

## SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

The first four sessions focus on expanding your knowledge based on one of the Smithsonian's Museum of African American History and Culture topic areas. The last two sessions provide an opportunity to learn skills helpful to handling difficult conversations about race and racism to your practice of being antiracist.

The pre-work is an opportunity for participants to become familiar with new material and concepts, while online sessions are dedicated to digesting and applying the material to one's life and work. Below is a summary of each topic (based on the Smithsonian website's description where applicable):

### **Historical Foundations of Race – January 12**

American society developed the notion of race early in its formation to justify its economic system of capitalism, which depended on the institution of forced labor, especially the enslavement of African peoples, and land stolen from Native Americans. To more accurately understand how race and its counterpart, racism, are woven into the very fabric of American society, we explore the history of how race, white privilege, and anti-blackness came to be. Minnesota history is included.

### **Race and Racism – February 2**

The scientific consensus is that race has no biological basis – that we are all one race, the human race. Racialized identity, however, is very real. And, in a racialized society, everyone is assigned a racial identity whether you are aware of it or not. Let's broaden our awareness.

### **Whiteness– March 2**

Socially and politically constructed, whiteness is not simply referring to skin color but is an ideology that reinforces power at the expense of others and strengthens systems of oppression. This unconscious ideology is pervasive and we all lose so much. How can we recognize our internalized whiteness, whether we are white or BIPOC? Let's dig deeper.

### **Social Identities and Systems of Oppression – March 30**

An oppressive system is built around the ideology that some groups are superior to others. These systems have many forms, but they all have essentially the same structure. As we explore aspects of our various identities, we learn about intersectionality and how identities can overlap in systems of oppression. How can we understand the complexity of intersectionality and how it plays out in our lives?

### **Handling Difficult Conversations – April 27**

To create change, we need to have emotionally challenging conversations about race. To effectively handle difficult conversations with family, friends, colleagues, and strangers, we adopt a mindful approach and practice having dialogues in a controlled setting. Learn about listening for understanding, staying curious, finding common ground, identifying judgment (both positive and negative), and becoming aware of triggers.

### **The Practice of Being Antiracist – May 25**

No one is born racist or antiracist; these result from the choices we make. Being antiracist results from a decision to make frequent, consistent, equitable choices daily. It's an ongoing *practice*. Ongoing self-awareness and self-reflection is required as we move through life. In the absence of making antiracist choices, we (un)consciously uphold aspects of white supremacy, white-dominant culture, and unequal institutions and society. Being racist or antiracist is not about who you are, it is about what you do. Finesse skills learned in the previous session to inform your lifelong practice and conclude the series with a constructive toolkit for antiracism work.

Please contact [leadership@overcomingracism.org](mailto:leadership@overcomingracism.org) if you have questions about this series.