to underline its importance.

The data on workforce diversity and 'protected characteristics' (ethnicity, gender, religion, sexuality etc) informs the support available for minority groups; training for all staff and organisational policies and procedures. The workforce is encouraged to self-declare their identity and individual/group wellbeing at work provisions are developed in partnership with them. Creative wellbeing at work provisions are developed for those who have experienced workplace trauma associated with racism (and other types of discrimination). This includes peer-led support groups for members to reflect fully on their personal and professional experiences. Personal wellbeing is a mandatory agenda item for supervision meetings. By using this 'identity dashboard' approach, organisational efforts are more focussed and genuine; progress is properly managed through a cycle of reviewing data output and periodic verbal/written feedback from the workforce.

Safe and informal systems are introduced for Black and ethnic minority social workers in the workplace. For example, discriminatory practices or constructive solutions are made anonymously in an 'honesty box' to empower POC without fear of reprisals. Arising issues are then explored in supervision, team meetings or with senior leaders (if necessary).

Annual ethnicity pay audits ensure that any anomalies and discrepancies for Black and ethnic minority staff are properly reviewed and resolved.

The Covid-19 risk assessment is consistently used for all staff (particularly those from Black and ethnic minority groups).

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Education

Anti-racist education is recognised as being at the heart of developing a more cultured and inclusive workforce and healthy workplace.

Education providers 'decolonialise' social work training programmes with the input of black and ethnic minority academics, social workers and service-users integrated at all stages of programme development and delivery.

Anti-discriminatory, anti-oppressive and anti-racist practice form a fundamental and mandatory requirement of social workers professional development and registration. This includes a range of educational tools and training opportunities (for different learning styles) to ensure *quality* cultural diversity education is prioritised and valued. Staff continuously learn and better understand microaggressions, stereotypes and how they can demonstrate 'anti-racist practice'.

The expertise of specialist external trainers and consultants is instrumental in shaping effective anti-racist approaches – with no reliance on tokenistic online courses.

Here are some additional weblinks to anti-racist education: [1](#), [2](#) and [3](#).

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Allyship

Anti-racist allyship is understood by senior leaders, educators and practitioners to be vital in combating all manifestations of racism. Educating, empowering and equipping allies to actively support colleagues from marginalised and minority groups is common practice.

Allyship actively promotes ways in which managers and staff can become allies or become *better* allies to support their Black and ethnic minority colleagues. Social work employers and educators demonstrate they are willing to keep listening and learning from POC to instigate any meaningful change.

7 A's of Authentic Allyship



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Reverse mentoring

Anti-racist 'reverse-mentoring' enables Black and ethnic minority social workers to mentor senior leaders and educators on anti-racism (especially those with identified 'anti-racist needs'). It is important reverse-mentoring allows mentors some autonomy in their approach. Furthermore, mentoring agreements (considering confidentiality, power dynamics and conflict resolution) are agreed and signed by both parties at the outset.

Leadership programmes

To combat 'glass ceiling racism', various professional development opportunities are available designed to provide advice/support colleagues from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds to enhance their career progression.

'Positive representation' recognises the disadvantages and obstacles for POC and provides opportunities (mentoring, nominations, secondments, shadowing etc) to support them in reaching their full potential.

Due to the representational imbalance, ring-fenced investment and operational resources to support leadership programmes is in place. This addresses the lack of Black and ethnic minority social workers in senior roles and provides support for those who are.

How can managers change the culture of their organization?

1. Start by changing what people do rather than how they think.
2. "It's easier to act your way to a new way of thinking, than to think your way to a new way of acting."
3. Give employees the means by which they can successfully do their jobs.
4. Recognize that the way that problems are treated reflects your corporate culture. —



Any questions?

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